

Matthew 1A

- Tonight we begin a verse-by-verse study through the Gospel of Matthew
 - I hope you'll join us here weekly to walk side-by-side with our Lord, Jesus of Nazareth
 - Let's learn all we can about Jesus so that we might serve Him all the more, both here in church and in the world

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

Matt. 1:2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers.

Matt. 1:3 Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez was the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram.

Matt. 1:4 Ram was the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon.

Matt. 1:5 Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab, Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse.

Matt. 1:6 Jesse was the father of David the king. David was the father of Solomon by Bathsheba who had been the wife of Uriah.

Matt. 1:7 Solomon was the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa.

Matt. 1:8 Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah.

Matt. 1:9 Uzziah was the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah.

Matt. 1:10 Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon, and Amon the father of Josiah.

Matt. 1:11 Josiah became the father of Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

Matt. 1:12 After the deportation to Babylon: Jeconiah became the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel.

Matt. 1:13 Zerubbabel was the father of Abihud, Abihud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor.

Matt. 1:14 Azor was the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud.

Matt. 1:15 Eliud was the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob.

Matt. 1:16 Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.

Matt. 1:17 So 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.

- Beginning a study of any of the four Gospels in the Bible requires some preliminary observations
 - During Jesus' 3+ years ministering on earth, tens of thousands of people witnessed His miracles and heard His teaching
 - So theoretically, many accounts of Jesus could have been written
 - But only the Holy Spirit can author scripture, as Peter reminds us

2Pet. 1:20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation,

2Pet. 1:21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

- So in God's providence, four men were moved by the Spirit to author an account of Jesus
 - And those four accounts are the first four books of the New Testament
 - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (not to be confused with John, Paul, George and Ringo)
- The first three Gospels (i.e., Matthew, Mark and Luke) are structured very similarly
 - They report the events of Jesus' life on earth ending with His death and resurrection
 - So naturally, these three Gospels report very similar things, as we would expect
- In fact, they are often called the synoptic gospels because they are so similar in their perspectives
 - The word synoptic is Greek meaning "to see together"

- These Gospels are synoptic because the authors share a similar view of Jesus' life
- But curiously, two of three synoptic authors were not even disciples of Jesus while He walked the earth
- Matthew was one of the twelve Apostles, but Luke and Mark became Christians only after Jesus ascended to Heaven
 - So how could Luke and Mark see the same things that Matthew saw?
 - The answer is they reported through the eyes of others
- Specifically, Mark was a traveling companion of the Apostle Peter while Luke was the companion of the Apostle Paul
 - So Mark wrote what Peter reported from his experiences accompanying Jesus before His death and resurrection
 - While Luke wrote what Paul learned from his encounters with the resurrected Christ
- So the first three Gospels are similar because they record the experience of three men (Matthew, Peter and Paul) who were eye witnesses to Jesus
 - Nevertheless, they are not identical, which causes some people to question their trustworthiness
 - For example, only Matthew's and Luke's Gospels include a genealogy of Jesus
 - But Luke's genealogy is different than Matthew's
- And there are other differences across the first three Gospels
 - Which causes us to wonder if these differences mean we can't trust the Gospel accounts
 - And in particular for our study this morning, why are Jesus' genealogies different?
- Before I address the question of the genealogies specifically, let's consider the general question of why differences exist at all
 - Imagine for a moment what if the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke were identical?

- What if each book was word-for-word exactly the same as the other two?
- Would there be any value in multiple identical versions of the Gospel? Why would God want to inspire such repetition?
- In fact, wouldn't such perfection leave us suspicious?
 - Wouldn't we assume that one author merely copied another?
 - If these books were exactly the same, wouldn't we feel less confident in their inspiration, not more confident?
- The Lord intentionally allowed each man's personality and memory to play a part in the formation of each Gospel so we would have greater confidence in their accuracy
 - Imagine you're a detective investigating the scene of a crime and you had four witnesses to the crime
 - You interview each witness separately and each one tells you exactly the same story, word-for-word
- Would you find that a reassuring finding or cause for suspicion?
 - If their stories were identical, wouldn't you assume the witnesses prearranged their testimonies?
 - It would likely be evidence of conspiracy
- Instead, you would expect each person's recollection to vary at least slightly from the others
 - Many of the things the witnesses reported would agree, but at least a few details would also differ
 - One person would recall details that the others overlooked and vice versa
 - In the end, the detective would find the true story by assimilate all four witnesses' statements into a single account of what happened
 - Having multiple perspectives of the same event gives the detective a better understanding of what happened
 - And the differences between the accounts serve to fill in gaps and add a different perspective

