

# **TANGAZA COLLEGE**

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**THE CONSTITUENT COLLEGE OF THE  
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA**

## **AN EXEGESIS OF MATTHEW 1:2-16**

**THE INCLUSION OF THE FIVE WOMEN AS A PARADIGM FOR  
GENDER EQUALITY IN CHRISTIAN LIFE AND MINISTRY**

**BY**

**FERENA LAMBE, OFM CONV.**

**FEBRUARY, 2002**

**NAIROBI-KENYA**

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FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF  
ARTS IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES.

**FEBRUARY, 2002.**

**NAIROBI-KENYA.**

# STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this long essay is my original work achieved through my personal readings, scientific research methods and critical reflections. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

Signed: .....


Br. Ferena Lambe, OFM Conv.

(Student)

Date: 7-02-2002.....

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This Long Essay has been submitted for Examination with my approval as a College Supervisor.

Signed: .....

Rev. Sr. Carmel Powell, FMM.

(Supervisor/Tutor)

Date: 7-2-02.....

# **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my Mum, Selestina Mumba Chipaya, and to my three young sisters (Elizabeth, Christina, and Anne) from whom I first experienced the initiative and power of an African woman in the family.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Academic works are collaborative products, and this work is no exception. My debts of gratitude are innumerable. Foremost, I am greatly indebted to my tutor, Sr. Carmel Powell, FMM., for her patient and supportive guidance during the whole course of my writing this essay. I am grateful, too, to the following people who generously accepted to proof read my work and offered fruitful criticisms that helped shape and sharpen my views: Fr. Jude Rochford, OFM Conv., Fr. Alexander Ngosa, OFM Conv., Fr. David Blowey, OFM Conv., Sr. Catherine Khayeli, SND., Sr. Theresa Makau, ASE., and Br. Christian Gisamonyo, FMS. I sincerely thank Fr. Angelo Paleri, OFM Conv. and Fr. Angelo O'Hagan, OFM. who were the first to inspire me to appreciate the Word of God through critical studies. My work would not have been completed without the fraternal and material support from my superiors, confreres, and benefactors. Their patience, encouragements and criticisms have been the burning force throughout my research work.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ABD	<i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
CBQ	<i>The Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
DJG	<i>Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels</i>
EDB	<i>Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible</i>
EDNT	<i>Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
ZPEB	<i>Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible</i>
B.C.E.	<i>Before Common Era</i>
C.E.	<i>Common Era</i>
Ibid	<i>The Source is the same as the footnote immediately preceding it (ibidem)</i>
Mss	<i>Manuscripts</i>
Op cit.	<i>In the work already quoted (opere citato).</i>
Sic.	<i>The phrase or word is quoted accurately, but it is incorrect</i>
LXX	<i>Septuagint</i>
MT	<i>Masoretic Texts</i>
Gen	<i>Genesis</i>
Exodus	<i>Exodus</i>
Num	<i>Numbers</i>
Deut	<i>Deuteronomy</i>
Josh	<i>Joshua</i>
Ruth	<i>Ruth</i>
Sam	<i>Samuel</i>
Kgs	<i>Kings</i>
Chro	<i>Chronicles</i>
Ezra	<i>Ezra</i>
Psalms	<i>Psalms</i>
Sir	<i>Sirach</i>
Isaiah	<i>Isaiah</i>
Jer	<i>Jeremiah</i>
Hos	<i>Hosea</i>
Esd	<i>Esdras</i>
Jub	<i>Jubilee</i>
Matt	<i>Matthew</i>
Mark	<i>Mark</i>
Luke	<i>Luke</i>
Heb	<i>Hebrew</i>
Jam	<i>James</i>
1 Clem	<i>1 Clement</i>

# GENERAL INTRODUCTION

## 1. EXPOSITION OF THE TOPIC

Substantially, this is an exegetical investigation that analyses Matthew 1:2-16 in order to expose its original message. It gives particular reference to the inclusion of the five women, arguing that their inclusion is a paradigm for gender equality in Christian life and ministry.

## 2. MOTIVATION AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

A number of issues within the text have motivated me to embark on a more detailed exegesis of this pericope: why Matthew prefaced his Gospel with a genealogy, and the inclusion of the five women? Because of my personal hermeneutical stance, I have given particular attention to the presence of the women in this text.<sup>1</sup> My objective therefore, is to unveil what lies behind this genealogy. I hope to bring to surface its theology and to answer some of the questions raised by the text, especially the presence of the women.

## 3. PRESUPPOSITIONS AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

In this study many issues have been presupposed, based on what many biblical scholars have agreed upon. That is, issues that cannot be demonstrated with certainty. The study is limited only to what is pertinent to our topic. It does not venture into everything that

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<sup>1</sup> I come from an African Society (the Kaonde community of Zambia) where women, though instrumental in the life of the community, are still played down. Both in the Church and civil society women are still the minority in areas of responsibility and leadership. Not only in Zambia, but also in most African societies women are still considered to be subordinate to men.

the genealogy implies. For example, those verses (Matt 1:13-16b) of the genealogy that lack documentary sources will not be analysed in great detail.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY, STRUCTURE, AND CONTENT OF THE STUDY

In this investigation, I have employed various biblical and socio-scientific methods.<sup>2</sup> Its fruit is a systematic synthesis of what some renowned biblical scholars have said on the same text. However, such a synthesis cannot be complete without my personal and original contributions. In order to have a well-founded exegetical investigation, I have used the Greek translation.<sup>3</sup> All English translations are from the *Revised Standard Version*.<sup>4</sup> The full text (Greek and English) is in the appendix.

This study has three Chapters, with General Introduction and Conclusion. Each Chapter has its own short introduction and conclusion. Chapter one is a preliminary exegesis that maps out a platform for a detailed exegesis. Chapter two presents a detailed exegesis of the text. It is the springboard of our work. The theology, with its particular reference to the five women as a paradigm for gender equality in Christian life, is presented in Chapter three. As a purely exegetical work, it does not give pastoral application, but simply exposes the theological themes to the public.

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<sup>2</sup> By Biblical and socio-scientific methods, I mean historical, textual, form and literary criticisms. That is, tools that help analyse an ancient text in a scientific manner.

<sup>3</sup> Barbara Aland, and others. eds., The Greek New Testament. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (D-Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994).

<sup>4</sup> The Holy Bible. Revised Standard Version: with the Apocrypha/ Deuterocanonical. (New York: Collins, 1973).

# CHAPTER ONE

## SITUATING THE TEXT: PRELIMINARY EXEGESIS

### INTRODUCTION

This introductory Chapter presents the necessary exegetical steps that are pivotal to the exegesis of our pericope. It maps out the platform on which a detailed exegetical part is to be constructed. It begins by analysing the delimitation of our text, looking at the *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem*.<sup>5</sup> Then, it answers the questions pertaining to the genre and structure of our text. This is important because form and meaning are directly interrelated. The exposition of the remote and immediate contexts of our pericope will follow thereafter.

The next step will be the analysis of parallel texts because parallel texts cast light on the pericope under analysis. The last analysis will be the historical setting of the text. This is a necessary exegetical stage because scriptural texts bear the marks of the world in which they were created and to whom they were addressed. All these analyses will lay down a foundation for further detailed exegesis of the text.

### 1.1. DELIMITATION OF THE TEXT

#### 1.1.1. The Terminus a Quo

The *terminus a quo* of our pericope is Matthew 1:2. The first verse lacks the structure and the formula (A ἐγέννησεν B), which are used in Matthew 1:2-16. Instead, it uses a different formula in a reverse order: B υἱοῦ A. Moreover, the opening phrase, Βίβλος γενέσεως, suggests that 1:1 is an introduction to what follows.

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<sup>5</sup> That is, from where the pericope begins (*terminus a quo*) and ends (*terminus ad quem*).

There are different views as to whether 1:1 refers only to the genealogy or to the whole Gospel. Some biblical scholars think that it introduces the whole Gospel.<sup>6</sup> Others argue that it simply introduces the genealogy, or to some extent, the infancy narratives.<sup>7</sup> Both arguments separate 1:1 from the proceeding verses. In this paper we hold a 'middle' argument that this first verse has a double function. It introduces the genealogy and functions as the title of the entire Gospel. Thus, the phrase, Βίβλος γενέσεως, is like a telescope that can be extended to

include more and more of what Matthew is beginning to write about. First it covers the genealogy which immediately follows it; then it can refer to the entire infancy narrative; thirdly, it can mean 'history or life story'; finally it can refer to the whole new creation which begins with the conception of Jesus and will be completed at his second coming.<sup>8</sup>

Hence, 1:1 is both the introduction to the genealogy, and the general title for the whole Gospel in which Jesus is the author of the new genesis. The genealogy proper begins with 1:2.

### 1.1.2. The Terminus ad Quem

The Matthean genealogy ends with 1:16. The proceeding verse, 1:17, does not contain the genealogical pattern used in 1:2-16. The genealogy has its own unifying structure of ancestral names that begins with Abraham and ends with Jesus who is called the Christ. Matthew 1:17 explains and concludes Matthew 1:2-16.<sup>9</sup> In this way, 1:1 and 1:17 serve as the

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<sup>6</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 18, 19. Even Zahn regards this expression as constituting the superscription of the whole Gospel; the Book of History (cf. Walter Bauer's Greek-English Lexicon, 154).

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*. Sacra Pagina Series. (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1991).

<sup>8</sup> Davies D., and Allison D. C., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew: In three Volumes (The International Critical Commentary) Introduction and Commentary on Matthew I - VII. Vol. I.* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 154.

<sup>9</sup> So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations (Matt 1:17).

frame for the genealogy. The names mentioned (Jesus Christ, David and Abraham) in 1:1 are also found in 1:17, though in the reverse order (Abraham, David, Christ). Both verses relate Jesus to David the King and to Abraham, the Father of all nations. Matthew 1:17 explains the structure of the genealogy by echoing the themes that are hinted at in the opening verse.

Taken together with its *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem* in opposition to the entire Gospel, Matthew 1:2-16 has its own distinct unity and structure based on a pattern of three sets of fourteen generations. It is “set off as a unity by an inclusion between the introduction in 1:1 and the conclusion in 1:17.”<sup>10</sup>

## 1.2. THE FORM AND STRUCTURE OF THE TEXT

### 1.2.1. The Form or Genre

It is unanimously asserted that this text is a genealogy.<sup>11</sup> It has all the elements that make up a genealogy proper, that is, an account of a person or tribe from an ancestor. Among the Jews interest in recording genealogies started after the Babylonian Deportation. During this period the need for Israelite exclusiveness became the major issue for ethnic purity, and genealogies served this purpose.<sup>12</sup>

There are two types of genealogy in the bible: a segmented genealogy and a linear genealogy. The segmented genealogies present a ‘family tree’ by showing how children are related to other family members (Gen 35:22-26). The linear genealogies present names that connect a person to an ancestor in either of two ways: ascending or descending. An ascending

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<sup>10</sup> Raymond E. Brown, The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1993), 50.

<sup>11</sup> Biblical scholars like Raymond Brown (ibid.), Daniel Harrington (op cit.), Davies and Allison (op cit.) all agree that this section is a genealogy of Jesus.

<sup>12</sup> Bruce J. Malina, and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 25.

linear genealogy (Ezra 7:1-5) shows an individual as the son of another (B is the son of A), and it traces one's lineage back to an important ancestor, that is, somebody is always the son of someone (Luke 3:23-38). A descending linear genealogy (Gen 4:17-22) features a father begetting a son (A begot B) and it connects an individual from an important ancestor.<sup>13</sup>

Linear genealogies have only one function: to ground a claim to power, status, rank, office, or inheritance in an earlier ancestor. Such genealogies are often used by rulers to justify their right to rule and by office-holders of all types to support their claim.<sup>14</sup>

Ironically, our pericope is a descending linear genealogy, in which somebody is always the father of someone. In the ancient world, including the Israelites, genealogies were composed to establish legitimacy, claim, rights, or royal function of an individual. The Matthean genealogy thus roots Jesus firmly within the history of God's people, authenticating him as the Messiah.

### 1.2.2. Structure and Organisation

Matthew 1:17 states clearly how the genealogy is structured. It is arranged in a pattern of fourteen generations, of which each set of fourteen is divided by an important event. Matthew 1:2-6a narrates names from Abraham to David, that is, from Pre-monarchical period

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<sup>13</sup> Mark W. Chavalas, "Genealogy." in EDB, (2000), 490. We notice that all these Old Testament genealogies are patriarchal (androcentric), they only record/present male generations, the system that the Matthean genealogy ironically criticizes by its inclusion of the five women.

