



# Contents

Foreword	7
Preface	9
Introduction	11
<b>Part One: The Origin of Jesus Christ</b>	
1. The Genealogy and Birth of Jesus Christ	21
2. The Divine Protection of the Child Jesus	31
<b>Part Two: The Early Ministry of Jesus</b>	
3. The Introduction and Baptism of Jesus	45
4. The Temptation of Jesus and the Call of His First Disciples	55
<b>Part Three: The Principles of the Kingdom: The Sermon on the Mount</b>	
5. The Moral Principles of the Kingdom	69
6. The Life of Faith in the Kingdom	87
7. Doing the Will of the Father	97
<b>Part Four: The Credentials of the King</b>	
8. The Authority of the King over Disease and Nature	109
9. The Authority of the King to Forgive Sin	121
<b>Part Five: The Rejection of the King and the Kingdom</b>	
10. The Twelve Apostles Called and Commissioned	133
11. The Growing Opposition to Jesus	145
12. Jesus Rejected by the Pharisees	157

<b>Part Six: The Period between the Two Advents</b>	
13. The Mysteries of the Kingdom	173
<b>Part Seven: The Continued Ministry of the Rejected King</b>	
14. The Compassion of the Rejected King	197
15. The Rejected King's Continued Ministry of Mercy	207
16. Teaching in Anticipation of Rejection	217
17. The Coming Kingdom after Jesus' Suffering and Death	229
18. Teachings Concerning Greatness and Forgiveness	239
19. Jesus Ministers in Perea	251
20. The Journey to Jerusalem	263
21. Jesus' Arrival in Jerusalem	273
22. Jesus' Controversy with the Jewish Rulers	289
23. Jesus Condemns the Scribes and Pharisees	299
<b>Part Eight: The Olivet Discourse on the End of the Age</b>	
24. The Signs of the End of the Age	313
25. Judgments at the End of the Age	337
<b>Part Nine: The Death and Resurrection of the Rejected King</b>	
26. Jesus' Last Hours before Crucifixion	353
27. The Crucifixion of Jesus	379
28. The Resurrection and Final Words of Jesus	399
Bibliography	407
Subject Index	419
Scripture Index and Apocrypha	445



# The Genealogy and Birth of Jesus Christ

## THE ROYAL GENEALOGY, PART 1 (1:1-6)

**1:1-6** The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king.

The first gospel opens by presenting the evidence that Jesus is indeed the true Son of David, the Son of Abraham, the Son of God, and is the true Messiah of Israel and the Savior of the world. Such a far-reaching claim must be supported by the best evidence. Accordingly, Matthew presents in an orderly way first the genealogy establishing the legal claim of Jesus to be the King of Israel. Then it accounts for the supernatural conception and deity of Jesus by explicitly detailing the virgin birth. In the process, the genuineness of His claim to be the King of Israel is demonstrated, and the damaging suspicion that Christ was illegitimate, a slander propagated by unbelievers, is completely answered. This material, as well as the rest of Matthew 1-2, is found only in this gospel.<sup>1</sup>

The opening words, “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham,” are intended to provide an introduction to the genealogy, not to the book as a whole. This introduction clearly demon-

strates that Matthew’s purpose in writing the gospel is to provide adequate proof for the investigator that the claims of Jesus to be King and Savior 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.<sup>2</sup>

As presented by Matthew, the genealogy begins with Abraham and concludes with Joseph, described as the husband of Mary but explicitly excluded from being the actual father of Jesus Christ. In the phrase “of whom Jesus was born,” *whom* is a feminine pronoun, referring to Mary. By contrast, the genealogy of Luke 3:23–38 is usually interpreted as giving the genealogy of Mary (see below).

