



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Gospel According to St. Matthew

Chapter 1

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Introduction

In this Chapter We Will Provide:

- An overview and introduction to the Gospel of St. Matthew
- A study of the genealogy of our Lord Jesus Christ
- A study of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ



Introduction

- The book of Matthew has always occupied a position of high esteem in the faith and life of the church
- The writings of the early church fathers reveal that it was the most frequently quoted and perhaps the most widely read gospel during the first two centuries of the church's history



The Author

- The early church fathers were unanimous in holding that Matthew was its author
- Matthew, whose name means "gift of the Lord" and surnamed Levi, had been a tax-collector, one of Jesus' earliest disciples (Mt 9:9; Mk 2:14)
- A close associate of Jesus during His ministry, Matthew's gospel is a first hand account, unlike Luke who depended upon other eyewitnesses (Lk 1:1-4)



Date

- Irenaeus says it was written when the apostles Peter and Paul were preaching in Rome
- Eusebius states that this was done when St. Matthew left Palestine and went to preach to others
- Clement of Alexandria said that the presbyters who succeeded each other from the beginning declared that "the gospels containing the genealogies (Matthew and Luke) were written first"



Date

- From the Church history & traditions we know that the Gospel of St. Matthew was found in 2 manuscripts: the Aramaic version (was lost) 39-42 A.D. & the Greek version in 60-67 A.D.
- The Aramaic was lost because:
 1. Desolation of Jerusalem & dispersion of the Jews
 2. It was tampered by the Judaizers who sponsored one of the non canonical gospels, the gospel of the Hebrews
- The Greek manuscript is the one we have right now
- The question now is, is it translated or rewritten?
- Some of the scholars believe that it is a translation and others prove that it was rewritten



The Theme

- The gospel appears written to Jews, designed to prove that Jesus is the Messianic king of Old Testament (OT) prophecy
- This is evidenced by St. Matthew's frequent appeal to OT Messianic prophecies
- He quotes from almost every book in the OT, and twelve times he identifies OT prophecies as fulfilled in the life of Jesus (Mt 1:22; 2:15,23; 4:14; 5:17; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14,35; 21:4; 27:9)
- The theme is: Jesus, the King of the Jews



Recipients

- It was written for the Jews and in particular to the victorious Jews who believed in Christ

Evidence:

- The Church early fathers
- Beginning the Gospel with the generation of Christ to prove that He is the son of David and Abraham and He is from Jewish race
- St. Matthew gives details of Jewish religious observances, and often uses Jewish style and techniques of argument



Recipients

- He did not explain or give interpretation of the Jewish customs because it was written for the Jews who know these customs, Mt 15:1-13 and 26:17
- The New Testament is a continuation of the Old Testament Matthew 5:17
- Matthew declares that Jesus was sent to the Jews
- He is the only one who mentioned ***I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel***”, (Matthew 15:24)



Characteristics

The Gospel of Matthew may be divided into five parts:

I. The Advent of the Messiah, 1:1 – 4:11

- a. Christ was the Son of David,
- b. He was born of a virgin at Bethlehem
- c. His way was prepared by John the Baptist
- d. Records His baptism and temptation



Characteristics

- II. The Public proclamation of Messiah's Kingdom, 4:12 – 16:12
 - a. Choosing His first disciples and beginning His work in Galilee, 4:12-25
 - b. The Sermon on the Mount, in which the law of the New Kingdom is announced
 - c. The description of a series of miracles



Characteristics

III. The Distinct and Public Claim of Messiahship, 16:13 – 23:39

- a. The Lord calls forth their explicit confession of Him as Messiah, 16:13-20;
- b. The transfiguration
- c. Entering Jerusalem as the Son of David and assuming Messianic authority in the temple