<sup>14</sup> Robert R. Wilson, "Genealogy." in ABD Vol. 5, ed. by David N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 931.

to Monarchical period.<sup>15</sup> The names found in this section are taken from the LXX 1 Chronicles 1:28, 34; 2:1-15 (cf. Ruth 4:18-22). The second set (Matt 1:6b-12) covers the period from the Monarchy to the Babylonian Deportation. It starts from King David and ends with Jechoniah. The third section (Matt 1:13a-16) gives names of ancestors after the Babylonian Deportation to Jesus who is called the Christ. The names in this last set are found nowhere else in the Bible.<sup>16</sup>

### 1.3. THE CONTEXT OF THE TEXT<sup>17</sup>

#### 1.3.1. The Remote Context

The remote context of our pericope is the first narrative block of the Gospel that begins at 1:1 and ends at 4:16. As a unity on its own, this first section of “Matthew’s Gospel (1:1-4:16) concentrates on the origin and consequently on the person of Jesus Messiah.”<sup>18</sup> What we have in Matthew 4:17 (From that time Jesus began to preach ...) implies a change of topic and time. It inaugurates a new stage in the life of Jesus, different from the infancy narratives. Matthew 4:17 thus opens up a new page of Jesus’ life, the public ministry. The other reason why Matthew 1:1-4:16 is taken as a unity is that it is permeated with the same Christological theme of Jesus as the Son of God. This theme runs throughout the section that

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<sup>15</sup> As Adrian Leske puts it, “the genealogy is presented in a pattern covering three periods of Israel’s history. Verses 2-6a cover the pre-monarchic period from Abraham to David, the two ancestors just mentioned in verse 1, thus firmly linking Jesus to this formative period. David is explicitly referred to as ‘the King’ because in him begins the dynastic principle from which the messianic hope emerged.” Adrian Leske, “Matthew” in The International Bible Commentary: A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-First Century, ed. by William R. Farmer (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 1259.

<sup>16</sup> Miriam Perlewitz, The Gospel of Matthew. Message of Biblical Spirituality, Vol. 8 (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1988), 17-18.

<sup>17</sup> By *the context of the text*, I mean the context (position) within which our pericope is found in Matthew’s Gospel. Knowledge about the *context of the text* helps us discover how such a pericope functions in the entire Gospel or contributes to its theology.

<sup>18</sup> Jack D. Kingsbury, Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 42.

contains the genealogy, the birth, the baptism and the temptation of Jesus.<sup>19</sup> Its primary objective is to trace the origin of Jesus the Messiah back to God Himself.

### 1.3.2. The Immediate Context

The immediate context of our pericope is Matthew 1-2. It falls within the narratives properly called the infancy narrative.<sup>20</sup> These are the narratives that contain the genealogy, the birth of Jesus, the coming of the Magi, the flight into Egypt, the killing of the infants by Herod, and the return from Egypt. It has its own integral unity that explains itself. For example, 1:17 explains the organisation of the genealogy; 1:18-25 makes clear the meaning of 1:16 about the virginal conception; and 2:2-6 confirms the Messianic and Davidic kingship of Jesus which are mentioned in 1:1 and 17.

Thus, the remote and immediate contexts of our pericope expand the same Christological themes coiled within the genealogy.

### 1.4. PARALLELISM AND COMPARISON OF THE TEXT

The Gospels of Matthew and Luke are the only New Testament books with genealogies. However, the Matthean and the Lukan genealogies are not parallels, even though they contain a number of similarities.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Brown, *Op cit.*, 40.

<sup>20</sup> Daniel J. Harrington, "Matthew" in *The Collegeville Bible Commentary*, ed. by Dainne Bergant, and Robert J. Karris (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1989), 862.

<sup>21</sup> John L. McKenzie, "The Gospel According to Matthew." in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. by Raymond Brown and others (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1976), 66.

The Matthean genealogy is certainly modelled on some of the Old Testament texts that begin with genealogies. For instance, the story of Noah in Genesis 5-9 begins with a genealogy (5:1-31); the account of Abraham's story in Genesis 11-12 is prefaced with a genealogy (11:10-32); and the Chronicler introduces the account of the kings of Judah with a number of genealogies (1 Chro 1-2). Thus, Matthew followed a common Old Testament scheme of beginning somebody's account with a genealogy. Most probably, he saw the story of Jesus as a continuation of biblical history, a counterpart to Genesis. This reason is reinforced by the opening expression, Βίβλος γενέσεως, translated literally as *a Book of Genesis*.

#### 1.4.1. Parallels in the Old Testament

The Matthean genealogy closely parallels most of the Old Testament genealogies both in content and format. Its main sources are 1 Chronicles 2-3 and Ruth 4:18-22.<sup>22</sup> The opening phrase in 1:1, Βίβλος εγενέσως, is from Genesis 2:4 and Genesis 5:1. In the former text it is translated as 'history of the origin,' thus, a very fitting heading for Matthew 1. In the latter text it equals genealogy, which describes well the contents of Matthew 1:1-17.<sup>23</sup>

The names from Abraham to the Babylonian Exile (Matt 1:2-13) are from 1 Chronicles (1:28, 34; 2:1-15). Ruth 4:18-22 supplies the names from Perez to David (Matt 1:3b-6a) and it is also the source of the formal pattern (A ἐγέννησεν B).<sup>24</sup> The source of the

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<sup>22</sup> Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Op cit., 31

<sup>23</sup> William F. Arndt, and Wilbur Gingrich, trans. *Walter Bauer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago: The University Press, 1979), 154.

<sup>24</sup> Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew* Op cit., 31

names from Abiud to Jacob (Matt 1:13b-16) is not known. Most likely, Matthew received it from oral traditions.<sup>25</sup>

#### 1.4.2. Comparison with the Lukan Genealogy

The Matthean genealogy is not parallel to the genealogy that Luke places after the infancy narratives (Luke 3:23-38). Thus, parallelism cannot be employed in this case. The two texts can be compared, however. There are a number of differences between the two genealogies, which suggest that they were deliberately composed to serve different purposes in their respective Gospels.<sup>26</sup>

The most notable difference lies in their positions in the Gospels. The Matthean genealogy introduces the Gospel, particularly, the birth narratives, and traces the genealogical line down from Abraham through Joseph to Jesus. It is a descending linear genealogy. The Lukan genealogy comes after the infancy narratives and works backward from Jesus through Joseph, David and Abraham to Adam. It is an ascending linear genealogy.<sup>27</sup>

The Matthean genealogy contains fewer (41) names and it is divided into three distinct periods of Israel's history, of fourteen generations each. It traces Jesus' Davidic descent from Solomon, that is, it follows the line of the Kings of Judah. It has Jacob as the father of Joseph. The Lukan genealogy has seventy-seven names and makes no division in Israel's history. The Davidic descent of Jesus is traced through Nathan and has Eli as the

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<sup>25</sup> Probably, the Matthean genealogy, up to Zorobabel, was composed by copying from a text of the Old Testament books. But there are no documentary sources with which we can parallel or compare with what follows thereafter (Matt 1:13-16), McKenzie, *Op cit.*, 66. We also notice that between Joram and Uzziah (Matt 1:8b-9a) Matthew omits the names of Ahaziah, Jehoash and Amaziah. This omission, and the names in the last section (Matt 1:13b-16), account for Matthew's purpose of compelling Jesus' genealogy to fit into three sets of fourteen generations.

<sup>26</sup> Douglas S. Huffma, "Genealogy," in *DJG*, ed. by Joel B. Green, and Scot McKnight, (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1992), 65.

<sup>27</sup> Kurt Aland, ed., *Synopsis of the Four Gospels*. Eng. Ed. (USA: United Bible Societies, 1985), 5-6.

father of Joseph. From these different ways of narrating Jesus' genealogy, we can say that Matthew is emphasising the royal line of David, while Luke is stressing the natural descent.<sup>28</sup>

Unlike the Lukan genealogy and contrary to the custom of his time, Matthew includes five women in a patriarchal genealogy. Together with other differences that are the Matthean characteristics, the inclusion of these women adds weight to what Matthew wants to convey, the surprising instruments that God uses. As it will be shown later, their inclusion is one of the fundamental components of the Matthean genealogy.

However, both genealogies present Joseph as the legal, not natural, father of Jesus; and Mary as his natural mother. They place Jesus in the line with David and Abraham (and Adam, in Luke's case) through Joseph.

In a nutshell, the Matthean genealogy enshrines the story of Jesus in Salvation History, making it a continuation and fulfilment of what began in Genesis and with Abraham. Jesus is he who inaugurates a new creation, a new and perfect beginning. It also stresses the Jewishness of Jesus and the Messianic quality of the Davidic Kingship of Jesus. Hence, for the Matthean Community, this genealogy served to root Jesus, and themselves as his followers, firmly within the history of Israel,<sup>29</sup> *a history in which both men and women were vehicles of God's plan*. The aspect of Jesus as the fulfilment of promises runs throughout the entire Gospel, affirming that, "since the election of Abraham, history has been moving towards Jesus as its goal."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Brown. *Op cit.*, 84-86.

<sup>29</sup> Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew Op cit.*, 32.

<sup>30</sup> Edward Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew*, trans. David E. Green. (London: John Knox Press, 1975), 24. That is, by not following the Old Testament lists of names word by word, it is certain that Matthew had his own intention. For him, the history that began with Abraham's election finds its fulfilment in Jesus (*ibid.* 20).

## 1.5. HISTORICAL SETTINGS OF THE TEXT<sup>31</sup>

### 1.5.1. The Author

Tradition has it that Matthew, the tax collector who became a disciple of Jesus, was the author of this Gospel. But the Gospel itself neither names the author nor makes any claim that the author was an eyewitness to the events that he narrates. However, from the internal evidence we notice that the author was somebody with an extensive education and well versed in Jewish religious life and Scriptures, and with a wide knowledge of the teachings of Jesus. His dependence on other sources like Mark's Gospel, Q source and another tradition commonly referred to as 'M', rules him out as an apostle. He was not an eyewitness to Jesus' words and deeds. He was of a second generation of disciples who was versed in the Hebrew Scriptures through the LXX.<sup>32</sup>

But the traditional view that the Gospel was written by Matthew, the disciple, can imply that the apostle Matthew might have been the patron of the Community from which the Gospel was written. Hence, this paper keeps the name 'Matthew' as the author.<sup>33</sup> In other words, such a great dependence on other documentary sources other than one's personal testimony suggests that he was not an immediate disciple of Jesus.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> The knowledge about the *text's history* and the *history in the text* is a very necessary exegetical step in situating the text. In this section we look at issues pertaining to the text's historical, geographical and cultural settings, and the original author(s) and audience(s). This will enable us understand the text's original purpose and, hence, map out a plan within which our exegesis will be built.

<sup>32</sup> This view is supported also by Brown who argues that Matthew's "dependence upon Mark (and upon Q, a body of Jesus' sayings in Greek known also to Luke) indicates that he was not an eyewitness to the ministry of Jesus; for presumably an eyewitness with his own memories would not draw so totally upon second-hand collections." (Brown, *Op cit.*, 45-46)

<sup>33</sup> Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins: A Sociopolitical and Religious Reading*, (New York: Orbis Books, 2000), 14-15.

<sup>34</sup> Francis Wright Beare, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1981), 7. Beare extends it even as far as to the third generation of disciples.

### 1.5.2. The Time of Composition.

Judging from the way the entire Gospel concerns itself mainly with the relations between the Christian Community and Judaism, it was written most certainly after the fall of Jerusalem to the armies of Titus in 70 C.E. Many times the Gospel refers to the Temple's destruction and interprets theologically its fall as a punishment, with the use of parables (cf. Matt 22:1-44). Its dependence on Mark's Gospel implies that it was written after Mark's Gospel had been written and circulated.<sup>35</sup> If this is the period of its composition, then it was written most probably around 85 C.E.

### 1.5.3. The Place of Composition.

The Gospel bears the marks of the world in which it was created and to which it was addressed.<sup>36</sup> Thus, looking at the way the Gospel deeply concerns itself

with the relations between the Church and Judaism, it must have originated in an area where Church and Synagogue were in continual contact and conflict, and where Jewish influence was sufficiently strong to bring serious trouble to the communities of Christian believers.<sup>37</sup>

It has been a long-standing, accepted opinion that the locale is the city of Antioch-on-the-Orontes in the Roman province of Syria.<sup>38</sup> Antioch was the capital of Syria and it was a predominantly Greek-speaking metropolis with a large Jewish population, probably the largest in Syria. It was a meeting place and melting pot of Jewish and Gentile influences.

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8. Carter argues that it was "written some years after Mark, perhaps a decade or two, when Mark's gospel, probably written in Rome, had become known to Matthew's community in Syria" (p. 16). A good number of biblical scholars place the period of composition between 85 and 90 C.E. i.e., scholars like Brown (*Op cit.*, 46), Donald Senior, *What Are They Saying about the Gospel of Matthew*. (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 4, etc. However, Edwin Freed widens the period from 85 to 110 C.E. in his book, *The New Testament: A Critical Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1994), 118.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>37</sup> Beare, *Op cit.*, 8.

