

# Matthew 1 Commentary

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Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission  
[Another Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll

## THE LIFE OF JESUS AS COVERED BY MATTHEW (shaded area)

Click chart to enlarge

**Matthew 1:1 The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham:**

NET Matthew 1:1 This is the record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

GNT Matthew 1:1 Β βλος γεν σεως ησο Χριστο υ ο Δαυ δ υ ο βρα μ.

NLT Matthew 1:1 This is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of David and of Abraham:

KJV Matthew 1:1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

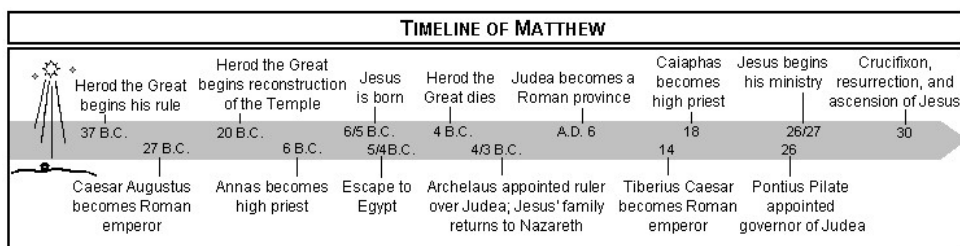
ESV Matthew 1:1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

NIV Matthew 1:1 A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham:

ASV Matthew 1:1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

CSB Matthew 1:1 The historical record of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

- **the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah:** Ge 2:4 5:1 Isa 53:8 Lu 3:23-38 Ro 9:5
- **the son of David:** Mt 9:27 15:22 22:42-45 2Sa 7:13,16 Ps 89:36 132:11 Isa 9:6,7 Isa 11:1 Jer 23:5 33:15-17,26 Am 9:11 Zec 12:8 Lu 1:31,32 Lu 1:69,70 Joh 7:42 Ac 2:30 13:22 Ro 1:3 Rev 22:16
- **the son of Abraham:** Ge 12:3 22:18 26:3-5 28:13,14 Ro 4:13 Ga 3:16



Source: Ryrie Study Bible

## "BIBLOS GENESEOS" BOOK OF THE BEGINNING OF JESUS CHRIST

Listen to the words of Jewish songwriter-musician [Marty Goetz](#) as he gives his testimony of how he met the Messiah. [This link is in the middle of his testimony](#), but I think you will be intrigued at what happened next! "Biblos geneleos" are the very first words of the New Testament and those words changed the life of Marty Goetz. Then listen to what Yeshua did to his heart as you listen to Marty and his daughter Misha sing "[Yeshua](#)" live in Jerusalem (you will be blessed!)

**E. Schuyler English** writes "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Ex. 3:5). It is in such an attitude as this that we must contemplate the birth of the Lord Jesus." ([Studies](#))

**D A Carson** notes that "The first two words of Matthew, *biblos geneleos*, may be translated "record of the genealogy" (NIV), "record of the origins," or "record of the history." (Expositor's Bible Commentary) ESV has "The book of the genealogy."

**Constable on Β βλος γεν σεως ησο Χριστο** - This verse is obviously a title, but is it a title of the whole Gospel, a title for the prologue (chs. 1-2), or a title for the genealogy that follows (1:1-17)? Probably it refers to the genealogy. There is no other ancient Near Eastern book-length document extant that uses the expression *biblos geneleos* (book or record of the generation) as its title. While the noun *genesis* (birth) occurs again in verse 18, there it introduces the birth narrative of Jesus. In the Septuagint the same phrase, *biblos geneleos* (Β βλος γεν σεως), occurs in Genesis 2:4 and Ge 5:1 where in each case a narrative follows it, as here." ([Matthew 1 Commentary](#))

**HCSB** - The phrase the **historical record of Jesus** is unusual. OT genealogies are consistently named after the earliest ancestor in the lineage because the Jews considered that person to be most significant since everyone else derived from them. That Matthew names his genealogy after Jesus, the final descendant in the lineage, implies that Jesus is more important than anyone who preceded Him. (HCSB Study Bible)

Some have called Matthew chapter 1, the "forgotten chapter of the Christmas story!" Why? Obviously because of the long list of names many of whom most Christians have little knowledge of and many they cannot even pronounce correctly! How many Christmas services have you been to when this list of names was read as part of the Christmas service? I don't hear any "yea and amen's" out there! Even more convicting, how many Christians even read this list in private, genuinely pondering the names? Let's be honest -- not many of us! Oh, we might speed read it in one of those "read through the Bible in a year" plans. Not many have memorized this list. And I am not aware of a single hymn that uses this list. So the point is made that this is a "forgotten chapter" at Christmas and hardly holds a candle to wise men, shepherds, a baby away in the manger!

**Michael Andrus** - Matthew was very knowledgeable about the OT, which is evident from his approximately 50 direct quotations plus about 75 literary allusions to the OT. The reason for his fascination with the OT is that Matthew primarily had Jews in mind as he wrote. He was trying to convince his fellow countrymen that...Jesus qualifies as the Messiah of the Jewish people, as well as the Savior of the World. How does He qualify? In his opening words Matthew offers two primary lines of evidence: He descended from the father of the Jewish race. He descended from Israel's greatest king. This basic purpose of the book of Matthew—to establish Jesus as Israel's Messiah—is evident from the very first verse. ([Matthew 1:1-17 Son of Man, Son of God \(or, Termites in the Family Tree\)](#))

**John Walvoord** - "This introduction clearly demonstrates that Matthew's purpose in writing the gospel is to provide adequate proof for the investigator that the claims of Christ to be King and Saviour are justified. For this reason, the gospel of Matthew was considered by the early church one of the most important books of the New Testament and was given more prominence than the other three gospels. ([Commentary](#))

**Guzik** on Matthew the writer of the Gospel - As a former tax collector (also called "Levi"), Matthew was qualified to write an account of Jesus' life and teachings. A tax collector of that day must know Greek and be a literate, well-organized man. Some think that Matthew was the "recorder" among the disciples, and took notes of Jesus' teaching. We might say that when Matthew followed Jesus, he left everything behind—except his pen and paper. "Matthew nobly used his literary skill to become the first man ever to compile an account of the teaching of Jesus." (Barclay) The Jewish flavor of the Gospel of Matthew makes for a logical transition between the Old and New Testaments. For these reasons, the early church placed it first in order among the four gospel accounts. The Jewish character of this Gospel is evident in many ways. There are many indications that Matthew expected that his readers would be familiar with Jewish culture.

1. Matthew doesn't translate Aramaic terms such as *raca* (Matthew 5:22) and *corban* (Mark 7:11).
2. Matthew refers to Jewish customs without explanation (Matthew 15:2 to Mark 7:3–4; see also Matthew 23:5).
3. Matthew starts his genealogy with Abraham (Matthew 1:1).
4. Matthew presents the name of Jesus and its meaning in a way that assumes the reader knows its Hebrew roots (Matthew 1:21).
5. Matthew frequently refers to Jesus as the "Son of David."
6. Matthew uses the more Jewish phrase "Kingdom of Heaven" instead of "Kingdom of God." (Enduring Word Commentary)

#### Related Resources:

- [An Introduction to Matthew](#) - John MacArthur
- [Introduction to Matthew](#) - Charles Swindoll

The names in Matthew 1 are given in three groups, Abraham to David (Mt 1:2–6), David to Babylon Removal (Mt 1:6–11), Jechoniah to Jesus (Mt 1:12–16).

**Louis Barbieri** writes that "Jesus Christ is the main character in Matthew's presentation, and the opening verse connected Him back to two great covenants in Jewish history: the Davidic (2 Sam. 7) and the Abrahamic (Gen. 12; 15). If Jesus of Nazareth is the fulfillment of these two great covenants, is He related to the rightful line? This is a question the Jews would have asked, so Matthew traced Jesus' lineage in detail." (BKC)

**F F Bruce** makes an interesting comment - "Christ and the new covenant are securely linked to the age of the old covenant. [Marcion](#), who wished to sever all the links binding Christianity to the Old Testament, knew what he was about when **he cut the genealogy out of his edition of Luke**" (NBD)

**The record of the genealogy** - Literally "**the book of the genealogy**." D A Carson says "'record of the origins,' or 'record of the history.' I like the HCSB's translation "historical record," for this was historically verifiable simply by examining the genealogy records ([see importance in ancient Israel](#)) that as best we can tell were still available in the Temple, but were destroyed in 70 AD (see note below). Genealogy is our English word "[genesis](#)" which means the beginning or origin of anything.

**McClintock** on **Genealogical Records** - No nation was more careful to frame and preserve its genealogical tables than Israel. Their sacred writings contain genealogies which extend through a period of more than 3500 years, from the creation of Adam to the captivity of Judah. Indeed, we find from the books of Ezra and Nehemiah that the same carefulness in this matter was observed after the captivity; for in Ezra 2:62 it is expressly stated that some who had come up from Babylon had sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but were not found; therefore were they, as polluted, removed from the priesthood. The division of the whole Hebrew nation into tribes, and the allotment to each tribe of a specified portion of the land of Canaan as an inalienable possession, rendered it indispensable that they should keep genealogical tables. God had, however, a still higher object than that of giving stability to property in Israel in leading successive generations of his people thus to keep an accurate list of their ancestry. That they should do this was especially required from the moment that the voice of prophecy declared that the promised Messiah should be of the seed of Abraham, of the posterity of Isaac, of the sons of Jacob, of the tribe of Judah, and of the family of David. The Rabbins affirm that

after the Captivity the Jews were most careful in keeping their pedigrees (Babyl. Gemar. Gloss. fol. 14:2). Since, however, the period of their destruction as a nation by the Romans, all their tables of descent seem to be lost, and now they are utterly unable to trace the pedigree of any one Israelite who might lay claim to be their promised and still expected Messiah. Hence Christians assert, with a force that no reasonable and candid Jew can resist, that Shiloh must have come. (McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Genealogy of Jesus Christ](#))

**R K Harrison** on **Genealogy** - A record or catalog of an individual's descent from ancestors according to generations. Whereas in modern genealogical records the lines of descent are traced generation by generation, in the ancient Near East it was not uncommon for individuals to be omitted from such records for a variety of reasons. OT genealogies traced inheritance lines both forward (cf. Ruth 4:18–22) and backward (cf. Ezr. 7:1–5) for a nation, tribe, family, or individual. Such records were compiled to authenticate hereditary succession and inheritance rights, biological descent, and geographical or ethnological relationships. Because of the patriarchal nature of Semitic society, lineage was normally traced through the males of a family, but females were mentioned occasionally too, particularly where property inheritance was involved (cf. Nu. 26:33; 27:1–11). (ISBE)

- [The Importance of Messianic Genealogy](#) - Wayne Jackson
- McClintock, John & James Strong. [Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Genealogy of Jesus Christ](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Genealogy of Jesus Christ](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Genealogy of Jesus Christ](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Genealogies of Jesus Christ](#)

**Record (976)(biblos)** is our word for Bible, and literally referred first to the shrub of the Egyptian papyrus and then to the inner bark of the papyrus reed used for paper. Biblos is an Egyptian loanword, originally bublos. As early as the Sixth Century B.C. papyrus became the standard writing material in Greece and so biblos came to mean "inscribed paper."

**Biblos** - 10x in 10v book(8), books(1), record(1) - Matt. 1:1; Mk. 12:26; Lk. 3:4; Lk. 20:42; Acts 1:20; Acts 7:42; Acts 19:19; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; Rev. 20:15

**Biblos** in the **Septuagint (Lxx)** - Ge 2:4 = "This is the **account**"; Ge 5:1 = "**book** of generations"; Ex 32:32 = "please blot me out from Your **book**"; Exod. 32:33; Jos. 1:8<sup>±</sup> = "This **book** of the law shall not depart from your mouth"; 2 Chr. 17:9 = "the **book** of the law of the LORD"; Job 37:20; Job 42:17; Ps. 69:28 "May they be blotted out of the **book** of life"; Jer. 29:1; Da 7:10; Da 9:2; Da 12:1

Da 12:1+ - "Now at that time (END OF THIS PRESENT AGE - SEE Da 11:45<sup>±</sup> REFERRING TO THE ANTI-CHRIST) Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the **book** (Lxx = biblos), will be rescued (Lxx = [sozo](#) = saved).

- [What is the Book of Life?](#)
- [Is there a difference between the book of life and the Lamb's book of life?](#)
- [Is it possible for a person's name to be erased from the Book of Life?](#)

**Genealogy (1078)(genesis** from **gennao** = to give birth to, beget). **BDAG** - lit. of ancestry as point of origin but also of one's coming into being at a specific moment. In James 1:23+ it means natural and describes one's face literally reading "the face (prosopon) he **was born with**." It is his natural face, i.e. the way he has turned out to be, the way he really looks. It means life, human experience in Jas 3:6 was used in the Orphic mysteries with the meaning. 'wheel of human origin'. In James 3:6 it seems to have lost its original meaning and to signify course of life, whole of life. In Mt 1:1 genesis means an account of someone's life or their life history, the source, origin so that biblos geneleos tinos = a book of one's lineage, i.e. in which his ancestry or his progeny are enumerated. **Genesis** - birth(2), genealogy(1), life(1), natural(1). Matt. 1:1; Matt. 1:18; Lk. 1:14 - "many will rejoice at his (John the Baptist's) birth."; Jas. 1:23; Jas. 3:6

**Brian Bill** - Genealogies were records of family history and were often memorized because ancient people did not have access to written records. Even today it is not uncommon for a Bedouin Arab to be able to recite a list of ancestors from memory for an hour without any mistakes.

The Bible contains numerous lineage lists. The Book of Genesis alone has nine different genealogies; 1 Chronicles has 17 chapters devoted to family trees; Ezra and Nehemiah record the names of people nine different times.

Genealogies were used to decide **inheritance rights**, to **make land allotments**, and to **organize censuses**. That's why Luke 2:3+ says that "everyone went to his own town to register." Joseph traced his heritage from David and his family was from Bethlehem, the city of David. The only way to be sure of your ancestral hometown was to know your genealogy.

Priests were determined by genealogy. They had to be from the tribe of Levi and the house of Aaron (see Nehemiah 7:64).

Royal succession and the credentials of the Messiah are linked to King David's lineage (see 1 Kings 11:36).

Genealogies are important but we must be careful about getting too caught up in them (see Titus 3:9). Their main purpose is to establish broad lines of descent without filling in all the details. The ultimate issue is Christology, not chronology.

The lineage of Jesus is essential to establish because His enemies enjoyed making disparaging remarks about Him. Matthew 13:54-56: "Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. 'Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?' they asked. 'Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?' And they took offense at him." They were trying to discredit Him. In John 8:41, they even implied that He was an illegitimate child. His enemies give Matthew an open door when they asked in John 7:42: "Does not the Scripture say that the Christ will come from David's family and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?" Exactly. ([Matthew 1:1-17 The Forgotten Family Tree](#))

**Carson** notes that "In Jesus' day Palestine was rife with messianic expectation. Not all of it was coherent, and many Jews expected [two different "Messiahs."](#) But Matthew's linking of "Christ" and "son of David" leaves no doubt of what he is claiming for Jesus." (Ibid)

**Of Jesus the Messiah** - This is the ultimate purpose of Matthew's genealogy, to convince the Jews and us that Jesus of Nazareth (see notes on Mt 2:23) is the **Messiah**, the Son of God. There is no "the" in the Greek so literally this reads "Jesus Christ" not "Jesus the Messiah." **Messiah** is the Greek word **Christos**, used 531 times in the NT, usually translated Christ (516x) and translated Messiah only 4 times. There is also a specific Greek word (**messias**) for **Messiah**. Here is a video by a Jewish man [I met the Messiah!](#) The word **Christos** refers to the special anointing of the Holy Spirit on Jesus' humanity.

**Jesus** (2424) (**Iesous**) is **transliteration** of the Greek **Iesous**, which in turn is the transliteration of Hebrew name **Yehoshua** or **Yeshua** which mean "Yahweh (Jehovah) saves" (Yahweh is typically rendered as "LORD" in OT) or Jehovah is help or Jehovah is salvation. The Greek form of the name **Iesous**, was translated into Latin as Jesus. Jesus corresponds to the Name Joshua (Hebrew - Yeshua). Matthew 1:21 "defines" Jesus' Name = "**He will save His people from their sins.**" The Name **Jesus** occurs 979x in 943v in the NT (NASB). **Jesus Christ** occurs 137x in 134v in the NT (only 6v in Gospels). Jesus was a common name among the Jews - (1). Joshua, successor to Moses Acts 7:45; Hb 4:8, (2). Joshua, son of Eliezer Lk 3:29, (3). Jesus referring to the Messiah, Jesus Christ - Mt 1:1, 21, 25 (4). Jesus Barabbas Mt 27:16f. (5). Jesus who is called Justus Col 4:11.

The **Jewish Historian Josephus** has this note (note he calls Him "Christ"! and speaks of His resurrection) 3. (63) Now, there was about this time **Jesus**, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works—a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] **Christ**; (64) and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day." ([Antiquities of the Jews, 18, 3, 3](#)).

**Messiah (Christ)** (5547) (**Christos** from **chrío** = to rub or anoint, consecrate to an office) describes one who has been anointed with oil, one who has been consecrated. The majority of the NT uses refer to Jesus (exceptions = "false Christs" - Mt 24:24, Mk 13:22). **Christos** describes one who has been anointed, symbolizing appointment to a task. It is used here as the title "Anointed One" and is the Greek synonym for "Messiah." **Christos** is used in the Septuagint describing everyone anointed with the holy oil, especially the priesthood (Lev. 4:5+, Lev 4:16+) and it is also a name applied to those who were acting as redeemers like Cyrus. **Christos** in Matthew - Mt. 1:1; Mt. 1:16; Mt. 1:17; Mt. 1:18; Mt. 2:4; Mt. 11:2; Mt. 16:16; Mt. 16:20; Mt. 22:42; Mt. 23:10; Mt. 24:5; Mt. 24:23; Mt. 26:63; Mt. 26:68; Mt. 27:17; Mt. 27:22.

**Gilbrant** writes that "Hamilton suggests a fourfold significance to such anointing ("māshach/masah - anoint," TWOT 1:530): (1) separation unto God, (2) authorization by God, (3) divine enablement, and (4) the coming Deliverer. In regards to this final use he says, "Though this association with the term māshach is not as prevalent in the OT as often supposed, the prospect of a righteous, Spirit-filled ruler is increasingly discernible in the OT (cf. Isaiah 9:1-7<sup>±</sup>; Isa1 1:1-5<sup>±</sup>; Isa 61:1<sup>±</sup>)" (ibid.). It was probably because of his role as a deliverer of God's people, selected by the Lord for His purpose, that Cyrus, a Gentile emperor, was given the title of "**messiah, anointed**" (Isaiah 45:1). However, long after Cyrus, God's people were still promised Messiah the prince, the one to fulfill all of the Biblical promises (Daniel 9:25,26<sup>±</sup>)." ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

**Carson on Christos - Christ** is roughly the Greek equivalent to "Messiah" or "Anointed." In the OT the term could refer to a variety of people anointed for some special function: priests (Lev 4:3; 6:22), kings (1Sa 16:13; 24:10; 2Sa 19:21; Lam 4:20), and, metaphorically, the patriarchs (Ps 105:15) and the pagan king Cyrus (Isa 45:1). Already in Hannah's prayer "Messiah" parallels "king": the Lord "will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed" (1Sam 2:10). With the rising number of OT prophecies concerning King David's line (e.g., 2Sam 7:12-16; cf. Ps 2:2; 105:15), "Messiah, or "Christ," became the designation of a figure representing the people of God and bringing in the promised eschatological reign. (Expositor's Bible Commentary)

**BDAG** adds Christos signifies the "Fulfiller of Israelite expectation of a Deliverer" and was used in the [Septuagint](#) of the great messianic [Ps 2:2](#) describing the future day when "The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together against the LORD and against His **Anointed** (Hebrew = [Mashiach/masiyah](#); [Lxx](#) = Christos)."

The first use of **Christos** in the Septuagint describes "**the anointed** (Hebrew = [Mashiach/masiyah](#); [Lxx](#) = Christos) **priest**" (Lev 4:5<sup>±</sup>) carrying out a blood sacrifice, clearly foreshadowing the One Who would come as both the Sacrifice and the Priest (see Christos in Messianic prophecy in Ps 2:2 = God's "Anointed")! Daniel 9:26<sup>±</sup> gives us the incredible prophecy that after 69 weeks (483 years) "the Messiah (Hebrew = [Mashiach/masiyah](#); [Lxx](#) = Christos) will be cut off," a specific prophecy of **what** would happen to Messiah and **when** it would happen. The Jews could have known and should have known (and some Jews have been saved when they read this prophecy) (See Luke 19:42<sup>±</sup>)

#### Related Resources:

- Specific term Messiah in John 1:41+, John 4:25 = Greek term [messias](#)
- [Messiah - Anointed One](#)
- [Is Jesus the Messiah?](#)
- [What does Messiah mean?](#)
- [Why do most Jews reject Jesus as the Messiah?](#)
- [Does the Old Testament truly predict a second advent of the Messiah?](#)
- [How a Jewish man Michael Goldstone met Messiah](#)
- [How to Recognize the Messiah as "More Than A Carpenter"](#)
- [Jewish Tradition of Two Messiahs](#)
- [Questions Skeptics Ask About Messianic Prophecy](#)

## THE SON OF DAVID

The phrase **son of David** is frequently used by Matthew as a messianic title - See Matthew 1:1, 6, 17, 20; Mt 9:27; Mt 12:23; Mt 15:22; Mt 20:30, 31; Mt 21:9, 15; Mt 22:42, 45. **Son of David** is used much less frequently in the other Gospels - Mk. 10:47; Mk. 10:48; Mk. 12:35; Lk. 3:31; Lk. 18:38; Lk. 18:39

**The son of David** ([Jewish man reads these words for the first time](#)) - Notice that even though **Abraham** precedes **David** by 100's of years, **David** is mentioned first. Why is that? What was Abraham the father of? He was father of the Jews wasn't he? So while the fact that the Messiah be Jewish was obviously important, it was not as crucial as whether He came from the line of King **David**. Despite six centuries of vacancy on the royal throne, the Messiah must be of royal descent. "In order to establish this fact according to Jewish law, it must be shown that the legal father of Jesus was a descendant of David, as this genealogy does; and to give the argument greater impressiveness, he goes back to trace the descent from Abraham, the father of the Jewish race, to whose "seed" the promise was spoken. (Ge 17:7; Gal 3:16) " (Broadus) The Messiah had to be a literal, physical descendant of **David**. so by default He would also be Jewish as was David. So Matthew links Jesus with Israel's greatest king **David** and Israel's founding father

**Abraham**, a profoundly prestigious pedigree! Gentiles read over this and miss its import to a Jewish person, because if one claiming to be Messiah (and there were others in the time of Jesus doing so) and he did not come from the line of David, then he would be easily discounted as a "false Messiah!" God had said 1000 years earlier that the Messiah must come from the line of David

"When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom.<sup>13</sup> "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. <sup>14</sup> "I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, <sup>15</sup> but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. <sup>16</sup> **"Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever."** (2 Sa 7:12-16, cf Ps 89:3-4, Jer. 33:22, 25-26)

**Carson on Son of David** - "Son of David" is an important designation in Matthew. Not only does David become a turning point in the genealogy (Mt 1:6, 17), but the title recurs throughout the Gospel (9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9, 15; 22:42, 45)....In Jesus' day at least some branches of popular Judaism understood "son of David" to be messianic....The theme was important in early Christianity (cf. Luke 1:32, 69; John 7:42; Acts 13:23; Rom 1:3; Rev 22:16). God's promises, though long delayed, had not been forgotten; Jesus and his ministry were perceived as God's fulfillment of covenantal promises now centuries old. The tree of David, hacked off so that only a stump remained, was sprouting a new branch (Isa 11:1). (Ibid)

**Brian Bill - David** is listed before Abraham, even though Abraham came first in history. In fact, David's name is mentioned five times in this genealogy. Why is that? Because Matthew is establishing that first and foremost, Jesus Christ is a direct descendant of David and therefore qualified to be the eternal king. In Matthew 22:41, Jesus asked His enemies a question so that they would state clearly what was becoming very evident: "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" 'The son of David,' they replied." We see this promise of a forever kingdom in 2 Samuel 7:16: "Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever." Jesus Christ is the supreme sovereign in the line of David. Isaiah spoke about Him in Isaiah 11:1: "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit." Jesse was the father of David and that family tree would eventually be cut down, but a shoot, Jesus Christ, would come up and bear fruit. Jesus is the biggest branch in God's family tree.

In the time of Christ, Jesus was not the only one claiming to be the Messiah. Other imposters claimed to be Israel's Messiah. How would the people know who to believe? One answer of course was to check his genealogy. If he was not from the line of David, then he was a pretender and could not be the Jewish Messiah.

**Robertson on son** - The Hebrew and Aramaic often used the word **son** (bēn) for the quality or character, but here the idea is **descent**. Christians are called **sons of God** because Christ has bestowed this dignity upon us (Ro 8:14; Ro 9:26; Gal. 3:26; Gal 4:5-7)

#### Related Resources:

- [What is the Davidic covenant?](#)
- [The Fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant](#)

## THE SON OF ABRAHAM

**Son of Abraham** is not a frequently used phrase, occurring only here as a **title** of Messiah and used in Luke 3:34+ and Luke 19:8+ in non-messianic contexts. Nevertheless Matthew does mention **Abraham** elsewhere (Mt 1:2, 17; Mt 3:9; Mt 8:11; Mt 22:32). Clearly **Abraham** is the one whose status in God's Kingdom is unquestionable. In fact he is so prominent that the Christ rejecting Jewish leaders appeal to their lineage from Abraham as validation to their beliefs/religion. For example Matthew records the John the Baptist warning to "the Pharisees and Sadducees" (Mt 3:7+) declaring "do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have **Abraham** for our father'; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to **Abraham**." (Mt 3:9+; see similar appeals to the name Abraham including the rich man in Hades in Lu 16:24+. See Jews who had professed Jesus in Jn 8:30 but did not truly believe in Him - Jn 8:33-38,39,40, 51-53, cf Ro 4:1-2+).

**The son of Abraham** - Obviously if Jesus was the **Son of David** it goes without saying He was also **the son of Abraham**. "Father" **Abraham** marks the beginning of the nation of the Jewish nation of Israel. In first century Israel, the Jews felt that they participated in the merits of **Abraham**, which made their prayers acceptable, helped in war, expiated sins, appeased the wrath of God, and assured a share in God's eternal kingdom. John the Baptist shattered their false beliefs declaring the absolute necessity of personal

repentance "Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance; and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have **Abraham** for our father'; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to**Abraham**." (Mt 3:8-9+) Jesus said the same thing when the Jews "said to Him, "**Abraham** is our father..." "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham. But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do." (Jn 8:39-40) And as Paul would later add "be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of **Abraham**." (Gal 3:7+)

**Abraham** -Luke 3:8, 8. Lk 1:55, 73. 13:16, 28. 16:22, 23, 24, 25, 29, 30. 19:9. 20:37. Mt 1:1, 2, 17. 3:9, 9. 8:11. 22:32. Mk 12:26. Jn 8:33, 37, 39, 39, 40, 52, 53, 56, 57, 58. Ac 3:13, 25. 7:2, 16, 17, 32. 13:26. Ro 4:1, 2, 3, 9, 12, 13, 16. 9:7. 11:1. 2 Co 11:22. Ga 3:6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 16, 18, 29. 4:22. He 2:16. 6:13. 7:1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9. 11:8, 17. Ja 2:21, 23. 1 P 3:6. Ge 17:5. Ge 12:3. 21:3, 22:18. 26:4. 28:14. Mt 1:1. Lk 1:54, 55. Jn 11:51, 52. Ac 3:25. Ro 4:13. Ga 3:8, 16.

**Brian Bill on Abraham** - That means that Jesus was Jewish, and like Abraham, who surrendered all, He is the supreme servant. Abraham was promised that through his bloodline would come forth someone who would bless all nations in Genesis 22:18: "And through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me." The lineage of the Lord is traced back to Abraham and at the same time, Jesus said in John 8:58 that He is eternal: "Before Abraham was born, I am!" He is fully God and fully man. Galatians 3:16 makes it clear that the offspring of Abraham was Jesus: "The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say 'and to seeds,' meaning many people, but 'and to your seed,' meaning one person, who is Christ."

**D A Carson** on why Matthew mentions **son of Abraham** - Abraham is mentioned for several important reasons. "Son of Abraham" may have been a recognized messianic title in some branches of Judaism (cf. T Levi 8:15). The covenant with the Jewish people had first been made with Abraham (Ge 12:1-3; Ge 17:7; Ge 22:18), a connection Paul sees as basic to Christianity (Gal 3:16). More important, Genesis 22:18 had promised that through Abraham's offspring "all nations" (panta ta ethne, LXX) would be blessed; so with this allusion to Abraham, Matthew is preparing his readers for the final words of this offspring from Abraham—the commission to make disciples of "all nations" (Mt 28:19, panta ta ethnē). Jesus the Messiah came in fulfillment of the kingdom promises to David and of the Gentile-blessings promises to Abraham (cf. also Matt 3:9; 8:11). (Ibid)

#### Related Resources:

- [What is the Abrahamic Covenant?](#)
- [Covenant: Abrahamic versus Mosaic](#)
- [Covenant: Abrahamic vs Old vs New](#)
- [Fulfillment Of The Abrahamic Covenant](#)

**Ray Pritchard** comments that the relative anonymity of Matthew chapter 1 is "like the story of the man who was asked to write a review of the phone book. His summary: "Great cast of characters. Weak plot." That's the way we feel when we examine Matthew 1: "Great cast of characters. Weak plot." Unless you happen to know the Old Testament. But even that may not help you because some of the names in Matthew 1 are completely unknown to us—particularly the ones in the last few verses. Since most of these men lived in the intertestamental period, we know nothing about them except their names. If you are familiar with the King James Version, you remember that the word "begat" is used instead of the phrase "the father of." "Abraham begat Isaac, Isaac begat Jacob, Jacob begat Judah," and so on. That strange word has given rise to many strange interpretations. One day a little boy came home from Sunday School excited about his lesson. When his mother asked him what he had learned, the little boy replied, "I learned all the "forgots" of the Bible." "What do you mean?" "You know, Abraham forgot Isaac, Isaac forgot Jacob, and Jacob forgot Judah...."

We routinely skip it in order to get to the "good stuff." But the Jews of the first century would be quite surprised by our attitude. To them the genealogy would have been an absolutely essential setting for the story of Jesus' birth. **The Jews routinely paid close attention to questions of genealogy.** For instance, whenever land was bought or sold, the genealogical records were consulted to insure that land belonging to one tribe was not being sold to members of another tribe—and thus destroying the integrity of the ancient tribal boundaries. You couldn't just put the money down and take the deed. You also had to prove that your ancestors came from the same tribe. **Genealogy** was also crucial in determining the priesthood. The law specified that the priests must come from the tribe of Levi. **Genealogy** also helped determine the line of heirship to the throne. That helps explain why Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7 contain lengthy listings of the various people returning from captivity. As the Jews re-established themselves in Israel, it was crucial that they know which families had historically held which positions in the nation.

But that same principle applies directly to the Christmas story. "In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world ... And everyone went to his own town to register." (Luke 2:1, 3+) **That meant that each**



man must return to his ancestral hometown—the town from which his family had originally come. But the only way you could be sure about your ancestral hometown was to know your genealogy. Which is why Mary and Joseph had to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem in the ninth month of her pregnancy. They had to make that long and dangerous journey because Bethlehem was Joseph's ancestral hometown—a fact they knew from studying their genealogy." ([Four Women in Jesus' Family Tree](#)).

