

# **Bible Study June 18, 2025**

## **MATTHEW 1 (ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION)**

### **The Genealogy of Jesus Christ**

***<sup>1</sup> The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.***

***<sup>2</sup> Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, <sup>3</sup> and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, <sup>4</sup> and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, <sup>5</sup> and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, <sup>6</sup> and Jesse the father of David the king.***

***And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah,***

Matthew's inclusion of four particular women (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba) reveals his concern to do more than relay historical data. These women might have raised both ethnic and ethical questions for Matthew's readers. All four of them were most likely not Israelites by birth, and all might seem scandalous to mention in an ancestral tree of the Messiah. Tamar acted as a prostitute to scam her father-in-law, Judah, but she was declared righteous for her actions by Judah for showing greater faithfulness to the family than he had (Genesis 38). Rahab was a prostitute and a foreigner, but she helped deliver the city of Jericho into the hands of the Israelites and had faith in God (Joshua 2:1-21; 6:22-25). Ruth was from Moab, an enemy tribe of Israel, but she faithfully took care of her mother-in-law Naomi and was praised for being better than seven sons (Ruth 1-4). King David committed adultery with Bathsheba, yet she became the mother of Solomon, the wisest king of Israel (2 Samuel 11; 12:24-25). This was the colorful line into which God's Son was born.

Matthew's genealogy of Jesus lists the good, the bad, and the ugly, and it intentionally does not leave out people who seemed questionable. The point Matthew is trying to make is that God sent his Son as the Savior of *all* people—Jews, Gentiles, men, and women. No matter who people are or where they come from, God's plan of salvation is offered to all people.

***<sup>7</sup> and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, <sup>8</sup> and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, <sup>9</sup> and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, <sup>10</sup> and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, <sup>11</sup> and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.***

The exile to Babylon occurred in 586 BC, when Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, conquered Judah, destroyed Jerusalem, and took thousands of people captive. The Roman occupation reminded the Jews of their exile. It highlighted to them that the Old Testament promises had not yet been fulfilled.

***<sup>12</sup> And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, <sup>13</sup> and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, <sup>14</sup> and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, <sup>15</sup> and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, <sup>16</sup> and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.***

Because Mary was a virgin when she became pregnant, Matthew lists Joseph only as the husband of Mary, not the father of Jesus. Matthew's genealogy gives Jesus' legal (or royal) lineage through Joseph. Mary's ancestral line is recorded in Luke 3:23-38. Both Mary and Joseph were direct descendants of David.

Matthew traced the genealogy back to Abraham, while Luke traced it back to Adam. Matthew wrote primarily to a Jewish audience, so Jesus was shown as a descendant of their ancestor Abraham. Luke wrote primarily to Gentiles, so he emphasized Jesus as the Savior of all people.

***<sup>17</sup> 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.***

Beginning his book by presenting this record of ancestors (called a genealogy) was the best way that Matthew could interest a Jewish audience. Because a Jewish person's family line proved his or her standing as one of God's chosen people, Matthew began by showing that Jesus was a descendant of Abraham, the father of all Jews, and a direct descendant of David, fulfilling Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah's line. The facts of this ancestry were carefully preserved. Matthew used this and many other proofs to show that Jesus is the true Messiah.

In the first 17 verses of Matthew we meet 46 people whose lifetimes span 2,000 years. All were ancestors of Jesus, but they varied considerably in personality, spiritual maturity, and experience. Some were heroes of faith, like Abraham, Isaac, Ruth, and David. Some came from outside Israel or had shady reputations, like Rahab, Tamar, and Ruth. Many were very ordinary, like Hezron, Ram, Nahshon, and Akim. And others were evil, like Manasseh and Abijah. Human failures or sins cannot limit or block God's work in history. He works through both remarkable and ordinary people. Just as God chose all kinds of people to be part of the lineage of Jesus, he uses all kinds today to accomplish his will, in the present and for the future. And God wants to use you. This is one of Matthew's main purposes—to show how you can be part of God's Kingdom by following Jesus.

Matthew breaks Israel's history into three sets of 14 generations, but there were probably more generations than those listed here. Genealogies often compressed history, meaning that not every generation of ancestors was specifically listed. Thus, the phrase "the father of" can also be translated "the ancestor of."

## **The Birth of Jesus Christ**

***<sup>18</sup> 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.***

Jewish marriage involved three basic steps. (1) The two families agreed to the union. (2) A public announcement was made. At this point, the couple was “engaged.” This was similar to engagement today except that their relationship could be broken only through death or divorce (even though sexual relations were not yet permitted). (3) The couple was married and began living together. Because Mary and Joseph were engaged, Mary’s apparent unfaithfulness carried a severe social stigma. According to Jewish civil law, Joseph had a right to divorce her, and this law included provisions for stoning her and her partner to death (Deuteronomy 22:23-24).

