

Matthew 1

In Galatians 4:4 Paul writes “But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law;” This was written before Matthew’s gospel and it is possible that Matthew’s first chapters represent an exposition of Paul’s brief account of Jesus origin.

I. The King is revealed (1-3)

How was Jesus’ nature unique?

Matthew’s contribution to the story begins with the birth of Jesus, which is described as the supernatural visitation of God to this earth in the person of Immanuel. He wants us to see how the advent of Christ was a part of God’s plan for history and that it was predicted long ago. He also wants us to see that Jesus is both the son of David and the Son of God.

What does the genealogy of Jesus teach us about His significance?

A. His ancestry “the fullness of the time” (1:1-17)

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

2 To Abraham was born Isaac; and to Isaac, Jacob; and to Jacob, Judah and his brothers; 3 and to Judah were born Perez and Zerah by Tamar; and to Perez was born Hezron; and to Hezron, Ram; 4 and to Ram was born Amminadab; and to Amminadab, Nahshon; and to Nahshon, Salmon; 5 and to Salmon was born Boaz by Rahab; and to Boaz was born Obed by Ruth; and to Obed, Jesse; 6 and to Jesse was born David the king.

And to David was born Solomon by her {who had been the wife} of Uriah; 7 and to Solomon was born Rehoboam; and to Rehoboam, Abijah; and to Abijah, Asa; 8 and to Asa was born Jehoshaphat; and to Jehoshaphat, Joram; and to Joram, Uzziah; 9 and to Uzziah was born Jotham; and to Jotham, Ahaz; and to Ahaz, Hezekiah; 10 and to Hezekiah was born Manasseh; and to Manasseh, Amon; and to Amon, Josiah; 11 and to Josiah were born Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

12 And after the deportation to Babylon, to Jeconiah was born Shealtiel; and to Shealtiel, Zerubbabel; 13 and to Zerubbabel was born Abihud; and to Abihud, Eliakim; and to Eliakim, Azor; 14 and to Azor was born Zadok; and to Zadok, Achim; and to Achim, Eliud; 15 and to Eliud was born Eleazar; and to Eleazar, Matthan; and to Matthan, Jacob; 16 and to Jacob was born Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

17 Therefore all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to {the time of} Christ fourteen generations.”

- The genealogy of Jesus from a human standpoint places him in the line of God’s promise and plan for deliverance. Three issues become pillars in the story – The promise through Abraham, the Kingdom of David, and the exile and suffering of Israel. These are the elements that make up Jesus’ story with respect to Israel. He is Israel’s Promised Redeemer King. Matthew wants us to see Jesus in this very special position.
- The genealogy of Matthew is divided into three parts that highlight significant elements in the Biblical story. This unique structure seems to focus attention on Jesus as the Promised King Redeemer.

| Abraham - David | David - Babylon | Babylon – Christ |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Jesus is promised as Lord of all | Jesus is modeled as King. | Jesus is desired as Redeemer |

| nations. | | Ruler. |
|--|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Abraham - A Hope of serenity, security, and significance | David - A Taste of glory | Babylon - A Brokenness of spirit |

- Four women are included in the genealogy. (Tamar vs.3, Rahab vs.5, Ruth vs.5 Bathsheba vs.6) All were outsiders to Israel; all were sexually suspect; and through all of them God had worked surprisingly for the salvation of the people. Mary seems to fit into this group from the world's perspective. It is significant for us to note that the incarnation was not only a picture of God humbling Himself to become a man but a man who had a posture and heritage that was lowly and a part of the fallen world in the most profound sense.
- The relationship of Jesus to David was an important issue with the Jews of Jesus' day. If Jesus were born of humble circumstances it was needed to demonstrate that he was not without strong connections with the messianic figure, David.

How are we to understand the differences between the genealogies in Matthew and Luke?

- The genealogies of Jesus appear in Matt.1:1-16 and Lk.3:23-38. They differ in that they begin and end at different places.
- It was understood by church fathers that Matthew gives the line of Joseph, the legal father of Jesus, whereas Luke gives the lineage of Mary, his mother. This interpretation goes back to the fifth Christian century, if not earlier.
- When each gets to David they digress.
 - a. Luke going through Nathan to Eli, father of Joseph. The absence of the article before Joseph (Lk.3:23) links Jesus directly with Eli and seemingly puts Joseph out of this genealogical line. In Jer.22:30 a curse is placed on Jehoiachin (Coniah) in that his children would never reign on the throne of David. Joseph was a descendant of Coniah suggesting that any son of Joseph could not be king. If this is so then we might expect that Mary, not Joseph was the intended termination of Luke's genealogy.
 - b. Matthew going through Solomon, identifying Jacob as the father of Joseph.

