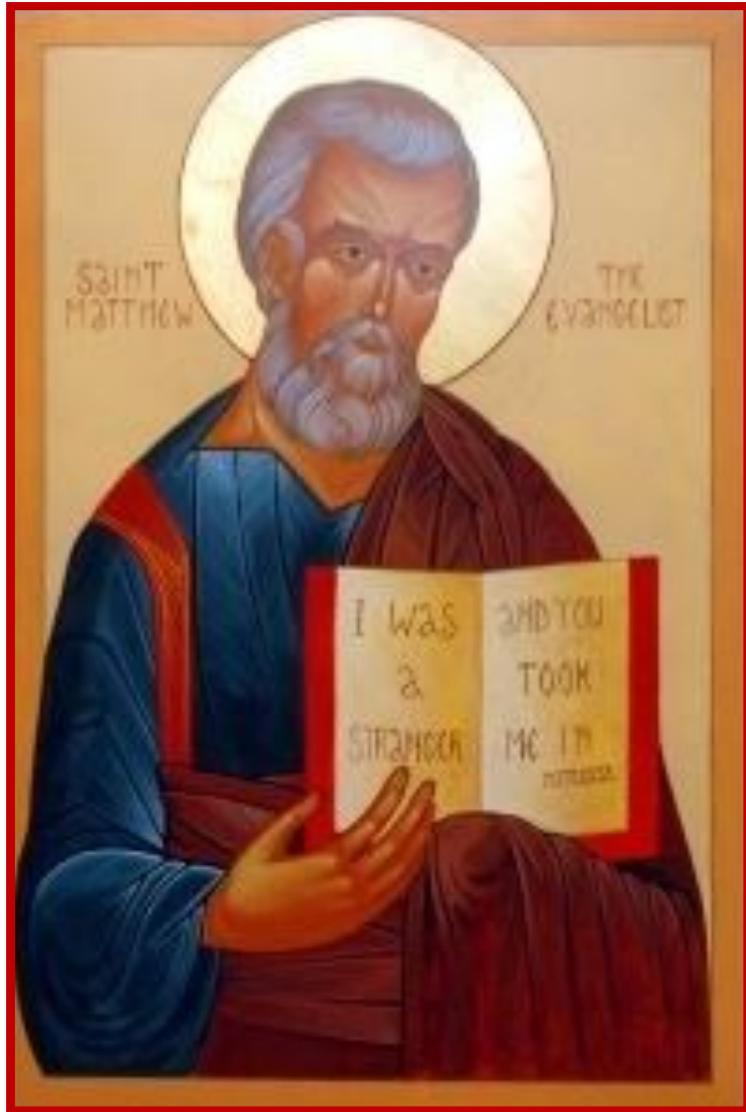


How this genealogy of S. Matthew is reconcilable with that of S. Luke, I will unfold in my commentary on the third chapter of S. Luke.



For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent* that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.

Matthew writes his gospel account to give us the view of Jesus as the King. He records Jesus' authority in calling the disciples: "Follow me" (Matthew 4:19), and he also records more than any of the others about Jesus' teaching concerning God's kingdom and heavenly rule.

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapide's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapide's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

## Matthew Chapter 1: 1-16

Douay Rheims Version

*The genealogy of Christ: he is conceived and born of a virgin.*

1. The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham:
2. Abraham begot Isaac. And Isaac begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Judas and his brethren.
3. And Judas begot Phares and Zara of Tamar. And Phares begot Esron. And Esron begot Aram.
4. And Aram begot Aminadab. And Aminadab begot Naasson. And Naasson begot Salmon.
5. And Salmon begot Booz of Rahab. And Booz begot Obed of Ruth. And Obed begot Jesse.

of their substance from their fathers, a portion from their mothers. Wherefore the Blessed Virgin contributed more to Christ than other mothers are wont to contribute to their sons, because she alone was, in a manner, both father and mother of Christ. Hence it follows—1. That the Blessed Virgin hath more right in Christ than other mothers have in their sons. 2. That Mary had far greater love for Christ, and Christ for her, than other mothers have for their sons, and other sons for their mothers, both because she alone bare (*genuit*) Him, as well as because she bare Him not after the natural, but after the supernatural and divine order. So, too, the love which, in other sons, is divided between father and mother, in Christ was united, and applied wholly to His Mother. And thus she felt, as it were, with a duplicated grief the pains of Christ upon the Cross, and experienced a duplicated joy at His Resurrection.