- That's exactly why the Lord provided His Church with four different perspectives on Jesus' life and words
 - Having four slightly different perspectives serves to increase our confidence in the authenticity of these accounts
 - And we gain the benefit of more information than one author could provide
 - Plus, the Lord could tailor each author's presentation to appeal to a particular audience
- Each Gospel author, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, wrote to record the events of Jesus life and ministry from his unique perspective
 - Mark wrote primarily to Romans of his day
 - Luke wrote to the wider Gentile audience
 - Matthew wrote to Jews dispersed throughout the empire
 - And John's Gospel is very different from the others because he wrote his account long after the first three
 - So he purposely chose to focus on certain events the other writers overlooked
- So when we find one Gospel's account of Jesus' life differing from others, we combine the accounts to gain a single record
 - We accept the reality that one author noticed or remembered things the others overlooked
 - And even if one account *seems* to contradict another, we have to work from the assumption that both accounts are true
 - Therefore, we seek a way to reconcile them, and there's always a way to reconcile them
 - We can safely this way because we know the Bible is the inspired word of God
 - The same God Who spoke the Universe into existence also spoke these words to us
 - The same God who designed the forces of nature, gave life to everything and made the sun to rise each morning also shared His thoughts with you and me

- There is no misplaced word in this book, nothing is approximate, nothing is in error, everything is in harmony
- So if we can't make sense of something here, it's not because the Bible lacks sense
 - It's because we lack understanding
 - The Bible was written by an omniscient God, and our finite minds can't absorb all that an infinite God can reveal
 - But in time, if we submit to His word and allow the Spirit to instruct us through it, the Lord will make things clear to us
 - For He delights to reveal Himself to those Who sit at His feet with open hearts
 - But as Jesus says:

Luke 10:21 At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, "I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to **infants**. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.

- So how do we understand the genealogy presented here in Matthew's Gospel? What's its purpose in the account of Jesus?
 - Both Matthew and Luke recorded genealogies for Jesus
 - And interestingly, Matthew and Luke are also the only two Gospels to record Jesus' birth story
 - Obviously, it makes sense that the two authors who chose to relate the birth story of Jesus also took an interest in His genealogy
 - But it turns out that this also explains why their two genealogies are different
 - To see why, we need to remember Matthew's connection to Jesus
 - Matthew was one of the twelve apostles of Jesus, so like the rest of the apostles he was introduced to Jesus near the beginning of Jesus' ministry
 - And like the rest of the apostles, Matthew knew nothing of Jesus prior to His baptism

- In fact, Jesus spent his first 30 years of life on earth living and working in obscurity in a backwater region of the Galilee
 - So even if Jesus and Matthew had crossed paths during those years, Matthew wouldn't have given Jesus a second look
 - So neither Matthew nor Luke had first-hand knowledge of Jesus' birth much less His family genealogy
 - So how did they gain this information?
- If we compare Matthew and Luke, we find they are written from the perspective of two different eye witnesses
 - In Matthew's Gospel, we find see intimate details of Joseph's experience, while in Luke we find intimate details of Mary's experience
 - In Matthew we learn Joseph's inner thoughts, yet Matthew has no record of Mary's thoughts
 - Conversely, in Luke's account we learn what Mary was thinking but there's no record of Joseph's thoughts
 - In Matthew's account, we're given a description of what the angel told Joseph, but no mention of an angel visiting Mary
 - In Luke, we have a description of what the angel told Mary, but no mention of an angel appearing to Joseph
 - So evidently Joseph was Matthew's source for the backstory on Jesus' genealogy and birth, while Mary was Luke's source
 - So naturally, each author's account reflects the perspective of their respective source
 - The genealogy in Matthew is the genealogy of Joseph's family
 - While the genealogy recorded in Luke was Mary's family genealogy
 - Mary was likely still alive when Luke wrote his Gospel, so he could have interviewed Mary
 - While Matthew probably received Joseph's account secondhand, perhaps from Joseph's other sons
- Knowing this, we read Matthew's genealogy understanding was telling a story through it from Joseph's perspective

