

1. **Brief introduction to Matthew**
2. **Jesus Christ, the message of the Old Testament**
3. **The genealogy itself**

1. **Brief introduction to Matthew**

Introduction: The Gospel according to Matthew is the very first book of the New Testament. The genealogy appears here first because this document we call the Gospel according to Matthew had in mind primarily a Jewish audience. There are at least 40 formal citations of the Old Testament in this gospel – more than the other three gospels individually: Mark, Luke, and John. Showing the Jewish people how Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Messiah – prophesied and foretold by the OT prophets is one of the book’s major burdens.

Authorship – It is important for Christians today to understand that all 4 of the gospels are normally considered to be anonymous documents. In other words, the authors never explicitly identify themselves in the text itself. However, it needs to be understood that in the case of Matthew, the attaching of the phrase “according to Matthew” at the top of the first page was *universal* in the 2nd century. In fact, at the top of each gospel on the original manuscripts, they all read: *kata matthaion, kata markon, kata lukan, kata ioannen* – i.e. “according to Matthew, according to Mark, according to Luke, according to John.” With that in mind, it is not entirely accurate to say that they are *anonymous* documents – had they been truly anonymous, by the time of the second century, we’d probably have a whole slew of potential authors to be deciding between.

Illustration: Years ago I listened to the testimony of a Jewish man who became a believer in Jesus Christ shortly after he started reading the New Testament. He tells the story of how this very first verse struck him deeply:

Matthew 1:1 “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.” All his life he had thought of Christianity as a movement that was somehow unrelated to the Old Testament Scriptures. And here, in the very first words of the very first verse in the very first book of the New Testament, he saw clearly that the writer was attempting to demonstrate that the person of Jesus Christ was not only rooted in the Old Testament, but He was the major message and thrust of everything promised in it. He was immediately captivated by the gospel of Matthew because of its heavy reliance upon the use of the Old Testament.

2. **Jesus Christ, the message of the Old Testament**

The Unity of the Bible in the mind of Jesus – If we take up the Bible and start reading it at Matthew 1:1, that’s like taking up a novel and starting 2/3 of the way into it. It is the Old Testament that spoke of the Lord Jesus and foresaw His coming into the world. It is a sad phenomenon in our day that for the last 150 years or so, many Christians have lived their lives wondering why the first 2/3rds of their Bibles are there. ***Truly it is self-evident upon reading the New Testament that its entire message is built upon the foundation of the Old Testament.***

In fact, Jesus worked hard to make sure his disciples understood this truth both before and after He died and rose from the grave.

3 Key Texts – Christ’s View of the Old Testament:

1. **TURN TO: Jesus’ response to the Jews who sought to kill Him after He healed the man – John 5:39-47** [39] **You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.** [40] But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life. [41] I do not receive honor from men. [42] But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. [43] I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. [44] How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that *comes* from the only God? [45] Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is *one* who accuses you--Moses, in whom you trust. [46] **For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me.** [47] But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"
2. **TURN TO: after His resurrection from the dead – Luke 24:24-27, 30-32** [24] And certain of those

who were with us went to the tomb and found *it* just as the women had said; but Him they did not see." [25] Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart **to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!** [26] Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" [27] And **beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.** ... [30] Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave it to them. [31] Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. [32] And they said to one another, "**Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?**"

3. **TURN TO: Luke 24:44-47** [44] Then He said to them, "These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written **in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.**" [45] And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. [46] Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, [47] and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

In the Scriptures, there is one and only one covenant of grace – and it spans across both testaments. There is essential *unity* between them in that the justification of sinners before God was always by grace alone, through faith alone on account of Christ alone.

From the Westminster Confession of Faith’s Chapter on “God’s Covenant with Man” (7.5): This covenant [of grace] was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel: (2 Cor. 3:6–9) under the law it was administered by **promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances** delivered to the people of the Jews, all foreshadowing Christ to come; (Heb. 8–10, Rom. 4:11. Col. 2:11–12, 1 Cor. 5:7) which were, for that time, sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, (1 Cor. 10:1–4, Heb. 11:13, John 8:56) by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation; and is called the Old Testament. (Ga. 3:7–9,14)

This is exactly why the Lord Jesus said in John 5:46 “For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me.”

Application: It is remarkable to know that there were **and are now** many people who know the Bible very well. There are people who could defeat everyone in this room at Bible trivia... and yet, if we do not *know truly the Lord Jesus Christ* through the written Word of God, then we are searching the Scriptures in vain! If our hearts do not burn within us with love for the Lord Jesus Christ through our study, memorizing, and applying the Word of God to our lives, then we ourselves have become the hypocrites, the white-washed tombs full of dead men’s bones. Then we are the Pharisees who for a pretense make long, pious-sounding prayers to be seen by men.

Application 2: It is through the written word that we come into communion with the living Word, Jesus.

