

Notes for Matthew - Introduction and Chapter 1 (Page 1 of 6)

Introduction Part 1 - What was Matthew's purpose for writing this book?

1. Matthew's purpose for writing this book was to convince people that Jesus is the promised king to the Nation of Israel.
2. For the most part, Jesus has already been rejected by the Jewish nation by the time this book was written roughly thirty years after Jesus death and resurrection.
3. The word "Messiah" is the Hebrew word for "king". Although the Nation of Israel had many kings in their history, "the" Messiah would be one who would rule forever.
 - a. The word "Christ" is from the Latin "Kristos"; it also means "king".
4. Another problem for Matthew is he had to change people's pre-conceived notion of just what is the Messiah as much as who the Messiah.
5. The Jews were expecting the Messiah to rule and reign from Israel and overthrow the Roman Government.
 - a. There are passages in the Old Testament that clearly speak of a ruling Messiah.
 - b. This is a future event where Jesus will rule and reign from Israel (see Rev. 20)
6. Matthew shows through this Gospel that Jesus is the promised Messiah because he fulfilled all the Old Testament predictions made about Jesus over the centuries.
 - a. The most common expression in Matthew is "as it was written".
7. First Matthew wanted to show Jesus is the Messiah via the Old Testament messianic predictions.
 - a. Then he could explain the purpose of the Messiah to pay the price for everyone's sin.
 - b. Then Matthew could explain that there will be a coming day when the Messiah would fulfill the Jewish's expectations of a ruling king.
8. Matthew is out to change people's preconceived notion of who is Jesus.
 - a. By studying Matthew we ourselves can get clear out any false notions we might have about the purpose of Jesus' ministry.

Introduction Part 2 - Who is Matthew?

1. Matthew is one of the 12 apostles. He is also known as Levi (Mark 2:14, Luke 3:24, et.al.).
 - a. The name Matthew means "gift from God". We don't know how/when he was renamed.
2. Before becoming an apostle, he was a tax collector for the Roman Government.
 - a. He was also a Jew by birth. He "sold out" to the Romans to be a tax collector.
 - b. He was an outcast in exchange for the financial reward of working for the Romans.
 - c. Being a tax collector, he was probably not very religious.
 - d. I suspect (but can't prove) he had to learn the Old Testament after becoming a disciple.
 - e. Being a tax collector, he probably knew Roman shorthand. He may have transcribed Jesus' sermons. Matthew quotes Jesus more than any of the four gospels.
3. Matthew gave up his occupation (and his income) as a tax collector to follow Jesus.
 - a. To follow Jesus meant to be an outcast by the Jewish nation. If anyone understood what it was like to be an outcast, an outsider, and one who gives up everything to follow Jesus, Matthew would be the guy.
 - b. For us to follow Jesus, we must be willing to give up everything to follow Jesus. For many in the world, that meant their standard of living, their friends, and often their lives.
 - c. That is an example of what Jesus meant by the statement:
 - i. "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters – yes, even his own life – he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:26 NIV)
 - ii. Jesus is not saying you have to hate your family. It is about trusting Jesus more than the love you have for anyone or anything else.

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Introduction Part 3 – Overview of Chapter 1 – The genealogy of Jesus the Christ (“Promised Messiah”)

1. Verses 1-17 focus on a genealogy of Jesus from King David to Jesus.
2. Verses 18-24 tell the story of the virgin birth. We’ll discuss this later.
3. The genealogy focuses on Jesus “step-father” Joseph and his lineage to King David.
 - a. Jesus was also a descendant of King David through his mother Mary.
 - b. Mary’s parents/grandparents, etc. were not kings, just descendants of King David.
 - c. Joseph is a direct descendant of the line-of-kings mentioned in 1st and 2nd Kings.
 - d. Matthew focuses on Joseph’s ancestors to show how Jesus is a direct descendant of the king. It is Jesus “royal blood line” from King David down to Jesus.
4. If Jesus is “adopted” by Joseph, how does that make him a king? Good question! ☺
 - a. In Numbers 36 is the story of the daughters of Zelophehad.
 - i. In summary, God commanded through Moses that when Jewish woman is to marry, she is to marry within the same (1 of the 12) tribe.
This way, the inheritance of her family stays in the territory of that same tribe.
 - ii. That section implies the idea of adoption as well. When a Jewish man takes a wife from the same tribe, one takes all of her “possessions” with him and it is a part of him. In summary, Jesus becomes “part” of Joseph’s family by adoption.
 - b. Remember that we as Christians are also adopted into God’s family.
 - i. “But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we (Gentiles) might receive the adoption as sons. (Galatians 4:4-5, NKJV).
5. When you understand the background of the people listed in this genealogy you begin to realize how embarrassing this list actually is.
 - a. This list of people includes stories of adultery, incense, murder, cheating, and idolatry in the worse form. Their isn’t a commandment of the Old Testament that isn’t broken somewhere in this line. Yet, God choose them to bring Jesus in the world. Why?
 - i. God allowed some rotten people to be part of the line of the Messiah. This way, no one can brag about their accomplishments other than what God has accomplished through them. You and I are no better!
 - ii. “He (God) chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things – and the things that are not – to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. (1st Corinthians 1:28- 29, NIV).