**Brian Bill** - While some people, like the Krank's want to skip Christmas, many of us are tempted to skip at least part of the Christmas story each year. When we come to the very first book of the New Testament, Matthew begins with a long list of hard-to-pronounce names. You would think he would begin the exciting news of Immanuel's birth with more of a bang. It's like the man who was asked to write a review of the phone book. This was his summary: "Great cast of characters. Weak plot." That's a bit how Matthew 1 sounds to many of us. Why would he begin the most important story in the history of the world like this? This is probably the least read section of the New Testament because it seems devotionally dry and maybe even boring. How many of you have skipped over this list before or just skimmed right past it? You're not alone. The names in this passage make up Jesus' family tree. Actually, we could say that this is the very first "**Christmas Tree.**" Before we jump into this section of Scripture, let's remind ourselves that there is great benefit in studying every part of the Bible. Even though this passage is piled up with people who are long gone, it's important to come to grips with this genealogy. 2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." ([Matthew 1:1-17 The Forgotten Family Tree](#)) And like someone else said, this **tree** has a lot of "knots" (so to speak) in it!

#### Related Resources:

- [What is the relevance of the genealogies in the Bible?](#)
- [What does it mean that Jesus is the son of David?](#)

**ILLUSTRATION** - RECENTLY I LISTENED to a fascinating talk by **Marvin Rosenthal**, a Jewish convert to Christianity. He shared how Matthew's genealogy was one of the proofs that persuaded him that Jesus is the Messiah. To explain what he meant Rosenthal used a helpful analogy from his experience as a U.S. Marine many decades ago. At the rifle range, he and his fellow soldiers would practice their aim by shooting at a target from three distances—200, 300, and 500 yards. From that distance they couldn't always tell by the naked eye if their bullets hit the target or not. So, in order to determine their accuracy, one of the soldiers would hide down in a nine-foot ravine behind the target until he heard ten shots. Then he would get up and check the sharpness of the shooter. He would add up the score and relay the results by slipping a colored disk onto the end of a pole and raising it up high. The color of the disk would communicate the shooter's accuracy. If you missed the target completely, a big flag would be waved, a military way of saying, "You ought to be embarrassed!" Yet, for each bull's-eye a red disk would be secured to the pole and the pole would go up and down. So if you were six out of ten, the pole would go up and down six times. Now, if you hit the bull's-eye ten times out of ten, that same pole and red disk would simply be spun around once. **Rosenthal** goes on to say that, especially for a Jewish audience (who understands the significance and the necessity of genealogical records), **Matthew's genealogy hits the bull's-eye ten times out of ten.** (Kent Hughes)

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**Question:** [Why are Jesus' genealogies in Matthew and Luke so different? - Gotquestions.org](#)

**Answer:** Jesus' genealogy is given in two places in Scripture: Matthew 1 and Luke 3:23-38. Matthew traces the genealogy from Jesus to Abraham. Luke traces the genealogy from Jesus to Adam. However, there is good reason to believe that Matthew and Luke are in fact tracing entirely different genealogies. For example, Matthew gives Joseph's father as Jacob (Matthew 1:16), while Luke gives Joseph's father as Heli (Luke 3:23). Matthew traces the line through David's son Solomon (Matthew 1:6), while Luke traces the line through David's son Nathan (Luke 3:31). In fact, between David and Jesus, the only names the genealogies have in common are Shealtiel and Zerubbabel (Matthew 1:12; Luke 3:27).

Some point to these differences as evidence of errors in the Bible. However, the Jews were meticulous record keepers, especially in regard to genealogies. It is inconceivable that Matthew and Luke could build two entirely contradictory genealogies of the same lineage. Again, from David through Jesus, the genealogies are completely different. Even the reference to Shealtiel and Zerubbabel likely refer to different individuals of the same names. Matthew gives Shealtiel's father as Jeconiah while Luke gives Shealtiel's father as Neri. It would be normal for a man named Shealtiel to name his son Zerubbabel in light of the famous individuals of those names (see the books of Ezra and Nehemiah).

One explanation, held by the church historian Eusebius, is that Matthew is tracing the primary, or biological, lineage while Luke is taking into account an occurrence of "levirate marriage." If a man died without having any sons, it was tradition for the man's brother to marry the widow and have a son who would carry on the deceased man's name. According to Eusebius's theory, Melchi (Luke 3:24) and Matthan (Matthew 1:15) were married at different times to the same woman (tradition names her Estha). This would make Heli (Luke 3:23) and Jacob (Matthew 1:15) half-brothers. Heli then died without a son, and so his (half-)brother Jacob married Heli's

widow, who gave birth to Joseph. This would make Joseph the “son of Heli” legally and the “son of Jacob” biologically. Thus, Matthew and Luke are both recording the same genealogy (Joseph’s), but Luke follows the legal lineage while Matthew follows the biological.

Most conservative Bible scholars today take a different view, namely, that Luke is recording Mary’s genealogy and Matthew is recording Joseph’s. Matthew is following the line of Joseph (Jesus’ legal father), through David’s son Solomon, while Luke is following the line of Mary (Jesus’ blood relative), through David’s son Nathan. Since there was no Greek word for “son-in-law,” Joseph was called the “son of Heli” by marriage to Mary, Heli’s daughter. Through either Mary’s or Joseph’s line, Jesus is a descendant of David and therefore eligible to be the Messiah. Tracing a genealogy through the mother’s side is unusual, but so was the virgin birth. Luke’s explanation is that Jesus was the son of Joseph, “so it was thought” (Luke 3:23). ([Gotquestions.org](http://Gotquestions.org))

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### **John Kitto - The Genealogies—Matthew 1:1–17; Luke 3:23–38**

There are two genealogies of Jesus in the gospels,—one given by Matthew, the other by Luke. The object of both is to show that, according to the flesh, the holy child was lineally descended from King David. This fact was often asserted in our Lord’s lifetime, and never denied by the Jews,—as they would have been glad to have done had it been in their power. But the case was too plain, being no doubt attested by the genealogical lists of the family preserved at Bethlehem. Indeed, the fact was so notorious, that Jesus was frequently addressed by strangers as “the son of David;” and the public knowledge of this circumstance should always be borne in mind in reading the Gospel history, since it materially affected the relations in which He appeared, and the point of view in which He was regarded by the people. Even apart from the Messiahship which was to be in that line, any member of the house of David, who came forward in a prominent character, would be an object of attention and solicitude, as possessing certain hereditary claims to the temporal sovereignty; and there can be no doubt, looking to the circumstances of times, and the unpopularity of the government, that the people would have thrown themselves heart and soul into any feasible, or indeed unfeasible, attempt to restore that ancient and popular line. Indeed, although our Lord was always careful to let it be understood that his kingdom was not of this world, there was a time, and perhaps more than one time, when the people would have taken Him by force and made Him their king, had He not withdrawn himself from public view. Hence, also, the dangerous malignancy of the charge eventually made against Him, that He aspired to be a king,—which would have been simply ridiculous, had not the fact of his being of the royal house of David given political significance to the charge; and had it not been true, that a claim to reign on the part of an already renowned member of that illustrious house, would have stirred the heart of the nation, from Dan to Beersheba.

It is true, however, and is evinced by the position of Joseph and Mary, that the families tracing their descent from the house of David had fallen into poverty, and also into neglect,—except in so far as their hopes of producing, at no distant day, “the desire of all nations,” were recognized. When, after the return from the Babylonish captivity, the sovereignty had been assumed, first, by the high priests of Levitical descent; subsequently, by the Asmonean family, and finally, by the house of Herod, of Idumaeen origin, but engrafted into the Maccabean line by the marriage of Herod with Mariamne, it was the most obvious policy to leave in the obscurity into which they had sunk that race, which, if it should produce any pretendant of the least distinction, might advance an hereditary claim, as dear to the people as it would be dangerous to the reigning dynasty. The whole descendants of the royal race seem to have sunk so low, that even the popular belief which looked to the line of David as that from which the Messiah was to spring, did not invest them with sufficient importance to awaken the jealousy or suspicion of the rulers.

The fact, that the descent of Jesus from David could be established by registers, and the presence of two such minute pedigrees as those of Matthew and Luke, evince that the Jews were, up to this time, still careful in the registration of family descents. The division of the whole Hebrew nation into tribes, and the allotment to each tribe, and to every family in each tribe, of its distinct portion of territory, as an inalienable possession, rendered it indispensable that genealogical tables should be preserved. It might seem that the disturbance of this arrangement occasioned by the captivity, or rather by the fact that only two of the twelve tribes returned from Babylon, would impair this motive. But the rabbis assure us, that from that time they became still more careful in registering their genealogies—with immediate reference, doubtless, to the expectation of the Messiah—but with the ulterior object, in the purposes of the Divine providence, of preserving means for the establishment of the exact fulfillment of the predictions respecting his parentage. That such registers existed to even a later date is shown by Josephus, who declared that he traced his own descent in the tribe of Levi by public registers; and he expressly informs that, however dispersed and dispossessed his nation were, they never failed to have exact genealogical tables prepared from the authentic documents which were kept at Jerusalem; and that in all their sufferings they were particularly careful to preserve these tables, which were renewed from time to time. Since, however, the period of their destruction as a nation by the Romans, all their tables of descent seem to be lost, and now they are utterly unable to trace the pedigree of any one Israelite who might lay claim to be their promised, and still expected Messiah.

These considerations are more important than they may seem at first view; as they show that, genealogical registers being still kept by the Jews, means existed for testing the claims of descent which any one might make; for rendering the fabrication of a genealogy impossible; and (apart from the question of inspiration) of furnishing the materials for the pedigrees which the evangelists have given,—thus meeting the objections of recent misbelievers who have ventured to insinuate, that no materials for such genealogies then existed among the Jews; and that they were made up—that is, fabricated—to produce a correspondence with the prophecies,

which required that the Messiah should be of the line of David.

But the two genealogies are materially different. They coincide until David, when Matthew takes the reigning line whereas Luke takes the younger and inferior line by David's son Nathan. They concur, indeed, in Salathiel and Zorobabel, at the time of the captivity; but then diverge again, and even at the close the difference is maintained, for Matthew makes Joseph the son of Jacob, whereas Luke represents him as the son of Heli, or Eli. He could not have been naturally the son of both these persons; and the essential differences in the two lines of descent allows no satisfactory solution in the idea, that Jacob and Heli are different names for the same person. They are obviously two different genealogies from the common ancestor David. This being the case, there can be little doubt that the genealogy of Matthew is that of Joseph, and the one of Luke that of Mary,—the former being the legal, and the latter the real genealogy of Jesus.

Indeed, Luke seems to have indicated his meaning as clearly as could be, consistently with the absence of a woman's name in a pedigree, by distinguishing the real from the legal genealogy, in a parenthetical remark,—“Jesus being (as was reputed) the son of Joseph (but in reality) the son of Heli,” or his grandson by the mother's side; for so the ellipsis should be supplied.

Furthermore, Mary is always called by the Jews “the daughter of Heli;” and by the early Christian writers, “the daughter of Joakim and Anna.” Now, Joakim and Eliakim (as different names in Hebrew for God) are sometimes interchanged; so that Heli or Eli is an abridged form of Eliakim, interchanged for Joakim.

These observations may suffice to indicate the heads of a discussion involving much curious matter, tending, as all discussion does, in the long run, to the vindication of the sacred writers, even in those of their statements that may, at the first view, seem the most inconsistent.

One of the lines is, therefore, the natural and legal line of Joseph's descent; and the other that of a reputed line, arising from his adoption by the father assigned to him in it, or by his marriage with the daughter. An adopted son inherited all the rights of a natural son. If, therefore, a man had a daughter only, the person who married her became virtually his son, and, as such, was reckoned in the genealogy,—so that, although descents could not be reckoned by females, yet the name of a man who had only a daughter was not lost in Israel, as the husband assumed his wife's genealogy, and took his place in the roll as the son of her father. The conclusion then, is, that one of these genealogies is that of Joseph, and the other that of his wife Mary,—both lines being preserved to show definitely, that Jesus was, in the most full and perfect sense, a descendant of David; not only by law in the royal line of kings through his reputed father, but by direct personal descent through his mother. (Daily Bible Illustrations)

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**HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATION** - The manager of a large office noticed a new employee and asked, “What's your name?” The worker replied, “John.” The manager scowled and said, “Look, I don't know where you worked before, but I don't call anyone by their first name. It breeds familiarity and that leads to a breakdown in authority. I refer to my employees by their last name only...Smith, Jones, Baker...you got it? I'm to be referred to as Mr. Robertson. Now that we've got that straightened out, what's your last name?” The new guy sighed, “Darling. My name is John Darling.” To which the boss replied, “It's nice to meet you, John.”

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**Matthew 1:2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers.**

- **Abraham:** Ge 21:2-5 Jos 24:2,3 1Ch 1:28 Isa 51:2 Lu 3:34 Ac 7:8 Ro 9:7-9 Heb 11:11,17,18
- **Isaac the father of Jacob:** Ge 25:26 Jos 24:4 1Ch 1:34 Isa 41:8 Mal 1:2,3 Ro 9:10-13
- **Jacob the father of Judah:** Ge 29:32-35 Ge 30:5-20 Ge 35:16-19 Ge 46:8-27 49:8-12 Ex 1:2-5 1Ch 2:1-8 5:1,2 Lu 3:33,34 Ac 7:8 Heb 7:14 Rev 7:5,

## **JESUS' GENEALOGY BEGINS WITH A SUPERNATURAL BIRTH**

As **Andrus** says commenting on Isaac's birth "The simplicity of that statement hides a fantastic miracle, for Abraham and his wife Sarah did not get pregnant until he was 100 and she was 90. They were both long past the child-bearing age, even considering that people generally lived longer in those days. But if the birth of Isaac was supernatural, it was nothing compared to the birth of Jesus. It's one thing to activate the reproductive organs of an old couple so that they are able to conceive; but it's an entirely different class of miracle to have a woman get pregnant without any involvement from a man at all." ([Matthew 1:1-17 Son of Man, Son of God or, Termites in the Family Tree](#))

**TECHNICAL NOTE:** While the phrase "**father of**" is used repeatedly (30x in every verse from Mt 1:2-16; KJV = "begat"), this phrase has two meanings, the first describing a literal father (e.g., Abraham) of the one mentioned (Isaac). But given that Matthew occasionally omits the literal father-son record, the other sense of "**father of**" does not require immediate relationship but is more like "was the ancestor of" or "became the progenitor of." (Carson)

**Abraham was the father of Isaac** - Isaac was the child of promise who God miraculously gave Sarah and Abraham in their old age. So

Genesis 21:2-5 (1Ch 1:28, Lk 3:34+) So Sarah conceived and bore a son to **Abraham** in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him. 3 **Abraham** called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, **Isaac**. 4 Then Abraham circumcised his son **Isaac** when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. 5 Now **Abraham** was one hundred years old when his son **Isaac** was born to him.

**Isaac:** Ge 21:3 25:26 1Ch 1:34 Mt 1:2 Ac 7:8 Ro 9:6-8. He 11:17-19

**Father of** - see [gennao](#) below, which occurs 42 times from Mt 1:2-16. **Zodhiates** observes a subtle shift "From Mt 1:2 to Mt 1:16, the verb egénnēsen (see [gennao](#)), the aorist active ([active voice](#)) of [gennao](#), to give birth or beget, is used when conception includes the physical father listed in the genealogy. However, in Mt 1:16, a **conspicuous shift** to egennēthe occurs (the aorist [passive](#) of [gennao](#)). The birth (**was born**) (not the conception) is highlighted, since the Lord was conceived by a virgin." (Exegetical Commentary on Matthew)

**Isaac the father of Jacob** - Jacob's name meant "heel-catcher" or "supplanter."

Genesis 25:26 Afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau's heel, so his name was called **Jacob**; and **Isaac** was sixty years old when she gave birth to them.

**And Jacob the father of Judah (Lk 3:33-34+) and his brothers** - Jacob's name of course was changed in Genesis 32:28 when God (see Ge 32:24, 30) said "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but **Israel** ("He contends with God"); for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed." **And his brothers** is an allusion to the 12 brothers that gave rise to 12 tribes.

Genesis 29:32-35 Leah conceived and bore a son and named him Reuben, for she said, "Because the LORD has seen my affliction; surely now my husband will love me." 33 Then she conceived again and bore a son and said, "Because the LORD has heard that I am unloved, He has therefore given me this son also." So she named him Simeon. 34 She conceived again and bore a son and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore he was named Levi. 35 And she conceived again and bore a son and said, "This time I will praise the LORD." Therefore she named him **Judah**. Then she stopped bearing.

**Ray Pritchard** makes an excellent point about this genealogical list - If you study these names in detail, it's almost as if God has pulled together a rogue's gallery. I've already said that we don't know about every person on this list. But of the ones we know about, nearly all of them had notable moral failures on their spiritual resumes. For instance, Abraham lied about his wife Sarah. Isaac did the same thing. Jacob was a cheater, Judah a fornicator. David was an adulterer and Solomon was a polygamist. Manasseh was the most evil king Israel ever had. And on and on we could go. This is not a list of plaster saints. Far from it. Some weren't saints at all. The best of these men had flaws and some were so flawed that it is impossible to see their good points. How does that show the grace of God? Simple. It shows the grace of God because people like this make up Jesus' family tree. A murderer is on the list, a fornicator is on the list, an adulterer is on the list, a liar is on the list, a deceiver is on the list. Think about that. Most of these men were very great sinners.

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**Brian Bill - Who God Uses** - As we look at the forgotten family tree, I see three types of people hanging from the branches – the faithful, the failures, and the forgotten.

**1. God uses the faithful. As we glance at this genealogy, there are at least ten names that stand out.**

- **Abraham.** Hebrews 11:17: "By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice."
- **Isaac.** Hebrews 11:20: "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future."
- **Jacob.** Hebrews 11:21: "By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff."
- **Ruth.** Ruth 1:16: "Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God."
- **David.** 1 Samuel 13:14: "The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart..."
- **Solomon.** 1 Kings 13:12: "I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be."
- **Asa.** 1 Kings 15:11: "Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as his father David had done."
- **Jehoshaphat.** 2 Chronicles 17:3: "The LORD was with Jehoshaphat because in his early years he walked in the ways his father David had followed."
- **Josiah.** 2 Kings 23:25: "Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the LORD as he did-with all his

heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the Law of Moses.”

- **Hezekiah.** 2 Kings 18:5: “Hezekiah trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel.”

God has always searched for devoted people to do His work as 2 Chronicles 16:9 states: “For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.” God loves to use faithful people but if you look close enough, you will see that none of these individuals were perfect. In fact, some were greatly flawed. Abraham lied (Genesis 12:13), Jacob was a deceiver (Genesis 27:36), David committed adultery and murder (2 Samuel 11:3-21), Solomon slacked off spiritually (1 Kings 11:3-4), Asa bailed on God at the end of his life (2 Chronicles 16:12) and even Hezekiah became proud and was judged by God (2 Chronicles 32:25). Here’s the lesson: Even the “good” need God’s grace. Actually, the Bible declares that no one is good or fully faithful. Romans 3:12: “All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.”

## 2. God uses failures.

As we continue to look at this family tree, I’m reminded of a statement: “Families are like fudge. Mostly sweet with a few nuts.” Matthew makes no effort to spruce up this tree. He’s not hiding the sorry spots or the twisted twigs. Most genealogists skipped over the scoundrels and focused just on the saints. Only the good guys made most lists, and if they had a bad reputation, the historian would often try to clean them up.

**ILLUSTRATION** - I recently heard about a very prominent family who commissioned a professional biographer to record their family tree. They gave him very careful instructions, and cautioned him to deal carefully with a certain Uncle George, who in a drunken stupor, had committed murder and was subsequently sent to the electric chair. The biographer assured them that he could handle it. This is what he wrote: “**Uncle George occupied a chair of applied electronics at an important government institution. He was attached to his position by the strongest of ties, and his death came as a real shock**” (Quoted from Pastor Dan Meyer, Christ Church of Oak Brook, “A Question of Breeding,” 11/28/04).

There are names in the lineage of the Lord that are shocking, and what some of them did can make us blush. Matthew’s genealogy is filled with “Uncle Georges,” but he makes no attempt at disguises. We don’t have time to go through all the bad apples and loose nuts in the tree, so I’ll pick just a few.

- **Judah.** Jacob had 12 sons, but for some reason, the lineage of the Lord ran through Judah. This is very interesting because he wasn’t the oldest like Reuben was, nor was he necessarily the favorite son – that would have been Joseph or Benjamin. Genesis 49:10 states that the ruler would come out of Judah: “The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his.” This is traced all the way to the end of the Bible as well in Revelation 5:5: “Then one of the elders said to me, ‘Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.’” At the climax of history in heaven, Judah’s offspring is the only one that was found worthy. Judah must have been a godly guy, right? Actually he wasn’t. In another largely ignored section of Scripture, Genesis 38 describes his depravity. His first step down the slippery slope of sin happened when he married a Canaanite woman. Their children become spiritually schizophrenic and the older one is so wicked that the Lord takes his life. This son was married to a woman named Tamar, leaving her a widow and without children. According to their customs (Deuteronomy 25:5-10), his brother was to marry the widow and give her children but he refused, so the Lord took his life as well. Judah promised his third son to Tamar but he procrastinated. Tamar realized that this wedding was never going to happen so she took things into her own hands. The story goes from bad to worse at this point. She hears that her father-in-law Judah is going to take a trip so she comes up with a wicked plan. She decided to disguise herself as a prostitute and waited alongside the road. Judah, not knowing it was her, offered to pay her a young goat for her services, and gave her a deposit before the goat could be delivered – his signet ring, a cord, and his shepherd’s staff, which is the ancient equivalent of a Driver’s License today. Tamar becomes pregnant with twins and when Judah finds out, he is ready to burn her in the fire because of the disgrace she has caused his family. As she was dragged away to be killed, and the flames crackled in the background, she calmly identified the father of the twins by holding up Judah’s personal property. Judah is humiliated and admits in verse 26: “She is more righteous than I.” If there was a tale like this in your family tree, wouldn’t you want to avoid it? This seamy story is in the Bible to help us see that God uses failures. The genealogy of Jesus not only goes through Judah and Tamar, but also travels through Perez, the child of incest. Listen. Through the broken, God breaks through! Through the twisted twig of Tamar, God’s grace continues to grow.
- **Rahab.** Drop down to verse 5: “Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab.” Most everyone has heard of Rahab the prostitute, who provided protection to the Hebrew spies in Jericho. Her most famous deed is the telling of a lie. Rahab is mentioned eight times in Scripture, and six of those times, she’s referred to as “Rahab the prostitute.” Because of her faith, she is listed in Hebrews 11:31. Amazingly the Redeemer comes through Rahab as well.

- **Bathsheba.** She is not mentioned by name in this genealogy, but is called, "Uriah's wife" in verse 6. She is the woman David committed adultery with. She may have purposely enticed him by bathing in an open courtyard. The son of their illicit union dies. Eventually David marries Bathsheba and they have another son named Solomon. The family tree of Jesus has Bathsheba as one of its branches. As someone has said, "We're reminded again that God's plan of redemption came neither through perfect people, nor for perfect people."
- **Rehoboam.** This king, listed in verse 7, was the son of Solomon, who because of his love of pride and lust for power, was responsible for the dividing of the kingdom (1 Kings 12:19). And yet, the Redeemer comes through Rehoboam.
- **Ahaz.** Verse 9 mentions ungodly Ahaz, who worshipped pagan gods and eventually self-destructed. It was to King Ahaz that Isaiah initially made his prophecy of the promised Immanuel that would be born to a virgin (see Isaiah 7:14). When he died he was buried without honor. Immanuel traces his earthly origin back to Ahaz.
- **Manasseh.** This king in verse 10 reigned 55 years, longer than any other, but was Judah's most wicked ruler. He was into idolatry, sacrificed his own son to the pagan god Molech, worshipped the sun and stars, and killed anyone who disagreed with him. 2 Kings 21:9 gives a stunningly sad summary of his life: "Manasseh led them astray, so that they did more evil than the nations the LORD had destroyed before the Israelites." Thankfully, after being deported to Babylon, he humbled himself and returned to the Lord (see 2 Chronicles 33:11-13). Manasseh is an ancestor of the Messiah.

The Savior of the world came from people that most of us would want nothing to do with. These individuals, who we could call failures, are in the Forgotten Family Tree, not for what they have in common with Christ, but for what they share in common with each of us. We are like them in so many ways...but isn't that why Christ came? Jesus can take our failures and turn them into something fruitful.

### 3. God uses the forgotten.

God uses faithful people with flaws, He uses those who feel like failures, and He never forgets those who fear that they are forgotten.

Look again at this list. There are some names here that we know nothing about. What about Hezron and Ram? One had a truck named after him but we don't know if they were saints or scoundrels. Abiud, Azor and Akim? Zadok? They might not make the headlines but they are known in heaven. Do you feel forgotten today? Do you wonder if God even notices you? Don't despair. You are never out of His mind. In fact, Psalm 139:17-18 says: "How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you."

The lion of the tribe of Judah is about deliverance, not condemnation. He takes what feeble faith we have, coupled with our failures and redeems them for his glory, and in the process, never forgets us.

## Lessons From the Tree

### 1. History is "His Story."

The hero of this story is God himself. Everything that has happened in the past, what takes place today, and what is yet to come, is part of His glorious and grand plan. As we look back at the lineage of the Lord, we see the Lord weaving His ways through the faithful, the failures, and the forgotten, in order to accomplish His purpose of bringing salvation to the world through the son of David. God is in the business of salvaging sinners and recreating those who He created. One writer said it this way: "This genealogy is marked by gross sin, blatant idolatry, captivity in Egypt, captivity in Babylon, a succession of flawed kings, and hostile enemies, yet God's plan is carried out to completion. It's as if God is saying, 'The famine in Egypt could not starve my plan. 400 years of slavery in Egypt and another 70 in Babylon couldn't shackle my plan. Murder, corruption, and idolatry could not stop my plan!'"

Remember too that the Bible teaches that history is moving toward a point of conclusion. At some definite point in the future, God will send His Son to this earth a second time as the triumphant King. Are you ready for that?

### 2. Get in His tree today.

**None of us can appear in the blood-line that stretches back from Jesus through David to Abraham, but the good news is that the blood-line flows the other way too** (idea from Pastor Dan Meyer). No matter if you've been fairly faithful, or find yourself a failure, or feel forgotten, there's a place for you in God's tree today. Jesus is the Savior of the world. Will you make Him your personal Savior right now? You can join the family of faith by receiving the gift of redemption. John 1:12: "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." Jesus died on a tree in order for you to have a place in

His eternal tree.

### 3. The glory of this genealogy is the grace of God.

Jesus' relatives could have been the Cleaver's; instead they were more like the Simpson's. God loves to give grace to the "Uncle George's" of life. Jesus came not to redeem those who think they're righteous, but to save sinners. Luke 19:10: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." God demands not **perfection**, but **contrition**. It was Rick Warren who said, "The worse you are, the better candidate you are for the grace of God." The glory of God's grace extends to the faithful, the failures, and the forgotten because grace glows through the branches and twigs of this Christmas tree.

In his book called, "**The Grace and Truth Paradox**," Randy Alcorn writes:

"Wesley Allan Dodd tortured and murdered three boys in Vancouver, Washington, fifteen miles from our home. Dodd was scheduled to be hanged—the first U.S. hanging in three decades—shortly after midnight, January 4, 1993. At dinner that evening, both our daughters, then eleven and thirteen, prayed earnestly that Dodd would repent and place his faith in Christ before he died. I agreed with their prayer... but only because I knew I should...Dodd's last words were: '**I had thought there was no hope and no peace. I was wrong. I have found hope and peace in the Lord Jesus Christ.**'"

"Gasps and moans erupted from the gallery. The anger was palpable. How dare someone who has done anything so terrible say he has found hope and peace in Jesus? Did he really think God would let him into heaven after what he'd done? Shut up and go to hell, child killer—you won't get off so easy! The idea of God's offering grace to Dodd was utterly offensive.

"And yet...didn't Jesus die for Dodd's sins just as He did for mine? No sin is bigger than the Savior. Grace is, literally, not of this world. I struggled with the idea of God saving Dodd only because I thought too much of myself and too little of my Lord. I'd imagined the distance between Dodd and me as the difference between the South and North Poles. But when you consider God's viewpoint from light-years away, that distance is negligible. In my standing before a holy God, apart from Christ...I am Dodd. I am Dahmer. I am Mao...if God isn't big enough to save Dodd and Dahmer, He's not big enough to save me...The cost of redemption cannot be overstated. The wonders of grace cannot be overemphasized. Christ took the hell He didn't deserve so we could take the heaven we don't deserve" (Multnomah, 2003: Pages 29, 43-45).

## JESUS "FAMILY TREE"

- The fairly faithful
- Those who find themselves to be failures
- Those who feel forgotten

Do you qualify in any one of these categories? **He is calling you today** - Mt 11:28-30 Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30"For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." ([Matthew 1:1-17 The Forgotten Family Tree](#))

**Matthew 1:3 Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez was the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram.**

- **Judah was the father of Perez:** Ge 38:27,29,30 46:12, Nu 26:20,21 1Ch 2:3,4, 1Ch 9:6
- **Zerah by Tamar:** Ge 38:6,11,24-26
- **Perez was the father of Hezron:** Ge 46:12 Nu 26:21 Ru 4:18 1Ch 2:5 4:1, Lk 3:33+
- **father of Ram:** Ru 4:19 1Ch 2:9

Rembrandt's Tamar and Judah

**"SKELETONS IN  
CHRIST'S CLOSET"**

**Skeleton in the closet** is an idiom used to describe an undisclosed fact about someone which, if revealed, would damage perceptions of the person. It evokes the idea of someone having had a human corpse concealed in their home so long that all its flesh had decomposed to the bone. Well, in the case of the Bible, God reveals the skeletons in Christ's closet! If you doubt the veracity of the Bible, sections like this in Matthew 1 ought to convince you that God's Word is true to life and true!

Judah is singled out here and is also alluded to in other passages...

Genesis 49:10 "The scepter shall not depart from **Judah**, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh ([THE MESSIAH](#)) comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples (NATIONS). (See notes on [meaning of the scepter will not depart from Judah](#))

Matthew 2:6 'AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF **JUDAH**; FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.'

Hebrews 7:14 For it is evident that our Lord was descended from **Judah**, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests.

Revelation 5:5 and one of the elders \*said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, **the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah**, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals." [Who/what is the Lion of the tribe of Judah?](#)

**Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar** - Now here is where the genealogy becomes very interesting because when Jews made a genealogy they normally did not include women on the list, but instead traced the family tree from father to son. Matthew breaks the mold so to speak by including not just Tamar but three other women, Rahab (Mt 1:5), Ruth (Mt 1:5) and Bathsheba (Mt 1:6). **Tamar** was also a Canaanite, hence a Gentile. Two-strikes! Judah, as a widower, frequented prostitutes. This occurred frequently enough that his daughter-in-law, **Tamar**, whom he had dishonored, knew that if she disguised herself as one, he'd sleep with her. He did and got her pregnant (Genesis 38). Many are quick to judge Tamar for her actions, but it is said that even Judah recognised that she was "more righteous than I".

1 Chronicles 2:3,4 The sons of **Judah** were Er, Onan and Shelah; these three were born to him by Bath-shua the Canaanitess. And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, so He put him to death. (2:4) **Tamar** his daughter-in-law bore him **Perez** and **Zerah**. **Judah** had five sons in all.

