

Matthew 1:1-17 – “In The Family”

Intro to the book of Matthew:

Matthew is the first of 4 gospels that begins the New Testament. And Matthew is the perfect bridge between the Old and New Testaments. You see the Old Testament was all about preparing us for the Promised Messiah. The Old Testament is Jesus Christ concealed, whereas the New Testament is Jesus Christ revealed. And Matthew sets out to show that Jesus Christ is the Promised Messiah, the One that the Old Testament Scriptures were prophesying of. This is why you see all throughout Matthew the term ‘fulfilled’ or ‘fulfill’. It’s used 17 times in the book of Matthew (the most out of any of the gospels). The term “it is written” is used another 9 times.

Matthew is purposefully writing to present Jesus as the King of the Jews. Matthew is a Jew, writing to a Jewish audience, about a Jewish Messiah. We of course know that Jesus came to be the Saviour of the whole world, but Matthew is being written with a specific agenda. Within Matthew’s gospel there are over 100 quotations or allusions from the Old Testament. Matthew wants to reveal to His Jewish audience that the Messiah promised in the Old Testament, and the Jesus revealed in the New Testament, are one and the same.

- So, the gospel of Matthew writes to reveal Jesus as the King, the Promised Messiah. Throughout Matthew we see the kingdom emphasized, the term kingdom of Heaven is used exclusively in Matthew’s gospel.

So, we have 4 different gospels and each of them portrays Jesus in a bit of a different light. Nothing that contradicts each other but rather compliments each other.

In Matthew Jesus is seen as King. His royalty and reign are emphasized.

- Matthew wrote to a Jewish audience.

In Mark Jesus is seen as a Suffering Servant. His servanthood is emphasized.

- Mark wrote primarily to the Romans of his day. It’s a fast paced book.

In Luke Jesus is seen as the Son of Man. His humanity is emphasized.

- Luke wrote to a Greek audience who were fascinated with Plato’s ideal man. So Luke presents Jesus as the Son of Man.

In John Jesus is seen as the Son of God. His deity is emphasized.

- John wrote to all men everywhere for the purpose of presenting Jesus as the universal Saviour and that all can be saved in and through Him.

This is interesting because in Ezekiel 1 and Revelation 4 we see the 4 living creatures – they're cherubim. And they had these distinct faces that reflect what we see in the gospels.

- **Revelation 4:7–8**, *"The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. ⁸ The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!""*
- In the book of Matthew Jesus is seen as the King, the lion of the tribe of Judah. So the first face we see is that of a lion.
- The book of Mark represents Jesus as a suffering servant. The second face is that of a calf or an ox, which symbolizes a burden, work, or servanthood.
- Luke shows Jesus as the Son of Man where His humanity is emphasized. Thus the third face is as a man.
- In John we see the deity of Jesus represented, this is pictured through the flying eagle, revealing supremacy, rulership, the Man from heaven.

*This is also depicted in the way the tribes camped around the tabernacle: East side was Judah whose ensign was a lion; West side was Ephraim whose ensign was an ox; South side was Reuben whose ensign was a man; North side was Dan whose ensign was an eagle.

Having 4 different accounts of Jesus allows us to see different perspectives and different purposes for including what's written in the gospels. Remember, John wrote: **John 21:25**, *"And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen."*

Since Matthew is writing to proclaim Jesus as the King, it's important to prove His lineage to the throne. So, Matthew begins with a genealogy – Jesus' legal line to His kingship through Joseph. Luke's gospel also includes a genealogy, but he traces Jesus' bloodline to the throne through Mary. We'll talk more about that in a bit.

1:1-6 - *The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: ² Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. ³ Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar,*

Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. ⁴ Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. ⁵ Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, ⁶ and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah.

Genealogy is the Greek word *genesis*. It means origin. Genealogies were very important for Jewish families. They would: (1) prove your national status as a Jew, (2) reveal what tribe you belonged to, (3) qualified certain Jews for religious duties (ie. Levitical and priestly service).

