The New Testament begins with words that are reminiscent of the book of Genesis: "the book of the generation." Matthew's subject is "Jesus Christ." The theme is that He is the "son of David, the son of Abraham" (1:1) who will "save His people from their sins" (1:21). This chapter will set Jesus in the historical framework of the OT, specifically God's promise to bless the world through the seed of Abraham (Gen. 12:3), and God's promise to David found in 2 Samuel 7:12-16.

TRANSLATION - 1:1-6:

1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham.

2 Abraham gave birth to Isaac; Isaac gave birth to Jacob; Jacob gave brith to Judah and his brothers; **3** Judah gave birth to Phares and Zara from Tamar; and Phares gave birth to Esrom; Esrom gave birth to Aram; **4** Aram gave birth to Aminadab; Aminadab gave birth to Naason; Naason gave birth to Salmon; **5** Salmon gave birth to Boes from Rachab; Boes gave birth to Obed from Ruth; Obed gave birth to Jessai; **6** And Jessai gave birth to David, the king. David gave birth to Solomon from her of Uriah.

WORDS:

"Book" (verse 1) is only found here in Matthew. It is used 10 times in the NT[1] and can refer to a record or book. "Books" as we know them were not invented at this point so we should understand the word to refer to "record." "Generation" is found in 1:1, 18. In the NT, the word is used 5 times and refers to beginning, origin, or birth (as it is used in verse 18).

"Gave birth" (verse 2) is found 97 times in the NT, but in this chapter alone, it is found 40 times. The first 39 forms are all the same, but the final form, in verse 16 is passive as Matthew avoids saying that Jesus had an earthly father.

"King" (verse 6; 115 times in the NT) is used 22 times in the gospel. By the end of the gospel, the Jews are (sarcastically but accurately) calling Jesus the "King of the Jews" (2:2; 27:11, 29, 37, 42).

PARALLELS:

The only parallel to the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1 is Luke's in Luke 3:23-38. There are some differences however. It seems that Matthew gives the genealogy through Joseph, the "son" of David through Solomon, while Luke gives the genealogy through Mary, the daughter of David through Nathan (2 Sam. 5:14; 1 Chron. 3:5). Thus through both parents (Joseph was only the adopted, earthly father), Jesus is a descendant of King David.

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

The first seventeen verses are a summary of the descendants of Abraham, most of which is recorded in our OT (generally from 1 Chronicles 1-3; Ruth 4). "David" is found 17 times in Matthew, five times in this text (1:1, 16-17), showing how important is the relationship between Jesus and David. "Abraham" is found 7 times. "Isaac" is found in Matthew 4 times (1:2; 8:11; 22:32). "Jacob" is found 6 times (1:2; 1:15-16; 8:11; 22:32).

"Judah," son of Jacob, was the one through whom the king would come (Gen. 49:10), whom we now know is Jesus (cf. Heb. 7:14; Rev. 5:5).

COMMENTS:

The phrase "book of the generation" is found in the LXX in Genesis 2:4; 5:1. It clearly sets Jesus's life in the framework of the OT in general and, specifically, in the book of Genesis. "Generation" is used here in the sense of "life," that is, Matthew is writing about the life of

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[1] Word counts come from Warren C. Trenchard's *The Student's Complete Vocabulary Guide to the Greek New Testament*; Zondervan; Grand Rapids, 1992.

Christ. Matthew wants to show emphatically that Jesus is a descendant of King David, "The" descendant who will sit on David's throne forever, as promised by God in 2 Samuel 7:12-16.

"Jesus," as a personal name, given by the angel of the Lord (1:21), is found 152 times in Matthew. An "angel of the Lord" appeared frequently in the lives of the patriarchs (Gen. 16:7; 22:11, 15; 31:11). His name is the Greek form of the Hebrew name "Joshua," which means "Jehovah saves." There are two important men named Joshua in the OT. The first led Israel into the Promised Land, a story told in the book which carries his name. The second man was a high priest, referred to in Ezra 2:2; 3:2-9; Neh. 7:7; Zech. 6:11-13.

"Christ" is found 16 times, the Greek translation of the Hebrew designation "the Anointed One" or "Messiah." The term "messiah" referred to one anointed by olive oil to serve as priests (Lev. 4:3; 6:22) and kings (1 Sam. 16:13; 24:10), and at least on one occasion, a prophet (1 Kings 19:16). "Christ" began as a title for Jesus but was applied to Him so frequently that it came to be a proper name. "Son of David" is also a Messianic title, used 10 times in the gospel (the phrase refers to Joseph in 1:20). Most often, the designation is found in the context of Jesus providing healing (9:27; 15:22; 20:30-31; see also 21:9, 15).