Some Bible interpreters such as Blomberg view the opening words of Matthew, “the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ,” as a heading for all of chapters 1–2 and thus, carrying the sense of “an account of the origin”<sup>3</sup> (v. 1). Blomberg continues:

Key Matthean titles for Jesus also appear here in the opening verse. “Christ” is the Greek translation of the Hebrew *Meshiach* (Messiah), meaning *Anointed One*. There was a great diversity of Jewish messianic expectation in the first century and previous eras, but one common thread involved liberation of Israel from its enemies [see R.A. Horsley, *The Liberation of Christmas* (New York: Crossroad, 1989)]. “Son of David” points to the Messiah’s necessary lineage and royal rule (see 2 Sam 7:11b–16). The classic intertestamental illustration of the messianic Son of David appears in *Pss Sol* 17:21–18:7—a righteous warrior-king who establishes God’s rule in Israel. “Son of Abraham” traces Jesus’ lineage back to the founding father of the nation of Israel, thus ensuring his Jewish pedigree from the earliest stage of his people’s history. But echoes are probably also to be heard here of God’s promises to Abraham that his offspring would bless all the peoples of the earth (Gen 12:1–3). “Son of Abraham” also carried messianic overtones as well in at least some intertestamental Jewish circles (e.g., *T. Levi* 8:15).

Already in this title verse, key themes of chaps. 1–2 are presented in

a nutshell. Matthew's names for Jesus present him as the fulfillment of the hopes and prophecies of Israel but also as one who will extend God's blessings to Gentiles. His birth marks a new epoch in human history.<sup>4</sup>

Matthew's genealogy is divided into three divisions of fourteen generations each. In making this division, some names are omitted, such as the three kings, Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, who are included in the line in 1 Chronicles 3:11–12. Also of interest is the fact that the names recorded in Matthew 1:13–15 are not found in the Old Testament but may have been recorded in the registers of families available at the time of Christ.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup>

MacArthur provides a helpful comparison and contrast between the genealogies of Matthew and the gospel of Luke, a question many students of the Bible ask. He notes:

Matthew's genealogy presents a descending line, from Abraham through David, through Joseph, to Jesus, "who is called Christ" [1:17]. Luke's genealogy presents an ascending line, starting from Jesus and going back through David, Abraham, and even to "Adam, the son of God" (Luke 3:23–38). Luke's record is apparently traced from Mary's side, the Eli of Luke 3:23 probably being Joseph's father-in-law (often referred to as a father) and therefore Mary's natural father. Matthew's intent is to validate Jesus' royal claim by showing His legal descent from David through Joseph, who was Jesus' legal, though not natural, father. Luke's intent is to trace Jesus' actual royal blood ancestry through His mother, thereby establishing His racial lineage from David. Matthew follows the royal line through David to Solomon, David's son and successor to the throne. Luke follows the royal line through Nathan, another son of David. Jesus was therefore the blood descendant of David through Mary and the legal descendant of David through Joseph. Genealogically, Jesus

was perfectly qualified to take the throne of David.<sup>7</sup>

### THE ROYAL GENEALOGY, PART 2 (1:7–11)

**1:7–11** And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

The fourteen names in this second section of Matthew’s genealogy contain some notable names. For example, Rehoboam was a wicked king who was the father of Abijah, of whom the Bible says, “[Abijah] walked in all the sins that his father did before him, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God” (1 Kings 15:3). Yet Abijah was the father of Asaph, a good king, who was the father of Jehoshaphat, another good king. However, “good or evil, [these kings] were part of Messiah’s line; for though grace does not run in the blood, God’s providence cannot be deceived or outmaneuvered.”<sup>8</sup>

This section ends with the important note that these generations brought Israel to “the time of the deportation to Babylon” (v. 11). The “brothers” of Jechoniah included Zedekiah (not mentioned by name here), who was the last king of Judah before the kingdom’s destruction and the people’s deportation to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25).

### THE ROYAL GENEALOGY, PART 3 (1:12–17)

**1:12–17** And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim,

and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.