Why is the Virgin Birth so important to the Christian faith? Jesus Christ, God’s Son, had to be free from the sinful nature passed on to all other human beings by Adam (Romans 5:12). Because Jesus was born of a woman, he was a human being; but as the Son of God, Jesus was born without any trace of human sin. Jesus is both fully human and fully divine. The fact that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit shows that God began a whole new work in his creation. Just as the Holy Spirit breathed the breath of life into Adam at Creation (Genesis 1:2; 2:7), the Holy Spirit brings new life into the world in the new Adam, Jesus Christ, the ultimate fulfillment of God’s creation (see Luke 1:34-35; Romans 5:12-19).

Because Jesus lived as a man, we know that he fully understands our experiences and struggles (Hebrews 4:15-16). Because he is God, he has the power and authority to deliver us from sin (Colossians 2:13-15). We can tell Jesus all our thoughts, feelings, and needs. He has been where we are now, and he has the ability to forgive, heal, and renew us.

***<sup>19</sup> And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.***

Joseph was faced with a difficult choice after discovering that Mary was pregnant. Perhaps Joseph thought he had only two options: divorce Mary quietly or have her stoned. But God provided a third option—marry her (1:20-23). In view of the circumstances, this had not occurred to Joseph. But God often shows us that there are more options available than we think. Although Joseph seemed to be doing the right thing by first wanting to break the engagement, only God’s guidance helped him make the best decision. But that did not make it an easy decision. Consenting to marry Mary surely cast doubt on his own innocence regarding the pregnancy, as well as leaving them both with a social stigma they would carry for the rest of their lives. Yet Joseph chose to obey the angel’s command (1:24). When our decisions affect the lives of others, we must always seek God’s wisdom and then be willing to follow through no matter how difficult it may be.

***<sup>20</sup> 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.***

The conception and birth of Jesus Christ are supernatural events beyond human logic or reasoning. Because of this, God sent angels to help certain people understand the significance of what was happening.

Angels are spiritual beings created by God who help carry out his work on earth. They bring God’s messages to people (Luke 1:26), protect God’s people (Daniel 6:22), offer encouragement (Genesis 16:7-16), give guidance (Exodus 14:19), carry out punishment (2 Samuel 24:16), patrol the earth (Zechariah 1:9-14), and fight the forces of evil (2 Kings 6:16-18; Revelation 20:1-2).

There are both good and evil angels (Revelation 12:7), but because evil angels (demons) are allied with the devil, Satan, they have considerably less power and authority than good angels. Eventually the main role of angels will be to offer continuous praise to God (Revelation 7:11-12).

***<sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:***

***<sup>23</sup> “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel”***

***(which means, God with us).***

Matthew refers to Jesus in three ways: (1) He calls Jesus the Messiah (1:18). This establishes him as the royal king promised from David's line who would restore Israel and rule justly. (2) The angel named him Jesus. This name means “the LORD saves.” Jesus came to earth to save us because we can't save ourselves from sin and its consequences. No matter how good we are, we can't eliminate the sinful nature present in us. Only Jesus can do that. Jesus came to deliver people not only from their oppression but also from themselves. Thank him for his death on the cross for your sin. Then ask him to take control of your life. At that moment, your new life begins. (3) Jesus would fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah, for he would be Immanuel (a name meaning “God is with us”; see Isaiah 7:14). Jesus was God in the flesh; thus, God was literally among us—“with us.” God didn't just tell us what to do; he sent help. Through the Holy Spirit, Christ lives with each of his followers every day. He stands with us in every trial and every joy. Isaiah must have wondered how far-reaching the meaning of Immanuel would be.

The angel declared to Joseph that Mary's child had been conceived by the Holy Spirit and would be a son. This reveals an important truth about Jesus—he is both God and human. The infinite, unlimited God took on the limitations of humanity so he could live and die for the salvation of all who would believe in him.

***<sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife,***

Joseph changed his plans quickly after learning that Mary had not been unfaithful to him (see 1:19). He obeyed God and proceeded with the marriage. Although others may have disapproved of his decision, Joseph went ahead with what he knew God wanted him to do. Sometimes we hesitate to do what God wants because of what others might think. Like Joseph, we must choose to obey God rather than seek the approval of others.

***<sup>25</sup> but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.***

More than 400 years had passed since the last Old Testament prophecies, and faithful Jews all over the world were still waiting for the Messiah (Luke 3:15). Matthew wrote this book to Jewish Christians to present Jesus both as King and Messiah, the promised descendant of David who would reign forever (Isaiah 11:1-5). The Gospel of Matthew links the Old and New Testaments and contains many references that show how Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecy.

Jesus entered human history when the land of Palestine was controlled by Rome and considered an insignificant outpost of the vast and mighty Roman Empire. The presence of Roman soldiers in Israel gave the Jews military peace, but at the price of oppression, slavery, injustice, immorality, and disregard for their religion. Into this kind of world came the promised Messiah.