5. The expression, *of whom was born*, signifies that the Holy Ghost was the most potent and efficient cause of the Nativity of Christ, who, within the Blessed Virgin, of her most pure blood, formed the Body of Christ, organized It, and gave It life, and hypostatically united It to the WORD in the first moment of Its conception. Still the Blessed Virgin was a secondary cause, and a true Mother of Christ for the purpose of generation, not merely as passively furnishing the material, but as actively concurring therein by way of forming, disposing, and organizing that material. See Francis Suarez, 3 p., q. 3, 2 art., 4 ac., q. 33, art. 4, where he teaches that Christ's generation of the Virgin was supernatural, as far as its manner and swiftness were concerned, because, in one moment, it was perfected by the Holy Ghost as the efficient cause. And so the action whereby Mary became a mother was natural; the mode was supernatural. Was born Jesus. The Word was made Flesh. God became Man. The Son of God was made the Son of the Virgin. This, as S. Thomas teaches at length, was the highest and greatest of all the works of God. At this work the Angels and all the Saints have ever been and are amazed in wonder. For in It God manifested His highest power by uniting man to God, clay to the Word, earth to heaven. He manifested also the highest wisdom, that He, who in His Godhead might not suffer to redeem us, put on, in the Virgin's womb, flesh, whereby He might be able to suffer, and to make satisfaction to the Father for our sins. He manifested also the highest justice, because by reason of the dignity of His Person, He makes satisfaction upon equal terms, as it were, to the wrath and justice of God, by suffering death upon the Cross. And He manifested the utmost goodness, because He emptied Himself, that He might replenish us with His gifts. He was made the Son of man that He might make us sons of God, as S. Augustine says. He was born on earth, that man might be born in heaven, as S. Gregory says. *Who is called Christ*: that is, who is the Messiah, or the Christ, the Redeemer of the world, promised to the Fathers. And henceforth He can and ought to be called Messiah, or Christ in His own right, and therefore now He is verily so called by all the faithful.

The reason, *à priori*, is identity of Person, because there is but one Person, and that a Divine Person, in Christ. Hence the attributes of either nature can be predicated of Him; and there becomes a joint participation of the peculiarities of each; so that this Man may be called God, and in return, God may be called Man, the Son of the Virgin, and it can be said that God suffered and was crucified, &c. For one Person is presupposed in these expressions, who gathereth up into Himself all the actions and passions of both natures. Wherefore the Person of the Son of God, who is God, is rightly spoken of as born of the Virgin Mary, but according to His human, not His divine nature.

The surpassing dignity, therefore, of the Blessed Virgin is here indicated: for such is the motherhood of God, that from her He received His own, that is to say, His human substances, such as flesh, bones, blood; and received it in such sort that He cherished, loved, and revered her as His mother, and was obedient to her as a mother, and spoke of her as “mother.” Whence S. Bernard exclaims in admiration, “A twofold wonder, a twofold miracle; God obeys a woman—humility without a parallel; and a woman is the head of God—dignity beyond compare!”

The Virgin Mother of God possessed the same right and authority over Christ which other mothers have over their own sons. Yea, she had more than other mothers have, because she was more the mother of Christ than other women are mothers of their sons, for a reason which I shall adduce presently.

S. Thomas (*1 part. quæst. 25, art. 6*) teaches that God could not perform a greater work than the Incarnation of the Word, and the maternity of the Blessed Virgin, because she is the very Mother of God—God than whom nothing greater can be imagined. Hence Bede saith, “O most blessed Virgin, in thee alone that rich, yea, more than rich, King emptied Himself.” For to be Mother of God is the highest affinity, consanguinity, and union with God. By that motherhood the Blessed Virgin Mary is in as close relationship with God as a mother is with her son.

From this dignity of Mother of God, there follow all the gifts and privileges which have been granted to the Blessed Virgin by God above all men and angels. For as the Humanity of Christ, being united to the Word, receiveth from the WORD such gifts and privileges as are becoming to such a union—I mean such as may exalt that Humanity, and render It, as it were, worthy of union with the WORD; so, in like manner, God showered upon Mary all the gifts and graces which befitted such a Mother of Christ and Spouse of God. Whence you may draw this conclusion—Mary is the Mother of God, therefore she is far more excellent than all the angels, even the Cherubim and Seraphim. She is the Mother of God, therefore she is Queen and Lady of heaven and earth. She is the Mother of God, therefore whatsoever privilege has been granted to any of the Saints, that she obtains in a more excellent degree.