Matthew lists four women in Jesus' ancestry: Tamar (Gen. 38), Rahab (Joshua 2 & 6; see also Heb. 11:31; James 2:25); Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:3), identified as "her of Uriah," perhaps to keep alive the sin of David and the fact that Bathsheba belonged to someone else; and Ruth. Tamar engaged in incest with Judah; Rahab was a prostitute; Bathsheba committed adultery with David. Perhaps these are reasons why Matthew included them. It was not uncommon to include women in a genealogy, but we would expect matriarchs like Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel. Yet, Tamar was probably a Canaanite, Rahab was Canaanite, Bathsheba may have been Hittite (Uriah, her husband was), and Ruth was Moabite. So it is more likely Matthew includes these women to foreshadow the universal call of Jesus to include into His body more than just Jews.

APPLICATION:
Later NT writers also emphasize Jesus' descent from David (Acts 2:30ff; 13:23; Rom. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:8; Rev. 22:16; Heb. 7:14).

TRANSLATION - 1:7-11:
7 Solomon gave birth to Roboam; Roboam gave birth to Abia; Abia gave birth to Asaph; **8** Asaph gave birth to Iosaphat; Iosaphat gave birth to Ioram; Ioram gave birth to Ozian; **9** Ozian gave birth to Ioatham; Ioatham gave birth to Achaz; Achaz gave birth to Ezekias; **10** Ezekias gave birth to Manasse; Manasse gave birth to Amos; Amos gave birth to Iosias; **11** Iosias gave birth to Iechonian and his brothers before the deportation of Babylon.

WORDS:
"Deportation"is only used here in the NT (1:11-12, 17). It refers to the exile of the Israelites in Babylon. See below under "Old Testament References."

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:
The deportation, or "exile," into Babylon (between 597 B. C. and 587 B. C.; 2 Kings 24) was due to Israel's sins, specifically to her idolatry (2 Chr. 36:15-21). The exile was the nadir of God's punishment on a stubborn and rebellious people. Matthew's mention of the deportation might be his way of foreshadowing Israel's loss of "favored-nation" status in the eyes of God (8:10-11; 21:13-22:18; 23:29-24:3). Additionally, the kingship of Israel came to an end with the Babylonian exile. No descendant of David would sit on the throne in Jerusalem again (Jer. 22:30). It will not be renewed until Jesus takes His throne following His resurrection (Acts 2).

ARCHAEOLOGY:
Babylon is found a dozen times in the NT, almost exclusively in Matthew (1:11-12, 17) and Revelation, where it is used as a metaphor for the Roman Empire (14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2,

10, 21). The other references are at Acts 7:43; 1 Peter 5:13. By the NT times, it was not a nation anymore but under the jurisdiction of Rome. Babylon was mentioned in the OT 282 times, concentrated in the books of 2 Kings, Ezra, Isaiah, and especially Jeremiah.

COMMENTS:

Many of the spellings are taken from the LXX. It is clear that Matthew, for whatever reason (he does not clarify), wanted to give groups of fourteen names. For that reason, he does not give every single individual, using "gave birth to" in a broader sense. Some suggest that Matthew divides the genealogy into groups of 14 because through the manipulation of numbers by the Jews, known as *gematria*, "14" designates the name "David" (with each consonant being given a numeric value so that "D" is 4 and "v" is 6) he emphasizes Jesus' descent from King David. However, Matthew wrote in Greek and the *gematria* could not be evident in that language.

Four women are distinguished in the list: "Tamar," "Rahab," "Ruth," and "her of Uriah." We have the stories of these three women in the OT (see above) and they each have a story to tell. Most, perhaps all, were Gentiles ("her of Uriah" is not clear) so that Matthew begins a message about that gospel that it is open to all, including women and Gentiles.

TRANSLATION - 1:12-16:

12 After the deportation of Babylon, Iechonias gave birth to Salathiel; Salathiel gave birth to Zorobabel; **13** Zorobabel gave birth to Abioud; Abioud gave birth to Eliakim; Eliakim gave birth to Azor; **14** Azor gave birth to Sadok; Sadok gave birth to Achim; Achim gave birth to Elioud; **15** Elioud gave birth to Eleazar; Eleazar gave birth to Mathan; Mathan gave birth to Iachob; **16** Iachob gave birth to Iosaph the husband of Maria, from whom was born Isus, the one called Christ.