Chapter 1 Verse 1: A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham.

1. Remember this is the opening sentence of the New Testament.
2. If you have to pick the two most famous people in the history of the Jews, these two are it.
3. Let’s talk about why Matthew chose to mention Jesus as the “Son of Abraham”.
 - a. The LORD said to Abram ... “Lift up your eyes from where you are (in Israel) and look north and south, east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.” (Genesis 13:14-15, NIV)
 - i. Abram was later renamed Abraham by God. (Genesis 17:5)
 - b. The text in Genesis does not say, “I’ll give you this land if you are a good person”. It does not say, “You get this land only if your children accept the Messiah”. It says this land belongs to you and your descendants forever and unconditionally.
 - c. The point here is simply that God called Abram (Abraham) to “be the first Jew”. God picked Abraham to start a nation so that this nation can be a witness (ambassadors) for God to the surrounding world.

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Verse 1: A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham. (Cont.)

1. Let's talk about why Matthew chose to mention Jesus as the "Son of David".
 - a. "The LORD declares to you (David) that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." (2nd Samuel 7:11b-13, NIV)
 - b. The temporary fulfillment was his (direct-immediate) son Solomon. He built a temple. This does not fit this prophecy because 1) Solomon did not live forever and 2) That temple was eventually destroyed. Again, "forever" means just that, "forever".
 - c. Jesus said of a different temple standing in his day "'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.'" (John 2:19b, NIV)
2. The term "Son of David" is a title that religious Jews associate with the Messiah to come.
3. Right now, Jesus is sitting on the right hand of God-The-Father (e.g., see Matthew 26:64).
4. Jesus will return to sit on "David's Throne" (Luke 1:32). That is part of Jesus' 2nd coming.

Verse 2: Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,

1. The emphasis here is strictly on the direct descendants from Abraham to Jesus.
2. For example, nothing is mentioned of Abraham having another son by his maidservant Hagar.
3. Jacob's brothers get a brief mention, only because those 12 brothers began the 12 tribes of which the Israelites were later divided.
4. The emphasis of this whole genealogy can be summarized by the statement "God's promises come true". God made a promise that the descendants of the 12 sons of Jacob inherit the Promised Land (Israel) and therefore, I believe that little tidbit was included for that reason.
5. Judah was one of the 12 sons of Jacob. He wasn't the oldest, nor was he his father's favorite.
 - a. He was simply picked by God among the 12 to carry on the Messianic line.

Verses 3-4: Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, ⁴ Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon,

1. Judah had a daughter-in-law named Tamar. Judah's son, (her husband) died.
2. Tamar, who didn't have any children, disguised herself as a prostitute and had sexual relations with her father-in-law Judah to produce the twins Perez and Zerah. The whole story is told in Genesis Chapter 38.
3. This is one example that Matthew "snuck" in the story simply to show that God's plan to have a descendant of Abraham, via David led to the Messiah. God's will got accomplished in the strangest of fashions!

Verse 5: Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife,

1. Matthew went out of his way in Verse 5 to mention that Boaz' mother was Rahab.
2. Rahab is a prostitute mentioned in Joshua Chapters 2 and 6. She lived in Jericho and was part of a city that God ordered the Israelites to destroy as punishment for centuries of idolatry.
3. When the Israelites first spied out the land, Rahab helped the Jewish spies by lying to the leaders of Jericho and saving the lives of the spies.
4. The fact that God used a lying prostitute is a good sign that God can use anyone. ☺
5. The information about the genealogy from Boaz to David comes from Ruth Chapter 4.

