

JESUS' GENEALOGY: INTERESTING ROOTS

MATHEW 01:01-17

Introduction

The genealogy of Jesus Christ is not barren ground for preaching and teaching. It yields rich fruit for the person who will seek out Jesus' roots.

- I. It shows Jesus to be the legal heir (vv. 1-2).
- II. It encourages believers scattered abroad (v. 2).
- III. It symbolizes God's glorious mercy (vv. 3-6).
- IV. It demonstrates that God's grace is not inherited; it is given as He wills (vv. 7-10).
- V. It emphasizes the power of God to keep His promises (vv. 11-16).
- VI. It symbolizes generations of spiritual history (v. 17).

I. *Mathew 01: 01 Jesus Christ, the Legal Heir*

The genealogy of Jesus Christ shows that Jesus is the legal heir to the throne of David. The genealogy is not given to satisfy man's curiosity about Jesus' roots nor to give His followers a reason to boast in His ancestors. Far from it. Mathew traces the roots of Jesus Christ in order to prove that He is the promised Messiah.

The Messiah was to be the son of Abraham and the son of David; that is, He was to be a descendant of both.

1. God gave to Abraham and his seed (the Messiah) *the promise of blessings* for the whole world (Gen. 12:1-3; 22:18. See *Israel, God's Special People*, Jn. 4:22; See Jn. 8:54-59.)
2. God gave to David and his seed (the Messiah) *the promise of eternal government* (2 Sam. 7:12; Psa. 39:3f; 132:11. See *Jesus Christ, King of Israel*, Jn. 1:49.)

The Jews believed these promises of God. Therefore, Mathew sets out to prove that Jesus "who is called Christ" (Mt. 1:16) is the promised son of Abraham and the promised son of David (Mt. 1:1).

Note how often Jesus was called the son of David. (See Mt 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9, 15; Acts 2:29-36; Rom. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:8; Rev. 22:16.) It was the common title and popular concept of the Messiah. Generation after generation of Jews longed and looked for the promised deliverer of Israel. The people expected Him to be a great general who would deliver and restore the nation to its greatness; in fact, they expected Him to make the nation the centre of universal rule.

He would, under God, conquer the world and centre the glory and majesty of God Himself in Jerusalem. From His throne, the throne of David, He would execute “the Messianic fire of judgment” upon the nations and peoples of the world (See *Christ, Messiah*, Mt. 1:18; *Baptism of Jesus and John the Baptist*, Mt. 3:11; notes, Mt. 11:1-6; Mt. 11:2-3; *Prophecy Fulfilled*, Mt. 11:5; *Messiah, Judgement*, Mt. 11:6; notes, Mt. 12:16; Mt. 22:42; Lk. 7:21-23.) If Mathew can prove that Jesus' roots go all the way back to David and Abraham, he will have shown how seriously man must take the claims of Jesus to be the Messiah. (See Mt. 1:18.)

Thought 1. Believers will share in the blessings of Abraham and in the eternal reign promised David. (See *Jews the Seed of Abraham*, Rom. 4:1-25.)

Rom 4:11 *And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them.*

Rom 4:16 *Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring – not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.*

Psa 89:3-4 *You said, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations.”*

Isa 9:6-7 *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.*

Isa 11:10 *In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious.*

Rom 14:9 *For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.*

Eph 1:18-22 *I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he*

exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church.

Thought 2. “Jesus, who is called Christ” (Mt. 1:16) *actually came* through the line of Abraham and David. Everyone must sit up and take the claim seriously. He Himself has made the claim of Messiahship, and He has generations of people witnessing to the fact that they have experienced His presence and power as the Messiah. Mathew began the witness, and teeming thousands have followed. If Christ and His followers are telling the truth, then the world is making a fatal mistake in its rejection of Christ.

Mat 27:11 *Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” “Yes, it is as you say,” Jesus replied.*

John 18:36-37 *Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.” “You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”*

JOHN 04:22 ISRAEL, GOD’S SPECIAL PEOPLE

*“You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews.” **John 04:22***

Why did Jesus Christ come to the Jewish nation and come to earth as a Jew? Very simply stated, the Jews were God’s special people. They had been born by a special act of God. It all started long, long ago. God had wanted four things.

1. He wanted a people who would love Him supremely and give Him their first loyalty. (See Gen. 17:7; Isa. 43 :10.)
2. He wanted a people who would witness to all other nations that He and He alone was the one true and living God. (See Gen. 12:3; 22:18; Acts 13:26, 47.)
3. He wanted a people through whom He could send the promised Seed, the Saviour and Messiah, Jesus Christ, to all men everywhere. (See Gen. 3:15; 17:7; 22:18; Gal. 3:16; Jn. 4:22.)