GRAMMAR:

"From whom" (verse 16) is significant because "whom" is a feminine pronoun by which Matthew breaks his pattern, saying "gave birth to" when he arrives at Joseph. Joseph was the husband of Mary, "from whom" (from "her") was born Jesus. Thus, Matthew hints at the virgin birth of Christ before he expressly describes it in the next verses.

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

The genealogy in this section is not found in the OT, but they are names known from writings composed in-between the times of the OT and the NT. There is about a 400-year gap between the two testaments when Palestine was controlled by the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans, in that order.

COMMENTS:

After the deportation into Babylon, this history extends into the inter-testamental period and we have no record in this generation to collaborate this genealogy. The point Matthew is making, however, is clear: Jesus was descended from Abraham, through David (cf. 1:1). Notice that Joseph is identified in verse 16 as the "husband" of Mary, even though subsequent verses will show that they were only engaged, a more serious and binding relationship in early Judaism than in modern cultures.

TRANSLATION - 1:17-25:

17 Therefore all the generations from Abraam until David, fourteen generations, and from David until the deportation of Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation of Babylon until Christ, fourteen generations.

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was thus. Being engaged his mother, Marias, to Ioseph, before they came together, there was found in her womb, having from the Holy Spirit; **19** And Ioseph, her husband, being a righteous [man] and not desiring to disgrace her he willed

secretly to divorce her. **20** And these things he was considering [when] behold, an angel of the Lord in a dream appeared to him, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Marias [as] your wife. For that in her being born from the Holy Spirit He is. **21** And she will give birth to a son, and you will name him 'Isus;' for This one will save His people from their sins."

22 And this complete had happened in order that it might be fulfilled the saying by the Lord through the prophet saying, **23** 'Behold the virgin will have in the womb and she will give birth to a son and they will call his name 'Emmanuel,'" which is being translated "With us, God." **24** Then Ioseph waking up from the sleep did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and he took his wife, **25** and he did not know her until when she gave birth to a son; and he called his name 'Isus.'

WORDS:

"Womb" (verse 18) is used 9 times and can refer to the "belly, womb" or "glutton." "Holy Spirit" is found in the OT only in Psalm 51:11; and in Isaiah 63:10-11. "Spirit" is used 19 times in Matthew; 379 times in the NT. It can be translated "breath, wind, spirit." Sometimes it refers to man's spirit (Matt. 5:3), sometimes to evil spirits (8:16), sometimes to the Holy Spirit, the third member of Deity (4:1). "Holy" means "dedicated to God, pure, saints." It is used 233 times, 10 times in Matthew. "To disgrace" (verse 19) is only used twice in the NT; here and Col. 2:15. "To divorce" translates a verb which has a much broader meaning than "divorce." It can mean to "set free, release, send away." It is used 66 times. "Righteous" is used often in Matthew (17 times out of 79 times in the NT). It can be translated "upright, just, honest, good, right." It refers to someone who conscientiously keeps God's commandments.

"Considering" (verse 20) is only used in Matthew (1:20; 9:4). "Behold" is used 200 times and indicates the author is especially wanting to draw the reader's and listener's attention to something. "Angel" (175 times in the NT) is found 20 times in Matthew; it can be translated "messenger." The word "dream" is only found in Matthew (1:20; 2:12-13, 19, 22; 27:19).

"Save" (106 times in the NT) can mean rescue from trouble or it can carry theological connotations, as it does here. It is used 15 times in Matthew. "People" is used 14 times in Matthew to refer to Israel; 142 times in the NT. It gives us the English word "laity." "Sins" is found 7 times in Matthew, out of 173 times in the NT: 1:21; 3:6; 9:2, 5-6; 12:31; 26:28.

"To be fulfilled" (verse 22) is used 86 times in the NT, 16 times in Matthew as the writer emphasizes Jesus has brought to a completion the plans God was working out in the OT. "Prophet" is used 144 times in the NT, 37 times in Matthew.

"Behold" (verse 23) is found 62 times in Matthew, to draw the reader's / audience's attention to something important. "Virgin" is used 15 times in the NT, four times in Matthew (1:23; 25:1, 7, 11). It can refer to a male or female who has not had sexual relations with anyone. "Emmanuel" is found only here in the NT. It translates literally "God with us." Early in patriarchal history, Abimelech recognized that God was with Abraham (Gen. 21:22). Abraham promised his servant, on the way to find a wife for Isaac, that the Lord's angel would be with him (Gen. 24:40). God promised Isaac He would be with him (26:3, 24). Again, Abimelech recognized God was with Isaac (Gen. 26:28). Isaac received that promise in 28:15. Jacob received the promise in Gen. 31:3. Before Jacob leaves Canaan to enter Egypt in Gen. 46:4, God promised Jacob that he will be with him. Finally, Israel said to Joseph before he died, "God will be with you" (48:21). Now "God with us" is found in the person of Jesus Christ.

