

Genealogy of Jesus Matthew 1:1-17

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

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. (English Standard Version – ESV)

Background:

- Ancient biographies typically began by rehearsing the noble lineage of their particular subjects. Here Jesus is connected with the history of his people from its inception.
- Jews believed Messiah would be a “son (descendant) of David,” and applied “son of Abraham” to themselves. By applying both references, Matthew underscores the fact that Jesus is Jewish.
- In Genesis, genealogies are named for the first person cited, yet Matthew’s genealogy is named for the person it reveres, which is Jesus, who is named at the beginning (v. 1) and the end (v. 16).
- Consistent with Old Testament genealogies, but in contrast to Greco-Roman genealogies like Luke, Matthew records names beginning with the oldest and moving to the most recent.

- Genealogical records of important (especially priestly) families were kept in the temple. After the temple was destroyed in A.D. 70, anyone could have claimed to be of Davidic descent, but the claim for Jesus was made before that time, when it could have been checked (Romans 1:3).
- Women did not need to be recorded in ancient genealogies, but Matthew includes four women (1:3, 5-6), three of whom are Gentile (Genesis 38:6; Josh 2:1; Ruth 1:4); the other one is either a Gentile or at least the wife of a Gentile (2 Samuel 11:3).
- Matthew omits some names, as was customary in genealogies. Creating patterns like three sets of 14 made lists easier to remember, and some scholars have argued that Matthew employs 14 generations because the numerical value of David's name in Hebrew letters is 14.

Questions:

- + Why would Matthew refer to Joseph as “the husband of Mary” in this genealogy?
- + If Jesus isn't related to Joseph by natural birth, what is the point of this genealogy?
- + Of the names in Matt. 1:1-17, which three do you regard as most significant, and why?
- + In your natural genealogy, what three people are most significant to you, and why?
- + In your spiritual genealogy, what three people are most significant to you, and why?
- + Who would you pick as a spiritual mentor, and what would you expect of him/her?