

MATTHEW

MATTHEW 1

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS *

| UBS ⁴ | NKJV | NRSV | TEV | JB |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| The Genealogy of Jesus Christ | The Genealogy of Jesus Christ | Jesus' Royal Descent | The Family Record of Jesus Christ | The Ancestry of Jesus |
| 1:1 | 1:1-17 | 1:1 | 1:1 | 1:1-16 |
| 1:2-6a | | 1:2-6a | 1:2-6a | |
| 1:6b-11 | | 1:6b-11 | 1:6b-11 | |
| 1:12-16 | | 1:12-16 | 1:12-16 | |
| 1:17 | | 1:17 | 1:17 | 1:17 |
| The Birth of Jesus Christ | Christ Born to Mary | Jesus' Birth | The Birth of Jesus Christ | The Virginal Conception of Christ |
| 1:18-25 | 1:18-25 | 1:18-25 | 1:18-21 1:22-23 1:24-25 | 1:18-25 |

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT THE PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

*Although not inspired, paragraph divisions are the key in understanding and following the original author's intent. Each modern translation has divided and summarized chapter one. Every paragraph has one central topic, truth or thought. Each version encapsulates that topic in its own distinct way. As you read the text, which translation fits your understanding of the subject and verse divisions?

In every chapter you must read the Bible first and try to identify its subjects (paragraphs). Then compare your understanding with the modern versions. Only when one understands the original author's intent by following his logic and presentation can one truly understand the Bible. Only the original author is inspired—readers have no right to change or modify the message. Bible readers do have the responsibility of applying the inspired truth to their day and their lives.

Note that all technical terms and abbreviations are explained fully in Appendices One, Two and Three.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS TO VERSES 1-25

- A. The lists of ancestors found in Matt. 1:1-17 and Lk. 3:23-38 do not agree. There are two major theories for the discrepancies:
1. Matthew wrote primarily to a Jewish audience and recorded Joseph's lineage to satisfy Jewish legal practices while Luke wrote to Gentiles and recorded Mary's lineage. Both trace Jesus back to David but Luke goes further, all the way back to Adam (probably because he was writing for Gentiles).
 2. Matthew recorded the lineage of the kings of Judah succeeding David (or after the Exile, those who would have succeeded) while Luke recorded the actual ancestors.
- B. This lineage would serve the purpose of proving Jesus' tribal identity and showing the fulfillment of prophecy (cf. Gen. 49:8-12 and II Sam. 7). Fulfilled prophecy (cf. 1:22; 2:15,17,23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 27:9,35) is strong evidence for a supernatural Bible and for God's control of history and time.
- C. Verse 17 gives the key to understanding why some ancestors are not listed. The author was using a numerically structured, three-tiered "fourteen generation" approach to Jesus' lineage.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:1

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

1:1

NASB "The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah,"

NKJV "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ"

NRSV "an account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah"

TEV "This is the family record of Jesus Christ"

JB "a record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ"

The genealogy is illustrative of God's hand in history fulfilling His promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and David. In some cultures the use of genealogy is evidence for a trustworthy history.

▣ **"the son of David"** This was a title for the promised Messiah that emphasized His Jewish royal line from the tribe of Judah (cf. Gen. 49:8-12). He was of the seed of woman, Gen. 3:15; the seed of Abraham, Gen. 22:18; seed of Judah, Gen. 49:10 and seed of David, II Sam. 7:12-16, 16. This was a common Messianic designation in Matthew (cf. 9:27; 12:33; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9,15; 22:42).