"To command" (verse 24) is found 7 times in the NT in Matthew (1:24; 8:4), Mark (1:44), Luke (5:14), and Acts (10:33, 48; 17:30).

"To know" (verse 25) is the normal verb "to know" (222 times in the NT) but, as in Genesis, its connotations here include intimate knowledge, that is, sexual relations.

GRAMMAR:

The verb translated "had happened" (verse 22) is a perfect tense verb which means it carries continuing relevance. Something happened in the past but its effects are still felt in the present.

PARALLELS:
        Luke's parallel to the birth of Jesus is found in 1:26-38; 2:1-20. It is clear that Matthew's account moves swiftly past Luke's account. They both record the announcements by an angel, Matthew to Joseph and Luke to Mary, but Luke's account deals with Jesus' earliest days while he is still in the manger in Bethlehem, while Matthew's moves quickly to the time when Joseph and Mary are in a home (2:11).

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:
        The idea that the Spirit is "holy" is a distinctive New Testament emphasis. The phrase "that it might be fulfilled" is a distinctive phrase and emphasis by Matthew among the gospel writers. The phrase is used at 1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14, 35; 15:7; 21:4; 26:56; 27:9. Matthew uses it to show that Jesus is the consummation of the OT promises of a Savior.

ARCHAEOLOGY:
        Jewish weddings began with an engagement period (Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:27; 2:5) one year before the wedding with the young woman (in her early teens, at age 12 or 13) lived with her parents. Yet, the engagement period was considered in a more serious light than in modern times for an engaged woman could be punished for fornication as an adulteress (Deut. 22:23-24). The formal wedding took place when the man took his fiancee into his home (1:20 where Mary is considered Joseph's "wife;" see also 25:1-13). According to Jewish tradition, Joseph could have given Mary a writ of divorce in front of two witnesses.

COMMENTS:
        We do not know why Matthew chose to divide his genealogy into three lists of "fourteen." Actually, we have thirteen names, then fourteen, then thirteen, which means in the first and last list, the numbering would have to be inclusive. That is not unusual in such lists.
        God communicates with Joseph through an "angel of the Lord," in a vision, which He does again in 2:12-13, 19, 22 (see also 27:19). Among the patriarchs, the "angel of the Lord" is found in Genesis 16:7, 9-11; 22:11, 15. Clearly God is working, again, in a special way with this new Son of Abraham. Matthew is clear that Joseph did exactly as the angel commanded him.
        Matthew makes it clear that there is no sexual relationship between God, or the Holy Spirit, and Mary, as happened often in pagan myths. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Divine Seed of the Word (cf. John 1:1) entered Mary's womb. The Holy Spirit will appear again at Jesus' baptism (3:16-17) and will be involved, in some way, with His resurrection (cf. Rom. 1:4). The coming of the Holy Spirit would indicate to knowledgeable Jews that the new age had arrived (Isa. 11:2; 42:1; 61:1; Joel 2:28-32; Ezek. 36:26-27).
        Joseph was a "righteous" man in the sense that he did his best to fulfill the obligations commandments of the Law of Moses, yet he was also merciful as he did not want to make a public embarrassment of Mary. Joseph named Jesus, as the angel commanded, and accepted Jesus as his adopted son, a descendant of King David. The naming usually happened when the child was 8 days old, at his circumcision (Luke 2:21).
        Jesus will save "His people" from their sins. The gospel will show that "His people" is broader than just the family of Abraham. Jesus will designate it His "Church" in 16:18. He will also state that His blood will be for the forgiveness of sins (26:28). This statement is an allusion to Psalm 130:8. The fact that Jesus would save or "deliver" His people from sins shows that Jesus did not come, in fulfillment of contemporary expectations, to be an earthly king and lead Israel to freedom from Roman oppression.
        The birth from the virgin is found in prophecy, in Isaiah 7:14. Matthew states that the "Lord" spoke this prophecy through His prophet. This shows that Matthew had a high view of the inspiration of Scripture. In other words, what was written in the OT was from the mouth of the Lord. Matthew, as he usually does, quotes from the LXX. The nature of this Man born from a virgin is such that He can be designated "God with us" or "Emmanuel" (see Isa. 8:8) This was a promise often given to the patriarchs in Genesis and Jesus will return to heaven with this

promise on His lips (Matt. 28:20). "Emmanuel" is not His proper name, nor as most commentators state, His role, as much as it describes His nature: He is Deity in the flesh.

