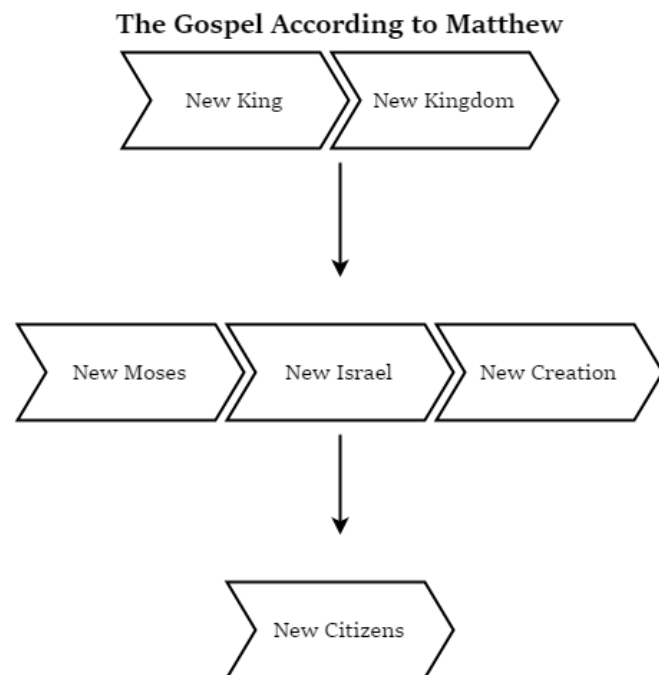


# Matthew 1

## Why a Genealogy?

“To us, a genealogy may seem a very tedious way to begin a book, and a waste of space. To the Jewish world in which Matthew belonged it was a matter of importance, as a glance at the numerous genealogies of the Old Testament makes clear. But Matthew is not merely conforming to Jewish literary convention. The way he presents his genealogy shows that it introduces several important strands into his presentation of Jesus as the Messiah...It places Jesus fully in line with the history of Old Testament Israel, as one famous name after another reminds the reader of the forward movement of God’s saving purpose.”<sup>1</sup>

## Key Themes for Matthew’s Gospel



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<sup>1</sup> R. T. France, *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 1, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 76.

# A Book of Beginnings

- Matt. 1:1, in Greek reads, “This is a book of the **genesis** (beginnings)...”
- This Greek grammatical construction closely follows the pattern of the many genealogies in Genesis.
- Matthew calls to mind the foundational stories of Genesis and gives us a hint of the **new creation** through the Messiah.

## A Jewish Story

Yeshua is championed here as the son “...of David and of Abraham.” Thus, not only emphasizing his Davidic lineage, but also his Jewishness. In other words, Matthew seeks to tell Yeshua’s story through the story of the Jewish people.

## Let’s Compare this to Luke

- Luke gives a genealogy stemming back to Adam, thus telling the story of **humanity**. (See Luke 3:23-38)

# The King of Promise

Fourteen? Why is this number important? Some of the numbers don’t add up, some names have been changed. Matthew is very aware of this and he doesn’t take you for an idiot either...instead, he is doing some very Jewish, very midrashic stuff here.

- David is the fourteenth male progenitor in the genealogy. Not only that, but David’s name equals fourteen gematria [D(4)+V(6)+D(4)=DVD(14)], thus Matthew is stamping “Davidness” all over the genealogy! He wants his audience to know that the King of Israel has come!

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{ד ו ד} = \text{ד} + \text{ו} + \text{ד} \\ \downarrow \\ 14 = 4 + 6 + 4 \end{array}$$

## The Culmination of History

By breaking up the generation into four groups (verse 17), Matthew accounts for all of Israel's history, Abraham (the founding of the nation), David (the golden age of the nation), the exile (the fall of a nation), and Messiah (the restoration of a nation).

- In the genealogies of Genesis (upon which this was modeled), a character is introduced, their story is told, and then a genealogy is given in order to introduce and give meaning to a new character or set of characters. Matthew turns this model on its head. Instead of the Jewish ancestors, or more importantly, Israel's history giving **him** meaning, Yeshua gives **them** meaning. **What God has been up to in the world, starting with restoration through Abraham, finds its culmination in Yeshua.**

- › Much like Genesis, this is not meant to be a stenographer's report, Matthew's genealogy is not **biology**, it's **theology**. He wants to communicate a message, not just a lineage.

## New Creation

Again, in verse 18, Matthew uses a design pattern straight from Genesis. The word "birth" is again the Greek word "genesis" (Strong's Greek #1078). Another allusion to Genesis, this time alongside the Holy Spirit, which is seen to bring forth life, a call-back to Genesis 1.