4. He wanted a people through whom He could send His written Word, the Holy Bible, and preserve it for all generations. (Rom. 9:4-5; 1 Pet. 2:10-12.)

In searching the earth for such a people, God could find none (Rom. 1:18-32). God could do only one thing. He had to find one man and through him raise a new people, a new nation.

1. God found and chose Abraham and through him established the Jewish nation. (Gen. 12:1-5; 13:14-17; 15:1-7; 17:1-8, 15-19; 22:16-18; 26:2-5, 24; 28:13-15; 31:13; 35:9-12.) God chose one man and challenged him to worship God supremely. If that man would worship God supremely, then God would cause a special people to be born of his seed. That man was Abraham. Abraham was the first Jew (Gen. 12:1-4; Gal. 3:16). In the Old Testament the Jews and their land (Palestine) were continually pointed to as the very special people and land of God. They were called...

=> God's treasured possession (Exo. 19:5; Deu. 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Psa. 135:4).

=> the LORD's portion (Deu. 32:9).

=> the LORD's land (Lev. 25:23; Jer. 2:7; 16:18; Hos. 9:3).

=> the holy land (Zec. 2:12).

However, the Jewish nation failed to obey God supremely. The whole plot of the Old Testament centres around God's pleading and dealing with the Jews. Again and again, He gave the nation the opportunity to obey Him. He dealt with them in mercy and in judgment, but at every turn they refused to heed His pleading.

2. God chose the family of David. (see *Jesus Christ, King of Israel*, Jn 1:49). God had no choice but to make another move, so He chose one faithful family within the Jewish nation and gave to that family one great promise. The family was that of King David, and the promise was that of the Messiah, God's great King, God's very own Son. God's Son was to come through the line of David and establish an eternal nation of people who would love God supremely. However, the Jewish nation again failed God. They misinterpreted God's Word – the prophecies of His coming.
 - a. The Jews misinterpreted God's Word by saying the seed of Abraham included only the Jewish nation. In their minds, God had no children except the children of the Jewish nation. The Bible says explicitly that

the seed of Abraham is Christ, and the special people of God are those individuals within all nations who worship God supremely (Gal. 3:16).

- b. The Jews misinterpreted God's Word by saying that the eternal kingdom promised to David was the Jewish nation and the Jewish nation only. They expected Israel to be established as an earthly nation forever and all other nations to be subservient to Israel. But again, God's promise was not that narrow, nor was it that prejudiced. The Bible says there is not, and never has been, any respect of persons with God (Deu. 10:17; 2 Chr. 19:7; Job. 34:19; Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11; Gal. 2:6; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25; 1 Pet. 1:17). God did say that Christ was to come from the Davidic line, but He also said that He was going to establish an eternal nation made up of people everywhere who would love God supremely (Rom. 2:28-29).

By misinterpreting God's promises, the Jews failed to be the missionaries to the world that God had chosen them to be. They became earthly bound and materialistic minded. They twisted the idea of the promised Messiah to fit their own schemes. They conceived of Him as One who was to establish an earthly kingdom for the Jewish nation alone. They failed to see that God was speaking...

- of an eternal kingdom of righteousness.
 - of a kingdom that is of another dimension entirely - the spiritual dimension.
 - of a new heaven and a new earth that would give each person an eternal life beyond just one earthly generation.
3. God had no choice but to make a third move. This He did by sending His own Son into the world through the Jewish nation. God sent Him so that the world through Him might be saved (Jn. 3:16-19). However, man rejected God's Son and crucified Him. This act – the killing of God's Son – was the final blow. When man slew the only Son of God, the whole world *was* involved. Both Jew and Gentile were represented symbolically in the Jewish religionists and the Roman authorities. They both actually did the plotting, sentencing, and execution. If the world were ever to be saved, it was now perfectly clear that God had to make every move Himself.

This He did once-for-all. In His eternal purpose and plan for man's salvation, God took the sins of all men and laid them upon His Son while He was being slain upon the cross. He allowed His Son to bear the sins of the

world (1 Pet. 2:24). Then He took His Son and raised Him from the dead – never to die again. He did what man had always failed to do: in His Son's resurrection God began to build a lasting kingdom of righteousness, a new nation that is presently being made up of men from all earthly nations who desire and are willing to follow Jesus Christ supremely. He is calling out and forming a new people who have genuinely been born again – spiritually. These new born people shall live eternally – beyond just one earthly generation. These people are identified as His church, as a body of people who genuinely believe and follow Him. They are destined to be the inhabitants of the new heavens and earth. Believers become God's new community, new society, new race, new nation of people. They become His church, His new creation – spiritually and supernaturally born again – who comprise the true family of God (Lk. 8:21; Eph. 2:11-18; 4:17-19.)