4. *Of whom was born Jesus*, signifies that He was born of His Mother only, so that she alone contributed to Christ all that flesh and substance which other fathers and mothers are wont to contribute conjointly to their children. For sons derive a portion

6. And Jesse begot David the king. And David the king begot Solomon, of her that had been the wife of Urias.
7. And Solomon begot Roboam. And Roboam begot Abia. And Abia begot Asa.
8. And Asa begot Josaphat. And Josaphat begot Joram. And Joram begot Ozias.
9. And Ozias begot Joatham. And Joatham begot Achaz. And Achaz begot Ezechias.
10. And Ezechias begot Manasses. And Manasses begot Amon. And Amon begot Josias.
11. And Josias begot Jechonias and his brethren in the transmigration of Babylon.
12. And after the transmigration of Babylon, Jechonias begot Salathiel. And Salathiel begot Zorobabel.
13. And Zorobabel begot Abiud. And Abiud begot Eliacim. And Eliacim begot Azor.
14. And Azor begot Sadoc. And Sadoc begot Achim. And Achim begot Eliud.
15. And Eliud begot Eleazar. And Eleazar begot Mathan. And Mathan begot Jacob.
16. And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.
17. So all the generations from Abraham to David, are fourteen generations. And from David to the transmigration of Babylon, are fourteen generations: and from the transmigration of Babylon to Christ are fourteen generations.
18. Now the generation of Christ was in this wise. When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child, of the Holy Ghost.
19. Whereupon Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing publicly to expose her, was minded to put her away privately.
20. But while he thought on these things, behold the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying: Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost.
21. And she shall bring forth a son: and thou shalt call his name Jesus. For he shall save his people from their sins.
22. Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying:
23. Behold a virgin shall be with child, and bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.
24. And Joseph rising up from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him, and took unto him his wife.
25. And he knew her not till she brought forth her first born son: and he called his name Jesus.

## Verse 1

The book of the generation.—Thus it is verbally in the Greek, Latin, Syrian, Arabic, Egyptian, Persian texts. But the Ethiopian has *the genealogy of Jesus Christ*. Matthew here seems to imitate Moses. Listen to what blessed Peter Damian says in his Sermon on S. Matthew: “As Moses is not improperly placed before the prophets and all who have written anything in the Old Testament, so Matthew rightly takes precedence of all who are found to have written in the New Testament. For as Moses compiled (*textit*) an account of the origin of the world, so has Matthew described the rising newness of the Church, as it were of a spiritual world. Hence it has been provided that, the **HOLY SPIRIT** guiding the pen, both Moses and S. Matthew placed the same commencement to their respective works, saying, ‘The Book of the Generation.’” So far Damian. Now Moses, in Gen. v. 1, thus begins the account of the genealogy and race of Adam, the first formed man—*The Book of generation of Adam*: for Adam was a type of Christ. For as Adam was the father of the mortal life of all men, so is Christ the Father of the immortal life of the faithful, as S. Paul teaches, Rom. v. 14, &c., and 1 Cor. xv. 47 et seq. The Hebrew is ספר תולדות *sepher toledoth*, i.e., the book, or catalogue, and enumeration of the generations of Adam. For, in the 5th of Genesis, many, indeed all the generations are given by which the human race was propagated from Adam to Noah and the Flood, whence it is probable that S. Matthew, who alludes to Moses, wrote likewise in Hebrew, in this passage, *sepher toledoth*, i.e., the book of the generations, in the plural. The LXX, however, in Gen. v., have translated *βιβλος γενέσεως*, *the Book of the generation*, in the singular, because the generation of Adam was one, by which he, as it were the patriarch of the whole human race, begat Seth, which generation was afterwards continued by Seth and his posterity, and was propagated as far as Noah. The Greek interpreter of S. Matthew, and the Latin Vulgate, which was translated from the Greek, here followed the LXX, because properly there is related the generation of Christ alone, whose origin indeed is derived from Abraham, through many generations of forefathers, and is brought down to Christ. As, therefore, Adam was the beginning or origin of the old world, so is Christ of the new and better world, whence he is called by Isaiah (ix. 6), “The Father of the coming age.” (Vulgate). Hence also Virgil, following the Cumæan Sibyl, sings thus concerning Him, Eclogue iv.:—

“Now the last age of Cumæan Verses is come,  
Afresh the great cycle of ages begins;  
Returneth the Virgin, Saturnian Kingdoms return:  
The heavenly Offspring descends from on high:”

and adds:—

“Dear increase of God, true Offspring of Jove,  
Begin, Boy, by smiles thy Mother to know.”

It is plain that these things were spoken by the Sibyl concerning Christ; but Virgil, either through ignorance or flattery, has transferred them to Pollio, the son of Asinius Pollio, the Roman Consul.