IV. The Sacrifice of Messiah the Priest, 24:1 – 27:66

- a. Prepares His disciples for His sacrificial death



Characteristics

- V. The Triumph of Messiah the Savior and King
Brings out that Jesus by rising again from the dead fully established His claim to the Messiahship. Abundant evidence of the resurrection is furnished and it is clearly shown that in the end Christ is clothed with Messianic authority
- In sacred Scripture numbers usually have more significance than their quantitative indicators
 - In addition to the use of the symbolic significance of different numbers in Scripture, there is the use of the numbers formed by the sum of the letters of words or names, known by the Greek word *gematria*



Characteristics

- The genealogy in chapter 1 consists of three groups of generations of fourteen each which gives a total of 42 generations from Abraham to Jesus of Nazareth
- He manipulates the list this way to bring attention to the link between the names and the covenant promises made by God to both Abraham and David
- St. Matthew manipulated the genealogy of Jesus to reflect the significance of the Hebrew *gematria* of King David's name, which was the number 14 (D = 4, V= 6, D= 4; Hebrew was written only in consonants)
- As if St. Matthew wanted to confirm the royal lineage of Jesus from David



Characteristics

- Also, as if he wants to say that Jesus is the King of all ages
- In Scripture the number 42 appears to symbolize a connection to or a conflict between man and the Spirit of God
- The number 42 is the product of 6 times 7
- Seven is one of the "perfect" numbers
- Six is the number of man and of man's opposition to God's plan for mankind's salvation
- There are seven beatitudes chapter 5; seven petitions in the Lord's prayer chapter 6; a group of seven parables chapter 13; and seven woes on Pharisees and Scribes chapter 23

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ (1:1-17)



- With this opening line St. Matthew is announcing to the Jewish readers that the long-awaited Messiah, who was promised by the prophets to restore the kingdom of David, is none other than Jesus of Nazareth
- He begins his gospel with the genealogy of Jesus from Abraham to Joseph
- Thus he shows the royal lineage of Jesus from David, one of the first things required to convince a Jewish audience that Jesus qualified to be the Messiah

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ (1:1-17)



- It is divided into three main parts of fourteen names each with David counted twice
- It is remarkable, that the evangelist introduce Jesus Christ as "son of David" before calling Him "son of Abraham," even though Abraham came before David and is the "father" of the Israelites

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ (1:1-17)



- The reason seems to be this, St. Matthew focuses attention not on the blood line through Abraham but on King David and God's covenant promises that identify Jesus as the Messianic King foretold by the prophets as David's heir
- Son of David, was a description by which the Messiah was afterwards known among the Jews; and, under this title, they were led to expect Him by prophetic authority, Psalm 89:3, Psalm 89:4; Psalm 132:10; Psalm 132:11, compared with Acts 13:23, and Isaiah 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ (1:1-17)



- In this genealogy, those persons only, among the ancestors of Christ, which formed the direct line, as specified: hence no mention is made of Ishmael, the son of Abraham, nor of Esau, the son of Isaac; and of all the twelve patriarchs, or sons of Jacob, Judah alone is mentioned
- Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth were all Gentile women, and are named for this reason and for their remarkable history
- Tamar's story is found in Genesis 38
- Rahab was the prostitute of Jericho (Josh 2:1)
- Ruth was a woman from Moab (Ruth 1:5)

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ (1:1-17)



- David the king: The greatest of line from Abraham to Christ, so exalted that one of the titles of the Messiah was the Son of David
- The mother of Solomon is referred to, not by name, but as the wife of Uriah
- Uriah was a Hittite, a Gentile, and his wife may have been also
- Between Joram and Uzziah three names are intentionally omitted
- They are found in 1 Chron 3:11-12
- They were probably omitted to equalize the threefold division of generations from Abraham to Joseph
- Such omissions of unimportant links are common in the Old Testament

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ (1:1-17)



