

Matthew 1:6b-8

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In Matthew 1:6-8 *Matthew continues the genealogy of Jesus from David through the succession of kings from Solomon to Jeconiah whose reign ended with the Babylonian exile. Matthew is establishing Jesus' credentials as "King of the Jews." Matthew includes notable kings in Jesus's line from David's reign to the Exile, but he does not mention every Judean ruler from this era.*

There is no apparent parallel account for this genealogical record in the Gospels.

King *Solomon* ruled the nation of Israel at its peak prosperity. His father, *David*, was a warrior who defended Israel from her enemies. *Solomon* redistricted the Kingdom of Israel (1 Kings 4:7-19); acquired vast amounts of wealth (1 Kings 4:20-28); was renowned for his wisdom (1 Kings 4:29-34); and successfully planned, constructed, furnished, and dedicated God's Temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 5-8.) *Solomon* was the author of the Biblical books of Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon. The sayings recorded in the first 29 chapters of Proverbs are also attributed to him. In the end, *Solomon's* heart was led astray by his many wives and concubines (1 Kings 11:1-13). Sadly, this contributed to Israel's disobedience and eventual downfall through worshipping false gods.

An unexpected but important figure in this section is *Uriah* the Hittite. *Uriah* was a warrior fighting for King *David*. The Hittites were a foreign people. Like the Canaanites, they were supposed to have been eliminated and displaced. While *Uriah* was away, fighting *David's* battles, the King lusted after his wife, *Bathsheba*, and committed adultery with her. When *Bathsheba* became pregnant, *David* tried to hide his affair by recalling *Uriah* home to be with *Bathsheba*. But to *David's* shame, *Uriah* righteously refused such a luxury when there were battles to be fought. *David* then had *Uriah* murdered and took *Bathsheba* as a wife, rather than let his sin come to light. (But God caused it to come to light).

Uriah is not part of Jesus' lineage, but likely because of his righteousness, Matthew names him as a way of identifying *Bathsheba*. *Bathsheba*, the fourth woman in this genealogy, is referenced but left unnamed in the original Greek text. Literally it reads, "David was the father of Solomon by her who had been the wife of *Uriah*." *Solomon* was the offspring of *David* and *Bathsheba*.

In this genealogy Matthew establishes Jesus as an authentic heir to the royal line of *David* and as the Messiah. But Matthew weaves an additional theme into the tapestry of Christ when he includes *Uriah* the Hittite, *Ruth* the Moabite, and *Rahab* and *Tamar* the Canaanites. The secondary theme is demonstrating how God grafts into his Kingdom Gentiles who live righteously by faith. Even though Jesus is the Jewish Messiah, He is the universal King and a Savior unto all peoples.

Rehoboam was *Solomon's* son. His mother was *Naamah*, an Ammonite, and one of *Solomon's* foreign wives. *Rehoboam's* heavy-handed rule caused the Northern Ten Tribes to revolt and form their own kingdom, which retained the name "Israel". (1 Kings 12:1-24) From that point

forward David's heirs reigned over the kingdom of Judah. King *Rehoboam* followed his father's sin and allowed Judah to worship false gods and practice their sexually perverted rituals. (1 Kings 14:21-30.)

Abijah was *Rehoboam's* son. He was an evil King of Judah after his father. To distinguish *Abijah* from his rival, the King of Israel, who was also named "Abijah", throughout the Book of Kings Rehoboam's son is referred to as "*Abijam*." His name means, "my father is the Sea" and is a possible reference to the Canaanite god, "Yam."

Asa was *Abijah's/Abijam's* son. 1 Kings 15:11-15 counts *Asa* a good king. He banished the perverted worship practices of false gods, renounced the idols of his fathers, and even removed his grandmother from her royal position for making an obscene image. But *Asa* compromised. He did not take down the high places of worship and he made a treaty with Ben-Hadad, the King of Syria, instead of trusting God. (1 Kings 15:16-22 and 2 Chronicles 16:1-10)

Jehoshaphat was *Asa's* son and successor. As a king of Judea, he ruled much like his father had. He worshipped the God of Israel, but did not take down the pagan altars (1 Kings 22:43). Despite his general faithfulness, *Jehoshaphat* made one colossal error. In order to bring peace between the kingdoms of Judea and Israel, *Jehoshaphat* made an alliance with Ahab, the wicked King of Israel. This alliance brought short term stability, but it ended in a disastrous defeat in battle against Ramoth Gilead, where *Jehoshaphat* was mercifully spared (2 Chronicles 18). The alliance also introduced negative influences that harmed the Kingdom of Judea for generations. To seal the alliance, *Jehoshaphat* married his son, *Joram*, to Ahab and Jezebel's daughter, Athaliah, who brought Baal worship to the Southern Kingdom.

Joram was *Jehoshaphat's* son and successor. Upon establishing himself as king, *Joram* (also spelled "Jehoram") had all of his brothers murdered. *Joram* and his wife Athaliah were both Baal worshipers and his kingdom suffered politically and spiritually under his rule. Because of his wickedness, the prophet Elijah foretold his death by painful illness. When *Joram* died he was neither lamented by his people nor buried in the tombs of kings (2 Chronicles 21).

Matthew's inclusion of this wicked king of Judea in his genealogy of Christ puts a spotlight on God's faithfulness despite the sinfulness of men:

"Yet the Lord was not willing to destroy the house of David because of the covenant which He had made with David, and since He had promised to give a lamp to him and his sons forever" (2 Chronicles 21:7).

Biblical Text

^{6b}David was the father of Solomon by Bathsheba who had been the wife of Uriah. ⁷Solomon was the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa. ⁸Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat