

>>>>>> Matthew – Lesson 01 <<<<<<<

- 1) The beginning of Matthew's gospel is quite different from the other 3 gospels.
 - a) Mark calls Him the Son of God and ties Him to a primary prophesy.
 - i) No genealogy given.
 - b) Luke, after his introduction to Theophilus, begins with the birth story of John the Baptist.
 - i) He doesn't get to any real discussion of Jesus until chapter 2.
 - ii) He doesn't present Jesus' genealogy until after His baptism and the beginning of His ministry in chapter 3.
 - c) John does not talk about Jesus' genealogy at all but begins and emphasizes His being the Son of God throughout his gospel.

- 2) Matthew on the other hand opens with an absolutely bold and unapologetic statement:

Matthew 1:1 (NASB 2020)

The Genealogy of Jesus the Messiah

¹The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham:

- 3) He claims Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah and immediately traces His lineage back to Abraham the father of the Jewish nation and David the progenitor of God's promised Messiah.
 - a) This is a rock-solid foundation on which Matthew will build his case with prophesies and actions of Jesus throughout his gospel.
- 4) So, we might ask why is this so important? To answer that we must remember first the audience:
 - a) Again, the consensus is that Matthew's gospel was written primarily to Jewish Christians.
 - b) Remember also that this is backed up but several of the church father's indication that Matthew penned this gospel in Hebrew (Aramaic).
 - c) Most important was the ways in which genealogy was tied to Jewish life in general.
 - i) **Covenant Identity** – Proved descent from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob which was essential for religious belonging
 - ii) **Land Inheritance** – Determined rights to land and property within tribal territories.
 - iii) **Priestly Legitimacy** – Ensured only legitimate descendants of Levi/Aaron could serve as priests.
 - iv) **Social Status & Marriage** – Affected eligibility for marriage and social standing.
 - v) **Preservation of Identity** – Maintained communal continuity through exile and diaspora.
 - vi) **Honor and Family Legacy** – Conferred status by descent from notable ancestors.
 - vii) **Scriptural and Liturgical** – Embedded in religious texts and rituals.
- (1) The first 5 chapters of 1 Chronicles is almost all genealogies – Adam to Abraham and on to the individual tribes and the priestly lines.
- d) Of course, the most important reason which is being considered here is the **Messianic Expectation** – Validated claims to Messiahship by tracing descent from David and Judah.

- i) As Matthew and the other gospels plainly show, the Old Testament prophesied that the Messiah would come from the line of David and the tribe of Judah.
 - ii) However, only Matthew and Luke actually list a genealogy for Jesus.
- 5) Before we look at Matthew's genealogy, we need to talk for a moment about one "historical point".
- a) I have always been told that the Roman conquest of Jerusalem and the burning of the temple in 70CE destroyed the genealogical records of the Jewish people.
 - b) Turns out, this like many other "historical points of the period" is really not totally clear from dispute.
 - c) There are two trains of thought here.
 - i) The first view is that indeed the destruction of the temple in 70CE did destroy the genealogical records of the Jewish nation for the most part.
 - ii) The second opinion is that this was not a total destruction and that these records continued to exist in different places and forms up until the middle ages.
 - d) There are many details about both of these scenarios, but we will not get into them here.
 - e) The point I think we need to see is that regardless of when the loss actually occurred, the ability to trace the lineage of the Messiah back to David was lost.
 - i) Even in the Jewish faith today, they admit readily that they no longer have the ability to trace that lineage.
 - (1) The implication is of course that though they await the Messiah, if he were to arrive, they would not be able to verify him by lineage.
- 6) Now, to the genealogy itself:
- a) As we will see, the list is broken into 3 distinct groups – Matthew himself acknowledges this fact in verse 17.

Matthew 1:17 (NASB 2020)

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.

- 7) The reasons for the threefold division are
- a) **Theological and Historical Markers** – Each section marks a key era in Israel's history:
 - b) **Literary and Mnemonic Device** – The threefold division, each with fourteen generations, creates a symmetrical and memorable structure.
 - i) This likely made the genealogy easier to memorize and recite, which was important in an oral culture²⁷⁸.
 - c) **Symbolic Significance of the Number Fourteen** – Fourteen is twice seven, a number often associated with completeness or perfection in biblical literature.
 - d) **Missing Names** - If you were to look closely at this list, you would see some missing names.
 - i) This is allowed in the Jewish way of recording genealogies.

