

Sunday of the Fathers

It is the Sunday of the genealogy of Lord Jesus, and Matthew means by this, since the beginning of his Gospel, that Jesus is stemmed from Abraham and David, and the sequence of the names of the Lord's fathers comes in three phases: The first one is from Abraham to David, the second is from David to Babylon's Captivity, and the third is from Babylon's captivity to Christ. After this, the reading reaches the incident of the nativity itself. Luke gave more names in the genealogy that he narrated, and this is closer to the sequence found in the Old Testament. It seems that Matthew depended on a reference that was more common in his days.

Matthew wanted to stress on the fact that the Lord is stemmed from David. This was a common belief among the Jews sixty years after the Savior's resurrection. In the genealogy there are women, and most of these women have bad behaviors, and one of them is a foreigner. Matthew probably wanted to say that Jesus comes from humanity as it is with its sins and he is the one that purifies it.

There are fourteen names in the first two groups and only thirteen in the third one. We can consider that the fourteen mentioned by Matthew in every group is a symbol for David (in Hebrew, David is written "DWD": The number of every "D" is 4, and the number of "W" is 6 which sums up to 14).

Matthew narrated the incident of the Nativity. Mary was engaged which means that she was theoretically or legally his wife but actually the marriage doesn't happen until the girl is wed and taken by the man to his house. Matthew assures clearly that Jesus didn't have a physical father. The virginity of Mary when giving birth to Jesus is only found in Matthew and Luke. This was sufficient for early Christians to adopt this fixed virginity. The absence of mentioning the virginity in the other Evangelists could be explained by the fact that the common belief in Mary's virginity saved them from mentioning the thing that was known for everyone.

"And you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins". In Hebrew, "Jesus" means "Joshua" which means "God saves". Jewish theology says that the time of Christ is the time of the end of sin.

The word "virgin" that Matthew uses is taken from Isaiah 7: 14 in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, and without any doubt, the text that was in Matthew's hands when he wrote his Gospel in Antioch around the year 80 was the Greek text. In fact, Jesus wasn't named "Immanuel" in the Christian nomenclature but the word "Immanuel" was to describe Christ and his works.

"But he knew her not until she had given birth to her firstborn son". The expression "he knew her not", after going back to the usage of the word "knew", means that he didn't have a relation with her in her pregnancy, he denies any

sexual relationship between them before the Savior's nativity, but he also doesn't suggest, from the linguistic aspect, that there was a relationship after that. As for the expression "her firstborn son", it was probably added as Christ is called by Paul "the firstborn from the dead". Also the expression "Jesus' brothers" doesn't necessarily mean that the Lord had physical siblings, because the word "brothers" in Hebrew means relatives (first cousins, the children of uncles and aunts).

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