

Matthew chapter 1 • Genealogy and Birth of Jesus

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Let's begin reading here in verse 1. It says,

“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.

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 (your Bible may say, exile) to Babylon.

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.” (ESV)

Yeah, thank you. I know we got through it. For those of you having babies, pick a name, any name.

Verse 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.”* Stop there.

Now, if you're one of those people, and I know they exist, they don't really like to study the Old Testament, you might get done reading the names that are listed in this genealogy and wonder what this is all about. And you wonder, of all, I mean, it's an interesting list of names and so forth, but you might be wondering what benefit is this to me? I mean, I'd rather just start getting into the action. Let's start getting into the story. These genealogies are boring.

Well, actually, they're really important. And if you knew the Old Testament and studied the Old Testament, you would know that these genealogies are predicated upon a particular promise, unconditional promise, I'll add, that was given to David related to his lineage of the Messiah. And that promise was made to David and recorded for us in the book of 2 Samuel. Let me put it on the screen for you. It goes like this. It says,

2 Samuel 7:12-13 (ESV)

When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

When your days are fulfilled (the Lord speaking here to David) *and you lie down with your fathers*, (which of course is a euphemism for death) *I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*

Now some of you might read that and say, well, now why couldn't that apply to his son Solomon because his son Solomon built a house for the Lord, the very temple there on Mount Zion.

Well, there's one element of this promise that Solomon could not be a part of and that was a kingdom that would last forever. You're going to see in a moment here, as we get further into Matthew chapter 1, that this will be referenced that Messiah's Kingdom is an ongoing kingdom, an unending kingdom.

Now the Jews always recognized this promise that we just read in 2 Samuel as a Messianic promise and therefore they knew that the one who would come as the Messiah must be of the lineage of David. That was vitally important.

And you see what Matthew is doing is, he's starting off his gospel account by proving that Jesus is in that lineage. And it records for us here in Matthew, the royal line of David through his son, Solomon, that then comes to Joseph. And you'll see here again, a little bit later in Matthew 1, how Joseph is even referred to as a son of David.

Now, some of you might be thinking now, wait a second here, pastor Paul, not too fast. There's a problem with this. Joseph wasn't really Jesus's father. How can the lineage that that is given here that relates to Joseph apply to Jesus? I think we have a problem here.

Well, no, we don't. And the reason we don't is because under Jewish law, an adopted son has the legal standing of his father in Israel. It doesn't matter if he is biologically connected or not, as long as he is adopted at least, he has all the legal rights of his father. Therefore you see, this genealogy proves that Jesus had a right to the throne of Israel from that legal position.

Now, there's another interesting element to this prophecy into this lineage and genealogy that is given here in the Book of Matthew and that is something that is mentioned in verse 11. I don't know if you caught this, but did you notice that there's a name there in verse 11, which, by the way, you might recognize again, if you study the Old Testament, and it's the name Jechoniah. Did you catch that in verse 11?

Well, Jechoniah was one of the sons of David, not immediate sons of David, but in the lineage of David. He was a king, and he was a nasty character, and a man whom God cursed. That curse is recorded for us in the Book of Jeremiah up on the screen for you so we can see it together.

Jeremiah 22:30 (ESV)

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."

Thus says (YAHWEH) the LORD: "Write this man down as childless, (referring to Jechoniah, He says,) a man who shall not succeed in his days, (look at this) for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David and ruling again in Judah."

That's the curse, you see, that was put upon Jeconiah and his lineage. That none of them would sit any longer on the throne of David, so that's what's interesting about the genealogy. Had Jesus been the biological son of Joseph, He would have been disqualified because Joseph carried on that lineage of Jeconiah.

