

**The Messiah Has Come
(A Study in Matthew - Week 1)
Matthew 1:1-25
“Who do you say that I AM?”**

Introduction

Therefore, The LORD Himself will give you a sign: See, the virgin will conceive, have a son, and name Him Immanuel... **Isaiah 7:14**

Each of the four gospels were written to a different audience, with a distinct message for each particular group. John's gospel was written to convince his readers that Jesus was indeed God in the flesh, so the thrust of his writings focused upon the power and deity of Christ. Mark's gospel emphasizes Jesus' suffering and His servanthood. Luke wanted to convey the humanity of Christ in order to demonstrate that He came as a Savior for all mankind. And finally, Matthew was written to a primarily Jewish audience for the purpose of revealing to them the Jesus was their long awaited Messiah, The King of The Jews.

So, when we combine the four gospels, we find a more complete and revealing portrait begins to appear. Jesus: The Son of God, The Messiah King, The Suffering Servant, and Savior of the World. Oh how wondrous are the works of The Holy Spirit as He carried these men along so they could more fully reveal Christ to all who would but listen! But sadly, still many do not believe. This is why we must never neglect the teaching of the gospels of Jesus Christ, for within them there remains the powerful message of salvation. So:

...“Let anyone who has ears to hear listen.”

Mark 4:9b

As we embark upon our study of The Gospel of *Matthew*, it is important that we remember just who his readers were. The Jews had long awaited the coming of the Messiah King that had been promised over and again in *The Old Testament*. But sadly, and in fact just as the Scriptures had foretold, when The promised King finally came, He was rejected. Just as Joseph was despised and rejected by his own brothers until the day came when he had to save them, so it would come to pass for The Christ.

The word “*Messiah*” (*Meshiach* in the Hebrew) actually means “*the anointed one*” (the word *Christ* means the same as well), and God had promised over and again that the One “anointed by God” would come as a rescuer of the people. God promised Abraham that all the world would be blessed through his offspring (**Genesis 22:18**). Moses foretold of a “*Prophet like me...*” who would come to lead the people (**Deuteronomy 18:15-19**). And God personally made a covenant with King David that one of his descendants would rule upon his throne forever.

When your time comes and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up after you your descendant, who will come from your body, and I will establish His kingdom. He is The One Who will build a house for My Name, and I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever. I will be His Father, and He will be My Son...

2 Samuel 7:12-14a

In fact, there are literally hundreds of *Old Testament* prophecies that concern the Christ and His coming. And here is the exciting truth, **every single one of those predictions were completely fulfilled by Jesus, The Son of God!** That is why we can proclaim with confidence that He is in fact the Messiah King, The Christ, King of the Jews, and not the Jews only, but to any who will come to believe in Him. As the Apostle Peter would testify when he was questioned by the religious leaders:

There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved. **Acts 4:12**

So as Matthew begins the writing of the Gospel, it shouldn't come as a surprise to us that he begins with a lineage of proof from the *Old Testament* Scriptures. He "*hits the ground running*", as it were, to lay out his case for the legitimate Messiahship of Jesus The Christ. In chapter one, we see *The Seed of The Woman, The Son of God, and The Savior of the World*. Please allow me to explain.

The Seed (vs. 1-17)

So why start off his book with a genealogy? Didn't Matthew know that there were more exciting ways to begin a great story? What about an opening paragraph that captures the attention of the reader, making it a book that they could not put down? Well, in fact, that is exactly what Matthew did. For you see, your copy of the *Old Testament* and the Hebrew copy has all the same books, but the order is different. The Hebrew Bible ends with the books of *1 and 2 Chronicles*. *1st Chronicles* contains the genealogies of God's chosen people. In fact, that is *all* it contains for the first nine chapters! So the first thing that a Jewish reader would want to know about Jesus would be His pedigree. For if Matthew couldn't prove the bloodline of The Messiah, then nothing else about his case would even matter!

