

Matthew 1:1-17

I. Verse 1

A. “The book of the genealogy”

1. Literally: The Book of **Genesis**
2. Is this book the account of a new **Creation**?

B. “The book of the genealogy of *Jesus Christ*”

1. This can also be translated: “The book of the generations of Jesus Christ”
2. In the OT, every time this kind of *heading* introduces a genealogy, it *always* introduces a person’s **descendants/children** (Gen. 10:1; 36:1, 5).
 - a. Genesis 5:1, 3 – **This is the book of the generations of Adam**... When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son...
 - b. Genesis 11:10 – **These are the generations of Shem**. When Shem was 100 years old, he fathered Arpachshad...
 - c. Genesis 25:12-13 – **These are the generations of Ishmael**... These are the names of the sons of Ishmael...
 - d. Genesis 36:9 – **These are the generations of Esau**... These are the names of Esau’s sons...
 - e. Ruth 4:18 – **These are the generations of Perez**: Perez fathered Hezron...
 - f. “These are the generations of” always introduces the main subject (eg. Adam) as the **source or beginning** of a **new** line.
3. Wherever this heading is not used to introduce a person’s descendants, it is *always* used to introduce a **story** (Gen. 11:27; 25:19; Num. 3:1-2).
 - a. Genesis 6:9 – **These are the generations of Noah**. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God... [story/account]
 - b. Genesis 37:2 – **These are the generations of Jacob**. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was pasturing the flock with his brothers... [story/account]
 - c. Genesis 2:4 – **These are the generations of the heavens and the earth** when they were created... [story/account]
4. “The book of the generations of Jesus Christ” is an announcement to Matthew’s Jewish Christian readers that in this **story** of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection, it will be seen that He is the founder of a **new** people. He is the author of a **new** creation.
5. But what does the new have to do with the old?

C. “The book of the [generations] of *Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham*.”

1. Christ

- a. “Christ” means “**anointed** one.” The Hebrew equivalent in the OT is “**Messiah**.”
- b. In the Old Testament, a person was anointed as a way of being *set apart* for a special **task**.
- c. As God’s promises kept growing, the anointed one, the Messiah, came to refer to the one who would bring the **fulfillment** of all God’s promises.
- d. The book of the generations of Jesus, *Messiah* – the one who not only **authors** the new, but **fulfills** the old.

2. “The son of David”

- a. 1 Chronicles 17:11-14 – When your days are fulfilled to walk with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. I will not take my steadfast love from him,

- as I took it from him who was before you, but I will confirm him in my house and in my kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever.
- b. It is only *as* the “son of David” and as the one who came to **fulfill** the promises made to David... that Jesus is now the author of a new creation and the founder of a new people composed of true Jews (Rev. 2:8-9; 3:9; Rom. 2:28-29).
3. “The son of Abraham”
 - a. Genesis 17:4-8 – Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations... I will make you exceedingly fruitful... And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.”
 - b. It is only *as* the “son of Abraham” and as the one who came to bring the **fulfillment** of the promises made to Abraham and his descendents... that Jesus is now the founder of a new people and the author of a new creation.
 4. “**The book of the generations of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham**”
 - a. Jesus is the **fulfillment** of the law and the prophets (Mat. 5:17) and “He is the head of the body, the church. He is the **beginning**” (Col. 1:18).
 - b. Colossians 1:15-16 – He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him *and for him*.

II. Verses 2-17 (see chart)

A. The sovereignty of God – Jesus as the fulfillment of Israel’s history (verse 17)

1. Ephesians 1:7-10 – In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for *the fullness of time*.
2. Galatians 4:4 – But when *the fullness of time* had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman.
3. As a multiple of seven, fourteen signifies **completeness**.
4. The whole *point* of Israel’s history as a nation was to serve as the vehicle through which Jesus Christ would enter into the world.
5. As the fulfillment of Israel’s history, Jesus has come in the **fullness** of time!