The problem is ultimately solved by the fact that Jesus was the biological son of Mary, and with Mary, there was no such curse. In fact, We have a different lineage, genealogy that is given to us in the Book of Luke that we believe to be Mary's lineage. And that lineage also goes through the line of David, but instead of going through Solomon, it goes through a different son of David. Bypassing Jeconiah and therefore bypassing the curse that would have otherwise been on him and so forth. And so Mary didn't pass along to her children, the curse that was pronounced on Jeconiah.

Let's keep reading. Matthew goes on in verse 18 saying, *“Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.”* I'm going pause there again for a moment because there's two things I want to talk about.

First of all, it's this statement that Mary and Joseph were betrothed. You need to understand what that means because we don't have an equal to that in our culture. The closest we have is two people becoming engaged to be married, but that's a different thing.

In Israel to be betrothed was to be called husband and wife. You literally would refer to your betrothed as your spouse, even though you had not come together in marriage, you had not consummated the relationship and you were not living together, but you were betrothed. And therefore, in a very real sense, they referred to each other as husband and wife.

And here's the big deal. In order to break a betrothal, you had to get a divorce, right? I mean, in our culture, if you're going to break an engagement, you basically just have to, all you have to do is break somebody's heart. Right. I mean, you just go to the person and say, I don't want to marry you anymore. Can I have the ring back? If it's the guy, I suppose, breaking the thing. And that's it. It's done, it's over. Nobody's going to say anything about it. Say, well, they were engaged, but they broke it off.

Well, it was a big deal in Israel. I mean, you literally had to go through a divorce to break a betrothal. So you need to understand that going into it.

The second thing we need to talk about is this statement that Mary “*was found to be with child.*” And that of course means that she's starting to show. I mean, they didn't have a way of going to the doctor and having a test to find that somebody was pregnant. They just started showing. Right? You get a baby bump.

And so it says, “*she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.*” Now you'll notice Matthew doesn't explain that. He doesn't say what “*from the Holy Spirit*” means. We know how people conceive and have throughout since the beginning. But how is this conception from the Holy Spirit work?

Well, actually it's Luke who does a better job of bringing some sort of an explanation to it. Up on the screen, from Luke chapter 1, it says,

Luke 1:30-35 (ESV)

And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,

And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. (we will talk about the meaning of that in just a moment) He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,

Now there you'll notice that the angel is confirming that David's, or excuse me, Jesus is in the lineage of David. All right. Which means Mary has to be also. And he goes on to say,

Luke 1:30-35 (ESV)

and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.

and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” (she's asking the same question everybody else is) And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most

High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.

And if you know anything about the concept of being the Son of God, that means equal to God. The work of the Holy Spirit is referenced here by Luke's record as the Holy Spirit coming upon and overshadowing Mary.

And that's the best we can do because this is a supernatural explanation for what would otherwise be a natural occurrence. And again, we know how it naturally works. Supernaturally, it's the best we're going to get. Interesting here that Mary remained a virgin and yet was pregnant and with child.

So here's the question. Did Mary remain a virgin after the birth of Jesus? Of course not. She was married to Joseph and they had children. And we're going to see that actually, as we go a little bit further on in this chapter. We won't necessarily won't reference the children, but it will reference them coming together after the birth of Christ.

Continuing on here in Matthew, verse 19, *“And her husband Joseph, being a just man (your Bible may say, a righteous man) and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.”*

There's where you see they're not married yet. They're just betrothed. But it says here that he *“resolved to divorce her.”* We've already talked about that. The point I want to bring up here is that he *“resolved to divorce her quietly.”* Quietly.

And what's important about this, is that this had to have been a very difficult situation for Joseph. I mean, here's a man who's betrothed to this beautiful young girl. And as far as he, I mean, she starts to have a baby bump and he knows he hasn't been with her. And the only other possible explanation is that she's been unfaithful to him and there's been some kind of stuff going on. He knows not what and this is a very, very, hurtful situation.

And what does he do? He protects her. People, he had every right to not only expose her, but under the law to have her put to death for her fornication, or what he perceived at this time to be fornication. He had that right, but rather than taking that right, even as hurt as he was. Wounded, emotionally, as he was, he chose to protect this woman.

