

Matthew, chapter 1

Jesus: The Christ, King, Emmanuel, Savior

Who is Jesus Christ? Who did He come from? How did He come here?

INTRODUCTION / CONTEXT

1 / We begin a new Bible study survey course today that will take us through the **Gospel of Matthew** over the next six months. Of course, this will not be in any way an exhaustive course, but what we hope to do is at least survey every chapter in Matthew with the purpose of mind of understanding and receiving the primary ‘point’ that Matthew wants to get across with his distinctive perspective of his Gospel account and the primary message he wants to communicate about Jesus Christ and His Good News. As always, we will focus on these three main areas of interest: [1] **CONTEXT** of the passage we are studying; [2] **CONNECTIONS** with the theme and flow of the whole narrative; [3] **CONTENT** of the specific message at hand.

2 / So, in order for us to get started, what we need to do is go to the end of the Book and see what grand finale and conclusion Matthew ends with. Then, we can come back to the beginning of the Book and understand it better ... and follow that ending theme throughout our survey study.

3 / So, we are all familiar with the ‘Great Commission’ ending of **Matthew 28.16-20**. We’d do well to fix it in our minds from the get-go:

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw Him they worshiped Him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

[1] Who are present at this commissioning? “the eleven disciples”—the ones who had been called, taught, and trained [discipled] by Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry described in the Book of Matthew. [Matthew, our Gospel writer, was one of them...]

[2] What did Jesus tell them to do? “make disciples.” He had made them His disciples by His teachings and role-modeling He had committed to them. Now, He’s telling them to go and **make disciples** just like He had made them disciples.

[3] Who did Jesus tell them to disciple? “all nations.” And, this is one of the most important ‘points’ Matthew will emphasize even from the beginning in chapter 1 as we shall see. Not just Jews or ‘the lost sheep of the house of Israel,’ but **all nations**. See **Matthew 24.14**—Jesus had been teaching them this world-wide missionary prospect and vision all along.

[4] What authority does Jesus have to give such a mandate? “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.” He possesses and exercises **all authority in heaven and on earth**, and therefore He has unlimited, unfettered, unconditional sovereignty and authority to mandate how the course of human and world history must be conducted.

[5] What promise and assurance of success does Jesus give us? “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” He not only sends us to go in His Name, but He Himself will be here...with us. It’s not only our mission to fulfill; first and foremost, it’s His Mission! He Himself will be completing His Gospel Mission in His own Presence and Person—through us!

4 / Now, what we want to do is begin in chapter 1 and see how Matthew—even from the first words of His Gospel account—begins to shape the narrative and point our hearts and understanding to this commission. As John quotes Jesus in **John 20.21**: **“Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you.’”** Matthew 1 begins to tell us how the Father sent the Son. We will answer the three main questions at the head of this study: [1] **Who is Jesus Christ? If**

we are to make disciples of Jesus Christ, then who is He that we are to make disciples of? [2] **Who did He come from?** [3] **How did He come here?**

I | 1.1 | The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham “Who is Jesus Christ?”

1 / Let's begin with this statement that will answer “**Who is Jesus Christ?**”...

2 / We note first that Matthew emphasizes that the man Jesus is **Jesus Christ**.

--Not only is **Christ** in his first naming, but in v 16, we are told that **Jesus was born, who is called Christ**. And again in v 17, in the divisions of the generations, **and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ...** And so there is a deliberate and intentional emphasis that Jesus is **the Christ**.

--The word **Christ** is a descriptor: **The Christ**—it is not Jesus' ‘last name,’ though it has become that in our calling of His Name. The word **Christ** means ‘*anointed*,’ and it points to His Divine authority as God's anointed. His anointing gives Him Divine identity and the right to **all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth**.

--Also, the name **Christ** is the same as the OT ‘*Messiah*,’ the promised, coming Redeemer. Jesus **Christ** fulfills every OT promise, prophecy, pointer, and pre-enactment of the salvation God has promised His people.

3 / **Covenant lineage**. Also, Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the covenants God has made with His people. Actually, all the covenants God has made for His people were made with **Christ** as the NT reiterates over and over [see **Romans 15.8**; **Galatians 3.16**]. God has made all His covenant promises *with* Christ and *to* Christ. And so, Matthew's genealogy is a **covenant genealogy**. Two prominent and core covenants are highlighted: **the son of David** and **the son of Abraham**. These two OT covenants promise both the Divinely-anointed eternal **King** and the **Savior** of Gentiles, the nations [two of the names in lesson title...].