Matthew carefully traces the line of Joseph the adoptive father of Jesus, while Luke on the other hand traces His line backward through Mary (**Luke 3:23-38**). And a careful examination of each family tree shows that both Joseph and Mary were descendants of King David himself. And not only that, the line goes all the way back to Abraham, proving that Christ was indeed, the seed of Abraham as well as that of David. When both genealogies are taken together they prove Christ's lineage from both a legal and actual descent, with Joseph being his legal ancestor and Mary being his actual ancestor. Remember the different audiences for these two books? Matthew is interested in proving that Jesus was a legal descendant of David, and therefore, qualified as The Messiah, while Luke is making the case that Jesus is in fact the Son of God, emphasizing His virgin birth, and subsequently, tracing His lineage all the way back to Adam.

The coming of the Anointed One (Messiah, Christ) was first foretold all the way back in the third chapter of *Genesis*, when God promised that one day the Seed of the woman would come to avenge and undo the curse caused by Satan's deception.

So The LORD God said to the serpent: Because you have done this, you are cursed more than any livestock and more than any wild animal. You will move on your belly and eat dust all the day of your life. I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike His heel. **Genesis 3:14-15**

From this point forward, *The Bible* actually becomes "*The story of The Seed*", for every woman since Eve had longed to give birth to the *Promised One*, Who would deliver them from Satan's curse. This explains perfectly the reason that Eve exclaimed, "*I have gotten a man, The LORD!*", when her first son Cain was born. She believed that she had given birth to the promised *seed*, and therefore, it could only be a matter of time before she could return to the garden of paradise!

When Eve's second child was born and there was still no possible road back to Eden, she named the boy Abel (*Hevel* in the Hebrew meaning *vanity* or *worthlessness*). Is it any wonder why these boys didn't get along? The point is; that it would not be the seed of a man that bought us salvation. It would in fact only be the offspring of a woman. The seed of women named Mary and a Father named *God!* Listen to Matthew's careful description, declaring that no mortal man could ever claim Jesus' paternity:

"...Joseph the husband of Mary, who gave birth to Jesus Who is called The Messiah." **Matthew 1:16b**

The Son (vs. 18-20)**The Nativity of the Messiah**

The birth of Jesus Christ came about this way: After his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, it was discovered before they came together that she was pregnant from the Holy Spirit. So her husband, Joseph, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her publicly, decided to divorce her secretly.

But after he had considered these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

Now, with the ancestral portion out of the way, Matthew begins to describe the immaculate conception. It is interesting to me that Matthew continues to tell the story from more of Joseph's perspective. There is no mention of the angel Gabriel appearing to Mary as is in Luke's account. It seems that Matthew, beginning his line of reasoning with Jesus' legal lineage through Joseph, continues things from Joseph's perspective.

At some point during Mary's pregnancy, she had to tell Joseph what had happened. And of course, he didn't believe her. Most men in his situation wouldn't, so it is difficult to find fault in his initial response. God carefully chose Mary to be the mother of His Only Begotten Son, that is obvious. But I believe that He carefully chose Joseph as well. Why do I believe this? Because of Joseph's godly response. He didn't react in vengeance or hostility. He didn't want Mary to be publicly humiliated, and possibly even stoned for her transgression, even though to his mind she had not only betrayed him, but had sinned grievously against the law of God.

So where did Joseph go for counsel? To the Word of God. And *that's* why I believe that God chose him. When Joseph was up against it... he went to the Scriptures for guidance. Joseph was a man who truly understood what King Solomon's proverb meant when he said:

There is a way that seems right to a person, but its end is the way to death.

Proverbs 14:12

So, instead of reacting, Joseph opted for obedience instead. He looked to The Scriptures for his next move. Now do you see why God chose him? What a perfect example of how the stepfather to God's Son should behave. I say this to all the men out there today (and women as well for that matter). Don't do what you **feel** when your back is against the wall. Go to God's Word, and pray for guidance. I promise that you'll make a lot fewer mistakes when you do. When we react, instead of seeking God's counsel, we often end up doing things that we regret for the rest of our lives. Can you imagine how disastrous things may have turned out had Joseph been vindictive, rather than a man of God?