And I emphasize that here this morning, because that's just so opposite what we see in our culture today. When people get hurt, they want to hurt back. And

that's just the common response we've learned. We hear about it in the news. Some guy has a girlfriend and she cheats on him with another guy so he goes and he kills them both. And then he usually turns the gun on himself. Isn't that a lovely story to see on the headlines? Double murder, suicide. We're so used to it. We're so used to it. We see it in the news. We're like, oh, that's too bad. That's what people do.

Well, not Joseph. He was a righteous man. And even being wounded, his effort was to protect this young girl. That's it. That blows me away, you guys. I mean, I'm looking forward to meeting this man someday in the kingdom of God. And I'm going to shake his hand and I'm going to say, well done, mister, because that's not that's not typical human behavior. You went above and beyond.

God chose the right man to be able to deal with that sort of a burden. So he *"resolved to divorce her quietly."*

Matthew writes in verse 20. *"But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, (notice that the angel acknowledges that Joseph too is in the lineage of David) do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'"* Stop there, please, for just a moment.

Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew name, Yeshua. We also read about it in the Old Testament. The name is Joshua, same name. What's interesting though, about the naming of, this is a fairly common name. But what is so interesting about this is that the name means, the Lord is salvation and I love that.

I mean what a great name for the Son of God who had come to die on the cross for our sins. The Lord is salvation. Not just the Lord brings salvation. Not just the Lord accomplishes salvation. The Lord is salvation. He is that for you and me. Right? It's a beautiful, beautiful naming of this child.

Verse 22. And it says, *"All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:*

²³ *"Behold, the virgin shall conceive (that's talking about a miracle there and) and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel"*

(which means, God with us)."

Some people read this passage and they get confused. They're like, so just where is it in the Bible where they call him Immanuel? I don't ever remember reading that. Well, you have to understand that to take that literally as if they went around calling him Immanuel, that's incorrect.

In the Bible names were more than just a moniker, something that was given to someone in order to call them in for dinner. A name has meaning and what this meaning is, and that's what Matthew gives us, parenthetically in the text, at the end of verse 23, is the name means, "*God with us.*"

And what that means is, they shall say of Him, God is with us. That's what it literally means. Right? It's the meaning of the name that is important here. They will say of him, God is among us. God is with us. And frankly this name, Emmanuel, is a declaration of His deity and nothing less.

Verse 24. "*When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife,*" And I love that. See, that's a statement of obedience.

Once again, you're seeing the heart of Joseph. He's been hurt. He has felt betrayed. And yet when an angel appears to him and tells him, this is what's really going on and this is what I want you to do. Joseph doesn't hesitate. He's not going to stay in his pity party, even though we may want to.

Have you ever noticed that? We do. When we get hurt by someone? It's fun, isn't it just to simmer in your pity party. And you don't even want anybody to apologize because it's, I'm not done being mad.

I was telling our first service crowd that Sue and I, we've been married a long time and sometimes when we hurt each other's feelings, we have this thing, we'll go up to one another and say is it too early for me to apologize? Or maybe you're not done with feeling sorry for yourself, sort of a thing. And sometimes we'll even say, yeah, give me an hour. I'm not, which is wrong. By the way, I'm not telling you to do that. Pastor Paul said, no...

I love the fact. That Joseph responds immediately with an attitude of obedience and he just moves out to do exactly what the Lord told him to do. It says, "*he took his wife, ...*" Look at verse 25, it says, "*but knew her not* (now that's an ancient way of saying that they did not have marital relations. But for how long? Look what it goes on to say,) *until she had given birth to a son.*"

So how long did they abstain? Until after the birth of Jesus. She was a virgin. All the way, the virgin shall conceive, give birth but after that, he's married to the woman. And they're going to have relations, and they did, and they had children. And we even have a couple of books in the New Testament that were written by Jesus' half-brothers, James and Jude. So there you go.