**Ray Pritchard** summarizes the story of **Tamar** -

Her story—unknown to most of us—is found in Genesis 38. Tamar was the daughter-in-law of Judah who was the son of Jacob, grandson of Abraham. All you need to know is that Judah had a son named Er who married a Gentile woman named ... Tamar. Er died and his brother Onan rose up to do his brotherly duty by marrying Tamar. But he, too, suddenly died, leaving Tamar both husbandless and childless—a kind of twin curse in those days. So because she was impatient and unwilling to wait for God to supply her need, she hatched a scheme to cause her father-in-law Judah to sleep with her. Her plan was simple: Dressing up as a shrine prostitute, she seduced Judah into sleeping with her, whereupon she became pregnant and gave birth to twin boys—Perez and Zerah. When she confronted Judah with the truth, he said (rightly), "She is more righteous than I." Indeed, no one looks good in this story, which reeks of greed, deception, illegitimacy, prostitution, sexual lust, and even the hint of incest. Whatever you can say about Judah (and it's not very good), you cannot by any stretch of the imagination make Tamar look good. She's only less-bad than her father-in-law. But what she did was evil, wrong and immoral. She truly acted like a prostitute even if she wasn't one by trade. That's all we know about Tamar. There really isn't a happy ending to this story. She's just a footnote in biblical history—and an unsavory one at that. The story of her encounter with Judah is a story of human frailty and weakness—of the sinfulness of human flesh. That people like Judah and Tamar would be included in the line of the Messiah sends a strong message about the pure grace of God. Neither one deserved it, but both are on the list. ([Four Women in Jesus' Family Tree](#)).

**Steven Cole** adds - Tamar's history illustrates that Jesus is the Savior of sinners. He deliberately associated with the tax collectors, who were notorious scoundrels. Matthew, the author of this gospel, was one when Jesus called him. Jesus was known as the friend of sinners (prostitutes and others, Matt. 11:19). When the religious Pharisees expressed their disgust with this, Jesus replied (Matt. 9:12), "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick." He added (Matt. 9:13b), "I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners." He did not mean that some are righteous enough to get into heaven on their own. Rather, He wanted the Pharisees to see that they were sinners who needed a Savior every bit as much as the tax collectors and prostitutes did. You may think, "But I'm not as sinful as a prostitute or a swindler! I have my faults, but I'm not a terrible sinner!" Be careful! That was the



mistake of the Pharisees. Their self-righteousness caused them to reject the Savior whom God sent. The angel who told Joseph that Mary had conceived through the Holy Spirit added (Matt. 1:21), "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." To benefit from the reason that Jesus came, you must recognize in the first place that you have sinned against the Holy God and that all of your good deeds will not atone for your sins. You need a Savior and Jesus is that Savior. ([Skeletons in Christ's Closet](#))

#### Related Resources:

- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Tamar](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Tamar](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Tamar](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Tamar](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Tamar \(2\)](#) [Tamar \(1\)](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Tamar](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Tamar](#)

#### [Perez](#) was the father of [Hezron](#), and Hezron the father of [Ram](#).

Genesis 38:6; 11; 24-26 Now Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar....(Ge 38:11) Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Remain a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah grows up"; for he thought, "I am afraid that he too may die like his brothers." So Tamar went and lived in her father's house....(Gen 38:24-26) Now it was about three months later that Judah was informed, "Your daughter-in-law **Tamar** has played the harlot, and behold, she is also with child by harlotry." Then **Judah** said, "Bring her out and let her be burned!" 25 It was while she was being brought out that she sent to her father-in-law, saying, "I am with child by the man to whom these things belong." And she said, "Please examine and see, whose signet ring and cords and staff are these?" 26 **Judah** recognized them, and said, "She is more righteous than I, inasmuch as I did not give her to my son Shelah." And he did not have relations with her again.

1 Chronicles 2:4 And **Tamar** (Judah's) his daughter-in-law bore him **Perez** and Zerah. **Judah** had five sons in all.

Genesis 46:12 And the sons of **Judah**: Er and Onan and Shelah and **Perez** and Zerah (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan). And the sons of **Perez** were **Hezron** and Hamul.

Ruth 4:18 Now these are the generations of **Perez**: to **Perez** was born **Hezron**, 19 and to **Hezron** was born **Ram**, and to **Ram**, Amminadab,

Luke 3:33+ the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin, the son of Ram, the son of **Hezron**, the son of **Perez**, the son of **Judah**,

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#### Spurgeon - 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.' 1 Timothy 1:15

In the genealogy of our blessed Lord we find the names of certain of the chief of sinners. Three women especially hold a position in it, who were each notorious for sin. Not many women are mentioned, but among the first is Tamar, guilty of incest. The next is Rahab the harlot, and a third is Bathsheba the adulteress. This is a crooked pedigree, an ancestral tree whose branches are more than a little gnarled and twisted. Admire the condescension of our Lord in coming of such a stock. He came of sinners, because he came for sinners. According to the flesh he comes of sinners that sinners may come to him. There was mixed in the veins through which flowed his ancestry the blood of Ruth the Moabitess, a heathen, brought in on purpose that we Gentiles might see how truly he was bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. I say not that there was any defilement in his humanity, for he was not born after the manner of men, so as to be polluted in that fashion, but still I say that his genealogy includes many great sinners in order that we may see how closely he allied himself with them, how thoroughly he undertook their cause. Read the roll of his ancestry, and you will see that David is there, who cried, 'Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,' and Solomon, who loved 'strange women', and Rehoboam, his foolish son, and Manasseh who 'shed innocent blood very much,' and worse men than they, if worse could be. Such sinners as these are in the genealogy of the Saviour of sinners. 'He was numbered with the transgressors'. He was called 'a friend of publicans and sinners.' It was said of him, 'This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.' Still he delights to save great sinners. It will delight him to save

you!

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## Four Grandmothers and a Mother Matthew 1:3, 5, 6, 16

### INTRODUCTION:

In the Matthew genealogy, five women are mentioned. Four grandmothers of our Lord and His mother the Virgin Mary are included in this account.

### I. TAMAR: THE PRINCIPLE OF SINFULNESS

When this woman became angry with her father-in-law, she disguised herself as a prostitute and sat by the wayside and seduced her husband's father. She later used this incident to blackmail her father-in-law as a measure of revenge. Despite this despicable affair, however, she is included as one of the grandmothers of the Saviour (Gen. 38).

### II. RAHAB: THE PRINCIPLE OF FAITH

The story of Rahab is recorded in the book of Joshua (Joshua 2). She believed the spies, and thus she represents the soul's relationship with God. Faith pleases God (Heb. 11:6).

Faith makes the approach to God so simple (Rom. 10:8). Herein lies its universal appeal, for faith can be exercised by everyone.

### III. RUTH: THE PRINCIPLE OF GRACE

Ruth, a Gentile from the land of Moab, married a Jewish young man, the son of Naomi.

In like manner, we are the recipients of the grace of God. Like Ruth, we have nothing to commend us to our Boaz, Christ. In His infinite love, He has regaled us with His affection, even though we are unworthy (Romans 5:8).

### IV. BATHSHEBA: THE PRINCIPLE OF RESTORATION

This woman had an affair with David. Despite this horrible involvement, the forgiving love of God allowed this erring woman to enter the line of the Messiah. She represents the mercy of God with wayward Christians.

### V. THE VIRGIN MARY: THE PRINCIPLE OF THE INDWELLING CHRIST

The Virgin Mary was chosen to be the physical receptacle of the body of Christ (Matt. 1:20). She was privileged to carry the infant God in her womb for 280 days. This sacred trust became for her a source of joy and gratitude.

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**Matthew 1:4 Ram was the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon.**

- **Amminadab:** Ru 4:19,20 1Ch 2:10-12
- **father of Nahshon:** Nu 1:7 2:3 7:12,17 10:14, Lk 3:32+

**ESV Study note** - The four generations between **Perez** (Mt 1:3) and **Amminadab** encompass approximately 450 years. The six generations from **Nahshon** to the rise of the monarchy with **David** total about 400 more.

**Ram was the father of [Amminadab](#), Amminadab the father of [Nahshon](#), and Nahshon the father of [Salmon](#).**

Ruth 4:18 (cf 1Ch 2:10-12) Now these are the generations of Perez: to Perez was born Hezron, 19 and to Hezron was born **Ram**, and to **Ram**, **Amminadab**, 20 and to **Amminadab** was born **Nahshon**, and to **Nahshon**, **Salmon**, (cf Lk 3:32+) 21 and to **Salmon** was born Boaz, and to Boaz, Obed, 22 and to Obed was born Jesse, and to Jesse, David.

### Cross-references:

- **Salmon** - Ruth 4:20; Ruth 4:21; 1 Ch 2:51, 54. Matt. 1:4; Matt. 1:5; Lk. 3:32
- **Nahshon** - Ex 6:23. Nu 1:7. 2:3. 7:12, 17. 10:14. Mt 1:4.

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**Matthew 1:5 Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab, Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse.**

- **Salmon:** Ru 4:21 1Ch 2:11,12,
- **Rahab:** Jos 2:1-22 6:22-25 Heb 11:31 Jas 2:25,
- **Boaz:** Ru 1:4,16,17,22 2:1-4:22
- **Obed:** Lk 3:32+

**Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab** - Note that elsewhere in the NT, **Rahab** is known by the epithet "**Rahab the harlot**," either in the esteemed "Hebrews hall of faith" in Hebrews 11. Go figure! This is grace like Paul described writing that "The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, **grace** abounded all the more." (Ro 5:20) Don't you love God. He reaches down and saves those that society ostracizes and casts off, those who do not deserve salvation! I know because He saved me from the guttermost to the uttermost!

Ruth 4:21+ and to **Salmon** was born **Boaz**, and to **Boaz**, **Obed**,

Hebrews 11:31+ By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.

James 2:25+ In the same way, was not **Rahab** the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

**John Walvoord** - Rahab, a harlot rescued from Jericho because she delivered and sheltered the spies (Jos 2:6; 6:25), is declared by Matthew to have been the wife of Salmon, the father of Boaz. There is no Old Testament support for Matthew's statement.

**Ray Pritchard** summarizes the story of **Rahab** -

We pass now to the second woman on the list—Rahab. Most of us know more about her. In fact, she is almost always mentioned by a certain phrase in the Bible, a phrase most of us know by heart: Rahab the harlot. But that's not all. Rahab was also a Canaanite—who were the hated enemies of Israel. Her most exemplary deed was the telling of a lie. Think about that. A Harlot, a Canaanite and a liar. You wouldn't think she would have much chance of making the list, but there she is. Her story is tied in with the larger story of Joshua's conquest of the walled city of Jericho. When Joshua sent spies into the city, Rahab hid them in her house. In exchange for safe passage out of the city, they promised to spare her and her household when the invasion took place. All she had to do was to hang a scarlet cord from her window so the Israelites could identify her house. She agreed, hid the spies, and when the king of Jericho sent messengers asking her to bring out the men, she lied and said they had already left the city (they were hiding on the roof). She let them out of a window with a rope, whereupon they returned to Joshua. It's a great story with many lessons, but we mustn't miss the point that Rahab was a harlot. That was her "trade." The men hid there because people would be accustomed to seeing strangers come and go at all hours of the night. We also can't deny the fact that Rahab told a bald-faced lie. Is there anything good we can say about her? Yes! She was a woman of faith. You don't have to take my word for it. Hebrews 11:31 says, "By faith Rahab ..." She was a believer! And her lie was motivated by her faith! When the invasion came, she was spared and in the course of time became the great-great grandmother of King David. A harlot ... a Canaanite ... and a liar. Also a woman of faith. She made the list and she's a part of Jesus' family tree. ([Four Women in Jesus' Family Tree](#)).

**Spurgeon on Rahab the Harlot** - I have often tried to put myself in Rahab's place and have said, 'Suppose I had been hiding two servants of God during the days of Claverhouse's dragoons; for instance, if I had Alexander Peden and Cameron in the back room, and two dragoons should ride up to my door and demand, "Are the ministers here?" ' I have tried to imagine what I should say and I have never yet been able to make up my mind. I suppose I have more light than Rahab and certainly more leisure to consider the case, and yet I do not see my way. I do not wonder, therefore, that she blundered. I am not astonished that she said what she did, for it would readily suggest itself to her ignorant and anxious mind. I have turned over a great many schemes of what I would have said. I do not see how I could have said, 'Yes, they are indoors.' That would be to betray God's servants, and that I would not do. I have concocted a great many pretty-looking plans, but upon examination they appear to be more or less tinctured with the deceit which tries to justify or conceal deceit, and I have had to abandon them as being no better than falsehood and perhaps not quite so good. I am not sure whether Rahab's lie was not more honest and outspoken than many an evasion which has suggested itself to very clever people; as a rule things which are not obvious, and need cleverness to suggest them, are rather suspicious. If you strip these clever plans, they peel into falsehoods. I do not want to say a word of apology for the falsehood. It is altogether wrong; but before you condemn Rahab, be sure that you do not condemn yourself; ask yourself what you would have said, or done under the circumstances. To tell the truth is always right.

I like this in Rahab, that she did not bargain for her own safety alone. Her sin had not hardened her heart as sin does in many cases. She thought of her father, her mother, her brothers, and her sisters. Wherever there is a real child of God there will be anxiety for his family. If you do not want to have your children saved, you are not saved yourself. - Spurgeon

**Spurgeon Morning and Evening on Rahab** - Rahab depended for her preservation upon the promise of the spies, whom she looked upon as the representatives of the God of Israel. Her faith was simple and firm, but it

was very obedient. To tie the scarlet line in the window was a very trivial act in itself, but she dared not run the risk of omitting it. Come, my soul, is there not here a lesson for thee? Hast thou been attentive to all thy Lord's will, even though some of his commands should seem non-essential? Hast thou observed in his own way the two ordinances of believers' baptism and the Lord's Supper? These neglected, argue much unloving disobedience in thy heart. Be henceforth in all things blameless, even to the tying of a thread, if that be matter of command. This act of Rahab sets forth a yet more solemn lesson. Have I implicitly trusted in the precious blood of Jesus? Have I tied the scarlet cord, as with a Gordian knot in my window, so that my trust can never be removed? Or can I look out towards the Dead Sea of my sins, or the Jerusalem of my hopes, without seeing the blood, and seeing all things in connection with its blessed power? The passer-by can see a cord of so conspicuous a colour, if it hangs from the window: it will be well for me if my life makes the efficacy of the atonement conspicuous to all onlookers. What is there to be ashamed of? Let men or devils gaze if they will, the blood is my boast and my song. My soul, there is One who will see that scarlet line, even when from weakness of faith thou canst not see it thyself; Jehovah, the Avenger, will see it and pass over thee. Jericho's walls fell flat: Rahab's house was on the wall, and yet it stood unmoved; my nature is built into the wall of humanity, and yet when destruction smites the race, I shall be secure. My soul, tie the scarlet thread in the window afresh, and rest in peace.

**Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse** (cf Lk 3:32+) - In the book of Ruth, she is repeatedly referred to as **Ruth the Moabitess** (Ruth 1:22; Ruth 2:2; Ruth 2:21; Ruth 4:5; Ruth 4:10)

Ruth 4:13 So **Boaz** took **Ruth**, and she became his wife, and he went in to her. And **the LORD enabled her to conceive**, and **she gave birth to a son**. 14 Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed is the LORD who has not left you without a redeemer today, and may his name become famous in Israel. 15 "May he also be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him." 16 Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her lap, and became his nurse. 17 The **neighbor women gave him a name**, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi!" So they named him **Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David**. 18 Now these are the generations of Perez: to Perez was born Hezron, 19 and to Hezron was born Ram, and to Ram, Amminadab, 20 and to Amminadab was born Nahshon, and to Nahshon, Salmon, 21 and to Salmon was born Boaz, and to **Boaz, Obed**, 22 and to **Obed** was born Jesse, and to Jesse, David.

**Ray Pritchard** summarizes the story of **Ruth** -

The most significant point about Ruth is that she, too, was not a Jew. She was in fact from the country of Moab. And that takes us back to Genesis 19 and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. On that dreadful day Lot escaped Sodom with his wife and two daughters. His wife was turned into a pillar of salt, but Lot and his daughters found refuge in a cave. His daughters evidently had been badly affected by their time in Sodom because they conspired to lure their father into sleeping with them. On successive nights they got Lot drunk and slept with him. Both sisters got pregnant and gave birth to sons - one named Moab, the other named Ammon. Those two boys—born of incest—grew up to found nations that would eventually become both incredibly evil as well as bitter enemies of Israel. The Jews hated the Moabites and Ammonites and wanted nothing to do with them. The book which bears her name tells of the romance that blossomed between Ruth the Moabitess and Boaz the Israelite. They were a very unlikely couple but in God's providence they were brought together in marriage. They had a son named Obed who had a son named Jesse who had a son named David, making Ruth David's great-grandmother. And that's how a person from the hated nation of Moab entered the line of the Messiah. ([Four Women in Jesus' Family Tree](#)).

**Spurgeon** - Thus was Ruth's self-denying faith rewarded. She left behind her both relatives, country, and prospects, to cast in her lot with the Lord's people, and the Lord not only blessed her, but blessed distant generations through her. Those who follow the Lord at all hazards shall be no losers in the long run. To increase Ruth's joy and crown her happiness, the Lord gave her a son, which son was also a joy to Naomi. (And was in the line of the Messiah!)

**Cross-references:**

- **Jesse** - Ru 4:18-22 1Sa 17:58 20:31 1Ki 12:16 1Ch 2:10-15 Ps 72:20 Isa 11:1,2 Mt 1:3-6 Ac 13:22,23
- **Obed** - Mt 1:5. Ru 4:17. Nu 1:7. 2:3. 7:12. 1 Ch 2:11, 12
- **Rahab** - Jos. 2:1; Jos. 2:3; Jos. 6:17; Jos. 6:23; Jos. 6:25; Job 9:13; Job 26:12; Matt. 1:5; Heb. 11:31; Jas. 2:25
- **Boaz** - Ruth 2:1; Ruth 2:3; Ruth 2:4; Ruth 2:5; Ruth 2:8; Ruth 2:11; Ruth 2:14; Ruth 2:15; Ruth 2:19; Ruth 2:23; Ruth 3:2; Ruth 3:7; Ruth 4:1; Ruth 4:5; Ruth 4:8; Ruth 4:9; Ruth 4:13; Ruth 4:21; 1 Ki. 7:21; 1 Chr. 2:11; 1 Chr. 2:12; 2 Chr. 3:17; Matt. 1:5; Lk.

**Matthew 1:6 Jesse was the father of David the king. David was the father of Solomon by Bathsheba who had been the wife of Uriah.**

- **Jesse:** Ru 4:22 1Sa 16:1,11-13 17:12,58 20:30,31 22:8 2Sa 23:1 1Ch 2:15 Ps 72:20 Isa 11:1 Ac 13:22,23
- **Solomon:** 2Sa 12:24,25 1Ch 3:5 14:4 28:5
- **by Bathsheba:** 2Sa 11:3,26,27 1Ki 1:11-17,28-31 15:5 Ro 8:3
- **Uriah:** 2Sa 23:39 1Ch 11:41

**Jesse was the father of David the king** - David is the pivotal person at the beginning of the second set of 3 groupings. This is the only mention of David as king, but is apropos for it establishes that the royalty of the Messiah's line, a theme which is picked up on in Matthew 2:2+ when the magi asked "Where is He who has been born **King** of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him." **Fenton** comments that "The addition of the title, *the king*, marks the end of this period of waiting, and points forward to Jesus, the Son of David, the Christ, the King of the Jews." ([The Gospel of St Matthew](#)) It is also notable that Matthew does not use the title of "king" for any of the other kings listed, presumably as he wanted to focus attention on David as king and Jesus the son of David as the fulfillment of that kingship.

Ru 4:22 And to Obed was born **Jesse**, and to **Jesse**, **David**.

**Jesse** - Ru 4:18-22 1Sa 17:58 20:31 1Ki 12:16 1Ch 2:10-15 Ps 72:20 Isa 11:1,2 Mt 1:3-6 Ac 13:22,23

**David was the father of Solomon by Bathsheba who had been the wife of Uriah** - God honors the slain husband [Uriah](#) whose name means "light of Jehovah." Solomon's mother **Bathsheba** was a Gentile since Uriah was a Hittite.

**Ray Pritchard** summarizes the story of **Bathsheba** -

The last woman is not mentioned by name. She is however clearly identified as the woman "who had been Uriah's wife." The story of Bathsheba's adultery with King David is so well-known that it need not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that adultery was only the beginning. Before the scandal was over it included lying, a royal cover-up, and ultimately murder. As a result the child conceived that night died soon after birth and David's family and his empire began to crumble. Eventually David married Bathsheba and they had another son—Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived. Quite a result for a union that began in adultery. There's dirt all over this episode. But don't miss the main point: Bathsheba made the list. Her name isn't there but she is mentioned nonetheless. ([Four Women in Jesus' Family Tree](#)).

**Pritchard sums up the four women in Jesus' Family Tree** -

#### Four Unlikely Women

- Tamar: Incest, immorality, feigned prostitution, a Gentile
- Rahab: Harlotry, lying, deception, a Canaanite
- Ruth: A woman from Moab—a nation born out of incest
- Bathsheba: Adultery

#### Four unlikely women:

- Three are Gentiles
- Three are involved in some form of sexual immorality
- Two are involved in prostitution
- One is an adulteress
- All four are in the line that leads to Jesus Christ!

Why would God include women like that in this list? But it's not just the women. Think about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David. They were sinners, too. Why include people like that? I think there are three answers to that question:

**1. He did it to send a message to self-righteous people.**

Matthew was written especially to the Jews. Many of their leaders (the Pharisees in particular) were self-righteous and judgmental toward others. They truly thought they deserved eternal life. What a shock it would be to read this genealogy because it is filled with liars, murderers, thieves, adulterers and harlots. Not a pretty picture. Not a “clean” family tree. This list was a stinging rebuke to that kind of judgmental self-righteousness. Do you know what this means? Jesus was born into a sinful family. He came from a long line of sinners.

## 2. He did it so that God’s grace might be richly displayed.

If you come from a family like this, you can’t exactly boast of your heritage. Sure, your ancestors were rulers and kings, but they were also great sinners. Question: Can a prostitute go to heaven? Yes or no? Can an adulterer go to heaven? Can a murderer go to heaven? Can a liar go to heaven? You’d better say yes, because Rahab and David are both going to be in heaven—and Rahab was a prostitute and a liar and David was an adulterer and a murderer. When you read the stories of these four women—and of the men on the list—you aren’t supposed to focus on the sin, but on the grace of God. The hero of this story is God. His grace shines through the blackest of human sin as he chooses flawed men and women and places them in Jesus’ family tree.

## 3. He did it so that we would focus on Jesus Christ.

Many people are intimidated by Jesus Christ. They hook him up with a lot of religious paraphernalia—big sanctuaries, stained glass, beautiful choir, pipe organs, formal prayers, and all the rest. When they look at the trappings, it’s all very intimidating to them. To many in the world today, Jesus seems too good to be true.

This genealogy is in the Bible to let us know that he had a background a lot like yours and mine. He called himself “the friend of sinners,” and he said he didn’t come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He said, “The Son of man has come to seek and to save that which is lost.”

My final point should greatly encourage you: No matter what your past, Jesus can save you. **Any murderers reading these words? Any prostitutes? Any adulterers? Any liars? Any cheaters? Any angry people? Any thieves? Any hypocrites?** Good News! No matter what you’ve done in the past, Jesus can save you. If a prostitute can be saved, you can be saved. If a murderer can be transformed, you can be transformed. If an incestuous person can be saved, then there is hope for you. No matter what your past looks like, or your present feels like, no matter where you’ve been or what you’ve done, God can give you a fresh start. After I preached this sermon in the early service, a man who is going through a difficult divorce said these words to me: “I’m glad to know somebody else comes from a broken family.” He’s right. There’s a lot of dysfunction in Jesus’ family tree. There’s a lot of brokenness and a lot of pain. He knows exactly what you are going through this year at Christmastime.

I hope you won’t skip Matthew 1 in your Bible reading. This unlikely list of unlikely people may be the greatest chapter on the grace of God in all the Bible. In these forgotten names from the past God turns the spotlight of his holy grace on fallen men and women, and through their lives, we see what the grace of God can do.

Good news! Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Good news! Call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. He didn’t come to make you religious, he came to save you from your sins. He didn’t come to make you pious, he came to save you from your sins. He didn’t come for moral reformation, he came to give you eternal salvation.

As strange as it may seem, the worse you are, the better candidate you are for the grace of God. He came to do for you what you could never do for yourself. He came to save you from your sins.

The same grace that Rahab experienced is now available to you. I invite you in Jesus’ name to come and be forgiven. He’s already made the first move. The next step is up to you. ([Four Women in Jesus' Family Tree](#)).

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**John Hutchinson** in an article entitled "[WOMEN, GENTILES, AND THE MESSIANIC MISSION IN MATTHEW’S GENEALOGY](#)" (Bibliotheca Sacra - 158, 2001) gives his "theological" reasons for the women in Matthew’s account:

In summary the inclusion of the four Old Testament women in Christ’s genealogy is an intentional device to remind the recipients of Matthew’s Gospel of several Old Testament stories with a common theological point. The allusions to these stories accomplish four theological purposes.

**First**, they demonstrate God’s providential hand in preserving Messiah’s line, even in apostate times. This naturally led to Matthew’s account of the virgin conception, through which God brought the Messiah into the world.

**Second**, they demonstrate God’s heart for godly Gentiles and the significant role of their faith at crucial times

in Israel's history.

**Third**, they demonstrate the importance of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants in understanding Messiah's mission, with a focus on faith and obedience, not a racial line.

**Fourth**, they call Matthew's readers to repentance and humility, and to accepting Gentiles into the body of Christ, thereby affirming an important theme of Matthew's Gospel.

#### Matthew 1:7 Solomon was the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa.

- **Rehoboam:** 1Ki 11:43 1 Ki 12:1-24 1Ch 3:10 2Ch 9:31 13:7,
- **Abijah:** 1Ki 14:31, Abijam, 2Ch 12:1,
- **Asa:** 1Ki 15:8-23 2Ch 14:1-16:14

Matthew 1:7-11 names kings all of whom are also listed in 1 Chr 3:10-16. As you examine this list, it is clear Matthew omits the names of Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah (1 Chr 3:11-12).

**Solomon was the father of Rehoboam** - [Hitchcock](#) says his name means "Who sets the people at liberty."

1 Kings 11:43 And **SOLOMON** slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of his father David, and his son **REHOBOAM** reigned in his place (1 Ki 12:1-24).

**Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa.**

1 Chronicles 3:10 Now Solomon's son was **REHOBOAM**, **ABIJAH** was his son, **ASA** his son, Jehoshaphat his son,

#### Matthew 1:8 Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah.

NET Matthew 1:8 Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of **Joram**, Joram the father of Uzziah,

GNT Matthew 1:8 σ φ δ γ ννησεν τ ν ωσαφ τ, ωσαφ τ δ γ ννησεν τ ν ω ρ μ, ω ρ μ δ γ ννησεν τ ν ζ αν,

NLT Matthew 1:8 Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat was the father of **Jehoram**. Jehoram was the father of Uzziah.

KJV Matthew 1:8 And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat **Joram**; and Joram begat Ozias;

ESV Matthew 1:8 and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of **Joram**, and Joram the father of Uzziah,

NIV Matthew 1:8 Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of **Jehoram**, Jehoram the father of Uzziah,

ASV Matthew 1:8 and Asa begat Jehoshaphat; and Jehoshaphat begat **Joram**; and Joram begat Uzziah;

CSB Matthew 1:8 Asa fathered Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat fathered **Joram**, Joram fathered Uzziah,

- **Jehoshaphat:** 1Ki 15:24 1 Ki 22:2-50 2Ki 3:1 2Ch 17:1-20:37
- **Joram:** 1Ki 22:50 2Ki 8:16, 1Ch 3:11 2Ch 21:1
- **Uzziah:** 2 Ki 14:2 2Ki 14:21 2 Ki 15:1-7, 13, 2Ch 26:1-23

### MATTHEW'S GENEALOGY IS SELECTIVE

**Andrus** - Jehoram was actually not the father of Uzziah Now please don't think of this as an error in Matthew's research, for the term "**father of**" in Greek also means "ancestor of." Unfortunately we cannot be certain why Matthew was bent on this symmetry of 14; it may have been simply a memory device. ([Matthew 1:1-17 Son of Man, Son of God \(or, Termites in the Family Tree\)](#))

**Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat** - Note that the term "**father of**" is not the Greek word for "**father**" ([pater](#)) but is the

verb [gennao](#) which is rendered in the KJV as "begat" and can be rendered "ancestor of."

1 Kings 15:24 And **ASA** slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father; and **JEHOSHAPHAT** his son reigned in his place. (cf his reign 1 Ki 22:2-50, 2Ch 17:1-20:37)

**Jehoshaphat the father of [Joram](#), and Joram the father of [Uzziah](#)** - In 2 Kings 15:1 we read "In the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam (aka Joram) king of Israel, Azariah (aka Uzziah) son of Amaziah king of Judah became king." Notice **Azariah/Uzziah's** father was not **Joram/Jehoram** but was Amaziah who is not listed by Matthew. As **Bob Utley** points out "Three Judean kings between Joram and Uzziah are omitted (1) **Ahaziah** (cf. 2 Ki 8, 9; 2 Chr. 22); (2) **Joash** (cf. 2 Ki 11:2; 12:19–21; 2 Chr. 24); and (3) **Amaziah** (cf. 2 Ki 14; 2 Chr. 25). The reason for their omission is uncertain."

King Uzziah was struck with leprosy for daring to enter the temple as a priest to offer incense (2 Chr 26:16-21), which is another illustration that God did not shy away from including sinners in the line of Messiah! As noted in the passage quoted above, King Uzziah was not the immediate son of Joram/Jehoram, but was actually his great-grandfather, with three kings between them (Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah). Don not think of this as an error in Matthew's research, for the term "**father of**" in Greek as noted above also means "ancestor of." It was very normal for ancient genealogies to pick and choose which ancestors to mention.

Yet as Clarke rightly says, "It is observed that omissions of this kind are not uncommon in the Jewish genealogies." (Guzik)

1 Kings 22:50 (2 Chr 21:1) And **JEHOSHAPHAT** slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of his father David, and **JEHORAM (JORAM)** his son became king in his place.

1 Chronicles 3:11 **JORAM** his son, **AHAZIAH (UZZIAH** his reign - 2Ch 26:1-23) his son, Joash his son,

#### **Matthew 1:9 Uzziah was the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah.**

- **Jotham:** 2Ki 15:7,32-38 1Ch 3:11-13 2Ch 26:21 27:1-9, Jotham
- **Achaz:** 2Ki 15:38 16:1-20 2Ch 27:9 28:1-27 Isa 7:1-13, Ahaz
- **Hezekiah:** 2Ki 16:20 18:1-20:21 2Ch 28:27 29:1-32:33 Isa 36:1-39:8, Hezekiah

**Uzziah** (Azariah) **was the father of [Jotham](#)** means "God is upright." He was the tenth king of Judah, and son of Uzziah, whom he succeeded in B.C. 758, at the age of twenty-five: he reigned sixteen years. He ruled well in the first half of his reign, "But "when he was strong his heart was lifted up to his destruction" (compare Isa 14:12-15), "pride going before destruction" as in Satan's, Babylon's, Tyre's, and antichrist's cases (Ezek 28:2; Ezek 28:17-23; Pr 16:18; Pr 1:32; Pr 1:2 Th 2). Uzziah wished, like Egypt's kings, to make himself high priest, and so combine in himself all civil and religious power. Azariah the high priest, therefore, with 80 valiant priests, withstood his attempt to burn incense (Ex 30:7-8; Nu 16:40; Nu 18:7) on the incense altar. In the very height of his wrath at their resistance a leprosy from God rose up in his forehead, so that they thrust him out, yea he hastened to go out of himself, feeling it vain to resist Jehovah's stroke. So Miriam was punished for trying to appropriate Moses' prerogative (Numbers 12)." Uzziah, being thus severed from Jehovah's house, could no longer live in fellowship with Jehovah's people, but had to dwell in a separate house, counted virtually as dead (Leviticus 13:46; Numbers 12:12) for the year or two before his death, during which Jotham conducted the government for him." ([Uzziah](#))

2 Kings 15:7 And Azariah (Uzziah) slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David, and Jotham his son became king in his place.

