

## Week 1: *Matthew 1*

### Hook



**Main Point: Jesus is the promised king of the eternal kingdom.**

Option 1:

People had been waiting for the Messiah since the Garden of Eden. Play the video “Messiah” (5:47) to learn more about this much anticipated king.

<https://bibleproject.com/videos/messiah/>

**Q: How did God’s promises minister to His children in the Scriptures? Why were promises and covenants and covenants about the Messiah so important to the Jewish people?**

Option 2:

Read the following verse – OR – choose a Scripture that speaks to God’s promises.

“Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass” (Jeremiah 21:45).

**Q: What does this verse teach us about God? How does knowing that God is a promise maker and promise keeper minister to us?**

## Week 1: Matthew 1

### Book

**Main Point: Jesus is the promised king of the eternal kingdom.**

#### Matthew 1:1 [Read]

**Talking Point 1:** Jesus is the promised king, the fulfillment of Old Testament covenants.

*This is the genealogy...* The word for genealogy is literally translated as *genesis*, the first book of the Pentateuch.<sup>i</sup> *Genesis* aptly describes the introduction of Jesus, as He brings a new beginning – the arrival of the promised Messiah and the coming of the kingdom of God.<sup>ii</sup> The birth of Christ is a milestone not only in Jewish history but in human history, the beginning of something new.<sup>iii</sup>

*...of Jesus Christ...* The term “Christ” is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word *Messiah* (or “anointed one”). This long awaited One would establish Israel as a powerhouse, rule from Jerusalem, reign over a never-ending kingdom and bless the world. And although Jewish people across the ages had different expectations of the Messiah, one common thread carried through – He would liberate the people from their enemies.<sup>iv</sup>

*...the son of David...* Ancestry and covenants were inseparably linked in Jewish culture and Matthew connects Jesus to two of the most significant covenants in Jewish history: the Davidic and Abrahamic covenants. Jesus is presented as the One who fulfills these two covenants – the One the Jewish people have been waiting for – He *is* the Messiah.<sup>v</sup>

God made a covenant with David that he would father a line of kings that would never end (2 Samuel 7:2), that the kingdom would last forever (2 Samuel 23:5) and the line would culminate with a divine king (the Messiah) who would rule all and maintain His throne for eternity (Isaiah 9:1–7; 11:1–5; Jeremiah 30:4–11; Ezekiel 34:23–24; 27:24–25; Amos 9:11–15). Jesus’ title as “son of David” makes him eligible to fulfill this prophecy.

*...the son of Abraham...* Abraham’s is the second covenant that Jesus fulfills. God’s covenant with Abraham is first established in Genesis 12:2–3.

*And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*

Why would God do so many wonderful things for Abraham and his descendants? Abraham would be made into a great nation, be blessed and have a great name, *so that* he could be a blessing to others, all the families of the earth (Genesis 12:2–3).

Yes, Jesus would be the ruling Jewish messiah. But that blessing would not be contained to the Jewish people. Jesus would bless all nations, fulfilling the covenant God made with Abraham.<sup>vi</sup> Matthew wants his Jewish readers to know that Jesus is a savior for the world.

God's blessings are not intended to be hoarded. God desires for you to share your faith with a world that is lost and broken (1 Peter 3:15–16; Psalm 96:2–4). Your spiritual gifts are designed for the building up of the Church (1 Corinthians 14:12). Your finances should be a reflection of your heart, giving to the things of the Lord (Luke 12:34). In fact, your very freedoms in Christ are to be given up for the good of others (1 Corinthians 10:23–24). May we as Christ-followers hold our blessings with an open hand, regarding them as tools for the Maker's glory.

**Q: How might the expectations of the Messiah clash with Jesus' mission?**

**Q: Discuss the idea of Jesus as a genesis, a new beginning. How did Jesus change history? How has He changed your life?**

**Q: How do we cultivate a lifestyle of using our blessings to bless others?**

**Matthew 1:2–17 [Read]**

**Talking Point 2:** God is faithful, saving and using imperfect people.

**Q: What grabs your attention in this presentation of Jesus' genealogy?**

Matthew now moves to tracing Jesus' bloodline, proving that Jesus is in fact the son of Abraham and the son of David.<sup>vii</sup> Notice that the list is split into three sections: the time of Abraham, of David, and of the Exile. This list is not exhaustive but instead includes 14 generations in each.