***Eph 2:18-22** For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief corner-stone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*

God, acting solely upon His own through the death and resurrection of His Son, has fulfilled His promises to both Abraham and David. All the people of the nations of the world now have the opportunity to become children of God, the special people of God. □

JOHN 01:49 JESUS CHRIST, KING OF ISRAEL

*Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God, you are the King of Israel." **John 1:49***

Jesus was declared to be the Messianic King. God had given to David and his seed (the Messiah) the promise of eternal government (2 Sam. 7:12; Psa. 39:3f; 132:11).

Note how often Jesus was called the son of David. (Mt. 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9, 15; Act. 2:29-36; Rom. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:8; Rev. 22:16.) It was the common title and popular concept of the Messiah. Generation after generation of Jews had ached and looked for the promised deliverer of Israel. The people expected

Him to be a great general who would deliver and restore the nation to its greatness. In fact, they expected Him to make the nation the centre of universal rule. He would, under God, conquer the world and centre the glory and majesty of God Himself in Jerusalem; and from His throne, the throne of David, He would execute *the Messianic fire of judgment* upon the nations and peoples of the world (Mt. 1:18; 3:11; 11:1-6; 11:2-3; 11:5; 11:6; Lk. 7:21). □

ROMANS 04:01–25

ISRAEL, THE SEED OR OFFSPRING OF ABRAHAM

Abraham held a unique position in the Jewish nation, for he was the founder of the nation. He was the man whom God had challenged to be a witness to the other nations of the world - a witness to the only living and true God. God had appeared to Abraham and challenged him to leave his home, his friends, his employment, and his country. God made two great promises if Abraham would follow God unquestionably: Abraham would become the father of a new nation, and all nations of the earth would be blessed by his seed or offspring (Gen. 12:1-5; 13:14-17; 15:1-7; 17:1-8, 15-19; 22:15-18; 26:2-5, 24; 28:13-15; 35:9-12).

Scripture says Abraham did as God requested. He went out not knowing where he went (Heb. 11:8). He completely and unquestionably trusted God and took God at His word.

Now note: it was not Abraham's keeping of the law that pleased God. In fact, the law had not yet been given (Gal. 3:17). What pleased God and what caused God to justify Abraham was Abraham doing as God had said. Abraham simply *believed* the promise of God that God would give him a new life - *in* a new nation - *with* a new people.

Note several things.

1. Abraham and his "seed" or "offspring" were the only ones to whom God gave the promises. This is emphatically stated (Rom. 4:13-25; Gal. 3:6-16, 26, 29).
2. Only a promise was given to Abraham (Rom. 4:13-21; Gal. 3:14, 18-21, 29). No other information whatsoever was given. God did not identify the country nor tell Abraham where he was to go. Neither did God tell Abraham when his wife (Sarah) would bear the seed (the male child) from whom the promised nation would be born. God made a simple promise, and all Abraham had to go on was that simple promise, that is, the sheer Word of God.

3. Only one condition was attached to the promise. Abraham had to believe God. No works whatsoever were involved.
4. Abraham did believe God (Gen. 12:4-5; Rom. 4:3. 11-22; Gal. 3:6; Heb. 11:8f).
5. Abraham was *counted righteous* because he believed God (Rom. 4:3-5, 9-13, 19-22; Gal. 3:6; see Gen. 15:6). God did not count him righteous because of who he was or what he had done. He simply believed God. Therefore, God took his faith and *counted* his faith as righteousness (Rom. 4:1-3).
6. The proof that Abraham really believed God was that he did what God had said. His faith *preceded* his obedience. He believed God and then he obeyed God. If he had not believed God, he would not have left his home or his employment. He would not have left his familiar surroundings and meaningful relationships and personal attachments. The fact that he did as God asked was evidence that he believed the promise of God.
7. The man who believes God is the man who receives the promises of God (Rom. 4:5-12, 16-17, 23-25; Gal. 3:7-9, 14, 22, 26, 29). Paul argues that neither heritage nor nationality, neither merit nor works, neither the law nor the rules of the law have anything to do with the promises of God (Gal.3:6-7). The true children of Abraham are those who believe God – any person of any nation. In fact, God's promise that a nation would be born to Abraham and "his seed (offspring)" was the promise of an eternal nation. This eternal nation is to be of another world, of another dimension of being: the spiritual dimension, a dimension just as real as the physical dimension. But it is to have one distinction: every citizen is to be a believer – one who has believed God and His Word. This is exactly what this passage is saying: "They who believe are the children of Abraham, the children of God's promise. They are to be blessed along with faithful Abraham. They are to be the citizens of God's Kingdom, of 'the new heavens and the new earth.'" (See Heb. 11:8-18; 2 Pet. 3:10-14.) □