*Of whom was born Jesus*. The form of expression is here changed The Evangelist does not say, *Joseph begat Jesus*, as he had said of Abraham and the rest. Neither does he say, *Mary begat Jesus*, but of whom was born Jesus. By this expression he signifies—

1. That Jesus was born of Mary, not by natural means, but by supernatural—that is to say, by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

2. That Jesus was not sprung from His father Joseph, but born of His mother alone, she being a virgin, and therefore that Joseph had no other connection with the genealogy of Christ than by right of his wife, the Virgin Mary.

Well does S. Bernard say (*Hom. 1 super Missus est*)—“Very beautiful was the mingling of humility and virginity; nor is that soul in only a slight degree pleasing unto God, in which humility commends virginity, and virginity adorns humility; but of what veneration must she be worthy whose fruitfulness exalteth humility, and childbirth consecrates virginity?” And again—“Such a nativity became God, that He should not be born save of a Virgin: such a birth became a Virgin, that she should bring forth only God.” It was fitting that, as Christ had a Father in heaven, He should have no father upon earth, but only a mother; for He who was without a mother in heaven (Gr. *ἀμήτωρ*) was without a father on earth (Gr. *ἀπάτωρ*). For it behoved that the Conception and the Birth of Christ should be removed as far as possible from original sin—that as it was not right that He should contract it, so neither should it be possible. And in this He was superior to His mother; for she, although conceived without sin by the singular preservation of God, nevertheless was bound, through that natural conception of herself whereby she was born of Joachim and Anna by natural generation from Adam, to have contracted it, unless it had been prevented by the grace of God. Lastly, it behoved that the Birth of Christ should be most divinely pure, that it might powerfully commend virginity and chastity to us. Whence S. Gregory Nazianzen (*Orat. 38, de Nativ. in principio*) says, “Christ was born of a virgin: O ye women, do ye then cherish virginity, that ye may be able to be mothers of Christ.” And Cyril of Jerusalem says, “Christ was born that He might make virgins; much more, therefore, ought a virgin to keep chaste her body.”

3. The expression—*Of whom was born Jesus*—signifies that the Virgin was the real mother of Jesus—i.e., of that Man who, being hypostatically united with God, was both God and man. Therefore was she truly the mother of God. For although she was not the mother of Deity, yet did she give birth to God, because she was mother of that Man. For that Man was God, therefore the Blessed Virgin was mother of God.

1. Joseph was the husband of the Blessed Virgin, and the father of Christ, as I have already shown. He was therefore the head and superior both of the Virgin, and of Christ as He was man. Hence,

2. There was singular love and reverence, on the part both of the Blessed Virgin and of Christ, towards Joseph. Whence John Gerson, Chancellor of Paris (*Serm. de Nativ. B.V.M.*), exclaims, “O, altogether wonderful is thy exaltation, O Joseph, incomparable thy dignity, that the Mother of God, the Queen of Heaven, the lady of the world, should not disdain to call thee lord!” S. Gregory Nazianzen (*Orat. 11*), denotes and celebrates the excellence of the husband of his sister, Gorgonia, by this one title, that he was Gorgonia’s husband. “Do you wish,” he says, “that I should describe the man? He was her husband, and I know of nothing more that I need say.” You may say the same of S. Joseph. Do you desire to know who and how great he was? He was the husband of the Mother of God.

3. The ministry and office of Joseph was most noble, in that it pertains to the order of the hypostatic union of the Word with our flesh. For Joseph exercised all his labours and actions in immediate proximity to the Person of Christ. He nourished, cherished, and guarded Christ, and taught Him his art as a carpenter, according to the common opinion of the Doctors. Hear Franc. Suarez (3 *part. quæst. 29, disp. 8, sect. 1*):— “There are some offices which pertain directly to the order of grace making grateful, and in this the Apostles hold the highest rank, and therefore need greater assistance of grace than all others. There are, again, other offices which pertain to the order of the hypostatic union, which is *in genere* a higher order, as is plain from the motherhood of God in the Blessed Virgin. And in this order S. Joseph exercised his ministry.”

4. Joseph, by his familiar and constant companionship with Christ and the Blessed Virgin, was made a sharer in their divine secrets, and daily beheld and imitated their lofty virtues.

5. Joseph was a person of the utmost sanctity, and endowed by God with singular gifts, both of nature and grace, so that in that age there was no man more holy, or more worthy the betrothal of the Mother of God. Whence Suarez thinks it probable that Joseph was superior to the Apostles and John the Baptist in grace and glory, because his office was more excellent than theirs; for it is more to be the father and governor of Christ than His preacher and forerunner. He adds that when Joseph espoused the Blessed Virgin, he was of mature age, and died before the Crucifixion. This is why in the Passion of Christ no mention is made of Joseph. Lastly, he rose with Christ in common with the rest of the patriarchs, of whom mention is made in Matt. xxvii. 52—“Many bodies of the saints which slept arose.” These are the things in which Joseph was pre-eminent.