Joseph went to the law of Moses, and it said he could give Mary a bill of divorce. For in those days, the one year betrothal period for Jewish men and women was looked upon as a promise of marriage. And the only legal way to break such a vow was to do so with Scriptural grounds and a legal divorce. But Joseph was a better man even beyond the construct of the law. Joseph was a man of mercy and grace. The last thing he wanted was to shame Mary in a public fashion. So he decided to keep the matter as quiet as possible. Pretty thoughtful considering he felt betrayed by her wouldn't you say? How he must have loved that girl!

Loves patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not arrogant, is not rude, is not self-seeking, is not irritable, and does not keep a record of wrongs. Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends...

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a

After Joseph had decided to do things as God would have him, the angel of The LORD appeared to him in a dream and assured him that Mary was indeed telling the truth, and that God had chosen this young girl to be the mother of His One and Only Son. This was no ordinary conception, but rather, just as Isaiah had prophesied, the virgin had indeed conceived, and she would bear a *Son*. Not just any son, but *The Son*. And He will be called Immanuel, meaning God with us!

I can only begin to imagine Joseph's emotions. He must have been flooded with relief that the love of his life had not only been true to him, but her love for, and her obedience to God had been honored above all other women on earth! And then... as soon as those feelings wore off, the incredible weight he must have felt to be given the task of being the earthly father of The Son of God! Just let that sink in for a moment, and possibly you can get some small insight into all the pressure this godly man had been chosen to endure. Imagine, if you will, trying to live and be an example to God in the flesh, not just for a day mind you, but every day, week after week, year after year! Yes, I believe that God chose Joseph just as carefully as He chose Mary. And may we all strive to be half as godly as he was.

The Savior (vs 21-25)

She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name him Immanuel, which is translated "God is with us".

When Joseph woke up, he did as the Lord's angel had commanded him. He married her but did not have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son. And he named him Jesus.

The angel commanded Joseph to go forward with his marriage plans and not be afraid. For Mary had indeed been truthful as to her situation. The Child to be born was in fact The Son of God. He was to be named Jesus (*Yeshua* in the Hebrew and *Iesous* in the Greek) meaning The LORD Saves. For He would come to save the people from their sins. The word for salvation in *The New Testament* is *sozo* in the Greek, and it means deliverance. Christ died on the cross to deliver us from the bondage of sin.

The Bible tells us that through one man, Adam, sin entered into all humanity. Therefore, we are born into sin, and we cannot extricate ourselves from its power over us. But thanks be to God, through the Savior, we are offered salvation. And that salvation comes in three parts. First, we are saved (delivered) from the *penalty* of sin, for the wages of sin is death (***Romans 6:23***). Second, we are delivered from the *power* of sin, ***"For sin will not rule over you, because you are not under the law but under grace."*** (***Romans 6:14***). And finally, we will one day be delivered from the very presence of sin, ***"Dear friends we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that when He appears we will be like Him because we will see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself just as He is pure."*** (***1 John 3:2-3***).

What a great salvation we have in Christ Jesus; The Seed of the woman, The Son of God, and The Savior of the world! And all that we need to do is to place our faith in Him; to have a *saving faith*, faith enough to follow where He leads, then we are assured of our deliverance from sin. In this season of the year, I ask you now to examine your own heart. Have you placed your trust in Christ? Have you called out to The Savior to have your sins forgiven. Are you trusting in His Word as your guide for living this Christian life. And if so, are you sharing the good news of His coming to a world that so desperately needs Him today?

This Christmas season is not simply a time to become consumed with our own comfort and joy, but rather, to bring tidings of comfort and joy to all who will Believe. Just as Joseph did exactly as he was commanded by God, we too are to obey the commands of Christ to go into all the world and spread the word of His coming. For He *is* the promised Seed, The Son of God, and The Savior of the world! And those, my friends, are the great tidings of *comfort* and *joy*!

Merry Christmas! And let all God's people say... **TRUTH!!!**