

**Matthew in Biblical Perspective:
A Biography of Jesus of Nazareth the Christ –
The Royal Line of the Redeemer**

Matthew 1:1-17

By [Dr. Harry Reeder III](#)

December 7, 2008 – Morning Sermon

There is a note sheet that has been made available to you. I think you will find it helpful in our second study of the book of Matthew as we look at this genealogy. I want to thank God for the privilege to be together on the Lord's Day and see the message of Christ through the fine arts of ballet tonight. Bring all your friends. Then you can see the Gospel again in the Walk Through Nativity this week. I am praying that God will allow us to bring about 5,000 people this year. When you bring people through just bring in carloads of them and we'll be down at the end to give out some hot chocolate, literature and talk to them about what they have seen. We want to build bridges as Christians to other people but this season gives us a lot of bridges already so let's take advantage of this. There will also be the Choir Festival where someone can see and hear the message of Christ and of course, the Christmas Eve Candlelight service which are great opportunities for celebration and outreach.

I also want to tell you how it is such an unbelievable privilege as a pastor to serve the Lord with you here. Your response in this "For Coming Generations," the stories that I've heard, the breadth of it and what God has done in the lives of your families, your sacrifice and what you do in the midst of this situation in our society has been absolutely overwhelming. I stand amazed at God's grace and His work in you. I thank you for the privilege to serve you and to equip Christians not only for this generation but for coming generations to serve the Lord.

I am going to start off by just reading the title in Matthew 1 but we will be looking at Matthew 1:1-17 for this study so keep your Bibles open. Here is the title of this first section. It is Matthew 1:1; "*The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*" The grass withers and the flower fades but the Word of our God abides forever by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you. I enjoy and am committed to expository preaching. One may say, "Harry, what is expository preaching?" It is preaching consecutively. It's not depository preaching and it's not like the person who came in one Sunday who said, "Hey preacher!" I said, "Hi." He said, "I've been listening to you on the radio." I said, "Great." He said, "I wanted to come visit. I've been looking for a

suppository preacher.” I said, “No, no, I think you missed that. It’s expository preaching. At least I hope you missed it.” There is another way you can tell an expository preacher. Periodically you will find that they have to preach through a genealogy. This is not some kind of text that on a Wednesday says “I think I’m going to preach through a genealogy this Sunday.” I also want to say that preaching through a genealogy as you consecutively work through the Scripture is no burden. There are unbelievable riches. I do believe God’s Word when it says “All Scripture is inspired and is profitable” (2 Timothy 3:16), including the genealogies.

I’m going to restrict myself in this study but this genealogy in Matthew 1 is a gold mine. It is an unbelievable gold mine that we can dig in and pull nuggets out. In this study I’m just going to pull two of them out. One is one that Matthew wants you to see directly and the other the Holy Spirit has embedded in what Matthew has said here that ought to encourage us and challenge us. To get started in this rich gold mine we might ask ourselves, “Now, why is this genealogy here?”

Remember, Matthew has been ministering for 15 years after the ascension of Jesus. We are looking at sometime between 45 and 55 A.D., before he goes away from Jerusalem to do his ministry which extra Biblical testimony tells us. Matthew wrote this biographical statement of the life and ministry of Jesus directed to Jewish people to affirm and announce. It’s an evangelistic biography. Matthew has been very selective in how he has put this biography together. He has put it together with over 60 references to Old Testament events or texts. He included 40 something prophecies. He is continually attempting to make clear to his Jewish audience and through them to us that this Jesus, born of Mary, stepfather Joseph, is in fact the Messiah. It is announcing it, it is affirming it, he is putting everything together so that he might say to them, “The house of Israel, come to Christ.” Matthew will do it in such a way that the message goes to Gentiles as well. We will even see that in this study.

Remember our focus in these weeks. The God of the Word that we have heard is now the Word of God that we see. The Word of God we have heard in the Old Testament has now become flesh. He’s the God of the Word we see. This biography about Jesus begins with a genealogy. Why? If you had been a small Jewish boy and you went up to the synagogue to get educated one of the things you would have in your hand was your family tree. You would have your genealogy with you. Without this in Israel there were no legal rights to education. There was no opportunity to participate. You couldn’t be in the court system or own property. The language we have used historically is “your roots.” Your genealogy, your family tree had to be there. We are about to hear about Christ who is the Messiah.