## A Message for the Mamzer

- In the genealogy, Matthew makes sure to include four women (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba). Not only are women uncommon in genealogies, these women are all Hamitic gentiles with scandalous pasts. Matthew wants his readers to know that in Yeshua's kingdom, there are no outsiders and there are no foreigners.
  - "All four women demonstrate intelligence, boldness and courage. As Raymond Brown writes, 'The women showed initiative or played an

**GENESIS**

Introduction

As its name implies, Genesis is about beginnings. Genesis tells us that God created everything that exists. It shows that God is both the Creator and the Ruler of all creation. But it also tells of humanity's tragic fall into sin and death, and of God's unfolding plan of redemption through his covenant with Abraham and his descendants....

**The Creation of the World**

**1** In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

**The Birth of Jesus Christ**

<sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

important role in God's plan and so came to be considered the instrument of God's providence or of His Holy Spirit.'"<sup>2</sup>

- › It also sets the stage for one more woman who would live under the shadow of scandal herself: Miriam, the mother of Yeshua.

### **Intrigue and Scandal**

- Engagement, for all intents and purposes, was the first step in a couple's marriage. A betrothed couple were already married in every sense, their bond could only be voided via divorce. At this point in the marriage, intercourse was a taboo, thus making Joseph's situation understandable, Mary has been found to be pregnant...
  - Matthew's use of "righteous" to describe Joseph in this passage is a common Jewish epithet for Torah abiding Jews. Someone that kept the letter and spirit of the Torah.
  - Verse 20 uses the Greek word "enthymēthentos" (Strong's Greek #1760) to express that Joseph not only pondered, but he was angry and upset. Perhaps could be rendered "As he **fumed** over this an angel of the Lord appeared..."
  - Miriam's punishment could have been public humiliation via a public trial, and even stoning (if the law was carried out in its rigor, which wouldn't be likely). Not only this, in the case of infidelity, the groom gets to keep the marriage gift of the bride's father, and the groom is refunded the bride price. Therefore, Joseph stood to gain financially from a public trial and still chose to spare Miriam from shame. Matthew wants you to know that **these** are the types of people that Yeshua is raised by, this is his stock.
- › In other words, the story of the Mamzer is not just Matthew's story, or our story, it's **Yeshua's** story...

Don't misunderstand, I'm not calling him a mamzer, but he and his family lived under that weight...many in his community likely didn't buy the virgin conception

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<sup>2</sup> Kenneth E. Bailey, *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 42.

story when told by Mary and Joseph, and therefore probably made some grim assumptions.

- When Yeshua teaches “Count the cost...” “Blessed are those who grieve...” “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness...” “God blesses those who are merciful...” “Pick up your cross...” these aren’t just idealistic, moral teachings...these are rooted deeply in the essence of who the man is and how he grew up. Yeshua taught these things because he himself **experienced it**. Remember, to “know” (Hebrew, “yada”) in the East is to experience.
- › If Yeshua was a mamzer, why was he a respected teacher?
- In antiquity, it’s debated what constituted the status of “mamzer.” But the virgin conception was probably not widely accepted by their friends, family, and neighbors. Even Joseph was only convinced by a dream. Yeshua was likely viewed and accused of being a mamzer.
  - There is some debate on who bore the stigma; the child or the parents. However, it was likely a little of both. Some probably looked down on him and some probably looked down on his parents, some probably thought very little of the whole family. There were also some that would have seen him as a legitimate Jew and would have commended Joseph for his righteous act of mercy and love. Opinions did and still do vary on mamzerim to this day.
    - “A mamzer who is a scholar [studies and teaches Torah] takes precedence over a High Priest who is an ignoramus.” – Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Horayot 13a

## Immanuel

The first of Matthew’s “fulfillment citations.” A direct quotation of Is. 7:14. Although the author likely has entire passages of Isaiah in view, particularly Is.

7-12 (but possibly as much as ch. 3-11) is in view here; chapters about Judah's social sins, political entanglements, judgement, and a future Davidic ruler.

- Despite how Matthew interpreted Isaiah, or what “fulfill” means in this context, the emphasis for Matthew is on the meaning of the name ***Immanuel***.

Matthew is doing something brilliant here...when the Jews returned from exile, and they began to rebuild and resettle, they still didn't feel “free.” The exile still felt like a reality, even though by all appearances they had been brought back to the land and delivered from captivity. They were out of exile but it didn't feel like it.

- This was the “wrestling match” of Yeshua's generation. They still had foreign powers oppressing them, no Davidic King on the throne, and they had no Ark of the Covenant (which, in their mind, likely meant there was an asterisk on the indwelling presence of God in the Temple). Here, Matthew wants to make it clear that in this man Yeshua the Redemption has come...really! Through the birth of Yeshua, God's presence is restored to His people and the rightful heir of David has come into the world.

Matthew brackets his gospel narrative with the pronouncement that God is with us through the birth and presence of this man Yeshua and that he is with us “...even to the end of the age.” (Matt. 28:20)

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