The careful reader will note that this last section in Jesus' genealogy actually contains only thirteen names. Complicated explanations are not wanting.<sup>9</sup> Suggested answers include a textual omission of Jehoiakim, or the possibility that Jesus is considered the fourteenth generation.

The threefold division is explained by Matthew himself in 1:17. The first division is the generations from Abraham to David, including Abraham as the first in the line of promise and culminating in David as the king. The second group of fourteen are kings who trace the line from David to Jeconiah, and the third division traces the line through the captivity to Jesus Christ.

An unusual feature of the genealogies is the prominence of five women who normally would not be included. Each of the first four had an unusual background. Tamar (1:3) got in the line by playing a prostitute with her father-in-law, Judah (Gen. 38:11–30). Rahab, a Gentile prostitute rescued from Jericho because she delivered and sheltered the spies (Josh. 2:6; 6:25), is declared by Matthew to have been the wife of Salmon, the father of Boaz (see Ruth 4:21; 1 Chron. 2:11). There is no Old Testament support for Matthew's statement, which nevertheless is not a problem because he wrote under the Holy Spirit's inspiration.

Another Gentile was included in the messianic line in the person of Ruth, the subject of the beautiful book by the same name in the Old Testament. Although Ruth was also a Gentile, she like Mary had an unspotted record. The fourth woman in the line is not named directly but is simply called "the wife of Uriah." But from the account in 2 Samuel we know that Matthew

was writing about Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, who had formerly been the wife of Uriah. Her relationship to David began with adultery and resulted in the murder of her husband (2 Sam. 11:1–12:25). No explanation is given for the emphasis of these facts in the genealogy, which many Jews would love to have forgotten. Possible reasons include the preparation for the prominence of Mary as the fifth and final woman in the line, and also to put Jewish pride in its place for having falsely accused Mary of sexual promiscuity for having conceived out of wedlock (cf. John 8:41).

Taken as a whole, these genealogies support the conclusion that Christ is a genuine son of David and Abraham through Mary, a King with a right to rule, with His legal title through Joseph, and His deity supported by His supernatural conception without a human father.

### **SUPERNATURAL CONCEPTION AND BIRTH OF JESUS (1:18–25)**

**1:18–25** 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. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 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. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

To put to rest any question or false accusations against the virtue of Mary or the supernatural nature of Christ’s birth, Matthew explicitly described the



relationship between Joseph and Mary. Joseph was legally betrothed to Mary and is described as her “husband” in Matthew 1:16. Betrothal was legally equivalent to marriage, and the relationship could only be broken by divorce or death, even though the relationship preceded actually living together as man and wife.

In this waiting period, according to 1:18, Mary was found to be pregnant. She had not revealed her experience with the angel, recorded in Luke 1:26–38. Obviously, Joseph knew nothing about it, and possibly Matthew himself, when writing this account, did not have this information, as the gospel of Luke was probably written later than the gospel of Matthew. Joseph considered the consummation of the marriage impossible and contemplated a quiet divorce rather than a public disclosure and scandal.

At the beginning of the narrative, Matthew at once declared that the child was “from the Holy Spirit” (1:18) and then described how this fact was revealed to Joseph. An angel sent by God appeared to him in a dream, addressing him as “Joseph, son of David.” He was instructed not to be afraid of taking Mary as his wife, as the child had been conceived by the Holy Spirit. Further, Joseph was informed that when Mary’s Son was born, He should be called Jesus, meaning Savior, “for he will save his people from their sins.”

Matthew went on to support the doctrine of the virgin birth by quoting Isaiah 7:14, which prophesied that a virgin, literally, “the virgin,” would bear a son whose name would be Immanuel, meaning “God with us.” Many believe Isaiah’s prophecy had both an immediate and a long-term fulfillment in view. That is, Isaiah was referring to a woman, possibly his second wife (8:1–4), who was a virgin at the time, who would later give birth to a son. This child would be a sign to King Ahaz that the nations besieging him would be removed by the time the child was old enough to know right and wrong.