**Jotham the father of [Ahaz](#), and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah** - Ahaz (possessor), son of Jotham, and eleventh king of Judah, who reigned sixteen years, beginning in B.C. 741, and ending in 726. **Kitto** writes "Ahaz was the most corrupt monarch that had hitherto appeared in Judah. He respected neither Jehovah the law, nor the prophets; he broke through all the restraints which law and custom had imposed upon the Hebrew kings, and had regard only to his own depraved inclinations. He introduced the religion of the Syrians into Jerusalem, erected altars to the Syrian gods, altered the temple in many respects after the Syrian model, and at length ventured to shut it up altogether."

**Hezekiah** was one of the five godly kings of Judah (Asa, Jehoshaphat, Uzziah, Hezekiah, and Josiah).

**Hezekiah** was the "Twelfth king of Judah; son of the unbelieving Ahaz and Abi or Abijah; ascended the throne at the age of 25 in 726 B.C. Of his faithfulness it is written (2 Kings 18:5) "he trusted in the Lord God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him, for he clave to the Lord, and departed not from following Him but kept His commandments."



- **Manasseh:** 2Ki 20:21 2 Ki 21:1-18 2 Ki 24:3,4 1Ch 3:13-15 2Ch 32:33 2 Chr 33:1-19
- **Amon:** 2Ki 21:19-26 2Ch 33:20-24
- **Josiah:** 1Ki 13:2 2Ki 21:25-26 2 Ki 22:1-20 2 Ki 23:1-30 2Ch 33:25 2 Chr 34:1-33 35:1-27 Jer 1:2,3

**Hezekiah was the father of [Manasseh](#)** - A faithful father begets an unfaithful (for most of his reign) son, Manasseh. He was one of the most wicked kings of Judah, but one who repented!

2 Kings 20:21 (1 Chr 3:13-15; his reign 2 Ki 21:1-18) So **Hezekiah** slept with his fathers, and **Manasseh** his son became king in his place.

2 Chronicles 32:33 (his reign 2 Chr 33:1-19) So **Hezekiah** slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the upper section of the tombs of the sons of David; and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem honored him at his death. And his son **Manasseh** became king in his place.

**Consequences of Manasseh's wickedness** - 2 Kings 24:1-4 In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant for three years; then he turned and rebelled against him. 2 The LORD sent against him bands of Chaldeans, bands of Arameans, bands of Moabites, and bands of Ammonites. So He sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD which He had spoken through His servants the prophets. 3 Surely at the command of the LORD it came upon Judah, to remove them from His sight **because of the sins of Manasseh**, according to all that he had done, 4 **and also for the innocent blood which he shed**, for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; and the LORD would not forgive. (AND THIS WICKED KING IS IN THE LINE OF THE MESSIAH!)

**Manasseh's repentance** - 2 Chr 33:11 Therefore the LORD brought the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria against them, and they captured Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze chains and took him to Babylon. 12 When he was in distress, he entreated the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. 13 When he prayed to Him, He was moved by his entreaty and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God. 14 Now after this he built the outer wall of the city of David on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entrance of the Fish Gate; and he encircled the Ophel with it and made it very high. Then he put army commanders in all the fortified cities of Judah. 15 He also removed the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the LORD, as well as all the altars which he had built on the mountain of the house of the LORD and in Jerusalem, and he threw them outside the city. 16 He set up the altar of the LORD and sacrificed peace offerings and thank offerings on it; and he ordered Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel. 17 Nevertheless the people still sacrificed in the high places, although only to the LORD their God.

**Manasseh the father of [Amon](#),**

2 Chronicles 33:20-24 (2 Chr 33:25) So **Manasseh** slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house. And **Amon** his son became king in his place. 21 **Amon** was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. 22 He did evil in the sight of the LORD as Manasseh his father had done, and **Amon** sacrificed to all the carved images which his father Manasseh had made, and he served them. 23 Moreover, he did not humble himself before the LORD as his father Manasseh had done, but **Amon** multiplied guilt. 24 Finally his servants conspired against him and put him to death in his own house.

**and Amon the father of [Josiah](#)** - His name means "supported or healed by Jehovah." He was a godly king of Judah.

2 Kings 21:25-26 (Josiah's **godly** reign = 2 Ki 22:1-20 2 Ki 23:1-30 and 2 Chr 34:1-33 35:1-27) Now the rest of the acts of **Amon** which he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? 26 He was buried in his grave in the garden of Uzza, and **Josiah** his son became king in his place.

GNT Matthew 1:11 ωσ ας δ γ ννησεν τ ν εχον αν κα το ς δελφο ς α το π τ ς μετοικεσ ας Βαβυλ νος.

NLT Matthew 1:11 Josiah was the father of Jehoiachin and his brothers (born at the time of the exile to Babylon).

KJV Matthew 1:11 And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon:

ESV Matthew 1:11 and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

NIV Matthew 1:11 and Josiah the father of Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.

ASV Matthew 1:11 and Josiah begat Jechoniah and his brethren, at the time of the carrying away to Babylon.

CSB Matthew 1:11 and Josiah fathered Jechoniah and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.

- **Jeconiah:** 2Ki 23:31-37 24:1-20 1Ch 3:15-17 2Ch 36:1-8 Jer 2:10-28
- **at the time of the deportation to Babylon:** 2Ki 24:14-16 25:11 2Ch 36:10,20 Jer 27:20 39:9 52:11-15,28-30 Da 1:2

**Josiah became the father of Jeconiah and his brothers** - **Barbieri** notes that it is "Of particular interest is the inclusion of **Jeconiah** (v. 11) of whom Jeremiah said, "Record this man as if childless" (Jer. 22:30). Jeremiah's prophecy related to the actual occupation of the throne and the reception of blessing while on the throne. Though Jeconiah's sons never occupied the throne, the line of rulership did pass through them. If Jesus had been a physical descendant of Jeconiah, He would not have been able to occupy David's throne. Luke's genealogy made it clear that Jesus was a physical descendant of David through another son named Nathan (Luke 3:31). But Joseph, a descendant of Solomon, was Jesus' legal father, so Jesus' right to the throne was traced through Joseph." (BKC)

**At the time of the deportation to Babylon** - This refers to their 70 years in exile which occurred under Nebuchadnezzar II who conquered Jerusalem three times - 605, 597, 586 B.C. There was a deportation of Daniel and his three friends in 605 B.C. (2) a deportation of Jehoiachin, Ezekiel, and ten thousand soldiers and craftsmen in 597 B.C. (cf. 2 Ki. 24:10–17) and finally (3) the deportation of most of the remaining population (the city of Jerusalem was destroyed) in 586 B.C (2 Ki 25:1-30).

**Deportation** (3350)(**metoikesia** from **metoikeo** = to move from one dwelling to another) describes a change of abode, A moving from one habitation or country to another, a transportation or transplantation. It describes forced removal to another place of habitation and thus deportation, the act of expelling a person from their native land and causing them to dwell in a foreign land. **Metoikeo** is used only 3x in the NT all in chapter 1 - Mt 1:11, 12, 17. While it is translated "deportation" which sounds bad, the true is the meaning of the word is more a change of domicile, so while obviously it was captivity, God saw it as more of a change of residence. In fact most of the Jews exiled to Babylon ended up remaining there after their 70 years was completed.

**Matthew 1:12 After the deportation to Babylon: Jeconiah became the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel.**

NET Matthew 1:12 After the deportation to Babylon, **Jeconiah** became the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,

GNT Matthew 1:12 Μετ δ τ ν μετοικεσ αν Βαβυλ νος εχον ας γ ννησεν τ ν Σαλαθι λ, Σαλαθι λ δ γ ννησεν τ ν Ζοροβαβ λ,

NLT Matthew 1:12 After the Babylonian exile: **Jehoiachin** was the father of Shealtiel. Shealtiel was the father of Zerubbabel.

KJV Matthew 1:12 And after they were brought to Babylon, **Jechonias** begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel;

ESV Matthew 1:12 And after the deportation to Babylon: **Jechoniah** was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,

NIV Matthew 1:12 After the exile to Babylon: **Jeconiah** was the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,

ASV Matthew 1:12 And after the carrying away to Babylon, **Jechoniah** begat Shealtiel; and Shealtiel begat

Zerubbabel;

CSB Matthew 1:12 Then after the exile to Babylon **Jechoniah** fathered Shealtiel, Shealtiel fathered Zerubbabel,

- **Jechoniah (Jehoiachin, Jechonias)** 2Ki 25:27-28, 1Ch 3:17,19-24, Jer 22:24,28
- **and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel** Ezra 3:2, 5:2 Ne 12:1 Hag 1:1,12,14 2:2,23, Lu 3:27

### THIRD SET OF FOURTEEN

**After the deportation to Babylon** - Matthew's "pivot" point to move on to the third grouping is the Babylonian exile or **deportation**. For **deportation** see note above on [metoikesia](#)

**Jechoniah became the father of Shealtiel** - In 1 Chronicles 3:17 we read "The sons of **Jechoniah** (aka **Jehoiachin, Jechonias**), the prisoner, were Shealtiel his son." As Barbieri's says above the fact that Jechoniah had a son does not contradict Jeremiah 22:28-30 because the predicted childlessness of Jechoniah refers to his children who would reign. In short Jechoniah had no son who ruled Israel as king.

**And Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel** - Regarding **Shealtiel** (Salathiel) most modern English translations use the OT form of the name (Shealtiel, Ezra 3:2).

Ezra 3:2 Then Jeshua the son of Jozadak and his brothers the priests, and **Zerubbabel** the son of **Shealtiel** and his brothers arose and built the altar of the God of Israel to offer burnt offerings on it, as it is written in the law of Moses, the man of God.

**Zerubbabel** - Lk 3:27+ Mt 1:12. Governor of Judea appointed by the Persians when the Jews returned from Babylonian exile. He supervised the rebuilding of the Temple (Ezra 3:2, 8).

**Bob Utley - Zerubbabel** was the leader of the Jews in the second return from Babylonian exile, the first return being under Sheshbazzar (cf. Ezra 1:8; 5:14). He was of the line of David (cf. Ezra 2-6). In 1 Chr. 3:16-19, his father is listed as Pedaiah and his grandfather as Shealtiel. Hebrew familial terms were fluid and could refer to several different categories of relatives. In this case, Shealtiel was an uncle. This confusion could be explained if Shealtiel adopted Zerubbabel after his father Pedaiah died (cf. Ezra 3:8; 5:2; Neh. 12:1; Hag. 1:1). These two names (Shealtiel and Zerubbabel) also appear in the Lucan genealogy but in a much later period.

**Matthew 1:13 Zerubbabel was the father of Abihud, Abihud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor.**

### THE "IN COGNITO" ANCESTORS

**Incognito** means without being known. This group from **Abihud** to **Jacob** that spans about 500 years are unknown in the Scriptures, but clearly known to God and to Matthew. Matthew does not tell us how he obtained these names but as explained below he very likely had access to genealogical records.

**Zerubbabel was the father of Abihud, Abihud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor** - **D A Carson** writes "After **Zerubbabel**, Matthew relies on extra-biblical sources of which we know nothing. But there is good evidence that records were kept at least till the end of the first century. Josephus (Life 6 [1]) refers to the "public registers" from which he extracts his genealogical information (cf. also Jos. *Contra Apion* I, 28-56 [6-10]). According to Genesis R 98:8, Rabbi Hillel was proved to be a descendant of David because a genealogical scroll was found in Jerusalem. Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 3. 19-20) cites Hegesippus to the effect that Emperor Domitian (A.D. 81-96) ordered all descendants of David slain. Nevertheless two of them when summoned, though admitting their Davidic descent, showed their calloused hands to prove they were but poor farmers. So they were let go. But the account shows that genealogical information was still available." While no twentieth-century Jew could prove he was from the tribe of Judah, let alone from the house of David, that does not appear to have been a problem in the first century, when lineage was important in gaining access to temple worship. Whether Matthew had access to the records himself or gleaned his information from intermediate sources, we cannot know from this distance; but in any case we "have no good reason to doubt that this genealogy was transmitted in good faith" (Albright and Mann). (Ibid)

**Matthew 1:14 Azor was the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud.**

**Azor was the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud-** There was another **Zadok**, but this **Zadok** was not the faithful priest of David's day (cf. 2 Sa 20:25; 1 Chr. 16:39) because Matthew's Zadok is of the tribe of Judah, not Levi.

**Matthew 1:15 Eliud was the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob.**

**Eliud was the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob.**

**Matthew 1:16 Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.**

NET Matthew 1:16 and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

GNT Matthew 1:16 ακ β δ γ ννησεν τ ν ω σ φ τ ν νδρα Μαρ ας, ξ ς γενν θη ησο ς λεγ μενος Χριστ ς.

NLT Matthew 1:16 Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Mary gave birth to Jesus, who is called the Messiah.

KJV Matthew 1:16 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

ESV Matthew 1:16 and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

NIV Matthew 1:16 and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

ASV Matthew 1:16 and Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

CSB Matthew 1:16 and Jacob fathered Joseph the husband of Mary, who gave birth to Jesus who is called the Messiah.

NKJ Matthew 1:16 And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

NRS Matthew 1:16 and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.

YLT Matthew 1:16 and Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was begotten Jesus, who is named Christ.

- **Joseph:** Mt 1:18-25 2:13 Lu 1:27 2:4,5,48 3:23 4:22
- **by whom Jesus was born:** Mk 6:3 Lu 1:31-35 2:7,10,11
- **who is called the Messiah:** Mt 27:17,22 Joh 4:25

## **JOSEPH, THE FORGOTTEN MAN OF CHRISTMAS!**

Have you ever heard a sermon on Joseph? Probably not. There is not much is said about him in the Bible. **Ray Pritchard** writes "This week I flipped through our hymnal to see how many times his name is mentioned. This is what I discovered: –Mary is mentioned by name 7 times. –Joseph is never mentioned—not even one time. In the great hymn "Angels We Have Heard on High," there is a verse that mentions him—"See within a manger laid, Jesus, Lord of heaven and earth! Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, sing with us Messiah's birth." Unfortunately our hymnal omits that verse, which means that Joseph is left out completely."

**Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus(see [lesous](#)) was born, who is called the Messiah**

(see [Christos](#)) - Jesus is legally Joseph's son. This verse gives us a "hint" at what Matthew later states plainly, that Jesus was born to a virgin named Mary. See the following note by Andrus.

**Andrus** makes an interesting point that "A recent survey showed that nationwide 56% of seminary students and faculty do not believe in the Virgin Birth—and that in spite of the fact that it is clearly taught in the Scripture. You can see it right here at the end of Jesus' genealogy in verse 16, where it says, "and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of **whom** was born Jesus, who is called Christ." A short grammar lesson reveals that there is no ambiguity here regarding the parentage of Jesus. In English the pronoun "**whom**" has no gender and no number. The same pronoun is used whether one is referring to a man, a woman, more than one man, more than one woman, or even a mixed group of men and women. But in the Greek language, there is a different form of "**whom**" for each of these cases. There is a masculine singular form, a masculine plural, a feminine singular, and a feminine plural. The only time the feminine singular form is used is when a single female is the antecedent. Now which form of "**whom**" do you think is used here in verse 16? Yes, it's the feminine singular, meaning that Jesus was **born of Mary, not of Mary and Joseph**. The Virgin Birth is, of course, confirmed later right in this chapter. (Mt 1:20, 23).

**Barbieri** states it this way - When the fifth woman, Mary (Mt. 1:16), was mentioned in the genealogy, an important change occurred. The genealogy consistently repeated, the father of, until it came to Mary. At that point Matthew changed and said of whom was born Jesus. The "**of whom**" is a feminine relative pronoun (ex hēs - **ED**: Note "**ex**" = out of), clearly indicating that Jesus was the physical Child of Mary but that Joseph was not His physical father. This miraculous conception and birth are explained in Mt 1:18–25." (BKC)

**Matthew 1:17** So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.

### THREE "FOURTEENS"

**Zodhiates** comments that "Matthew divides the genealogy of Jesus into three divisions (with various omissions, since Jewish genealogies generally listed only prominent individuals): from Abraham to Solomon (Mt 1:2-6), from Solomon to the Babylonian captivity (Mt 1:7-11), and from the return of the Babylonian captives to the appearance of Christ (Mt 1:12-16). The intervening fourteen generations in each period are loosely and purposefully calculated to reach the time when the eternal Word entered verifiable history. This may have been arranged for the purpose of easy memorization, since few books were available at that time." (Exegetical Commentary - Matthew)

**So all the generations** ([genea](#)) **from Abraham to David are fourteen generations** ([genea](#)) - **All the generations** does not mean that the 3 groupings of 14 generations are **ALL** of the genealogy from Abraham to Jesus (see Zodhiates comment above).

**Generations** ([1074](#))([genea](#)) gives us our English genealogy) literally refers to those descended from a common ancestor and in this sense refers to a race, a clan or descendants.

**From David to the deportation** ([metoikesia](#)) **to Babylon, fourteen generations** - As discussed it is clear that Matthew did not list every single individual between Abraham and David (Mt 1:2-6), between David and the Exile (Mt 1:6-11) and between the Babylonian Exile and Jesus (Mt 1:12-15). As noted above, the Jews did not require every single name in order to recognize a genealogy as valid. The question then arises why did Matthew have 3 groups of fourteen. Commentators are not in agreement as to why the three "fourteens" but one that is accepted by several scholars is the explanation of D A Carson (EBC)...

The simplest explanation—the one that best fits the context—observes that the numerical value of "**David**" in Hebrew is fourteen. By this symbolism Matthew points out that the promised "son of David" (Mt 1:1), the Messiah, has come. And if the third set of fourteen is short one member, perhaps it will suggest to some readers that just as God cuts short the time of distress for the sake of his elect (Mt 24:22), so also He mercifully shortens the period from the Exile to Jesus the Messiah. (EBC)

**And from the deportation** ([metoikesia](#)) **to Babylon to the Messiah** (literally "Christ" see [Christos](#)), **fourteen generations** - This would obviously include the 400 years when God was "silent," and this would explain why a number of these names are not found anywhere else in Scripture - **Abihud, Eliakim, Azor** (Mt 1:13), **Zadok, Achim, Eliud** (Mt 1:14), **Eleazar, Matthan, Jacob** (only 2 mentions of Joseph's father) (Mt 1:15, 16).

**Technical Note** - The Greek word [messias](#) which is literally "Messiah" is only found 2 times in the NT, Jn 1:41+ (Andrew addressing his brother Simon Peter) and Jn 4:25+ (from the lips of a Samaritan!). Compare the related Hebrew word [mashiach/masiyah](#) found 38x in the OT and translated in NAS as Anointed (1x - Ps 2:2), anointed (34), anointed ones(2), Messiah (2x - Da 9:25+, Da 9:26+). Several modern translations frequently translate the Greek word [Christos](#) (means "anointed one") with the English word "Messiah." For example, the

HCSB translates [Christos](#) as Messiah over 100 times (last use in Rev 20:6).

**Constable** - The differences with Jesus' genealogy in Luke 3:23–38 are a problem that no one has been able to solve adequately. The problem is that Joseph's ancestors in Matthew's genealogy are different from his ancestors in Luke's genealogy, especially from Joseph to King David. The theory that most scholars subscribe to now is that Matthew gave the legal line of descent from David, stating who was the heir to the throne in each case, and Luke gave the actual descendants of David in the branch of David's family to which Joseph belonged. " ([Matthew 1 Commentary](#))

**John Walvoord** on the three 14's - The deliberate editing of the genealogy to provide three divisions of fourteen generations each was by design, probably for literary symmetry, although some have pointed out that the numerical value of the Hebrew consonants in the word *David* add up to fourteen. A further problem appears because the last section has actually only thirteen names. Complicated explanations are not wanting. Suggested answers include a textual omission of Jehoiakim or the possibility that Jesus is considered the fourteenth. ([Commentary](#))

#### Related Resources:

- [Is there an error in the counting of the 14 generations in Matthew chapter 1?](#)
- [What is the relevance of the genealogies in the Bible?](#)
- [What does it mean that Jesus is the son of David?](#)
- [Where was Joseph when Jesus was an adult?](#)
- [Why are Jesus' genealogies in Matthew and Luke so different?](#)

**Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.**

NET Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ happened this way. While his mother Mary was engaged to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.

GNT Matthew 1:18 Το ὄρθο Χριστο γενεσις οτως ν. μνηστευθε σης τς μητρς ατο Μαρ ας τ ωσ φ, πρ ν συνελθε ν ατο ς ε ρ θη ν γαστρ χουσα κ πνε ματος γ ου.

NLT Matthew 1:18 This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit.

KJV Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

ESV Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

NIV Matthew 1:18 This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.

ASV Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

CSB Matthew 1:18 The birth of Jesus Christ came about this way: After His mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, it was discovered before they came together that she was pregnant by the Holy Spirit.

- **the birth:** Lu 1:27-38
- **by the Holy Spirit** Ge 3:15 Job 14:4 15:14 Lu 1:25,35 Ga 4:4,5 Heb 7:26 10:5

## THE "GENESIS" OF JESUS

So Mt 1:1-17 describes the **genealogical record** and Mt 1:18-25 describes the **birth record** of Jesus. The word for **birth** is **genesis**, used in Genesis 2:4 to describe the **creation of heaven and earth!** How ironic that it is used here by Matthew to describe the earthly "genesis" of the **Creator of heaven and earth!** As Kent Hughes says "The Spirit *genesis-ed* Jesus!," adding that "It is not "the genesis," of course, in the sense of the birth of God's preexistent Son, but rather "the genesis" of the Spirit's work to take the preexistent Son and form his inward parts—to knit him together in his mother's womb, to make him "fearfully and wonderfully" human

(cf. Psalm 139:13, 14)."

The [Nicene Creed](#) describes the birth or "genesis" of Jesus:

"We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

"And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and **was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary**, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end.

"And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen."

**Now the birth of Jesus Christ** (see [Jesus Christos](#)) **was as follows** - NLT = "This is how Jesus the Messiah was born." "**Birth** is from the same Greek root as "genealogy" in verse 1, indicating that Matthew is here giving a parallel account of Jesus' ancestry—this time from His Father's side." (MacArthur)

**Birth** (1078) (genesis from [gennao](#) = to give birth to, beget) . **BDAG** - lit. of ancestry as point of origin but also of one's coming into being at a specific moment. In James 1:23+ it means natural and describes one's face literally reading "the face (prosopon) he **was born with**." It is his natural face, i.e. the way he has turned out to be, the way he really looks. It means life, human experience in Jas 3:6 was used in the Orphic mysteries with the meaning, 'wheel of human origin'. In James 3:6 it seems to have lost its original meaning and to signify course of life, whole of life. In Mt 1:1 genesis means an account of someone's life or their life history, the source, origin so that biblos geneseos tinou = a book of one's lineage, i.e. in which his ancestry or his progeny are enumerated.

**Genesis** - birth(2), genealogy(1), life(1), natural(1). Matt. 1:1; Matt. 1:18; Lk. 1:14 - "many will rejoice at his (John the Baptist's) **birth**."; Jas. 1:23; Jas. 3:6

**Genesis** in [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) - Ge 2:4 = "the **account** of..."; Gen. 5:1 = "book of **generations**"; Gen. 6:9 = "**generations** of Noah"; Gen. 10:1; Gen. 10:32; Gen. 11:10; Gen. 11:27; Gen. 25:12; Gen. 25:19; Gen. 31:13; Gen. 32:9; Gen. 36:1; Gen. 36:9; Gen. 37:2; Gen. 40:20; Exod. 6:24; Exod. 6:25; Exod. 28:10; Num. 1:18; Num. 3:1; Ruth 2:11; Ruth 4:18; 1 Chr. 1:29; 1 Chr. 4:2; 1 Chr. 4:21; 1 Chr. 4:38; 1 Chr. 5:7; 1 Chr. 7:2; 1 Chr. 7:4; 1 Chr. 7:9; 1 Chr. 8:28; 1 Chr. 9:9; 1 Chr. 9:34; 1 Chr. 26:31; Eccl. 7:1; Ezek. 4:14; Ezek. 16:3; Ezek. 16:4; Dan. 2:43; Hos. 2:3;

**TECHNICAL NOTE** - The [Greek Textus Receptus](#) has **genesis** (1083) for birth (in KJV of Mt 1:18, Lk 1:14), whereas the modern manuscripts (Nestle/Aland) have **genesis** (1078) which most authorities accept as the authentic reading.

**When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph** - The first stage of marriage in Jewish culture, usually lasting for a year before the wedding night, more legal than an engagement Mary's character is well summed up in Lk 1:38+ when she said "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her." Mary's humility, reverence and love for her Lord are verbalized in her famous Magnificat, in Luke 1:46–55+ beginning with these words "My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.... For the Mighty One has done great things for me; and holy is His name" (Lk 1:47, 49)." We know very little about Joseph, except that his father's name was Jacob (Mt 1:16), he was likely a carpenter by trade (Mt 13:55) and he was a righteous man (Mt 1:19).

**Betrothed** (3423) ([mnesteuo](#) from [mnaomai](#) = to remember) to be engaged was "to be remembered." In the active voice means to woo and win for marriage, to ask in marriage, to pledge to marry. **Mnesteuo** is used only in the passive voice in the NT and means to be promised in marriage, to be [betrothed](#), to become engaged. **Mnesteuo** is used in the NT only in Mt 1:18 ([betrothed](#)), Lk 1:27 and Lk 2:5. As used in by the NT writers **mnesteuo** described a legally binding arrangement, unlike the sense of engagement as used today.

**Zodhiates** has an informative discussion of **mnesteuo** - It is related to the verb used for "**remember**" because it was a ceremony which was to be remembered when a person was espoused or committed to another for marriage (Sept.: Dt. 22:23, 25, 27, 28). The betrothal ceremony perpetuated in a conventional fashion the

recollection of the time when a woman was purchased from her family (Dt. 20:7). When a woman was designated (Ex. 21:8, 9) by the head of her family as the future wife of another man, the prospective bridegroom paid a certain sum of money (or service as in the case of Jacob). A contract, which was inviolable, was then entered into (Ge 34:12; Ex 22:17). Until the time of the actual marriage, the bride-to-be remained in her own family. It was not permissible to betroth her to any other man except by action amounting to divorce, and any violation of the rights established by the betrothal was as serious as if the two persons had been ceremonially married (Dt. 22:23, 24). In the OT, it is impossible to say with precision just how soon the wedding followed betrothal. In later times, in the case of a virgin, it was after the lapse of a year, and at least thirty days in the case of a widow. So, too, it is impossible to describe with any great precision the betrothal ceremony, but it certainly included the payment of a particular sum (1 Sa 18:25) and the making of a betrothal contract (Ezek 16:8) by the prospective bridegroom. The money payment belonged originally to the family of the woman, but gradually came to belong in part or wholly to the woman herself. The first advances might come from the family of either party. There is no clear evidence that the young woman had any right of appeal as to her family's choice. The bridegroom himself did not conduct the negotiations, but the matter was in the hands of a third party such as his parents or some trusted servant or friend.

After the exile, the custom of the earlier period seems to have continued, although with certain modifications. The payment to the bride's father on the part of the prospective groom had been increasingly regarded as the property, at least in part, of the bride. Such a payment during this period was often supplemented by a dowry in the true sense. No consent of the girl was demanded, nor do we know of the recognition of any legal age of consent, unless, as in somewhat later times, it was not expected that boys would marry before the age of eighteen or girls before twelve. In Talmudic times, there was a distinct tendency to combine the betrothal with the wedding. Today the Jews seem to combine the two ceremonies.

Probably the ceremony of betrothal in NT times involved the following acts:

- **First**, a contract drawn up by the parents or by the friend of the bridegroom. (Play [Matchmaker](#), [Matchmaker from Fiddler on the Roof](#))
- **Second**, the meeting of the two families concerned, with other witnesses, at which time the groom gave the bride jewelry (Gen. 24:53) and declared his intention to observe the terms of the contract already arranged.
- **Third**, the payment of the mōhar (4119 - **Ed Note**: Gesenius Definition מֹהָר m. a price paid for a wife to her parents, Ge 34:12; Ex 22:16; 1 Sa 18:25. Different from this is the use of the Arab. مَهْر i.e. a spousal gift promised to the future wife, and the Latin dos, i.e. the gift given by the parents to their daughter who is about to be married.) by the prospective bridegroom. This occurred during a ceremony at which a priest may have been present.

The status of the man and woman was now, as in Hebrew times, practically the same as that of married persons, although it was generally customary for the wedding ceremony proper to be celebrated at a later date. As in the older times, separation of betrothed persons demanded a divorce, and there seems to have been no taboo in their living together as man and wife previous to the wedding ceremony. The children of such a union would be regarded as legitimate. Insofar as the virgin Mary and Joseph are concerned, the use of the verb *mnēsteúomai*, to betroth (Mt. 1:18; Lk 1:27; 2:5), indicates a betrothal ceremony. There is no mention, however, of a subsequent wedding ceremony. It was during this period of betrothal that the angel appeared to Mary (Mt. 1:18). It is clearly stated, however, that the angel appeared to announce to Mary her conception by the Holy Spirit before she had sexual relations with Joseph. The same angel also appeared to Joseph to tell him of the supernatural conception of his betrothed, Mary (Mt. 1:24; see Lk 1:26ff.). ([Zodhiates' Word Study Dictionary of the NT](#) - This resource is highly recommended and in my opinion is superior to BDAG because it is much more readable)

**Ron Mattoon** - Mary was not only a virgin, she was betrothed to Joseph. By Jewish custom, a betrothal signified more than an engagement in the modern sense. If it was dissolved before the marriage ceremony, it could be dissolved only by divorce. A Hebrew marriage involved two stages, the *kiddushin* (betrothal) and the *huppah* (marriage ceremony). The marriage was almost always arranged by the families of the bride and groom, often without consulting them. A contract was made and was sealed by payment of the *mohar*, the dowry or bride price, which was paid by the groom or his family to the father of the bride. The *mohar* served to compensate the father for wedding expenses, the loss of a worker in the home, and to provide a type of insurance for the bride in the event the groom became dissatisfied and divorced her before the marriage



ceremony. This marriage contract was considered binding as soon as it was made, and the man and woman were considered legally married, even though the marriage ceremony (huppah) and sexual intimacy often did not occur until as much as a year later. Should the man die to whom a woman was betrothed, in the eyes of the law she was considered as a widow. The betrothal period served as a time of probation and testing of fidelity. During that period the bride and groom usually had little, if any, social contact with each other. It was during this period of betrothal between Mary and Joseph, that Gabriel delivered the message of the future birth of Jesus. (Luke Commentary)

#### Related Resources:

- American Church Dictionary [Betrothal](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Betrothal](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Betrothal](#)

**Before they came together** - This phrase is a euphemistic way of saying Joseph and Mary did not have sexual relations prior to her conception by the Holy Spirit.