“Christ’s genealogy is crucial to historic Christianity. Matthew traced the lineage of Christ Jesus back to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to show that He was a Jew, but also back through David to inform the readers that Jesus is qualified to rule on the throne of David (see 2 Sam. 7:12), an event still in the future (19:28).” ¹

This genealogy is going to be split up into 3 groups of 14 generations each. Going from Abraham to David, from David to the Babylonian captivity, and from the Babylon captivity to Jesus. Now there were more people in these generations than what is listed here. Some names were left off. But this list of 3 groups of 14 generations was primarily to make things easier for memorization.

“Hebrew names can be assigned numeric values by adding up the numeric value of each individual letter in the name.

- We’re told that the numeric value of the antichrist will be 666.
- And the numeric value of Jesus’ full name is 749 (7 and 7x7).

If we add up the Hebrew numbers for David’s Hebrew name we arrive at the number 14.

- So Matthew arranged his genealogy into three groups of 14 to speak out the name David three times.
- Jesus is the eternal David, the King God promised to bring His people.

In fact, notice in v.17 how Matthew connects his first and second groups of names by mentioning David again.

- There were 14 generations (in Matthew’s list) between Abraham to David.
- And there were 14 more from David to the Babylonian captivity.
- For 14 generations, David’s descendants held power and for 14 generations they lost it.

¹ Radmacher, E. D., Allen, R. B., & House, H. W. (1997). *The Nelson Study Bible: New King James Version* (Mt 1:1). T. Nelson Publishers.

- You can't help but notice David's prominence in this list, nor can you miss the point.
- After fourteen generations, a son of David has come to rule again."²

In Genesis 5 we get another list of names, it's the genealogy of Adam. We were all born into that lineage. But it says repeatedly in Genesis 5, "and he died". This is the reality for us all because sin brought death. We were all born into sin. But the genealogy of Jesus Christ is about life. There's no mention of death in this list. We're a part of that life by putting our faith in Jesus as our Saviour and being born again.

- **Romans 5:14–15**, *"Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. ¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many."*

This genealogy begins with Jesus being linked specifically to two important people – David and Abraham.

God made a covenant with Abraham that he would become a great nation and all the families of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:4-5; 17:1-8). Here is the reality and fulfillment of that.

God made a covenant with David that his kingdom and throne would be established forever (2 Samuel 7:12-16). Royalty depends on heredity, and this genealogy established Jesus' legal and royal rights to this throne. He is the fulfillment of these promises.

- That's a wonderful truth that emerges for us from this genealogy – God always keeps His Word. There is no time that you ever have to wonder if God will really do what He has said. There's one thing God can't do, and that is lie (Numbers 23:19). God is a promise keeping God and we can live confidently and dependently by His Word.

Here's another thing to note from this genealogy – it is full of grace.

Most genealogies only included the fathers' names, yet in these first 6 verses the names of 4 women are given. Some of which you would perhaps want to leave off to avoid embarrassment or shame. But look at who's listed:

² <https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/matthew-lesson-1a>

1. **Tamar** (1:3) – She’s mentioned in Genesis 38 and it’s a seedy story involving Judah’s unfulfilled promise. Tamar prostituted herself and tricked her father-in-law Judah to have a child with her. This is the kind of stuff you may see on soap operas, but in the Bible? Yet, here her name is being carried on through history as one of the ancestors of Jesus Christ. It’s a reminder how even the line of Jesus includes imperfect people whose lives are filled with messy mistakes.
2. **Rahab** (1:5) – She’s mentioned in Joshua 2 and is referred to as a harlot; a prostitute in pagan Jericho. She had a little faith in the God of Israel, and she’s accepted. God is no respecter of persons. All who put their faith in Him will be saved!
3. **Ruth** (1:5) – She was an outsider; a Moabitess (Ruth 1:4). This is the offspring of an incestual encounter between Lot and his daughter (Genesis 19:34-38). They were enemies of Israel; a pagan people. Yet God brought Ruth in to the family of God through a wonderful relationship with Boaz, a picture of our Kinsmen Redeemer Jesus Christ. Ruth left all, but gained greater blessing. This is our story too. Outsiders, enemies of God, walking in a land of death, but our Saviour redeemed us and gave us new life.
4. **Bathsheba** (1:6) – Bathsheba isn’t named specifically. It would have been more sanitary to just say David begot Solomon by Bathsheba. But we read that she was the wife of Uriah. It recalls that this was an adulterous relationship that ended in the murder of Uriah (2 Samuel 11:2-5). Yikes! These are the things you leave out of your family history. But God in His grace turned it all around and gave them Solomon, one of Israel’s greatest kings. It doesn’t make sense.