B. The grace of God – Jesus as the fulfillment of Israel’s history, *in spite* of Israel (vv. 2-16)

1. “Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar” (verse 3; cf. Genesis 38)
 - ✓ The point of mentioning Tamar is to highlight Judah’s moral **depravity** in the very process of continuing the chosen line (and as the founder of the tribe from which Jesus would come)!
2. “David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah” (v. 6; cf. 2 Sam. 11-12)
 - a. The point of mentioning that David was the father of Solomon *by the wife of Uriah* is to emphasize David’s **lust and adultery** in the very process of continuing the chosen line (and as the founder of the royal line from which Jesus would come).
 - b. *And* it reminds the reader that David **murdered** Uriah in order to cover up his adultery!
3. Asaph? (verses 7-8)
 - a. Asaph was actually one of the Psalmists of Israel. He composed several of the Psalms and he was responsible for worship in the temple under King David. (1 Chron. 16:7, 37; 2 Chron. 29:30; Psalm 50, 73-83)

- b. But the royal son of Abijah was actually King Asa (not Asaph).
 - c. And King Asa ended his reign by turning away from God, trusting in the king of Syria, refusing to seek the Lord in his sickness, jailing a prophet, and inflicting cruelties upon some of his people (2 Chronicles 16).
 - d. All Matthew had to do was add one Greek letter to the end of Asa and he had Asaph (a very well-known and exemplary character in Israel's history).
 - e. I think that Matthew was making a point. Asa was certainly no Asaph!
 - f. And calling Asa "Asaph" was a very ironic and sad way of pointing this out!
 - g. If only Asa *had been* more like Asaph!
4. Amos? (verse 10)
- a. Amos was actually one of the prophets of Israel. And He was constantly exposing the wickedness and evil of Israel's kings.
 - b. But the royal son of Manasseh was actually King Amon (not Amos).
 - c. Amon was probably the worst king that Judah ever had. He oppressed the people and shed innocent blood and worshipped idols (2 Kings 21).
 - d. All Matthew had to do was switch out the last letter of Amon's name, and he had Amos (another very well-known and exemplary character in Israel's history).
 - e. Once again, Matthew was making a point. Amon was precisely the kind of King that the prophet Amos would have condemned.
 - f. So calling Amon "Amos" is an ironic way of emphasizing Amon's sin.
 - g. If only these kings had been willing to listen to prophets like Amos!
5. Jechoniah (verses 11-12)
- a. In order to come up with 42 generations (or three sets of 14), one generation/name has to be counted **twice** (see chart).
 - b. It has to be either David or Jechoniah because they are the two hinges or links in the genealogy (see verse 17).
 - c. Jechoniah was another wicked king who was **abandoned** by God because of his sin (counted once)
 - ✓ Jeremiah 22:24-30 – "As I live, declares the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the **signet ring** on my right hand, yet I would **tear you off** and give you into the hand of... Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon... I will hurl you and the mother who bore you into another country, where you were not born, and there you shall die. But to the land to which they will long to return, there they shall not return. Is this man Coniah a despised, broken pot, a vessel no one cares for? Why are he *and his children* hurled and cast into a land that they do not know?" ... Thus says the LORD: "Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not succeed *in his days*, for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David and ruling again in Judah."
 - d. Jechoniah **remembered** because of God's grace (counted twice)
 - i. 2 Kings 25:27-30 – And in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, graciously freed Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison. And he spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat above the seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon. So Jehoiachin put off his prison garments. And every day of his life he dined regularly at the king's table, and for his allowance, a regular allowance was given him by the king, according to his daily needs, as long as he lived.
 - ii. Haggai 2:23 – On that day, declares the LORD of hosts, I will take you, O Zerubbabel my servant, the son of Shealtiel [the son of Jechoniah], declares the

LORD, and make you like a **signet ring**, for I have **chosen you**, declares the LORD of hosts.”

6. The fall of the “royal” line (verses 12-16)
 - a. The first set of fourteen generations anticipates and builds up to the coming of the kings.
 - b. In the middle set of fourteen generations, the kings rule in Israel.
 - c. But in the last set, the royal line no longer sits on the throne. It descends into almost complete **obscurity**. It is of no account.
 - d. It would seem that because of its sin, the royal line has been **abandoned**.