Note, 1st, *Book* here is the same as catalogue, or enumeration, or description, whence the Syriac translation, *ܟܬܘܒܐ ketobo, i.e.*, a description, or writing. For this is the exact meaning of the Hebrew, *sepher*, to which the Greek *βιβλος* and Latin *liber* correspond. In a like sense, the paper in which was recorded the putting away of a wife by her husband was called a *Book of divorcement*. So the *Book of the righteous* is the catalogue in which the names and acts of the righteous are recorded. *The Book of Life* is the catalogue of the elect, who are written in the mind of God as in a book. Cicero called a catalogue of names, a *book of names*.

Note, 2nd, the word *generation*. First, and most evidently, it is the same as the race, or genealogy of Christ. Second, the generation of Christ is the conception and birth of Christ. See ver. 18. *The birth (γέννησις) of Jesus Christ was on this wise*. Third, as Maldonatus observes, “the generation of Christ is the life of Christ.” For Matthew, in the Gospel, relates the history of the whole course of the life of Christ. Fourth, the Hebrew *toledoth* properly signifies generations, many of which intervened between Adam and Christ. The steps in Jacob’s ladder, above which God stood, represented these generations—those steps, I mean, by which the angels ascended from earth to heaven. For as this ladder joined, as it were, earth to heaven, and Jacob to God, so this series of generations united all the patriarchs to Christ, who was made Flesh, and so united all men to Himself and to God.

*Son of David,*

*i.e.* , descendant of David: for the Hebrews call all male lineal descendants, sons. The Evangelist places David first, then Abraham: 1st, because David was the nearer to Christ, and through him Christ reaches to Abraham; 2nd, because thus, in a more compendious manner, without repetition, Christ’s genealogy is stated. He wished to impress this fact, that Christ was descended from Abraham through David. So S. Jerome. 3rd, and chiefly, because the promise of God made to David concerning Christ, as about to be born of his posterity, was the later, more special, and more glorious promise, as S. Chrysostom, Theophilus, Euthym., teach. Hence the Jews constantly call their Messiah the Son of David. Hence on Palm Sunday, when Christ entered into Jerusalem, they hailed Him as Messiah: *Hosanna to the Son of David, i.e.*, O Lord, save our Messiah, speaking of Him as David’s son and heir. Lastly, by the title, *Son of David*, the nobility of the race from whence Messiah sprung is hinted at, as also His kingdom, viz., that He too should be a king, as being the Son of David, a king, according to that divine voice of the Archangel Gabriel to the Blessed Virgin, “He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of David his father: and he shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever. And of his kingdom there shall be no end.” (S. Luke i. 31.) For this reason the prophets everywhere speak of Christ as David’s son and heir, thus Is. ix. 7, lv. 3; Jer. xxv. 5; Ez. xxxiv. 23, xxxvii. 25, &c.

The first promise which was made to David concerning Christ, that He should spring from him, and reign for ever, is found 2 Sam. vii. 12; the same was confirmed, Ps. lxxxviii. and cxxxi.; and repeated to Solomon, David's Son, 1 Kings ix. 5. When, therefore, S. Matthew says, *Jesus Christ the Son of David*, he means that all these promises were now fulfilled in Christ. Thus S. Chrysostom 2; Theophilus, Euthym.; Irenæus, lib. 8, c. 8; S. Ambrose, lib. 3 *in Luc.*, c. 3; and others.

#### *Son of Abraham*

The word Son here may be referred either to David or to Christ. For David, as well as Christ, was a son, *i.e.* a descendant, of Abraham. It signifies, therefore, that Christ, through David His father, was also the Son of Abraham, who was the father of them that believe, and of the ancient Church. The first express promise concerning Christ was made to him. (Gen. xxii. 18.) Now, from the birth of Abraham to the birth of Christ there were 2,000 years; from the death of David to Christ, 1,013 years. So great was the antiquity of the oracles and promises of God concerning Christ; so constant and sure was God's faithfulness in fulfilling them. And this is why S. Matthew so carefully derives the genealogy of Christ from Abraham, even through forty-two generations, in order that he might show the Jews that Jesus Christ was the true Messiah promised to Abraham, and that He was the Son of Abraham and the rest of the patriarchs; and that He might therefore, as such, be received, cherished, and worshipped by the Jews.