Matthew's use of "virgin" (*parthenos* in Greek), from the LXX, has stirred much controversy. An exact answer on Isaiah's use of *'alma* is still illusive. The Hebrew word used by Isaiah (7:14; *'alma*) is used seven times. It refers to a young woman, not yet married, and probably a virgin. Through the providence of God, the translators of the LXX used the word *parthenos*, which is less ambiguous. Matthew clearly wants to argue that Jesus was born from a virgin.

A second issue relates to Isaiah's use of the passage in its OT context. Isaiah lived in the mid-700s B. C. during the Assyrian exile. Israel was being threatened by Kings Pekah and Rezin. Isaiah predicted that before this young woman / virgin gave birth and the boy could choose good or evil (7:14-16), the kings would be killed. Such happened, but Israel would eventually fall to Assyria in 722 B. C. Matthew would use that promise of a young woman and narrow the denotation of the term to a virgin and apply it to Jesus Christ who would bring salvation from sins rather than deliverance from physical exile. Matthew will quote several passages in Isaiah chapters 7-9 and apply them to Jesus in these early chapters of his gospel (see for example Isa. 9:1-2 quoted in 4:12-16).

Matthew makes it clear that Joseph and Mary did not have sexual relations before Jesus' birth; that fact protects the teaching that Jesus did not have a human father. Once Jesus was born, Joseph had further sexual relations with Mary. The denotation of the verb "to know" here carries the idea of sexual relations. Joseph and Mary will have James, Joseph, Simon, Judas, and perhaps a minimum of two daughters (Matt. 13:55-56). Jesus is, therefore, a legal son of Joseph, a descendant of King David (Matt. 13:55; John 6:42).

The Catholic Church and Orthodox Church believe that Mary remained perpetually a virgin, out of the mistaken view that virginity is somehow more holy than child birth. There is no basis in God's word for this view. In fact, the Bible very clearly teaches otherwise, a fact which the Orthodox Bible hides. The word translated "until" (1:25) is used 49 times in the Gospel of Matthew and it is *left out* of the Orthodox translation. In the other 48 times, it is translated as "până la" or "până" (1:17; 2:9, 13, 15; 5:18, 25-26; 10:11, 23; 11:12-13, 23; 12:20; 13:30, 33; 14:22; 16:28; 17:9, 17; 18:21-22, 30, 34; 20:8; 22:26, 44; 23:35, 39; 24:21, 27, 31, 34, 39; 26:29, 36, 38, 58; 27:8, 45, 51, 64; 28:20) or "înainte" (5:18). Again, 1:25 is the *only* place where the Orthodox Bible does not translate "until" *at all*. Clearly, with the adverb in the text, it strongly suggests that Joseph and Mary had sexual relations after Jesus' birth, a fact which other texts verify (Matt. 13:55-56; John 7:3-5). In order to maintain the suggestion that Mary remained a virgin, the Orthodox Bible inserts in parentheses in Matthew 13:55-56 "cousins" (*verii / verișoarele*) as legitimate translations for *frații / surorile*. But, there is no legitimate reason to so interpret those words, except for a preconceived commitment to a doctrine which, otherwise, is not found in Scripture. The Orthodox translation keeps "brothers" in the John 7 text.

APPLICATION:

There are at least four ways in which Matthew teaches the virgin birth of Jesus in this text. In verse 18, Mary is described as pregnant before she and Joseph "came together." Secondly, Joseph's desire to send her away privately shows that they had not had any sexual relationship. In verse 20, the angel directly says the baby born in Mary was "of the Holy Spirit." The quotation from Isaiah 7:14 and the description of Mary as a "virgin" plainly teaches such a doctrine. Finally, Joseph did not have sexual relations with Mary until after Jesus was born (1:25).

There are also a number of reasons why this doctrine is important to biblical theology. God has no flesh and blood (cf. Luke 24:39); He is eternal. Therefore, God cannot die. Jesus had to have a human mother in order to have the physical nature so that He could die for sins (Rom. 8:3). Related to this, God cannot be tempted to sin (James 1:13), but in order for Jesus to be the perfect offering for mankind He had to be tempted to sin, yet have the spiritual

strength to say no (Heb. 4:15-16). Therefore, the teaching that Jesus was born from a virgin is at the theological foundation of the Bible.