

Part 1: The World Did

Introduction

In Matthew's gospel, the genealogy of Christ, (His human family tree starting with Abraham), contains many people whose lives were marked by all kinds of failure and sin, and whose lives were up and down. Yet despite all the imperfection in them, God still made good his promise to Abraham that 'all people will be blessed through you' (Genesis 12:3) by bringing Jesus, the Saviour of the World, from his family line. In the middle of our failures and difficult times we can remember the faithfulness and trustworthiness of God. The world needs Christmas because Jesus is the hope of the world.

Questions

- How do you feel about your family tree? Are there some things about it that you would rather not be true? Do you think that makes any difference to how God sees you?
- What situation do you face now where you need more hope?
- Do you ever feel that God might give up on you? What does the history of Israel tell you about that?
- Looking at the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1, how many of the names are referred to elsewhere in the Bible? What does that tell you about the relevance of cross-referencing Scripture to understand it?
- Compare the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1 with the genealogy of Jesus in Luke 3:23. What different perspectives do they give you and why do both those perspectives matter?
- Why was it necessary for Jesus to be born as a human being in the flesh? Why does treating the record of Jesus as just another inspirational story/myth matter?

Moving On

- How confident do you feel that Jesus is coming back to earth again? What difference does that make to your everyday life? (1 John 3:2-3)