**Ver. 2.—***Abraham begat Isaac.* These two, with those who came after them, were the first patriarchs, the founders of the synagogue and people of God, and of the Kingdom of Christ. They, as types, foreshadowed Him. (See comment on Genesis, where I have unfolded their genealogies.) I will not here repeat what has been said. God constantly calls Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and even makes a boast, so to say, of this title. Wherefore He chose the posterity of Abraham, descending through Isaac and Jacob, for His own family and Church, and gave them the sign and pledge of circumcision. Wherefore God changed Abraham's name from Abram, *i.e.*, a high father, to Abraham, that is to say, אב רב המון, *ab rab hamon*, or the father of a great multitude—*viz.*, of the believing people that should be born of him according to the flesh; in like manner as of Christ, both Jews and Gentiles, who believe in Him, are born according to the Spirit. Now Isaac—*i.e.* laughter—about to be offered up by his father on Mount Moriah, clearly represented Christ, who was crucified on the same mount, and brought salvation and joy to the whole world.

**Ver. 3.—***And Judah begat Pharez and Zara of Tamar.* (See what I have said on Tamar, Gen. xxxviii. 29.) Observe that in the genealogy of Christ, with the exception of His Blessed Mother, only four females are made mention of, three of them harlots—Tamar, Rahab, and Bathsheba—and the fourth a Gentile, Ruth the Moabitess. Rahab, too, was a Gentile, being an inhabitant of Jericho. If the reason of all this be asked, SS. Jerome, Chrysostom, Ambrose answer, that it was so because Christ would signify that "He who came for the abolishing and putting away of sins wished to be born of sinners." This reason is true, but allegorical. The literal and simple reason is, that these women were united to their husbands, not in the ordinary way, but

iniquitously taken away by Herod; yea, who was to raise their kingdom to a far higher grandeur, by making it spiritual instead of corporeal, heavenly instead of earthly, and, instead of temporal, eternal.

Observe the expression, *Joseph the husband of Mary*. The Arabic has—*the spouse of Mary*. From this we may gather that S. Joseph had all the rights of a real husband with regard to the Virgin, and consequently is rightly and truly called the father of Christ. This is pointed out by S. Augustine.

1. Christ may be said to be the fruit of the marriage of Joseph and Mary, because He was born *in wedlock*, though not *of wedlock*. He may therefore be ascribed either to His father or His mother.

2. Forasmuch as a man and his wife are made one by marriage, as it were but one person in the eye of the law, therefore they have everything in common, and so all their legitimate children: for I except children born of adultery. They have the adulterer as their father, and belong to him.

Christ, then, who was the Son of the Virgin Mother of God, was also the Son of Joseph, who was her husband, and therefore the partner of all her honours and blessings.

Joseph was more truly the father of Christ than one who adopts a son is the father of that son. He is only a father by adoption, but Joseph was father of Christ by marriage. Hence it follows that Joseph had a father's authority over Christ, and therefore the utmost solicitude and affection for him. And Christ in return cherished, loved, and honoured Joseph as a father, and was obedient to him, as is plain from Luke ii. 51. "This subjection," as Gerson says, "marks at once the unspeakable humility of Christ, and the incomparable dignity of Joseph and Mary."

3. Because Christ properly belonged to the family of Joseph: for He belonged to His mother's family as His mother herself belonged to Joseph's. There was therefore upon earth one most noble, yea, divine and heavenly family, of which the father and ruler was Joseph; the mother, the Blessed Virgin; the son, Christ. In it were the three most exalted and excellent persons of the whole world; first, Christ, both God and man; secondly, the Virgin Mother of God, most closely united to Christ; and thirdly, Joseph, the father of Christ by marriage.

The common herd of men, yea, many of this world's wise ones, think of Joseph only as a poor and despised carpenter. But the more despised and unknown he was upon earth, so much the greater is his glory in heaven. Wherefore Gregory XV. hath lately decreed that his Festival shall be celebrated as a *Double* by the whole Church on the 19th of March. And this is a well deserved honour; for consider, from what I am about to subjoin, how great were his prerogatives, his office, and dignity above all other men.

**Ver. 16.**—*Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary.* You may ask, why is the generation of Christ here derived from the genealogy of Joseph? Christ was the Son, not of Joseph, but of the Virgin Mary, especially if S. Mary were able, as it might appear, to marry a man of another tribe, as her cousin Elizabeth, who was of the tribe of Judah, like Mary herself, married Zachariah, a priest, and therefore of the tribe of Levi. The answer is, that Jewish women might, indeed, marry into another tribe: but if they themselves, in the failure of heirs male, became heiresses of their fathers, they were in that case obliged to marry husbands of their own tribe and family, that their inheritance might not pass by marriage into another tribe. (See the last chapter of Numbers, ver. 7.)

