

# Matthew 1

by John Nelson Darby

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*John Nelson Darby's sermon on Matthew 1 explores the genealogy and divine nature of Jesus, emphasizing His fulfillment of prophecy and the significance of His birth.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 2:7, Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:1-17, Matthew 1:20-23, Luke 1:31-33, John 1:14, Romans 1:3-4, Galatians 4:4-5, Philippians 2:7-8, Hebrews 2:14-17

**Topics:** "Fulfillment of Prophecy", "Genealogy of Jesus"

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## Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the significance of the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1, illustrating how it fulfills God's promises to Israel and highlights the divine grace amidst human sin. He notes the careful structure of the genealogy, divided into three periods, and the importance of Joseph's lineage as the legal heir to David. The sermon also discusses the miraculous conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit and the angel's message to Joseph, affirming Jesus as Jehovah the Saviour and Emmanuel. Darby underscores the mystery of Christ's dual nature as both fully human and fully divine, and the profound implications of His birth for both Israel and humanity. Ultimately, he calls attention to the obedience of Joseph, who recognizes and responds to God's revelation.

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## Transcript

The object of the Spirit of God, in this Gospel, being to present Jehovah as fulfilling the promises made to Israel, and the prophecies that relate to the Messiah (and no one can fail to be struck with the number of references to their fulfilment), He commences with the genealogy of the Lord, starting from David and Abraham, the two stocks from which the Messianic genealogy sprang, and to which the promises had been made. The genealogy is divided into three periods, conformably to three great divisions of the history of the people: from Abraham to the establishment of royalty, in the person of David; from the establishment of royalty to the captivity; and from the captivity to Jesus.

We may observe that the Holy Ghost mentions, in this genealogy, the grievous sins committed by the persons whose names are given, magnifying the sovereign grace of God who could bestow a Saviour in connection with such sins as those of Judah, with a poor Moabitess brought in amidst His people, and with crimes like those of David.

It is the legal genealogy which is given here, that is to say, the genealogy of Joseph, of whom Christ was the rightful heir according to Jewish law. The evangelist has omitted three kings of the parentage of Ahab, in order to have the fourteen generations in each period. Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim are also omitted. The

object of the genealogy is not at all affected by this circumstance. The point was to give it as recognised by the Jews, and all the kings were well known to all.

The evangelist briefly relates the facts concerning the birth of Jesus-facts which are of infinite and eternal importance, not only to the Jews, who were immediately interested in them, but to ourselves-facts in which God has deigned to link His own glory with our interests, with man.

Mary was betrothed to Joseph. Her posterity was consequently legally that of Joseph, as to the rights of inheritance; but the child she carried in her womb was of divine origin, conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost. The angel of Jehovah is sent, as the instrument of providence, to satisfy the tender conscience and upright heart of Joseph, by communicating to him that that which Mary had conceived was of the Holy Ghost.

We may remark here, that the angel on this occasion addresses Joseph as "son of David." The Holy Ghost thus draws our attention to the relationship of Joseph (the reputed father of Jesus) to David, Mary being called his wife. The angel gives at the same time the name of Jesus (that is, Jehovah the Saviour) to the child that should be born. He applies this name to the deliverance of Israel from the condition into which sin had plunged them. [See Footnote #2] All these circumstances happened, in order to fulfil that which Jehovah had said by the mouth of His prophet, "Behold a [the] virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

Here then is that which the Spirit of God sets before us in these few verses: Jesus, the Son of David, conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost; Jehovah, the Saviour, who delivers Israel from their sins; God with them; He who accomplished those marvellous prophecies which, more or less plainly, drew the outline that the Lord Jesus alone could fill up.

Joseph, a just man, simple in heart and obedient, discerns without difficulty the revelation of the Lord, and obeys it.

These titles stamp the character of this Gospel, that is, of the way Christ is presented in it. And how wonderful this revelation of Him by whom the words and promises of Jehovah were to be fulfilled! What a groundwork of truth for the understanding of what this glorious and mysterious Person was, of whom the Old Testament had said enough to awaken the desires and to confound the minds of the people to whom He was given!

Born of a woman, born under the law, heir to all the rights of David according to the flesh, also the Son of God, Jehovah the Saviour, God with His people:-who could comprehend or fathom the mystery of His nature in whom all these things were combined? His life in fact, as we shall see, displays the obedience of the perfect man, the perfections and the power of God.

The titles which we have just named, and which we read in chapter 1:20-23, are connected with His glory in the midst of Israel-that is to say, the heir of David, Jesus the Saviour of His people, and Emmanuel. His birth of the Holy Ghost accomplished Psalms 2:7 with regard to Him as a man born on the earth. The name of Jesus, and His conception by the power of the Holy Ghost, no doubt go beyond this relationship, but are linked also in an especial manner with His position in Israel. [See Footnote #3]

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Footnotes for Matthew 1

2: It is written, "For he shall save his people," thus plainly shewing the title of Jehovah contained in the word Jesus or Jehoshua. For Israel was the people of the Lord, that is, of Jehovah.

3: The wider relationship is more distinctively given in the Gospel of Luke, where His genealogy is traced up to Adam; but here the title of Son of man is specially appropriate.

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