<sup>38</sup> Antioch was in the Southwest corner of the Amuk plain, some 14 or so miles inland from the Mediterranean Sea. From social sciences we know that Antioch in Syria was the third largest city of the Roman Empire after Rome and Alexandria. It was founded by Seleucus I about 300 B.C.E. (Carter, *Op cit.*, 17.).

This is confirmed by the Gospel's Jewish tone, Semitic usage, interest in Jewish customs and rites, heavy emphasis on the fulfilment of prophecy and disputes with Pharisaic Judaism.<sup>39</sup>

The city of Antioch was comprised of two groups: a small elite who controlled the city for their own advantage, and the non-elite comprising a broad spectrum of the very poor population. In this social set up, the person's status, prestige and identity in the eyes of others, or lack of them, rested on ancestry, place and origin, on one's social rank reflecting wealth, and on political office or power.<sup>40</sup> The need for genealogies was for establishing claims to social status or to a particular office/rank, thus providing a map for social interaction and legitimisation.<sup>41</sup>

Like other Mediterranean cities, Antioch was an advanced agrarian society in which gender status and roles were significant to life. Such a society had a "crystallised, hierarchically ordered, male dominated social order marked by social inequality."<sup>42</sup> Women belonged to a private realm, were usually subordinate, unequal and inferior to men, whose domain was the public sphere. The consequence of such a female confinement was that women did not usually participate or take up major roles in public functions. On the contrary, they were the source of shame or male honour: their appearance in public would bring shame to their male counterparts. A respectable woman is one who stayed within the "acceptable social boundaries, that is, within the home and immediate area and venture into more public

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<sup>39</sup> Raymond E. Brown, and John P. Meier, Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1983), 22-23. The Antiochene origin of Matthew is also supported by the way the Gospel gives primacy to Peter whom tradition makes the first bishop of Antioch. This is further confirmed by the fact that Ignatius of Antioch is the first Father of the Church to use Matthew (cf. Ibid., 24).

<sup>40</sup> Carter, Op cit., 21.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 48. In such a set up, the representation of the household in the public domain was a male function. Women's role tended to be restricted to the private sphere, though this division was by no means strictly enforced, especially for elite women. Carter reports that their status was relatively good.

<sup>42</sup> Stuart L. Love, "The Household: A Major Social Component for Gender Analysis in the Gospel of Matthew." BTB 23 (1993), 22.

areas like market-place only when accompanied by a male.”<sup>43</sup> Thus, women brought honour to the family, and the society at large, when they remained in their domestic confinements. This seclusion of women from public appearances meant that “leadership and participation in public worship setting was largely a male affair.”<sup>44</sup>

#### 1.5.4. The Matthean Community: Its Social and Religious Settings.

The Matthean Community consisted of the elite and the non-elite, the powerful and the weak, the rich and the poor, and Jewish and Gentile converts. However, the poor were the majority, as were the Jewish Christians. It seems to be still part of the larger Jewish Community at the time the Gospel was being written. Its locale appears to be urban. This is reflected by the use of the word city, πόλις, twenty-six times in the gospel, as compared to the word village, κώμη, which is used three times.<sup>45</sup> Sociologically, it was “a fragile minority still identified with the Jewish Community by others and still thinking of itself as Jewish.”<sup>46</sup> This is reflected in the Gospel itself. To a great extent, it employs words like *few, little ones, infants, and children*. These images denote small size, vulnerability, and powerlessness, but also ‘specialness’ in God’s purpose.<sup>47</sup>

Even though it was ensconced in an advanced agrarian set-up, women did possess an equal influence in the life of the Community. Similar to other early Christian Communities, it

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<sup>43</sup> Alicia Batten, “More Queries For Q: Women and Christian Origins.” *BTB* 24 (1994), 44.

<sup>44</sup> Love, “The Household:” *Op cit.*, 23. That is, women upheld male honour through their sexual purity and acts of hospitality. It is precisely in such confinements that a woman’s power and control over the house organisation rested.

<sup>45</sup> Beare, *Op cit.*, 10. Mark’s Gospel uses ‘city’ eight times and ‘village’ seven times.

<sup>46</sup> Anthony J. Saldarini, “The Gospel of Matthew and Jewish-Christian Conflict” in *Social History of the Matthean Community: Cross-disciplinary approaches*, ed. by David L. Balch (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 38.

<sup>47</sup> Such images are consonant with the Jewish understanding of election by God that the Jews were chosen precisely because they were the fewest of all peoples (Deut 7:7-8).

accorded freedom and equality to women, as opposed to the intense patriarchy within Judaism and the androcentric mentality of the society. Although authority and power within the Community was in the hands of the male disciples, women seem to have been taking up some leadership roles, and were being incorporated equally with men within the Community. Together with children, women participated equally with men in the Eucharistic meals of the Matthean Church.<sup>48</sup>

It was a Community trying to find its distinct identity within formative Judaism, defending itself from being victimised as an illegitimate sect. Emerging out of the devastating event of 70 C.E., it aims at proposing a way of being a true Israelite, a way marked out by Jesus, the promised Messiah. However, it does not consider itself a different sect, but as part of the entire Jewish heritage. The telling of the Jesus' story, as fulfilment of the Old Testament promises, legitimised the Community as inheriting the same promises made to Abraham and to David. This is the reason Matthew begins with a genealogy that makes Jesus the Messiah, a true Jew and the one in whom the Hebrew Scriptures and prophecies are fulfilled (Matt 1:22-23; 2:15, 17-18, 23, etc.).

“With this type of royal genealogy, Matthew has located Jesus at the top of the social honour scale....”<sup>49</sup> It is a social map that establishes Jesus' messianic role and the Matthean Community's claim within the people of God. This Community challenges any kind of life that marginalizes some people because of their gender, race or status.

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<sup>48</sup> Stuart L. Love, “The Place of Women in Public Setting in Matthew's Gospel: A Sociological Inquiry.” *BTB* 24 (1994), 63. Throughout the Gospel, the religious status of women stands counter to that of women in Mishnaic culture. No longer are men the only ones who come before the Lord... No longer are women attached to males for their public religious identity.

<sup>49</sup> Malina, *Op.cit.*, 24.

## CONCLUSION

After such a preliminary exegesis, we come to a conclusion that our pericope is a genealogy with its own distinguishing marks that are fundamental to its unique purpose in the entire Gospel.<sup>50</sup> This Chapter has mapped out the stage for further investigations of our pericope. It has inserted us into the text's world and structure. It has raised some of the fundamental textual questions, particularly the inclusion of the five women in the patriarchal genealogy, a genealogy that necessarily had to exclude women. Together with other distinctive textual features, the appearance of these women provokes further questions that need immediate exegetical attention. This is the objective of the next Chapter.

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<sup>50</sup> It has its own delimitation, structure and organization, genre, immediate and remote contexts, parallel texts, and historical settings, which give it an integral unity.

## CHAPTER TWO

### A DETAILED EXEGESIS OF MATTHEW 1:2-16

#### INTRODUCTION

This Chapter analyses the pericope in a more detailed manner, excavating what lies behind it. It begins with the textual criticism. This exegetical method will expose us to variant readings of manuscripts of our pericope, leading us to the original readings of the text. The next exegetical layer is the exposition of certain features that seem peculiar to the text: the phrases or words that are unusual in the text.

Thereafter, a detailed exegetical analysis of the text will follow. Since the genealogy is simply a list of names, the section on exegesis will explicate the personalities that embrace the genealogy. We will discover that this bare list of names gives a sense of inevitability to the continuation of Salvation History, reflecting “a deterministic view of history common in traditional apocalyptic thought.”<sup>51</sup> It is not simply a mere list, but a list that gives messianic credentials to Jesus, whom generations after generations have been awaiting eagerly. The reader should pay particular attention to the mention of the five women with their vibrant characters and actions. It will be obvious that these were women of initiative, courage and trust in the midst of male domination, in which they often fell victims.

To substantiate it more clearly, this Chapter is the springboard of the entire work, the oasis from which the theology of our pericope will be drawn.

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<sup>51</sup> Barnes W. Tatum, “The Origin of Jesus Messiah (Matt 1:1, 18a): Matthew’s use of the Infancy Traditions.” *JBL* 96 (1977): 528.

## 2.1. A TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Both the internal and external evidence in various texts affirm that Matthew 1:2-16 has been a part of the Gospel. Despite some variant readings, it has never been circulated apart from the Gospel as it is in its present form. For instance, the use of 'Ο λέγομενος in Matthew 1:16 is an expression very typical to the Matthean speeches (cf. Matt 10:2 with Mark 2:16 and Matt 27:17, 22 with Mark 15:9, 12).<sup>52</sup>

Most manuscripts of the Gospel of Matthew also possess its genealogy.<sup>53</sup> However, when we compare various manuscripts, translations and versions, we notice a number of variations in the readings of some of the names and phrases within the genealogy. For instance, in 1:7-8 some manuscripts (*Alexandrian, Old Latin, Byzantine, etc*) read 'Ασάφ while others read 'Ασά. Since most of the Greek manuscripts of 1 Chronicles 3:10 read 'Ασά, some translations of the Matthean genealogy prefer it.

Nevertheless, given the evidence from a number of manuscripts, it is most likely that 'Ασάφ is the earliest form of the text preserved. Later on, scholars discovered that Matthew might have mistaken 'Ασάφ, the Psalmist, for 'Ασά, the king of Judah. Thus, such later texts that read 'Ασά were meant simply to correct this old scribal error that Matthew may have used unknowingly.<sup>54</sup>

The other textual variations occur in 1:10a about 'Αμώς, which is seen as an error for 'Αμών, the King of Judah. Several manuscripts of 1 Chronicles 3:14 read 'Αμών instead of

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> As Bruce Metzger reports that, "the Mss of the Arabic Diatessaron present two forms of the text. One form has the genealogies of Jesus near the beginning of the harmony: the genealogy of Matt 1 stands in chapter 2 of the Diatessaron, and that of Luke 3 in chapter 4 of the Diatessaron." Bruce M. Metzger, *The Early Version of the New Testament: Their Origins, Transmission and Limitations*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), 15. Moreover, the Old Syriac Version contains some of Matt 1:1-6, *Ibid.*, 37-38.

<sup>54</sup> Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on The Greek New Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1994), 1.

Ἄμωσ (read by *A B*). However, as with Ἀσάφ, Ἄμωσ is certainly the original reading in Matthew.<sup>55</sup>

Other notable textual variations occur in the reading of 1:11. A good number of manuscripts (*MUΘΣ, Syriac, etc*) add τὸν Ἰωακίμ, Ἰωακίμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν between Josias and Jechoniah. This addition is meant to harmonise this genealogy with the genealogy in 1 Chronicles 3:15-16. However, this is not the first and only time Matthew has left out some names. He has done it in 1:8 as well.<sup>56</sup> Secondly, this addition brings the names to fifteen in the second set of generations, thus contradicting 1:17. Most certainly the original reading was Ἰωσίας δὲ ἐγέννησεν Ἰεχονίαν as it is in this version.<sup>57</sup>

The next observable variant readings are found in the reading of 1:16: Ἰακώβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωσήφ τὸν ἄνδρα Μαρίας, ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Χριστός. There are many manuscripts and versional witnesses that support different readings of this verse. "Though all the best texts, and indeed almost all the Greek witnesses, supported by most of the versions, read in 1:16 τὸν ἄνδρα Μαρίας, ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη, (the husband of Mary, out of whom was born), there are several strikingly different readings."<sup>58</sup> The other two principal variant readings are (1) some Greek and Old Latin witnesses (*Family 13, a group of Greek Mss*) which have ὧ μνηστευθεῖσα παρθένος Μαρίας ἐγεννήσεν (to whom being betrothed the virgin Mary bore), and (2) the Sinaitic Syriac manuscript which reads Ἰωσήφ, ὧ μνηστευθεῖσα παρθένος Μαρίας, ἐγεννήσεν Ἰησοῦς (Joseph, to whom was betrothed Mary the virgin, bore Jesus)<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>56</sup> The Curetonia Ms inserts the names Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah in Matt 1:8 with some support from D and five Ethiopic Mss, but the Sinaitic agree with mass of authorities in omitting these names, (Bruce Metzger, *Op cit.*).

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>58</sup> John Nolland, "A Text-Critical Discussion of Matthew 1:16." *CBO* 58 (1996): 665.

<sup>59</sup> Metzger, *Op cit.*, 2-3.

