

THE TITLE OF VOLUME II (Mt. 1:1)

Each one of us knows the opening verse of the Old Testament ... [Gen. 1:1](#) [In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.](#) It is very familiar to us. ... However, the opening verse of the New Testament is not just so well known. For many readers of the Bible the first chapter of Matthew begins at verse eighteen, with the account of the birth of Jesus.

Why, therefore, is Matthew 1:1 important? It might not look too profound, ... but, why should we consider it?

Fundamentally, it is not a verse in isolation, - it is part of the genealogy of Jesus. The genealogies are *not irrelevant*, they are meaningful sections of God's Word. Why read them? They contain the difficult-to-pronounce names and all the 'begats' ... what possible help can they be to my spiritual development?

Well, once again we remind ourselves that [All scripture is given by inspiration of God \(II Tim. 3:16\)](#) ... including the difficult-to-pronounce names and the 'begats'. ... [All scripture ... is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.](#)

What could God possibly be teaching us through the opening words of the New Testament? First of all, Jesus came into this world ...

HIS HISTORICAL VALIDITY

* This is the historical record that Jesus was a real person. "Ah, but it is just your Bible telling you He was a real person".

* Yes, agreed ... the Bible teaches me Jesus was a real Person. The evidence is weighed heavily in His favour that He was did actually live.

* He was not some character out of a legendary fable, neither is He a myth or a character borne out of someone's imagination, - Jesus Christ was a real person. To arrive at any other conclusion is to dice with error.

* Yes, as I have said, the Bible tells me He was a real Person, and it is corroborated by other ancient manuscripts, - the Bible is not the only manuscript that mentions the Name of Jesus. ...

* For example, Josephus was a Jewish historian who mentioned Jesus twice. Tacitus was a senator and a historian of the Roman Empire who mentioned Jesus in his writings. Suetonius was another Roman historian who mentioned Christ in his writings. ...

- * Pliny the Younger was a magistrate of Ancient Rome, a lawyer and an author, ... and during his time as governor of Pontus and Bithynia he wrote to Emperor Trajan c.112AD about people who worshipped Christ.
- * The evidence is there ... Jesus was a real Person, not a myth!
- * **HIS ANCESTRY.** He had 'forefathers', - a family history ... descendants that could be traced back.
- * In fact, Matthew was so confident of Jesus' ancestry he included some of the biggest names in the nation's history, - Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and Solomon.
- * Matthew, - himself a Jew, - had no fear anyone would contest what he was writing, - Jesus came from human stock!
- * Matthew was not afraid to name names ... and not only were the biggest names mentioned, there were also mentioned many names that would usually have been left out ... names of women, - Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba and Mary.
- * Jesus was a real Person, with a real family history.
- * **HIS FAMILY.** When He began His ministry He went to the local synagogue and began to teach, and He spoke with such knowledge and authority that He astounded His hearers, [Mk. 6:3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.](#)
- * They had seen Him grow up in Nazareth ... and some of those same people had 'known Him all His days'. They could remember Him as a 'toddler', as a little boy and as a teenager.
- * They knew what His father worked at, and they would have known Him growing up and learning the family trade.
- * **HIS AUTHORITY.** When He was just a young boy of twelve years of age, He spoke about issues of the faith with men who had been steeped in it since childhood and who had become highly-respected students and doctors of Hebrew writings ... and even they found Jesus' knowledge and depth of understanding utterly amazing, [Lk. 2:47 all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.](#)
- * In the same way, many years later when He asked Simon Peter, [Mt. 16:15 whom say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.](#)
- * When He hung on the cross, Pilate, - a pagan unbeliever, - demanded the name for Jesus to be retained, [King of the Jews](#). Even a man who was given to the worship of great numbers of idols recognised in Jesus an authority away beyond this world.

* So, there is no doubt about it ... **His historical validity** ... Jesus was a real Person in history.

HIS VALUE

* I was brought up within an environment where God's Word was considered truth, and issues relating to God were 'black and white'. You can imagine my surprise one day when I was having a conversation with a man who attended a good church, - one that was faithful to God's Word. However, this man and I were talking about Jesus and he said to me Jesus was nothing more than a prophet! Now, this was a decent church-going man!

* He taught me to take nothing for granted ... not even with regular church-goers! I have found since, - even in Baptist circles, - it is not a good idea to think everyone's beliefs are based on the Bible!

* What is the value of Jesus? Would our religion be any the less if He was not included? It is such a 'big thing'? Of course, it is ... Christianity is about Jesus and if you get your view of Jesus wrong you will get your Christianity wrong!