If you want to present a pure and noble kingship, you would want to make sure there’s no skeletons in the closet, or at least keep the closet door closed. But all this is brought to the open. It reveals to us that Jesus didn’t come just for the righteous, He came for all that were broken and in need of saving.

- Too many people think today that they cannot come to Jesus because they’re too messed up. People think they need to clean themselves up before they turn to Jesus. Let me tell you that you cannot clean yourself up! There’s nothing you can do to better yourself, you simply need to come to Jesus and allow Him to do that work you cannot do for yourself. He will clean you up and make you new. His family tree is full of a bunch of nuts and there’s always room for more. That’s the love and grace of Jesus! You’ve been invited in to be a part of that, not because you’re good, but

because He is. Don't fret over your past or background, rejoice in the future that Jesus gives you in Him.

All these women were Gentile women too. Remember, God told Abraham that all the families of the earth would be blessed. We see that clearly and wonderfully here.

As we move into the list of kings, once again there's many that were wicked and evil. Manasseh was Judah's worst and most evil king. Yet God allows Him to be in the line of the Messiah.

1:7-11 - *Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. ⁸ Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. ⁹ Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. ¹⁰ Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. ¹¹ Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon.*

Now there's an interesting prophecy that takes place in Jeremiah 22:28-30 regarding king Jeconiah (also known as Coniah or Jehoiachin). It says in **Jeremiah 22:30**, *"Thus says the Lord: 'Write this man down as childless, A man who shall not prosper in his days; For none of his descendants shall prosper, Sitting on the throne of David, And ruling anymore in Judah.' "*

But we've already seen God's covenant with David that his throne would be established forever. So how does this work?

This verse confused Jews for centuries and wondered if God went back on His word. But here's how God gets around this...

Jesus is the successor to the royal line of David through Joseph, His step-dad. But since Joseph had nothing to do with Jesus being born, Jesus didn't have the cursed blood of Jeconiah. Luke gives us the genealogy of Jesus through Mary. She also was a descendant of David but it bypassed the line of Jeconiah. Jesus then was a rightful blood heir of David.

This is why the virgin birth is of utmost importance and necessity.

1:12-16 - *And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. ¹³ Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. ¹⁴ Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. ¹⁵ Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. ¹⁶ And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.*

Notice the ‘begots’ stop at Joseph. Joseph didn’t beget Jesus, he had no part in His birth. Rather it’s Mary that’s clarified as the one of whom Jesus was born. In the Greek, the word **whom** is singular and in the feminine, indicating Jesus was born of Mary, but not of Joseph.

- This is what Isaiah 9:6 speaks of, *"For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given..."* He was born of Mary, but He was given by our Heavenly Father. That verse represents the humanity and the deity of Jesus Christ.

The name Jesus is taken from the Hebrew form of His name – Jeshua or Joshua. It’s meaning is quite literally “Jehovah is salvation.”

Christ is not His last name, it’s a title. It means anointed, and it referenced the Promised Messiah that was foretold in the Old Testament. Jesus is the Messiah!

1:17 - *So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations.*

“Matthew’s genealogy answered the important question a Jew would rightfully ask about anyone who claimed to be King of the Jews. Is He a descendant of David through the rightful line of succession? Matthew answered yes!”³

This list gives us 46 names of different people. Names that include some good people and some not so good people. All people that were linked to Jesus! We’ve been qualified through Jesus Christ. We’re in the family. If these people all got in, there’s hope for us all!

[*Interesting read regarding heptatic structure in this passage:

<http://achristiananswers.blogspot.com/2011/04/hepatic-structure-in-bible.html>]

³ Barbieri, L. A., Jr. (1985). Matthew. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 18). Victor Books.