We see that the first attestation leaves no room for Joseph's biological fatherhood, though he is called the husband of Mary. The second (1) "avoids calling Joseph the husband of Mary, and specifically designates her as a virgin,"<sup>60</sup> thus ruling out completely Joseph's biological fatherhood. The third reading (2) not only rules out Joseph's biological fatherhood and affirms Mary's virginity, but it maintains the genealogical pattern by repeating the name of Joseph. However, given the manifold attestations that read the first variant (τὸν ἄνδρα Μαρίας, ἐξ ἧς ἐγέννηθη), it is most certain this was the earliest/original reading, and the other two [(1) and (2)] were later improvements to the first. They were meant to correct the original reading, to emphasise the virginal conception of Jesus, and also to follow the usual genealogical formula (A ἐγέννησεν B, B ἐγέννησεν C).<sup>61</sup>

## 2.2. SOME TEXTUAL FEATURES IN THE TEXT

A closer analysis of the text reveals a few specific features that seem peculiar to this particular genealogy. We notice that it is patterned on a patriarchal background in which one's ancestry is traced and continued through a male member of the family.<sup>62</sup> It names forty male ancestors of Jesus, each connected to his son by ἐγέννησεν, which is repeated thirty-nine times, altered only in one case (Matt 1:16b: ἐγέννηθη).

Surprisingly, this usual patriarchal genealogical pattern is five times broken by the inclusion of the five wives with the use of ἐκ to the husband's action. In fact, the fifth alteration (ἐξ ἧς ἐγέννηθη) is more unusual because the emphasis is entirely laid on the

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<sup>60</sup> Brown, *Op cit.*, 62.

<sup>61</sup> Metzger, *Op cit.*, 6.

<sup>62</sup> Carter, *Op cit.*, 57.

female partner (Mary) and not on the husband (Joseph). She is the focus and the main progenitor of the one born, Jesus the Messiah.

In the first four cases (Matt 1: 3, 5, 6) the women mentioned are connected to the action of their husbands, ἐγέννησεν, by a preposition ἐκ, which in these cases entails origin in relations to the begetting of a child.<sup>63</sup> That is, “the four women are not themselves the subject of γεννάω. They are connected with the verb by means of the preposition ἐκ.”<sup>64</sup> Ἐγέννησεν, in all thirty-nine cases is in the first aorist active form, literally meaning *to become the father of* (beget). The father is the subject of the action. The use of ἐγέννησεν, which is the Old Testament standard (Ruth and 1 Chronicles), “reflects a patriarchal culture that values descent through the male line”<sup>65</sup> By using ἐκ, the mother is introduced as the co-operator, but without whom the action could not have taken place. Thus, the preposition ἐκ highlights the women’s contributions to the begetting of their children.

As it will be shown later, ἐγέννησεν does not only imply physical begetting, but it can also be extended to mean legal relation. In this genealogy, γέννησις is used for immediate as well as mediate natural generation (cf. 1:8: Joram begot Ozias), and possibly of legal generation (cf. levirate law in 1:12: Salathiel begot Zorobabel).<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Arndt F. W., *Op cit.*, 234 - 235.

<sup>64</sup> Wim J. C. Weren, “The Five Women in Matthew’s Genealogy.” *CBQ*, 59 (1997): 291.

<sup>65</sup> Carter, *Op cit.*, 57.

<sup>66</sup> Horst Balz, and Gerhard Schneider, *EDNT*. Vol. 1. (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, Co., 1994), 243. In secular Greek, γεννάω refers to the father’s role of begetting, and less frequently is it used for the mother’s role of giving birth.

The other notable feature is the addition of ‘brothers’ in three instances (Matt 1: 2, 3, 11). Ἀδελφός in these cases does not mean simply one’s blood brothers.<sup>67</sup> It includes all those who are one’s closer relatives. Matthew employs it in a symbolic way, using it to refer to the brother/sisterhood of the Church, and possibly to show that divine election is done within the Community. The theme of ‘brother/sisterhood’ is very dear to the Gospel of Matthew, which is a true image of the Church. Although Matthew took this from 1 Chronicles 2:1-2, “it grows primarily out of Matthew’s interest in portraying the people of God as a *brotherhood* (Sic!).”<sup>68</sup> Thus, the addition of ‘his brothers’ and the women reflects a Community where all are included, regardless of gender or race.

### 2.3. A DETAILED EXEGESIS OF MATTHEW 1:2-16

Given its dual function, we begin our exegesis with Matthew 1:1, though it is not part of the genealogy proper.

VI. Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ.

In the Matthean context, Βίβλος probably means nothing more than a book, and here it refers to the entire Gospel. Γενέσεως, a genitive form of γενέσις, designate either birth or origin/genesis. It can also mean life, creation, or history. In this initial verse it is probably more inclusive than that of 1:18 where it only means birth. Here, most likely, it implies creation and genesis. Together with Βίβλος, γενέσις brings the idea of a new creation, a new

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<sup>67</sup> In fact, Ἀδελφοί, which is the plural of Ἀδελφός, when it refers to one’s siblings, is translated as brothers and sisters. (Ibid., 30). In the Christian (religious) context, it refers to one’s fellow members of the Community (cf. John 21:23, a post-Johannine text). In this case, I take ‘his brothers’ as denoting brothers and sisters, thus a reference to brother/sisterhood in the Community.

<sup>68</sup> Robert H. Gundry, Matthew: A Commentary on His Hard Book For a Mixed Church and Under Persecution. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994), 14.

beginning that echoes Genesis 2:4 and Genesis 5:1. Thus from the very beginning, Matthew is proclaiming that a new beginning and a continuation of the old genesis is at hand.<sup>69</sup>

Ἰησοῦς is the Greek translation of the Hebrew name 'Yeshua', which means YHWH saves. Matthew uses it as a personal name without any Christological implications.<sup>70</sup> Χριστός is a Greek form of the Hebrew derived term מָשִׁיחַ (Messiah), meaning the Anointed One. An anointed is a person set apart and commissioned by God for service, like kings, priests, and prophets.<sup>71</sup> The compound name 'Jesus Christ' became a personal name in the early Christian Communities. Matthew always gives it a Christological meaning.

The expression υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ had Christological implications. David was a major political and religious figure in Israel's history and tradition (1 Sam 16:1-1 Kgs 2:11). It was from him that a messiah was expected.<sup>72</sup> Thus, the phrase *Son of David* became the standard messianic title for the Rabbi. By the time of Jesus this phrase has become a dominant title of Jewish expectation. The emphasis on the Son of David was reinforced by the shortcomings of the non-Davidic Hasmoneans.<sup>73</sup> In fact, this became one of the requirements for the true Messiah. He was to come from the line of David. The Davidic Messiah was expected to deliver his people from oppression and fulfil the promises made in 2 Samuel 7 (cf. 7:12-16).

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<sup>69</sup> Davies and Allison, *Op cit.*, 154.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 155. Matthew mentions it 150 times, and it seems that it was popular among Jews before 70 C.E.

<sup>71</sup> In the Old Testament kings, priests, and prophets were anointed. From the time of David the Jews expected a Messiah who would carry out a special role in God's purposes for a new world. However, there was no set standard expectation of a messiah, the expectations varied from place to place and from time to time. Thus, to call Jesus 'Messiah' did not evoke a fixed meaning or checklist of what the Messiah was to do. It simply raised the question in many people's minds about his identity (Matt 16:13-16). Carter, *Op cit.*, 56.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>73</sup> The name Hasmonean is given to the dynasty descended from the Maccabee brothers. It ruled Israel from 135 to 36 B.C.E.C. The last Hasmonean was overthrown by Herod the Great.

This is why the early Christians laid emphasis on the Davidic lineage of Jesus. More than any one else, Matthew stresses very much Jesus' Davidic ancestry.<sup>74</sup>

The expression υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ was not a Messianic title. Matthew uses it only here. It referred to one of Jewish blood or a worthy descendant of father Abraham. In this usage then, both designations are appropriate with Jesus, a true Israelite both by blood and by worthiness. The mention of Abraham invokes God's promise and Abraham's faith. Through Abraham (and Sarah), God promised to bless all the nations of the earth.<sup>75</sup>

The identification of Jesus Christ as Son of David and Son of Abraham locates him within God's eschatological purposes for a new creation.<sup>76</sup> It refers to the fulfilment of the hope for the new creation, for which Jesus the Christ is the author.

### 2.3.1. The First Set of 14 Generations

V2a. Ἀβραάμ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰσαὰκ: Matthew mentions the name Ἀβραάμ seven times (Matt 1:1, 2, 17; 3:9; 8:11; 22:32).<sup>77</sup> Abraham is the progenitor of the whole people, the bearer of the ancient promises: *by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves* (Gen 18:18). He is placed at the beginning of the genealogy, and indeed the entire Gospel, because he stands at the beginning of Salvation History.<sup>78</sup> Both Testaments bear witness to

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<sup>74</sup> Davies and Allison, *Op cit.*, 157. He uses the phrase υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ nine times as opposed to three in Mark and none in Q.

<sup>75</sup> I have included *Sarah* because she is involved in the reception and fulfilment of God's Promise (cf. Gal. 4:21-31). Thus, when we mention Abraham, we should also have Sarah in mind.

<sup>76</sup> The identification of Jesus Christ as Son of David and Son of Abraham is probably a reflection of the old traditional equation of the messiah: *seed of Abraham = seed of David = the Messiah*. Davies and Allison, (Davies and Allison, *Op cit.*, 159).

<sup>77</sup> Clinton Morrison, An Analytical Concordance to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1979), 3.

<sup>78</sup> In Salvation history Abraham stands out as the pipeline from which divine blessings flow. Genesis 12 depicts very well the story of Abraham (formerly known as Abram), a name which means *father of the multitude*. He married Sarah and was called by God to leave his pagan country, staying for a long time without a child of their own, until Isaac, the child of the promise, was born.

his importance in the History of Salvation (James 2:20-23; Heb 6:13-15) as the father of all believers.

The mention of Isaac reminds us of God's promise to Abraham. Isaac, meaning, *one will laugh*, was born when Abraham and Sarah had no hope of giving birth, and was offered as a sacrifice to God by his father (though God did not accept). He was a child of the promise and thus, a type of Christ. In spite of his shortcomings, he "carried on the line of Abraham, and the promises made originally to Abraham are specifically referred to him also."<sup>79</sup> He married Rebecca and had two sons (twins), Esau and Jacob, who were born after a long time of waiting, since his wife had been barren.

V2b. Ἰσαὰκ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰακώβ: The name Jacob can be a play on words because its Hebrew root has two meanings: *to take up the heel* (Hos 12:3), and *to deceive* (Jer 9:3; Gen 27:36). Jacob, who later became Israel, was born while holding his older twin brother's heel, and twice he deceitfully stole his brother's birthright and blessings. He married Leah and Rachel, and had many sons and daughters: his 'twelve sons' became the ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel.<sup>80</sup> Despite his life of deceit and dishonesty, it is through him that the line of blessings and promises is traced and continued (Gen 28:1-4).<sup>81</sup>

V2c. Ἰακώβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰούδαν καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ: Judah, the fourth son of Jacob by Leah (Gen 29:35), became very instrumental among his brothers early in life (Gen 37:26). He "was promised leadership and tribal stability, and ultimately kingship through David and the Messiah (Gen 49:8-12)."<sup>82</sup> It is through him that the line of Abraham

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<sup>79</sup> Herbert C. Leupold, "Isaac." *ZPEB* Vol.3 (Michigan: The Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), 312. Instead of his half-brother Ishmael, Isaac was promised to continue the line of blessings (Gen 15:2-6; 21:12-13).

<sup>80</sup> Larry L. Walker, "Jacob." *Ibid.*, 383-386.

<sup>81</sup> Carter, *Op cit.*, 57-58.

<sup>82</sup> R. K. Harrison, "Judah." *ZPEB*. 718. That is, Jacob prophetically blessed him with the promise of having pre-eminent authority among his brothers until the future Messiah would appear (Gen 49:8-12).

and Sarah, with all its blessings and promises, is traced and continued. He married a Canaanite daughter of Shua of Adullan and had three sons, Er, Onan and Shelah (Gen 38:1-11).<sup>83</sup> He became the ancestor of the tribe of Judah during the possession of the Promised Land, a tribe that was very prominent among the twelve tribes of Israel.

Καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ: This is an unusual expression in this genealogical narration. We notice that in all the lists of the sons of Jacob, Judah is given fourth position (Gen 35:23; 46:12; Exodus 1:2; 1 Chro 2:1). His first full brothers (Ruben, Simeon and Levi) are always mentioned first.<sup>84</sup> Historically, the mention of 'his brothers' brings to our attention the twelve tribes of Israel as the inheritors of God's blessings. Theologically, it reveals Matthew's concern about brother/sisterhood in his Community.

V3a. Ἰούδας δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Φάρες καὶ τὸν Ζάρα ἐκ τῆς Θαμάρ: Peres, whose name means *breaking through*, was one of the twin sons of Judah by Tamar (Gen 38:37-30).<sup>85</sup> In all the genealogical lists, he takes precedence over his brother (Zera), and it is through him that Judah's line is traced and continued. He had two sons, Hezron and Hamul who became two of the four principal clans of the tribe of Judah.