II. *Mathew 01:02 Encouragement to Scattered Believers*

The genealogy of Jesus Christ encourages believers scattered abroad. Among Jacob's sons only Judas was an ancestor of Christ. Why then are his eleven brothers, all the sons of Jacob, listed in the genealogy? There is probably one main reason. Every Jew knew he had come through the line of Jacob; every Jew was a descendant of one of Jacob's sons. During the time of Mathew's writing, Rome dominated the

world. Rome, just like the Babylonians, had scattered the Jews all over the world. Mathew wished to encourage all Jews – encourage them by assuring them that they were descendants of Jacob's sons, and as such they had a part in Christ, the true Messiah. They were all in line to receive the promises made to Abraham and his seed and to be gathered back together under the government of David's seed. (See *Christ, Messiah*, Mt. 1:18.)

Thought 1. Believers sometime feel scattered abroad: all alone, lonely, frustrated, depressed, without purpose, meaning or significance in life. They feel as if they are in a rut – going no place. They feel God is far away, unapproachable. They wonder why God will not answer and meet their need. Matthew is saying to everyone: every believer is in line to receive the promise of God to Abraham and to David (See notes, Mt. 1:1; 1:3-6). God *meets* the believer's need in Christ and *will fulfil* His promises in Him.

2 Pet 1:4 *Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.*

1 John 2:25 *And this is what he promised us – even eternal life.*

Rom 8:16-17 *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

Titus 3:7 *So that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.*

III. **Mathew 01:03–06 God's Glorious Mercy**

The genealogy of Jesus Christ symbolizes God's glorious mercy. It is unusual to find the names of women in genealogies. They are listed in Jesus' lineage as a sign of God's mercy.

1. Tamar was a seducer and adulteress whom God reached (Gen. 38:24f).
2. Rahab was a Gentile rejected by the Jews. She was a prostitute who was saved from judgment because she exercised faith in God and in Israel as *His people* (Jos. 2: 1f)
3. Ruth was a citizen of a nation hated by the Jews, but she was a woman who chose to become associated with God and His people (Ruth 1f).

4. Bathsheba deliberately sinned with David, but she sought God's forgiveness along with David (2 Sam. 11-12).

Thought 1. There are no barriers to God's mercy. He will have mercy upon anyone – no matter the sex, nationality or sin. Glance at the four women listed in the ancestry of Christ. How marvellous the mercy of God!

Thought 2. There is a beautiful picture in the four women listed in Jesus' roots, a beautiful picture of the gospel of Christ: their sins are forgiven, and they are accepted by God as His own.

Eph 2:3-5 *All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved.*

Eph 1:7 *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.*

Titus 3:5 *He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.*

IV. Mathew 01:07–10 God's Grace is Not Inherited

The genealogy of Jesus Christ demonstrates that God's grace is not inherited; it is given as He wills. There are both good and bad kings in the ancestry of Christ. Just because a king was good did not mean that his goodness was inherited by the next king.

1. The good kings given in vs. 7-8 are:
 - => Solomon (1 Kng. 1:1-11:43).
 - => Asa (1 Kng. 15:9-24; 2 Chron. Chapters 14-16).
 - => Josaphat (or Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. Chapters 17-20).
2. The wicked kings are:
 - => Roboam (or Rehoboam, 1 Kng. 11:43f).
 - => Abia (or Abijah, 2 Chron. 12:16f).
 - => Joram (or Jehoram, 2 Kng. 8:21-24; 1 Chron. 3:11).

Thought 1. Godliness and righteousness are not inherited. Not a single king was able to pass his nature down to the next king. Every human being stands as an individual before God and is responsible for his own life and behaviour (Jn. 1:12-13). A person may have godly parents and a godly family, but godliness is not passed from one person to another. A person has to confront Jesus Christ for himself.

Mat 3:8-9 “Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.”

John 1:12-13 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – Children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

V. *Mathew 01:11–16 Power of God*

The genealogy of Jesus Christ emphasizes the power of God to keep His promises. God’s power is seen in particular events.

1. God’s power is seen in delivering His people through terrible times (for example, the Babylonian captivity). Why is the Babylonian captivity so prominent in the genealogy of Christ (v. 11-12, 17)? Mathew wants to stress a great fact. God alone could save a nation of people through so great a trial. The Babylonians took the people of the nations they conquered and scattered them in mass all over the world. By such methods they destroyed the conquered nations. Succeeding generations forgot their identity and loyalty to the old land and attached themselves to their present country. But not so with Israel; Mathew is saying that God preserved the Jews through the impossible – an attempt to stamp them out as a nation. And God did it in order to preserve the line of the Messiah who had now come (see Isa. 45.8-9).
2. God’s power is seen in sending forth the Christ, the Messiah (See *Birth of Jesus Christ, Son of God*, Mt. 1:16; *Christ, Messiah*, Mt. 1:18).

