

We will also encounter geographical references as we study through the Gospel of Matthew. What are some of these places and where are they?

- Palestine – divided into three districts:
 - Location – a narrow strip of land along the eastern side of the Mediterranean Sea;
 - Land Area – “only some 140 miles long. In the north it reaches only 23 miles inland from the sea; in the south, about 80.”³³; this region was similar in shape to the US State of New Hampshire, only New Hampshire is over 220 miles long and 110 miles wide in the south;

- Galilee
 - Location – northernmost district of Palestine;
 - Land Area – “60 by 33 miles”³⁴ or about 1980 miles² (about the size of NWA)
 - Landmarks –
 - Sea of Galilee (or Lake Gennesaret) “lies about 700 feet below the sea level, making it the world’s lowest fresh water lake and the second lowest lake after the Dead Sea.”³⁵)
 - Cities – Nazareth (Jesus’ hometown), Capernaum (“Jesus’ base during His 3-year ministry in Israel”³⁶), Cana



³³ Richards 519.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Source: <http://www.israeljerusalem.com/lake-of-gennesaret.htm> accessed on October 6, 2018.

³⁶ Source: <http://www.israeljerusalem.com/capernaum-israel.htm> accessed on October 6, 2018.

(site of His first miracle), and Bethsaida.

- Samaria
 - Location – situated in between the other two districts of Palestine;
 - Land Area – “its greatest extent was 56 miles long and 47 miles wide”³⁷
 - Landmarks –
 - Mt. Gerazim – the place that Samaritan religion claimed was “the one place of divinely ordered worship.”³⁸
 - “Its cities are seldom mentioned in the Gospels, as Jesus’ ministry during His lifetime was primarily to the Jewish people, who did not live there.”³⁹
 - John 4 records Jesus’ encounter with a Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well near the town of Sychar.
- Judea
 - Location – southernmost district of Palestine;
 - Land Area – “only 57 miles wide and about 45 miles in length”⁴⁰
 - Landmarks –
 - Mt. Zion and Mt. Moriah are 2 of 4 mountains that Jerusalem sits on.
 - Dead Sea – “One, the surface of the Dead Sea, which lies 1,418 feet below the sea level, is the lowest point on the earth’s surface. Two, the Dead Sea is the earth’s saltiest body of water. Its 34% salt content is ten times more salty than the ocean and precludes marine life, hence its name.”⁴¹ Three, while only 30 miles long and 9 miles wide at its widest point, the Dead Sea is “990 feet deep.”⁴²
 - Cities/Towns – Jerusalem (location of the Temple), Bethlehem (birthplace of Jesus), Emmaus, Bethany, and Bethel.

³⁷ Richards 519.

³⁸ *TBKC-NT* 286.

³⁹ Richards 519.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Source: <http://www.israeljerusalem.com/dead-sea.htm> accessed on October 6, 2018.

⁴² *Ibid.*

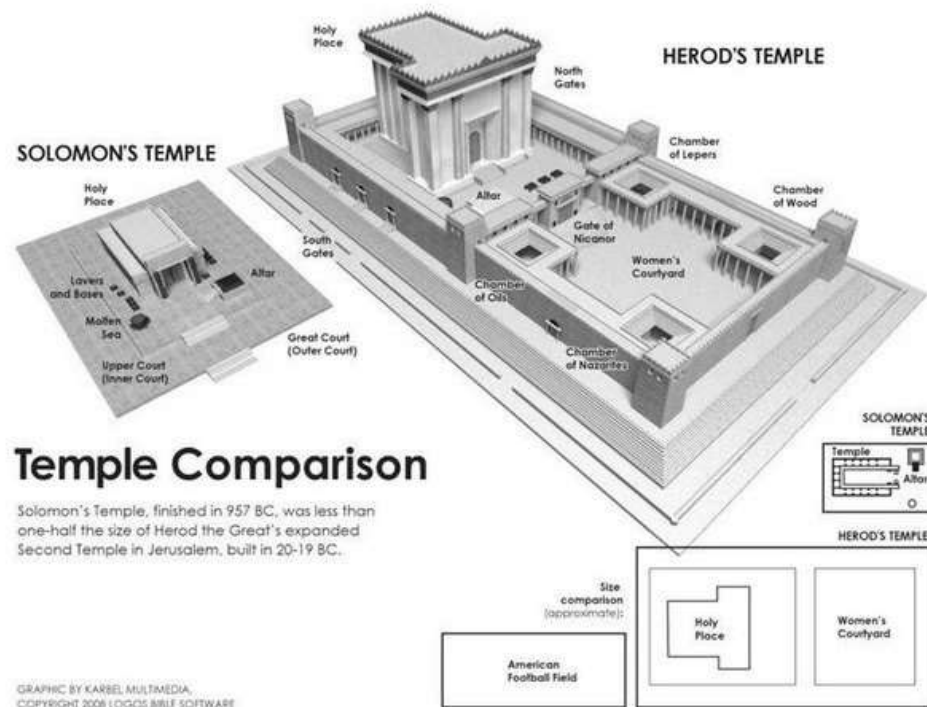
And finally, we will be introduced to several institutions with which the people of Jesus' day were very familiar. What are some of these institutions?