ἐκ τῆς Θαμάρ: Like καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ, the insertion of the expression ἐκ τῆς Θαμάρ, raises a number of questions since it was unusual, though not uncommon, to

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<sup>83</sup> Judah had his son Er married to Tamar, but he died without leaving any children. In obedience to the levirate law, Judah had his second son Onan marry Tamar, but unfortunately he too died without having children. Fearing that his last son, Shelah, might die like his brothers, he sent Tamar away, back to her father's home. After some time, his wife also died. While he was on his journey for his business, he unknowingly slept with Tamar, his daughter-in-law, thinking that she was merely one of the street harlots. The result of this incestuous union was the birth of twin-sons: Peres and Zera.

<sup>84</sup> However, we see that the New Testament, particularly the Book of Revelation, ranks Judah at the head of the list of the sealed (Rev 7:5). This pre-eminence reflects his prominence among his brothers early in life: he often acted as a spokesman (Gen 37:26-27; 43:8).

<sup>85</sup> At birth the hand of his twin-brother (Zera) appeared first, of which the midwife tied a scarlet string about it. But the hand withdrew and Peres came forth first, and hence his name (Gen 38:37-30).

include a woman in one's genealogy. Furthermore, it breaks the usual genealogical format that Matthew has employed from the beginning.

This Tamar is certainly that of Genesis 38 who, dressing as a harlot, deceived Judah, her father-in-law, to get children by him. "The result of her deception was the birth of twins, Perez and Zera."<sup>86</sup> We see that with her feminine initiative, though deceitful and cunning, she brought about the continuation of the line of Judah. According to Genesis 38 she was probably a Canaanite, though "the Hebrew Bible never actually states this."<sup>87</sup> But other texts (cf. Jub 41:1-2) report Tamar as a daughter of Aram (an Aramean), hence, denying her Canaanite ancestry.<sup>88</sup> Whatever the case, Tamar was not a Hebrew. Together with Ruth, she is celebrated by Jewish legends as an ancestress of the Messiah. Apart from Matthew, Tamar is mentioned nowhere in the New Testament.<sup>89</sup>

V3b. Φάρες δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἑσρώμ: Genesis 46:12 reports that Hezron was the son of Peres. Together with his brother, Hamul, he is listed among the sons of Leah in order to complete the list of the seventy people who went to Egypt with Jacob. Eponymously, Hezron is the ancestor of the Hezron clan, a Southern clan of Judah (Num 26:6; Josh 15:3). In the biblical tradition Hezron is linked with the period of Joseph and the going of Jacob with his sons to Egypt.<sup>90</sup>

V3c. Ἑσρώμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀράμ: Aram, meaning *high* or *exalted*, was the son of Hezron and the father of Aminadab. There is not much known about him, except from

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<sup>86</sup> Harrington, *Op cit.*, 28.

<sup>87</sup> David C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism: The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community*. (Edinburgh: T.& T. Clark, 1992), 219.

<sup>88</sup> Davies and Allison, *Op cit.*, 170.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Brown, *Op cit.*, 60.

genealogies that make him the ancestor of King David (Ruth 4:19; 1 Chro 2:9). He is never mentioned in the Pentateuch.<sup>91</sup>

V4a. Ἀράμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀμμιναδάβ. Aminadab, meaning *my kinsman is noble*, was the son of Aram. Nothing much is known about him, except that Exodus 6:23 tells us that his daughter, Elizabeth, was married to Aaron the high-priest, and that it was his son Nahasson, who became the leader of his tribe at the time of the exodus. Ruth 4:19 lists him among the ancestors of David, and both genealogies in the New Testaments include him among Jesus' ancestors.<sup>92</sup>

V4b. Ἀμμιναδαβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ναασσών: Nahasson, means *Serpent*. During the first census of the Israelites in the desert he led the tribe of Judah (Num 1:7; 2:3; 7:12, 17; 10:14). He died in the wilderness before the entrance into the Promised Land. Genealogical records list him as the ancestor of King David (Ruth 4:20-22).

V4c. Ναασσών ἐγέννησεν τὸν Σαλμών: Salmon is known nowhere in the bible apart from the genealogical records, in which he is made the son of Nahasson (Ruth 4:20; 1 Chro 2:11). That is to say,

while there are Old Testament stories about the first four names in Matthew's record (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah), there are no real narratives about the names he gives between Judah and Boaz. The Old Testament authority for these names are genealogical lists such as found in Ruth 4:18-22 and 1 Chro 2:5ff.<sup>93</sup>

V5a. Σαλμών δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Βόες ἐκ τῆς Ραχάβ: This statement that Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab is attested nowhere except in the genealogical records of Ruth 4:21 and 1 Chronicles 2:11.<sup>94</sup> It is very unlikely that Salmon begot Boaz because apart from Ruth and

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> John E. Steinmueller and Kathryn Sullivan, Catholic Biblical Encyclopaedia: Old Testament. (New York: Joseph Wagner Publishers, 1956), 57.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>94</sup> Davies and Allison, Op cit., 172.

1 Chronicles, there is no other biblical record that supports that Rahab was the mother of Boaz by Salmon. Moreover, this is made more difficult by the fact that over a century separates them: “Rahab lived at the time of the conquest, nearly two centuries before Boaz’ time.”<sup>95</sup>

Boaz, meaning *alacrity* or *quickness*, was a rich man of Bethlehem who married Ruth in accordance with the levirate law. In the biblical tradition he is set forth as a model of piety and graciousness. His marriage with Ruth made him become the great grandfather of King David.<sup>96</sup>

ἐκ τῆς Ραχάβ: Most likely this Rachab is the Canaanite harlot of Jericho (Josh 2 and 6) who helped the spies of Israel at the time of the conquest.<sup>97</sup> The LXX and some New Testament books (Heb 11:31; Jam. 2:25; 1 Clem 12:1-3) have Ρααβ instead of Ραχάβ as in Matthew. This may imply that the ρ of Ραχαβ stands for the h of *Rahab*.<sup>98</sup> According to Joshua 2, Rahab helped the spies of Israel to enter Jericho, thus enabling the people of God to take possession of Jericho. Her action enabled the Israelites to reach the Promised Land. In the Old Testament chronology Rahab existed two hundred years before Salmon, whom Matthew makes her husband. The Talmud has Rahab as Joshua’s wife.<sup>99</sup> She enjoys a good report from both the Jewish and Christian traditions. The “rabbis praised her as a proselyte, a prophetess, and one of the most beautiful women in the world.”<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Brown, *Op cit.*, 60.

<sup>96</sup> Davies and Allison, *Op cit.*, 172.

<sup>97</sup> Leonard J. Greenspoon, “Rahab,” In: David Noel Freedman, ed., *ABD* Vol. 5. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 611.

<sup>98</sup> Davies and Allison, *Op cit.* 172 -173.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

Matthew is the only book that inserts Rahab in the Davidic line.<sup>101</sup> The fact that Rahab is not mentioned in Ruth 4:18-22 and 1 Chronicles 2:11-13, which are the main sources of our text, underlines Matthew's intention of including this woman.

V5b. Βόες δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωβὴδ ἐκ Ρούθ: Boaz' marriage to Ruth resulted in the birth of Obed.<sup>102</sup> Scriptural texts speak very little about Obed. The only information is from the book of Ruth (4:18-22), which simply presents him as the son of Boaz and Ruth. He was the father of Jesse, David's father.

ἐκ τῆς Ρούθ: According to the book named after her, Ruth was a Moabite woman who lived with her mother-in-law, Naomi, after her Israelite husband had died (Ruth 1:3ff).<sup>103</sup> She later married Boaz and bore Obed, the grandfather of King David. Her marriage to Boaz is the fruit of her initiative, together with that of her mother-in-law, Naomi. When she was being handed over to Boaz, the elders blessed her, that she have the same fortunes as Rachel and Leah (Jacob's wives), who had built up the house of Israel (Ruth 4:11). In the New Testament, Matthew is the only book that mentions her. "Rabbinic tradition made her a proselyte, the mother of kings and an ancestress of the Messiah."<sup>104</sup>

V5c. Ἰωβὴδ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰεσσαί: Very little is known about Jesse, apart from the few instances where he features, but always in relation to his son, David. His name is held in high esteem in the messianic expectation, as *the Root of Jesse*. He was a man of humble origin (cf. 1 Sam 18:23; Isaiah 11:1) with eight children.

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<sup>101</sup> Eugene M. Boring, "The Gospel of Matthew: Introductions, Commentary and Reflections." In: Keck, E., and Others, eds. The New Interpreter's Bible: General Articles and Introduction, Commentary and Reflections for Bible Including the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books. Vol. 8. (Nashville: Abingon, 1995), 130.

<sup>102</sup> There are variations in the spelling of Obed: some forms of LXX, like in 1 Chronicles and in Luke 3:32, have Ἰωβηδ, but other LXX manuscripts (Ruth 4:17, 21, 22) and some later manuscripts of Matthew have Ἰαβηδ (from where our spelling of Obed comes), Davies and Allison, Op cit., 173.

<sup>103</sup> Harrington, Op cit., 28.

<sup>104</sup> Davies and Allison, Op cit., 173.

V6a. Ἰεσσαὶ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Δαυὶδ τὸν βασιλέα: David marks a very important historical point in the history of the chosen people, and indeed in the entire Salvation History. He was the youngest son of Jesse, anointed as king to replace King Saul. It was to him that the messianic promise was made (cf. exegesis on Matt 1:1 above). During his reign Israel became a great and prosperous monarchy, with its capital in Jerusalem. However, he was also a weak man, especially as is revealed by his act of adultery with Uriah's wife, which resulted in the death of Uriah, and also in his marriage to Bathsheba.

τὸν βασιλέα: The additional of τὸν βασιλέα breaks the usual pattern set up for the previously mentioned male members of the genealogy. It highlights David's political, social, economic, and religious prominence in the history of Israel, and of his divine commission as the anointed King (1 Sam 16; 2 Sam 5) and of God's promise of a line and a kingdom that will last forever (2 Sam 7). Thus, it "serves to underline David's royal dignity, to mark a break in Israel's history, and to point forward to Jesus who is called the Christ."<sup>105</sup>

### 2.3.2. The Second Set of 14 Generations

V6b. Δαυὶδ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Σολομῶνα ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Οὐρίου: According to Matthew's calculation, here begins the second set of fourteen generations, and David begins the group. Solomon was the son and successor of David. During his reign he built the first Jerusalem Temple, and he is known as the most wise man who ever existed. But he is, likewise, listed among the kings who failed to preserve pure monotheism in the land. His wealth came mainly from exploitative and oppressive means, the means that Moses had condemned (Deut 17:14-20) and also Samuel (1 Sam 8:1-17).<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Harrington, *Op cit.*, 28-29.

<sup>106</sup> Carter, *Op cit.*, 62.

ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Οὐρίου: Uriah's wife was Bathsheba, who is not mentioned by name as in the other previous three cases where wives have been named. David's relation with Bathsheba was a scandal: adultery, the result of which David decided to kill Uriah her husband. Her appearance here

evokes the sin of David, who had Uriah killed (2 Sam 11, 12). 1 Kgs 15:5 reads: 'David did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and did not turn aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite'.<sup>107</sup>

Though the marriage was a scandal, it was through it that King Solomon, was born. Bathsheba played an important role in ensuring that Solomon succeeded his father (1 Kgs 1:11ff). It is not clear whether she was an Israelite or not, but because of her marriage to a Hittite, later Rabbinic laws regarded her as a Gentile.<sup>108</sup>

V7a. Σολομών δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ῥοβοάμ: Roboam was the first King of Judah after the division of the United Kingdom. He was the son of Solomon by one of his wives, Naama, the Ammonite (1 Kgs 14:21). He reigned from 932 to 917 B.C.E. During his reign he continued the oppression of his father, and allowed idolatry and pagan worship (1 Kgs 14:22-29; 2 Chro 12:1, 14). Sirach describes him as a man of *little wisdom* (Sir 47:28).<sup>109</sup>

V7b. Ῥοβοάμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀβία: Abia, meaning *YHWH is a father*, was the eldest son of Roboam by his wife Maacha. He succeeded his father as King of Judah (917-914 B.C.E.). He was a capable young king though he was like his idolatrous and pleasure-loving father, that is, while 1 Kings 15:1-8 presents him negatively, 2 Chronicles 13:1-22 gives him a good report.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Davies and Allison, *Op cit.*, 175.

<sup>108</sup> Boring, *Op cit.*, 130.

<sup>109</sup> Carter, *Op cit.*, 62.

<sup>110</sup> Davies and Allison, *Op cit.*, 175.