- Turning to the genealogy itself, a genealogy is like a family tree, listing generations over time
 - Many people today are interested in knowing their family origins
 - There are website that help you learn your ancestry
 - Most of us are drawn to the mystery and wonder of discovering our connections to people from the past
 - But it's not the size of our family tree that matters
 - It's how many nuts you find hanging on it...and every family has some
- But for a Jew, keeping genealogy records wasn't merely a hobby, it was a crucially important part of being Jewish
 - God assigned the Jewish nation a special place among the nations of the world
 - He made covenants with that people and gave promises to the nation as a whole
 - The most important promise God gave Israel was to bring a Messiah, a Savior for the world, through the Jewish nation
 - So was all important for the Jewish people to maintain a certain understanding of who was truly Jewish
 - And genealogy records were used for that purpose
- For example, when the Jews were preparing to return to Israel after spending 70 years in exile in Babylon, some couldn't prove their ancestral origins

Ezra 2:59 Now these are those who came up from Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Cherub, Addan and Immer, but they were not able to give evidence of their fathers' households and their descendants, whether they were of Israel:

Ezra 2:62 These searched among their ancestral registration, but they could not be located; therefore they were considered unclean and excluded from the priesthood.

- If you claimed to be a Jew, much more a priest or a heir to the throne of David, it was necessary to prove your claim

- Therefore, the Jews kept scrupulous genealogies for every tribe stored and carefully preserved in the temple in Jerusalem for centuries
- So Matthew opens his Jewish Gospel with Jesus' genealogy on Joseph's side and he does so to prove something about Jesus' claims
 - We have no reason to doubt Matthew's genealogy
 - Because in his day it would have been easy to verify or refute Jesus' genealogy
 - Anyone could simply visit the archives in the temple and look it up
 - Yet there is no historical record of anyone disputing the accuracy of Matthew's record of Jesus' genealogy
- So as we look at the names in this list, the question we need to answer is what was Matthew trying to prove about Jesus with this genealogy?
 - And we find our answer by starting with a few observations of the names we find in the list
 - First, we see in v.2 that the list begins with Abraham
 - Matthew uses the man's covenant name, Abraham, and not his given name, Abram
 - Back in v.1 Matthew introduced the genealogy by calling it the record of Jesus, the son of Abraham
 - God made a covenant with Abram promising to bring a nation of people from his seed, meaning from his family line
 - And through this line, God says He would bring a certain Person to bless all nations, both Jewish and Gentile
 - God changed Abram's name to Abraham to mark His promise
 - So beginning the genealogy with Abraham and calling Jesus the son of Abraham testifies that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham
- Secondly, Matthew also identifies Jesus as the son of David in v.1
 - Why mention David's name at all, especially before Abraham's name?

- Once again, David received covenant promises from God concerning an eternal dynasty
- The Lord promised David He would raise up a ruler from David's family line to rule Israel and the world forever
- Therefore, inserting David's before Abraham's name indicates that Jesus fulfills both covenants
 - Jesus is the son of David, meaning Jesus was the promised King coming in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant
 - And Jesus is the son of Abraham because He is the promised Seed sent to bless all nations, not just Israel
- Thirdly, as Matthew tells us in v.17, we see that he arranged Jesus' genealogy into three groups of fourteen names
 - By comparing his genealogy to others in the Old Testament, we find that Matthew intentionally left out several names in Jesus' genealogy while adding a few names we wouldn't expect to find
 - For example, five kings in Jesus' family line are missing while four women have been added, which was uncommon
 - We might think that missing names would invalidate Matthew's genealogy, but the practice of skipping a generation here or there in genealogies was common in Judaism
 - Jews understood that jumping over a generation didn't invalidate a genealogy so long as the other names were accurate
 - For example, if I skipped your grandfather in your family tree but I included your great grandfather and father correctly, then your genealogy is still accurate
 - So Jews commonly left out names to produce numeric symmetry or to provide commentary on a family tree
 - In Matthew's case, he wanted to achieve both
 - So he dropped some of Jesus' ancestors to yield three groups of fourteen names to make a point
 - And he inserted four women to make a second point
- Matthew is pointing us to the themes of his Gospel, and we can see them clearly in v.1