Thought 1. It is an historical fact that God has preserved the Jewish people through every mad attempt to stamp them out. By such power He has fulfilled His promise to send His Son through the line of Abraham and David. Every person should take note both as a warning and as a hope.

Thought 2. God preserved the Jews through the Babylonian captivity; He kept His promise to send the Messiah. The believer can rest assured in God’s

promises and power, for He will fulfil all His promises. The world can be overcome: despair, depression, discouragement, emptiness, loneliness and lack of purpose can be conquered. There is assured victory in His promises.

1 Cor 10:13 *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

2 Cor 1:20-22 *For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God. Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*

2 Cor 4:17 *For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.*

1 John 5:4-5 *For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*

Thought 3. It was centuries before God fulfilled His promise to send a Saviour to the world. Many had despaired; others had forsaken the belief. There were some who went so far as to mock and persecute those who still believed. But “when the time had fully come, God sent His Son....” (Gal. 4:4). There is application here for the second coming of Christ: “In the last days scoffers will come, sneering and following their own evil desires. They will say, ‘Where is this “coming” he promised?’” (2 Pet. 3:3-18.)

MATHEW 01:16 BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST, SON OF GOD

*And Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. **Mathew 01:16***

Note the changed expression from “the father of”. Jesus was born of Mary but not of Joseph. Joseph was the husband of Mary, but Jesus was not born of Joseph. He was born of the Holy Spirit through Mary.

This stresses a vital fact: Jesus was not born of a man, but of the Holy Spirit. He was Divine, yet human through His conception in Mary. He was God-Man,

fully God and fully man. The real significance of this is that as God, He had the *capacity not to sin*. No other man since Adam has ever had this capacity, for all other men have had a human father and human mother, a father and mother contaminated with a sinful human nature. Therefore, the child of a man is born with the same nature, a nature that *cannot help but sin*. However Jesus Christ, as the only begotten Son of God born of the Holy Spirit, had the capacity to live a perfect and righteous life. He had the capacity never to sin.

However, Jesus Christ, as man, also had the capacity to sin. He suffered the pull and strain and suffering of temptation as all men do. He could have *willed* to sin. (Jn. 6:38.)

But there is this glorious difference. He utilized the capacity never to sin. He learned obedience by the things that He suffered (Heb. 5:8). He never gave in to temptation; He never sinned (2 Cor. 5:21). Thereby He became the Perfect and Ideal Man in whom all men find their salvation. □

VI. Mathew 01:17 Spiritual History

The genealogy of Jesus Christ symbolizes generations of spiritual history.

=> The first period of Israel's history can symbolize God's giving *birth to Israel through Abraham* and *giving dominion through David*.

=> The second period can symbolize Israel's *losing its dominion* and being enslaved as a result of God's judgment upon sin.

=> The third period of Israel's history can symbolize Israel's *ultimate triumph* through the Messiah and His liberating power.

These historical periods can also symbolize the *spiritual pilgrimage* of any saved man.

1. Man was born and purposed to rule as king.

Gen 1:26-27 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Psa 8:6 You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet:

2. Man, however, lost his right to dominion through enslavement to sin and the judgment of God.

Gen 3:16-19 *To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."*

Rom 3:23 *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

Rom 5:12 *Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.*

3. Man can now be liberated and restored to fulfil his original purpose through Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

Rom 5:8-10 *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!*

Rom 8:15-18 *For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ■*

THE DIVINE BIRTH OF JESUS: UNUSUAL EVENTS MATHEW 01:18–24

Introduction

The coming of God's Son into the world was one of the most phenomenal events in all of history. It necessitated and caused some very unusual events.

- I. His birth was of the Spirit (v. 18).
- II. His birth created a predicament (vv. 18-19).
- III. His birth necessitated a special revelation (vv. 20-21).
- IV. His birth was a fulfillment of prophecy (vv. 22-23).
- V. His birth stirred a great obedience (v. 24).

I. *Mathew 01:18 The Birth of Jesus Christ*

Jesus' birth was of the Spirit. Never before had a man been born "through the Holy Spirit," but Jesus was. A person either accepts the evidence of Scripture at this point or rejects it. The Scripture is clear in what it says: "Before they came together, she [Mary] was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit." It is a matter of faith and trust in the *God of love*.

