

THE HEIR TO DAVID'S THRONE

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Matthew 1:1-17 contains “the book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” The genealogy in these verses includes 14 generations from Abraham to David, 14 generations from David to the Babylonian captivity, and 14 generations from the Babylonian captivity to Christ. It is important to recognize that the point of this genealogy is *not* to list every generation from Abraham to Christ, but to provide sufficient proof that Christ descended from Abraham through David's *royal line*. Jesus is the legitimate heir to the throne of David as established by this record. The text does not claim to include *every* generation, and other scriptures show that certain individuals have been omitted from the 42 generations in Matthew.

From Abraham to David

The 14 generations from Abraham to David (Matt 1:1-6; Luke 3:31-34; Num 26:19-22; Ruth 4:18-22; 1 Chr 1:28,34; 2:1-5,9-15; 4:1) include Abraham, Isaac (Gen 21:1-3), Jacob (Gen 25:21-26), Judah (Gen 29:35; 35:23), Pharez (Gen 38:6-30), Hezron, Ram, Amminadab, Nahshon, Salmon, Boaz, Obed (Ruth 4:13-17), Jesse and David (1 Sam 16:10-13; 17:12-14; 1 Chr 2:13-15). Hezron was among the 70 children of Israel who originally went down into Egypt (Gen 46:8-27). Nahshon was among the generation that came up out of Egypt with Moses (Num 1:5-7; 2:3; 7:12,17; 10:14). For the 430 year sojourn in Egypt, only two generations are recorded between Hezron and Nahshon: Ram and Amminadab. Matthew 1 (and also Luke 3 and the other genealogies for this period that are recorded in the scriptures) apparently omits several generations from Hezron to Nahshon. Also, for the approximate 300 years between Nahshon and Boaz, only Salmon is given in Matthew 1:4-5, Luke 3:32, Ruth 4:20-21 and 1 Chronicles 2:11. There is no possible way that Rahab actually gave birth to Boaz. Unquestionably, many generations are excluded between Nahshon and Boaz. Fourteen generations are given in God's word for the period between Abraham and David, but it is clear that there were actually more than that during that time. However, enough are given to remove any doubt about David's descent from Abraham through Judah. It is also significant that two of the most righteous women of the Bible, Rahab and Ruth, are ancestors of David and Christ.

From David to Babylon

The 14 generations from David to the Babylonian captivity (Matt 1:6-11; 1 Chr 3:1-17) include Solomon (2 Sam 5:13-14; 12:24; 1 Chr 3:1-5), Rehoboam (1 Kgs 11:43; 14:31; 2 Chr 9:31), Abijah (1 Kgs 14:31; 2 Chr 11:18-22; 12:16), Asa (1 Kgs 15:8-10; 2 Chr 14:1), Jehoshaphat (1 Kgs 15:24; 2 Chr 16:13-17:1), Jehoram (1 Kgs 22:50; 2 Kgs 8:16; 2 Chr 21:1-6), Uzziah (2 Kgs 14:18-21; 15:1-3; 2 Chr 25:26-26:3; Isa 1:1; Hos 1:1), Jotham (2 Kgs 15:5-7,32-33; 1 Chr 5:17; 2 Chr 26:21-27:1; Isa 1:1; Hos 1:1; Mic 1:1), Ahaz (2 Kgs 15:38-16:1; 2 Chr 27:9; Isa 1:1; 7:1-13; Hos 1:1; Mic 1:1), Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:1-2; 2 Chr 28:27-29:1; Isa 1:1; Hos 1:1; Mic 1:1), Manasseh (2 Kgs 20:21-21:1; 2 Chr 32:33; Jer 15:4), Amon (2 Kgs 21:18-19; 2 Chr 33:20-23), Josiah (2 Kgs 21:23-22:1; 2 Chr 33:23-25; Jer 1:2; 25:3; Zeph 1:1), and Jehoniah (2 Kgs 24:6-16; 25:27-30; 1 Chr 3:16; 2 Chr 36:5-10; Jer 22:24-30; 24:1; 27:20; 37:1; 52:31-34).

There are 4 generations (all of them kings) omitted for this time period: 1) king Ahaziah the son of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat (2 Kgs 8:24-26; 9:29; 2 Chr 21:16-

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(continued)

22:2); 2) king Joash the son of Ahaziah (2 Kgs 11:1-3; 2 Chr 22:10-12); 3) king Amaziah the son of Joash and the father of Uzziah (2 Kgs 12:20-21; 14:1-3; 2 Chr 24:22-25:2); and 4) king Jehoiakim the son of Josiah and the father of Jechoniah (2 Kgs 23:34-37; 1 Chr 3:15; 2 Chr 36:4-5; Jer 1:3; 22:18-19; 25:1; 26:1; 27:1; 35:1; 36:1,9,20-32; 45:1; 46:2). Fourteen generations are given, but there were actually 18 generations during the time from David to Jechoniah and the Babylonian captivity. But the key point here is that this is king David's direct royal line. David had several wives and many descendants, but Christ descended through the kings.

From Babylon to Christ

The 14 generations from the Babylonian captivity to Christ (Matt 1:12-16) include Jechoniah, Shealtiel (1 Chr 3:17), Zerubbabel (Ezra 2:2; 3:2,8; 4:2-3; 5:2; Neh 7:7; 12:1,47; Hag 1:1,12,14; 2:2-4,20-23; Zech 4:6-10), Abiud, Eliakim, Azor, Zadok, Achim, Eliud, Eleazar, Matthan, Jacob, Joseph and Jesus (Matt 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-2:21). The lineage of Christ in Luke 3:23-27 records 22 generations from Shealtiel to Christ, a total of 9 more generations than Matthew 1:12-16 records for the equivalent period of time. It is obvious that several generations are omitted in Matthew for the period from the Babylonian captivity to the birth of Christ.

Fourteen generations are given, but that is not all there was during that time. Unlike the genealogies of Genesis chapters 5 and 11 that give the exact ages of the fathers when the person of the next generation was born, Matthew 1 only says that one man "begat" another. The genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 thus have no gaps. But it is completely accurate for Matthew 1 to say that one man "begat" another, even if there were other generations in between, because the latter individual is still the direct descendant of the former. That is why Jesus, for example, is called the "son of David" and the "son of Abraham" at the beginning of Matthew's genealogy of Christ (Matt 1:1). Having 14 generations for each division of the genealogy would certainly make it easier to remember, but not every generation needed to be included for the purpose of Matthew's genealogy for Christ. The genealogy in Matthew 1 establishes Jesus as the legitimate heir of Joseph (even though he was not his actual offspring), and thus the legitimate heir to David's throne. Matthew 1 establishes Christ's *royal lineage*, and the manner in which the genealogy is divided (pre-kingdom, kingdom, and post-kingdom) demonstrates that this is the purpose of this genealogy. The beginning of the genealogy asserts that Jesus is indeed the "son of David" and the proof of that fact is then provided. Matthew 1:6 does not merely give David's name, but calls him "David the king" both as offspring and progenitor. The kings of Judah from Solomon to Jechoniah are the direct ancestors of Christ. Christ, the firstborn son of Joseph (Matt 1:24-25) is rightfully called the son of David, and rightfully sits upon his throne. Though the physical throne of David became extinct with Jechoniah and Zedekiah (Jer 22:28-30; which is why Jesus refused to be an earthly king, John 6:14-15; 18:36), Jesus is sitting upon David's throne as the king of God's spiritual kingdom, the church (Luke 1:31-33; Matt 16:18-19; John 18:36-37; Acts 2:29-36; Col 1:13; Eph 1:22-23; 5:23; Col 1:18).