

# THE *Christmas* CODE

DAILY DEVOTIONS  
CELEBRATING  
THE ADVENT SEASON

*O. S. Hawkins*



## DECEMBER 1

### ROOTS: A CHRISTMAS GIFT

*The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ . . . And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.*

MATTHEW 1:1, 16

There is no one like you. You are unique. No one has a fingerprint like yours, a DNA that exactly matches yours. Roots are important, and not just to plants. Your DNA shows what proclivities you may have regarding disease, intellect, temperament, and so much more.

There are forty-seven names listed in Matthew 1, most unpronounceable. Some are great, some not so great. From paupers to princes, shepherds to slaves, kings to harlots, spanning twenty-one centuries of human experience, the list ends in a stable on a starlit night with one name that is above every other name: Jesus!

The family tree of our Lord does not end with His ancestors, because His descendants—you and I—have been born again into His forever family.



## CODE WORD: ROOTS



Can you tell me the full name of your great-grandfather? Or anything about his life? Chances are your own children's grandchildren will not even know your name. What really matters is this: are your true roots in Jesus' family tree?

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*Lord, may I be more concerned this season about being on Your list than on any other Christmas invitation list. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## DECEMBER 2

### THERE IS GRIEF IN THE FAMILY TREE OF JESUS

*Abraham begot Isaac. . . . David the king begot  
Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah.*

MATTHEW 1:2, 6

Talk about heartbreak, sorrow, misery, and grief—all those things are woven through the fabric of our Lord's family tree. Can you feel their grief behind these words? The grief of Abraham leaving all he had known to go to a land where he had never been. The grief of letting go of his firstborn, Ishmael, whom he loved. And what about King David? He had a son who died in infancy because of David's own sin. His son Absalom killed his brother Amnon, and if that were not enough to break a father's heart, Absalom led a revolt against his own dad.

But all these names in Christ's family tree don't hold a candle to grief this Christmas season. Jesus understands the grief in His ancestors and His descendants. Perhaps your own heart is heavy. Perhaps you have been misunderstood. Jesus was. He says, "I understand." Perhaps you are lonely. Jesus says, "I know the loneliness of Gethsemane's garden." He will bear your griefs and carry your sorrows . . . if you will let Him.





## CODE WORD: GRIEF



The month of December holds more grief than any other. In the midst of all the tinsel and trappings, loneliness haunts so many. More suicides are attempted in this month than any other. Jesus understands your grief. Behind the lives of all these men and women in His family tree, we see grief, but they made it . . . and so can you.

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*Lord, thank You for bearing my grief  
and carrying my sorrows. I am leaning  
on You. In Jesus' name, amen.*



## DECEMBER 3

### THERE IS GRACE IN THE FAMILY TREE OF JESUS

*Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth.*

MATTHEW 1:5


If time permitted, we could stop at each of the dozens of names in Christ's genealogy and speak of the grace behind their lives. But there are four obvious testimonies of grace that should catch our eyes. They are all women, and in that ancient world it was unheard-of to see women listed in genealogy tables.

First is Tamar (Matthew 1:3). Who was she? Let me introduce her. She once dressed as a prostitute, seduced her father-in-law, and had an illegitimate child (Genesis 38). We also read of Rahab (Matthew 1:5). She was the town prostitute of ancient Jericho. Next comes Ruth (v. 5). She was a member of a race that began in incest and worshipped pagan gods. Finally we meet Bathsheba (v. 6). She lived in adultery with King David.

How did these women find their way into Jesus' own family tree? Only one word: grace! God's unmerited favor.



## CODE WORD: FAVOR



There is good news this Christmas. Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds . . . for you. What is the Lord telling us? I don't think He is speaking softly—"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

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*Lord, thank You for giving me what  
I never deserved . . . an amazing gift:  
grace! In Jesus' name, amen.*

## DECEMBER 4

### THERE IS GOD IN THE FAMILY TREE OF JESUS

*And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of  
whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.*

MATTHEW 1:16

Note carefully what today's verse says . . . and doesn't say. It does not say, "Joseph begot Jesus." Here the repetition of the "begots" ends. The "whom" in Greek is feminine singular, referring only to Mary and not to Joseph. Can you see God the Father right here in the family tree of Jesus? Jesus was the virgin-born son of Mary, in whose womb the Father implanted His Son. Hundreds of years earlier, the prophet Isaiah had said the virgin birth would be the "sign" of the long-awaited Messiah (Isaiah 7:14).

