

“Ancestry . Jesus”

That title isn't a misprint. Yes, there's a very popular genealogy research website with a similar name, but I doubt you'll find much there when it comes to Jesus. You don't even have to bother looking. Any information they'd have would come from the Bible, which tells us all we need to know about “from whence Jesus came.”

This Advent, our Midweek services will be looking at what the Gospel According to St Matthew tells us about some of these things. We're going to spend time looking at *The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham* (Matthew 1:1). (No, we won't go through *all* the names listed in Matthew's first chapter—frankly, we don't know who many of those people are!)

To some, such a list of names may seem exceedingly boring. But behind each name there's a story. One story links to another, and another. That string of stories soon becomes a history, and that history gives us a context to individual lives. From an understanding of the past, we gain perspective on the present which, in turn, equips us to discern the future that is just over the horizon.

Sadly, the stories represented by the names listed in Matthew 1 are not always stories of faithful servants of God. More often, they are the stories of people who have really messed up in life. They're the accounts of sinners, like you and me.

Yet it was through this line of sinners that God gave the world a Savior—*our* Savior! For us to look back and see how He got here is also to see why He came: we need Him, far more than we knew, far more than we would ever admit.

That's why God didn't wait for us to ask for a Savior. He knew we never would—at least, we wouldn't ask for the kind of Savior we need, the kind that would do the job of bringing us back to the One True God. Sinners don't seek God. We run away from Him.

So God ran toward us. He ran toward us over and over again, toward every name mentioned in Matthew 1 and toward every person who has lived on this earth. Many still ran away from Him, but (as we say in one of our liturgies) “to those who believed He gave power to become the children of God, and has promised them the Holy Spirit. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. Grant this, Lord, to us all.”

As you prepare for the celebration of Christmas and look to the coming of Jesus, consider from whence Jesus came. Consider the people—sinners like you and me—who were part of that long line of God's plan for your salvation. Remember and rejoice in the biggest, best, and first gift of Christmas: Jesus Christ.

An Advent Challenge

*There are 24 days from the first Sunday in Advent to Christmas Eve
and 24 chapters in the Gospel according to St Luke.*

Read a chapter a day and on Christmas Eve Day you'll read why Jesus was born for us!