V7c. Ἀβιά δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀσάφ: 1 Chronicles has the name Asa, and Matthew may have confused him with Asaph the Levitical temple musician to whom many Psalms were ascribed (Palms 50, 73-83).<sup>111</sup> However, the Asaph meant here is the King of Judah (913 -873 B.C.E.), the son and successor of Abiam (1 Kgs 15:8). Unlike his father, Asaph promoted the true worship of God and zealously suppressed idolatry, and deprived the wicked Maacha, his grandmother, of her royal title as Queen because she had erected pagan idols in the land (1 Kgs 15:11-15). Although he could not remove all the pagan shrines, he sponsored the restoration of the temple services.<sup>112</sup>

V8a. Ἀσάφ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωσαφάτ: Josaphat succeeded his father, Asaph, as King of Judah (873-849 B.C.E.), and had a very long pleasant reign. He ended “the sixty years of hostility with the Northern Kingdom by concluding an alliance with Achab, King of Israel (1 Kgs 22:45).”<sup>113</sup> Like his father he made efforts to promote the true worship of YHWH, though he too failed to eradicate all pagan shrines (1 Kgs 22:23-44). His achievements are praised in 2 Chronicles 17-20.

V8b. Ἰωσαφάτ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωράμ: Joram succeeded his father as King of Judah (849-842 B.C.E). Upon his succession, he killed his brothers and all other rivals. His wife Athalia, the daughter of King Achab of Israel, led him astray from the true religion to pagan worship. His apostasy led him to die miserably without people mourning for him. Thus, he enjoys no good report in biblical tradition.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Steinmueller and Sullivan, *Op cit.*, 114.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 587.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 584.

V8c. Ἰωρὰμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ὀζίαν<sup>115</sup>: Matthew makes Ozias as son of Joram, thus omitting three kings and a queen (2 Kgs 8:25-9:28). Ozias was the son of Amasias by his wife Jehelia (2 Kgs 15:1ff). He became king at the age of sixteen after his father had been murdered, and ruled for fifty-two years. The prophet Zecharias, helped him remain faithful to the true religion, but in the absence of the prophet, he turned against YHWH. However, during his reign, the Kingdom of Judah prospered as in the time of Solomon. It was during Ozias' reign that Isaiah, Hosea and Amos began their prophetic ministries. He died of leprosy as a punishment for his sins. He, too, receives a mediocre report.<sup>116</sup>

V9a. Ὀζίας δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωαθάμ: Joatham was the eleventh King of Judah (740 - 736 B.C.E.).<sup>117</sup> He is known as a good king and a builder. He repaired the temple and the Jerusalem wall, and erected cities, palaces and towers. However, he failed to completely remove the idol worship in the land, the evils that the prophets persistently condemned.<sup>118</sup>

V9b. Ἰωαθάμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀχάζ: Achaz became the twelfth King of Judah (736-728 B.C.E.) after Joatham his father (2 Chro 28). He is known as the worst and the most evil king of Judah. He allowed the temple treasures to be taken to Damascus, closed the Jerusalem temple and set up false gods throughout the land of Judah. It was during his reign

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<sup>115</sup> Historically, Ochozias was the youngest son and successor of Joram. He was acclaimed as king at the age of twenty years because his elder brothers had been killed by the Philistines. However, he reigned only for one year (842 B.C.E), after which his mother, Athalia, took control and ruled for six years, after she had killed all the sons of Ochozias, except Joas, the youngest son, who was saved by his aunt, Josaba. Athalia was later murdered (2 Kgs 11:1ff) and the young Joas became king. Joas (836-797 B.C.E.), son of Ochozias and Sebia of Bersabee, took the throne from his stepmother, Athalia. As long as Joiada (husband to Josaba) the high priest lived, Joas remained faithful to the YHWH the God of Israel. He repaired the temple, though many people continued to worship at the Bamoth, a pagan shrine (2 Kgs 12:1-16). In the absence of Joiada, the king followed the way of the pagan, and thus died miserably. Amasias, *YHWH has been mighty*, was the tenth of the Davidic kings (797-789 B.C.E.). He was the son and successor of Joas by his wife Joadan (2 Kgs 14:1ff); he brought wickedness in the land by introducing idolatry. His son, Ozias, succeeded him.

<sup>116</sup> Carter, *Op cit.*, 62.

<sup>117</sup> Steinmueller and Sullivan, *Op cit.*, 572.

<sup>118</sup> Carter, *Op cit.*, 63.

that Isaiah prophesised that a virgin would give birth to the Messiah (Isaiah 7:10-14). He died without having repented.<sup>119</sup>

V9c. Ἀχάζ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἐζεκίαν: Hezekiah took the throne at the age of twenty-nine as the thirteenth King of Judah (727-699 B.C.E.) after the death of his father. He married Haphsiba by whom he begot Manasseh. He restored the worship of YHWH, doing away with any form of pagan worship (2 Kgs 22-23:30; 2 Chro 34). As such, he is praised like David and Josias (Sir 49:5); he is also renowned outside the biblical tradition (in the inscription of Sargon II [721-705 B.C.E] and Sennacherib [704-681 B.C.E]). He witnessed the destruction of the Northern Kingdom by the Assyrians in 722 B.C.E.

V10a. Ἐζεκίας δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Μανασση: Manasseh succeeded his father as the fourteenth King of Judah (698-643 B.C.E.). He brought all sorts of evil in the land and was so disastrous that, on political grounds, the Assyrians deported him to Babylon. Biblical traditions “strongly condemned him for encouraging pagan worship and injustice (2 Kgs 21:1-18; 2 Chro 33:1-20).”<sup>120</sup>

V10b. Μανασσῆς δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀμώς: Amos, or Amon as in some manuscripts, son of Manasseh from his wife Massalemeth, succeeded his father as the fifteenth King of Judah (643-641 B.C.E.). He became king when he was twenty-two years old (2 Kgs 21:18ff; 2 Chro 33:21-25). Biblical literature “records nothing good about him, and the evils of his reign are described as idolatry that resembled and exceeded that of his father.”<sup>121</sup> He was killed in a *coup d'etat*, at his palace by some conspirators.

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<sup>119</sup> Steinmueller and Sullivan, *Op cit.*, 20.

<sup>120</sup> Carter, *Op cit.*, 63. In contrast to the religious policy of his God-fearing father, Manasseh introduced Assyrian astral deities, sacred prostitution, worship of female goddess, Ishtar, and the sun-god, Shamash (cf. Steinmueller and Sullivan, *Op cit.*, 20).

<sup>121</sup> Steinmueller and Sullivan, *Op cit.*, 60.

V10c. Ἀμὼς δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωσὶάν: Josias was acclaimed as the sixteenth King of Judah (640-609 B.C.E.) by the people after the death of his father, at the age of eight. At first, he lived under the guide of Helcias the high priest. During his reign he quickly suppressed idolatry and all sorts of unlawful forms of worship in the land of Judah (2 Kgs 22-23:30; 2 Chro 34). It was during his reign that the Book of Moses (the Pentateuch) was rediscovered and promulgated again. He was killed in June/July 609 B.C.E. in a battle against Pharaoh Nechao of Egypt at Megiddo, in the plains of Esdraelon.<sup>122</sup>

V11. Ἰωσίας δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰεχονίαν καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλώνος: Jechoniah was grandson of Josiah.<sup>123</sup> He became the nineteenth King of Judah at the age of eighteen (2 Kgs 24:8) and ruled for only three months and ten days (2 Chro 36:9) after which he and all the leading men of Jerusalem, including the queen mother and the prophet Ezekiel, were deported to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar on 16<sup>th</sup> March, 597 B.C.E.<sup>124</sup> His deportation was seen as the result of his evil deeds. Zedekiah who might be the brother or uncle of Jechoniah (depending on 2 Chro 36:10 or 2 Kgs 24:17) was appointed king, but he too was exiled in 587 B.C.E.

καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ: Historically, Jechoniah probably had only one brother, Zedekiah (1 Chro 13:16). Matthew uses *brothers* to include all the leading men and women of Jerusalem who were exiled with Jechoniah into Babylonian. It is a play on words, that just

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<sup>122</sup> J. Lilley, "Josias." *ZPEB*, 710.

<sup>123</sup> Historically, we know that Jochoniah's father was Joachim, the son to Josiah by his wife Zebida (2 Kgs 23:36). Joachim had succeeded his stepbrother, Joachaz (the son of Josiah by Amital), who was deposed by Pharao Nechao after three months' rule and taken as captive to Egypt. Joachim's name had been Eliachim, but was changed by Nechoa who made him king of Judah for eighteen years (608-597 B.C.E.). Thus, in the Matthean genealogy, Joachaz (17th king) and Joachim (18th King) are omitted, hence making Jechoniah, son of Joachim by his wife Nohesta, as the son of Josiah.

<sup>124</sup> J. Lilley, "Jechoniah." *Ibid.*, 416.

as Judah and his brothers went into Egypt, so Jechoniah too went into Babylonian Exile with *his brothers*. Again it symbolizes the brother/sisterhood within the Church.<sup>125</sup>

ἐπὶ τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλῶνος: In the history of Israel, the Babylonian Deportation marks a very important theological point. Like Egypt and the Exodus, it enacts a moment of reference of how God punishes His people and leads them to a greater fidelity. There were two waves of deportation, 597 B.C.E and 587 B.C.E, but they all lasted until 535 B.C.E. The monarchy that was established with King David was lost with the Babylonian Deportation.<sup>126</sup>

### 2.3.3. The Third Set of 14 Generations

V12a. Μετὰ δὲ τὴν μετοικεσίαν Βαβυλῶνος: The Babylonian Deportation ended when the Persian King, Cyrus, allowed the Jews to go back to their land and begin to rebuild the Temple (Ezra 1:1-4). During this post-exilic period a strong and ardent messianic expectation was felt throughout the land. The Jews as well as the early Christians saw the “Babylonian situation, like the exodus from Egypt, as analogous to the crisis under Rome in 66-70 C.E.”<sup>127</sup> It was as if God had used Rome to punish the people (Matt 21:12-13, 18-19). They longed for a Messiah who would deliver them from Roman oppression. Writing after the destruction of the Temple by the Romans (70 C.E.), Matthew is using the name *Babylonian* to encourage his audience that just as God restored Judaism after the Babylonian Deportation, God will also restore them in Christ.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Gundry, *Op cit.*, 14, 16.

<sup>126</sup> Davies and Allison, *Op cit.*, 179.

<sup>127</sup> Carter, *Op cit.*, 63.

<sup>128</sup> J. J. McDermott, "Multipurpose Genealogies." *The Bible Today* 35 (1997): 386.

V12b. Ἰεχοϊάσ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Σαλαθιήλ: This statement implies that Jechoniah led the people after the exile. What we know is that Jechoniah was finally released by King Amel-Marduk and was given a place at the court in 561/60 B.C.E. (2 Kgs 25:27-30; Jer 52:31-34). It was Zorobabel, his supposed son, who came back to Palestine with the people after the Exile.

There are conflicting reports on whether Salathiel was a natural or legal son of Jechoniah (Luke 3:27 makes him son of Neri, while 1 Chro 3:17, makes him son of Jechoniah). Most probably, he was his legal son by a levirate law.<sup>129</sup>

V12c. Σαλαθιήλ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ζοροβαβέλ: It is not quite certain if Zorobabel was the natural son of Salathiel or simply his legal son by a levirate law. Some texts have Phadaia, the brother of Salathiel and third son of King Jechoniah, as the father of Zorobabel (the MT of 1 Chro 3:19). Whatever the case, Zorobabel and Josue the high priest, head the list of the twelve leaders who returned to Palestine in 535 B.C.E. after the Babylonian Exile (1 Esd 2:2; 2 Esd 7:7). He “was appointed governor of Jerusalem by the Persians after the return of the exile.”<sup>130</sup> Upon their return, Zorobabel was very active in the construction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. In this immediate post-exilic period, the people looked at him with messianic expectations. This is certainly why Matthew and Luke include him in Jesus’ genealogies. Nothing more is known about his family or his fate. What seems likely is that

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<sup>129</sup> Gundry, *Op cit.*, 17. Ezra 3:2, 8; 5:2 report that he was the first son of King Jechoniah

<sup>130</sup> Carter, *Op cit.*, 64.

“after him the Persians apparently did not choose governors from the Davidic line. 1 Chronicles 3:19 gives his descendents, but there is no Abiud among them.”<sup>131</sup>

V13. Ζοροβαβέλ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀβιουδ, ... : Zorobabel marks the last person in this genealogy about whom we have Old Testament evidence. After him it is quite impossible to know where Matthew might have found these names (Matt 1:13-16a). No biblical genealogical documentary has been found containing the names from Abiud to Joseph.<sup>132</sup> We can only assert that this last section, with its unknown names, represents a period of waiting, of the unknown. It is a symbolic image of the people of God who, “through fourteen more generations wait in the darkness for the promised light.”<sup>133</sup>

V16. Ἰακώβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωσήφ τὸν ἄνδρα Μαρίας, ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Χριστοῦς: This verse not only breaks the usual pattern of the genealogy, but it ‘shouts’ something new and unusual.

Ἰακώβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωσήφ: Like the other names in this last section, this Jacob is unknown. Probably Matthew wants to link him to the Jacob of Genesis, son of Isaac, who also had a son by the name of Joseph. This linkage becomes certain when we look at the similarities between the Joseph of Genesis and the Joseph of Matthew. Both travel to Egypt, face danger under imperial rule, have and interpret dreams, are faithful to God, and play a great role in God’s purposes. Nevertheless, beyond this comparison, nothing more can be said about this Jacob who is the immediate grandfather of Jesus.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Davies and Allison, *Op cit.*, 180.

<sup>132</sup> The source from which Matthew knew these names is not known, though several people in the biblical tradition bear some of these names, like Eliakim, Azor, Zadok and Eleazar *Ibid.*, 181, and also Warren Carter supports this opinion (*Op cit.*, 64).

<sup>133</sup> Fritz Kunkel, *Creation Continues*. ed. by Elizabeth Kunkel and Ruth Spafford Morris, (Texas: Word Books Publishers, 1973), 34.

<sup>134</sup> Carter, *Op cit.*, 64.

Joseph could have been a faceless person had it not been for the Gospel of Matthew (Matt 1-2). “Nowhere else in the New Testament is he anything more than a bystander, the husband of Mary (Luke 1-2), or the father of Jesus (John 1:45; 6:42).”<sup>135</sup> Matthew tells that Joseph was of Davidic descent, was a righteous man, and obedient to God’s will. In Luke, he remains a simple carpenter.

Ἰωσήφ τὸν ἄνδρα Μαρίας, ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Χριστός This verse differs from others in breaking the usual formula of *A δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν B*. The subject of the verb γεννάω is no longer a man, but a woman (Mary). It is used in the first aorist passive form (ἐγεννήθη) in order to lay emphasis on the one being begotten and on the role of the mother. The use of the passive, a *divine passive*, alludes to the activity of the Holy Spirit in the begetting of Jesus.<sup>136</sup> Though Joseph is the husband, he is not the begetter as in other preceding verses where the begetter is the father. Mary is she who bore Jesus without the male partner (cf. Matt 1:18). In this case, “Mary’s position is more fully described than the position of the four other women.”<sup>137</sup> She, like the men, is also the principal protagonist in Salvation History.

To de-emphasize the role of Joseph, some texts use μνηστευθεῖσα (betrothed) instead of ἄνδρα (husband), and refer to Mary as παρθένος (virgin) to stress that “Joseph and Mary did not become husband and wife prior to the birth of Jesus (a view perhaps influenced by Matt 1:25a).”<sup>138</sup>

Mary is always referred to as the mother of Jesus in the New Testament. Matthew never presents her independently, but always in connection with Joseph, the Holy Spirit or

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<sup>135</sup> Davies and Allison, *Op cit.*, 183.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>137</sup> Weren, *Op cit.*, 290.

<sup>138</sup> Nolland, *Op cit.*, 665, 673.

her son Jesus Christ.<sup>139</sup> From the very beginning she became very instrumental in Jesus' life. Together with other afore-mentioned women, she functions in this genealogy as a critique of patriarchal mentality that emphasizes male generation. She highlights a point of tension in the text that must guide the reader as the story unfolds.<sup>140</sup>

## CONCLUSION

To the eyes of a 'lay person', this genealogy is simply a list of bare and past names with little or no meaning. But to those who may read it critically, it is the oasis and fountain of the entire Matthean theology. With the help of a detailed exegesis of our pericope, all the theological themes within the Gospel of Matthew are exposed.<sup>141</sup> This Chapter is thus the factual revelation of our investigation.

Through textual criticism, we have seen that there are variant manuscripts and translations that read some of the words and expressions of the genealogy differently. However, our translation is most probably the author's original script. Moreover, some of its distinct features (the addition of 'brothers' and the five women) mirror certain fundamental themes, already found in the entire Gospel, that were central to the life of the Community. For instance, the genealogy answers the question of empowering female disciples in a culture that undermined women's contributions.

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<sup>139</sup> Davies and Allison, *Op cit*, 184.

<sup>140</sup> Elaine Wainwright, "The Gospel of Matthew", in *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary*, ed. by Florenza E. Schussler, (New York: Crossroad Publishing co., 1994), 643.

<sup>141</sup> Christology, Eschatology, Virginal Conception, Gentiles, Women in ministry, Discipleship, etc.

## CHAPTER THREE

### **THEOLOGY OF THE GENEALOGY: THE INCLUSION OF THE WOMEN AS A PARADIGM FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN CHRISTIAN LIFE AND MINISTRY.**

#### INTRODUCTION

As stated in the General Introduction, the exegetical part is the backbone of the whole research. This last Chapter presents the theology of the genealogy. Coupled with this theological presentation is the analysis of the five women in the genealogy. It starts by presenting the purpose for which Matthew prefaced his Gospel with the genealogy. However, given the manifold implications of this genealogy, it deals only with aspects that are pertinent to our investigation. Thereafter, it exposes the theological implications of the five women for the Matthean Community. Their presence in the genealogy is held as the paradigm for gender equality in the Christian life and ministry.

#### 3.1. THE THEOLOGY/MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

By using γενέσις instead of γεννήσις in Matthew 1:1, the genealogy is ushering in a new kind of creation inaugurated by Jesus the Messiah. At the very beginning of the Gospel, we are led to “witness a second Genesis, a re-beginning, a rebirth. With Jesus starts a fresh phase of creation.”<sup>142</sup> It is a new creation that includes all, both men and women, Jews and Gentiles.

This genealogy is not simply a list of names and episodes to remember. It is an announcement, proclaiming from the very outset of the Gospel, that Jesus is the Davidic Messiah for whom the Jews waited for a long time. It legitimises Jesus’ authority and

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<sup>142</sup> Kunkel, *Op cit.*, 33.

messianic claim. By authenticating Jesus' identity, the genealogy also legitimises the identity and the divine origin of the Matthean Community. It is the Community of the new Israel, a people who find existence and beginning in and with Jesus Christ. Taking the historical settings of the Gospel as a window of analysis, this genealogy becomes the Community's mirror. It reflects the life situation of the Community, its organisation and life, a brother/sisterly Community inaugurated by Jesus in which all are included. Though structured from a patriarchal set-up, it ironically reflects a Community where men and women are all included. The five women reflect the Matthean women who were struggling to have their voices and contributions heard.

The genealogy, then, is a reflection of "the working out of God's plan of creation in a History of Salvation."<sup>143</sup> It is the narration of the History of Salvation that God began with Abraham and Sarah and now is completed with Jesus the Messiah. It demonstrates how God has been with the chosen people throughout the ages. With Jesus the Messiah emerges a new beginning, a new creation that renews the old. Hence, the Christian Community, the new Israel, is the legitimate and authentic eschatological Community.

It is also a representation of what was going on in the Matthean Church, a mixed Community of Jewish and Gentile Christians. This text is the window through which we perceive the Church's internal situation and its relations with the outside world. Its expression of *and his brothers* (ἀδελφοί) is a reference to the brother/sisterhood of the Community that has Jesus as its Lord. The addition of the five women represents the women who were taking up active roles in the life and ministry of the Community.

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<sup>143</sup> Brown, *Op cit.*, 68.

Furthermore, this pericope was meant to encourage the Christians that Jesus is the true Messiah who will liberate them from Roman oppression. Just as there was a restoration after the Babylonian Deportation, after the Temple destruction (70 C.E.) “there will again be a renewed Israel. This time it will be through Jesus, who will give a new identity to the people in grief.”<sup>144</sup>

With this understanding, we see that the genealogy’s theology is very much in consonance with the theology of the entire Gospel. It is the key to a proper understanding of what the whole Gospel is all about: Jesus is the Messiah and the Christian Community is a new Israel. It is Jesus the Messiah who ushers in the new beginning, a new and perfect generation of believers (whose ancestors in faith are Abraham and Sarah).

### 3.2. THE THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE INCLUSION OF THE FIVE WOMEN

The inclusion of the five women is the most unusual feature of the pericope. This unusualness has been a surprise to many people throughout the centuries. Notwithstanding the worthy suggestions given by different scholars, I am of the opinion that a sound theological reason should view these women from the text’s socio-historical settings. Even though these women in the genealogy are historical figures, they are considered in the eyes of Matthew’s audience, in a similar role expectation as women of his time and place. I will begin by previewing the commonly held reasons (3.2.1., 3.2.2. and 3.2.3) of which I will also show their weaknesses. At the end I will give my personal two opinions (3.2.4. and 3.2.5.) based on my exegetical analysis in Chapter two.

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<sup>144</sup> McDermott, *Op cit.*, 386.

### 3.2.1. Jesus' Mission to Sinners?

A good number of people argue that the five women in the genealogy foreshadowed the messianic mission that invited sinners into the Kingdom of God.<sup>145</sup> From the very beginning, Matthew is firmly stating that Jesus is both for the righteous and the sinners who make up his human origin (Matt 9:9-13).

However, this view is erroneous for it makes a general judgement on all the five women. Only three of these can be considered to have indulged in dubious sexual activities (Tamar, Rahab and Bathsheba) and of whom two were victims of male injustice (Tamar and Bathsheba). Secondly, it associates sexual sin only with women. In Matthew's time, sexuality was "not automatically equated with sin. Moreover, other sources from this time, both Jewish and Christian, did not regard these women as sinners."<sup>146</sup> If Matthew wanted to stress the aspect of sinners then many kings mentioned would further this theme, rather than these women, who are purported to be such (cf. King Ahaz, 2 Chro 28:1-5).

### 3.2.2. The Inclusion of Gentiles in God's Kingdom?

Looking more closely at the kind of women mentioned, we see that all, except Mary, can be considered outsiders or Gentiles either by birth or by affinity. Tamar seems to have been a Canaanite or Aramean; Rahab was a Canaanite; Ruth was a Moabite; and Bathsheba can be considered a Gentile through her marriage to Uriah, a Hittite, according to later rabbinic laws. Thus, the theme of Gentiles, which is one of the Matthean main themes, holds

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<sup>145</sup> Stephen J. Binz, Advent of the Saviour: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives of Jesus. (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 17. The first proponents of this argument are St. Jerome and St. Augustine.

<sup>146</sup> Amy-Jill Levine, "Matthew." In: Carol A. Newsom and, Sharon H. Ringe, eds., The Women's Bible Commentary. (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1992), 253.

some weight for including these women.<sup>147</sup> Hence, the argument that the inclusion of these women was “probably intended also as a sign of future inclusion of Gentiles and ‘outsiders’ in the ecclesial family of Jesus.”<sup>148</sup>

Though it is a good argument, it is inadequate because not all these women were Gentiles (only Ruth and Rahab are explicitly stated as such). Besides, “Rahab and Ruth were considered proselytes, and Tamar and Bathsheba are usually considered to be Hebrews. Nor can a Gentile association explain Mary’s presence.”<sup>149</sup> Hence, their inclusion was not to highlight their Gentile origin.<sup>150</sup>

### 3.2.3. The Unusual Birth of Jesus?

Most of the contemporary biblical scholars agree that the reason for including these women was their extraordinary relationships with their partners in the birth of their children.<sup>151</sup> Their marital history contains elements of human scorn, and God used precisely these scandalous relationships to accomplish His plan of salvation. In this way, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba prefigured Mary’s relationship to the birth of Jesus, a relationship that was not only cultural but also a human scandal. This view defends the unusual birth of Jesus that might have been a scorn in the early days of Christian faith.<sup>152</sup>

However, not of all these women had irregularities in the birth of their children. For instance, Rahab was not the wife of Salmon, and even if she was, the birth of her son would

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<sup>147</sup> Eugene M. Boring (The Gospel of Matthew, p.130) and Stephen J. Binz (*Op cit.*, 17) seems to support this view.

<sup>148</sup> Donald Senior, “Between Two Worlds: Gentiles and Jewish Christians in Matthew’s Gospel.” *CBO*, 61 (1999): 14.

<sup>149</sup> Amy-Jill Levine, *Op cit.* 253.

<sup>150</sup> David C. Sim, *Op cit.* 220.