- who is revealed in Scripture as caring for man with an eternal and perfect love.
- who set out to save man from his sins (v. 21).
- who caused the greatest event of human history: God's *becoming one with man* – "God with us" (v. 23). (See *Immanuel*, Mathew 01:23; *Virgin Birth of Jesus*, Mathew 01:23.)

MATHEW 01:18–25 THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE DEMANDS ON MARY AND JOSEPH

Jesus' birth was one of the most convulsive and disturbing events in all history (see Lk. 2:1-24).

1. There was Mary's pregnancy – the idea of her being an unwed mother (Mt. 1:18; Lk. 1:26f). Who of that day would ever believe her story? Required was a willingness to be available to God regardless of embarrassment and the opinions of family, friends, and neighbours.

2. There was Joseph's discovery of Mary's pregnancy (Mt.1:19). The shock of Mary's infidelity and of personal embarrassment was more than Joseph could bear (Mt. 1:20). Required was a willingness to forget self completely.
3. There was the child, the Son of God Himself, being born in a smelly manger (Mt. 1:25; Lk. 2:1f). Required was a willingness to be humble.
4. There was the family having to be uprooted and moved to a foreign nation, Egypt (Mt. 2:13f). Required was a willingness to obey at any cost.
5. There was the slaughter of all children under two years of age (Mt. 2:16f). The heavy weight of feeling some responsibility was bound to attack Joseph and Mary. Required was a willingness on their part to bear anything.
6. There was the visit of the wise men showing that the foreign relationships of nations were affected (Mt. 2:1f). Required was a willingness to bear the pressure of responsibility and the demands of being in the limelight.
7. There was the uproar of Herod's household traumatically affecting the lives of both Joseph and Mary (Mt. 2:7-8, 15-16, 22). Required was a willingness to stand against all odds. □

MATHEW 01:18 MEANING OF 'CHRIST' AND 'MESSIAH'

The word for "Christ" and "Messiah" is the same word: *Christos*. Messiah is the Hebrew word, and Christ is the Greek word. Both words refer to the same Person and mean the same thing: *the Anointed One*. The Messiah is *the Anointed One* of God. Mathew says that Jesus "is called Christ" (Mt. 1:16); that is, He is recognized as the Anointed One of God, the Messiah Himself.

In the day of Jesus Christ, people feverishly panted for the coming of the long-promised Messiah. The weight of life was harsh, hard, and impoverishing. Under the Romans, people felt that God could not wait much longer to fulfill His promise. Such longings for deliverance left the people trusting. Many arose who claimed to be the Messiah and led the trusting followers into rebellion against the Roman State. The insurrectionist, Barabbas, who was set free in the place of Jesus at Jesus' trial, is an example (Mk. 15:6f).

The Messiah was thought to be several things:

1. *Nationally*, He was to be the leader from David's line who would free the Jewish state and establish it as an independent nation, leading it to be the greatest nation the world had ever known.
2. *Militarily*, He was to be a great military leader who would lead Jewish armies victoriously over all the world.
3. *Religiously*, He was to be a supernatural figure straight from God who would bring righteousness over all the earth.
4. *Personally*, He was to be the One who would bring peace to the whole world.

Jesus Christ accepted the title of Messiah on three different occasions (Mt. 16:17; Mk. 14:61; Jn. 4:26). The name Jesus shows Him to be man. The name Christ shows Him to be God's anointed, God's very own Son. Christ is Jesus' official title. It identifies Him officially as: Prophet (Deu. 18:15-19), Priest (Psa. 110:4) and King (2 Sam. 7:12-13).

These officials were always anointed with oil, a symbol of the Holy Spirit who was to perfectly anoint the Christ, the Messiah (Mt. 3:16; Mk. 1:10-11; Lk. 3:21-22; Jn. 1:32-33). □

II. *Mathew 01: 18–19 The Righteous Joseph*

Jesus' birth created a predicament – the predicament of Joseph's life. The words “a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace” show a deeply troubled spirit. Joseph was literally torn between obeying the law (exposing Mary to the authorities) and his love for her. He struggled, for he was perplexed, troubled, and disappointed. His imagination ran wild. He felt deceived, experiencing jealousy and rage. Mary had committed whoredom against him. Yet he cared for her and loved her deeply. He did not want Mary to be hurt. He wanted to divorce her quietly and secretly. (See *Betrothed*, Mathew 1:18.)

Thought 1. Jesus' birth creates a predicament for every man. Imagine the emotions and the hurt Joseph felt when he discovered that Mary, his fiancée, was pregnant. Imagine the thoughts that must have flooded his mind! What a predicament Jesus' birth created for Joseph! Jesus' birth creates a predicament for every man in that every man is now forced to make a decision about Christ and *His claims*.