The Messiah we are told in the Old Testament, has to come through Abraham and David. So now Matthew starts with the *biblos*. This is even the word we get the word “Bible” from. It is the book of the genealogy or the generation of Jesus

the Christ. Jesus is His name. Matthew 1:1 says, "*The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*" Jesus is His name and Christ is His title. Christ is not His name, it is His title. The first step Matthew is doing is he is going to do what is to be expected. Jesus, of Mary, Joseph, Nazareth, why and how can He be the Messiah? The family tree has to go back to David and from David to Abraham because the promise was to Abraham. Then through David from Abraham narrowed to David and now is this Jesus the Messiah? By the way, that's not all that is going to be clear here.

Let me ask this question. Do you know of anybody that you think is too religious, too immoral, so rich, so poor, too far away, or so near that they have been inoculated to Christianity by churchyancy to come to Christ? If so, then please don't pass by this genealogy. Actually there are 4 genealogies of Christ in the Bible. Most of you know that there are 2 genealogies found in Matthew and Luke and that those genealogies have become instruments in the hand of unbelieving scholars to attack the inherency of Scripture. But there are not just 2 there are 3. There is another genealogy in the Gospels. There is the genealogy in Matthew 1, Luke 3 and John 1; "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." He was in the beginning with God. That's a genealogy of Jesus the Son of God. Matthew and Luke tell you about Jesus the Son of God becoming Man. John gives you the genealogy of His deity; "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God."

Harry, what is the fourth genealogy? It's your Old Testament. The Old Testament is the exhaustive genealogy of Jesus. If you will study the Old Testament you will be able to from Adam all the way up to the birth of Jesus and fill in all the blanks. Matthew and Luke give you a purposed, edited, abridged genealogy and they are doing two different things so there is some seeming contradiction to them that is actually not a contradiction. They are just fulfilling their purposes which I will try to explain to you. Let me give you Matthew and Luke first. So if one wants to study the exhaustive genealogy of Jesus they should start in Genesis and go to Malachi then Jesus. Here is His genealogy of His deity in John 1. So what about these genealogies in Matthew and Luke that are even used to attack the inerrancy of Scripture?

The first thing I want to look at this Matthew's genealogy. Matthew's genealogy is what we call a descending genealogy. It starts with Abraham and descends to the birth of Jesus. Luke's genealogy is what we call an ascending genealogy. It starts with Jesus and works all the way back to Adam. Matthew's genealogy is focused on the messianic promises to Abraham and David. So it starts with Abraham, telescopes down to David and then brings us to the birth of Jesus. Luke, giving us Christ the Son of Man begins with Jesus and takes Him back all the way ascending to Abraham but beyond Abraham and beyond Matthew's purpose and brings us all the way back to Adam. Now what are some other differences? Here's the big difference. It is the one that is always used to attack the inerrancy. It's when you follow Matthew's genealogy it comes from Abraham

to David and the section in Luke matches up with it but when you get to David, Matthew's genealogy says, "begotten of David and then begotten of Solomon." Let's take a look at the three sections of Matthew's genealogy, each are 14 generations. Matthew 1:1-11 says;

1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. 2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, 3 and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, 4 and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, 5 and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, 6 and Jesse the father of David the king. (Second section) And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, 7 and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, 8 and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, 9 and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, 10 and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, 11 and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

You'll notice in the second section David who is the father of Solomon and Solomon the father of Rehoboam but if you go read in Luke's book you'll find that the genealogy does not go through Solomon because it goes through David's oldest son Nathan and comes down a different line. Why is that? It is because Matthew is giving you the Royal line through Jesus stepfather Joseph whereby he has the legal claim to the throne which has to go through Solomon. There is a problem. At the end of David's line at the deportation there is a man by the name of Jechoniah. It was said that his sons shall never sit on the throne. So while the legal line went through there the biological line could not sit on the throne by the curse of God. Then what Luke gives us is not the line of Joseph. Luke gives us a line of Mary because Joseph and Mary are very distant cousins of each other. Mary's father is Eli and that goes all the way back up to David's son Nathan. So the biological line of Jesus as the Son of Man is through Mary by way of Nathan and is in Luke. The legal Royal line is through Joseph by way of Solomon in Matthew. They have two different purposes and that is why the names are different. They are the same from Abraham to David but from David on day are different because one is from the line of Mary and the other is the line of Joseph.