B. His advent "God sent forth His Son, born of a woman," (1:18-25)

1. Divine origin (1:18-23)

a. The Betrothal to the Virgin (1:18-19)

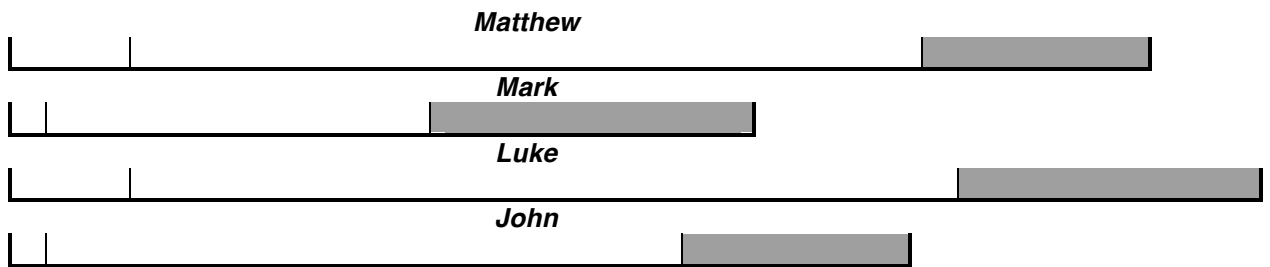
18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. 19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly.

- Jesus is born in a humble but spiritually noble family. This is the significance of Joseph's virtue being mentioned.

b. The Angelic Visit to Joseph (1:20-21)

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 that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins."

- Jesus' life calling from the beginning is his "death" atonement for sin. This is the emphasis of each of the Gospels and it is the point of contact that Jesus' story has with the Apostle's teaching in the epistles. The gospels place an inordinate amount of attention on the crucifixion and resurrection.



c. The Fulfillment of Prophecy (1:22-23)

22 Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, 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.*"

- Matthew wants us to know that Jesus' story is rooted in the OT. The quotation from Isaiah (7:14) is taken from the Greek version which uses the term for "virgin" as opposed to the Hebrew text which uses the term for "maiden." The virgin birth is a logical corollary to the incarnation.

2. Human origin (1:24-25) Jesus' name foretells his mission. It means "Jehovah is salvation."

24 And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took {her} as his wife, 25 and kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

How important is the virgin birth to the story of Jesus?

1. **Scriptural support of the doctrine of the virgin birth of Christ is limited.**
 - a. **Lk.1:35** "And 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 offspring shall be called the Son of God.'"
 - b. **Matt.1:16** "and to Jacob was born Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom (feminine singular) was born Jesus, who is called Christ."
 - c. **Matt.1:20-23** "for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.' . . . '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.'"
 - d. **Isa.7:14** "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.
 - e. **Gal.4:4** "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman," The verb translated "born" is not the regular verb for "be born" but the same verb as in Jn.1:14 which refers to the Incarnation.
2. **Significance of the doctrine lies in its relationship to the dual nature of Christ.**
 - a. By the late 2nd century the doctrine of the virgin birth was well established.
 - c. It is important to realize that the virgin birth receives little attention in the apostles writing. This might suggest that it is not in itself a central tenant of the faith.
 - d. The virgin birth does appear however to illustrate and thus communicate a number of important characteristics of Jesus. He was human, divine, and supernatural.

Insights and Lessons from this chapter

- The story of Jesus is not just one chapter in the Biblical narrative. It is the central focus and climactic expression of God and His Kingdom. In an age of pluralism it is easy for us to marginalize Jesus as the “bastion saint” of Christianity with other religious traditions having their own icon or God figure. That is not something Matthew wants us to get away with. From the very beginning, he puts Jesus at the pinnacle of God’s plan.
- The question that we must answer is this – Do we give Jesus his rightful place in our story?
- The incarnation was a special blend of humble humanity and dignified royalty. We are called to wear our royalty in a similar way as children of the King. What does this look like in our world?
- The incarnation reveals a lot about the nature of God and His Kingdom. God chooses to be with us as Emanuel. How does this fact challenge your life?
- Jesus is both fully God and fully human. This is a unique doctrine of the Christian faith and is fundamental to orthodox belief. What are some of its implications for your faith?