

## Transcript\* - The Knots in Jesus' Family Tree – John Enabnit – 3/23/2023

Good morning, church. So before I get to the message real quickly, Lord willing, I'm going to lead a group to Israel a year from now, next March. March 2026. Obviously, we're not going to go right now, so don't sweat that part. Okay? But but if you're at all even mildly interested and come next, Sunday to, to an info meeting.

Okay, so that's all I've got to say about that. And good morning again. I am John and Abnett, and for those of you that don't know me, consider yourself fortunate. Okay. But today I want to talk about, something that I know will light your fire. We're going to talk about the genealogies in the Bible. Yay! All right.

How many of you have done a study of your family tree? Anybody here? Can I see show of Hands? Some of you have done that. Okay. And were you able to trace your family heritage back a few generations? Let's say let's just find out how many of you could go back, let's say, to the year 1700. Before anybody here.

1700. How about how about 1600? How about 1500? How about 1400? How about 1300? Really? You really did, Jeff. We don't care, okay? We don't care. So there.

Because I'm. I'm not here to talk about your family tree. I'm here to talk about my family tree. This this is my heritage contained in this book, and I don't. Are you telling the truth, brother? Are you really telling the truth? Well, anyway,

Thanks to a guy in our church, he traced my genealogy. Back to a man named Osbert who was born. And I'm not making this up in eight 1088, 1080. He was. He was the king of Bernice here. Sounds like a sewing machine. The king of Asia. In England, a region in England before England was even a nation.

So that's that's a long time ago. So what that's telling you. And I hope you're picking up on this, is that on this platform this morning is royalty all right?

So after the service, you may line up to kiss the royal ring. All right. Honestly, who cares? I mean, you know, nobody cares about anybody else's genealogy. And then you get to the genealogies in the Bible, and it's just kind of a big yawn, isn't it? I mean it, by the way, I have to tell you that when you start to study your genealogy, when you shake the family tree, a few nuts are going to fall out.

You know that, don't you? But anyway, you get to these genealogies in here, and that's really the case. I mean, but reading them, I mean, if the whole Bible were nothing but genealogies, I could read through it in a week. I would just apply speed reading techniques to the whole thing. Who cares about all the big gaps in the Bible?

Yeah. I mean, is it warms the heart about as much as reading a phone book. And yeah, yeah, we pay lip service to this verse and second Timothy chapter two that says all that says second Timothy two says, oh, there it is. Oh, I'm looking at the wrong.

I've, I've never preached before. You'll have to forgive me. It says all Scripture, say all Scripture Scripture is in is what let's keep reading. And it's useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training and righteousness. Does that include the genealogies? Yes, I suppose it does. I suppose it does. So Matthew, the gospel writer, sets out to tell us the storyline of Jesus Christ about his life, his ministry, his death, his burial, his resurrection.

But he doesn't start where Luke does. Luke starts with the birth of Jesus. Matthew instead starts 42 generations before with Abraham, the father of the Hebrew nation. Now, just so you understand something, sometimes, when a person wanted their family story, told their history, the history told, they would hire, a writer, a biographer, historian, and if there were unsavory details in their background, in their heritage, they would leave them out, you know, so you could have gaps in the genealogy, or maybe you'd exaggerate some things.

You do the same thing. I mean, if you were writing your family's story and you discovered that Osama bin Laden was your cousin, you'd keep that hush hush, right? But when it comes to the story of Jesus, he does the opposite. He includes the people that we would probably have left out, which didn't exactly help Matthew's case that Jesus was Messiah, the Son of God.

Remember that he's writing to a Jewish audience and to the Jews. It was especially important that the bloodline and the heritage of their Messiah be absolutely pure and have all the right connections. So Matthew goes almost out of his way to underscore that some of the people in the heritage of Jesus, well, they're just not very holy. They're not very righteous.

Why would he do that? I mean, if Jesus is legit, if he really is the promised Messiah with all the right bloodline and everything else, why would he include in his family tree some of these unsavory characters? Well, because they're the point of the story. That's why. Because Jesus came for that kind of person. Now think about this.

Matthew himself was, well, he was considered a sellout. I mean, he was a tax collector in, in first century Palestine, in Israel, a person that collaborated with the Roman Empire was a pariah. Nobody could stand him. Which meant that, religiously speaking, the Matthew couldn't find any standing with God. Because up until the time of Jesus, before the time of Jesus, every religion taught that your standing with God was dependent on who you are and what you had done.

