**Community Group Discussion Guide
Matthew 1:2 Jacob**

*Read Matthew 1:2*

*Set the Context…*

**Context:** The Gospel of Matthew begins with these words, “***The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ***,” (Matthew 1:1). “The genealogy” can literally be translated “the genesis/beginning”, an allusion to Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning, God…”. This indicates that a new world is following Jesus’ inception. The Bible’s new focal point/person, “Jesus Christ”, is also introduced. His title, “Christ”, being synonymous to messiah, would awaken his audience in excitement to their long-awaited savior. This said, Matthew’s genealogy is unveiling a new beginning and world through the messiah, Jesus Christ.
 While Matthew may be alerting us of a new beginning, he makes no attempts to skip by the blemishes in the messiah’s ancestry. This lineage is made of adulterers, prostitutes, murderers, and more. Redacting these figures would be expected, as it would give Jesus a more admirable appearance in the eyes of men. Instead, Mathew does not shy away from the faults of Christ’s ancestors, introducing the dark along with the light; there is no hiding from the wickedness in theses verses. In doing this, he clues readers into the purpose of Jesus’ coming, which is to redeem a broken people in desperate need. Briefly stated, Matthew’s genealogy is revealing a broken people’s new beginning in Christ.

**Commentary:** While none of the characters in Matthew’s genealogy are flawless, some are more defective than others. Indicative of this is Jacob, the third person mentioned in Jesus’ heritage (Matt. 1:2). He is introduced in Genesis 25. Initially, he is presented in a positive light, as “***the LORD granted***” Isaac’s prayer for offspring (25:21). However, this blessing takes on a destructive tone as Jacob grasps his brother Esau’s heel and is named, “He cheats”[[1]](#footnote-1) (25:26). This establishes a pattern in the narrative, as he is next seen baiting Esau with soup in exchange for his birthright (25:29-34). In succession, with the support and encouragement of his mother, Jacob disguises himself as Esau to deceive his father and steal his brother’s rightful blessing (27:1-29). This once hopeful answer to prayer is thus more akin to brokenness than blessedness.
 With Jacob’s deception bringing doubt to the line of Abraham and his ability to obtain the promises, the Lord begins his work of redemption. In this, it is evident that the Lord’s redemptive works are not provoked by Jacob’s merits (Rom. 9:11-12). Rather, the Lord is showing himself faithful to his promises made with Abraham’s posterity (Gen. 12:1-3). From this premise, the Lord meets Jacob in a dream (28:12). With “***angels of God…ascending and descending”*** upon a ladder, the Lord speaks from the heavens, “***I am the LORD…The Land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth…Behold, I am with you***” (28:13-15). Reverberating the promises made to Abraham and Isaac, the Lord repeats his former words and delivers them to the most dubious of recipients, a deceptive Jacob.
 The gracious character of God abounds, as Jacob is redeemed to be a vessel of the Lord’s covenant purpose. Reflecting upon his prosperity, he states, “***God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me***” (31:9). While reconnecting with his brother, Esau asks him, “***Who are these with you?***” and he responds, “***The children whom God has graciously given your servant***” (33:5), which is more than twelve. In addition, the Lord renames Jacob, Israel, and tells him, “***nations shall come from you, kings shall come from your own body***” (35:11). As a result, this abundant blessing transforms Jacob’s character. By the end of Genesis, Jacob is looking forward to the fulfillment of the promised land and requests to be buried with his fathers (49:29-30). Jacob’s newfound trust testifies to the redemptive power of the Lord and, that in Christ, broken vessels can be made new.

*Share main truths of the passage along with verses that teach them, and discuss how to apply to our daily lives …*

**Key Points:**

* Jacob in the genealogy (Matt. 1:2)
* Jacob’s deception (*Broken*) (Gen. 25:26; 25:29-34; 27:1-29)
* Jacob’s redemption (*Redeemed)* (Gen. 28:12-15; 31:9; 33:5; 35:11; 49:29-30)

**Discussion/Application Questions:**

Matthew 1:2

1. When coming to the genealogy of Jesus Christ, what kind of character would you expect out of his family tree?
2. Often, historical figures of the Bible are not noble or “good”; what does this tell us about the nature of the Bible?
3. How can knowing the background of different figures in the genealogy be a comfort to us?
4. How could you incorporate the genealogy in a gospel presentation? Along with this, who is someone in your life who needs to hear this message?
5. Why is knowing the Old Testament important when reading this genealogy? As a goal, how much of the Old Testament could you begin or continue to read each day?
6. Would someone be willing to share a testimony about how reading the Old Testament has helped them understand the Bible?

Genesis 25:26; 25:29-34; 27:1-29 (*Broken)*

1. Jacob’s deception reveals that the human heart is set on selfish gain. As Christians, what can prompt us to live for selfish gain?
2. In what ways have you been manipulative or dishonest for selfish gain?
3. How can we combat the desire to be like Jacob and to not live for our own interests?
4. Notice that Jacob’s treachery is influenced by his mother. What influences in your life are leading you away from intimacy with Christ?
5. What are some practical steps we can take to cut out worldly influences in our lives?

Genesis 28:12-15; 31:9; 33:5; 35:11; 49:29-30 (*Redeemed)*

1. The narrative does not mention Jacob performing good works to earn God’s favor, and still the Lord blesses him. What does this tell us about God’s grace?
2. How does the nature of God’s grace comfort sinners in their struggle with sin? How has it comforted you?
3. How could God’s grace in the gospel empower you to forgive someone who has cheated/lied to/or taken advantage of you?
4. In a counseling situation, how could you apply the story of Jacob to someone who is struggling to understand and accept forgiveness?
5. How have you seen God’s grace transform your life over the years?

*Share a key take away or challenge for the week…*

*Pray together in light of Matthew 1:2*

**Prayer Guide:**

Pray for our church’s devotion to God’s word, that we would not be merely Sunday hearers, but everyday readers. May this message from Jesus’ genealogy provoke us to explore the Old Testament.

Pray for our church counselor’s as they seek to comfort and instruct people with the message of God’s grace. Also, pray for those who are being counselled, that they would embrace God’s truth for their lives. May we remember that God’s grace is not only his unmerited favor, but also his enabling power to transform us.

Pray that sinners would relate with the person of Jacob and hear about God’s unmerited forgiveness in Christ Jesus. Pray also that we would be bold to share the message of Jacob’s forgiveness with those around us.

1. ESV Footnote, Genesis 25:26. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)