- The Sanhedrin
 - The Sanhedrin was the governing body of the Jews in both political and religious matters.
 - “The Sanhedrin, headed by the high priest and composed of the ‘chief priests,’ scholars of Scripture, and lay members, governed the Jewish population in Palestine, and also had authority over Jews anywhere in the Roman Empire.”⁴³
 - The Sanhedrin functioned under the authority of the Roman Empire; thus its authority was limited in some things (e.g. the death penalty).
- The Synagogue
 - “When the temple was destroyed in 586 B.C. by Nebuchadnezzar, the Jews were taken captive to Babylon. There they began to meet in small groups on the Sabbath to study the Scriptures and worship God. When the people returned to the land and the temple was rebuilt, these weekly meetings of local communities for study of God’s Word continued.”⁴⁴
 - Everywhere there were groups of Jewish people in the Roman Empire; there was a synagogue there for them to worship and study Scripture.
 - Jesus often read Scripture and then would explain its meaning there.
 - Paul made a habit of teaching/evangelizing the synagogue first when he entered a new area.
- The Temple

⁴³ Richards 522.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

- In Jesus' day, the Temple was not the original temple built by Solomon; it was the temple that had been rebuilt by the returning exiles. The rebuilding process was started in 538 B.C. and completed by 515 B.C.⁴⁵
- "The Jewish people were required to appear at Jerusalem for several of the festivals established in the Old Testament. Jesus often preached on such occasions. And member of the Jerusalem church worshiped in the temple daily, and preached there about Jesus."⁴⁶



- "As the central Jewish place of sacrificial worship from about 515 B.C.E. until its destruction by the Romans in 70 C.E., the second temple in Jerusalem played a major role in the religious and national life of the Jewish people."⁴⁷
- Today, the Islamic Dome of the Rock now stands in the place where the Temple once stood.

⁴⁵ Source: <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/second-temple/> accessed on October 6, 2018.

⁴⁶ Richards 522.

⁴⁷ Source: <https://www.bibleodyssey.org/places/main-articles/second-temple> accessed on October 6, 2018.

Part One: Early Life of the Messiah

“The first chapter of the Gospel of Matthew is divided into two parts. In the first to the seventeenth verse we find the genealogy of Jesus Christ, and in the last part of the chapter the account of the birth of the promised One. In the second half we see Him as Son of God and Saviour, while in the first, in the genealogy, His royal descent is proven. He is the rightful heir to David’s throne, and thus His Kingship is legally established.”¹

I. Birth of Jesus Christ (1:1-25)

“The First Gospel has a summary statement in its first verse: ‘A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.’ Why does David’s name appear before Abraham’s? Would not Abraham, the father of the nation, be more significant to a Jewish mind? Perhaps Matthew listed the name of David first because the King who would rule over the nation was to come through David (2 Sam. 7:12-17).”²

A. Genealogy of a King

The Importance of a Genealogy

Why is the genealogy included in Holy Scripture?

- Reminder of Christ’s Humanity
 - Whereas Luke’s Gospel focuses on His deity, Matthew focuses on His humanity.
 - “Genealogy is the first emphasis in the Gospel of Matthew. When we think of Jesus, we must realize that we are dealing with a Man. The person who came from heaven (John 1:1-2) was also fully human, and it is His heritage as a human being that Matthew wants us to understand first.”³

¹ Gaebelin 17.