**Came together** (4905)([sunerchomai](#) from **sun** = with, together + **erchomai** = to come) means to get together for a specific purpose and here is used euphemistically referring to sexual intercourse. This verb is used in 32 times in the NT and one passage is especially interesting as it is used in the context of another "conception" (so to speak) by the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost at the birth of the Church, the Bride of Christ, Luke recording "And when this sound occurred (Acts 2:1-4+), the crowd **came together** ([sunerchomai](#)), and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language." (Acts 2:6+).

### EUREKA!

The verb **was found** is [heurisko](#) which gives us our English "**Eureka**" which was used to express triumph upon finding or discovering something. Another dictionary says "**Eureka**" is cry of joy or satisfaction when one finds or discovers something. Beloved, was this not the cry of our hearts the day the Spirit birthed us into the Kingdom of God and we met our King, Jesus Christ, for the first time! Here is a note on the etymology of **eureka** - "Early 17th century from Greek *heurēka* 'I have found it' (from *heuriskein* 'find'), said to have been uttered by Archimedes when he hit upon a method of determining the purity of gold." Interesting!

**She was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit**- Read this by omitting the phrase **by the Holy Spirit** and then put yourself in Joseph's position! This is about as plain and profound a statement that has ever been recorded in the history of the world. Mary is **with child**! This is absolutely holy ground and we simply cannot grasp how this miracle took place, but praise God the Creator that it did take place! As **Zodhiates** said "When God speaks, things happen (Ge 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26; Jon. 2:10). He is not limited by or dependent on the processes of nature, which He established." Galatians 4:4+ states "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law," and makes no mention of a father. The fullness of the times had arrived as God the Father sends His Son to redeem mankind from the sin of Adam and eternal death. We praise Thee our gracious and merciful God!

See commentary on Gabriel's announcement to the virgin Mary in Luke 1:26-38

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a **virgin** ([parthenos](#)) engaged ([mnesteuo](#)) to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David **NOTE**: Greek word order here favors connecting Davidic descent to Joseph, not Mary); and the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." 29 But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. 30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. 31 "And **behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus**. 32 "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of **His father David**; 33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end (**NOTE**: fulfilling the "Davidic Covenant" = 2 Sa 7:16 "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.")" 34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" 35 The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God (**NOTE**: Gabriel's prophetic promise from God is viewed as fulfilled here in Matthew 1:18 = **was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit**). 36 "And **behold**, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived ([sullambano](#)) a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth

month. 37 "For nothing will be impossible with God." (LITERALLY - "No spoken Word of God is void of power!") 38 And Mary said, "**Behold**, the bondslave of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." (NOTE: Contrast Mary's reaction to that of Zacharias when Gabriel gave him a "birth announcement!" Lk 1:18-20+) And the angel departed from her. (Luke 1:26-38+)

#### **Related Resources on the Holy Spirit:**

- [1 Corinthians 2:10-16 Commentary](#)
- [1 John 4:4 Commentary](#)
- [A Spirit Filled Church](#)
- [Acts 1:8 Commentary](#)
- [Ephesians 5:18 Commentary](#)
- [Expulsive Power of a New Affection](#)
- [Galatians 5:16 Commentary](#)
- [Illumination of the Bible](#)
- [Loving Obedience-Obedient Love](#)
- [Our Anointing - The Holy Spirit](#)
- [Praying in the Spirit](#)
- [Spirit-Filled Believers Are Like Artesian Wells](#)
- [Spiritual Paradox in the Christian Life](#)
- [The Holy Spirit-2](#)
- [Walk Like Jesus Walked](#)

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#### **Spurgeon on believer's "betrothal" to Christ -**

"And I will betroth thee unto me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know the Lord."—Hosea 2:19-20

BETROTHMENT unto the Lord! What an honor and joy! My soul, is Jesus indeed thine by His own condescending betrothal? Then, mark, it is forever. He will never break His engagement, much less sue out a divorce against a soul joined to Himself in marriage bonds.

Three times the Lord says, "I will betroth thee." What words He heaps together to set forth the betrothal! Righteousness comes in to make the covenant legal; none can forbid these lawful banns. Judgment sanctions the alliance with its decree: none can see folly or error in the match. Lovingkindness warrants that this is a love union, for without love betrothal is bondage, and not blessedness. Meanwhile, mercy smiles, and even sings; yea, she multiplies herself into "mercies," because of the abounding grace of this holy union.

Faithfulness is the registrar and records the marriage, and the Holy Spirit says "Amen" to it, as He promises to teach the betrothal heart all the sacred knowledge needful for its high destiny. What a promise! (Faith's Checkbook)

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#### **"The Birth of Jesus Christ" By: Charles Webb**

Matthew 1:18–25

INTRODUCTION:

The birth of Christ is a critical issue. To give in at this point is to give in on every other issue. The Holy Spirit is very careful to clearly state the way Jesus came into this world.

I. THE HOW OF CHRIST'S BIRTH, Matt. 1:18

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise"

1. Mary was espoused or engaged to Joseph.
2. They had not yet begun living together.
3. Mary became with child before marriage.

"She was found with child of the Holy Ghost."

II. THE HUSBAND OF MARY, Matt. 1:19

1. He was a just man.
2. He did not desire to publicly defame Mary.
3. He decided to put her away secretly.

"Was minded to put her away privily"

### III. THE HEAVENLY INSTRUCTIONS, Matt. 1:20–21

1. An angel appears in a dream, v. 20a.

“But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream.”

2. The angel tells him the source of her pregnancy, v. 20b.

“Saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.”

3. The angel instructs Joseph in naming the child, v. 21.

“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”

### IV. THE HISTORICAL PROPHECY, Matt. 1:22–23

1. All things were done to fulfill scripture, v. 22.

“Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying...”

2. Isaiah prophesied of His virgin birth, v. 23a.

“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son...”

3. Isaiah called him “God with us,” v. 23b.

“And they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”

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**DEVOTIONAL on Matthew 1:18 - CHRIST'S VIRGIN BIRTH** - The virgin birth is an underlying assumption in everything the Bible says about Jesus. To throw out the virgin birth is to reject Christ's deity, the accuracy and authority of Scripture, and a host of other related doctrines that are the heart of the Christian faith. No issue is more important than the virgin birth to our understanding of who Jesus is. If we deny that Jesus is God, we have denied the very essence of Christianity. Everything else the Bible teaches about Christ hinges on the truth we celebrate at Christmas—that Jesus is God in human flesh. If the story of His birth is merely a fabricated or trumped-up legend, then so is the rest of what Scripture tells us about Him. The virgin birth is as crucial as the resurrection in substantiating His deity. It is not an optional truth. Anyone who rejects Christ's deity rejects Christ absolutely—even if he pretends otherwise (see 1 John 4:1–3). (John MacArthur - Truth for Today)

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### QUESTION - [What was betrothal in biblical times?](#)

**ANSWER** - “Biblical times” covers a broad section of history's timeline, since Bible history spans several thousand years and a number of cultures. Through those years and in those cultures, betrothal traditions varied. However, some elements of betrothal were consistent throughout.

“[Engagements](#)” in Bible times, like those in modern-day Western countries, were heterosexual relationships preliminary to marriage. Then, as now, the engagement period gave the bride time to prepare for her new role, to gather personal belongings, to adjust relationships with parents, siblings, and friends, and in some cases to become better acquainted with her fiancé. The groom used the engagement period for similar matters, including completing the house in which he would raise his family.

[Arranged marriages](#) were common in Bible times, and it was possible that the bride and groom might not even know each other until they met at the wedding ceremony. If the parents arranged the marriage while the bride, the groom, or both were too young for marriage, a much longer betrothal would ensue. What seems strange to modern Westerners is that neither sexual attraction nor love was considered a necessary prelude to engagement or marriage. Parents who arranged a marriage for their children assumed that love and affection would grow out of the intimate acquaintance and sexual bonding that naturally takes place in a marriage. This mindset helps explain why Ephesians 5:25–33 commands Christian husbands to love their wives and Christian wives to respect their husbands. Such love and respect grew *after* the wedding and was not necessarily required beforehand.

In modern Western culture, there is a clear distinction between betrothal/engagement and marriage. In the cultures of Bible times, the distinction was much less definitive. Betrothal in most eras of Bible history involved two families in a formal contract, and that contract was as binding as marriage itself. Betrothal then was more of a business transaction between two families than a personal, romantic choice. [Dowry or bride price](#) agreements were included, so that a broken engagement required repayment of the dowry. After betrothal, all that remained were three matters: the wedding celebration, the bride's move into the groom's house, and the consummation of the marriage.

The best-known example of betrothal is that of Jesus' mother, Mary, and her fiancé, Joseph. When Joseph learned that Mary was pregnant, and before he understood the miraculous nature of the conception, he thought that Mary had violated her betrothal, which was as binding as a marriage contract. At first, Joseph believed that his only recourse was to divorce her, or “put her away.” Matthew records the account: “This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly” (Matthew 1:18–19). Matthew says that Mary was “pledged to be married,” but he also calls Joseph “her husband.” The fact that a “divorce” was required to break the

betrothal shows that their premarital contract was legally binding. If, even during the betrothal period, Mary had been sexually intimate with someone other than Joseph, she would have been guilty of adultery.[GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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## Ralph Gower - Betrothal

Once the arrangement to marry was entered into, there was a betrothal that was more binding than the engagement in contemporary society. A man who was betrothed to a woman, even though not yet married, was exempted from military service (Deuteronomy 20:7). If a girl was already betrothed and was raped by another man she could not become that other man's wife, as would normally be the case (Deuteronomy 22:28–29), because she already belonged to her husband-to-be. Such violation involved the death penalty (Deuteronomy 22:23–27).

The formal words of the betrothal were probably those spoken by Saul when Michal and David were betrothed, "You shall be my son-in-law" (see 1 Samuel 18:22). The betrothal could be broken only by a legal transaction (in effect, a divorce), and the ground for such termination was adultery (see Deuteronomy 22:24). Betrothal lasted for about twelve months, during which the home was to be prepared by the groom, and the wedding clothes would be prepared by the bride. The bride's family would prepare for the wedding festivities.

Mary and Joseph were betrothed when it was found that she was pregnant. Joseph did not want to expose her publicly, because, as a supposed adulteress, Mary would have been stoned to death. It must have taken a great deal of love for Mary and a great deal of trust in God speaking through his dream that enabled Joseph to marry her. Maybe this is a reflection of the character God looked for in the man who was to bring up Jesus (Matthew 1:18–20). In New Testament times a man such as Joseph became formally betrothed when he gave a present to the girl and said, "By this, thou art set apart for me according to the laws of Moses and of Israel." (Borrow [New Manners and Customs of the Bible page 64](#). See also [multiple other resources on Manners and Customs all of which can be borrowed](#)).

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## QUESTION - [Why is the virgin birth so important? WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

**ANSWER** - The doctrine of the virgin birth teaches that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin. That is, when Mary conceived Jesus, she had never had sexual intercourse. Jesus' birth, therefore, was truly miraculous. The virgin birth of Jesus is a crucially important doctrine and one that the Bible plainly teaches in Matthew 1:23 and Luke 1:27, 34.

Let's look at how Scripture describes the virgin birth. The [angel Gabriel](#) visits the Virgin Mary to bring her the news that she would be the mother of the Messiah. Mary asks, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" (Luke 1:34ESV). Gabriel's reply indicates the miraculous nature of the conception: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). The angel points not to any human act but to the Holy Spirit and the power of God as the agency of Jesus' birth. Jesus would properly be called the Son of God.

Gabriel later repeats the news to [Joseph](#), betrothed to be married to Mary: "What is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:20). Joseph needed this information because, "before they came together, [Mary] was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:18). Accepting God's word on the matter, Joseph proceeded to take Mary as his wife, but she remained a virgin until *after* Jesus was born: "He did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son" (Matthew 1:25).

The gospel writers are judicious in their wording to maintain the doctrine of the virgin birth. In his genealogy of Jesus, Luke mentions that Jesus was "the son (as was supposed) of Joseph" (Luke 3:23ESV). In his genealogy, Matthew carefully avoids calling Joseph the father of Jesus; rather, he speaks of "Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah" (Matthew 1:16).

The virgin birth of Jesus Christ was predicted in the Old Testament: "The Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him [Immanuel](#)" (Isaiah 7:14+, quoted in Matthew 1:22). There is also a possible allusion to the virgin birth in Genesis 3:15, which says that the "seed" of "the woman" would destroy the serpent.

The Bible teaches the preexistence of the eternal Son of God. In Isaiah 9:6, the child who is "born" is also the son who is "given." In like manner, Galatians 4:4 also teaches the preexistence and virgin birth of Christ: "God sent His Son, born of a woman." The virgin birth is important because that was the means by which "the Word became flesh" (John 1:14+). The [incarnation](#) is when the eternal Son of God took on human flesh; without losing any of His divine nature, He added a human nature. That miraculous, history-changing event took place in the Virgin Mary's womb.

In the virgin birth, the immaterial (the Spirit) and the material (Mary's womb) were both involved. Just as, at creation, "the earth was formless and empty" and dark (Genesis 1:2+), Mary's womb was an empty, barren place. And just as, at creation, "the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" (Genesis 1:2+), the Spirit of God came upon Mary (Luke 1:35+). Only God can make something out

of nothing; only God could perform the miracles of creation, the incarnation, and the virgin birth.

The virgin birth is important in that it preserves the truth that Jesus is fully God and fully man at the same time. His physical body He received from [Mary as her biological child](#). But His eternal, holy nature was His from all eternity past (see John 6:69). Jesus had no sin nature (Hebrews 7:26) and therefore was able to be our perfect substitute (1 Peter 1:19), conquering sin and death once for all (Hebrews 10:10). Not only was He able to take away our sin, but He was tempted in every way that we are, yet without sin. Therefore, He is our perfect sacrifice and also able to empathize with our weaknesses (Hebrews 4:15). Our God miraculously became man to save us and graciously reveal His love for us.

The virgin birth of Jesus is an example of God's gracious work on our behalf. God took the initiative—Mary was not looking to become pregnant—it was all God's idea. Joseph had no role in the conception—his body was not involved—so the power had to come from God. In a similar way, our salvation is based solely on God's initiative and God's power—we did not seek God, but He sought us; and we did nothing to earn our salvation, but we rely on God's power.

Unsurprisingly, Jesus' enemies among His contemporaries denied His virgin birth. They went so far as to publicly accuse Jesus of being a Samaritan, i.e., a person of mixed race (John 8:48). Those today who would deny the virgin birth contradict the clear teaching of Scripture, call into question other miracles recorded in the Bible, and open the door to a denial of Christ's full deity or His full humanity.[GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### **QUESTION - [Is the perpetual virginity of Mary biblical?](#)**

**ANSWER** - It is the official position of the Roman Catholic Church that Jesus' mother Mary remained a virgin for her entire life. Is this concept biblical? Before we look at specific Scriptures, it is important to understand why the Roman Catholic Church believes in the perpetual virginity of Mary. The Roman Catholic Church views Mary as "the Mother of God" and "Queen of Heaven." Catholics believe Mary to have an exalted place in Heaven, with the closest access to Jesus and God the Father. Such a concept is nowhere taught in Scripture. Further, even if Mary did occupy such an exalted position, her having sexual intercourse would not have prevented her from gaining such a position. Sex in marriage is not sinful. Mary would have in no way defiled herself by having sexual relations with Joseph her husband. The entire concept of the perpetual virginity of Mary is based on an unbiblical teaching, Mary as Queen of Heaven, and on an unbiblical understanding of sex.

So, what does the Bible say about the perpetual virginity of Mary? Using the New American Bible, which is a Catholic translation, we can see that the perpetual virginity of Mary is not taught in the Bible. Matthew 1:25 NAB tells us, "He had no relations with her until she bore a son, and he named him Jesus." He, Joseph, did not have sexual relations with her, Mary, UNTIL after she bore a son, Jesus." The meaning of this Scripture is abundantly clear. Joseph and Mary did not have sexual relations until after Jesus was born. Matthew 13:55-56 NAB declares, "Is He not the carpenter's son? Is not his mother named Mary and his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? Are not His sisters all with us?" Catholics claim, correctly, that the Greek terms for "brothers" and "sisters" in these verses could also refer to male and female relatives, not necessarily literal brothers and sisters. However, the intended meaning is clear, they thought Jesus to be Joseph's son, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas, and the brother of the unnamed and unnumbered sisters. Father, mother, brother, sister. It is straining the meaning of the text to interpret "brothers" and "sisters" as "cousins" or "relatives" with the mentioning of Jesus' mother and father.

Matthew 12:46 NAB tells us, "While He was still speaking to the crowds, His mother and His brothers appeared outside, wishing to speak with Him." See also Mark 3:31-34; Luke 8:19-21; John 2:12; and Acts 1:14. All mention Jesus' mother with His brothers. If they were His cousins, or the sons of [Joseph from a previous marriage](#), why were they mentioned with Mary so often? The idea of the perpetual virginity of Mary cannot be drawn from Scripture. It must be forced on Scripture, in contradiction to what the Scriptures clearly state.[GotQuestions.org](#)

#### **Related Resources:**

- [What is Mariology? | GotQuestions.org](#)
  - [Did Mary have other children? How many children did Mary have? | GotQuestions.org](#)
  - [What does the Bible say about the virgin Mary? | GotQuestions.org](#)
  - [Was Mary sinless? Was Mary without sin? | GotQuestions.org](#)
  - [How many siblings did Jesus have? | GotQuestions.org](#)
  - [Did Jesus have brothers and sisters \(siblings\)? | GotQuestions.org](#)
  - [What does the Bible say about the virgin Mary? | GotQuestions.org](#)
  - [Who is the Lady of Guadalupe? Were the apparitions of Mary at Guadalupe real? | GotQuestions.org](#)
  - [Are apparitions of Mary, such as Lady Fatima, true messages from God? | GotQuestions.org](#)
-



**away secretly** - Joseph did not want to bring shame or dishonor upon Mary. How? One way would have been by giving her a certificate of divorce publically which was required when couples had been betrothed. He sought to do it without others noticing so she would not be dishonored. What is interesting is what is not recorded -- no resentment, no anger, no malice from Joseph! A **righteous** man indeed!

**Disgrace** (1165)(**deigmatizo** from **deigma** = an example from **deiknuo** = to show, present to one's sight, exhibit, point out) is literally make a show of openly and boldly, exhibiting, exposing, making a public spectacle or exposing to public shame which clearly would disgrace Mary. The only other use is Col 2:15+ "When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He **made a public display** of them, having triumphed over them through Him."

**Secretly** (2977)(**lathra** from **lanthano** = to be hidden) is an adverb that means in a secretive way, doing so without others noticing. Four uses in NT - Matt. 1:19; Matt. 2:7; Jn. 11:28; Acts 16:37 - Of Herod who "secretly called the magi." (Mt 2:7). Of Martha when she "called Mary her sister, saying **secretly**, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." (Jn 11:28) Of Paul after being falsely beaten and jailed asked and "now are they sending us away **secretly**?"

**Septuagint** - Dt. 13:6; 1 Sa 18:22; 1 Sa 26:5; Job 31:27; Ps. 101:5; Hab 3:14;

**To send away** (630)(**apoluo**) means to let go, to release, to send away, to dismiss. Apoluo is used 62 times in the NT and 10 times is translated as divorce (3), divorced (2), divorces (5) (e.g., Mt 1:19; 5:31, 32, Mt 9:9 Mk 10:2, 4, 11 Lk 16:18; Mk 10:12)

#### Related Resources:

- [Andy Woods on The 10 Steps in the Sequence of the Typical Hebrew Wedding - below is an excerpt of "Step 4"](#)

**Fourth**, this time of separation is known as the **betrothal period**. During this time of separation, the fidelity of the groom and the bride was tested. The test, of course, involved whether the bride and the groom would be loyal to each other despite the vast distance between them. If either failed the test during this time of separation, the **betrothal contract** would be dissolved. This ancient Jewish ritual explains Joseph's dismay and desire to end the engagement upon discovering Mary's pregnancy. The severity of this situation also explains why an angel had to be dispatched from heaven to assure Joseph that Mary's pregnancy had in fact been wrought by the Holy Spirit rather than caused by Mary's unfaithfulness to Joseph during the betrothal period (Mt 1:18-25). Just as the fidelity of the groom and bride are tested during this time of separation, the church's loyalty to Christ is currently being tested as the church is tempted to succumb to false teaching and worldly conduct (Jas 4:4+; 2 Cor. 11:2+) during Christ's physical absence. The church demonstrates her loyalty to Christ during this time by maintaining both correct beliefs (orthodoxy) and correct practice (orthopraxy).

**Matthew 1:20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.**

NET Matthew 1:20 When he had contemplated this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

GNT Matthew 1:20 τατα δ ατο νθυμηθ ντος δο γγελος κυρ ου κατ ναρ φ νη ατ λ γων, ωσ φ υ ς Δαυ δ, μ φοβηθ ς παραλαβε ν Μαρ αν τ ν γυνα κ σου· τ γ ρ ν α τ γεννηθ ν κ πνε ματ ς σπιν γ ου.

NLT Matthew 1:20 As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

KJV Matthew 1:20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

ESV Matthew 1:20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

NIV Matthew 1:20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

ASV Matthew 1:20 But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

CSB Matthew 1:20 But after he had considered these things, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in her is by the Holy Spirit.

- **But when he had considered:** Ps 25:8,9 94:19 119:125 143:8 Pr 3:5,6 12:5 Isa 26:3 30:21
- **an angel of the Lord:** Jud 13:3,8,9 Lu 1:10-13,19,26-38 2:8-14
- **in a dream:** Mt 2:13,19,22 Ge 31:11 Nu 12:6 Job 4:13-16 33:15-17 Joe 2:28
- **Joseph:** Isa 7:2,13 Jer 33:26 Lu 2:4
- **do not be afraid:** Mt 28:5 Ge 46:3 1Ki 17:13 Isa 51:7 Jer 40:9 Lu 1:30
- **the Child who has been conceived:** Mt 1:18 Jer 31:22

## THE VIRGIN BIRTH CONCEIVED OF THE SPIRIT

**Constable** makes the distinction that "The **virgin birth** is technically the **virgin conception**. Mary was not just a virgin when she bore Jesus, but she was one when she conceived Him." ([Matthew 1 Commentary](#))

**But when** - Term of contrast combined with a time term. In this context the result is a critical reversal in the direction of the narrative. Joseph was on the verge of divorcing Mary (aka "send her away secretly")! The sovereign God stepped into the scene by sending His messenger to speak to Joseph and encourage him to consider a change of heart and mind, which he does as the narrative unfolds.

**THOUGHT** - Once again we see the juxtaposition of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility (or free will), that divine mystery that permeates the pages of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. [Keep your eyes peeled](#) for this divinely inspired juxtaposition and be encouraged that God is behind the scenes in your life also, beloved, and He is not indifferent to what you are going through! He may not send an angel to encourage you or to warn you, but He may use other means, so be alert to His sovereign movements in your life, all for your gracious good and His great glory. Amen!

**He had considered this** - This says a lot about Joseph. He may have only been a carpenter but he was a thoughtful man and not prone to impulsive decisions.

**He had considered** ([1760](#))(*enthumeomai* from **en** = in + **thumos** = mind, thought) means to ponder or reflect on, deliberate, think about, contemplate, process information by thinking about it carefully. **Liddell-Scott** = to lay to heart, consider well. To think out a thing, form a plan. Only 2 times in Nestle-Aland - Mt 1:20, Mt 9:4. One additional use in Textus Receptus of Acts 10:19 (where NAS has the related word *dienthumeomai*). Uses in the Septuagint - Gen. 6:6; Dt. 21:11; Jos. 6:18; Jos. 7:21 ("**coveted**"); Isa. 10:7; Lam. 2:17 ("what He **purposed**"); Dan. 1:8 ("Daniel **made up his mind**")

**Behold** (Pay Attention!)([2400](#))(*idou*) is the second person singular aorist middle imperative of *eidon* which means to see, perceive, look at. In the NT **idou** is used as a demonstrative particle that draws attention to what follows. **idou** in the **middle voice** means "you yourself look, see, perceive!" The **aorist imperative** is a command emphasizing "Do it now! Don't delay!" **Spurgeon** reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

**An angel** ([aggelos](#)) **of the Lord appeared** ([phaino](#)) **to him in a dream** ([onar](#) - cf Heb 1:1,2+), **saying** - Notice it is **an angel**, not **the Angel of the LORD** (almost certainly an OT Christophany, Ge 16:7, 9, 10, 11+, et al). **Dream** ([onar](#)) is used only by Matthew - Matt. 1:20; Matt. 2:12; Matt. 2:13; Matt. 2:19; Matt. 2:22; Matt. 27:19

**Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid** ([phobeo](#)) **to take** (see [paralambano](#) below - to take to his side) **Mary as your wife** - **Son**



of David indicates that Joseph is also in the lineage from which Messiah would arise and this manner of being addressed by the angel should have given him a clue something significant was about to be stated. This manner of address also connects this passage with Matthew's introduction (Mt 1:1). Jesus was not the real son of Joseph, but was his legal son and His royal right in the Davidic line came by Joseph. **Do not be afraid** in context refers not to the angel in the dream but to fear of marrying Mary who would begin to show her pregnancy before they would be allowed to consummate their marriage. In other words don't be afraid of the potential "social stigma."

For ([gar](#)) is a term of explanation, in this case explaining why Joseph need not fear men.

**The Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit**- Note that **has been conceived** is past tense, so yes Joseph, your betrothed, Mary, is already pregnant! Imagine Joseph's initial thoughts upon hearing these words! She had conceived not because she was unfaithful, but, to the contrary because she was faithful. Her faithfulness of course did not merit God's favor, but God bestowed it as an act of grace on a faithful woman. Luke records Gabriel's message "'Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor (grace) with God.'" (Lk 1:30+). This verse is permeated with a mysterious sense of the supernatural!

**Conceived** (1080)([gennao](#) from [genos](#) = offspring, in turn from [ginomai](#) = to become) means to beget, to bring forth, to give birth, to procreate a descendant, to produce offspring, to generate. To beget is spoken of men (Mt 1:2-16), whereas to bear is spoken of women. The passive voice means to be begotten or to be born. The most notable use of [gennao](#) is here in Mt 1:20 in the description of Jesus' virgin birth in which He was supernaturally "**conceived** ([gennao](#)) in Mary of the Holy Spirit." and His subsequent supernatural resurrection in which He is described as "**begotten** ([gennao](#))." (Acts 13:33+) . [Gennao](#) describes the commencement of life where previously none had existed. While Christ clearly had existed, this conception did mark the commencement of His existence as a Man!

**Matthew 1:21 "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."**

NET Matthew 1:21 She will give birth to a son and you will name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

GNT Matthew 1:21 τ ξεται δ υ ν, κα καλ σεις τ νομα α το ησο ν· α τ ς γ ρ σ σει τ ν λα ν α το π τ ν μαρτι ν α τ ν.

NLT Matthew 1:21 And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

KJV Matthew 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

ESV Matthew 1:21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

NIV Matthew 1:21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

ASV Matthew 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins.

CSB Matthew 1:21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to name Him Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins."

- **she**: Ge 17:19,21 18:10 Jud 13:3 2Ki 4:16,17 Lu 1:13,35,36
- **you shall**: Lu 1:31 2:21
- **for**: Ps 130:7,8 Isa 12:1,2 45:21,22 Jer 23:6 33:16 Eze 36:25-29 Da 9:24 Zec 9:9 Joh 1:29 Ac 3:26 4:12 5:31 13:23,38,39 Eph 5:25-27 Col 1:20-23 Tit 2:14 Heb 7:25 1Jn 1:7 2:1,2 3:5 Rev 1:5,6 7:14

**NO OTHER NAME  
BUT JESUS**

In Acts 4:12+ Peter declared

"And there is salvation in **no one** else; for there is **no other name** under heaven that has been given among

men by which we MUST be saved." (Take a moment from your busy schedule and worship the King with [No Other Name sung by Casting Crowns includes lyrics](#))

Lift up our eyes  
See the King has come  
Light of the world  
Reaching out for us  
There is no other Name  
There is no other Name  
Jesus Christ our God

Seated on high  
The undefeated One  
Mountains bow down  
As we lift Him up  
There is no other Name  
There is no other Name  
Jesus Christ our God

Find hope  
When all the world seems lost  
Behold  
The triumph of the cross  
His power  
Has trampled death and grave  
Our life found in His Name  
The greatest Name of all

The Earth will shake  
And tremble before Him  
Chains will break  
As Heaven and Earth sing  
Holy is the Name  
Holy is the Name of  
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus

**She will bear a Son** - The angel Gabriel's promise from God the Father. This is in essence a fulfillment of the [protoevangelium](#), the prophecy given by God Himself in Genesis 3:15+ "And I will put enmity Between you (SATAN) and the woman (MARY), And between your seed and her seed (MESSIAH); He (MESSIAH) shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

**Robertson** - The rabbis named six whose names were given before birth: "Isaac, Ishmael, Moses, Solomon, Josiah, and the name of the Messiah, whom may the Holy One, blessed be His name, bring in our day."

**And you shall call His Name Jesus** (see [Iesous](#)) - Like His forerunner, John the Baptist (Lk 1:13+), **Jesus** was named by God (via His messenger Gabriel) before His birth. Joseph would have the privilege of giving the Savior of the World the Name above every name, the Name of Jesus. O dear reader, may the Spirit enable you to bow down in surrender, reverence and adoration to His Name Jesus while today is still called today. Amen. (2 Cor 6:2)!

For this reason also (Php 2:8<sup>+</sup>), God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him (JOSEPH WAS GOD'S INSTRUMENT IN GIVING) the **NAME** which is above every name, so that at the **NAME OF JESUS EVERY KNEE WILL BOW**, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (AMEN AND AMEN!) (Php 2:9-11<sup>+</sup>).

**For** ([gar](#)) is a term of explanation, in this case obviously explains why **His Name** was to be "**Jesus**." His Name is His message and His mission! It is interesting that "**He**" ([autos](#)) precedes the "**for**" in the Greek text, placing full emphasis on "**He**," on **Jesus** the [summum bonum](#), the highest good! **Summum bonum** is generally thought of as being an end in itself, and at the same time containing all other goods, an apropos description of **Jesus**, the "**the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End**" (Rev 21:6<sup>+</sup>) (AND EVERYTHING GOOD IN BETWEEN!)

**Jesus** ([2424](#))([Iesous](#)) is [transliteration](#) of the Greek **Iesous**, which in turn is the transliteration of Hebrew name [Yehoshua](#) or [Yeshua](#) which mean "Yahweh (Jehovah) saves" (Yahweh is typically rendered as "LORD" in OT) or Jehovah is help or Jehovah is salvation. The Greek form of the name Iēsous, was translated into

Latin as Jesus. Jesus corresponds to the Name Joshua (Hebrew - Yeshua). Matthew 1:21 "defines" Jesus' Name = "**He will save His people from their sins.**" The Name **Jesus** occurs 979x in 943v in the NT (NASB). **Jesus Christ** occurs 137x in 134v in the NT (only 6v in Gospels). Jesus was a common name among the Jews - (1). Joshua, successor to Moses Acts 7:45; Hb 4:8, (2). Joshua, son of Eliezer Lk 3:29, (3). Jesus referring to the Messiah, Jesus Christ - Mt 1:1, 21, 25 (4). Jesus Barabbas Mt 27:16f. (5). Jesus who is called Justus Col 4:11.

## THE SAVIOR OF ISRAEL

Jesus as **Savior of Israel** was prophetically announced in Isaiah 43:3 "I am the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your **Savior**." Jeremiah described Him as "Thou Hope of Israel, its **Savior** in time of distress (cf Jer 30:7+)." (Jer 14:8). In Acts 5:31+ Peter (and the apostles) declared "He (Jesus- Acts 5:30+) is the One Whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a **Savior**, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." (cf Acts 13:23+) But even in the Genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1:1-17 we see the door of salvation flung open wide to the Gentiles, for the lineage of Messiah included Gentiles Rahab the harlot and Ruth the Moabitess, both foreshadowing the greater harvest of Gentiles yet to come. The psalmist wrote "And He will redeem Israel from all his iniquities." (Ps 130:8).