Joachim, the father of the Blessed Virgin, had no male children, a fact which S. Matthew here omits, as something perfectly well known in the age in which he writes. Hence it became the duty of S. Mary to marry a husband of her own tribe and family, that is to say, Joseph. Thus the genealogy of Joseph became the genealogy of the Blessed Virgin, and consequently of Christ, the Lord. Thus, too, it is, that the Fathers teach universally that Joseph and Mary were of the same tribe and family. It may be yet further asked, why S. Matthew unfolded the genealogy of Joseph rather than of Mary, since Christ was born of her alone, being a Virgin? I answer:—First, because among the Jews, and other nations, genealogy is customarily reckoned through fathers and husbands, not through mothers and wives. Second, because Joseph was the true and lawful father of Christ, after the manner which I shall explain presently. And Christ was the heir of David's throne and sceptre, not through Mary, but through Joseph, according to God's promise to David, 2 Sam. vii. 12; Ps. lxxxviii. and cxxxi. The sceptre, therefore, of Judah devolved upon Jesus Christ, not only by the promise and gift of God, but by the right of hereditary succession. For if, by common right, sons succeed to their fathers' inheritance, when they are only accounted their sons by common repute, how much more was Christ Joseph's, His father's, heir, since He was the Son of his wife, by the power and the gift of the Holy Ghost? Wherefore as Joseph had a parent's right over Christ, indeed, all rights which parents have over sons, so on the other hand, Christ had, with reference to Joseph, all the rights which sons have in respect to their parents. He had therefore a right to the kingdom of Israel after Joseph's death. Hence the question of the Magi (ii. 2), "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" This was what S. Matthew wished to demonstrate, who, as S. Augustine says, insists, most of all the Evangelists, upon the kingship of Christ. And this explains why he gives the genealogy of Joseph, rather than of Mary. For she could not be the heiress of the kingdom, so long as heirs male, like Joseph and others, survived. Whence also it must be said, as a consequence, that the father and other ancestors of Joseph were first-born, or at least eldest surviving sons of their fathers, so that the right of reigning devolved upon them.

This is what is meant in the first chapter of S. Luke by the words, "And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of David his father." So likewise in Gen. xlix. 10, "The sceptre shall not be taken away from Judah, nor a ruler from his thigh, till he come that is to be sent:" that is, Christ, who was to restore to Judah the sceptre,

after a new and extraordinary manner; and so they became types of the Church of Christ, which, when the Jews were rejected, was gathered out of the Gentiles by a new vocation, and after a new manner. Tamar, because Shelah was denied her in marriage, or rather because her union with him was deferred, using deceit, prostituted herself to Judah. Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, was united to David, first by adultery, then in marriage. Rahab married Salmon because she hospitably received and protected the Hebrew spies who were sent by Joshua to Jericho, and so she became of the same faith and religion. Ruth married Boaz when she had passed with her mother-in-law, Naomi, from Moab into Judæa.

The tropological sense is to show us the vanity of pride of birth, and that true nobility consists, not in ancestry, but in our own good disposition and virtues. Thus S. Chrysostom. Wherefore let no one be ashamed of his birth, nor even of vile and wicked ancestors; but let us say with Cicero, "I have outshone my forefathers in virtue." There can be no doubt that there are in the ancestry of the most exalted persons, forasmuch as they are sprung from Adam, many ignoble, worthless, wicked, and infamous persons. Plato, according to Seneca (*Epis.* 44), is of opinion that all kings are descended from servants, and that all servants are sprung from kings; that there is no king who has been entirely free from the plough, and no ploughman who has not been mixed up with kings.

Lastly, Solomon, amongst the other vanities and uncertainties of the world, reckons this: "Because out of prison and chains sometimes a man cometh forth to a kingdom: and another born king is consumed with poverty." (*Eccles.* iv. 14.)

**Verse 4- Aminadab.** He was prince of the tribe of Judah when the Israelites came out of Egypt, who, when the rest stood still, fearing to go into the Red Sea, although God had made dry ground through the midst of it, courageously entered into it, and brought his own tribe safely through, and then the other princes and tribes followed. This is a Hebrew tradition. To this alludes the verse, Cant. vi. 12, "My soul made me like the chariots of Aminadab." His son Naasson succeeded him in the headship of the tribe.

*Jesse*, or, according to a different punctuation of the Hebrew, *Isai*. The name itself prefigured Jesus Christ, who was to be born of him. For Jesse and Jesus are the same word if we consider the root of both, which is to be found in the Hebrew *ישיא*, *i.e.*, to save.