- *Zorobabel begat Abiud*, Abiud is not named in 1 Chronicles 3:19 but he is doubtless taken from the public or family registers, which the Jews carefully kept, and their accuracy was never challenged
- *Jacob begat Joseph*, The descendant of a long line of kings was a poor carpenter of Nazareth
- As the husband of St. Mary he was the legal father of Jesus, and Matthew gives his line of descent
- A comparison of the table given by St. Luke will show that it differs in part from that of St. Matthew
- Between David and Joseph the lists are widely different

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ (1:1-17)



- Several views, all possible, have been presented, but the most probable explanation is that St. Matthew gives the line of Joseph, the legal line, and that St. Luke gives the line of St. Mary, the mother of our Lord
- As the Jews regarded only male descent, unless Joseph, the supposed father, was a descendant of David they would not have recognized the genealogy as a fulfillment of the prophecies that Christ should be the Son of David; while St. Luke, himself a Gentile and writing for Gentiles, was more particular to give the line that shows that Jesus is really the Son of David

Christ Born of St. Mary (1:18-25)



- St. Mary was engaged to St. Joseph
- Betrothal was, from the times of the patriarchs, a formal ceremony, and was regarded a binding obligation
- It generally lasted a whole year before marriage
- After betrothal unfaithfulness was regarded adultery
- St. Joseph did not know that St. Mary's pregnancy was by the Holy Spirit
- They were legally bound through the betrothal
- He made his decision
- He resolved to divorce her privately and would do it in secret
- But the Lord had other ideas

Christ Born of St. Mary (1:18-25)



- St. Joseph was still in doubt, perplexed
- The angel of the Lord mentioned here was probably the angel Gabriel, who, six months before, had been sent to Zacharias and Elisabeth, to announce the birth of Christ's forerunner, John the Baptist, Luke 1:36
- “Son of David”: The style of address was doubtless advisedly chosen to remind him of what all the families of David's line so early desired, and thus it would prepare him for the marvelous announcement which was to follow

Christ Born of St. Mary (1:18-25)



- The Angel asked him not to be afraid either that he would offend the Lord, or bring any reproach or scandal upon himself
- This conception of St. Mary is of the Holy Spirit
- The name Jesus is the same as Savior
- It is derived from the verb signifying to save
- Not a temporal salvation, but from the curse of sin, condemnation and banishment

Christ Born of St. Mary (1:18-25)



- The prophecy is taken from Isaiah 7:14
- St. Matthew neglects no opportunity to show the Jews that their prophets described Christ
- Emmanuel means God with us, an appropriate title for Jesus among men
- Joseph took Mary as a wife
- Probably this was done immediately, since he was now convinced of her innocence, and, by delay, he would not leave any ground of suspicion that he had not confidence in her
- He obeyed at once, a fitting example for all men
- When the Lord's will is spoken there should be no delay in obedience

Christ Born of St. Mary (1:18-25)



- The word "till" does not necessarily imply that they lived differently afterwards (as will be evident from the use of the same word in 1 Sam 15:35; 2 Sam 6:23; Mt 12:20); nor does the word "first-born" decide the much-disputed question, whether St. Mary had any children to St. Joseph after the birth of Christ
- The first-born does not mean whether any were born after or no, but only that none were born before



Conclusion

- For what audience did St. Matthew write his Gospel?
- What is the focus of the Gospel of St. Matthew?
- How many women were mentioned in St. Matthew's list? Who are they?
- Discuss what the act of anointing was for a Jew, and what anointing was used for by St. Matthew
- Why does St. Matthew takes pains to mention David, and why does he mention him first, even though Abraham preceded David?



Conclusion

- What scripture in the OT was fulfilled by the virgin birth of Christ?
- Who were Abraham's two sons, and their mothers. Why was Isaac mentioned and not the other?
- Why did St. Matthew give the genealogy of Christ through Joseph, even though, as all know, since Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, Joseph was not Jesus' true father?
- What did St. Joseph want to do when he learns that Mary is pregnant?
- What is the meaning of Emmanuel?