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Pastor John W. Brown

Calvary Chapel Central Phoenix

MATTHEW

Chapter 1  
**BACKGROUND AND BIRTH**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. With the Christmas season upon us, we thought it would be an excellent time to teach the Gospel of Matthew.
  - 1. And as I try to do with any new book, I would like to give you some background.
- B. Almost 400 years have passed since the Lord spoke through the Prophet Malachi – the last prophet to speak and write in our Old Testament.
  - 1. In other words, the Lord has been relatively silent in His dealings with mankind.
  - 2. He may have been silent in his dealing with mankind, but in the meantime – he has also been setting the stage for the Savior!
- C. Just about everything changes in this 400-year span of time.
  - 1. It is a new culture with new institutions and social groups with a new and powerful government in charge of things.
  - 2. At the close of the Old Testament – the Medo-Persian Empire was “large and in charge.”
  - 3. Now at time of Matthew, it is the Roman Empire, but there were some very significant events that took place between the span of this span of 400 years!
    - a) You see war has always been a part on mankind’s life.
    - b) One nation or tribe would increase in power and numbers – and overthrow the reigning government. They would stay in power until some other faction would gain enough power to overthrow them, and this went on and on.
      - (1) BTW – that is not much different than today, the only problem has been that the U.S. has been powerful enough (up to this point) to keep any other government from taking us down. But they are certainly trying!
  - 4. Why are the events that took place in those 400 years important?
    - a) Because they “set the stage” for the birth of Jesus!
    - b) They help us know how things got the way they were at the time of His birth.
    - c) I will be brief, but I will fill in the blanks of these 400 years.
      - (1) In approximately **480 B.C.** (and please understand – even historians disagree in these exact dates – so I will give them as approximate) Xerxes, who was the Persian King at the time had his last “big win” against the Greeks at Thermopylae but lost the battle of Salamis.
        - (a) Why is that important? Well, it was the last time anyone in the East was a leading world power! The power turned westward.

- (2) I don't know how many of you remember our studies in the book of Daniel, but he spoke of a "*goat with a great horn*" rising up and capturing that world power.
  - (a) Well, that "*goat with a great horn*" was Alexander the Great and under him the Greeks took the reigns over the Persians in approximately **333 B.C.** (Battle at Issus)
- (3) Alexander conquered just about everything in his sight, but spared Jerusalem when someone pointed out that Daniel had spoken of him prophetically.
  - (a) When he died – he divided his kingdom among his 4 generals.
- (4) Jumping ahead a bit – in **203 B.C.** Jerusalem fell to "Antiochus The Great" and 130 years later Antiochus Epiphanes defiled the temple in Jerusalem as the prophet Daniel said he would: **Daniel 8:8-12**  
**Therefore the male goat (Alexander The Great) grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones (his generals) came up toward the four winds of heaven. <sup>9</sup> And out of one of them came a little horn (Antiochus Epiphanes) which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land. <sup>10</sup> And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them. <sup>11</sup> He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. <sup>12</sup> Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered.** Thus, Jerusalem came under Syrian influence.
- (5) Jumping again – Pompey – the Roman, took Jerusalem in **63 B.C.** and the Romans are still in charge during the time of Jesus!
- (6) About 20 years later, the Roman senate felt that they needed some control over the Jews, so they appointed a man by the name of Herod (the Edomite) to be king of Judea.
  - (a) Herod and his entire family were very corrupt and wicked people, and this is the climate Jesus is born into.

D. In any given day, in Jerusalem, you would most likely encounter one if not all four different social and political groups known as the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Scribes and the Herodians.

- 1. **The Pharisees** were the "Bible thumpers" of the day. The "fundamentalists" if you will, but not in a good way.
  - a) They were very strict legalists bent on preserving the Jewish lifestyle at all costs.
  - b) But very little conviction of their own sin
- 2. **The Sadducees** were the liberals who were just concerned with "*the lifestyles of the rich and famous.*" Their motto was "*eat drink and be merry.*"
- 3. **The Scribes** were committed to preserving the written Law! They were the "lawyers" of their time. They knew how to split hairs, and they would often miss the intent of the Law an attempt to preserve it!

- a) But it was also these guys that Herod went to when HE needed to find out WHEN Jesus would be born, because they knew the Law.
- 4. **The Herodians** were simply political opportunists who wanted to keep the Herod family on the throne at all costs!
  - a) Now I am pretty sure we still have all these 4 groups around.
    - (1) Religion is still around and just like the **Pharisees** these guys often miss Jesus but have a lot of rules and regulations!
    - (2) We still have the rich and famous **Sadducees**, filling their bellies and not their souls! Just look at Hollywood!
    - (3) We certainly still have the “lawyers” amongst us don’t we. Who like the **Scribes**, are willing to fight over doctrinal issues and specific passages of scripture while missing the main message!
    - (4) And yes, the **Herodians** certainly come to the surface whenever there is an election. And they go to great lengths to defame their opponents so they can keep “Herod” in office.

