

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

The Fullness of Time in Jesus Final Advent Days Wednesday, December 17, 2014
8:15 AM Gn 49:2, 8-10; **Mt 1:1-17** (So now the gift of God can be made manifest.)

We begin the Gospel of Matthew with this genealogy which is really trying to show how **Jesus in his humanity**, at least his adopted humanity, **is part of a long line of both holy and unholy people**. This is not a long line of saints. This is a long line of not only **sinner but also outsiders**. Not all these people I read are really children of Abraham. They are also brought in from outside; **they are a mixed breed**, a mixed bunch, good and bad, part of the family, not part of the family, adopted into the family, part of the nation of Israel, but also beyond Israel. All this is part of the background.

Now people point out that this all has to do with Joseph, and Joseph really wasn't the father of Jesus, which is true; but on the other hand, **Joseph was probably related to Mary because poor people usually marry close by**. When it comes to higher ups in tribes, they will marry someone from another tribe. But within a particular poor area people marry close. So probably Joseph and Mary were related. It's almost most certain.

So what is really Matthew trying to say? because the literal sense—as St. Thomas says—the literal sense of Scripture really has to do with **what the author is trying to convey**, a message. **This is a message of the fullness of time**. There are 14 generations. You have to keep in mind that 7 is a sacred number to the ancient people, at least to the ancient Hebrews—7. Now 7 squared is 49, 7 times 7. So 7 times 7 is the fullness. Well, up to the time of Jesus we don't have fullness. We have 14, 14, 14—that's 42. There's still a lack of 7, 7 generations yet to be born until the fullness of time. **What Matthew is saying is that Jesus is 7 generations all in one**, all in one person. **He is fullness of time in himself**, that the work God began when he called Abraham is now complete in Jesus. He is the one for which all preparations have been made. **So now the gift of God can be made manifest**.

This is the way we need to think about the coming of Jesus, the gift of God being made manifest. **This is about what God is offering to humanity**, what God wants to give to humanity. It's not what God wants to get from humanity. What could we give God? The only thing we can give God is our praise and our gratitude. The only thing we can give God is our own hearts and our wills, but they actually are something he already created for himself. **So all we do is go along with this wonderful plan which is for our blessing**.