- ii) The word son (inferred by fathered in this translation) can mean a descendant who is not an immediate progeny.
- iii) The practice is justified if the writer is trying to make a particular point as Matthew is here which we discuss in a moment.
- iv) One other tie to the **significance of the number 14** here is this:
 - (1) One commentator makes note that in ancient times, the Hebrew language had a numeric value associated with each of its letters.
 - (2) It is not coincidental that one of the numeric values of the number 14 may be expressed in the three Hebrew letters (D/dalet=4, V/vav=6, D/dalet=4), the Hebrew letters for David.
 - (3) By intentionally skipping over particular names that could have been included in the list, the Matthew is emphasizing the Davidic connection to Jesus as King Messiah, the Son of David.^{4,4}
 - (4) That's kind of a stretch but thought it was interesting, nonetheless.

8) So, here we go...

Matthew 1:2–16 (NASB 2020)

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

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

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

9) Ok, let's take a quick look at a couple of interesting facts regarding Matthew's genealogy.

10) First, there is the inclusion of Jeconiah, also known as Coniah or Jehoiachin in verse 11.

⁴ It seems that the men whom Luke cites in his listing are actually related to Yeshua's mother and not his apparent father, Yosef. Therefore, the odd Greek construction would be a tip-off to the observant reader. An extra-biblical source that confirms these details is found in the Talmud, where the father of the New Testament Miryam is said to be a man by the name of Eli, just as Luke attests (cf. Tractate Hagigah 2:4).

Barney Kasdan, [*Matthew Presents Yeshua, King Messiah: A Messianic Commentary*](#) (Clarksville, MD: Messianic Jewish Publishers, 2011), 12.

- a) Though he was indeed from the family line of David, Coniah was inflicted with a curse because of his rebelliousness against the Lord in his day.

Jeremiah 22:24–30 (NASB 2020)

²⁴ “As I live,” declares the LORD, “even if Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were a signet *ring* on My right hand, yet I would pull you off; ²⁵ and I will hand you over to those who are seeking your life, yes, to those of whom you are frightened, that is, to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the Chaldeans. ²⁶ I will hurl you and your mother who gave birth to you into another country where you were not born, and there you will die. ²⁷ But as for the land to which they long to return, they will not return to it.

²⁸ “Is this man Coniah a despised, shattered jar?

Or is he an undesirable vessel?

Why have he and his descendants been hurled out

And cast into a land that they had not known?

²⁹ “O land, land, land,

Hear the word of the LORD!

³⁰ This is what the LORD says:

‘Write this man down *as* childless,

A man who will not prosper in his days;

For no man among his descendants will prosper

Sitting on the throne of David

Or ruling again in Judah.’”

- b) Not only was a judgment placed on this evil king, but the prophet Jeremiah was also told in verse 30 to extend the curse to all Coniah’s descendants.

- c) So, here this becomes a problem ...

i) Matthew is recounting the genealogy of Joseph (the patriarchal side).

ii) Joseph, though in the messianic line of David, is also in the direct line of the cursed king of Judah, Coniah!

iii) If Jesus were the biological son of Joseph, ironically, he would be disqualified to inherit the messianic throne of King David.

- d) However, we must take note of two things:

i) First Matthew says “Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah”

(1) This eliminates the problem from one perspective however, there is still the issue of the required Davidic line.

ii) We take care of that problem by looking at Luke’s genealogy,

(1) When we do, we see clearly that both Mary and Joseph were in the Davidic line thereby eliminating the problem completely.⁵

11) The other interesting detail of Matthew’s genealogy considering it is patriarchal is the fact that his list includes four women.

- a) All these women are non-Jews, and each had her own share of spiritual problems.

- i) Tamar, Rahab, and Bathsheba were all involved in sexual immorality.
- ii) Ruth, although she joined the Jewish people, was a part of the cursed Moabites, who were not allowed to fully participate in the riches of Israel because of their historical opposition to God's people (cf. Deuteronomy 23:3).
- iii) Matthew's point seems to be that the Messiah would come into this fallen world to redeem all categories of humanity: Jew, Gentile, man, woman, slave, and free.^{5, 5}

⁵ Barney Kasdan, *Matthew Presents Yeshua, King Messiah: A Messianic Commentary* (Clarksville, MD: Messianic Jewish Publishers, 2011), 12–13.