

**The Genesis of Jesus: Matthew 1-2**  
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*The opening chapters of Matthew intentionally evoke and link to the Book of Genesis, showing us that Jesus inaugurates a completely new epoch in human history—indeed, a New Creation.*

Introduction:

Genealogies are boring to modern Americans, but this genealogy was enthralling to any first century Jew, if you understand the backstory!

*The Hasmonean or Maccabean dynasty (160's BC–60'sBC) and the Herodian dynasty (37BC– AD66) both expanded Israel almost to Solomonic borders but did not have the proper genealogy!*

I. The Genealogy of Jesus (Matt 1:1-14)

A. *“The Book of the Genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham ...”*

1. Compare Gen 5:1: “This is the book of the genealogy (Heb *toledoth*) of Adam ...”; Jesus is the “second Adam” (1 Cor 15:45-47); human history has been restarted.
2. “*The Son of David,*” not “*a Son of David,*” in other words, the one promised to restore the Davidic Kingdom and Covenant (2 Sam 7:14; Jer 23:5) by ruling on David’s throne forever (2 Sam 7:13)
3. “*The Son of Abraham,*” not “*a Son of Abraham,*” the one to restore and fulfill the Covenant with Abraham (see Gen 22:18) by bringing universal blessing

B. *“So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations ...”*

1. The genealogy has been stylized on the number 14, which is the number of David in the Hebrew language.
2. We notice that the genealogy is concerned not so much concerned with *biology* as with *legality*, which suggests an explanation for the differences with Luke 3:23-38.  
See “Genealogy,” in *The Westminster Dictionary of New Testament and Early Christian Literature and Rhetoric* (ed. David Aune; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2003) 194-95. “Marcus Aurelius is recorded as the ‘son’ of Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and Antoninus Pius, although none of these men were biologically related.”
3. Matthew’s genealogy of Jesus is notable for the inclusion of four women: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba

- a. All four are Gentiles
- b. All four have an irregular romantic history.
- c. All four are in the line of descent of Solomon the greatest king, Son of David, Temple Builder, Wisest Man.

- 4. What's the point of the inclusion of these women?
  - a. Foreshadows the inclusion of the Gentiles in the New Covenant
  - b. Foreshadows the inclusion of sinners in the New Covenant
  - c. Points out the hypocrisy of the slanders hurled at our Lord's birth and descent
  - d. Points out that "One greater than Solomon is here." (Matt 12:42)

## II. The Birth of Christ: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son ..." (Isa 7:14)

- 1. This is a purported "mistranslation"
  - a. The facts: Isa 7:14 uses the rare word *almah* (Gen. 24:43; Ex. 2:8; Is. 7:14; Psa. 68:25; Prov. 30:19; Song 1:3; Song 6:8) Really the biblical data and contextual sense is all we have to go on.
  - b. A little scholarship on Song 6:8: "There are sixty (1) queens and eighty (2) concubines, and (3) *maidens* ('*almoth*) without number ....". Now, observe the logic of the enumeration: (1) full royal wives, (2) secondary royal wives, and (3) potential royal wives (therefore, *virgins*)
  - c. Therefore, an '*almah* is an unmarried woman of marriageable age, thus a virgin, but usually translated "young woman" in Greek but not always.
  - d. *Jewish* translators in the 3d cent. BC chose *parthenos* as the best semantic overlap in Isa 7:14 and Gen 24:43 (which describes the *betrothal* of the virgin Rebecca for Isaac: see Gen 24:16)
- 2. Isa 7:14 *does* have an immediate fulfillment in Hezekiah, but Hezekiah is a *type* of Christ.

## III. The Visit of the Magi (Matt 2:1-12)

- A. The Magi ask an unwittingly politically-charged question, setting the capital in turmoil
- B. *Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh*: Solomonic gifts (1 Kings 10:14; Song 3:6; 4:6,14) that point out once again, "One greater than Solomon is here" (cf. 1 Kings 4:30,34).

## IV. The Slaughter of the Innocents (Matt 2:13-18)

- A. Completely in keeping the historical character of Herod the Great (killed wives Doris and Mariamne, sons Antipater III, Alexander, Aristobulos IV)

## V. The Return from Egypt and Settlement in Nazareth

- A. *Out of Egypt I have called my son ...* The Typology of the Messiah-as-"Israel," like Abraham of old (Gen 12:10-20). See these texts where God's Servant is both "Israel" but also an individual person:
  - 1. Isa 49:3-5: "He said to me, 'You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified ....'"

2. Isa 49:6, “And now the Lord says, “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore the preserved of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations ...”

B. “*He shall be called a Nazarene*” (Heb. *netzary*): where does this quote come from?

1. “There shall come forth a Branch (*netzer*) from the stump of Jesse.”

(Isa11:1) Other prophecies employ the synonym *tzemach*:

**Jer. 23:5** “Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous **Branch** (*tzemach*), and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

**Jer. 33:15** In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous **Branch** to spring forth for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

**Zech. 3:8** Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you, for they are men of good omen: behold, I will bring my servant the **Branch**.

**Zech. 6:12** and say to him, “Thus says the LORD of hosts, “Behold, the man whose name is the **Branch**: for he shall grow up in his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD.

2. Jews of the Davidic line may have returned from Babylon and settled in rural areas, as clans, in towns to which they gave messianic names: *Cochabah* (little star), *Nazareth* (little branch). See Bargil Pixner, *Paths of the Messiah* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2010) 28-32

VI. Summing Up: Matt 1-2 shows Jesus to be all three of the great Seeds promised in the Scriptures of Israel:

A. The Seed of the Woman, who restores the Adamic/Creation Covenant

**Gen. 3:15** 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.”

B. The Seed of Abraham, who restores the Abrahamic Covenant and brings blessing to all the nations

**Gen. 22:18** and by your descendants (Heb *seed*) shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.”

C. The Seed of David, who restores the Davidic Covenant and Kingdom by ruling on his throne over the nations forever.

**2Sam. 7:12** When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring (Heb *seed*) after you, who shall come forth 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 for ever. **14** I will be his father, and he shall be my son.