<sup>151</sup> Brown, *Op cit.* 73.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 74. Such a view also supports the virginal conception of Jesus.

not be regarded as irregular. The book of Joshua simply reports her as a single woman. The point still remains, therefore, why Matthew included women in the patriarchal genealogy!<sup>153</sup>

#### 3.2.4. The Role of Women in Salvation History.

What brings immediate attention after critical investigations is not so much that these women had irregular relations, were sinners or Gentiles. Rather, they were women who used their feminine initiatives and actively contributed to God's plan of salvation. Their prominence in the genealogy parallels and reflects the importance of women in Jesus' ministry and in the Matthean Community, and more so in Salvation History.<sup>154</sup> Thus, Matthew includes women whom tradition placed at different stages, who risked a change in the History of Salvation, women who risked their own lives in order to contribute to the survival of the Davidic line (though unknowingly, except in the case of Mary).

By her deception, Tamar enabled Judah to have offspring who continued his line; Rahab's action enabled the people of God to take possession of the Promised Land; Ruth's marriage to Boaz brought about the grandfather of King David. Bathsheba actively made it possible for her son Solomon to succeed his father; Mary seems to be completely passive, but it is through her that the Messiah is born. Hence, Mary sums up the long-standing Jewish tradition which placed women at key positions of redemption.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Elaine M. Wainwright also refutes these aforementioned views because they all put blame on the women. Towards a Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel According to Matthew. (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991), 63-66.

<sup>154</sup> Richard A. Horsley, The Liberation of Christmas: The Infancy Narratives in Social Context. (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 83. Only Mary was aware of her action as part of God's plan.

<sup>155</sup> Brown, Op cit., 73 -74.

They helped preserve and save the line of David. Without their initiative and active participation, Israel's history might have taken on a different picture.<sup>156</sup> Thus, these were women of courage who either used or trespassed the social law and its expectations in order to allow the will of God to take place. That is to say, "if it had not been for the five women, Israel's history would not have reached its goal."<sup>157</sup> God used these women, within their initiatives, to bring the divine plan to its fulfilment.

### 3.2.5. A Paradigm for Gender Equality in the Christian Community

Evaluating these women against their cultural background, we see that Matthew is breaking down the patriarchal mentality in his Community. In a patriarchal culture it was uncommon to include women in one's genealogy.<sup>158</sup> Matthew is challenging this cultural set up by including these women. In this view, the five women reflect the Christian attitude towards women in the entire Gospel of Matthew, that is, their presence reflects the presence of women in the Matthean Community. By including women in the genealogy, Matthew is recognizing women as equal partners with men in life and ministry, 'redeeming' them from a culture that undermined them. He chooses women who were vulnerable in their society to emphasise that God uses both women and men for the fulfilment of his purpose. Matthew is gender sensitive.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Horsley, *Op cit.*, 85 –86. We can see that, as Abraham risked his life in order to do the will of God, these women too, risked their lives. Tamar risked being killed by having sexual intercourse with her father-in-law (Gen 38:13-26); Rahab risked her life (Josh 2:2-3) by hiding and helping the spies of Israel; by leaving her own country and security for Bethlehem with her mother-in-law, Ruth risked her future life. Bathsheba was in great risk of death for having an illicit pregnancy by the King (it was a scandal). Finally, Mary's pregnancy was a risk for her life since she did not conceive by her legal (betrothed) husband (cf. Wainwright, *Towards a Critical ...* 68).

<sup>157</sup> Weren, *Op cit.*, 295.

<sup>158</sup> Boring, *Op cit.*, 132.

<sup>159</sup> Carmel Powell, *Unpublished Class Notes on the Gospel of Matthew*. (Nairobi: Tangaza College, 2000).

This is affirmed by the fact that throughout Matthew's Gospel "women are prominent in stories demanding faith ... because exemplary faith is considered most wonderful where least expected."<sup>160</sup> In his Gospel women enjoy praise from Jesus for their challenging faith (the Canaanite woman [15:28], and the woman suffering from haemorrhages [9:22]). More so than in the other Gospels, in Matthew's Gospel women speak more, a fact that signifies leadership and equality with their male counterparts.<sup>161</sup>

This Matthean view of women destroys the Jewish patriarchal mentality and the Greco-Roman attitude that played down the status of women. Matthew gives a new alternative that enhances the relative status of Christian women. In the Matthean Community women seem to have started seeking power like men. This is shown clearly by the attitude of the mother of Zebedee's sons and the wife of Pilate who explicitly or implicitly intervened in the decisions of their children and husband, respectively.<sup>162</sup>

Thus, by including the five vulnerable and assertive women in the genealogy of Jesus, Matthew is bringing to surface the situation of women in his Community. Since Christian power lies in faith and service, women are presented as doing exactly that, and the male disciples are challenged to emulate their faith (cf. Matt 15:28).

## CONCLUSION

As a springboard, the Matthean genealogy is pregnant with all the important theological issues that are dealt with throughout the Gospel. By rooting Jesus as the Messiah

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<sup>160</sup> Antoinette Clark Wire, "Gender Roles in a Scribal Community." In: David L. Balch, ed., Social History of the Matthean Community: Cross-disciplinary approaches. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991) 104.

<sup>161</sup> Joanna Dewey. "Women in the Synoptic Gospels: Seen but not Heard?" *BTB*, 27 (1997): 53, 58.

<sup>162</sup> PHEME PERKINS, "Gender Analysis: A Response to Antoinette Clark Wire." In: *ibid.*, 124. That is, together with the image of children, women are examples of discipleship that lies in humility and faith. Their tendency to assert their authority can also be seen in the actions of Herodias and her daughter, and the symbolic gesture done by the unnamed woman who anointed Jesus (26:6-13).

within the Jewish tradition, it implicitly affirms the Matthean Community as the new Israel, affirming and confirming the Community as legitimate and authentic. Symbolically, the genealogy mirrors the Community as comprising both women and men. The presence of the five women becomes the paradigm for equal recognition of both women and men in any believing Community. It challenges androcentric cultures that undermine the contributions and presence of women in the society.

These women, and all the vibrancy of their characters and actions, introduce us to a Community of believers where women, just as vibrant, live out their dynamic call to discipleship. They stand for women who were striking in faith and perhaps strident in their demands to be 'equal partners' in their Community participation. "By breaking the patrilineal genealogy through the insertion of the women, and by bringing the genealogy to its conclusion and climax with reference to Mary's motherhood (not Joseph's fatherhood), these women become one of the keys to the significance of the genealogy."<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Dorothy Jean Weaver, "Rewriting the Messianic Script: Matthew's Account of the Birth of Jesus." *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 54 (2000): 378.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

As we conclude our investigation, we are led to assert that the Matthean genealogy is a loudspeaker that proclaims from the very outset what Matthew intends to say. Chapter one informs us that this pericope has its own distinct structure, context, genre, etc., which give it its own unique contribution to the entire Gospel message.

Chapter two has inserted us into the genealogy, making us understand that the bare list of names is not simply for 'entertainment' or 'boredom', but a presentation of Salvation History. It is not only a narration of history, but also an announcement of the new creation inaugurated by Jesus the Messiah. Its "artificiality" and some of its distinct features suggest that it was meant to answer certain pastoral problems the Community was facing, for instance, the recognition of the ministry of female disciples.

Chapter three gives the purpose for the genealogy of Jesus. It was meant to root Jesus firmly within Jewish tradition, proclaiming him as the Messiah who fulfils the promises made to Abraham and David. It also legitimises the Matthean Community as the new Israel. Notwithstanding the other theological themes within the genealogy, the inclusion of the five women becomes one of the keys to our understanding of the author's intention: they were meant to reflect the prominence of women in the ministry of the Community. They become for us and, in turn, for any society, an example of how to shift the paradigm of male-dominated society to a society where both men and women receive equal recognition in its life and ministry, and are empowered and commissioned to announce Christ to the world!

In a nutshell, the genealogy is, for readers of the Gospel, fundamental to the theological understanding of the entire Gospel. All the theological themes that the Gospel is about to announce are coiled within the genealogy. Moreover, it is itself a symbol of the Matthean Community, the Community that is firmly established within the Jewish heritage,

and expands beyond it to embrace all God's people. Living in a stereotypic society where women are sidelined from certain Community responsibilities because of their gender, we are challenged to give equal recognition and opportunities to men and women of our time. The evil of gender inequality in ministry is an evil contrary to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The names of Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba and Mary, echo the suppressed voices of many women of our time. Their appearance here proclaims to us that the hour has come to acknowledge the vocation of women in its fullness, the hour in which women should acquire in the world an influence, an effect and a power never hitherto achieved.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> John Paul II, Apostolic Letter: *Mulieris Dignitatem: On the Dignity and Vocation of Women on the Occasion of the Marian Year*. (Boston: St Paul Books & Media, 1996), 1. Hence, we can rightly say that, this exegetical investigation has made the 'dry bones' of a bare list of names speak to our contemporary society that undervalues the importance of women as equal partners with men in ministry and life. It is a *thorn in the flesh* for most male members of the Church who still use the 'Law,' the 'Bible' and the 'Traditions' to exclude women from active participation in the Church's life and ministry.

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## APPENDIX: THE MATTHEAN GENEALOGY

1. Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ  
Δαυὶδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ.

2 Ἀβραάμ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰσαὰκ, Ἰσαὰκ  
ὁ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰακώβ, Ἰακώβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν  
ν Ἰούδαν καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ, 3. Ἰούδας δὲ  
ἐγέννησεν τὸν Φάρες καὶ τὸν Ζάρα ἐκ τῆς Θαμάρ,  
Φάρες δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἑσρώμ, Ἑσρώμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν  
τὸν Ἀράμ,

4 Ἀράμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀμιναδάβ, Ἀμιναδάβ  
δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ναασσών, Ναασσών δὲ ἐγέννησεν  
τὸν Σαλιών, 5 Σαλιών δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Βόες  
ἐκ τῆς Ραχάβ, Βόες δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωβὴδ ἐκ τῆς  
Ρούθ, Ἰωβὴδ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰεσσαί, 6 Ἰεσσαί  
δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Δαυὶδ τὸν βασιλέα. Δαυὶδ  
δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Σολομῶνα ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Οὐρίου 7  
Σολομῶν δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ῥοβοάμ, Ῥοβοάμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν  
τὸν Ἀβιά, Ἀβιά δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀσάφ, 8 Ἀσάφ δὲ ἐγέννησεν  
τὸν Ἀωσαφάτ, Ἀωσαφάτ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωράμ, Ἰωράμ  
δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ὀζίαν, 9 Ὀζίας δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωθάμ,  
Ἰωθάμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀχάζ, Ἀχάζ δὲ ἐγέννησεν  
τὸν Ἐζεκίαν, 10 Ἐζεκίας δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν  
Μανασσῆ, Μανασσῆ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀμώς,  
Ἀμώς δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωσίαν, 11 Ἰωσίας δὲ ἐγέννησεν  
τὸν Ἰεχοϊάν καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς μετοικεσίας  
Βαβυλῶνος.

12 Μετὰ δὲ τὴν μετοικεσίαν Βαβυλῶνος  
Ἰεχοϊάας ἐγέννησεν τὸν Σαλαθιήλ, Σαλαθιήλ δὲ ἐγέννησεν  
τὸν Ζοροβαβέλ, 13 Ζοροβαβέλ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀβιοὺδ,  
Ἀβιοὺδ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἐλιακίμ, Ἐλιακίμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν  
τὸν Ἀζώρ, 14 Ἀζώρ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Σαδώκ, Σαδώκ  
δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀξίμ, Ἀξίμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἐλιοὺδ,  
15 Ἐλιοὺδ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἐλεάζαρ, Ἐλεάζαρ δὲ ἐγέννησεν  
τὸν Ματθάν, Ματθάν δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰακώβ, 16 Ἰακώβ  
δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωσήφ τὸν ἄνδρα Μαρίας, ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς ὁ  
λεγόμενος Χριστός.

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

2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac  
the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and  
his brothers, 3 and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah  
by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron  
the father of Aram, 4 and Aram the father of Aminadab,  
and Aminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the  
father of Salmon, 5 and Salmon the father of Boaz by  
Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed  
the father of Jesse, 6 and Jesse the father of King David.

And David was the father of Solomon by the  
wife of Uriah, 7 and Solomon the father of Rehoboam,  
and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the  
father of Asaph, 8 and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat,  
and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the  
father of Uzziah, 9 and Uzziah the father of Jotham,  
and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the  
father of Hezekiah, 10 and Hezekiah the father of  
Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and  
Amos the father of Josiah, 11 and Josiah the father of  
Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the  
deportation to Babylon.

12 And after the deportation to Babylon:  
Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the  
father of Zerubbabel, 13 and Zerubbabel the father of  
Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim  
the father of Azor, 14 and Azor the father of Zadok,  
and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father  
of Eliud, 15 and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and  
Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father  
of Jacob, 16 and Jacob the father of Joseph the  
husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is  
called the Christ.