Now look at the third section. Matthew 1:12-17;

12 And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, 13 and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of

Azor, 14 and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, 15 and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, 16 and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. 17 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.

I want to point out just a couple of thoughts here as we look at some of the dimensions in this text. You have seen the dynamics of Matthew, Luke and John in their genealogies but I would like to step back and take a little bit more focus with Matthew; this royal line, through Joseph to Jesus, who is not the one who gave birth to him that Jesus was born through Mary. Notice the careful way the text acknowledges the virgin birth of Christ. Notice what it says in Matthew 1:16; *“and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.”* There is a definite shift, not begotten from the father but begotten or born through the mother, the virgin birth, not of Joseph. For Jesus was not of Joseph's biological seed even though Joseph being His father legally brings Him into the legal inheritance of the kingship of the Messiah.

Here are a couple of things that are very interesting to me about this. Matthew 1:1 says, *“The book of the genealogy of Jesus (named) Christ (His title), the son of David, the son of Abraham.”* How does the New Testament start with the Old Testament leading up to it? Everything is leading to who? Jesus the Christ. Then you go to the end of the New Testament in Revelation 1:21 where it says, *“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with all. Amen.”* The New Testament begins, ends and exalts throughout all of its pages, Christ the fulfillment of the promises of the Old Covenant.

The second thing I find interesting is how it is put into three sets of 14. The first set that I read are the fathers, the patriarchs, giving you the rise of the kings. The second set is a selected group that give you the rise and the fall of the kings into the deportation. So the first set are the patriarchs which give you the rising of the promises of God being seen through the King David. Then you have the kings selectively put together to give you the rise and the fall of the kings and then the discipline of God that takes them into the Babylonian captivity. The third set are the fathers that God laid His hand upon of the line of David to bring them back and to restore them after the Babylonian captivity, back into Israel from whom ultimately Joseph will come forward and to whom Christ will be entrusted.

So we have 14, 14, and 14 and 3x14 is 42 and the only problem is there's 41 names, not 42. Take my word for it. So how does he get 42? It is because he puts David as the fulfillment of the fathers in the first section of the genealogy and David is listed as the first of the kings in the second section of the genealogy. David does double duty as it were. Our focus is upon whom? It is

upon Abraham and his seed comes through Judah all the way to David. Then David is the first of the kings of the Royal line so David is not only the culmination of the fathers, the patriarchs but he is also the initiation of the rise and eventually the fall of the Kings. David's life we see both rise and fall and so it comes in the line of the kings.

But then something astounding, amazing takes place. In the middle of this genealogy in the ancient near East we find five women listed. Now folks, that's unheard of. One does not find women in ancient near East genealogies. Israel does stand distinct from them because Israel unlike the other life views, religions and cultures of the Middle East honored the woman. For instance, in the law of God is says, "Honor your father and your mother" which is something unheard of in the other law codes. It also says, "Don't commit adultery" that is you are to treat your spouse, your wife with respect. Those things are unheard of in that whole culture. But even then in Israel ladies could not own property, they could not bear witness in court, they had no legal rights and if you were outside of Israel a woman was not even considered a person, they were a possession. It was the audacity of Matthew to include five women in this genealogy; Ruth, Rahab, Tamar, Bathsheba whom he can't even bring himself to mention her name so he calls her the wife of Uriah and then Mary. Of these five women, if that's not scandalous enough to have women in this, four of them are Gentiles. Rahab and Tamar were Canaanites. Ruth was a Moabite and Bathsheba was a Hittite. So here are four Gentiles of which three were adulteresses. Tamar was an adulteress in the context of incest. Rahab was a prostitute and the wife of Uriah, Bathsheba, was an adulteress with David. Here this scandalous genealogy, with women, with Gentiles, these women having no legal rights whatsoever, three adulteresses, are used to affirm the birthright of Christ the King.