▣ **"the son of Abraham"** Luke's genealogy takes the line back to Adam. Luke was written for Gentiles, so it emphasizes the common human ancestry (cf. Gen. 12:3; 22:18). Matthew was written for Jews, so it focuses on the beginning of the Jewish family, Abram.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:2-11

²Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers. ³Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez was the father of Hezron the father of Ram. ⁴Ram was the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon. ⁵Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab, Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse. ⁶Jesse was the father of David the king. David was the father of Solomon by Bathsheba who had been the wife of Uriah. ⁷Solomon was the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa. ⁸Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah. ⁹Uzziah was the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah. ¹⁰Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon, and Amon the father of Josiah. ¹¹Josiah was the father of Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

1:2 **"Judah"** Judah was one of Jacob's children (cf. Gen. 49:10; Deut. 33:7). Verses 2-6 follow the genealogy of I Chronicles 1-3 in a limited sense.

1:3 **"Perez and Zerah"** Perez and Zerah were twins (cf. Gen. 38:27-30). The Messianic line came through Perez.

▣ **“Tamar”** Tamar was Judah’s daughter-in-law who became pregnant by him (cf. Gen. 38:12 ff). It was very unusual to include women in Jewish genealogical lists. Several are included here in Matthew to emphasize that the lineage of the Messiah was not based on nationality or meritorious effort. All four women listed—Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba—were probably Gentiles.

1:5 “Rahab” Rahab was the Canaanite prostitute who helped the spies (cf. Josh. 2:13; 6:17,23,25). In Jewish and Christian tradition Rahab was an example of the power of repentance (cf. Heb. 11:31; Jas. 2:25).

▣ **“Ruth”** Ruth was a Moabitess (cf. Ruth 1). Moabites were forbidden from entering the congregation of Israel (cf. Deut. 23:3). She exemplified the faith of Gentiles and women and God’s inclusive love.

1:6 “who had been the wife of Uriah” This referred to Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon (cf. II Sam. 11 and 12), who, like Rahab and Ruth, was not Jewish.

1:7

NASB, NKJV,

TEV, JB

“Asa”

NRSV

“Asaph”

This Judean king was named Asa in I Kgs. 15:9 and I Chr. 3:10. The early uncial Greek manuscripts **ℵ**, B & C have “Asaph.” This was the name of a choir director of David (cf. Ps. 50,73,83). Most textual critics assume that this is an ancient copyist error.

1:8 Three Judean kings between Joram and Uzziah are omitted (1) Ahaziah (cf. II Kgs. 8,9; II Chr. 22); (2) Joash (cf. II Kgs. 11:2; 12:19-21; II Chr. 24); and (3) Amaziah (cf. II Kgs. 14; II Chr. 25).

The reason for their omission is uncertain. Two theories are: (1) Joram was married to and influenced by his wife Athaliah, the daughter of Jezebel and, therefore, his sin of idolatry was transmitted to the third generation (cf. Deut. 5:9); or (2) Matthew is structuring the genealogy into three sections of 14 ancestors each (v. 17). This would be the middle section.

1:9 “Uzziah was born to Jotham” In II Kgs. 15:1-7 and I Chr. 3:12 Uzziah is called Azariah. He was a godly king who was struck with leprosy because he offered a sacrifice.

1:10 “Hezekiah” Hezekiah was one of the five godly kings of Judah (Asa, Jehoshaphat, Uzziah, Hezekiah, and Josiah). His life is recorded in II Kgs. 18-20, II Chr. 29-32, and Isa. 36-39.

▣ **“Manasseh”** He was the son of Hezekiah. Manasseh was reputed to be the most evil king in Judah’s history (cf. II Kgs. 21:2-7). He also reigned the longest, fifty five years (cf. II Kgs. 21; II Chr. 33).

▣ **“Amon”** He was the son of Manasseh and father of Josiah (cf. II Kgs. 21:18-19,23-25; I Chr. 3:14; II Chr. 33:20-25). Some early uncial Greek manuscripts, **ℵ**, B^c and C, have the name, “Amos.” This manuscript problem is much like v. 7.

▣ **“Josiah”** Another godly king of Judah, Josiah was eight years old when he became king (cf. II Kgs. 22-23; II Chr. 34,35). Many scholars believe that the righteous father, the wicked son of the righteous father, and the righteous son of the wicked father in Ezekiel (cf. 18:5-9, 10-13, 14-18) were direct references to Hezekiah, Manasseh, and Josiah.

