

Matthew Chapter 1 – Genealogy of the Messiah

The Pedigree of Jesus

Every section of Matthew is intended to demonstrate that Jesus is the Messiah or to introduce the words/actions of Messiah. In this opening passage, Matthew provides an emphatic statement, follows it with extensive evidence, and concludes with a summary of the information.

Verse 1 is instrumental; do not skip it. The first verse in the Literal Clunky Version is very fascinating.

Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ.
Biblos geneoseōs Iēsou Christou uiou David uiou Abraham
Book genealogy of Jesus Messiah son of David son of Abraham

With a cursory look at this sentence, we see two words that we recognize.

“Biblos” is the word for book. The Bible is literally “The Book.”

Geneoseōs looks like the word “Genesis.” The word means beginning and is a cognate of “ginomai,” which means to become. It is only used a few times in the New Testament and only one other time in Matthew. In Matthew 1:18, it is translated as *birth*.

We could translate this word *beginning*, but this misses it a bit. This word means beginning, birth, lineage, the proof of existence, an account of a person’s life. The use of this opening phrase points to the record of the existence and lineage of Jesus Christ.

The one connection that we could not make without looking at the Greek and the LXX is the use of “Βίβλος γενέσεως,” which is used in Genesis 2:4 and Genesis 5:1. The book (account) of the generations (heritage, beginnings) of...

The word “γενέσεις” is used in Genesis for generations (heritage, lineage) twelve times. Follow the line and we see the significance of Matthew 1:1.

Genesis 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 10:32, 11:10, 27, 25:19, 37:2

Ruth 4:18

Let’s clarify the use of *Messiah* and *Christ*. In Hebrew, the word is “מָשִׁיחַ masiah.” The Greek equivalent is “Χριστός Christos.” Both words mean anointed. In English, the word Christ is normally thought of as a surname. In reality, Jesus’ surname would have been “ben Yosep” (son of Joseph) or, rather more precisely, “ben Elohim” (son of God). I have no problem using the moniker *Christ* as long as we have the understanding that the word means anointed. Likewise, if we use the word *Messiah*, understand that it means anointed. In this study, I will probably go back and forth between *Christ* and *Messiah*; they both mean the same thing.

Anointed means one being designated for a service, action, or office.

What is the name of our Savior? Many cult-like groups state if one is not using the Hebrew name for Jesus, then it is wrong. And some even state that it affects salvation.

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The word in the inspired Greek New Testament is “Ἰησοῦς” pronounced ee-ay-sus. This is the Greek translation for “Yeshua” and combines the name of YHWH and the Hebrew word for *save* (yasha): YHWH saves (Matthew 1:21). The English translation is probably more like Joshua.

“Ἰησοῦς” is a very popular name: Jahdai; Jehu (son of Obed); Jeshua (Ezr. 2:6); Jeshua (leader of Mizpah); Justus (Jesus); Jesus (son of Eliezer); Jesus (grandfather of Ben-Sira); Jesus Ben Sirach; Joshua (son of Nun); Joshua (son of Jozadak); and others. The LXX has 251 uses of the name “Ἰησοῦς” and none of them are prophetic.

Jesus is an acceptable translation and probably derived from the actual vocalization of the Greek name to differentiate between other people named “Ἰησοῦς” in the New Testament. The actual vocalization of the Hebrew name is not magical, nor does it invoke God to any activity.

William, Guillermo, Gabriel, are all equivalent. The point is not the vocalization of the name but the person the name represents. This is one of the reasons that surnames and other distinctions are given in the text. This is also why I insist that to believe in Jesus is not only His historical nature, but rather to believe in who He is, what He did, and what His message is.

Verse 1 points to a specific nature of Jesus.

Messiah – Already covered

Son of David – Davidic line points to Jesus’ Kingship as the prophesied King of Israel.

2 Samuel 7:11b-16; Matthew 22:42

Son of Abraham – Points to the seed promise of Abraham bringing about the covenant promise.

Genesis 12:1-3; Galatians 3:6-9, 14-18

In verses 2-16, we have the lineage of Jesus.

Verses 2-6a – Abraham to David the King

Verses 6b-11 – Solomon to Exile

Verses 12-16 – Exile to Jesus

Over the past 2 years, we have covered this line very extensively, but the Hebrew Scriptures end with verse 12 with Zerubbabel. The Intertestamental Period is when the line of Abihud through Jacob comes about. This is the first time we are exposed to this line.