It is because Jesus was Mary's seed (the seed of a woman, Genesis 3:15) and not the seed of Joseph that entitles Him to be your Savior and Lord. The virgin birth is the bedrock of His authority.

Some see only grief. But look closer and you will find grace. And, if you look close enough, you will see the hand of God molding, making, forming, and fashioning you. He has been there all along.







## CODE WORD: BOOK



The only book that ultimately matters is the Lamb's Book of Life, where the names of all those who have put their trust in Christ are listed. Is your name in that book? Jesus said, "Do not rejoice . . . that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20).

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*Lord, thank You that You are working in my life this very moment, forming and fashioning me into Your very image. In Jesus' name, amen.*



DECEMBER 5

## UPON A MIDNIGHT CLEAR

*She brought forth her firstborn Son . . . and laid Him  
in a manger.*

LUKE 2:7

If you are like me, you type hundreds of words each day. Let me ask you a question. Are the keys you type on black, gray, or white? The truth is, most people cannot give a definitive answer without looking at the keys, even though they look at them several times every single day. The point? There are a lot of things in life we see but don't really see.

Take the nativity scene. You have seen it depicted thousands of times, but have you really *seen* it? I love the feature on my mobile phone that allows me to crop my photos. Recently we took a family picture. Susie and I in the middle, with the grandkids and their parents flanking us. We have a common “enemy” with our grandkids—their parents! I cropped them out and have a beautiful photo of Susie, me, and the grandkids!

Let's crop the nativity. Look at the entire nativity scene. It is a worship service. Crop it a bit and you find a family in the middle: Joseph, Mary, and the Christ. Crop it more and in the center you see Jesus only.



## CODE WORD: CROP



Take a picture of the nativity set in your home. Crop out everything but Jesus. Christmas is about Jesus. Keep Him in the middle of your Christmas this year.

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*Lord, in the midst of all the hustle and bustle of this season, help me focus on You. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## DECEMBER 6

### LOOK AT THE BIG PICTURE— IT'S A WORSHIP SERVICE

*“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace,  
goodwill toward men!”*

LUKE 2:14

Look at the nativity, and you see a worship service. Angels hover over it like drones. Common, smelly shepherds and sophisticated wise men bow down. Worship flows from everyone toward the child.

It is difficult to imagine any greater contrasts than what we see at the nativity. They were different socially. Shepherds were low on the socioeconomic level. Wise men were so socially acceptable they entered the king's palace. They were different educationally. Shepherds had no formal education, while the wise men were famed for knowledge. God is telling us that no matter who you are or where you are from, any and all can come to Christ and worship Him.

Christmas, first and foremost, is about worship. Those at the manger were not there simply admiring this Child. They were worshipping Him. Make sure worship is first on your Christmas list.



## CODE WORD: MANGER



Think about it: “She . . . laid Him in a manger,” a feeding trough for the animals (Luke 2:7). Had He been born in a palace, only the elite would have access. But any and all can approach a manger. Jesus is still accessible to you and anyone who will join the shepherds in bowing before Him.

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*Lord, help me keep the worship of You  
in the heart of my Christmas this year.  
Glory to God in the highest. In Jesus’  
name, amen.*

## DECEMBER 7

### CROP THE NATIVITY, AND IN THE MIDDLE YOU WILL FIND A FAMILY

*So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered.*

LUKE 2:6

Look in the middle of the nativity and you find a little family. Christmas is about family. God entrusted His own Son to a human family, just like yours. He could have circumvented the family, but He didn't. God put His own stamp of approval on the family.

Family is important to God. Think about it. He instituted the family long before He did the church. He placed His own Son in a family with relationships and domestic responsibilities. So Jesus was raised in Nazareth in a family unit.

Later, while hanging on the cross, He spotted Mary and instructed John to care for her. Jesus was a family man. His was a blended family, when you think about it. Family is precious to Him.

The nativity has a family in the middle of it for good reason. God is pro-family. Christmas has its own unique way of drawing families together.



## CODE WORD: FAMILY



Where do we most want to be at Christmas? Home. We drive long distances to sleep on couches and floors to be home for Christmas. Make sure you hold your family close to your heart, and don't be hesitant to say, "I love you."

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*Lord, thank You for family, and help me do my part in drawing my family closer this Christmas. In Jesus' name, amen.*