* Yes, you cannot be a Christian without having the Biblical Christ within! ... Christianity is not a set of principles and regulations; Christianity is a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

* Christianity without Jesus is a dead religion. If Christianity did not have a Christ Who came into this world to save sinners who must believe in Him for their salvation ... our religion would be dead and lifeless!

* Jesus blatantly made it so clear, [Jn. 10:10 I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.](#)

* The value of Jesus is not so much in a story ... but in the living and ongoing daily relationship.

* How do I know Jesus is real? I know He is real because the Bible tells me He is real. How do I know the Bible is true? I know it is true because I know the Jesus it speaks about is central to my relationship with God. I am more certain of the reality of Jesus as my Saviour and Lord as I am of anyone I have ever met in my life!

* Now, there is no way you can have a confidence like that unless you have been introduced, ... and you and I, - believer, - *have* been introduced by the Holy Spirit to the Lord Jesus.

* You see, it is not just history that tells me Jesus was a Character within it ... the Bible tells me Jesus was a real Person, and the Bible also tells me Jesus is a real Person. I am not depending upon something in the past, I am trusting in Someone in the present!

* No one can prove to me Mohammed is alive ... because Mohammed is dead! No one can prove to me Buddha is alive ... because he is dead! The fathers of communism have nothing more to look forward to because they are all dead ... but *Jesus is alive!!* Out of all the religions, Christianity *alone* has a living Head!

* The living Jesus has more to commend than any dead founder or 'ism' or theory or religion

* Matthew begins his Gospel with a list of names of real people ... and at the 'top', - at the very beginning of that list of real people, - is the Name of the *real* Jesus Christ! **His validity, His value ...**

HIS VOCATION

* Jesus came into this world ... not with a hope ... but with confidence He would achieve what He set out to achieve.

* Down through the history of His Old Testament ancestors, they had to rely on the Law, - there was the Law of Moses, and, - prior to Moses, - God had given principles by which the people were required to live in order to please Him.

* It was so desperately difficult and it came to the point where the Law was showing up their deficiencies and their inadequacies.

* God, therefore, - under the new dispensation, - sent His Son to be the fulfilment of the Law. Under the old dispensation they had to bring a lamb every time they sought forgiveness of sin ... but the Lord Jesus Christ, - of behalf of the Godhead, - became as a Lamb Who would bleed and die to become the final sacrifice God would require for the eternal salvation of His people.

* When Matthew begins, [The book of the generation of Jesus Christ](#), it is a statement to his Jewish readers that a new chapter in their history was about to be written ... and throughout ever page, and along every line was this new Name of Jesus Christ.

* Many people look for different ways to find God ... but there is only one! They spend their money, they climb mountains barefooted, they dress in the lowliest of clothes ... but there is still only one way to find God, *and it is through Jesus Christ.*

- * All other attempts end in disappointment, they end with emptiness and failure.
- * This Book tells you Who Jesus was, why He came, and what He achieved.
- * It is the very beginning of the new Chapter in God's wonderful plan.
- * Jesus entered into a family line so He would identify with you and me. He is a real Person, - He did not pretend, or make some type of attempt to patronise us.
- * He is a real Person ... and He is also God! He could not achieve what needed to be achieved if He was anything less than a real Person and real God. He would have failed because He would not have had the necessary qualifications, Paul said, [II Cor. 8:9](#) *ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*
- * **His vocation** was to die in your place and mine place, - the eternal death ... and even before Matthew gives the account of the birth of Jesus, Matthew puts it within its proper context and He gives the account of how Jesus is the right Person to come into this world to purchase our salvation. ... *That was why He came.*

CONCLUSION

- * So, to argue against Jesus is a difficult job. To try and deny His legitimacy and **His validity** is to 'score a line' through history, - Biblical and secular. Yes, the evidence is irrefutable ... even to unbelievers who will look at the issue objectively.
- * With the Bible in your hand, measure Him up against other religions and other philosophies ... and you will see their value does not even come close! **His value** is more than all the others combined ... and more than they could ever obtain.
- * Just as Matthew chapter one begins with the simple and plain statement, [The book of the generation of Jesus Christ](#), ... it is the platform from which the reader *springs* into discovering more about Him.
- * You can read other books about Him, - some of them better than others, - but the greatest Book to read about Jesus is the Book of which He is Author.
- * In it you will find **His validity** for all the claims He makes, **His value** as the Saviour and Lord He affirms to be, and **His vocation**, - in His human role, ... as [the Son of man \[Who has\]](#) come to save that which was lost (Mt. 18:11).