Thought 2. There is no room for gossip and censorious judgment among God's people. In Joseph's mind, Mary's sin was great. She had committed whoredom

against him. Yet, he cared and truly loved her. It was this love that helped him in his treatment of her: “Love covers over a multitude of sins” (1 Pet. 4:8). A person who truly loves others cannot be critical, judgmental or censorious. The person who loves will not talk, gossip or criticize. He will get alone with God and pray about the problem just as Joseph did.

***Mat 7:1-4** “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?”*

***Gal 6:1** Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.*

***Eph 4:32** Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

***Col 3:12** Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.*

***1 Pet 4:8** Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.*

Thought 1. Believers are not to be unequally yoked together. Joseph was a just man; Mary was a virtuous woman. Both were godly. Believers should be careful in selecting their companions for marriage.

***2 Cor 6:14** Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?*

Thought 2. There is real wisdom in taking time to confirm one’s decision to marry. It is much better to delay and be sure than to rush and be sorry.

Thought 3. A waiting period before marriage is wise. It gives God time to melt and mould the couple into one being spiritually – much more time than in a quick marriage. It also allows more time for a couple to grow together before being married. Spending time growing together prevents a multitude of heartaches and much pain.

III. *Mathew 01:20–21 Joseph, Son of David*

Jesus' birth necessitated a special revelation. Joseph did just what he should have done: he got alone with God to think and pray through the predicament. Because of his godly dependence and obedience, God met his need. God gave Joseph a special revelation. God's purpose was fourfold.

1. To give assurance to Joseph. When the angel called Joseph "son of David," Joseph was shocked. He was wakened to a glorious call. He was chosen by God as a son of David to be the earthly father to "The Son of David," the Messiah! All Jews knew the prophecies that said the Messiah was to be of the line of David. Joseph knew them; but to hear himself addressed as "Joseph, son of David," quickened his attention and alerted him to an extremely important message. It indicated to some degree a divine call. Remember: Joseph was only a humble carpenter.
2. To guide Joseph.
3. To explain the predicament.
4. To reveal the destiny of the promised child. (See *Jesus*, Mt. 1:21; *Salvation – Mission of Jesus*, Mt. 1:21.)

Thought 1. There is a right way to confront traumatic experiences. Joseph demonstrated the right way. He got alone and "considered this thing" (v. 20). Being a just and godly man, he got alone with God; he shared his thoughts with God. He probably wept as a child pouring out his soul to God. Believers often weep when facing terrible trials.

Heb 4:15-16 *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

John 15:7 *"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given to you."*

James 5:13 *Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise.*

Psa 91:15 *He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him.*

Isa 65:24 Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.

Thought 2. There is a way to conquer criticism, murmuring, and censorious judgment. It is to do what Joseph did: hush, keep quiet, and get alone with God to discuss the matter.

Thought 3. God met Joseph when he took time to get alone and to think. The right frame of mind is essential in order to hear and receive the message of God.

Thought 4. The believer who gets alone with God and thinks through the trials confronting him will be met by God. God will give assurance and guide the believer (Mt. 6:33; Phil. 4:6-7; Jn.16:13; Rom. 8:13; Heb. 13:5).

Thought 5. A person is to say “yes” to God’s call. Joseph received the call of God, and he accepted God’s call and was obedient. Most people reject God’s call.

Mat 20:16 “So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

Thought 6. *The vast majority of persons called by God are from humble stations in life. Joseph came from a humble station in life, and so did Christ.*

1 Cor 1:26-27 Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.

Thought 7. His name was Jesus. God chose His name and instructed that He be called by that name. Every person should know and call upon the name “Jesus.”

Thought 8. Jesus’ mission was to save. God gave Him His mission, His purpose for living. God gives the mission — the purpose for every person’s life, who looks to God as Jesus looked.

Mat 20:28 Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.

John 20:21 Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”

MATHEW 01:21 JESUS (IESOUS)

The name Jesus means Saviour; He will save. The Hebrew form is *Joshua* (yasha), meaning Jehovah is salvation; He is the Saviour. The idea is that of deliverance, of being saved from some terrible disaster that leads to destruction (see Jn. 3:16; Rom. 8:3; Gal. 1:4; Heb. 2:14-18; 7:25). □

MATHEW 01:21 SALVATION: THE MISSION OF JESUS CHRIST

“She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” Mathew 01:21

The statement “He will save his people from their sins” is full of meaning.

1. The word *save* or *salvation* means to deliver. It is Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, who saves.
2. The words “His people” are significant. It infers that all people are not “His people.”

John 10:26–27 But you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

3. The words “from their sins” mean that Christ saves His people from:
 - the power of sin
 - the bondage of sin
 - the guilt of sin
 - the consequences of sin(Gal. 1:4-5; 4:4-7; Heb. 2:14-18; 7:25; Tit. 2:14.)