And so if you had done some good things, if you were a moral, upstanding person, you would expect that your God, whatever that God would be, would bless you with what good crops, healthy babies, that kind of stuff. And if you're good enough, then God would bless you. Which meant that there was a lot of self-

righteousness in that day, and Matthew understood that if it was self-righteousness that he didn't stand a chance with God, he couldn't make the cut.

So then Jesus comes along and guess what? He changed the game. Drawing close to God didn't depend any longer on who you were or what you had done. Instead, it depended on who Jesus was and what he had done on the cross. Amen. So Matthew in his genealogy, wants to demonstrate for us that Jesus didn't just come for sinners, that he came from sinners, and not just any sinners.

I mean, these people, these people wouldn't, wouldn't, would have won awards for their sins if there was such a thing, in fact, that they were your relatives, you probably would have left them out of your family reunion. You know you wouldn't have invited them. So let's jump in to Matthew chapter one, verse one. If you have your Bibles open, here we go.

This is the genealogy of Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac. Isaac the father of Jacob. Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers. I'll stop right there for a moment. I have four talking points today. And the first one is this. God's mercy is greater than our sin.

God's mercy is greater than our sin. As we go through the names of some of the people on this list in Matthew one, we're going to see some, some people that are pretty messed up and they've lived messed up lives. And it begins with Abraham, who even though he's the father of the Hebrew nation, Abraham more than once lied like Pinocchio to save his own neck.

And then you've got his grandson. Jacob, who I tell you was slicker than a Las Vegas card shark. I mean, Jacob cheated his brother. He cheated his father in law. Cheated his uncle. In fact, his very name means cheater. And yet he's on the list leading to Christ. And then you come to Judah. The last guy mentioned in verse two.

Now, you don't want you to do. I want you to turn to your neighbor and tell them everything you know about Judah. Go ahead, start.

It's a very short conversation, isn't it?

But if you were raised in church and I asked you to turn to your neighbor and tell them about his very famous brother, chances are you could talk for at least 2 to 3 minutes. Because Judah had 11 brothers. Judah plus 11 equals 12. These 12 men comprise the 12 tribes of Israel. And here comes the first bump in the road.

This guy named Judah. And the Jewish readers looking at this biography would say, man, can you believe that Matthew is bringing him up because his famous brother was? Anybody know Joseph? Joseph, you know, with a coat of many colors. And Joseph lived such an outstanding life that 3000 years after he

lived, they were writing a musical on Broadway about his dreamcoat or whatever that thing is.

Right now. Joseph, his 11 brothers, were very jealous of him, and they wanted to get rid of him. And honestly, most people know the story of Joseph, but very few know the story of Judah. And yet when you look at the genealogy of Jesus, it isn't Joseph who's name here. It's Judah, it's Judah. And you know, if you were God and you had to choose between Judah and Joseph, my guess is you'd skip right over Judah and land on Joseph because this guy was an outstanding person.

I mean, he was moral, he was upright, he was honest. He was persecuted. He was punished. He does good things for people that are cruel to him. And in the end, he becomes a savior to his family, to Pharaoh, to the Egyptian nation. He is the perfect picture of Jesus. And if ever there was a person through whom the Messiah should come, it would be this man Joseph.

Because the parallels between between him and Jesus are just amazing. And yet. Yet God looks down and says, I got to choose one of the 12 boys. I think I'll go with Judah. I promise you, you would never have gone with him. You would have chosen Joseph well, Judah in his story is in the Old Testament. So keep your finger here in Matthew.

But now go back to Genesis 37. Judah's story occupied just a chapter or two of the Bible. And if you know the story, you know that Judah and his brothers were very jealous of Joseph. Joseph was clearly the favorite of Jacob. Their father and Jacob doted on his son, doted on his son. He didn't dote on Sonny doted on his son.

But, you know, he was the favorite. And he got this special coat of many colors and all that stuff. Anybody hear of the favorite of their fathers and mothers that you were growing? Can we see them? Who were who here was the favorite child? Yeah. These are the spoiled ones with their hands up right now. Just note that, okay.

Well, Joseph, he has these dreams about his brothers bowing down to him, and they hated him for it. And in fact, they want to get rid of him. So one day, Jacob sends his son Joseph out to look for his brothers, are out in the field doing something. And now we're going to pick up in Genesis chapter 37, verse 23, here we go.

So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the ornate robe he was wearing, and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty. There was no water in it. As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt.

Judah said to his brothers, what will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? So Judas kind of like an organizer. He's an influencer. And he looked at his brothers and said, you know, guys, I mean, think about it. If we kill him, if we kill Joseph, we don't get anything out of it. I got an idea.