**Verse 6-** *Of her which had been the wife of Urias.* After Uriah's death, David married his wife, and of her he begat Solomon, for Solomon was not born of adultery, but in wedlock. In this passage it is intimated that God did not recall the promises which He had made to David on account of his adultery with Bathsheba, but, on their repentance, He confirmed His promises. Whence from Bathsheba and her son Solomon Christ was descended. In truth, Bathsheba herself became a saintly penitent, and brought up Solomon her son in a holy manner. Yea, she became illustrious for the spirit of prophecy, as I have shown in Prov. xxxi. 1, on the words, "The words of king Lemuel. The vision which his mother taught him." (Vulgate.)

**Verse 8-** *Now Joram begat Ozias*—not directly, but with three generations intervening; for Joram was really the father of Ahaziah, Ahaziah of Joash, Joash of Amaziah, Amaziah of Azariah or Uzziah, for he had both names. (See 1 Chron. iii. 12, &c.) It is asked why S. Matthew here omits these three links in the genealogy. S. Jerome answers, because the Evangelist wished to form three exact series of fourteen generations each, on which see ver. 17. And because Jehoram had allied himself to the most wicked Jezebel and to Ahab, in taking Ahab's sister, the impious Athaliah, to wife; for God had sworn that, on account of Ahab's impiety and idolatry, He would blot out all his posterity. (1 Kings xxi. 21, &c.) Posterity in Scripture is reckoned to the fourth generation. Here, then, it is blotted out, forasmuch as it is omitted and obliterated by S. Matthew. Thus S. Hilary, S. Thomas, Jansen, &c. Gaspar Sanchez gives another reason. He conjectures that Matthew actually wrote as follows: "Joram begat Ochoziah, Ochoziah begat Joash, Joash begat Amaziah, Amaziah begat Oziah;" but that the copyist, misled by the similarity between Ochoziah and Oziah, as the names are written in Greek, by a slip of his eye passed over from Ahaziah to Uzziah. Thus Gaspar. But this would be an enormous blunder, and though one copyist might fall into such an error, it was scarcely possible that all could. All extant MSS. and Versions are alike here—Greek, Syriac, Latin, Arabic, &c. "*Joram begat Ozias,*" not *Ahaziah*. Besides, if these three generations were inserted, they would make seventeen generations, whereas S. Matthew says expressly there were fourteen generations.

**Verse 11-** *Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren.* Josias begat four sons. The first was Johanan; the second, Jehoiakim, who is also Eliakim; the third, Jehoahaz, also called Shallum; the fourth, Zedekiah, who is also Mattaniah. Jehoahaz, although the third son, succeeded his father Josias immediately upon his death; but Pharaoh, King of Egypt, removed him, and placed his brother Jehoiakim upon the throne. After he had reigned eleven years, Nebuchadnezzar slew him, and gave the crown to his son Jehoiachin. Him he shortly afterwards dethroned, and made his uncle Zedekiah king. When Zedekiah rebelled, he took him captive, and put out his eyes; and in him that branch of David's royal line came to an end.

### *The carrying away to Babylon*

—Greek *ἐπὶ τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλώνης*—that is, about the time of the transmigration to Babylon, or the Babylonish captivity, in which the Jews were carried away by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon.

The transmigration of the Jews to Babylon took place at three different times. The first was in the eleventh year of King Jehoiakim, when Daniel and Ezekiel were carried away. The second was three months afterwards, when Mordecai, Esther's uncle, was carried away, together with Jehoiachin, the son of Jehoiakim. The third, and most complete, captivity was eleven years afterwards, under King Zedekiah, when almost all the people who were left were taken away.

**Ver. 12.**—*Jeconias begat Salathiel.* There is a great difficulty here, which Porphyry, the enemy of Christ and of Christians, was in the habit of bringing forward as insuperable. For this Jeconias, the father of Salathiel, was not the Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, who is spoken of in the preceding verse, but the son of that Jehoiakim, and the grandson of Josiah, and consequently there are only thirteen generations, instead of fourteen, as S. Matthew enumerates.

S. Jerome replies that this Jeconias is a different person from Jeconias, the son of Josiah. The former was Jehoiakim, or *Jechonias*, and *Jeconias* by a corruption. The latter is properly Jehoiachin. Josiah begat Jehoiakim, and Jehoiakim begat Jehoiachin. One generation must, therefore, be supplied in this place. "*Now Jeconias begat Jechonias,*" as some Greek and Latin MSS. do read. That what has been said is correct, is clear from 1 Chron. iii. 15, 16, and 2 Kings xxiii. and xxiv.

The generation in question was omitted, either by S. Matthew himself, in order to avoid the repetition of the two similar names, as S. Augustine thinks, or, more probably, through the fault and ignorance of transcribers, who, mistaking *Jechonias* for *Jeconias*, thought that one of the two was redundant, and so omitted it. This was the opinion of S. Epiphanius.