

A Shared Savior: The Lord Jesus Christ

Matthew 1 – 2

Unity, Diversity and Our Identity in Christ

Part 8 of 14



Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

Our Identity – Who do we think we are?

Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

Our Identity – Who do we think we are?

- Our personal identity develops as we tell our personal story – either to others or to ourselves.
- That narrative develops over time.
- New experiences, new friends, new accomplishments all get worked into our story – and into our personal identity.

Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

Narrative and Metanarrative

Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

Narrative and Metanarrative

- Each story we tell, about ourselves or anyone else , can be called a **narrative**.
- Any historical framework into which we can fit all the stories that can ever be told is a **metanarrative**.

Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

The American Church:

Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

The American Church:

- Churches tend to be deeply segregated along generational, racial, socioeconomic, educational and other lines.
- For example, at the start of the 21st Century **only 5.5%** of Christian congregations were racially mixed.²
- This is not the model the Bible presents to us.

Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

- The Goals of This series:

Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

- The Goals of This series:

1. To gain a better understanding of the Bible's *metanarrative* – the **big story** that takes us from **Genesis** to **Revelation**.

Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

- The Goals of This series:

1. To gain a better understanding of the Bible's *metanarrative* – the **big story** that takes us from **Genesis** to **Revelation**.
2. To see how **our individual identities** become more meaningful as we find our primary identity in Christ.

Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

- The Goals of This series:

1. To gain a better understanding of the Bible's *metanarrative* – the big story that takes us from Genesis to Revelation.
2. To see how our individual identities become more meaningful as we find our primary identity in Christ.
3. To accept that our identity in Christ is something shared, and is a basis for unity with diverse others in the church.

Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

- The Goals of This series:

1. To gain a better understanding of the Bible's *metanarrative* – the **big story** that takes us from **Genesis** to **Revelation**.
2. To see how **our individual identities** become more meaningful as we find our primary identity in Christ.
3. To accept that **our identity in Christ** is something shared, and is a basis for unity with diverse others in the church.
4. To appreciate **biblical diversity as a spiritual strength** that expresses itself in the people and ministries of our church.

Previously in this series

Previously in this series

A Shared Origin: The Story of Creation

Genesis 1 – 2

Unity, Diversity and Our Identity in Christ

Part 1 of 14



Previously in this series

A Shared Tragedy: Sin and Its Effects

Genesis 3 – 11

Unity, Diversity and Our Identity in Christ

Part 2 of 14



Previously in this series

A Shared Promise: The Covenant with Abraham

Genesis 12:1-3

Unity, Diversity and Our Identity in Christ

Part 3 of 14



Previously in this series

A Shared Standard: The Law of Love

Leviticus 19, Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Unity, Diversity and Our Identity in Christ



Part 4 of 14

Previously in this series

A Shared King: The Covenant with David

2 Samuel 7

Unity, Diversity and Our Identity in Christ

Part 5 of 14



Previously in this series

A Shared Songbook: Christ in the Psalms

Psalms 2, 16, 22, 110 & 118

Unity, Diversity and Our Identity in Christ

Part 6 of 14



Previously in this series

A Shared Expectation: The Nations in Prophecy

Isaiah – Malachi

Unity, Diversity and Our Identity in Christ



Part 7 of 14

A Shared Savior: The Lord Jesus Christ

A Shared Savior: The Lord Jesus Christ

Notes on the Genealogy

A Shared Savior: The Lord Jesus Christ

Notes on the Genealogy

- **1:1** Abraham and David are both singled out because of the covenants God made with them.
- Matthew wants to remind us that God keeps his promises.

A Shared Savior: The Lord Jesus Christ

Notes on the Genealogy

- Genealogies normally tracked the names of the **fathers** down through the generations.
- Matthew mentions **several women**, and each of them gives us insight into the family background of Jesus.

A Shared Savior: The Lord Jesus Christ

Notes on the Genealogy

- Tamar (1:3) was the daughter-in-law of Judah, the father of her children. (See Genesis 38.)
- Rahab (1:5) was a prostitute (Joshua 2:1) and was not Jewish, but Canaanite.
- Ruth (1:5) was not Jewish but Moabite.
- The wife of Uriah (1:6), aka Bathsheba, was simply taken by David who then had her husband Uriah the Hittite killed.

A Shared Savior: The Lord Jesus Christ

Notes on the Genealogy

- The **pedigree of Jesus** has its problems. I like that.
- I was the third child born to an unmarried mother and the second (as far as I can tell) of an unknown father.
- If you find your own family background somehow embarrassing, **Jesus is the Savior for you.**

A Shared Savior: The Lord Jesus Christ

Notes on the Genealogy

- We can imagine him saying, “Welcome to the family!”
- Jesus does not build his church using only the best kind of people as the world sees them.
- He builds it out of people like all of us.
- See **1 Corinthians 1:26-31**.

A Shared Savior: The Lord Jesus Christ

- **Matthew 1:18-25** is about the birth of Jesus.
- Take special note of **1:21**.
- We will then keep going into **Matthew 2**.

A Shared Savior: The Lord Jesus Christ

- **2:1** The “wise men” or “magi” mentioned here were from a priestly caste in Persia.
- We might call them *magicians* or *sorcerers*.
- Their religion was not biblical, but somehow it led them to seek out the king of the Jews – Jesus.