1:11 “Jeconiah” He was also called Coniah (cf. Jer. 22:24) and Jehoiachin. The next to last Davidic king before the Babylonian captivity, Jeconiah was 13 years old when he ascended the throne and reigned only three months (cf. I Chr. 3:16-17; Jer. 24:1; 29:2). Ezekiel dates his prophecies from the year of this king’s exile by Nebuchadnezzar II in 597 BC: (cf. 1:1,2; 8:1; 20:1; 24:1; 26:1; 29:1; 30:20; 31:1; 32:1,17; 33:21; 40:1).

▣ **“deportation to Babylon”** This deportation occurred under Nebuchadnezzar II. Jerusalem was captured by the army of Babylon several times—in 605, 597, 586, and 582 B.C. Several different deportations occurred: (1) deportation of Daniel and his three friends in 605 B.C.; (2) the deportation of Jehoiachin, Ezekiel, and ten thousand soldiers and craftsmen in 597 B.C. (cf. I Kgs. 24:10-17); (3) the deportation of most of the remaining population (the city of Jerusalem was destroyed) in 587/586 B.C., II Kgs. 25; and (4) the final invasion and deportation of Judah in 582 B.C. in retaliation for the killing of Nebuchadnezzar’s appointed governor, Gedeliah and his Babylonian honor guard.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:12-16

¹²After the deportation to Babylon, Jeconiah became the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel.

¹³Zerubbabel was the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor. ¹⁴Azor was the father of Zadok, Zadok the father

of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud. ¹⁵Eliud was the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob. ¹⁶Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.

1:12 “and to Shealtiel, Zerubbabel” Zerubbabel was the leader of the Jews in the second return from Babylonian exile, the first return being under Sheshbazzar (cf. Ezra 1:8; 5:14). He was of the line of David (cf. Ezra 2-6). In I Chr. 3:16-19, his father is listed as Pedaiah and his grandfather as Shealtiel. Hebrew familial terms were fluid and could refer to several different categories of relatives. In this case, Shealtiel was an uncle. This confusion could be explained if Shealtiel adopted Zerubbabel after his father Pedaiah died (cf. Ezra 3:8; 5:2; Neh. 12:1; Hag. 1:1).

These two names also appear in the Lucan genealogy but in a much later period.

1:14 “Zadok” This was not the faithful priest of David’s day (cf. II Sam. 20:25; I Chr. 16:39) because Matthew’s Zadok is of the tribe of Judah, not Levi.

1:16 “Joseph the husband of Mary” “Begot,” which is so prominent in this listing of the other fathers, is left out! Joseph is named as the legal father and his lineage given because this was what the Jews of the first century legally required and recognized. But he was not the true biological father.

▣ **“who is called the Messiah”** “Christ” was the Greek translation of the Hebrew term *Messiah*, meaning “an anointed one.” Jesus was YHWH’s special Servant (cf. Isa. 52:13-53:12), the Coming One, who would establish the new age of righteousness (cf. Isa. 61, 65-66).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:17

¹⁷So 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.

1:17 “generations” This was not a complete historical genealogy. The Hebrew term “generations” was ambiguous and could have meant grandfather or great-great-grandfather or ancestor.