² TBKC-NT 17.

³ Richards 525.

- Evidence of the Fulfillment of His Covenant
 - “[T]he opening verse connected Him [Jesus] back to two great covenants in Jewish history: the Davidic (2 Sam 7) and the Abrahamic (Gen. 12; 15).”⁴
 - Abrahamic Covenant – “God gave Abraham great and special promises. These included the promise of possession of the land of Palestine forever, a great people to live in it, a special relationship with God for Abraham’s descendants, and ultimately a descendant (seed) through whom all the peoples of the earth would be blessed (Gen 12, 15; and 17).”⁵
 - Davidic Covenant – “The second significant genealogical element is the relationship to David. Later in Israel’s history God promised to David that the Messiah would come through his family line. The ultimate King would be born from the family of David, Israel’s greatest king.”⁶
- “In tracing the genealogy of Jesus from Abraham and from David, Matthew was demonstrating Jesus’ right to rule. Jesus’ genealogy not only established Him as a true Man, but also was the foundation of His claim to the throne of Israel as the promised Seed of David.”⁷

The Unique Aspects of Each Genealogy

*What are the differences between the genealogies in Matthew 1 and Luke 3?
What is the significance of this?*

- Matthew’s focus was on Jesus’ royal lineage.
 - Matthew 1 traces Jesus’ lineage through His legal father, Joseph; whereas Luke 3 traces Jesus lineage through His mother, Mary.
 - Luke starts with Jesus, through the line of Joseph’s family back to King David, then back to Abraham and eventually all the way back to Adam.
 - Matthew places greater importance on being the son of David, over the son of Abraham. Matthew starts with Abraham and moves forward to King David (14 generations), then continued moving forward from David to the Babylonian captivity (another 14 generations), and from there through His mother’s lineage to the birth of Jesus (another 14 generations).

⁴ TBKC-NT 18.

⁵ Richards 526

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

- Matthew also includes several females in its list of descendants.
 - “Women in a genealogy is something which is very rarely the case. There were many noble, devoted and believing women in the Old Testament. Sarah, Rebekah, Deborah... Instead of them we discover four who are only known, at least three, by their shame, and the other belonged to a race which was according to the law cursed.”⁸
 - Women of the Old Testament in Matthew’s Genealogy of Christ
 - Tamar – disguised herself so to secretly prostitute herself out to her father-in-law in order to become pregnant (Genesis 38)
 - Rahab – a prostitute (Joshua 6; see also Hebrews 11:31)
 - Ruth – a foreigner
 - Wife of Uriah (Bathsheeba) – an adultress (2 Samuel 11)
 - “Matthew may have included these women in order to emphasize that God’s choices in dealing with people are all of His grace. Perhaps also he included these women in order to put Jewish pride in its place.”⁹
 - The last woman to be mentioned in the genealogy is Mary, the birth mother of Jesus.

Were there really only 3 sets of 14 generations between Abraham and Jesus?

- There are obvious omissions in Matthew’s genealogy.
 - “The most prominent omission is in verse eight. Three kings are left out. These are Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah. Who were they? They are the descendants of the daughter of wicked Ahab, Athaliah. Athaliah desired to annihilate the kingly seed of the house of Judah... This is undoubtedly the reason why the Holy Spirit left out these three kings.”¹⁰
 - There were other omissions that we will not discuss in this setting.
- Why did Matthew’s genealogy leave these out?
 - “Jewish reckoning did not require every name in order to satisfy a genealogy.”¹¹
 - “Perhaps the best solution is that the name ‘David’ in Hebrew numerology added up to 14.”¹²

⁸ Gaebelain 25.

⁹ TBKC-NT 18.

¹⁰ Gaebelain 22-23.

¹¹ TBKC-NT 18.

- “Matthew’s genealogy answered the important question a Jew would rightfully ask about anyone who claimed to be King of the Jews. Is He a descendant of David through the rightful line of succession? Matthew answered yes!”¹³

(THIS SECTION COMPLETED ON 10/7/2018)

¹² *TBKC-NT* 18.

¹³ *Ibid.*