A Shared Savior: The Lord Jesus Christ

- **Comparisons:**
- I began reading the Bible because **Revelation** was quoted in some music I was enjoying as a teenager.
- Marat (now in Ukraine) was raised in a non-religious Muslim home in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
- When he first started seeking the Lord, he did so by digging deeper into Islam – but later found his way to Jesus.

A Shared Savior: The Lord Jesus Christ

- 2:6 The citation is from **Micah 5:2**.
- 2:13-15 Jesus was once a political refugee in Egypt.
- Joseph then took his family back to **Nazareth**, far from the Jewish mainstream religious area of Jerusalem.

A Shared Savior: The Lord Jesus Christ

- **2:18** The next citation is from **Jeremiah 31:15**.
- In that chapter, Jeremiah uses this verse as a starting point for a **prophecy of blessing** that ends with the **New Covenant**.
- Jesus introduced the New Covenant at **the Last Supper**, pointing ahead to **his shed blood**. (See **Matthew 26:28**)

A Shared Savior: The Lord Jesus Christ

The Gospel

- As we go through the New Testament, we see **five pairs** that enter into the message of the gospel.³

A Shared Savior: The Lord Jesus Christ

Pair One:

- Two gospel events:
- Christ's death and resurrection (**Acts 2:23–24; 1 Corinthians 15:3–5**).
- The Christian message is not something someone made up.
- It is rooted in history. It is all about Jesus, who really lived, died and rose again.

A Shared Savior: The Lord Jesus Christ

Pair Two:

- Two gospel witnesses:
- The Old Testament Scriptures (**Acts 26:22–23; 1 Corinthians 15:3–4**) and the witness of the apostles (**Acts 2:32; 3:15**).
- The apostles pointed to the Old Testament and their own eyewitness testimony to back up their claims about Jesus.

A Shared Savior: The Lord Jesus Christ

Pair Three:

- Two gospel affirmations:
- Jesus is Lord and Savior (**Acts 2:36; 5:31**).
- Jesus has authority as Lord to demand submission, and as Savior to give salvation.
- **Acts 4:12** (ESV)

Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

A Shared Savior: The Lord Jesus Christ

Pair Four:

- Two gospel promises:
- Forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Spirit (**Acts 2:38**).
- These two great gifts are received when we turn to Christ.

A Shared Savior: The Lord Jesus Christ

Pair Five:

- Two gospel demands:
- Repentance and faith (**Acts 2:38; 16:31**).
- The apostles called on people to respond to the message of Jesus with both trust and obedience.

A Shared Savior: The Lord Jesus Christ

- No philosopher, no king or politician, no scientist or superhero can ever save humanity from sin.
- We need a Savior, and that is what God has provided.

A Shared Savior: The Lord Jesus Christ

Someone once put it like this:⁴

- If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator.
- If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist.
- If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist.
- But our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a Savior.

A Shared Savior Conclusions

A Shared Savior Conclusions

- The pedigree of Jesus is consistent with Old Testament prophecy – containing Abraham, David and Bethlehem.
- Yet the quality and ethnicity of the people in it are mixed.
- This should be an encouragement to us because God is able to redeem those from any background or childhood.

A Shared Savior Conclusions

- There may be things about our background that we have to leave behind.
- They remain a part of our story, but they are put into perspective as we find our identity in Christ.

A Shared Savior Conclusions

- Our identity in Christ is wrapped up in our belonging to him.
- **Who we are** is very important, but **whose we are – who we belong to** – is more important still.⁵

Closing Prayers

Closing Prayers

- Let's express our faith in Christ as more than a baby in Bethlehem, but also the Savior who died for our sins.
- Let's then ask for God's supernatural help in order to:
 1. See our own background in light of Christ.
 2. See Jesus as a Savior that is perfect for all people regardless of who they are or who they once were.
 3. See Jesus as King of the Jews, King of kings and Lord of Lords – the eternal ruler over heaven and earth.

Closing Prayers

- Finally, may the Lord make a church that is
 1. Even more unified
 2. Even more diverse
 3. So fully identified with Christ that God's nature, love and wisdom will be evident to us and to the outside world.

Next Week

A Shared Assignment: The Great Commission

Matthew 28, Luke 24 & Acts 1

Unity, Diversity and Our Identity in Christ



Part 9 of 14

Reference List

1. Grenz, Stanley J. 1994. *Theology for the community of God*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 65.
2. DeYoung, Curtiss, Michael O. Emerson, George Yancey, and Karen Chai Kim. 2003. *United by faith: The multiracial congregation as and answer to the problem of race*. Kindle edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2.
3. John Stott, *Baptism and Fullness* (Leicester: IVP, 1975), p. 36. Cited in Roberts, Vaughan. *Life's Big Questions: Six Major Themes Traced Through the Bible*. InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition. Location 2013
4. J. John, *What's the Point of Christmas?* (Oxford: Lion), p. 41. Cited n Roberts, *Life's Big Questions*. Location 560
5. Rosner, Brian S. 2017. *Known by God: A biblical theology of personal identity (Biblical theology for life)*. Kindle edition. Edited by Jonathan Lunde. Grand Rapids: Zondervan; 46, 137.