E. Matthew whose name means “gift of the Lord” was a “**publican**”.

- 1. Meaning he as *a Jew appointed by the Roman government, to collect taxes from his brethren*. You might imagine how popular that made him amongst his own people, who hated the Roman government for lording over them in their own country!
  - a) But he responded to the call of the Lord upon his life and left it all behind to follow Jesus.
  - b) The 4 Gospels were written to 4 different groups of people and *this Gospel, the Gospel of Matthew is written to the Jews*.

II. **MAT 1:1-17 THE RECORD OF THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS THE MESSIAH, THE SON OF DAVID, THE SON OF ABRAHAM: (2) ABRAHAM WAS THE FATHER OF ISAAC, ISAAC THE FATHER OF JACOB, AND JACOB THE FATHER OF JUDAH AND HIS BROTHERS. (3) JUDAH WAS THE FATHER OF PEREZ AND ZERAH BY TAMAR, PEREZ WAS THE FATHER OF HEZRON, AND HEZRON THE FATHER OF RAM. (4) RAM WAS THE FATHER OF AMMINADAB, AMMINADAB THE FATHER OF NAHSHON, AND NAHSHON THE FATHER OF SALMON. (5) SALMON WAS THE FATHER OF BOAZ BY RAHAB, BOAZ WAS THE FATHER OF OBED BY RUTH, AND OBED THE FATHER OF JESSE. (6) JESSE WAS THE FATHER OF DAVID THE KING. DAVID WAS THE FATHER OF SOLOMON BY BATHSHEBA WHO HAD BEEN THE WIFE OF URIA. (7) SOLOMON WAS THE FATHER OF REHOBOAM, REHOBOAM THE FATHER OF ABIJAH, AND ABIJAH THE FATHER OF ASA. (8) ASA WAS THE FATHER OF JEHOSEPHAT, JEHOSEPHAT THE FATHER OF JORAM, AND JORAM THE FATHER OF UZZIAH. (9) UZZIAH WAS THE FATHER OF JOTHAM, JOTHAM THE FATHER OF AHAZ, AND AHAZ THE FATHER OF HEZEKIAH. (10) HEZEKIAH WAS THE FATHER OF MANASSEH, MANASSEH THE FATHER OF AMON, AND AMON THE FATHER OF JOSIAH. (11) JOSIAH BECAME THE FATHER OF JECONIAH AND HIS BROTHERS, AT THE TIME OF THE DEPORTATION TO BABYLON. (12) AFTER THE DEPORTATION TO BABYLON: JECONIAH BECAME THE FATHER OF SHEALTEI, AND SHEALTEI THE FATHER OF ZERUBBABEL. (13) ZERUBBABEL WAS THE FATHER OF ABIHUD, ABIHUD THE FATHER OF ELIAKIM, AND ELIAKIM THE FATHER OF AZOR. (14) AZOR WAS THE FATHER OF ZADOK, ZADOK THE FATHER OF ACHIM, AND ACHIM THE FATHER OF ELIUD. (15) ELIUD WAS THE FATHER OF ELEAZAR, ELEAZAR THE FATHER OF MATTHAN, AND MATTHAN THE FATHER OF JACOB. (16) JACOB WAS THE FATHER**

**OF JOSEPH THE HUSBAND OF MARY, BY WHOM JESUS WAS BORN, WHO IS CALLED THE MESSIAH. (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.**

- A. Remember this is written to the Jew. If Jesus is not connected to Abraham and to David, then He cannot be Messiah.
  - 1. Matthew shows that He is through His “legal” stepfather Joseph. So, He had a legal and legitimate claim to those promises!
    - a) To show you how accurate and specific the Word of God is, notice that Jeconiah is mentioned in **verse 11**. A curse was place on Jeconiah for not obeying the Lord, that none of his descendants should ever sit upon the throne of David. (**Jeremiah 22:24-28, 37:1**).
    - b) If Jesus had been related by blood He could not have been Messiah because of this curse.
  - 2. It is important to point out that there another genealogy in the Gospel of Luke that verifies Jesus’ right to the throne through his mother - Mary.
    - a) It is interesting to note that Jesus’ enemies offered a substitute explanation for everything He did. But they never questioned His genealogy!

### III. CONCLUSION

- A. **Mat 1:18-25** Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. **(19)** And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. **(20)** But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. **(21)** "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." **(22)** Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: **(23)** "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US." **(24)** And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took *Mary* as his wife, **(25)** but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.
  - 1. After almost 400 years of silence, the Lord speaks and when he does – they are words of comfort to the future stepfather of His Son to not be afraid.
    - a) And he announces his Son as God!