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Verse 5-6 (cont.)

1. The other little “dig” that Matthew snuck in here is about King David.
2. Of all the things written about David, the one fact Matthew chooses to mention is David having an affair with Bathshiba. Bathshiba got pregnant from David, and David had her husband Uriah murdered to cover the event. (See 2nd Samuel Chapters 11-12).
3. God’s plans get accomplished even through the mistakes man has made.
4. It doesn’t excuse those mistakes; it just shows that God uses those events for the greater good.

Verses 7-11: Solomon the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asa, ⁸Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram, Jehoram the father of Uzziah, ⁹Uzziah the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, ¹⁰Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon, Amon the father of Josiah, ¹¹ and Josiah the father of Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.

1. In four verses, we have all the kings of Israel from Solomon (a son of David) all the way until the time the Nation of Israel went into captivity.
2. To be technical, after Solomon, beginning with his son Rehoboam, Israel split into two nations, with the Northern alliance calling themselves “Israel” (the capital was Samaria) and the Southern Alliance calling themselves “Judah”. The kings of Judah are those listed here.
3. Most of these kings described here were wicked idolaters. Other than a few good exceptions (e.g., Hezekiah, Josiah), most of these guys were bad news.
4. By the time we get to Jeconiah, it is so bad, God put a curse on Jeconiah through Jeremiah:
 - a. This is what the LORD says: “Record this man (Jeconiah) as if childless, a man who will not prosper in his lifetime, for none of his offspring will prosper, none will sit on the throne of David or rule anymore in Judah.” (Jeremiah 22:30, NIV)
 - b. This curse given by Jeremiah means that no descendant of Jeconiah will be the Messiah.
 - c. God “got around that problem” by the virgin birth.
 - d. There is a hint in the Old Testament that the Messiah would be both born and adopted:
 1. “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.” (Isaiah 9:6 NIV)
 2. Notice the first phrase says, “a child is born”, which describes physical birth.
 3. The second phrase says a “son is given” implies a “gift”, not a physical birth.
 4. Jesus can be both a “gift” (Joseph’s perspective) and a birth (Mary’s perspective).

Verses 12-16: After the exile to Babylon: Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, ¹³ Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, Abiud the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor, ¹⁴ Azor the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Akim, Akim the father of Eliud, ¹⁵ Eliud the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob, ¹⁶ and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

1. The Israelites were conquered by the Babylonians and “kicked out” of Israel for 70 years.
2. The Babylonians were conquered by the Medo-Persians, who permitted Jews to return to Israel.
3. Just when Jesus’ ancestors returned to Israel is a mystery.
4. The first century Jews were meticulous record keepers. Even the historian Josephus (a non-Christian Jew, first century) wrote about how the Jews kept records of their ancestry.
5. One reason they did this was because the Jews were looking for a Messiah. They knew that whoever the Messiah was, would be a descendant of David. Therefore, they kept very good records of David’s descendants.
6. In 70AD, all records were destroyed. No Jew from 70AD can prove they are a Son of David.

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Verse 17: Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.

1. Matthew sums up Verses 1-16 by stating there are 14 “generations” in each of the major sections of the history of Israel:
 - a. Section 1 is Abraham to David.
 - b. Section 2 is David to “Captivity Time” (when the Israelites were taken to Babylon).
 - c. Section 3 is “End of Captivity Time to Jesus’ birth”.
2. What is so significant about “14 generations”.
 - a. We don’t know. Matthew does not state the reason, so it is all speculation.
 - b. The majority opinion among the commentators is that Matthew was a “mystic”.
 - c. He wanted to show how God worked in patterns of fourteen’s (14’s).
 - d. In Hebrew, every letter represents a number. It is as if to say, “A=1, B=2, C=3, etc.) You can add up the number value of any Hebrew word and get a total number.
 - e. The word for “David” has the numerical value of “14”
 - i. The Hebrew letter “Daleth” (a “D”) is the 4th Letter
 - ii. The Hebrew letter “Waw” (roughly a “V”) is the 6th Letter
 - iii. Therefore “D”+“V”+“D” is 4+6+4 = 14. (There are no vowels in Hebrew.)
3. Critics of the Bible like to point out the inaccuracies with the patterns of “14’s”.
 - a. For example, if you look carefully, there are 13 names (i.e., 13 generations) listed from the Babylonian captivity to Jesus. How does Matthew get “14” when there are only 13 generations listed?
 - b. “Jeconiah is counted in both lists, since he lived both before and after the captivity. So, there are literally 14 names listed “from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ,” just as Matthew says.” (Geisler, N.L., & Howe, T. A. 1992. From the book “When critics ask, a popular handbook on Bible difficulties. Victor Books”)