So here we go in verse 27, come, let's sell into the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him. After all, he is our brother. Well, how magnanimous can you get right? Our own flesh and blood. His brothers agreed. This is just such an amazing thing that they're doing. So they concoct this story to tell their father, Jacob, that Joseph has been killed by a wild animal.

And they take his coat, special coat, and they dip it in blood so they can deceive their father. Now we go down to verse 34. Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth, and mourned for his son. Many days all his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. No, he said, I will continue to mourn until my son, until I join my son in the grave.

So his father wept for him, and they break their father's heart, and all along they know they've got a secret, and they're going to take it to their grave. And every year they gather on Joseph's birthday, and there's his empty chair. And Judah knows what he's done. He and he's not. He doesn't crack. He doesn't. He mourns with Jacob, but he doesn't let on.

And he knows exactly what's happened to Joseph, because he's again, he's the influencer. He's the leader. He's the guy that could have changed the destiny of his younger brother, but he doesn't do it. And when you read through the book of Genesis, Joseph plays a very prominent spot. Judah, on the other hand, just doesn't. There's just gets a chapter two.

There's a lot of dysfunction in the family. Now go back to Matthew one. A lot of dysfunction in the family tree of Jesus. They these people put the fun in dysfunction. I'm telling you what, today, I mean, they they lie, they deceive, they cheat. But it doesn't end there. You get down to verse six of Matthew one and we find David is mentioned as an ancestor of Jesus, and of course he's King David.

Well, you know the story. You probably do. David takes another man's wife and gets her pregnant. And then to cover up his sin, he takes up the wife's man, her husband, and he puts him on the front line of battle. And he and he gets killed. And now, so David can take Bathsheba as his own wife, and he thinks he's gotten away with that until Nathan the prophet comes along and points his bony finger right in David's face and says, you're the man.

You're the guy that did this. And that's when sexual sin inhabits David's household. There's incest, there's rape, there's all kinds of things that happen. And David seems to be powerless to do anything about it. Why? Well, maybe for one thing, because he feels such overwhelming guilt of his own sin. Or maybe because his sons know exactly what their father has done and so they think they can get away with it.

There's even murder. And David doesn't lift a finger. It's just a very messed up family church. I'm telling you this so that you know that if you feel helpless and hopeless, you don't have to be that way. Because here's a list of people that came from very sinful situations, and yet God redeems them. We mess up in life, don't we?

We've all messed up. Turn to your neighbor and say you messed up. Did you know that?

Oh, you wives, you enjoy this, don't you?

And Jesus redeems because God's mercy is greater than our sin. In fact, Jesus says this in Matthew nine. Go and learn what this means. I desire mercy, not sacrifice, for I have not come to call the righteous, but who sinners. Jesus didn't come to build a hotel for saints. He came to build a hospital for sinners. And that's what the church is supposed to be.

We're supposed to be a place where lost people can come and find redemption in the name of Jesus Christ. He had such a passion for lost people, and we, the followers of Christ, should have no less passion than he does, because we've all messed up and we're all in need of redemption. God's mercy is greater than our sin.

That's the first talking point. The second one is this God values the overlooked and forgotten. I see that also in this list of names in his genealogy. Did you notice, by the way, that there are women here in the list, which wouldn't seem all that unusual to us? But believe me, in Matthew's day, you didn't put women in anybody's list of genealogies.

In fact, women in that day were not allowed to give a testimony in a court of law because they had no legal standing. But in this passage, women are included. There are five in total, including Mary, who is the mother of Jesus. And you might say, well, then why aren't there more women? But remember, you remember that this is a Jewish genealogy.

In fact, if you went to Israel even today, you would not find women listed in anyone's genealogies. So not only are there women, but there are Gentiles here. Like Ruth, she's not even Jewish, and yet she's included, which was revolutionary in Matthew's time, which is precisely what Jesus came to do to elevate the status of everyone. I want the women to know in our church that we're not for Christ, were it not for the way that he elevated womanhood in Scripture.

I want you to understand what he did for you and see. The thing is that God values the overlooked in the forgotten. He values women. He values non-Jews, Jewish people. He values sinners, people with messed up lives. That's why Paul says this in Galatians three, that there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female.

For you are all what church, one in Christ Jesus. And you look at some of the women that are named here, go to verse three of your list. And there's Tamar. Now she's the daughter in law of Judah. We just talked about him, and Tamar marries Judah's oldest son and he's wicked, so God kills him. They don't have children.