If anybody tells you she remained a virgin perpetually, I'm sorry to burst the bubble. It's just simply not true. So, *“until she gave birth to a son (and again) And he called his name Jesus.”*

As I read through this chapter, and I was thinking about it, I was just, oh, just thinking again about Mary and Joseph and what incredible people they were to be called to this place in life to deal with this kind of stuff. They both had a lot to lose.

This was a hard road that God gave them to walk. In fact, it didn't get any easier even after this point. Even after this thing was resolved by the angel that appeared to Joseph, and they were married, and they went on, and things were hard. Things were difficult.

The journey to Bethlehem because of the taxation issue that came up, you guys know about this story, we read it every Christmas. And then even when they brought up Jesus to dedicate Him to the Lord, Mary received a prophetic word about Jesus. And one of the things that the Lord spoke prophetically to her was that a sword would pierce her heart.

And we're not even sure what that even means, except, I mean, we deduce what we think is the meaning of it. That it probably meant that she would live long enough to watch her son suffer on the cross for the sins of the world. And perhaps that was in fact, the sword that pierced her heart. We don't know. All we know is, I mean, a sword piercing your heart doesn't sound like fun.

My point here is that these two people were put through some pretty incredibly difficult circumstances and yet they were both chosen for the task. That was God's plan. That was God's purpose.

And I guess if there's one thing the story of Joseph and Mary, it teaches us is that we should never allow ourselves to believe that God's calling will never be demanding, or even dangerous. Because in our American way of interpreting the will of the Lord, sometimes we just don't think that difficulty should come with the package. I've had people say to me, pastor Paul, I'm not sure I'm doing

what the Lord wants me to do. Well, why? Well, because it's so hard. I'm going through such a hard time.

Well, what does that have to do with anything? Aren't you glad people like Jeremiah didn't take that attitude? Or the apostle Paul, when he went through a couple of shipwrecks, beatings, scourgings, and all the other things that went along with his apostolic ministry. It was hard. It was difficult and yet it was the path of the Lord. It was the path of the Lord.

Guys, like the Bible tells us, when you go through trials of many kinds, don't think that something strange is happening to you, as if this shouldn't be happening. (1 Peter 4:12) And somehow God missed the boat on this one. The plan of the Lord many times is a challenging and sometimes even a dangerous one.

But let me just tell you here, whatever path the Lord puts you on, that's the best one for you to be on. That's the one where you need to stay put because that's where God is with you. And He has promised never to leave you nor forsake you. You don't need to run away from that path. You just need to invite the Lord and surrender to the Lord to walk down that path with you. And He will, He'll take care of you. He's good at that, amen. Let's stand together. We'll close in prayer.

As we typically do here at Calvary Chapel, when we're done with our service, we'll have some folks right down front here. We call them our prayer team, and they'll be available to pray with you if you have a need. If you came in here burdened, don't walk out burdened, because you and I both have this wonderful invitation from our Savior.

He says, come to Me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I'll give you rest. For my yoke is easy, My burden is light. It doesn't mean it's not going to be challenging or dangerous, but with the power of the Lord, with the grace of God in your life, you'll make it through. He'll help you to make it through.

Father, thank You so much for our time this morning. Thank You, Lord, that we can come together and worship, sing songs of praise and adoration, and remembrance.

Thank You, Father, God, that we could enjoy celebrating a reminder of what Jesus did for us on the cross through communion.

Thank You, Lord God, for these times of prayer, for these times of study through the Word. And thank You, Father God, for these times of fellowship where we can just enjoy one another's presence.

We rejoice, Lord God, in the faithfulness that You display every time the body of Christ comes together in obedience to Your Word.

Continue, we pray, to strengthen our hearts as we walk through the path of life that You've appointed for us. We ask you to guide and direct us in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, and all God's people said together, amen.

God bless you.

Have a good rest of your day.