And the cast is odd – a bit of a mixed bag. It includes good kings such as Jehoshaphat, who followed in the ways of King David and was blessed with God's presence. The list also includes the likes of King Rehoboam, whose foolish actions caused the division of the kingdom of Israel and a resurgence of idol worship.

Perhaps the most glaring distinction in Matthew's genealogy is the inclusion of five women, a rare thing.<sup>viii</sup> Four of these women were particularly odd choices to include.

Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth were Gentiles, and Bathsheba (“the wife of Uriah”) was married to a Gentile. Further, three of them were of ill repute. Tamar seduced her father-in-law; Rahab was a prostitute, and Bathsheba committed adultery.

Why include such a colorful host of characters? Why heroes and villains, men and women, kings and the poor?

This list calls us to remember the faithfulness of God. He uses everyday people to accomplish His purposes. This includes those not of the proper bloodline, both men and women, those who committed public and weighty sins, and those who are labeled as illegitimate. These people weren’t necessarily “qualified” to make the cut for the lineage of the great Messiah and yet God chose them.<sup>ix</sup>

Consider the ministry of Jesus and the people He chose to serve beside Him: the likes of Peter (a traitor), Mary Magdalene (formerly demon possessed), Matthew (a money-loving cheat) and Paul (a murderer). Every member of the body of Christ has been rescued, is unique and has a story. God chooses to use us, despite our past failures. We must view other believers without prejudice and see them as God does – redeemed and set apart for His glory. We are all new creations thanks to the Promised One.

This unique host of individuals also calls us to remember the people that the Messiah has come to save. Jesus ignored societal barriers, instead He came to scoop up the sinners, the oppressed and the marginalized and offer them the good news of salvation.<sup>x</sup> The Church is called to reach all nations with the Gospel (Matthew 28:19–20), to mirror the cause of pursuit of Jesus in seeking and saving the lost (Luke 19:10).

**Q: What strikes you about the Holy Spirit’s leading Matthew to include these names in the genealogy?**

**Q: How might those included in the genealogy challenge Jewish expectations?**

**Matthew 1:18–25 [Read]**

**Talking Point 3:** God is with us.

**Q: How has Jesus proven to be Immanuel, “God with us,” in your life?**

Jesus’ conception came about through a manifestation of the Holy Spirit within Mary. You will notice that Mary is the fifth woman listed in the genealogy of Christ, and Matthew notes with precision that Jesus is a biological descendant of Mary. Joseph is the legal father but had no role in Jesus’ conception.<sup>xi</sup> Being of Mary and the Holy Spirit, Jesus is both 100-percent man and 100-percent God.

The Scripture describes Joseph as righteous, meaning that he was law-abiding, of good character, obedient and seeking to be faithful to God's commandments. Because of this, and his being unaware of how the pregnancy came about, Joseph could not go through with the marriage ceremony. He would have had every right to assume Mary had not been faithful. And taken to the extreme, the consequence for infidelity on the part of the betrothed would have been death by stoning. Instead, Joseph decides to protect Mary and divorce her quietly to spare her the shame of a public divorce.<sup>xii</sup>

But God intervenes. Reminiscent of Old Testament encounters, an angel of the Lord appears to Joseph in a dream, addressing Joseph as the "son of David," tying this event back to the genealogy and making Joseph aware of the significance of his role.<sup>xiii</sup> The angel shares that Mary has remained faithful. The child is from God and Joseph is to proceed with his marriage to Mary. The marriage would legally make the child a "son of David" as well.<sup>xiv</sup>

This boy's name will be Jesus, meaning "the Lord saves."<sup>xv</sup> This Messiah would indeed liberate His people, not from an earthly enemy but from their sin. While there were certainly grand expectations of the Messiah, salvation from sin was not one of them. This king was expected to liberate the people from the Romans, not give his life as a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28).<sup>xvi</sup>