However, others believe it’s not at all necessary to find an immediate fulfillment for Isaiah’s prophecy. Michael Rydelnik does an excellent job in tracing the birth of the promised messianic child through the “Book of Immanuel” in Isaiah 7–11 and into the prophecies of his contemporary Micah (Mic. 5:2). As Rydelnik notes, “It appears that Matthew was following a careful and close reading of Isaiah and recognized that the prediction given

to the house of David had found its fulfillment in the virgin birth of Jesus of Nazareth.”<sup>10</sup>

Some critics who don't believe in the virgin birth point out that the Hebrew word *‘almâh*, translated “virgin” in Isaiah 7:14, means “a young woman of marriageable age,” which does not require the meaning “virgin.” However, Matthew, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, quoted this text as he described Jesus' birth, using the Greek word *parthenos*, which can only mean “virgin.” The virgin in Isaiah's prophecy points to Jesus, and Matthew quoted this verse to demonstrate clearly that Jesus' birth was miraculous. “Isaiah was not merely promising a future Davidic king who would secure the line of David. . . . Ultimately, the prophet has revealed that the Messiah would be God in the flesh, Immanuel.”<sup>11</sup> Matthew 1:23 then is the Holy Spirit pointing to the one who was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy.

In obedience to the angelic vision, Joseph took Mary as his wife but “knew her not” until after Jesus was born. The normal interpretation of this expression is that Joseph and Mary did not have sexual relations until after Jesus was born, but that thereafter, they had a normal married life with children born to them. The alternate explanation, that the brothers of Christ were children of Joseph by an earlier marriage, while possible, is less probable. The perpetual virginity of Mary was not necessary to the divine purpose, although it has been taught as part of a system that exalts Mary beyond what the Scriptures justify.

Although liberal critics have spared no efforts to assail the account given in this first chapter of Matthew, unquestionably, the record as given was accepted literally by the early church and is supported by the rest of the New Testament, including the account of Luke. Every reason ever advanced for denying the historicity of Matthew has carried with it the premise of rationalistic rejection of the supernatural and determined prejudice against the claims of Jesus Christ to be the God-Man. Faith in the accuracy of such a record induced early believers to die as martyrs rather than renounce their faith in the virgin-born Son of Mary.

Hagner makes a noteworthy point: “Matthew has taken his historical traditions and set them forth in such a way as to underline matters of funda-

mental theological importance. Thus he grounds his narrative upon several OT quotations and provides a strong sense of fulfillment.”<sup>12</sup>

## NOTES

1. W. Graham Scroggie, *A Guide to the Gospels*, (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1948), 260–61. Scroggie notes that of the 1,068 verses in this gospel, 387 whole verses and parts of 23 other verses, 410 in all, are peculiar to it, which is more than a third of the whole gospel.
2. For example, Tertullian called Matthew “a most trustworthy compiler of the Gospel, as having been a companion of the Lord” Tertullian, *On the Flesh of Christ*, 3.22.
3. Craig L. Blomberg, *The New American Commentary: Matthew*, vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 52.
4. *Ibid.*, 52–53.
5. So Blomberg notes that “ancient Jews tried scrupulously to preserve their genealogies; so it is not implausible that Matthew had access to sources that have since been lost” (*Matthew*, 55).
6. John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 86–87.
7. John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Matthew 1–7* (Chicago: Moody, 1985), 3.
8. D. A. Carson, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew*, Frank E. Gaebelein, ed., vol. 8 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 67.
9. Cf. R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew’s Gospel* (Minneapolis: Wartburg, 1943), 30–33.
10. Michael Rydellnik, *The Messianic Hope*, *NAC Studies in Bible and Theology* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2010), 161–62.
11. *Ibid.*, 156.
12. Donald A. Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary: Matthew 1–13*, Bruce M Metzger, gen. ed., Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, New Testament eds.; vol. 33a (Nashville: Nelson, 2000), 2.