- First, Matthew wants to show us that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant, the promised eternal King of Israel
 - Hebrew names can be assigned numeric values by adding up the numeric value of each individual letter in the name
 - We're told that the numeric value of the antichrist will be 666
 - And the numeric value of Jesus' full name is 749 (7 - 7x7)
- If we add up the Hebrew numbers for David's Hebrew name we arrive at the number 14
 - So Matthew arranged his genealogy into three groups of 14 to speak out the name David three times
 - Jesus is the eternal David, the King God promised to bring His people
- In fact, notice in v.17 how Matthew connects his first and second groups of names by mentioning David
 - There were 14 generations (in Matthew's list) between Abraham to David
 - And there were 14 more from David to the Babylonian captivity
 - For 14 generations, David's descendants held power and for 14 generations they lost it
 - You can't help but notice David's prominence in this list, nor can you miss the point
 - After fourteen generations, a son of David has come to rule again
- Secondly, Matthew draws our attention to Jesus fulfilling Abraham's promise too
 - Notice that the four women inserted into the list were all Gentile women
 - Tamar and Rahab were Canaanites
 - Ruth was a Moabitess
 - Bathsheba was a Hittite
 - And three of these women were guilty of sexual sin of one kind or another

- Matthew includes four Gentile women in Jesus' genealogy to testify that Jesus fulfills God's promise to Abraham to save Gentiles too
 - Once again, notice how his second and third groups of 14 are connected by mention of the Jews' Babylonian captivity
 - The Babylonian captivity was a result of Israel's rebellion against the Lord
 - Through Jeremiah and Daniel the Lord declared He was placing Israel under judgment for a time to give opportunity to Gentiles
 - This judgment period would culminate with a Savior coming to rescue Israel after setting up His kingdom
- So Matthew's genealogy has been carefully constructed to introduce two themes
 - First, Jesus was the fulfillment of the promise God gave David to bring Israel a king
 - And secondly, He was the fulfillment of the promise God gave Abraham to bless all nations
 - David's name is listed first in v.1 because Jesus came to the Jews first, as their King offering a kingdom in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant
 - And Abraham's name is listed second because after the Jews rejected Jesus and the kingdom, Jesus would turn to Gentiles in fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant
 - We will see Matthew develop these themes in his Gospel
- Finally, notice the way Matthew finishes his genealogy of Jesus
 - In v.16 he describes Joseph as the father of Mary, by whom Jesus was born
 - He doesn't call Joseph Jesus' father, which makes sense because we know Joseph wasn't the literal father of Jesus
 - Mary was a virgin before she gave birth to Jesus
 - So although Joseph assumed legal responsibility for Jesus, he was not Jesus' biological father

- Therefore, while Jesus was Joseph's heir, He was not Joseph's descendant
 - He only shared a physical relationship with His mother, Mary
 - As you look at Mary's genealogy in Luke's Gospel, you find that Mary also descended from David
 - So Jesus is an heir to the throne through His father and a biological descendant of David through His mother's genealogy
- So why did Matthew want us to know that Jesus was not physically related to Joseph? Wouldn't that hurt his case that Jesus was the rightful king of Israel?
 - Actually, it strengthens Matthew's argument to a Jewish reader who knew their Old Testament
 - Back in Jeremiah 22 the Lord pronounced a curse on one line of David's descendants, on a king names Jechoniah
 - God cursed the king for his disobedience declaring that no descendant of Jechoniah would ever sit on the throne of David again
 - If you look at v.11, you see that Joseph is a descendant of this cursed king
 - So if Jesus had been a physical descendant of Joseph, then Jesus would have been prevented from assuming the throne of David
 - Matthew couldn't ignore this fact
 - As I said earlier, any Jew could have easily looked up Jesus's family tree and learned of this connection
 - And you can be sure Jesus' critiques certainly would have pointed to this connection to discredit Him if they could
 - So Matthew preempts any criticism buy providing Joseph's genealogy, but doing so to demonstrate that Jesus was not a blood relative of Joseph
 - Through Joseph, Jesus meets the requirements to be an heir to the throne
 - And through Mary, Jesus meets the requirement to be a physical descendant