Verses 18-19: This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

1. Matthew gives a brief account of this story. Luke’s Gospel gives many more details.
2. Matthew’s purpose is to show Jesus as the Messiah, not to write a detailed history of Jesus’ life.
3. I always thought Joseph never gets enough credit during Christmas pageants. ☺
 - a. He had a good balance of Jewish righteousness (keeping the law) and mercy.
 - b. He wanted to keep the law by quietly divorcing Mary and at the same time having mercy by not making a big deal about it.
 1. The “law” to marry only a virgin is implied by Deuteronomy 22:23-24.
 - c. That’s a good balance for us as Christians. We are asked to be in obedience to Christ, but God also wants us to be a good witness to the outside world.

Verses 20-21: But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

1. Notice in Verse 21 is that the purpose of Jesus being born in this world is to “save his people from their sins”. It doesn’t say that he came to be a “great teacher” or some other limited role.
2. It said, “While he (Joseph) was considering this, an angel of the Lord appeared...”
3. That means that God reads our thoughts. It is a support of silent prayer.

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Verses 20-21: (cont.)

4. I love the fact that Joseph was called "Son of David".
 - a. Remember Joseph was part of the "cursed blood-line" of Jeconiah.
 - b. I am sure everyone of his family was aware they would never be the father of the Messiah.
 - c. You can see the grace of God in that verse alone when Joseph is called "The Son of David".
 - d. It is a reminder to us that despite our family heritage and our shortcomings, we can still be used by God for great things.
5. Joseph understood this was a dream from God and obeyed. That is the key point.
 1. Does God still speak to us today through dreams? This is another classic Christian debate.
 - a. Most conservative Christians argue no, because today we have God's word and we don't need dreams for direct revelation.
 - b. Others argue "God can do anything he wants, and if He wants to talk to us in a dream, who are we to say no."
 2. How did Matthew know all of this? Maybe Jesus told him, or Mary herself.

Verses 22-23: All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" --which means, "God with us."²⁴ (Matthew is quoting Isaiah 7:14 in Verse 23)

1. Let's discuss the classic "Christian vs. Jewish" debate on Isaiah 7:14
2. Modern Jews argue: "In the surrounding text of Isaiah Chapter 7, Isaiah was making a prediction to King Ahaz. Isaiah said that before this "son" is born, the king's enemies would be wiped out. Isaiah then had a son who was born after the king's enemies of the moments were killed.
3. Bible prophecy often has double-fulfillment.
4. There is a short-term fulfillment to validate the prophet (Isaiah) as speaking from God.
5. There is often a long-term fulfillment of the same prophecy tied to the Messiah.
6. Religious Jews will correctly argue that the Hebrew word "almah" can mean either a virgin or maiden. One can translate Isaiah 7:14 as saying "a maiden will give birth".
7. The problem with that interpretation is that "a maiden giving birth" is not a sign-from-God. I can go to any maternity ward of a hospital and predict, "A young maiden is about to give birth. That is not impressive. But, if I say a virgin will give birth, that is a sign from God!
8. Roughly two hundred years before Jesus was born, the leading rabbi's of Israel translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek, the common language of the day. In that translation, known as the Septuagint, the rabbi's used the Greek word "parthenos". The word "parthenos" definitely means virgin. Therefore, the Jews of that day thought Isaiah meant "virgin".
9. If you see a English translation of the Bible that uses the word "maiden" instead of "virgin" in the Old Testament (such as the NRSV translation) it may be literally correct, but is wrong in the intent of the author.

Verses 24-25: When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵ But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

1. Verse 25 is problem for the Roman Catholic view of the "perpetual virginity" of Mary.
 - a. One of the key words to notice in verse 25 is the word "until".
 - b. The word "union" is a polite word for sexual intercourse.
2. Mary went on to have at least five children after Jesus. Two of them became followers of Jesus after the resurrection and wrote epistles (James & John).
 - a. "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren't all his sisters with us? (Matthew 13:55-56, NIV)