Conclusion

- A. Even the line of David and the tribe of Judah and the nation of Israel all stand in desperate need of the salvation that the Messiah came to bring.
- B. There is no room for **boasting**.
- C. There is room only for glorying in the **grace** of God, who in spite of **us**, brought Jesus, the Messiah into this world (cf. Philippians 3:3-11).

Teaching our Children

Q. What is so special about the fact that Jesus is the son of David?

A. Jesus came to bring the *fulfillment* of God’s promises to David. (See I.C.2.)

Q. What is so special about the fact that Jesus is the son of Abraham?

A. Jesus came to bring the *fulfillment* of God’s promises to Abraham. (See I.C.3.)

Q. What is so special about calling Jesus “the Christ/Messiah”? (cf. I.C.1.)

A. The Christ/Messiah was the one who would come and fulfill *all* of God’s promises to His people!

Q. How will Jesus bring about the fulfillment of all God’s promises?

(Hint: Matthew 1:1 – “The book of Genesis” or “The book of the generations of Jesus Christ”)

A. Jesus will bring the fulfillment of all God’s promises by creating a new people (true Jews) – a new creation.

Reflect with your children on the fact that all of history B.C. was preparation for the coming of Christ. And now all of history A.D. flows from the wonderful reality that Christ has come, and is coming again.

Christ is the center of the entire history of the world! Worship Christ through the reading of Colossians 1:15-16 (See I.C.4.B. above).

Q. Could the people in the genealogy of Jesus bring the Messiah into the world? Why or why not?

A. No! Even the “best” people in the genealogy were still sinners. And some of the people were terribly wicked. (If your children are older, reflect on Judah (II.B.1), David (II.B.2.), Jechoniah (II.B.5.) and perhaps even Asaph (II.B.3.) Amos (II.B.4.) and the fall of the royal line (II.B.6.).

Read (or paraphrase) the “Conclusion” to your children. Be sure to truly glory in God’s grace this Christmas season!

The Covenant Ancestry of Jesus

1. Abraham

2. Isaac
3. Jacob
4. Judah (Tamar)
5. Perez
6. Hezron
7. Ram
8. Amminadab
9. Nahshon
10. Salmon (Rahab)
11. Boaz (Ruth)
12. Obed
13. Jesse

14. David

1. Solomon
2. Rehoboam
3. Abijah
4. Asaph (versus Asa)
5. Jehoshaphat
6. Joram

Ahaziah
Joash
Amaziah

7. Uzziah
8. Jotham
9. Ahaz
10. Hezekiah
11. Manasseh
12. Amos (versus Amon)
13. Josiah

Jehoiakim

14. Jechoniah (exile)

1. Jechoniah (exile)

2. Shealtiel
3. Zerubbabel
4. Abiud
5. Eliakim
6. Azor
7. Zadok
8. Achim
9. Eliud
10. Eleazar
11. Matthan
12. Jacob
13. Joseph (Mary)

14. Jesus

This period covers approximately **1000 years** with a list of only **14 generations**. Only four generations (from Hezron to Nahshon) are said to cover 400 years (Gen. 46:12 & Num. 1:7)

Old Testament source: 1 Chronicles 2:1-15; Ruth 4:18-22

It seems unlikely that Rahab was the great-great-grandmother of David (born almost 400 years later). This implies a gap between Salmon and Boaz.

This period covers approximately **400 years** and an actual total of **19 generations**.

Old Testament source: 1 Chronicles 3:10-17

(Matthew leaves out four generations that were included in his source.)

The middle set of 14 generations is the “royal set”.

David was the first king (ignoring Saul)

Jechoniah was the last king (ignoring Zedekiah)

This period covers approximately **600 years** with a list of only **14 generations**.

In comparison, Luke’s genealogy has 23 generations (nine additional) for the same period (Luke 3:23-27).

(No Old Testament source)

“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.” (Mat. 1:17)