▣ **“from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations”** There are three sections of fourteen ancestors listed (1) Abraham to David, (2) David to the Exile, and (3) the Exile to Jesus. Only thirteen names are listed in the third section, so possibly Jehoiachin is counted in both the second and third sections. The number pattern implies that some names were left out (cf. I Chr. 1-3). Some commentators believe that these structured lists of fourteen are based on the numerical value of the consonants of David’s name in Hebrew (*daleth*, 4 + *waw*, 6 + *daleth*, 4 = 14).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:18-25

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, wanted to send her away secretly. ²⁰But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” ²²Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³“BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL,” which translated means, “GOD WITH US.” ²⁴And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, ²⁵ but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

1:18 “the birth” There is a Greek manuscript variant between “beginning” [*genesis*] and “birth” [*gennasis*]. The term *genesis* was original (cf. MSS P¹, N, B, C). While both terms can mean “birth,” the first had wider connotations (creation, generation) and could have meant “begotten.” It has been supposed that later scribes changed the first term to “birth” deliberately to counteract later Christological (gnostic) heresies (cf. *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture* by Bart P. Ehrman, pp. 75-77).

▣ **“betrothed to Joseph”** Betrothal was a legally binding Jewish custom, usually lasting about a year before marriage. The parties lived separately but were considered contractually married. Only death or divorce could break the betrothal arrangement.



NASB “she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit”
NKJV “she was found with child of the Holy Spirit”
NRSV “she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit”
TEV “she was going to have a baby by the Holy Spirit”
JB “she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit”

This refers to the virgin birth, which was not a sexual experience for Mary or the Spirit. This was a prophetic fulfillment of Gen. 3:15 (“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel”), and in a multiple fulfillment sense, of Isa. 7:14 (“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel”). Surprisingly, no apostolic sermons in Acts or the Epistles mention this, possibly because it could have been confused with Greco-Roman mythology.

1:19 “being a righteous man” A “righteous man” meant a lawful man by the standards of the Mosaic Law and the oral traditions of his day. It does not imply sinlessness; Noah and Job were righteous in the same sense (cf. Gen. 6:9 and Job 1:1).



“to send her away secretly” Joseph could have accomplished this through two legal procedures: (1) open renunciation in court; or (2) the presentation of a written bill of divorce in front of two witnesses (cf. Deut. 24). Mary had not shared the vision concerning her pregnancy with Joseph. OT Law demanded the death penalty for sexual unfaithfulness (cf. Deut. 22:20-21).

1:20 Joseph was informed about his pregnant betrothed wife by an angelic messenger. In Lk. 1:26 the angel is identified as Gabriel (cf. 1:19; Dan. 8:16; 9:21).

1:21 “you shall call His name Jesus,” This name meant “YHWH saves,” “YHWH brings salvation” or “YHWH is Savior.” (Some verb must be supplied). The Hebrew term *YHWH*, from the CAUSATIVE form of the verb “to be,” is the covenant name for the God of Israel, revealed to Moses in Ex. 3:14. The Hebrew prophet Hosea’s name means “salvation” or “saves.” Jesus is the same Hebrew name as “Joshua.”

1:23 “virgin” This is a quotation of Isa. 7:14 from the Septuagint. In Isaiah the Hebrew word used was *almah*, meaning a “chaste young woman of marriageable age.” Only one virgin birth has ever occurred, not two; therefore, the historical fulfillment in Isaiah’s day was a sign to Ahaz, but not an impregnation by the Holy Spirit. This is an example of a multiple fulfillment of prophecy.



NASB, NKJV “Immanuel”
NRSV, TEV “Emmanuel”
JB “God-is-with-us”

Immanuel meant “God with us.” This shows that the OT passage pointed beyond its own day. Isaiah 7-11 ultimately referred to incarnate Deity (cf. Isa. 9:6), Jesus of Nazareth (cf. Isa. 9:1-2; 11:1-5). However, it must be remembered that the Jews did not expect the Messiah to be divine. They would have seen these powerful names as metaphors. It is not until the NT that the Messiah as God Incarnate was clearly revealed.

1:24-25 These verses reaffirm a truly supernatural virgin birth. They also imply that the couple had a normal married life after the birth of Jesus. The Textus Receptus, following the Greek uncial manuscripts C and D*, adds “her firstborn son.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. Why does Matthew have such a lengthy genealogy?
2. Why is Luke's genealogy different from Matthew's?
3. Did Isaiah predict a virgin birth in his own time?