And then she marries the second oldest son and he's wicked. God kills him. Don't get on God's bad side. Amen. Anyway, anyway, the third son, Judah, his third son, is old enough to get married. So Judah promises Tamar hey, when he grows up, he'll marry you. You can have children with him. Well, Judah reneges and here's Tamar.

She has no kids, okay? She's not fulfilled in her own mind. So then one day, as a widow, she hears that her father in law, Judah, is coming to their community. So guess what she does? She takes off her widow's mourning clothes and she puts on a prostitute's outfit. And this gets crazy. She seduces her father in law and she gets pregnant by her own father in law.

This is so yucky. You know, it's right there in the Bible and she makes it on the list. Tamar makes it on the list and in her out of wedlock son Perez is a distant ancestor of Jesus. I'm telling you all the skeletons in Jesus' closet are just laid out here. Who else is on the list?

Well, go to verse five. There's Rahab. Now, Rahab didn't just dress up like a prostitute. She was a prostitute. The Jewish audience is reading this genealogy, and they get to verse five and they see her name and they say, whoa, can you believe that? Rahab on the list because she had a label, you know, she had a label in her day.

You know, we tend to label people. We put labels on people all the time. It's not all that unusual, I guess. Let me let's check this out. Let's see. How are you guys feeling? Sharp today. You didn't even answer the question. So, what am I doing up here anyway? So I'll give you some names. Let's see if you got.

If you know their labels in the Bible, we've got John the very good. How about Uriah the a few of you got that one. Okay. How about, how about from history? Alexander the Great, Attila the, how about Canaan? And, Wow, look at you guys. You know, your pop culture better than the Bible. Good for you, Buffy the Vampire Slayer.

Buffy the vampire slayer. How about, Jabba the. Let's not forget pizza the hot also. Okay.

Unfortunately for Rahab, she had a label in the world in which she lived, the Canaanite world. She was Rahab, the prostitute, which creates some tension in the family line of Jesus. I mean, she's not even Jewish. She's Canaanite. Why put her name on the list? Well, because wait a minute. The genealogy of Jesus isn't about who's perfect and makes it on the list.

It's about the fact that God is marvelous in his grace and mercy and forgiveness. Amen. And all of these people, sinners alike, are in the lineage of Jesus. So why would Matthew want to draw attention to a woman with a tainted reputation? Or because she's part of the story? She's the point of this story. See, when the time came for the Israelites to finally occupy the Promised Land, their first obstacle was Jericho, a walled fortress city.

They had never seen anything like it. The Israelites hadn't. I mean, they were wandering in the wilderness for 40 years. They didn't know what a building looked like, like this. So they sent a couple of spies in to figure out how to, you know, conquer the city. And they end up being harbored by Rahab the prostitute.

She protects them. And it turns out that Rahab, she leaves behind her Canaanite gods and begins worshiping the one true God. She's on the list. She's actually the great grandmother of David. Did you know that King David? There's another woman on this list. This is. She's not even named her name. She's listed as Uriah's wife. Well, why wouldn't God call her by her name?

Bathsheba? Because in God's eyes, she was Uriah's wife. In God's eyes, David invaded the bedroom of a man and took his wife. And David may have thought that Bathsheba was his wife, but she, in God's eyes, was Uriah's wife. God values the overlooked in the forgotten. And maybe you feel alone. I mean, it's so easy in this culture to feel like you're being bypassed and overlooked and forgotten.

I want you to know that the God of heaven and earth values you. And maybe if you feel unforgivable or irredeemable, just understand that God's mercy is greater than any sin you've ever committed. My friend. Can I get an amen from the house? My third point is this godliness is not inherited. It's a choice. I see this in the lineage of Jesus here because in a sense church, you can't pass on your faith to your kids just because you're a Christian doesn't automatically mean that your kids will become a Christian.

We all have to choose for ourselves. I was fortunate enough to be born into a godly home where my parents had a strong faith in Jesus. My dad was a preacher, but they couldn't give me a faith. They could lay down the framework for my faith. But you have to choose. I had to choose. You had to choose.

And I want to talk to the parents and the grandparents in the room right now. If you've, especially some of you I know, have kids who have drifted away from the faith and it breaks your heart every generation, regardless of the previous generation. Every generation has to choose what in whom they will believe. And this is what I see in this list, because I want you to watch out from generation to generation to generation, the godly, the godlessness seems to creep in.

We go to verse six and you begin with David there. King David, of course, despite his moral failure, was a man after God's own heart. So he was pretty good guy. And then you get to Solomon, who was well, he started off well, didn't end so great. And then you go from Solomon to rebel son of a Beja Asa.