**He will save His people from their sins**- This was the purpose for which Jesus was born! Not to destroy but to **save** (Jn 3:16-18). Notice **His people** refers in context to the Jews. Why do **His people** (and all people) need to be saved? They are in their sins. And Paul says unequivocally that "the wages of sin is death (physical death, spiritual death and eternal life unless saved by Jesus)." (Ro 6:23+). **Vincent** writes "The meaning of the name (JESUS), therefore, finds expression in the title **Saviour** applied to our Lord (Lk 1:47+; Lk 2:11+; John 4:42)" "**He will save** (sōsei) **His people from their sins** and so be their Saviour (**Soter**). He will be prophet, priest, and king, but "**Saviour**" sums it all up in one word." (Robertson)

**Will save** (4982) (**sozo**) has the basic meaning of rescuing one from great peril, which is apropos in view of the gravity of eternal punishment! Additional nuances include to protect, keep alive, preserve life, deliver, heal, be made whole. In short sozo speaks of a "**holistic**" salvation!. **Sozo** most often refers to **salvation** in a spiritual sense as "defined" even in Mt 1:21 where it speaks of deliverance from **sins** (guilt and power of) with Jesus' Name being a transliteration of Joshua meaning "Jehovah is salvation". All uses of **sozo** in **Matthew** - Matt. 1:21; Matt. 8:25; Matt. 9:21; Matt. 9:22; Matt. 10:22; Matt. 14:30; Matt. 16:25; Matt. 18:11; Matt. 19:25; Matt. 24:13; Matt. 24:22; Matt. 27:40; Matt. 27:42; Matt. 27:49;

**Sins** (266) (**hamartia**) literally conveys the idea of missing the mark as when hunting with a bow and arrow (in Homer some hundred times of a warrior hurling his spear but missing his foe). It was used of a traveler who misses his way, which is interesting in light of the fact that Jesus is called "The Way" (Jn 14:6)! Later **hamartia** came to mean missing or falling short of any goal, standard, or purpose. **Hamartia** in the Bible signifies a departure from God's holy, perfect standard of what is right in word or deed (righteous). It pictures the idea of missing His appointed goal (His will) which results in a deviation from what is pleasing to Him. **In short, sin is conceived as a missing the true end and scope of our lives, which is Jesus and Triune God.** As **Martin Luther** put it "*Sin is essentially a departure from God.*" Robertson says "Jesus will save us away from (apo) as well as out of (ex) our sins. They will be cast into oblivion and he will cover them up out of sight." Surprisingly Matthew has only 7 uses of **hamartia** (150 verses in NT) - Matt. 1:21; Matt. 3:6; Matt. 9:2; Matt. 9:5; Matt. 9:6; Matt. 12:31; Matt. 26:28

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### "Whom Say Ye That I Am"

1. WHO IS HE? Matt. 1:23
2. WHY DID HE COME? Matt. 1:21
3. WHAT DID HE DO? Isa. 53:5, 6
4. WHY DID HE DO IT? John 3:16
5. WHERE IS HE NOW? Luke 24:51
6. WHY IS HE THERE? John 14:2
7. WILL HE COME AGAIN? John 14:3

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### The Name

God also has highly exalted Him . . . , that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. —Philippians 2:9-10

Today's Scripture: Philippians 2:5-11

Jesus! No other name draws people together so closely, while at the same time evoking hatred in others.

In 1999, a political candidate answered a question about who had the greatest effect on his life by saying, "Jesus Christ. He changed my heart." This person's honest answer was met with disdain from people who detest the name of Jesus.

On the other hand, people all over the world who love Christ meet every week to honor and praise Jesus' name. To them, His name means love, joy, peace, hope, and forgiveness.

What is it about this name that divides people so clearly? Why do some treat the name of Jesus with contempt while others hold it in highest esteem? I think the reason some people can't stand Jesus' name is that they don't want to be reminded of their sins. Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), the One who saves us from our sins (Matthew 1:21). People who refuse to ask for forgiveness from sin cannot love the name of Jesus. Yet His name "is above every name," and one day "every tongue [will] confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Philippians 2:9,11).

Jesus! Do you love that name? Praise God for that holy name—and tell others what Jesus has done for you. By: Dave Branon [Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

Reflect & Pray

Jesus—O how sweet the name,  
Jesus—every day the same;  
Jesus—let all saints proclaim  
Its worthy praise forever.  
—Martin

We honor God's name when we call Him our Father and live like His Son.

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## Big Plans

Read: Luke 2:1-12

You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. —Matthew 1:21

Two thousand years ago, there were no earthly plans for celebrating Jesus' birth. Quietly and unannounced, Joseph and Mary entered Bethlehem and searched for a place to spend the night.

It was a busy time in the Judean village, but the excitement had nothing to do with the upcoming birth. The crowds had gathered to take part in a census. They didn't know that Mary was about to deliver the Savior.

As the year 2000 approaches, the story has changed. There are serious discussions going on about how Bethlehem can get ready for the estimated 4 million tourists who will converge on the Israeli city during Christmas 2000. One estimate puts the price tag at \$3.5 billion to prepare for the big day.

What a contrast to that first Christmas! It's almost as if people want to make up for missing His birth. Yet, a proper preparation has nothing to do with money or motels or shrines. It's a matter of the heart. If we want to honor Christ for who He is, we will put our complete faith in His death, burial, and resurrection.

You can make all the plans you want to, but the best way to celebrate the birth of the baby is by trusting Him as your Savior. By Dave Branon [\(Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved\)](#)

The Christmas season comes again.

Let all the earth with one accord  
Rejoice that God has given to men  
A Savior, who is Christ the Lord.  
—Baker

You can't truly celebrate Christ's birth until you've invited Him into your heart.

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## The Baby Grew Up

Read: Matthew 1:18-25

You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. —Matthew 1:21

Even Christians can miss the point of the Christmas story if they aren't careful. Halford E. Luccock warned of that danger in a thought-provoking essay. He wrote: "We can become so charmed with the story of a baby that we grow sentimental about it. It does not ask that we do anything about it; it does not demand any vital change in our way of thinking and living.

"The great question for us is this: Is our Christmas still only a story about a baby, or is it more, a deathless story about a Person into whom the baby grew, who can redeem the world from its sins, and who calls us into partnership with His great and mighty purposes?"

When the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, he said, "You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Mt. 1:21). It is only as we see the birth of Jesus in light of His crucifixion and resurrection that we are able to grasp the full meaning of Christ's coming.

With your eyes wide open this Christmas, respond to God with love and commitment for the gift of His Son. Focus your thoughts and actions and motivations toward honoring the Baby who grew up and died for all our sins. By David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Christ the Savior is born!

When we look beyond the manger  
To the cross of Calvary,  
We will know the reason Christmas  
Brings such joy to you and me.  
—DJD

The mission of the cross is hidden in the message of the cradle.

### Matthew 1:22 Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

NET Matthew 1:22 This all happened so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet would be fulfilled:

GNT Matthew 1:22 Το το δ̅ λον γ γονεν να πληρωθ τ̅ ηθ ν π̅ κυρ ου δι̅ το̅ προφ του λ̅ γοντος,

NLT Matthew 1:22 All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet:

KJV Matthew 1:22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

ESV Matthew 1:22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

NIV Matthew 1:22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

ASV Matthew 1:22 Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying,

CSB Matthew 1:22 Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

- **to fulfill what was spoken:** Mt 2:15,23 5:17 8:17 12:17 13:35,21 1Ki 8:15,24 Ezr 1:1 Lu 21:22 24:44 Joh 10:35 12:38-40 15:25 17:12 18:9, Joh 19:36,37 Ac 3:18 13:27-29 Rev 17:17

## VIRGIN BIRTH FULFILLED PROPHECY

**Now all this took place** - What is **this**? The virgin birth of Jesus which was predicted in the Old Testament. NET has "This all happened." **Took place** (happened) is in the [perfect tense](#) indicating that it stands on record as a historical fact! You can stake your life on it! Indeed, you must! (Acts 4:12+, Jn 8:24+, Acts 16:31+).

**To fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through**([dia](#) = by way of, by means of) **the prophet** (who was the [intermediate](#) agent) - The OT prediction of the virgin birth of the Messiah is now fulfilled. Matthew does not name the **prophet** but the text quoted is from Isaiah 7:14 (see below). Notice the phrase **spoken by the Lord through the prophet** which is a clear definition of divine inspiration

of the Word of God (see [verbal plenary inspiration](#)) through "men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." (2 Pe 1:21+). God spoke and Isaiah was His "instrument" to record what He said!

**TECHNICAL NOTE** - Remember that **25% of Scripture** was prophecy when it was originally inspired by the Spirit and recorded by men and that **80%** of those prophecies have already been perfectly fulfilled. That means that the remaining **20%** will be perfectly fulfilled! **Dear pastors and teachers, can I humbly exhort you to not fail to preach and teach prophecy!** I have been a follower of Messiah for 38 years and can recall only a few sermons on God's Plan for the Ages in that time! If you fail to study prophecy (reading it literally and not through the "grid" of anyone's systematic theological approach, including dispensationalism!), you leave open the door for the cults who feast on the Biblical ignorance of prophecy and draw many into their snare by false teachings on the prophetic passages. Your best defense to their false teaching is your knowledge of the Truth. So study, preach and teach prophecy, for we are one day closer to the beginning fulfillment of the last 20% of God's sure word of prophecy (2Pe 1:19+)! [Maranatha](#), Lord Jesus Christ! Amen.

**To fulfill** (complete) (4137)([pleroo](#)) means to **be** filled ([passive voice](#) = saints acted on by outside force). Matthew repeatedly uses the phrase of Old Testament prophecy being **fulfilled** (Mt 2:15, 17, 23+; Mt 8:17+; Mt 12:17+; Mt 13:35+; Mt 21:4; Mt 26:54)

**John Broadus** has an interesting note on **fulfill** - Fulfilled is the translation of a Greek word signifying to 'make full,' to 'fill up.' (So the English fill full or fulfill). It is often used in New Testament, both literally, as to fill a valley, boat, etc., and figuratively, as to fill with gladness, knowledge, etc. In a derivative sense it signifies to 'perform fully,' 'accomplish,' being applied to a work or a duty, and to predictions, as here. This last very important use, to fulfill (a prediction), is found frequently in Matthew (1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 26:54, 56; 27:9), and in John (12:38; 13:18; 15:25; 17:12; 18:9, 31; 19:24, 36); several times in Luke (1:20; 4:21; 21:22; 24:44), and in Acts (1:16; 3:18; 13:27); once in Mark (14:49) and in James (2:23.) An examination of these passages would show that in general they will admit only the strict sense of fulfill, implying a real prediction, and that no one of them requires the quite different meaning attached to the term by some expositors, viz.: that while there was no real prediction, the New Testament occurrence reminded the Evangelist of the Old Testament passage, or so resembled the Old Testament occurrence as to warrant the application to it of the same language. This serious departure from the etymology and regular use of the word is supposed by such expositors to be required by a few passages in which it is difficult for us to see that there exists the strict relation of prediction and fulfillment. But such passages, it will be found, all admit of at least a possible explanation in consistency with the idea of a real fulfillment (see on 2:15, 18), and we have no right to take this or any other word in a sense alien to its origin and use, unless there be found passages in which it cannot possibly have the usual meaning. The strict application of this rule of interpretation is here a matter of importance, as the question involved seriously affects the prophetic relation between the Old and the New Testament.

But two things are to be observed. (1) The New Testament writers sometimes quote Old Testament expressions as applicable to gospel facts or truths, without saying that they are prophecies (e. g., Rom 10:18), and in some cases it is doubtful how they intend the quotation to be regarded. (2) It is often unnecessary, and sometimes impossible, to suppose that the prophet himself had in mind that which the New Testament writer calls a fulfillment of his prediction. Some predictions were even involuntary, as that of Caiaphas. (John 11:50.) Many prophecies received fulfillments which the prophet does not appear to have at all contemplated. But as God's providence often brought about the fulfillment though the human actors were heedless or even ignorant of the predictions they fulfilled (e. g., John 19:24), so God's Spirit often contemplated fulfillments of which the prophet had no conception, but which the Evangelist makes known. And it is of a piece with the general development of revelation that the later inspiration should explain the records of earlier inspiration, and that only after events have occurred should the early predictions of them be fully understood.

**Matthew 1:23 "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US."**

NET Matthew 1:23 "Look! The virgin will conceive and bear a son, and they will call him Emmanuel," which means "God with us."

GNT Matthew 1:23 δο παρθ νος ν γαστρ ξει κα τ ξεται υ ν, κα καλ σουσιν τ νομα α το μμανου λ, στιν μεθερμηνευ μενον Μεθ μ ν θε ς.

NLT Matthew 1:23 "Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.' "

KJV Matthew 1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

ESV Matthew 1:23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

NIV Matthew 1:23 "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"-- which means, "God with us."

ASV Matthew 1:23 Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, And they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us.

CSB Matthew 1:23 See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name Him Immanuel, which is translated "God is with us."

- **virgin:** Isa 7:14
- **Emmanuel:** Isa 7:14, 8:8
- **God:** Mt 28:20 Ps 46:7,11 Isa 8:8-10 9:6,7 12:2 Joh 1:14 Ac 18:9 Ro 1:3,4 9:5 2Co 5:19 1Ti 3:16 2Ti 4:17,22

## GOD WITH US

**"BEHOLD** (see note above) **THE VIRGIN** ([parthenos](#)) **SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON** - MacArthur writes that "The most famous medieval Jewish interpreter, [Rashi](#) (1040–1105 A D), who was an opponent of Christianity, made the following comment: " 'Behold the 'almâ shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel' means that our Creator shall be with us. And this is the sign: The one who will conceive is a girl (na'ârâ) who never in her life has had intercourse with any man. Upon this one shall the Holy Spirit have power." It should be noted that in modern Hebrew the word virgin is either 'almâ or betûlâ. Why did not Isaiah use betûlâ? Because it is sometimes used in the Old Testament of a married woman who is not a virgin (Deut. 22:19; Joel 1:8). 'Almâ can mean "virgin," and that is how the Jewish translators of the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) translated the word in Isaiah 7:14 (by the Greek parthenos, "virgin")—several hundred years before the birth of Christ....Matthew did not give the term 'almâ a Christian "twist," but used it with the same meaning with which all Jews of that time used it. In any case, his teaching of the virgin birth does not hinge on that word. It is made incontestably clear by the preceding statements that Jesus' conception was "by the Holy Spirit" (vv. 18, 20)." (Matthew Commentary)

Here is the discussion of **virgin** in Isaiah 7:14 - for detail of this prophecy in the original context see the Isaiah 7 Commentary.

**Virgin** ([05959](#)) (**'almah**) has several meanings depending on the context - young woman of marriageable age (Ge 24:43), maiden (Pr 30:19), girl (Ex 2:8), virgin. While some argue that **'almah** is by no means an unambiguous Hebrew term for a virgin, it is notable that a passage such as Genesis 24:43 describes not only a young woman of marriageable age but one who undoubtedly is a virgin. Thus the use of **'almah** by no means excludes the possibility that the intended meaning in Isaiah 7:14 is a literal **virgin**. **'Almah** is never employed of a married woman.

**Virgin** ([3933](#)) (**parthenos**) is generally is used of a female who is beyond puberty but not married and still a virgin. In [2 Cor 11:2](#) parthenos is used figuratively of the church, the bride pledged to Christ.. Some contexts do not focus on the meaning virginity. The clear sense of **parthenos** in Mt 1:23 quoted from Isa 7:14+ ([Lxx](#) uses parthenos for Heb - **'almah** - see below) is of a woman who has not been intimate with a man (cp Lk 1:27). Paul uses parthenos in First Corinthians to refer to a woman of marriageable age. In Mt 25:1, 7, 11 parthenos refers to young women of marriageable age.

In Isa 7:14 quoted in Mt 1:23, the Hebrew word for **virgin** is **'almah** ([05959](#)). **Almah** has several meanings depending on the context - young woman of marriageable age (Ge 24:43), maiden (Pr 30:19), girl (Ex 2:8), virgin.

**Charles Ryrie** writes, "There is no instance where it can be proved that **'almah** designates a young woman who is not a virgin" (Basic Theology).

**W A Criswell** adds that "The [Septuagint](#) ([Lxx](#)) also uses [parthenos](#) to translate another Hebrew word meaning "virgin" ([bethulah](#)), again underscoring the fact that **parthenos** meant "virgin" in the [Lxx](#) and in Matthew 1:23 and Luke 1:27+ where "the virgin's name was Mary." It is clear that both Matthew and the [Lxx](#) translators understood that Isaiah was speaking of a virgin when he used 'almah. And this is precisely the purity which both Matthew and Luke ascribe to Mary (cf. Mt 1:18-25; Lk 1:26-35+)."

I love **Spurgeon's** comment that Isaiah 7:14 is "One of the most difficult in all the Word of God. It may be so; I certainly did not think it was until I saw what the commentators had to say about it, and I rose up from reading them perfectly confused."

**MacArthur** - Fantasy and mythology have counterfeited **the virgin birth of Jesus Christ** with a proliferation of false accounts intended to minimize His utterly unique birth. For example, the Romans believed that [Zeus impregnated Semele](#) without contact and that she conceived Dionysus, lord of the earth. The Babylonians believed that [Tammuz](#) (see Ezek. 8:14) was conceived in the priestess [Semiramis](#) by a sunbeam. In an ancient Sumerian/Assyrian story inscribed on a wall, Tukulti II (890–884 B.C.) told how the gods created him in the womb of his mother. It was even claimed that the goddess of procreation superintended the conception of King Sennacherib (705–681 B.C.). At the conception of Buddha, his mother supposedly saw a great white elephant enter her belly. Hinduism has claimed that the divine Vishnu, after incarnations as a fish, tortoise, boar, and lion, descended into the womb of Devaki and was born as her son Krishna. There is even a legend that Alexander the Great was virgin born by the power of Zeus through a snake that impregnated his mother, Olympias. Satan has set up many more such myths to counterfeit the birth of Christ in order to make it seem either common or legendary. (Matthew Commentary)

**AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US."** - This is a prediction of the incarnation of God, now dwelling with men. John describes "**Immanuel**" writing "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." (Jn 1:14+) And Isaiah was God's instrument He used to communicate this marvelous message to mankind!

#### Related Resources:

- [See discussions above related to Mary and the virgin birth](#)
- [You may be surprised that most Americans believe in the virgin birth!](#) (but there is some variation)
- [Must Christians Believe in the Virgin Birth? - Ligonier Ministries](#) - Al Mohler
- [The Immanuel Prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 and its use in Matthew 1:23 - R Bruce Compton](#)
- [Doctrine of the Virgin Birth](#) - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Virgin Birth](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Virgin](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Mary, the Virgin](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Virgin](#)
- Hawker's Poor Man's Dictionary [Virgin](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Birth, Virgin](#)
- [The Virginity of the עַלְמָה in Isaiah 7:14 - Bibliotheca Sacra 137:546, April, 1980](#)
- [Is "virgin" or "young woman" the correct translation of Isaiah 7:14? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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Given the importance of the **Virgin Birth in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ** you might want to refresh your doctrinal knowledge of the Humanity of Jesus Christ by listening to **3 excellent lectures from Dr Wayne Grudem**. You could print out the accompanying outline to take notes. Only a portion of this material deals directly with the Virgin Birth but all three lectures will give you an excellent overview of the Humanity of Jesus Christ.

- [Online Systematic Theology](#) - Wayne Grudem - The Person of Christ - scroll to page 455
- [Lecture 1 - The Person of Christ](#)
- [Lecture 2 - The Person of Christ](#)
- [Lecture 3 - The Person of Christ](#)
- [Outline of the Person of Christ](#)

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#### Wayne Grudem - The doctrinal importance of the virgin birth is seen in at least three areas.

1. **It shows that salvation ultimately must come from the Lord.** Just as God had promised that the "seed" of the woman (Gen. 3:15) would ultimately destroy the serpent, so God brought it about by his own power, not through mere human effort. The virgin birth of Christ is an unmistakable reminder that salvation can never come through human effort, but must be the work of God himself. Our salvation only comes about through the supernatural work of God, and that was evident at the very beginning of Jesus' life when "God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons" (Gal. 4:4–5).
2. **The virgin birth made possible the uniting of full deity and full humanity in one person.** This was the means God used to send his Son (John 3:16; Gal. 4:4) into the world as a man. If we think for a moment of other possible ways in which Christ might have come to the earth, none of them would so clearly unite humanity and deity in one person. It probably would have been possible for God to create Jesus as a complete human being in heaven and send him to descend from heaven to earth without the benefit of any human parent. But then it would have been very hard for us to see how Jesus could be fully human as we are, nor would he be a part of the human race that physically descended from Adam. On the other hand, it probably



would have been possible for God to have Jesus come into the world with two human parents, both a father and a mother, and with his full divine nature miraculously united to his human nature at some point early in his life. But then it would have been hard for us to understand how Jesus was fully God, since his origin was like ours in every way. When we think of these two other possibilities, it helps us to understand how God, in his wisdom, ordained a combination of human and divine influence in the birth of Christ, so that his full humanity would be evident to us from the fact of his ordinary human birth from a human mother, and his full deity would be evident from the fact of his conception in Mary's womb by the powerful work of the Holy Spirit.

3. **The virgin birth also makes possible Christ's true humanity without inherited sin.** As we noted in chapter 24, all human beings have inherited legal guilt and a corrupt moral nature from their first father, Adam (this is sometimes called "inherited sin" or "original sin"). But the fact that Jesus did not have a human father means that the line of descent from Adam is partially interrupted. Jesus did not descend from Adam in exactly the same way in which every other human being has descended from Adam. And this helps us to understand why the legal guilt and moral corruption that belongs to all other human beings did not belong to Christ. ([Scroll to Page 456](#))

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## God's Answer To Loneliness

The virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel. —Matthew 1:23

Today's Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25

Most of us have experienced loneliness in some form or another. I remember the deep sense of aloneness that swept over me during my first day in the military when I was exposed to almost constant cursing and foul language.

People with physical disabilities have said that their greatest pain is loneliness. It is also felt by parents who have been neglected by their children, by husbands or wives who have lost their mate, and by people from a minority group who have been excluded from social activities.

If we want to be followers of our Savior, we should be reaching out to the lonely all around us. But we can't be with them all the time, nor can we fully know their pain. Our presence may help, but we are never enough. Only God can meet the needs of the lonely. And here is the good news. In Jesus He has revealed Himself as "Immanuel," which means, "God with us."

One day G. Campbell Morgan visited an elderly woman who lived alone. Before leaving, he read, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). "A great promise," he said. With a twinkle in her eye she retorted, "Dr. Morgan, that's not a promise. It's reality!" For her, Immanuel was the ultimate cure for loneliness. By: Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Reflect & Pray

Though all around me is darkness  
And earthly joys have flown,  
My Savior whispers His promise—  
Never to leave me alone.  
—Anon.

God said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." —Hebrews 13:5

## [Immanuel-Emmanuel](#)

**IMMANUEL, EMMANUEL (GOD WITH US):** Have you ever wondered if you should spell Immanuel with an "I" or an "E?" The answer is that both are correct! **Immanuel** with an "I" is a transliteration of the original Hebrew word composed of **Immanu** (with us) and **Ei** (God), while **Emmanuel** with an "E" is a transliteration of the Greek "Emmanuel." The NET Bible is one of the few translations that maintains this distinction, translating Isa 7:14+ as **Immanuel** and Mt 1:23+ as **Emmanuel**. Inherent in the name **IMMANUEL** is the great mystery of godliness of the One Who "was revealed in the flesh" (1Ti 3:16+), of the INFINITE becoming FINITE, of the promised Messiah Who is both Divine and Human, fully God and fully Man, Majesty (2Pe 1:16+) veiled in Meekness (Mt 11:29KJV+). He was God FOR us before He became God WITH us, and it was because He was FOR us that He became God WITH us. And so the King of glory became the servant of men (Php 2:7-8+, Mk 10:45).

The Name **IMMANUEL** emphasizes the nearness of God. Christ's birth brought the infinite, holy God within reach of finite, sinful man. God came to live with us so we could live with Him. The Son of God became the Son of Man that He might change the sons of

men into sons of God (1Jn 3:1KJV+), sons and daughters who can "now draw near with confidence (boldness) to the Throne of grace" through our Immanuel (Heb 4:16+, Heb 10:19-22+). And so Immanuel speaks of the incarnation of Christ, God in the flesh. John describes the revelation of Immanuel writing that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His (Shekinah) glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." (Jn 1:14+) **Spurgeon** says in this great Name IMMANUEL "is eternity's sonnet, heaven's hallelujah, the shout of the glorified, the song of the redeemed, the chorus of angels, the everlasting oratorio of the great orchestra of the sky." He adds that "John Wesley died with the words "The best of all is GOD IS WITH US" on his tongue. May God's Spirit enable us to live with those very words ever on our hearts!" "Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail the incarnate Deity, Pleas'd as Man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel." (John Wesley) Let us praise the One Who is both transcendent and yet approachable, God Most High and yet God With Us, Immanuel!

While there are only 3 occurrences of Immanuel in Scripture (Isa 7:14+, Isa 8:8+, Mt 1:23+), there are many passages that speak of the truth of God's presence with His people. The Gospel of Matthew opens with "Behold!... **IMMANUEL... GOD WITH US**" (Mt 1:23+) and closes with "Lo! **I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS**, even to the end of the age! (Mt 28:20+) **J C Ryle** writes that Immanuel promises to be "with us daily to pardon and forgive; with us daily to sanctify and strengthen; with us daily to defend and keep; with us daily to lead and to guide; with us in sorrow, and with us in joy; with us in sickness, and with us in health; with us in life, and with us in death; with us in time, and with us in eternity." **Wiersbe** adds "What a tremendous assurance. "I am with you always!" In Mt 1:23, He was called "Immanuel," God with us, and in Mt 28:20 He reaffirms that Name. He is with us through His Spirit, in His Word, by His providential care, and with His divine presence. This is the promise that carried Livingstone into the heart of darkest Africa and that encouraged and enabled messengers of Christ down through the years." May the Truth of IMMANUEL, be an anchor to your soul when winds of trial blow.

As **Matthew Henry** said "By the light of nature we see God as a God above us (Ps 19:1-2); by the light of the law we see him as a God against us (Ro 3:19, 20+, Jas 2:10+, Col 2:14+); but by the light of the Gospel we see Him as EMMANUEL, GOD WITH US." Let us meditate on His Name Immanuel. Indeed, His "Name... is wonderful." (Jdg 13:18+) "O LORD our Lord, how majestic is YOUR NAME in all the earth." (Ps 8:1+) "Sing praise to the LORD, you His godly ones, and give thanks to His holy NAME." (Ps 30:4+) "I will sing praise to the NAME of the LORD Most High." (Ps 7:17+) "And those who know (experientially, intimately) Your NAME (IMMANUEL) will put their trust in You, for You, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek Thee." (Ps 9:10) "O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His NAME together." (Ps 34:3+) "Blessed be His glorious NAME (IMMANUEL) forever; and may the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen." (Ps 72:19+)

He is our **IMMANUEL, GOD WITH US**, at every stage of our spiritual life, for He has promised to never (Greek has 5 negatives emphasizing the impossibility that He will ever) desert us or forsake us (Heb 13:5+). Even in the OT prior to the full revelation of Immanuel in Mt 1:23, we see that the heart of God is to be WITH His people. And so the phrase "**I WILL BE WITH YOU**" occurs 9x in the OT (Ge 26:3+, Ge 31:3+, Dt 31:23, Josh 1:5+, Josh 3:7+, Jdg 6:16+, 1Ki 11:38, Isa 43:2). For example, in Isaiah 43, God gives a great promise of His presence to Israel (and applicable to all His children) declaring that "When (not "if") you go through deep waters, I WILL BE WITH YOU ("I will be Immanuel to you"). When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you." (Isaiah 43:2NLT) Because you belong to Him, Immanuel will preserve you in the midst of the trials by His presence and power! **Believe it for it is the Word of Truth!** Let us recall the three Hebrew boys who were thrown into the fiery furnace because they would rather burn rather bow (Da 3:17,18+). Their courageous stand resulted in Nebuchadnezzar's description of a "fourth (Man in the fire who) is like the Son of God" (Da 3:25KJV+)! It is not some quality given to enable us to endure the trial nor is it a dramatic change of circumstances that makes victory possible, but it is the unfailing presence of a PERSON, the "fourth Man in the fiery trial," Jesus Christ, our IMMANUEL! In Genesis, we see the same pattern of **GOD'S PRESENCE WITH** Joseph in his trials! (Read Ge 39:2, 3, 5, 21, 23+) Paul when faced with his imminent death, could still confidently declare in some of his very last words that "the **LORD STOOD WITH ME** and strengthened me." (2Ti 4:16+) So yes, beloved, Jesus, our IMMANUEL will be WITH US in every trial until the very end (cf Mt 28:20)! Jehovah is not a distant God but is IMMANUEL "a very present help in trouble" (Ps 46:1+)

**Spurgeon** comments on Isaiah 43:2: "Bridge there is none: we must go through the waters and feel the rush of the rivers. The PRESENCE OF GOD in the flood is better than a ferry-boat. TRIED we must be, but TRIUMPHANT we shall be; for JEHOVAH HIMSELF, Who is mightier than many waters, shall BE WITH US (IMMANUEL!). Whenever else He may be away from His people, the Lord will SURELY BE WITH THEM in difficulties and dangers. The sorrows of life may rise to an extraordinary height, but the Lord is equal to every occasion. The enemies of God can put in our way dangers of their own making, namely, persecutions and cruel mockings, which are like a burning fiery furnace. What then? We shall walk through the fires. GOD BEING WITH US, we shall not be burned; nay, not even the smell of fire shall remain upon us! Oh, the wonderful security of the heaven-born and heaven-bound pilgrim! Floods cannot drown him, nor fires burn him. THY PRESENCE, O Lord, is the protection of Thy saints from the varied perils of the road. Behold, in faith I commit myself unto Thee, and my spirit enters into rest." AMEN! Indeed, Immanuel is a powerful, practical Name which is like "a strong tower that the righteous man or woman runs into and is safe, protected (literally "set on high")" (Pr 18:10+)

In your daily experience, do you know Jesus as IMMANUEL, GOD WITH YOU? How was "God with you" today? Many of us are like the children of Israel asking "Is the LORD among us or not?" (Ex 17:7+) We need to remind ourselves of the truth that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever." (Heb 13:8+) What we need even more than deliverance from trouble is the sure knowledge that God is our IMMANUEL in the midst of trouble. The secret of peace is not a plan or program but a Person, Immanuel, God with us (Read Ps 20:7+). Indeed, the wonderful Name Immanuel is an antidote for our fear, even as Moses reminded Israel declaring that "the LORD is WITH US; do not FEAR" (Nu 14:9+) When danger threatens or calamity strikes, we can be assured of Immanuel's personal presence to comfort and calm us. And so when we experience fearful thoughts, we recall to mind David's affirmation "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I **FEAR** no evil, (Why?) for **YOU ARE WITH ME**, Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me." (Ps 23:4+). As Spurgeon affirms, Jesus Christ is "**Immanuel**, God with us in our nature, in our sorrow, in our lifework, in our punishment, in our grave, and now with us, or rather we with Him, in resurrection, ascension, triumph, and Second Advent splendour."

