

1 Book of the origin of the Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham.

2 Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob begat Judah and his brothers, 3 and Judah begat Perez and Zerah *by Tamar*, and Perez begat Hezron, and Hezron begat Aram, 4 and Aram begat Aminadab, and Aminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon, 5 and Salmon begat Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz begat Obed *by Ruth*, and Obed begat Jesse, 6 and Jesse begat King David.

And David begat Solomon *by the wife of Uriah*, 7 and Solomon begat Rehoboam, and Rehoboam begat Abijah, and Abijah begat Asaph, 8 and Asaph begat Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat begat Joram, and Joram begat Uzziah, 9 and Uzziah begat Jotham, and Jotham begat Ahaz, and Ahaz begat Hezekiah, 10 and Hezekiah begat Manasseh, and Manasseh begat Amos, and Amos begat Josiah, 11 and Josiah begat Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the **deportation to Babylon**.

12 And after the **deportation to Babylon**: Jechoniah begat Salathiel, and Salathiel begat Zerubbabel, 13 and Zerubbabel begat Abiud, and Abiud begat Eliakim, and Eliakim begat Azor, 14 and Azor begat Zadok, and Zadok begat Achim, and Achim begat Eliud, 15 and Eliud begat Eleazar, and Eleazar begat Matthan, and Matthan begat Jacob, 16 and Jacob begat Joseph the husband of *Mary*, of whom Jesus was begotten, who is called the Christ.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the **deportation to Babylon**, fourteen generations; and from the **deportation to Babylon** to the Christ, fourteen generations.

Reading Notes:

A. Genealogies are social and political statements.¹ Imperial, royal and familial genealogies begin with the current emperor, monarch or nobleman and work backwards through illustrious male ancestors to the founder of the dynasty – an ascending genealogy.

The genealogy of Jesus Christ is more complex

After a brief ascending genealogy in first verse – Jesus, son of David, son of Abraham – there is a long descending genealogy – from Abraham through all the generations to Jesus.

Many rules are broken:

- No primogeniture – first sons or even the best sons don't always succeed.
- Male & female figures – some surprising inclusions, some surprising omissions.
- Five women included – Gentiles or married to a Gentile.
- Glorious periods of history not included – instead deportation and exile to Babylon.
- A counter cultural genealogy for the evangelist's times and for our time – Jesus Christ comes with an unexpected introduction – how will his story unfold for us today?

¹ Warren Carter, "Matthew 1-2 and Roman Political Power," In Jeremy Corley, *New Perspectives on the Nativity* (London; New York: T & T Clark International 2009): 79-81.

B. Polyvalence of “genesis”: origin/birth/genealogy/genesis/begetting (Gen 2:4 heaven & earth; 5:1 family of Adam). Whose story is so important that it might be compared to the creation of the world and the family of humanity that inhabits it? Genesis is also the title of first book of the Greek version of the Old Testament: “What had been the foundational history of the people of Israel has now become the prehistory of a new foundational story, the new book of Genesis of Jesus Christ (1:1)”. Ulrich Luz

C. Translation – *X begat Y* (KJV) not *X was the father of Y* (ESV; NRSV) – ‘begetting’ not limited to males! Also shorter form preserves cadence and rhythm of genealogy.

D. Keys to Reading the Genealogy – notice the gaps and hiatuses!

1. Old Testament time arranged in 7s (Sabbath; Feasts). So, 3 x 14, or 6 x 7 generations, now at the beginning of the series of 7 x 7 generations = **Jubilee** (debts are remitted; liberation of those enslaved; land restored to ancestral owners (Lev 25). Mathematical study of the genealogy – neither the imperial nor the metric system, but the biblical system – sabbaths (7), feasts of weeks (7x7), jubilees (7x7). “Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day” (Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15).

2. Brothers mentioned only twice in the genealogy.²

2.1 Judah and his brothers – time of promise of land, progeny and prosperity.

2.2 Jechoniah and his brothers – time of deportation & exile.

3. Only event mentioned in genealogy is **deportation** to Babylon.³ There is no mention of a return. The deportation lasted 50 years. The coming jubilee may herald liberation and return.

4. Five women (Tamar [Gen 38], Rahab [Josh 2], Ruth [Ruth 1-4] wife of Uriah the Hittite [2 Sam 11-12; 1 Kings 1], Mary) & **their consorts**.⁴

5. Numbers

5.1 Three sets of 14 generations but only 13 in first and third sets!

5.2 Numerical value of David – D+W+D (4+6+4) =14

5.3 Five mentions of David in the genealogy – key hinge figure – key of David!

6. Missing in action

6.1 Missing matriarchs – Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel

6.2 Missing kings – Joram did not beget Uzziah – loss of 3 intervening kings (Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah) – Joram marries Athaliah, daughter of Ahab (curse on Ahab 1Kings 21:21-24) also implements the curse on the house of Ahab in Judah. Josiah did not beget Jechoniah and his brothers

7. Missing generations

7.1 Does Matthew get his sums wrong? Symbolic purpose of numbers – but why short?

7.2 The mysterious work of the Holy Spirit – the missing generation.⁵

What might this say about salvation? What might this invite readers of Matthew to do?

7.3 Genealogy – a hymn of praise to God for the glorious reach of salvation: *Te Deum laudamus*

² John Nolland, “Jechoniah and His Brothers (Matthew 1:11).” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 7 (1997): 169–77.

³ Nicholas G. Piotrowski, “‘After the Deportation’: Observations in Matthew’s Apocalyptic Genealogy.” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 25 (2015): 189–203.

⁴ Sébastien Doane, “Masculinities of the Husbands in the Genealogy of Jesus (Matt. 1:2-16).” *Biblical Interpretation* 27 (2019): 91–106.

⁵ Brian M. Nolan, *The Royal Son of God: The Christology of Matthew 1-2 in the Setting of the Gospel*. (Fribourg, Switzerland / Göttingen, Germany: Éditions Universitaires / Vandenhoeck Ruprecht, 1979) 223.