There are many other things in the text but I just want to give you one takeaway in conclusion. What is it that you see in this text? Here is the genealogy of Jesus Christ that announces Him as the Promised Messiah and what do we see proclaimed in this genealogy? We see God's sovereign, sure and searching grace that stands paramount. About four years ago, one of the elders of this church called me up and said, "Harry, would you come and speak to a Boy Scout meeting?" I said, "Sure, I'd be glad to." I love our Boy Scout's ministry here. It's a great ministry to see what they are doing in the lives of these young boys. He said, "Would you come speak to the leaders on leadership?" I said, "Sure." He said, "I'll pick you up." I said, "Great." He said, "We're going to go to The Club." I said, "The Club? The Boy Scouts are having a meeting at The Club?" He said, "Yeah, we're going to meet at The Club." I said, "Okay." So I get there and walk in and as I walk through the doors there are 200 men in the room. I realize that these are not Boy Scouts. They are a bunch of old men in this room. I looked around and I saw a sign that said, "Alive After Five." I realized that I had been there for five years as pastor of Briarwood. I looked a little bit closer and these men were all officers of the church. I realized this was not a Boy Scouts meeting

and I was not going to be speaking on leadership. This was a party but I wasn't sure if this was a going away party or not.

One of the things that came out of this wonderful time of fellowship was a print from an original painting that was given to me from a wonderful artist who is a member of this church. His name is Ron Lewis. I love to look at his stuff and it is all around this church. In this painting, years ago Ron took the time to put a portrait of the store front where Briarwood started and then behind it, looming up over it was the sanctuary that we now serve in as we serve the Lord here. It was just an amazing use of symbolism to speak of God's faithfulness and our responsibility. So it is now hanging in my office and you are more than welcome to by and see it anytime.

I want to close by allowing you to see what is at the forefront. This is an announcement. Jesus, born from Mary the virgin, with Joseph as His stepfather, this adopted Son of Joseph, this has clearly been announced and affirmed through the legal line as the Messiah. Step one to affirm that Jesus is the Promised Christ has been done. It is announced and affirmed in this genealogy. That stands in front of you but there's something else I don't want you to miss that is looming over this entire portrait. That is God's grace is sovereign, searching and sufficient for any and all.

A man said to me one time, "Harry, how do you say it? Is Joseph Jesus' stepfather? Is Jesus his adopted son?" I think what the genealogy is telling you is the way to look at this is not that Joseph has adopted Jesus as his son nor is Jesus the stepson and Joseph the stepfather. What the genealogy is telling you is that Jesus has adopted a father, Joseph. He has not only adopted Joseph but He has adopted this whole line. The line through which Christ comes legally didn't produce Jesus. Jesus saved and reproduced that line. When Jesus has come into this world He has not only saved and changed sinners saved by grace through which He now legally comes as the Messiah, He then victorious as King upon the cross, our Savior, now has a new line and all who are with Him in Christ are joint heirs with Him and you stand in the line of Christ who went to the cross. And who is in that line? It is the same that is in the first line, sinners saved by grace.

What does this line tell you? This line tells you that Jews can be saved. Look at all of them in the 41 that are Jews. This line tells you Gentiles can be saved. There is one Savior. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile" (Romans 1:16). See the Jews and the Gentiles by God's grace in His line. That's no accident. That is a sovereign God who went and saved a Gentile and his name was Abraham. Abraham wasn't searching for the Lord. The Lord sought out Abraham in the land of the Chaldeans and He said to him, "Leave your country and come to Me. I'll make you a nation." The Lord saved Gentile women; Tamar, Bathsheba, Ruth, Rahab. The Lord saves Jew and

Gentile and I tell you whether you are Jew or Gentile there is no other Savior but this One and you may freely come to Him. He has even embedded that announcement to you in the line through which He came.