In Rev. 14:4, Christ is said to redeem believers “from among men [worldly men]”. In Heb. 7:26 where Christ is said to be “set apart from sinners”. The believer is called to separation: to live away from, above and over sin; to conquer sin; to live victoriously over sin. (See 2 Cor. 6:17-18; Rom. 12:2; 1 Jn. 2:15-16.) □

IV. *Mathew 01:22–23 The Birth of Jesus Christ*

Jesus' birth was a fulfillment of prophecy. (See *Prophecy*, Mathew 1:22.) Mathew stresses two prophecies in particular.

1. There was the prophecy predicting His virgin birth. (See *Virgin Birth of Christ*, Mathew 1:23.)
2. There was the prophecy predicting His name: Immanuel. (See *Immanuel*, Mathew 01:23.)

MATHEW 01:22 PROPHECY

The basic elements of prophecy are given here.

1. Prophecy is “the Word of the Lord.” It is not the word of men. The future is revealed by God, not by men.
2. The prophet is but a messenger — not the spokesman.
3. Prophecy must be fulfilled. It will always come to pass. □

MATHEW 01:23

THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST, SON OF GOD

*“The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” — which means, “God with us”. **Mathew 01:23***

Four convincing things about the virgin birth of Christ are:

1. The concern and great pains to which Mathew went in pointing out the supernatural birth of Jesus. He said very pointedly, “This is how the birth of Jesus Christ [not just Jesus, but “Jesus Christ, the Messiah] came about.”
 - a. “Mary...was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit” (v. 18).
 - b. “What is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit” (v. 20).
 - c. “All this took place to fulfill [the prophecy]... ‘The virgin...will give birth to a son. They will call Him Immanuel... ‘God with us.’” (v. 22-23)
 - d. “They will call Him Immanuel...God With Us” (v. 23)

Matthew was not interested in giving a detailed account of Jesus' birth. His concern was simply to draw the reader's attention to two important facts.

First, the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah's birth were fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Second, the Jews needed to know that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin, especially those who misinterpreted the Old Testament prophecies and who were not expecting the Messiah to be virgin born. One of the slanderous reports facing the early Christian believers was that Jesus was born out of wedlock.

Isa 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Isa 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Luke 1:31 You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.

Luke 2:7 And she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Rom 8:3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man.

Gal 4:4-5 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.

Phil 2:6-7 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, But made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

1 John 4:2 This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.

2. The simple profession of Mary that shows shock and amazement: "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" (Lk. 1:34).

3. Note the mystery of life about which man knows so little.

***Eccl 11:5** As you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed in a mother's womb, so you cannot understand the work of God, the Maker of all things.*

***Psa 139:13-15** For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth.*

4. Note the mystery of godliness.

***1 Tim 3:16** Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory. (see Ga1.4:4; 1 Jn.1:1-3)*

***Heb 2:14-17** Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — And free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.*

***Phi12:5-7** Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, But made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.*

***2 Cor 5:19** That God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.*

***John 14:9** Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*

***John 10:33** "We are not stoning you for any of these," replied the Jews, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God." □*

MATHEW 01:23 JESUS, IMMANUEL, SON OF GOD

Immanuel means God with us. He is God manifest in human flesh. The word “Immanuel” is not a name or a title. It is a descriptive term. It characterizes a person. Jesus is Immanuel: God with us, God revealed in human flesh (see Isa. 1:26; 9:6; Jn. 1:1, 14; 2 Cor. 5:19; 1 Jn. 1:2). □

V. *Mathew 01:24 Obedience of Joseph*

Jesus’ birth brought about a great obedience. Very simply, Joseph obeyed God. Despite the predicament – despite the appearance of things – Joseph obeyed. He did exactly what God said. Imagine how difficult it must have been! Mary was pregnant, yet they were not married. How much gossip had been there? What would have been the reaction of the neighbours? How much pain Joseph and Mary might have experienced while giving them a reply? Would people believe the story of angels and of a virgin birth from two people whom they knew so well? What a situation! Yet, Joseph did exactly as God said – despite all. What a lesson for great obedience on the part of every believer!

John 14:21 “Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.”

John 15:10, 14 If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love...You are my friends if you do what I command.

Heb 5:8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered.

Thought 1. Joseph acted as God wants a man to act.

- 1) He was merciful and gentle and tender toward one who had hurt him so much.
- 2) He forgave as one who had been forgiven. He had the attitude that is needed by believers when a loved one or a fellow believer is found in sin.

Gal 6:1 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

Eph 4:2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Eph 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. ■