Verses 22 and 23 take a moment to remind the reader that the virgin conception is a fulfillment of a prophecy from the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 7:14). And although this never-before-seen event is certainly worthy of note, it is not the primary focus of the quote.<sup>xvii</sup> Here's the headline: Jesus is Immanuel, God with us. God is not far off, an aloof deity or king. He is present with His people. This is a major theme in the book of Matthew and one that is highlighted in the introduction of Jesus (v. 23) and Jesus' final words in Matthew's Gospel – "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

**Q: Jesus is with you. How does this impact the way that you endure hardship? The way in which you make decisions? The way in which you choose to use your resources?**

**Q: What does Jesus' role as Immanuel reveal about His motivations for coming to earth?**

**Q: Why is it important that Jesus is both fully man and fully God?**

## Week 1: Matthew 1

### Took

**Main Point: Jesus is the promised king of the eternal kingdom.**

Handel's *Messiah* was first performed on April 13, 1742, and has become a Christmas tradition for many. The *Hallelujah Chorus* closes the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of *Messiah* and celebrates Jesus' Second Coming and rule (specifically, Revelation 11:15, Revelation 19:6, and Revelation 19:16). Customarily, audiences stand during a performance of the *Hallelujah Chorus* out of respect – a response to the wonder and power of King Jesus. Today's passage reminds us of Jesus' majesty and His incredible grace in taking on the form of man to rescue us from our sins. Listen to the *Hallelujah Chorus* and reflect on King Jesus.

Teacher, play the *Hallelujah Chorus* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUZEtvBJT5c>).

**Q: How does the music make you feel? Why might this music lead you to stand up?**

**Q: Does your life reflect someone who “stands up” for Jesus? What are the dangers in approaching Jesus too casually?**

**Q: Jesus is the promised king of the eternal kingdom – what actions should this truth prompt you to take in your marriage, your work, your service, your giving, your calendar?**

### CHALLENGES

**THINK about Jesus' lordship in your life.** Could you honestly describe Jesus as your king? Or are there areas of your life in which you refuse to allow Him to reign? Take time this week to reflect on those things that you must surrender to Jesus.

**PRAY that God's kingdom would expand.** Pray that the lost would come to Christ. Pray that the Lord would reign in the hearts of His people so that those far from Jesus would see the work of the Church and desire to know the God she serves.

**ACT: Share your story this week.** You are an emissary of the King. Make a choice this week to share the grand story of Jesus. Consider, in particular, those who are marginalized or viewed as “less than.” Take joy in the knowledge that you are bringing are bringing hope and light into the darkness.

## *Hook, Took & Editing by Tim Matthews*

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i

<sup>®</sup> Allen, Clifton J., editor. "Matthew-Mark" *The Broadman Bible Commentary*, Broadman Press, 1969, p. 80.

ii

<sup>®</sup> Wilkins, Michael J., "Matthew" *The NIV Application Commentary*, Zondervan, 2004, p. 55.

iii

<sup>®</sup> Blomberg, Craig L., "Matthew" *The New American Commentary*, Broadman Press, 1992, p. 53.

iv

<sup>®</sup> Blomberg, p. 52.

v

<sup>®</sup> Allen, p. 80.

vi

<sup>®</sup> Gaebelein, Frank E., editor, "Matthew, Mark, Luke" *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Zondervan, 1984, p. 61.

vii

<sup>®</sup> Allen, p. 80.

viii

<sup>®</sup> Blomberg, p. 55.

ix

<sup>®</sup> Wilkins, p. 67.

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<sup>®</sup> Blomberg, p. 56.

xi

<sup>®</sup> Wilkins, p. 63.

xii

<sup>®</sup> Gaebelein, p. 75.

xiii

<sup>®</sup> Gaebelein, p. 75.

xiv

<sup>®</sup> Blomberg, p. 59.

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<sup>®</sup> Blomberg, p. 59.

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<sup>®</sup> Gaebelein, p. 76.

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<sup>®</sup> Blomberg, p. 59.