Not only Jew or Gentile, male and female, here they are. He reached, used, saved, transformed, and changed not only Jew and Gentile, but male and female. They are His and they serve Him and they may enjoy Him. Dear friend, do you think today there is someone who is on your heart that's too far away? How far away was Abraham? Look at the two men who we focus on in this line. Who are they? They are Abraham and David, a congenital liar and a conspirator to murder, an adulterer. Don't cross anybody off. The Lord saves sinners. Abraham, a man who twice lied about his wife, put her in danger to save himself. God's grace laid hold of him. David, a man who committed adultery, by conspiracy put a man to death by putting him at the forefront of the battle. That man's name was Uriah. God saved David brought him back and claimed him for His own. Rahab, a prostitute, an incestuous adulterer and then you go beyond Rahab and Tamar and then you see Ruth, a Moabite, who couldn't even step into the Temple. God saved her and brought her into the line. Look at God's grace.

Look at the choices as He brings forth Abraham and who does the promise come through? It doesn't come through Ishmael; it comes through Isaac who came from a supernatural birth. How does the genealogy end? It ends with Jesus who came from a supernatural birth. One was a miracle which was Isaac and the other was absolutely unique which was the virgin birth. Here is Isaac and there will come a day when Abraham will have to take Isaac up to a place in putting to death as a sacrifice, but he doesn't because God provides the sacrifice. Here is Jesus at the end of the genealogy and the Father will take Him up on a hill. There won't be a lamb to take His place. He is the Lamb will substitute Himself for us that we may have everlasting life.

My friends don't cross anybody off. No one is too religious that they can't be converted. No one is too pagan that they can't be converted. No one is too addicted. Just look at this genealogy. Here is something to dispel something that is running for our culture today; "I am a victim of my genetic pool." Here is an announcement; God's grace is greater than our sin. Here is an announcement through the genealogy of our Savior; "Look, He saves sinners." He saves the immoral. He saves the religious. He saves the rich. He saves the poor. He saves men, women, Jews, Gentiles and He saves any and all will bow and say, "I'm a sinner. I need a Savior." And they put their trust in Christ alone. This line does not produce Him. He produces this line by His grace and He produces all else will come to Him.

When you get to the end of the sermon one of the things that you pray for, for weeks while you are preparing it is, "God, can you give me a good illustration for the point of the text? Help me find something to help Your people see and hang onto." This one is easy. I didn't have to go read and find an illustration. There are

41 of them listed for you. They are all sinners saved by grace, male and female, Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, immoral and religious, brought to a Savior through which the Savior comes to you. Not only don't cross anyone off, because I don't want to cross you off today. Maybe you are reading this and wondered, "How can I know the living God with all that I am and all that I've done?" This genealogy shouts to you, "Come, just as I am, come." It also shouts, "He won't leave you there." The kingdom of God is not the sexually immoral, the effeminate, the drunkard, the glutton, the murderer, the sorcerer, the liar, such were you. Come just as you are and know the joy of knowing Him. Watch what He does in you as you are put in His line of Kings forever in Christ. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. Thank You for the privilege to examine this text. God, would You speak to our hearts in this moment? Dear friend, is there someone that you have just mentally crossed off the radar of your heart's desire to tell them about Jesus? This genealogy shouts to you, "There is no one so near or far away that God's grace can't reach them." Would you even now begin to pray for them finding the way to speak of the majesty of Christ who invites them? Your steps have been ordered here for there is one Savior given by God to men and He is given to save any or all who put their trust in Him. Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. You may be saying, "Pastor, I want to come to Him." Come today. Pray this prayer; "Lord, I trust in You. You have sovereignly searched me out and brought me to You today. Today I trust in You alone for You are sufficient to save me from my sins." If you prayed that prayer I would love to give you something to help you on the first days of a new forever life in and for Christ so please contact me at Briarwood Presbyterian Church. King Jesus, praise Your name that You have come and may we come to You for Your glory, Amen.

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