**Who is Immanuel today?** Spurgeon answers that "Jesus came, and the ever-blessed Son in His own proper Person, was the delight of His people's eyes. At the time of the Redeemer's ascension, the Holy Spirit became the Head of the present church age (Jn 16:7+, Lk 24:49, Acts 2:33+), and His power (Acts 1:8+) was gloriously manifested in (Acts 2:4+) and after Pentecost (Acts 16:7). He remains at this hour the **PRESENT IMMANUEL—GOD WITH US**, (Read Ro 8:9+, Php 1:19+, Gal 4:6+) dwelling in (1Cor 6:19+, 1Cor 3:16, 2Co 6:16) and with His people, making alive (Ro 8:2+, 2Cor 3:5, 6+), guiding (Jn 16:13+), and ruling in their midst (1Cor 12:11, Acts 13:2, 4+, Acts 10:19+, Acts 11:12+, Acts 16:6+, Acts 20:28+). Is the Spirit's presence recognized as it ought to be? Are we sufficiently anxious to obtain the Spirit's enabling power (Acts 1:8+, Eph 3:16+) or sufficiently watchful lest we provoke Him to withdraw His aid? (Eph 4:29, 30+, 1Th 5:18, 19+) Without Him we can do **NOTHING** (Jn 6:63+, Jn 15:5+), but by His almighty energy the most extraordinary results can be produced (Eph 3:20+): everything depends upon His manifesting or concealing His power (Ro 15:19+, Acts 1:8+). Do we always look up to the Spirit both for our inner life and our outward service with the respectful dependence which is fitting? Do we not too often run before His call and act independently of His aid (Ro 7:6+, 1Cor 15:10+)? Condescending and tender, He does not weary of us, but awaits to be gracious still."

**Spurgeon leaves us with a good prayer to pray:** "Blessed Immanuel, we gladly obey Thee! In Thee our darkness ends and from the shadow of death we rise to the Light of life. It is salvation to be obedient to Thee. It is the end of gloom to her that was in anguish to bow herself before Thee. May God the Holy Spirit take of the things of Christ and show them unto us, and then we shall all cry— "Go worship at Immanuel's feet! See in His face what wonders meet! Earth is too narrow to express; His worth, His grace, His righteousness." to which we add "O Come, O Come Emmanuel."

### [Immanuel, God is with us!](#)

**Michael Card**

A sign shall be given, A virgin will conceive  
A human baby bearing undiminished Deity  
The Glory of the nations, a Light for all to see  
And Hope for all who will embrace His warm reality.

Refrain

IMMANUEL, OUR GOD IS WITH US  
And if GOD IS WITH US, who could stand against us?  
Our GOD IS WITH US, IMMANUEL.

For all those who live in the shadow of death  
A Glorious Light has dawned  
For all those who stumble in the darkness  
Behold, your Light has come.

Refrain

So what will be your answer? Will you hear the call  
Of Him Who did not spare His Son but gave Him for us all  
On earth there is no power, there is no depth nor height  
That could ever separate us from the love of God in Christ.

Refrain

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They will call him "Immanuel"—which means, "God with us." - Matthew 1:23

## TODAY IN THE WORD

In a fourth-century Christmas sermon, St. John Chrysostom preached:

“What shall I say! And how shall I describe this Birth to you? For this wonder fills me with astonishment. The Ancient of Days has become an infant. He who sits upon the sublime and heavenly Throne, now lies in a manger. And He who cannot be touched, who is simple, without complexity, and incorporeal, now lies subject to the hands of men. He who has broken the bonds of sinners, is now bound by an infant’s bands. But He has decreed that ignominy shall become honor, infamy be clothed with glory, and total humiliation [be] the measure of His goodness.”

Amen! The Christmas story, rightly understood, should fill our hearts with praise. First, we see many Old Testament prophecies fulfilled. Isaiah had foretold the virgin birth of the Messiah (Mt 1:23; Isa. 7:14). Micah had said His birthplace would be Bethlehem (Mt 2:6; Mic. 5:2). Hosea had spoken of a time in Egypt (Mt 2:15; Hos. 11:1). Jeremiah had foreseen the horrifying violence of Herod (Mt 2:18; Jer. 31:15). And various prophets had indicated the Messiah would be “despised,” or in Jesus’ day, the equivalent of being “called a Nazarene” (Mt 2:23; Isa. 53:3).

We also rejoice because God intervened in miraculous ways throughout the Christmas story. Jesus was born of a virgin—somehow, the Holy Spirit engineered His conception outside of the normal means (Mt 1:18). Angels, who are God’s messengers, delivered several special announcements. And how did the Magi know where and when to come to find the newborn King? God was clearly at work in their knowledge, the star they followed, and the dream, warning not to tell Herod.

## TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Never mind that it’s April . . . after today’s devotional, don’t you feel like singing a Christmas song? Go for it!

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### Two Bethlehems

The power of the Highest will overshadow you. —Luke 1:35

Today’s Scripture: Luke 1:26-35

The birth of Jesus Christ was unlike any other. Mary’s was an “other world” conception. The angel told her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you” (Luke 1:35). The child conceived in her was from outside our world. And it had to be so, because the boy born to Mary was Immanuel, “God with us” (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23).

The baby born in Bethlehem was of heavenly origin. God had entered the earth in the form and nature of Mary’s little son. He came into the world from above, and His incarnation made possible our redemption.

Now think about it. Our own new birth—our regeneration—comes from outside the world. Jesus said that we are born again “of the Spirit” (John 3:3,7-8). Our salvation is not from an earthly source, but from God Himself through Jesus by means of His Spirit. In a sense, then, our heart becomes a “Bethlehem stable,” a place where Jesus comes into the world. We open the door to Him by faith, and He is born in us by the blessed Holy Spirit.

We make Him known to others by His power in us. He affects every aspect of our lives. We are a “Bethlehem,” His place of entrance into today’s world. By: David C. Egnor ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Reflect & Pray

### **[Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!](#)**

O what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,  
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.  
-Crosby

Christ was born here below that we might be born from above.

---

### Immanuel

“The virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.” —Matthew 1:23

Today’s Scripture: Isaiah 8:1-10

Since that first Christmas day 2,000 years ago, the assurance that God is with His people has taken on new meaning. Before Jesus was born, the Israelites were assured that even in judgment they could have hope because God was with them (Isaiah 8:8,10). Yet

they didn't know God as fully as we can today.

We have a great advantage because through reading the New Testament we can see the glory of God "in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6). And we can sense His presence in all situations of life because He is made real to us by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:10-16).

When I need to be reassured that God is with me, I think about Jesus as He is revealed in the New Testament. I recall how He took little children in His arms and blessed them (Matthew 19:13-15). Then I think of His crucifixion, which reminds me of all He endured to be my Savior (27:27-54). Finally, I reflect on His promise, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (28:20).

The birth of Jesus gave new significance to the name Immanuel, which means "God with us" (1:23). Because He lived among us, died for us, and sent His Spirit to indwell us, we can rejoice! By: Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Reflect & Pray

**Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,**

Hail the incarnate Deity!

Pleased as man with men to dwell,

Jesus, our Immanuel.

—Wesley

God came to live with us so we could live with Him.

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Seven Great Prophecies Fulfilled

1. EMMANUEL, BY ISAIAH Isaiah 7:14; Matt. 1:22, 23
2. BETHLEHEM, BY MICAH Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:6
3. EGYPT, BY HOSEA Hosea 11:1; Matt. 2:15
4. RAMA, BY JEREMIAH Jeremiah 31:15; Matt. 2:18
5. NAZARETH, BY AN UNKNOWN PROPHET, UNRECORDED PROPHECY Matt. 2:23
6. WILDERNESS, BY ISAIAH Isaiah 40:3, 4; Matt. 3:3
7. GALILEE, BY ISAIAH Isaiah 9:1, 2; Matt. 4:14–16

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**Illustration** The land of Persia was once ruled by a wise and beloved Shah who cared greatly for his people and desired only what was best for them. One day he disguised himself as a poor man and went to visit the public baths. The water for the baths was heated by a furnace in the cellar, so the Shah made his way to the dark place to sit with the man who tended the fire. The two men shared the coarse food, and the Shah befriended him in his loneliness. Day after day the ruler went to visit the man. The worker became attached to this stranger because he "came where he was".

One day the Shah revealed his true identity, and he expected the man to ask him for a gift. Instead, he looked long into his leader's face and with love and wonder in his voice said, "You left your palace and your glory to sit with me in this dark place, to eat my coarse food, and to care about what happens to me. On others you may bestow rich gifts, but to me you have given yourself!"

As we think of what our Lord has done for us, we can echo that fire tender's sentiments. Oh, what a step our Lord took -- from heaven to earth, from the worship of angels to the mocking of cruel men, from glory to humiliation!

**Matthew 1:24 And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife,**

NET Matthew 1:24 When Joseph awoke from sleep he did what the angel of the Lord told him. He took his wife,

GNT Matthew 1:24 γερθε ς δ ωσ φ π το πνου πο ησεν ς προσ ταξεν ατ γγελος κυρ ου κα παρ λαβεν τ ν γυνα κα α το ,

NLT Matthew 1:24 When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife.

KJV Matthew 1:24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and

took unto him his wife:

ESV Matthew 1:24 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife,

NIV Matthew 1:24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.

ASV Matthew 1:24 And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took unto him his wife;

CSB Matthew 1:24 When Joseph got up from sleeping, he did as the Lord's angel had commanded him. He married her

- **did as the angel of the Lord commanded** Ge 6:22 7:5 22:2,3 Ex 40:16,19,25,27,32 2Ki 5:11-14 Joh 2:5-8 Joh 15:14 Heb 11:7,8,24-31 Jas 2:21-26

**And Joseph awoke** ([diegeiro](#)) **from his sleep** ([hupnos](#)) - If we had just heard from an angel in a dream, we would probably shortly be wide awake. God had spoken with men through dreams on a number of occasions (Ge 20:3; 31:10–11; Nu 12:6; 1 Ki 3:5; Job 33:14–16).

**MacArthur** summarizes the rest of Joseph's life - We know nothing else of Joseph's life except his taking the infant Jesus to the Temple for dedication (Luke 2:22–33), his taking Mary and Jesus into Egypt to protect Him from Herod's bloody edict and the return (Matt. 2:13–23), and his taking his family to the Passover in Jerusalem when Jesus was twelve (Luke 2:42–52). We have no idea when Joseph died, but it could have been well before Jesus began His public ministry. Obviously it was before Jesus' crucifixion, because from the cross Jesus gave his mother into the care of John (John 19:26).

**And did as the angel** ([aggelos](#)) **of the Lord commanded him and took Mary as his wife**- Joseph's unerring obedience underscores that he was a righteous man, righteous before God by faith (cf Ge 15:6+) and righteous before men in behavior.

**Commanded** (4367) ([prostasso](#) from **prós** = to + **tássō** = to arrange) means to set in order toward, in regard to a person or thing, to order towards or to someone, to command, prescribe to. To be formally ordered with official authorization. Only other use by Matthew - Mt 8:4.

**Took** (same verb used by angel in Mt 1:20+) (3880) ([paralambano](#) from **para** = beside + **lambano** = appropriate, receive) means to receive alongside or to take to oneself (into close association). There is an interesting play on words here for the same verb is used by Jesus in John 14:3 giving the promise "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and **receive** ([paralambano](#)) you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." Many take this as an allusion to the [Rapture](#) when Christ, our Bridegroom, returns to "sweep" His Bride, the Church, off of her feet! (Pun intended!). All of Matthew's uses of **paralambano** - Matt. 1:20; Matt. 1:24; Matt. 2:13; Matt. 2:14; Matt. 2:20; Matt. 2:21; Matt. 4:5; Matt. 4:8; Matt. 12:45; Matt. 17:1; Matt. 18:16; Matt. 20:17; Matt. 24:40; Matt. 24:41; Matt. 26:37; Matt. 27:27

### Matthew 1:25 but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

NET Matthew 1:25 but did not have marital relations with her until she gave birth to a son, whom he named Jesus.

GNT Matthew 1:25 κα ο κ γ νωσκειν α τ ν ως ο τεκεν υ ν· κα κ λεσεν τ νομα α το ησο ν.

NLT Matthew 1:25 But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus.

KJV Matthew 1:25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

ESV Matthew 1:25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

NIV Matthew 1:25 But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

ASV Matthew 1:25 and knew her not till she had brought forth a son: and he called his name JESUS.

CSB Matthew 1:25 but did not know her intimately until she gave birth to a son. And he named Him Jesus.

- **she gave birth to a Son:** Ex 13:2 22:29 Lu 2:7 Ro 8:29
- **and he called His name Jesus:** Lu 2:21

## VIRGINITY VERIFIED

To **verify** means to declare or affirm solemnly and formally as true.

**But** - This is a critical term of contrast. Joseph and Mary were together and yet "not together."

**Kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son** - The word "**virgin**" is not in the Greek (as it is in Mt 1:23). More literally this reads "**knew her not** till she had brought forth a son" (Mt 1:25ASV) where "**not**" is absolute negation (ou) and **know** is [ginosko](#) to know by experience and is the same verb used in the Septuagint to translate Ge 4:1KJV which says "And Adam **knew** (Lxx - [ginosko](#)) Eve his wife." Notice the important word until which means to be done up to a particular point in time, and then stopping. In short, Joseph kept Mary a virgin up to the point in time when she delivered Jesus and after that the couple had normal conjugal relations as indicated by the Gospel mentions of Jesus' brothers and sisters (Mt 12:46, Mt 13:55-56, Mk 6:3).

**THOUGHT** - That Mary remained a [perpetual virgin](#) is a false teaching. And remember that false teaching on one point is like leaven, so if you are in a group that has a false teaching on the virginity of Mary, rest assured there is very likely to be false teaching on many doctrines, some of which are of [soteriological](#) import. In regard to your eternal salvation, you do not dare take a risk and wake up after your last breath in the place of **eternal punishment!** Be wise today, and throughout eternity you will be grateful you were wise!

**And he called His name Jesus** (see [Jesus](#)) - This as in obedience to the angel's command in Mt 1:21. Luke writes "And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb." (Lk 2:21+)

**HUMOR** - A little girl was learning about the Bible from her grandmother and was becoming quite know knowledgeable. Then, one day, she floored her grandmother by asking. "Which Virgin was the mother of Jesus? The Virgin Man or the King James Virgin?"

### [Hark! the herald angels sing,](#)

“Glory to the new-born King;  
Peace on earth, and mercy mild;  
God and sinners reconciled.”  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,  
Join the triumph of the skies;  
With angelic hosts proclaim,  
“Christ is born in Bethlehem.”

Christ, by highest heav’n adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord:  
Late in time behold Him come,  
Offspring of a virgin’s womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,  
Hail th’ incarnate Deity!  
Pleased as man with man to dwell,  
Jesus our Immanuel.

Hail the heav’n-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail the Sun of righteousness!  
Light and life to all He brings,  
Ris’n with healing in His wings:  
Mild He lays His glory by,  
Born that man no more may die;  
Born to raise the sons of earth;  
Born to give them second birth.

Come, Desire of nations, come!

Fix in us Thy humble home:  
Rise, the woman's conqu'ring seed,  
Bruise in us the serpent's head;  
Adam's likeness now efface,  
Stamp Thine image in its place:  
Final Adam from above,  
Reinstate us in Thy love.

#### Related Resources:

- [See discussions above related to Mary and the virgin birth](#)
  - [How can it be said that we have everlasting life when we still die? | GotQuestions.org](#)
  - [Did Mary have other children? How many children did Mary have? | GotQuestions.org](#)
  - [What does the Bible say about the virgin Mary? | GotQuestions.org](#)
  - [How many siblings did Jesus have? | GotQuestions.org](#)
  - [What is the Protoevangelium of James? | GotQuestions.org](#)
  - [Did Jesus have brothers and sisters \(siblings\)? | GotQuestions.org](#)
  - [Was Mary sinless? Was Mary without sin? | GotQuestions.org](#)
  - [Who is the Lady of Guadalupe? Were the apparitions of Mary at Guadalupe real?](#)
- 

#### Jesus: Unique In All The World

In [Jesus] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. —Colossians 2:9

Today's Scripture: Philippians 2:5-11

A new Christian sent an e-mail to a Web site that answers questions about faith. She said, "I struggle with the claim of other Christians that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven and to God. What will happen to those who believe otherwise?"

This kind of question challenges us to examine our view of Jesus. A scriptural review of Jesus and His uniqueness can help us stand strong in our belief that He is the only way.

Jesus is unmatched in history—His very being cries out for us to entrust our lives to Him. Jesus Christ is:

- Unique in substance: He alone is both God and man (John 10:30).
- Unique in prophecy: No other leader's life was foretold so clearly and accurately (Micah 5:2).
- Unique in mission: Jesus alone came to save us from our sins (Matthew 1:21).
- Unique in birth: Only Jesus was born of a virgin (Matthew 1:23).
- Unique in ability: No one but Jesus has the power to forgive sins (Mark 2:10).
- Unique in existence: Jesus alone existed before the beginning of time (John 1:1-2).
- Unique in position: No one else is equal with God (Philippians 2:5-6).
- Unique in reign: Only Jesus reigns forever (Hebrews 1:8).

No one in history is like Jesus. He alone deserves our trust, and He alone is the path to God. By: Dave Branon [Our Daily Bread](#).  
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Reflect & Pray

No other name can save me,  
No other name beside,  
But Jesus Christ the risen Lord,  
Who once was crucified.  
—Brandt

Only one road leads to heaven—Jesus Christ is the way.

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[The Importance of Messianic Genealogy](#) BY WAYNE JACKSON



There is no question but that the Old Testament contains ample prophetic testimony regarding the coming, and the identification of, the Messiah. Some scholars have argued there are more than 300 of these prophecies (**ED**: SEE MESSIANIC PROPHECIES and MESSIANIC PROPHECIES IN ISAIAH).

Among these are a number that foretell the genealogical lineage of Jesus, as such pertained to David, Israel's greatest king (cf. 2 Samuel 7:12-13; Psalm 89:3-4; 110:1; Isaiah 9:7; 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5-6; 30:9; Ezekiel 34:23-24; 37:24-25; Hosea 3:5; Amos 9:11). The Savior is referred to as the "son [offspring] of David" more than a dozen times in the New Testament. Both Matthew and Luke trace the genealogy of Christ through David—the former legally, through Joseph; the latter biologically, via Mary. This is clear evidence that the lineage of our Lord was employed as a powerful argument for the identification of Jesus of Nazareth as the fulfillment of messianic prophecy.

At the time of the Lord's birth, ample genealogical evidence was available to check a Hebrew's historical background. Such would be crucial in determining whether Christ had the necessary "genealogical pedigree" to establish his ancestry. If these records were not available, any attempt to argue for the Lord's messiahship on the ground of Old Testament prophecy—at least pertaining to his ancestry—falls flat. The fact is, however, those genealogical records substantially vanished when the Romans slaughtered and/or dispersed the Hebrew populace in A.D. 70.

Accordingly, no modern Jew could possibly argue that he is the promised Messiah, based upon the prophecies cited above, since he would be unable to establish his lineage from David. This dilemma recently was submitted to a Jewish lady who identifies herself as a formal Hebrew "Rabbi." This was the core of her claim.

"[G]eneological [sic] records were never kept in the Temple or anywhere else in Jerusalem. Judaism is a religion of orality, and one's tribal lineage was never maintained on paper—not even today, when Levites and Kohanim [priests] are the only tribal and house affiliation maintained, there are no written records. So, the problem of identifying the messiah would never have been solved by geneological [sic] records."

## **A Response**

The following is a brief response to the Jewish lady's allegation.

The [McClintock & Strong Cyclopedia](#) is quite possibly the most thorough Bible encyclopedia ever published. It took twenty years to produce and contains seventeen million words packed into 12 large volumes, with scores of scholars involved in the project. Therein the following statement is made.

"The [Hebrew] Rabbis affirm that after the [Babylonian] Captivity the Jews were most careful in keeping their pedigrees (Babyl. Gemar. Gloss. fol. xiv, 2). Since, however, the period of their destruction as a nation by the Romans, all their tables of descent seem to be lost, and now they are utterly unable to trace the pedigree of any one who might lay claim to be their promised Messiah" (3.771; emp.WJ).

Consider the following evidence.

The book of Genesis alone, which contains Moses' written record (cf. John 5:46-47), contains at least a dozen genealogies. Add to these the records in Chronicles, along with those from post-exilic days recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah, and the lists of names are profuse. No informed person would contend that tribal lineages were never recorded in written form.

When Luke, an "unsurpassed" historian according to Sir William Ramsay (81), wrote his Gospel account, he recorded a genealogical catalog reaching from Christ back to Adam. Where did he obtain his information? He obviously did not interview the ancients personally! Clearly, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he consulted written documents in existence then (cf. 1:3).

## **The Purpose of Genealogies**

R.K. Harrison observed that: "Records of descent were an extremely important part of Hebrew tradition from the very beginning..." ([Bromiley, 2.425](#)). Noted scholar [Joachim Jeremias](#) has discussed at length the necessity of preserving the genealogical heritage of the post-exile Jews. Note the following.

In view of a special lineage that Jehovah had chosen, through whom the promised Messiah would descend, the Hebrews were prohibited from contracting marriages with Gentiles (Deuteronomy 7:1-3; Ezra 10:2)—though there were rare exceptions, e.g., Ruth, Rahab and Bathsheba. Due to Israel's dispersal among the nations, Jews who made pilgrimages back to Jerusalem, and wished to marry, were "required to have the genealogy of their future wife checked according to [the] requirements" (69). How could this be if no written records were available?

Under the Old Testament law, the offices of the priests and Levites were hereditary. This position could be obtained in no other way

than by inheritance. It was extremely important, therefore, that the “purity of the line” remain intact. Accordingly, “great care was taken in tracing genealogy.” “[I]f a priest could not prove his legitimate descent, he lost his rights to priestly office, both for himself and for his descendants, and [also] to priestly revenues” (214). Induction into the priesthood was not a matter of “orality” alone!

During the time of Christ’s earthly sojourn, certain families of Hebrew nobility were granted the privilege of “carrying wood to the Temple on certain days; this fact shows that the genealogical tradition was well preserved among the lay nobility.” An Israelite woman “who wished to marry into a priest’s family had to produce her genealogy for five generations (p. 216; M. Kidd. iv.4)...” (Jeremias, 276).

## Property Rights

When the Hebrews conquered the territory on the eastern side of the Jordan River, and then likewise that between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, by divine edict they were assigned various tribal allotments. Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh settled east of the Jordan (Numbers 32). After the initial victories to the west, Judah, Ephraim, and the other half-tribe of Manasseh were given their regions (Joshua 15-17). Finally, after considerable delay, the remaining tribes, by “lot,” received their portions of the land (Joshua 18-19), with the Levites receiving priestly cities.

Years passed and a gradual apostasy from the faith by Israel resulted. As a divine judgment the entire land eventually was ravaged by foreigners. Assyria conquered the northern kingdom of “Israel.” According to Assyrian records, 27,290 souls were taken into captivity—never to return as a body of people. “Judah,” in the south, progressively degenerated spiritually until finally, after three invasions between 606-536 B.C., some 70,000 Hebrews were taken to Babylon as captives, where they were to remain for seventy years (Jeremiah 25:8-11).

Finally, beginning with the reign of Cyrus the Persian (who had conquered Babylon), the Jews, some 125,000 strong by then, were permitted to return to Canaan. Many of their ancestors were now gone—into Assyria, Egypt, and various other places. In the return to Canaan, the problem was this: who should inherit what land assignment? How could any Jew prove his “right” to a certain property inheritance? Was such to be accomplished by verbal jousting? Did one person’s “say so” trump another’s contention? How might a Jew prove his right to settle in a certain tribal territory—if there were no genealogical documents to establish his ancestral history?

## Conclusion

The combined historical facts inevitably drive the analytical person to the conclusion that numerous genealogical documents were available in Israel during the days of Christ. In A.D. 70 that changed! After a five-month siege, the Romans broke through the walls of the sacred city and burned it to the ground. The date was September 7, A.D. 70. Josephus, a Jewish historian, claimed that 1,100,000 Hebrews were killed, and that another 97,000 were captured and carried away into slavery (see Wars 5.3.1 fn; 6.9.2-4). It was a divine judgment upon a rebellious people (Matthew 22:7; cf. 23:36). A final episode occurred two years later. Almost a thousand Jews had taken refuge on the high cliffs of “Masada,” just west of the Dead Sea. They were besieged by Roman forces; rather than be captured, all but seven committed suicide. For an account of this episode see, Masada — The Final and Futile Stand.

There is no doubt at all that thousands of Hebrew documents were destroyed at this time in these dark days of Hebrew history (c. A.D. 66-72), thus leaving the scattered Dispersion of Jewish people (cf. 1 Peter 1:1), with virtually no genealogical documentation—should someone appear claiming to have messianic authenticity. The argument in McClintock & Strong thus remains unscathed; and the assertion that the Jews had no use for written genealogical documents stands exposed as a desperate theory, utterly void of support.

## Sources/Footnotes

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**About the Author** - Wayne Jackson has written for and edited the *Christian Courier* since its inception in 1965. He has also written several books on a variety of biblical topics including *The Bible and Science, Creation, Evolution, and the Age of the Earth, The Bible on Trial*, and a number of commentaries. He lives in Stockton, California with his dear wife, and life-long partner, Betty.

# Genealogy of Jesus Christ

- SOURCE - McClintock, John & James Strong. [Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature](#).

## Genealogy Of Jesus Christ, the only one given in the New Testament.

1. *Object of this Genealogical Record.*— From the foregoing article it is evident that no nation was more careful to frame and preserve its genealogical tables than Israel. Their sacred writings contain genealogies which extend through a period of more than 3500 years, from the creation of Adam to the captivity of Judah. Indeed, we find from the books of Ezra and Nehemiah that the same carefulness in this matter was observed *after* the captivity; for in Ezr 2:62 it is expressly stated that some who had come up from Babylon had sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but were not found; therefore were they, as polluted, removed from the priesthood. The division of the whole Hebrew nation into tribes, and the allotment to each tribe of a specified portion of the land of Canaan as an inalienable possession, rendered it indispensable that they should keep genealogical tables. God had, however, a still higher object than that of giving stability to property in Israel in leading successive generations of his people thus to keep an accurate list of their ancestry. That they should do this was especially required from the moment that the voice of prophecy declared that the promised Messiah should be of the seed of Abraham, of the posterity of Isaac, of the sons of Jacob, of the tribe of Judah, and of the family of David.

The Rabbins affirm that after the Captivity the Jews were most careful in keeping their pedigrees (*Babyl. Gemar. Gloss. fol. 14:2*). Since, however, the period of their destruction as a nation by the Romans, all their tables of descent seem to be lost, and now they are utterly unable to trace the pedigree of any one Israelite who might lay claim to be their promised and still expected Messiah. Hence Christians assert, with a force that no reasonable and candid Jew can resist, that *Shiloh must have come*.

⇒ [See also the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#).

The priesthood of Aaron having ceased, the possession of the land of Canaan being transferred to the Gentiles, there being under the N.T. dispensation no difference between circumcision and uncircumcision, Barbarian and Scythian, bond and free, there is but one whose genealogy it concerns us as Christians to be acquainted with, that of our Lord Jesus Christ. Him the prophets announced as the seed of Abraham, and the son of David, and the angels declared that to him should be given the throne of his father David, that he might reign over the house of Jacob forever. His descent from David and Abraham being therefore an essential part of his Messiahship, it was right that his genealogy should be given as a portion of gospel truth. Considering, further, that to the Jews first he was manifested and preached, and that his descent from David and Abraham was a matter of special interest to them, it seems likely that the proof of his descent would be one especially adapted to convince them; in other words, that it would be drawn from documents which they deemed authentic. Such were the genealogical records preserved at Jerusalem. *SEE GENEALOGY*. Now when to the above consideration we add the fact that the lineage of Joseph was actually made out from authentic records for the purpose of the civil census ordered by Augustus, it becomes morally certain that the genealogy of Jesus Christ was extracted from the public registers. Another consideration adds yet further conviction. It has often excited surprise that the genealogies of Christ should both seem to be traced through Joseph, and not Mary. But if these genealogies were those contained in the public registers, it could not be otherwise. In them Jesus, the son of Mary, the espoused wife of Joseph, could only appear as Joseph's son (comp. Joh 1:45). In transferring them to the pages of the gospels, the evangelists only added the qualifying expression "as was supposed" (Lu 3:23, and its equivalent, Mt 1:16).

We find other traces of the existence of the public tables of descent in the New Testament: the taxation spoken of by Lu 2:2-3, would clearly indicate this, for how could each one be able to go to his own city unless he knew the specific tribe to which he belonged? Hence it was, we think, that Paul was able with confidence to appeal to the Hebrews concerning the lineage of Christ, "for it is evident," says he, "that our Lord sprung out of Judah" (Heb 7:14; 2Ti 2:8). To evince this beyond reasonable doubt, it pleased God to give us, by his inspired servants Matthew and Luke, these genealogies.

2. *Statement of the Subject.*— The following is a tabular view of these records, with which it will be convenient to compare the parallel lists as found in the *Hebrew* copies of the Old Testament.

3. *Solution of Difficulties.*— We do not find that there was any objection made to these genealogies, either by Jew or Gentile, during the 1st century. Had any difficulty on this head existed, we may reasonably suppose that the Jews, of all others, would have been but too ready to detect and expose it. We may, therefore, fairly conclude that, whatever difficulty meets us now in harmonizing our Lord's pedigree as given by the two evangelists, it could have had no place in the first age of the Christian Church. In subsequent ages, however, objections were and still are made to the genealogies of Matthew and Luke.

A preliminary difficulty, which applies, however, equally to the O.T. lists, lies in the small number of names between Judah and David, being only nine for an interval of 833 years, making the incredible average of nearly a century for each generation. Hence

arises the presumption that some names have been omitted (see Browne, *Ordo Saeclorum*, page 283), and at least three — more probably *nine* — must be supplied, in order to reduce this average to the ordinary age of paternity; three, Judah, Boaz, and Jesse, are known to have been advanced in life at the birth of their youngest sons, and Salmon was considerably so. The synchronism of Nahshon with the Exode, and Boaz with the earlier judges, requires the insertion of these omitted generations in the latter part of the list. *SEE RAHAB; SEE RUTH.*

On the other hand, the names Menan and Melea, also Mattathias and Maath, seem to be superfluous repetitions of others in the same list.