- But Mary's genealogy doesn't go through Jechoniah, clearing Jesus of the curse
- So according to Matthew, Jesus is the King promised to Israel and the Savior promised to the world
- A few years ago a Jewish doctor living on the East Coast was invited to a special church service by a Christian friend
 - The Christian man was suffering from a mysterious paralysis and had been confined to a wheel chair
 - His church scheduled a prayer service for his healing
 - So the man invited his family and friends to attend the service
 - He also invited a work colleague, a Jewish doctor, who had never set foot in a Christian church before
 - On the night of the service, the doctor arrived and took a seat in a pew
 - He quietly observed the proceedings with little understanding of what was going on
 - Until at a point near the end of the service the pastor issued an open invitation for anyone else to receive prayer
 - And at that moment and quite to his surprise, the Jewish doctor suddenly felt compelled to stand up and walk forward
 - As he reached the front, he stopped without saying a word waiting while a few elders gathered around him in prayer
 - The elders prayed over the doctor without even knowing his request, just allowing the Spirit to direct their intercession
 - The doctor remained silent through the prayer with his head bowed, and when they finished, he returned to his seat
- In that moment the Jewish doctor felt a love he had never known before
 - It seemed to be everywhere in the room and in himself at the same time
 - After the service ended, he left the church without telling anyone what he had experienced
 - But in the days that followed he couldn't shake the feeling, so he began a search for answers

- He searched for someone or something that could explain what he encountered in that Christian church
 - He consulted his Jewish friends, he searched the internet, he even called upon a Catholic priest in a downtown cathedral
 - No one could explain his feelings of awakening and love
 - So, out of ideas, the doctor ventured into a Christian book store and asked for a copy of the Christian Bible
- This doctor had been raised in a strict Jewish home, so he had been taught all his life to despise Christianity and the Bible
 - Most Jews have never read the New Testament,
 - So they imagine it gives instructions on how to build stained glass buildings or how to kill Jews
 - So as the doctor stared at the bookshelf of Bibles, he couldn't help feeling he was betraying his heritage and his people by consulting the manual of his enemies
 - Nevertheless, something inside him, something stronger than hate and more compelling than loyalty, was calling him to read it
- So that Jewish doctor went home, opened the New Testament, and began reading at the beginning...in the Gospel of Matthew
 - And as he read chapter after chapter, his eyes opened wider, his heart beat faster
 - Instead of finding hatred and prejudice against the Jewish people, he was shocked to find a very Jewish story
 - He found an account of a humble servant sent to Israel with a salvation promised for all nations
 - And at that moment the Jewish Doctor realized Jesus was his Messiah
 - No human being preached the Gospel to this man
 - The Lord preached it to him directly through His word and the Spirit of God brought it to life in his heart
 - In that moment the doctor was born again by faith in Jesus Christ

- I share that true story with you because it powerfully illustrates three unique qualities of Gospel of Matthew
 - First, Matthew wrote his account to persuade a Jewish audience, people like the Jewish doctor
 - Matthew was a Jewish tax collector, who Jesus called to be an apostle, one of Jesus' chief disciples
 - Matthew was not looking for a Savior, but the Savior found him
 - So he wrote his account specifically for Jewish readers of his day, men and women who had also overlooked Jesus
 - And even after 2,000 years, his Gospel is still reaching Jewish men...men like the Jewish doctor
 - Secondly, Matthew's Gospel emphasizes the faithfulness of a sovereign God to fulfill His promises to bless Israel and the world through a Savior
 - God foretold everything that happened through the prophets,
 - And He carried everything out precisely as He promised He would, even the death of His Son
 - Which is why my doctor friend felt so convicted by the Gospel of Matthew
 - He saw the Lord at work through Jesus to fulfill Old Testament prophecies, promises he had been taught since he was a child
 - Finally, the most important connection between Matthew's Gospel and my friend's story...this account was written to save souls
 - This isn't merely an ancient historical account or a Jewish version of a campfire story
 - Matthew didn't write this to stimulate your mind or tickle your funny bone
 - It was written to change your heart...to move us out of darkness and into the light of a salvation through faith in Jesus Christ
 - Which is what He did for that Jewish doctor, who discovered a Jesus Who died for his sins and resurrected to give him hope for eternal life

- And He can do the same for you, no matter where you come from, no matter what you've heard about Jesus
 - No matter what you've done, no matter how many mistakes you've made, no matter how bad those mistake might be
 - You're exactly the reason Jesus had to come and had to die
 - He came for you, because you're not perfect, because you made mistakes
 - You too can have your sins forgiven by God, all your sins, everything you've ever done, wiped clean by one sacrifice
 - Jesus died on the cross to be your Savior
 - So that the penalty God requires for sin would fall on Him instead of you
 - If only you would receive that free gift, if you would call upon His name, the Bible promises you will be saved
 - That anyone who comes to Jesus He will not cast out but will give eternal life