What is the point of this genealogy?

1. Of the seed of Abraham
2. Of the seed of David
3. Appropriate timing
4. To provide a pneumatic device for the readers

If we remember that, then the questions that are derived from an analysis of the genealogy are first asked with the purpose in mind. If the questions that are posed do not enhance the purpose then the point is moot.

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Analysis of the Genealogy

1	Abraham	Solomon	Exile
2	Isaac	Rehoboam	Shealtiel
3	Jacob	Abijah	Zerubbabel
4	Judah	Asa	Abihud
5	Perez	Jehoshaphat	Eliakim
6	Hezron	Joram	Azor
7	Ram	Uzziah	Zadok
8	Amminadab	Jotham	Achim
9	Nahshon	Ahaz	Eliud
10	Salmon	Hezekiah	Eleazar
11	Boaz	Manasseh	Matthan
12	Obed	Amon	Jacob
13	Jesse	Josiah	Joseph
14	David the King	Exile	Jesus

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.”

Observations

The first observation is that four kings are skipped from Joram to Uzziah. The reason why these four kings are skipped is unknown. One of the kings is Joash, a good king, and there does not seem to be a good reason to skip over his reign.

The 14 generation statements are not designed to tell time but to give the people an understanding of periods. Pre David, David to Exile, Exile to Jesus. The generational concept seems to just divide the eras into sections so that the reader can see how the significant events are highlighted.

From Shealtiel to Jesus we only count 13 generations. The deportation to Babylon takes place over a long period from 605-566. The deportation of Babylon seems to cover two generations, the end of the second era and the beginning of the third era.

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Ancient Hebrew genealogies were most often intended to communicate a meaning with an agenda. They were not meant to convey a precise, all-inclusive record of a family; a genealogy could do that, but it was not always necessary to complete the thought.

We must be careful with numerology. Many conclude that David's name has a gematria value of 14, and, therefore, Matthew is creating a pattern of 14's to get to 42, finding symmetry with the Messianic expectations of Daniel's prophecies (end-time prophecies seem to circulate around 42 months). There are some good arguments for numerology, but without definitive texts that tell us how to use numbers in the Bible, I resist trying to find the numeric value of this opening text.

I conclude that Matthew is simply drawing on symmetry to draw attention to Jesus' rightful claim as King of Israel. If Jesus is the rightful king, it must be provable through a genealogical claim.

The addition of four Gentile women is unusual, but as we discovered over the last two years, God includes them to demonstrate that women are important, and these honored Him even though much of Israel did not. Ruth 4:11-12 – The blessing of Ruth is primarily a blessing of non-Israeli women.

What about the curse of Jeconiah (Jeremiah 22:24)? Does this mean that this line cannot reign in Israel? This cannot be discussed without a review of Luke's genealogy (Luke 3:23-27).

The argument is that Matthew demonstrates an illegitimate claim to the throne, but Luke demonstrates a rightful line to the throne.

This does not make sense to me. Why would a book dedicated to Jesus' rightful claim to the throne of David begin with an illegitimate line? Only after Luke writes his historical account does the rightful claim come into view.

Shealtiel and Zerubbabel are in both lines converging after David. If both are men considered to be the son of Jeconiah, then are not both Luke's and Matthew's lines tainted? I guess Luke's line is not claiming the line of Jeconiah, but no one has broached the subject.

Although Jeconiah has the signet removed, Zerubbabel is stated to have the signet in Haggai 2.

My conclusion is that the curse of Jeconiah is that his immediate sons would not rule, the first person to rule in that line is Zerubbabel, not Shealtiel. I believe both lines (Matthew and Luke) can be used to demonstrate that Jesus has a rightful claim to the throne. The Jeremiah curse of Jeconiah does not have any impact on the line in Matthew.

Is Matthew the line of Joseph or Mary? When people got married, the male assumed both lines as an adopted son of his wife's father. The content of Matthew pays very little attention to Mary. Joseph's character, thoughts, dreams, and statements are on display. Joseph is the subject of the story in Matthew 2:18-25, and the angel of the Lord addresses Joseph as the son of David.

In Luke, it is about Mary, her thoughts and interactions with the angel. It would make sense that her father's genealogy is on display. And the point of Luke's genealogy is not a claim to the throne but a historical account of Jesus' heritage back to Adam the son of God.