3. The genealogy itself

The Importance of genealogy (we often skip these parts of Scripture): Extensive and detailed genealogies appear in Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah. Hear Hendricksen’s comments on this:

“Now, for the Jews genealogy had never been lacking in significance. After the conquest of Canaan it was important in determining a family’s place of residence; for, by divine law, the occupation of the land was according to tribes, families, and fathers’ houses (Num. 26:52–56; 33:54). If one settled in a territory other than his own he might be called a *deserter* (Judg. 12:4). Under certain circumstances transfer of property required accurate knowledge of pedigree (Ruth 3:9, 12, 13; 4:1–10). Later, in Judah, royal succession was linked with Davidic lineage (1 Kings 11:36; 15:4). At the return from Babylon a person who claimed priestly prerogatives was required to prove

priestly descent. Otherwise he was excluded from office [Ezra 2:62 “These sought their listing among those who were registered by genealogy, but they were not found; therefore they were excluded from the priesthood as defiled.”] At the beginning of the new dispensation, fulfilling one’s duty in connection with the general registration or “enrolment” described in Luke 2:1–4 necessitated knowledge of the ancestral roll.”

Luke 2:4 “Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David,”

Philip. 3:5 “circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;”

Old Testament expectation of descent: The Messiah would be the seed of the woman, of Abraham, of Judah, and of David:

Genesis 3:15 [15] And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and **her Seed**; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

Genesis 22:18 [18] In **your seed** all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

Genesis 49:10 [10] The **scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver** from between his feet, Until **Shiloh** ["peaceful one"] **comes**; And to Him *shall be* the obedience of the people.

2 Samuel 7:12-13 [12] "When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. [13] He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

Any presentation to a Jewish audience (or any audience of people who believed in and loved the Old Testament Scriptures) of a man *being the actual Messiah* of Israel would have to begin by establishing His genealogical credentials. Everything that follows in Matthew’s gospel would be for all intents and purposes irrelevant *until an accurate genealogy was produced*.

- **Illustration:** In the medieval period, jousting was a very popular sport, but it was a sport in which only the nobility could compete. When the counts, earls, dukes, and knights came to compete – they had to prove who they were and did so with what are called “Patents of nobility.” If you couldn’t produce these, you could not compete. Even if you were the best horseman in the world and the toughest jouster in Europe and England... ***“You have to be of noble birth to compete!”***
- **For the Jewish reader, it would not have mattered how profound Jesus’ teaching, how remarkable his signs and wonders – what they needed to know first was: *Who is He a descendent of?!*** “We want to see His patents of nobility!”
- **Application:** A constant attack Jesus endured was on his origins. Consider these statements:
Matthew 13:55-56: [55] Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? [56] And His sisters, are they not all with us? ...
Application: Therefore, setting the record straight that Jesus was indeed descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – and letting all know that Jesus was born to a *virgin* was critical.

Now, let’s look at the genealogy itself:

- **While Christ is the eternal God and Creator of the universe, His humanity is also made plainly evident by the fact that He has a genealogy.** The difference between his conception and birth and the conceptions and births of all other people who have ever lived since Adam is that they were all *passive* in their conceptions and in their being born. Jesus Christ was **sent** into the world and He **came**. None of us pre-existed our conceptions. None of us determined the circumstances or parents to whom we would be born, or the location.

- **Application: Everything – every last detail – of Jesus’ conception and birth was planned before the foundation of the world and was executed *perfectly and flawlessly* by the Triune God.**
- **The genealogy is *concrete evidence of God’s faithfulness to the promises He made.***

Illustration: It is remarkable to consider the fact that the entirety of Old Testament expectation, from the announcement of the gospel made to Adam in Eden, God’s covenant with Noah, God’s covenant promises to Abraham, God’s covenant with David, and the Prophetic announcement of the coming New Covenant from Jeremiah – *all of these are fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ.*

Imagine the magnitude of that moment: When the Lord Jesus Christ was but a single tiny cell in Mary’s womb that began to divide and develop. The entirety of the Christian hope, faith, and message is embodied in Him.

Why did Jesus come? To destroy death – **2 Tim. 1:8-10** “Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, [9] who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, [10] but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, **who has abolished death** and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel...”

The impact of the incarnation of Christ on history – Athanasius in the 4th century from “*On the Incarnation*”:

*A very strong proof of this destruction of death and its conquest by the cross is supplied by a present fact, namely this. All the disciples of Christ despise death; they take the offensive against it and, instead of fearing it, ... by faith in Christ trample on it as on something dead. Before the divine sojourn of the Savior, even the holiest of men were afraid of death, and mourned the dead as those who perish. But now that the Savior has raised His body, death is no longer terrible, but all those who believe in Christ tread it underfoot as nothing, and prefer to die rather than to deny their faith in Christ, knowing full well that when they die they do not perish, but live indeed, and become incorruptible through the resurrection. ... There is proof of this too; for men who, before they believe in Christ, think death horrible and are afraid of it, once they are converted despise it so completely that they go eagerly to meet it, and themselves become witnesses of the Savior's resurrection from it. Even children hasten thus to die, and not men only, but women train themselves by bodily discipline to meet it. So weak has death become that even women, who used to be taken in by it, mock at it now as a dead thing robbed of all its strength. **Death has become like a tyrant who has been completely conquered by the legitimate monarch; bound hand and foot the passers-by sneer at him, hitting him and abusing him, no longer afraid of his cruelty and rage, because of the king who has conquered him. So has death been conquered and branded for what it is by the Savior on the cross. It is bound hand and foot, all who are in Christ trample it as they pass and as witnesses to Him deride it, scoffing and saying, "O Death, where is thy victory? O Grave, where is thy sting? (1 Cor. 15:55)***

John 11:21-26 Then Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. [22] But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." [23] Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." [24] Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." [25] Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. [26] And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"