Jehoshaphat. Joram, you, sire, from generation to generation. And then you get to King Ahaz. This was in the evil man, far from God. Sacrificed his own son to the false God. Bill engaged heavily in idolatry. And then get this. After him comes his son Hezekiah, who's great. He loves the Lord. He carries on all the high places of idol worship, brings his people back to the worship of the one true Jehovah God.

And then his son Hezekiah said, Manasseh, he's evil. He reinstituted idolatry. He dives big time into witchcraft. You know, just because you have a godly dad doesn't mean you're going to be godly. And just because you had awful parents doesn't mean you're going to be awful. We each have to choose. And so parents and grandparents today, I urge you not to squander the influence that you have with your kids and your grandkids.

It matters that you speak about Jesus. You can't give them faith, but you can lay the groundwork, the framework for the faith that they can have. You can't make them trust in Christ, but you can certainly point the way to Jesus because, brothers and sisters, the time is short. You don't have forever. Now notice the last name in verse 11 before the exile to Babylon is this king named Janiya.

And God makes a promise to this young king. And it's not a good promise. In Jeremiah 22 verse 30, this is what the Lord says. Let the record show that this man Aniah was childless. He is a failure for none of his children will succeed him on the throne of David, to rule over Israel, over Judah. Nobody from his family is going to sit on David's throne until that is Jesus Christ.

And you know why? Because Jesus redeems every situation. Jesus breaks every curse. Jesus takes people who are far from God and brings them back and redeems it all. When he comes on the scene, it doesn't matter how far we drift, God can redeem us in Christ. I can't believe nobody's saying amen to anything I'm talking about. God can turn your life into something beautiful.

Which brings me to my last thought. With Jesus, I can have a new beginning, a new beginning. I. I don't have to stay where I am. It doesn't matter what my heritage was. I can have a fresh start. You look at this list of names leading up to Jesus and there's a lot of dysfunction going on. There are 42 generations of dysfunctional, sinful people, messed up people, leading to the to the life of Jesus.

And maybe, as I've been talking today, you can identify some patterns of godlessness and deception or whatever in your family line preceding you. It doesn't have to continue with you, because God can give you a new heart and a new purpose. I like what Peter says in first Peter 1:18 he says, for you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your what is from your ancestors, what we're talking about today.

And it was not paid with mere gold or silver which lose their value. It was with the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. That doesn't matter anymore in Jesus. Amen. It doesn't

matter how good they were or how bad they were. It doesn't make any difference because all things are new in Christ. How can I be redeemed?

Not by the goodness that I do, but by the good God has done in my life. Not by who I am, but because of who Jesus Christ is. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, all things have become new.

Listen to me. One day you will come to this place of worship for the last time, and six men will carry you out and place you in the cemetery, and they'll put a tombstone over your grave. And over time, over time, the wind and the water and the elements will cause your name to erode, and it will fade away.

And even your grandchildren, you will be nothing but a distant memory in the lives of your grandchildren. Or perhaps your name will be in some dusty family Bible, and the day will come eventually when there's not a person on the planet will remember anything about you. And the only thing that will matter in that moment is, am I remembered in the mind of God?

Am I remembered in the mind of God? This genealogy of Jesus is a reminder of his mercy that's greater than anything you've done, that he values you, even though you may feel overlooked and forgotten by this culture of ours, and that in Christ you can be made new. My friend, if you're not a Christian, if you've never trusted in Christ, do you realize that when you make that decision, your name goes in the down line of Jesus Christ?

You are then in his genealogy. You become a child of God. We're not all children of God. Just because you're a human doesn't. You're created in God's image. Yes, but only those who receive Christ. John 1:12. Only those who call in his name can be allowed the right to be called the children of God. And that's what you can be in Christ if you've never made a decision.

We're not we're not having a formal invitation today. But at the close of this service, in just a moment, I'll be right here. If you'd like to talk about what it means to trust in Christ, then make that decision today. It is the single most important decision you can make to be put in the family line of Jesus.

Amen. Church. Father in Heaven, I pray that you would cause these words from Scripture to come to our mind. Even though we look at these genealogies and they seem so drab and boring and uneventful, and yet there's such a richness in them. Lord, we thank you that God that you redeem. We thank you, Lord, that you clean up the mess that we make.

We thank you that we are new in Christ. Lord, I pray for any person who has yet to trust in him with their life, that they would come to Christ and be saved. And all of this I ask in his precious name, Amen.

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