1. *Difficulties that apply to the Evangelists INDIVIDUALLY.* —

(1.) It is objected that Jechoniah was not the son of Josiah, but his grandson. Answer: Matthew does not mean to say he was his son; for verses 11 and 12 are obviously intended to designate two different persons, viz. *Jehoiakim*, and his son *Jehoiachin*. That the former is the person meant in verse 11 is evident from the addition of "his brethren." Whose brethren? Not Jehoiachin's (or Jechonias), for he had none, but Jehoiakim's, viz. Jehoahaz and Zedekiah, the former of whom reigned before him (though a younger brother), and the latter after him (1Ch 3:15-17). Admitting this, we see the consistency of the evangelist as to the number of generations in the second and third series; whereas they who make Jechonias (verses 11, 12) to be the same person leave only thirteen in the second series, if Jechonias be added to the third; or in the third, if he be placed to the second. If the objection had any truth, the evangelist would be palpably inconsistent with himself! St. Jerome (in *Mattheum*, cap. 1) confirms this view: "If Jechonias be included *in* the first tessarodecade there will not be fourteen generations: we may therefore assume that the first Jechonias meant *Joakim* and the latter *Joachim* — the one spelt with the letters *k* and *m*, the other with *ch* and *i*; which letters, in the course of time, by fault of transcribers, were confounded by Greeks and Latins." Porphyry brought forward this objection against Matthew's genealogy, and we find the same father, in his *Comment. on Daniel*, thus replying: "In the Gospel of Matthew one generation seems to be wanting, for the second tessarodecade ends with Joakim, the son of Josiah, and the third begins with Joachim, the son of Joakim. Porphyry, ignorant of this, would exhibit his own skill in proving the falsity of the evangelist Matthew." We may add that some respectable MSS. still exhibit the name of Jehoiakim as well as that of Jechonias. (See Strong's *Greek Harmony of the Gospels*, ad loc.) The triple series of fourteen generations will therefore stand thus *SEE JEHOIAKIM.*

1. Abraham. 1. Solomon. 1. Jechoniah.

2. Isaac. 2. Rehoboam. 2. Salathiel.

3. Jacob. 3. Abijah. 3. Zerubabel.

4. Judah. 4. Asa. 4. Abiud.

5. Phares. 5. Jehoshaphat. 5. Eliakim.

6. Esrom. 6. Jehoram. 6. Azor.

7. Aram. 7. Uzziah. 7. Sadok.

8. Aminadab. 8. Jotham. 8. Achim.

9. Naason. 9. Ahaz. 9. Eliud.

10. Salmon. 10. Hezekiah. 10. Eleazar.

11. Boaz. 11. Manasseh. 11. Matthan.

12. Obed. 12. Amon. 12. Jacob.

13. Jesse. 13. Josiah. 13. Joseph.

14. David. 14. *Jehoiakim*. 14. Jesus.

(2.) It is objected that Matthew omits three kings, viz. Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah (comp. 1 Chronicles 3, and 2 Kings 8), from his second series. In reference to this objection, it might suffice to say that Matthew, finding fourteen generations from Abraham to David inclusively, contracted, most likely in order to assist memory and give uniformity, the second, and possibly the last series. If we compare Ezr 7:1-5 with 1Ch 6:3-15, it will be seen that Ezra, in detailing, with apparent particularity, his own lineal descent from Aaron, calls Azariah, who was high-priest at the dedication of the first Temple, the son, not of Johbaan his father, but of Meraioth, his ancestor at the distance of six generations. Doubtless the desire of abridgment led him to omit those names with which there were connected no very remarkable associations. Some of the early fathers, however, give a different solution of this difficulty. Hilary (in *Mattum*, cap. 1) says: "Three generations are designedly passed over by Matthew, for Jaras is said to have begotten Ozias,

when, in fact, he was the fourth from him, i.e., Jaras begat Ochazias from the Gentile family of Ahab, whose wife was Jezebel." That the omission of the three kings was a punishment inflicted upon the house of guilty Joram to the fourth generation is the view yet were pointedly put forth by St. Jerome also, and by many of our own best commentators. *SEE [SON](#)*.

(3.) Moreover, it is said that Matthew terms Zorobabel the son of Salathiel, whereas in 1Ch 3:19, he is called the son of *Pedtia*. How is this? We answer that the Sept. version of 1 Chronicles 3 agrees with Matthew, and that this is the manner in which Zorobabel is designated in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Hiaggai. Josephus also calls him the son of Salathiel. Were he not the immediate son of Salathiel, but of *Pedaiah*, yet is it suitable to the language of the Jewish nation to count the grandson the son of the grandfather. Thus Laban is called the son of Nahor (Ge 29:5), as being the son of Bethuel, who was, in fact, the son of Nahor (24:47). If, according to another manner of rendering verses 17 and 18, Salathiel and Pedaiah were brothers, Zorobabel might have been, by the Levirate law, the natural son of the one and the legal son of the other. *SEE [PEDAIAH](#)*.

(4.) It is again asked, if it be, as Matthew states, that Salmon, son of Naason, prince of Israel, had married so remarkable a person as Rahab, how then comes it that such a circumstance is not noticed in the book of Joshua? This objection will have no force if we remember that this book, full as it is in describing the partition of Canaan among the several tribes, is yet very silent concerning the exploits, and even names, of the subordinate leaders of Israel. There is nothing, therefore, surprising in the circumstance that it should pass over in total silence Salmon's marriage with Rahab. Had the matter in question been the espousal of Rahab by Joshua himself, the presumption against its truth would be very different. Indeed Kimchi, in his *Commentary on the Book of Joshua*, adduces a tradition to this effect, taken from the Babylonian Talmud. Every consideration, moreover, of a chronological character is in favor of the circumstance of the son of Naason, born to him in the wilderness being married to Rahab. *SEE [RAHAB](#)*.

(5.) But a far graver objection than that which is alleged against Matthew for having omitted names is brought against Luke for having inserted that of *Cainan* as son of Arphaxad — a name neither to be found in the Hebrew nor Samaritan text, nor yet in any of the Targums or versions, save the Sept. We may infer from the fact that neither Philo nor Josephus, who in other respects followed this version, receive this name as genuine, that it was not found in the earlier copies of the Sept.; it was, no doubt, borrowed from the corrupted Sept. which has come down to us, containing the name in question, but which cannot, with any propriety, be raised to a level of authority with the Heb. text. It is clear, moreover, that Irenaeus, Africanus, Eusebius, and Jerome reject it as an interpolation. (See, on this subject, Whitby's Preface to *the Reader*, and Lightfoot's *Harm.*; also Usher's *Dissertation on Cainan*, and Kidder's *Demonstr. of Messiah*.) *SEE [CAINAN](#)*.

2. We are now to compare the evangelists as to the points on which they *agree and differ*. It does not appear that Celsus attacked the genealogies on the score of any *inconsistency* with each other. Not so the emperor Julian; he made their discrepancies the specific ground of attack. Jerome (*in Matthew* 1) — thus writes: "Julianus Augustus in this place attacks the evangelists on the ground of discrepancy: Matthew calls Joseph the son of Jacob, whereas Luke calls him the son of Heli! Had Julian been better acquainted with the modes of speech of the Jews, he would have seen that one evangelist gives the natural and the other the legal pedigree of Joseph."

(1.) The first solution of the apparent discrepancies of the evangelists (one to which this ancient father obviously here alludes) is that of Africanus, which, he informs us (Eusebius *Hist. Eccles.* 1:7), he received from the relatives of our Lord, who, because of their consanguinity to him, were called Δεσπόσσοι. It is to the effect that Matthan, the third in the list from Joseph in Matthew's genealogy, and Melchi, the third in Luke's list, married successively the same woman, by whom the former begat Jacob, and the latter Heli. Heli dying without issue, his maternal brother took his widow to wife, by whom he had Joseph, who, according to law (De 25:6), was registered by Luke as the son of Heli, though naturally the son of Jacob, as Matthew records him. This is the explanation which was generally admitted by Eusebius, Nazianzen, the writer of *Ad orthodoxos*, and others, *for ages*.

(2.) Grotius, however, availing himself of the tradition that Heli and Jacob were both sons of the same mother, but of different fathers (Matthan and Melchi), supposes that Luke traces the natural pedigree of Christ, and Matthew the legal. This he argues on two grounds: first, that Salathiel could not have been the natural son of *Jechonkas*, who was childless — according to the declaration of God by Jeremiah (22) — and was, therefore, as Luke states, the son, properly so called, of Neri, of Nathan's line; and, secondly, that the *Levirate* law imposed no necessity on Jacob to marry Heli's widow, they being only uterine brothers. The learned commentator might have been led to this view by St. Ambrose, who, in his *Commentary on Luke*, says, "Heli, fratre sine liberis decedente, copulatus est fratris uxori et generavit filium Joseph, qui juxta legem Jacobi fillius dicitur." But both the reasons assigned by Grotius for differing from the solution of Africanus would seem to be founded on *petitio principio*. It does not appear an ascertained fact that Salathiel was not the natural son of Jechonias, nor yet that the law which obliged a man to marry the widow of his deceased brother might be departed from when they were only maternal brethren; for even in cases of distant relationship the law seemed obligatory, as we see in the case of Boaz marrying Ruth, the widow of his distant kinsman. Whitby defends Africanus's account; Hammond, Le Clerc, and Wetstein agree with Grotius.

**(3.)** Dr. Barrett, who in his preliminary dissertation to a curious *facsimile* of a most ancient MS. of Matthew's Gospel (an abridgment of which treatise may be found in Clarke's Commentary, at the end of Luke 3), brings to bear upon this difficult question a large share of sound learning and correct criticism, objects to the above theory as given by Africanus and altered by Grotius, on the ground principally that it refers entirely to the descent of Joseph from David, without attempting to prove that the son of Mary was the son of David. Dr. Barrett then states his own hypothesis, viz., that Matthew relates the genealogy of Joseph, and Luke that of Mary. He supposes a sufficient reason, that after Matthew had given his genealogical table another should be added by Luke, fully to prove that Christ, according to the flesh, derived his descent from David, not only by his supposed father Joseph, but also by his real mother Mary. The writers who agree to this opinion Dr. B. divides into two classes: first, those who assert that the families of Solomon and Nathan met in Salathiel and Zorobabel, after which they separated, and were again reunited in Joseph and Mary; secondly, those who suppose that Salathiel and Zorobabel were distinct individuals, and deny that any union took place between them previously to the marriage of Joseph and Mary. He rejects this latter opinion because it seems to contradict the divine promise ([2Sa 7:12-16](#)), which intimates that Christ should be lineally descended from David through Solomon. He therefore receives the former hypothesis, and supports it by numerous and profound arguments. (See his Preliminary Dissertation to *Codex Rescriptus*; see also, on both hypotheses, Lightfoot's *Harmony Ev.*; South's *Sermon on Revelation 12:16*, volume 3;

Wetstein, *ad Matthaeum*, 1:17; Bishop Kidder's *Demonst. of Messiah*, part 2 to chapter 13; Hale's *Analysis of Chronology*, volume 3).

In constructing their genealogical tables, it is well known that the Jews reckoned wholly by males, rejecting, where the blood of the grandfather passed to the grandson through a daughter, the name of the daughter herself, and counting that daughter's husband for the son of the maternal grandfather (Nu 26:33; Nu 27:4-7). On this principle Joseph, begotten by Jacob, marries Mary, the daughter of Hell, and in the genealogical register of his wife's family is counted for Heli's son. Salathiel, begotten by Jeconiah, marries the daughter of Neri, and, in like manner, is accounted his son in Zorobabel, the offspring of Salathiel and Neri's daughter, the lines of Solomon and Nathan coalesce; Joseph and Mary are of the same tribe and family; they are both descendants of David in the line of Solomon; they have in them both the blood of Nathan, David's son. Joseph deduces his descent from Abiud (Mt 1:13), Mary from Rhesa (Lu 3:27), sons of Zorobabel. The genealogies of Matthew and Luke are parts of one perfect whole, and each of them is essential to the explanation of the other. By Matthew's table we prove the descent of Mary, as well as Joseph, from Solomon; by Luke's we see the descent of Joseph, as well as Mary, from Nathan. But still it is asked how know we that Mary was the daughter of Neri?

**[1.]** Because the angel Gabriel, at the Annunciation, told the Virgin that God would give her divine son the throne of his father David ([Lu 1:32](#)), and thus it was necessary to prove this by her genealogy afterwards.

**[2.]** Mary is called by the Jews בת עלי, "the daughter of Hell," and by the early Christian writers "the daughter of Joakim and Anna" (Lightfoot, *on Luke* 3:23). But Joakim and Eliakim (as different names in Hebrew for God) are sometimes interchanged ([2Ch 36:4](#)): Eli or Hell, then, is the abridgment of Eliakim.

**[3.]** The evangelist Luke has critically distinguished the *real* from the *legal* genealogy by a parenthetical remark: Ἰησοῦς υἱὸς Ἰωσὴφ, τοῦ ἑλλή, "Jesus being (as was reputed) the son of Joseph (but in reality), the son of Hell," or his grandson by the mother's side, for so the ellipsis should be supplied. Moreover, on comparing the two tables, we find that from Abraham to David they agree with each other because they are in accordance with the genealogies of Genesis, Ruth, and 1 Chronicles 3; but from David to Joseph they are evidently distinct lines of pedigree, agreeing only in two persons, viz. Salathiel and Zorobabel.

Again, it is objected that there are now in Luke's genealogy seventy-seven names; whereas Irenaeus, Africanus, and other early fathers, acknowledge but seventy-two. But if we omit the names *Maath*, *Mattathias*, *Melea*, *Mfainan*, and *Cainan*, as being interpolations, then the number will be reduced to seventy-two.

It is said that Abiud and Rhesa are called by the evangelists the sons of Zorobabel, though in 1Ch 3:19 we have no mention of them among his sons. We remark that it was a custom with the Jews to call the same person by different names, and that this custom was peculiarly prevalent about the time of the captivity (Da 1:6-7; also comp. 2Sa 3:3 with 1Ch 3:1).

Lastly, it is inquired whence the evangelists had their genealogies from Zorobabel to Christ, there being nothing of them to be found in Scripture. We answer, from those authentic public tables kept by the Jews, of which, as before noticed, Josephus speaks; and regarding which also Eusebius (*Hist. Eccles.* 1:1) says, "Omnes Hebraeorum generationes descriptae in archivis Templi secretioribus habebantur." It was doubtless from this source that they had the above-named parts of our Lord's legal and natural pedigree; for, otherwise, they would have exposed themselves to the cavils of the Jews; nor could the apostles have appealed, as they did, with confidence, to Christ's pedigree, as answering all the requirements of prophecy. — Kitto, s.v.; Smith, s.v.

**(4.)** Rejecting all the above identifications and Levirate marriages, Lord Hervey (*Genealogies of our Lord*, Camb. 1853) contends that both evangelists give the genealogy of Joseph, Matthew's being the legal or royal line, and Luke's the private. He supposes that Mary was the daughter of Jacob, and thus the first cousin of Joseph. The discrepancies in the latter names of the two lists he

attempts to reconcile by supposing "Rhgsa" to be merely a title (Chald. for *prince*) of Zorobabel, so that "Joanna" of Luke will be the "Hananiah" of 1 Chronicles, but omitted by Matthew; then identifying Matthew's "Abiud" with Luke's "Juda," and both with the "Hodaiah" of 1 Chronicles; also Matthew's "Matthan" with Luke's "Matthat.;" and finally cutting off all the remaining names in 1 Chronicles, and supposing a number of generations to have been omitted in the following names of Matthew; so that the lists will, in this part, stand thus:

The violent character of these suppositions is sufficiently obvious. (See each name in its place.)

(5.) Others, like Alford (*Commeanlt. ad loc.*), content themselves with saying that solution is impossible without further knowledge than we possess. But this is a view in which, with the actual documents before us, few will be disposed to acquiesce.

See, in addition to the works already referred to, Mill, *Vindication of the Genealogies* (Cambridge, 1842); Beeston, *Geneal. of Matt. and Luke* (3d 6d. Lond. 1842); *Jour. Sac. Lit.* July, 1856; *Meth. Quart. Rev.* October 1852, page 593 sq.; Schleyer, in the *Theolog. Quartelschr.* 1836. Older treatises may be seen in Darlimg's *Cyclop. Bibliograph.* 2, col. 771 sq., 1854; Volbeding, *Index*, page 7; Hase, *Leben Jesu*, page 51. SEE [LINEAGE](#).

## The Genealogy Of Jesus Christ

- SOURCE: [ISBE](#) Article by Louis Matthews Sweet

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### LITERATURE

#### I. Introduction.

##### 1. The Problems Involved:

The genealogy of Jesus as contained in the First and Third Gospels presents three special problems which lie somewhat part from general questions of New Testament criticism: (1) the construction and purpose of each list taken separately; (2) the relation of the two lists, in their coincidences and variations, to each other; (3) the relationship of both lists to the statement concerning the virgin birth of our Lord with which they are directly connected. These questions necessarily involve the conclusion to be arrived at concerning the trustworthiness of the list of names as forming an actual historical connection between Jesus and His ancestors according to the flesh.

##### 2. Nature and Importance of the Issue:

Before these problems are dealt with, it would be well to consider the kind and degree of importance to be attached to the question at issue. As we see it, the only vital point at stake is the balance, sanity and good judgment of the evangelists.

(1) That Jesus had a line of ancestors by His human birth may be taken for granted. The tradition, universal from the earliest times

among believers and granted even by the bitterest opponents, that He was connected with the line of David, may also readily be accepted. The exact line through which that connection is traced is, on general principles, of secondary importance. The fact is that, while natural sonship to David on the part of the Messiah was of vital importance to many Jewish inquirers, it failed of any very enthusiastic endorsement on the part of Jesus Himself (see the truly remarkable interview recorded in Mk 12:35-37). The expressions of Paul in this connection will be referred to later; at this point it is sufficient to say that physical kinship to David cannot be insisted upon as the only justification for his words.

(2) If, then, the purpose of the evangelists in having recourse to these lists is worth while, the question of their correctness need not even be raised. Unless some vital issue is involved, the supposition of a special inspiration to go behind lists currently accepted is gratuitous. No such issue seems to be presented here. The Davidic kinship of Jesus, in any sense essential to His Messiahship, is independent of the lists which are used to justify it. This is preliminary to the actual discussion and need not prevent us from giving all due credit to lists which could not have been carelessly compiled nor lightly used.

## II. The Genealogies Separately.

### 1. Peculiarities of Matthew's Genealogy:

(1) The construction and incorporation of Joseph's genealogical tree is, in the light of all the facts, the primary consideration.

(2) The artificial division into three groups of fourteen generations each. The apparent defect in this arrangement as it actually stands (the third group lacks one member) is probably traceable to a defect of the Septuagint version of 1 Ch 3:11, which is reproduced in the Greek gospel (see Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, English translation, 564, note 4). This arrangement into groups is the more striking because it makes 14 generations from the captivity to Joseph, where Luke makes 20 or 21, and because the first group of 14 is formed by the omission of three names. It is perfectly clear, therefore, that this artificial grouping is essential to the purpose of the evangelist.

(3) The insertion of the names of brothers, thus following the historical lists and broadening the genealogy by including collateral lines.

(4) The insertion of the names of women--a practice not only foreign but abhorrent to ordinary usage. This peculiarity is the more marked when we notice that these names introduce what would be considered serious blots in the family history of the Davidic house (see Mt 1:5,7).

(5) The principle upon which the division into periods is constructed: (a) from Abraham to David, (b) from David to the Captivity, (c) from the Captivity to Jesus. Attention has repeatedly been called to the fact that this gives a definite historical movement to the genealogy. It involves the origin, the rise to power, the decay and downfall of the house of David (see Allen, ICC, "Matthew," 2; compare Zahn, N T, English translation, I, 535).

### 2. Explanation of the Foregoing:

Of the many theories which have been constructed to explain the foregoing six peculiarities of the genealogy of Matthew, altogether the most satisfactory is that of Professor Zahn. His contention is that the list was framed not to prove the natural connection of Jesus with the house of David--a fact which no one doubted--but to defend the one vital point where attack had been made, namely, the legitimacy of Jesus' connection with David. No one seems to have questioned that Jesus was born of Mary and was closely connected with the royal house. The question was whether He was of legitimate birth. It was charged--and the slander which was very early in origin and circumstantial in character obtained an extraordinary hold upon the hostile Jewish mind--that Jesus was the illegitimate offspring of Mary. The Gospel of Mt meets that slander by giving a bird's-eye view of the movement of the history from Abraham to the Messiah in the form of a genealogy of Joseph, who in the light of all the facts concerning the origin of Jesus marries Mary and gives her the protection of his stainless name and royal lineage. The extraordinary boldness and brilliancy of this apologetic method ought not to be overlooked. The formal charge that Jesus is son of Mary, not of Joseph, is admitted--the slander involved is refuted by bringing Joseph forward as a witness for Mary. Nothing could have been more natural for a man fearless in the confidence of truth; nothing could have been more impossible for one insecure in his hold upon the facts. So far as the genealogy is concerned, just the moment we realize that the purpose is not to prove the natural sonship of Jesus to David, but to epitomize the history, all hesitancy and apprehension concerning the historicity of the successive names disappear. The continuity of blood relationship through these successive generations becomes of no essential importance. Zahn's explanation (the argument in full should be read by every student), simple in itself, explains all the facts, as a key fits a complicated lock. It explains the choice of a genealogy as a method of epitomizing history and that genealogy Joseph's, the artificial grouping at the expense of changing the traditional lists, the inclusion of the names of brothers and of women.

### 3. Peculiarities of Luke's Genealogy:



(1) The choice of Joseph's genealogical tree on the part of one who is so deeply interested in Mary.

(2) The reversal of order in going back from Joseph to his ancestors. Godet emphasizes the fact that, in the nature of the case, a genealogy follows the order of succession, each new individual being added to the roll of his family. Luke's method indicates that his genealogy has been constructed for a special purpose.

(3) The carrying of the line back of the history of the covenant, which begins with Abraham, to Adam, who represents the race in general. This fact, together with another, that the line of Joseph is traced to David through Nathan who was not David's heir, proves that Luke was not concerned with establishing the Davidic standing of Jesus.

(4) The placing of the genealogy, not at the beginning of the Gospel, but at the beginning of the ministry, between the baptism and the temptation.

(5) The omission of the article before the name of Joseph.

#### 4. Explanation of the Foregoing:

(1) In his comment upon the fourth peculiarity enumerated above, namely, the placing of the genealogy at the beginning of the ministry, Godet (*Gospel of Luke*, American edition, 126) has this to say: "In crossing the threshold of this new era, the sacred historian casts a general glance over the period which thus reaches its close, and sums it up in this document, which might be called the mortuary register of the earlier humanity." In other words, in connecting the genealogy directly with the ministry, Luke exhibits the fact that his interest in it is historical rather than antiquarian or, so to say, genealogical. As Matthew summarizes the history of the covenant people from the days of Abraham by means of the genealogical register, modified so as to make it graphic by its uniformity, so Luke has written the story of the humanity Jesus, as the Second Adam, came to save, by the register of names summarizing its entire course in the world.

It has recently been commented upon that genealogical lists such as those of Genesis and the New Testament are not infrequently used to convey ideas not strictly germane to the matter of descent or the cognate notion of chronology. For example, the statements as to the longevity of the patriarchs are of historical interest only--they are not and could never have been of value for chronological purposes (see Warfield, "Antiquity and Unity of Human Race," *Princeton Review*, February, 1911).

(2) In commenting upon the order which Luke adopts, Godet (who has thrown more light upon this portion of the Gospel than anyone else) says: "The ascending form of genealogy can only be that of a private instrument, drawn up from the public document with a view to the particular individual whose name serves as the starting-point of the whole list" (127).

(3) From the fact that the name of Joseph is introduced without an article Godet draws three conclusions: (a) that this name belongs rather to the sentence introduced by Luke; (b) that the genealogical document which he consulted began with the name of Heli; (c) and consequently, that this piece was not originally the genealogy of Jesus or of Joseph, but of Heli (*ibid.*, 128).

(4) (a) The importance of these considerations is twofold. In the first place it indicates that Luke is bringing together two separate documents, one of which contained a statement of the foster-fatherhood of Joseph, while the other contained the genealogy of Heli, between whom and Joseph there existed a relationship which made Luke desirous of connecting them. (b) In addition, the absence of the article serves to call attention to something exceptional in the relationship of Joseph to the rest of this ancestral line which is brought into connection with his name. To this point we shall recur later. We have an explanation for all the suggested problems except one, and that one, in a sense, the most difficult of all, namely, the choice of Joseph's genealogy.

### III. The Genealogies Compared.

#### 1. Divergences:

In order, however, to discuss this question intelligently, we must enter upon the second stage of our inquiry--as to the relationship between the two lists.

(1) The most notable fact here is of course the wideness of the divergence together with the contrasted and unintelligible fact of minute correspondence. Between Abraham and David the two lists agree. Between David and Joseph there is evident correspondence in two (see Mt 1:12; Lk 3:27), and possible correspondence in four names (that is, if Abiud (Mt 1:13)) and Judah (Lk 3:30) are the same). This initial and greatest difficulty is of material assistance to us because it makes one conclusion certain beyond peradventure. The two lists are not divergent attempts to perform the same task. Whatever difficulties may remain, this difficulty is eliminated at the outset. It is impossible that among a people given to genealogies two lists purporting to give the ancestry of a man in the same line could diverge so widely. There is, therefore, a difference between these lists which includes the purpose for which they were compiled and the meaning which they were intended to convey.

## 2. Correspondence:

(2) Two of the most striking points in the lists as they stand may be brought into connection and made to explain each other. The two lists coincide in the names of Zerubbabel and Shealtiel--they differ as to the name of Joseph's father, who is Jacob according to Matthew and Heli according to Luke. As to the second of these two important items this much is clear. Either these two lists are in violent contradiction, or else Joseph was in some sense son of both Jacob and Heli. Now, in connection with this seeming impossibility, turn to the other item. The names of Shealtiel and Zerubbabel belong to the captivity. Their being common to both lists is easily explained by the fact that during that troubled period a number of collateral family branches might be narrowed down to one or two common representatives (see Zahn, *op. cit.*, 535). In the New Testament genealogies Zerubbabel is the son of Shealtiel--according to 1 Ch 3:19 he is the nephew of Shealtiel and the son of Pedaiah. He is, therefore, at one and the same time heir and, legally, son of two men and would appear as such on two collateral lists.

Shealtiel himself appears in Mt (1:12) as the son of Jechoniah and in Lk (3:27) as the son of Neri. In 1 Ch 3:17 he appears as son of Jechoniah. The name of Neri is peculiar to Lk, so that we cannot check his use of it and discover the actual parentage of Shealtiel. His appearance in two lists with a double reference of parentage is not surprising in view of what we have already seen. Besides this, a reasonable explanation at once appears. In Jer 36:30 it is asserted that Jehoiakim should have "none to sit upon the throne of David," and of his son (Jehoiachin, Jechoniah, Coniah) it is said (Jer 22:30), "Write ye this man childless," etc. It has been rightly pointed out (see HDB, II 557) that this means simply legal proscription, not actual childlessness. It suggests, however, that it might be thought necessary to provide in the genealogy an heir not of their blood for the two disgraced and proscribed members of the royal house. In view of these facts the contradictory references as to Joseph's parentage present no difficulty.

Joseph may easily have been and undoubtedly was, legally, son and heir of both Jacob and Heli. Godet's objection to this is based upon the supposition that Heli and Jacob were brothers, which leaves the divergence beyond these two names unexplained. It is evident, however, that the kinship between Jacob and Heli might have been more distant than this supposition calls for.

(3) When we come to explain how it happened that Joseph was connected with both these lines and that Matthew chose one list and Luke the other we are necessarily shut up to conjecture. There is one supposition, however, which is worthy of very careful consideration because it solves so many and such difficult problems. The authorities have been divided as to whether Luke's genealogy is Joseph's, as appears, or Mary's. Godet makes a strong showing for the latter, and, after all has been said *per contra*, some of his representations remain unshaken (compare Godet and Plummer *sub loc.*). Most of the difficulties are removed at one stroke, and the known facts harmonized, by the simple supposition that Luke has given us the meeting-point of the lineage both of Joseph and Mary who are akin. This explains the apparent choice of Joseph's list; the peculiar position of his name in that list; the reversal of the order; the coincidences and discrepancies with reference to Matthew's; the early tradition of Mary's Davidic origin; the strange reference in the Talmud (Chaghigha' 77 4) to Mary as the daughter of Heli; the visit of Mary with Joseph to Bethlehem at the time of the registration; the traditional discrepancy of ages between Joseph and Mary, such that (apparently) Joseph disappears from the scene before Jesus reaches maturity. Against this nothing of real weight can be urged (the kinship with Elisabeth is not such: see Edersheim, *LTJM*, I, 149) except that it is too simple and too felicitous. Its simplicity and felicitous adjustment to the whole complex situation is precisely its recommendation. And there we may let the matter rest.

## IV. The Genealogies and the Virgin Birth.

We have now to deal with the relationship of the genealogies to the virgin-birth statement which forms the vital center of the infancy narratives and to the general question of the Davidic origin of Jesus.

See VIRGIN BIRTH.

### 1. Text of Matthew 1:16:

The first part of this question may be most directly approached by a brief consideration of the text of Mt 1:16. The text upon which the Revised Version (British and American) is based reads: "And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." Beside this there are two readings, one contained in the so-called Ferrar group of manuscripts, and the other in the Sinaitic which, differing among themselves, unite in ascribing the parentage of Jesus to Joseph. This has been seized upon by negative critics (see for list and discussion Machen, *Princeton Review*, January, 1906, 63; compare Bacon, HDB, article "Genealogy of Jesus Christ," *Am. Jour. Theol.*, January, 1911, who long ago gave in his advocacy to the supposition that the evangelists could easily reconcile the supernatural birth with the actual paternity of Joseph) to support the idea of a primitive Christian tradition that Joseph was the father of Jesus. Of this contention Zahn leaves nothing, and concludes his argument with this statement: "The hope of finding indications in old manuscripts and versions that the authors of lost Gospels or brief writings which may have been worked over in our Mt and Lk regarded Joseph as the physical father of Jesus, should at last be dismissed. An author who knew how to make even the dry material of a genealogy to its least detail contribute to the purpose of his thought concerning the slandered miracle of the Messiah's birth, cannot at the same time have taken over statements from a genealogy of

Joseph or Jesus used by him which directly contradicted his conception of this fact. Any text of Mt which contained such statements would be condemned in advance as one altered against the author's interest" (op. cit., 567). It is interesting to note that Allen (ICC, "Matthew," 8), starting from the extreme position that the Sinaitic form of statement, of all extant texts, most nearly represents the original, reaches the same conclusion as Zahn, that Matthew's Gospel from the beginning taught the virgin birth.

## 2. General Conclusions:

(1) It is clear, therefore, from the general trend as well as from specific statements of both Gospels, that the genealogies and the birth-narratives were not floating traditions which accidentally touched and coalesced in mid-stream, but that they were intended to weld inseparably the two beliefs that Jesus was miraculously conceived and that He was the heir of David. This could be done only on the basis of Joseph's genealogy, for whatever the lineage of Mary, Joseph was the head of the family, and the Davidic connection of Jesus could only be established by acknowledgment of Him as legal son by Joseph. Upon this basis rests the common belief of the apostolic age (see Zahn, *ibid.*, 567, note references), and in accordance with it all statements (such as those of Paul, Rom 1:3; 2 Tim 2:8) must be interpreted.

(2) For it must be remembered that, back of the problem of reconciling the virgin birth and the Davidic origin of Jesus, lay the far deeper problem--to harmonize the incarnation and the Davidic origin. This problem had been presented in shadow and intimation by Jesus Himself in the question: "David himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he his Son?" It is further to be noticed that in the annunciation (Lk 1:32) the promised One is called at once Son of God and Son of David, and that He is the Son of God by virtue of His conception by the Spirit--leaving it evident that He is Son of David by virtue of His birth of Mary. With this should be compared the statement of Paul (Rom 1:3,1): He who was God's Son was "born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." This is at least most suggestive (see Orr, *Virgin Birth of Christ*, 119, with note, p. 121), for it indicates that as Paul and Luke were in very close sympathy as to the person of our Lord, so they are in equally close sympathy as to the mystery of His origin. The unanimity of conviction on the part of the early church as to the Davidic origin of Jesus is closely paralleled by its equally firm conviction as to His supernatural derivation. The meeting-point of these two beliefs and the resolution of the mystery of their relationship is in the genealogies in which two widely diverging lines of human ancestry, representing the whole process of history, converge at the point where the new creation from heaven is introduced.

## LITERATURE.

The literature on this subject is very copious. The works referred to in the text will serve to introduce the reader to more extensive investigations. The whole situation is well summarized by Plummer (ICC, "Luke," sub loc.).

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