[1] **The son of David** [v 1] and ‘**David the king**’ [v 6a] refers to the covenant promise God made to David in 2 Samuel 7: “**When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom [v 12] ... “And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever [v 16].** Keep this promise in mind here in **Matthew 1** when we come to the divisions of the generations; because that earthly, human line of Davidic kings was broken when they were deported to Babylon—they had no earthly king after Jehoniah [Jehoiachin]. The earthly throne was vacated—no earthly king has since sat on David's throne. Yet, through all these generations of Davidic kings who failed even when they reigned, and especially when the earthly throne had been vacated, Yahweh promised repeatedly: “**...you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel**” [1 Kings 2.4; 8.25; 9.5; 2 Chronicles 6.16; 7.18]. So when **Christ** comes as **the son of David**, Matthew is proclaiming to them and to us that **Christ is the promise and fulfillment of the eternal, never-ending, universal King that Yahweh promised to David** [see also **Luke 1.31-33**].

[2] **The son of Abraham** refers to the covenant promise that Yahweh made to Abraham in **Genesis 12.3**, specifically “**...and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**” ‘**All the families of the earth**’ includes not only the ethnic descendants of Abraham [Jews], but also Gentiles—indeed “**from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages...**” [Revelation 7.9]. These are the **nations** that Jesus came to save and we are commanded to **make disciples** of. And, keep this thought in mind because as we go through Jesus Christ's genealogy, we're going to find Gentiles already included even in His earthly lineage. We'll name them here in a minute...

II | 1.2-17 | The earthly lineage of The Christ, the son of David “Who did Jesus Christ come from?”

Matthew will answer our question “Who did Jesus Christ come from” by giving the genealogical names of Christ’s earthly descendants. They are divided into three groups of fourteen generations [see v 17]:

1 / vv 2-6a: From Abraham to David were fourteen generations

Since Abraham was the ‘father’ of the covenant people of God, Matthew begins with him (see above I, 3/, [2]). There are several distinctive features about Matthew’s genealogy: [1] *he names women*. Women of course are not fathers or begetters—their husbands are. But four women are named in this genealogy: *Tamar*, v 4, [daughter-in-law of Judah, **Genesis 38**]; *Rahab*, v 5 [wife of Salmon, **Joshua 2**; **Ruth 4.18-22**]; *Ruth*, v 5 [wife of Obed, **Ruth 4.18-22**]; and *Bathsheba*, though she is not named, v 6 [wife of **Uriah, 2 Samuel 11-12**]. [2] *Three of these women were involved in sexual sins* [Tamar, Rahab, Bathsheba]. [3] *And three of these women were Gentiles or related to Gentiles* [Rahab was a saved prostitute in Jericho in Canaan; Ruth was a Moabitess; Bathsheba was married to Uriah, a Hittite]. So just in these names and bios we can see that Jesus Christ is the Savior of sinners [see v 21] ... and that He is the Savior of sinners from among Gentiles—the nations! *The ‘church father’ Ignatius is credited with saying: “God uses crooked sticks to draw straight lines.”* We see that, not only in these corrupted lives in Jesus’ genealogy, but also in the Davidic line of kings named in the next section ... and we might also add, in all of us!

2 / vv 6b-11: From David to the deportation to Babylon were fourteen generations

Next follows a listing of fifteen of the kings of Judah [David is counted twice, both in the preceding generations and in this one]. Not all of the kings of Judah are listed here, but these are representative of them all. All of them—even the best among them—were failed kings in some way. But their failures were a constant reminder that God’s perfect King, **son of David**, had not yet come to sit on his throne. Jechoniah [Jehoiachin] was the king who was reigning when the Babylonians invaded and destroyed Jerusalem and carried the nation of Judah into captivity [**2 Kings 24-25**]. When it looked like the family of David had been extinguished and the Davidic lineage had been interrupted, Yahweh had kept the birthline intact!

3 / vv 12-16: From the deportation to Babylon to the Christ were fourteen generations

Even though the earthly Davidic throne was vacated, never to be occupied again until **The Christ** came to claim it, the Davidic family lineage remained intact. When the remnant returned again to rebuild Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity, some of Jechoniah’s descendants were among their leaders—men like Shealtiel and Zerubbabel. They would carry on the royal, Davidic genealogy until “**Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ**” [16].

III | vv 18-25 | “Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way...”
“How did Jesus Christ come here?”

Matthew then relates to us how this **Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham** appeared when came into our world...

1 / v 18 / When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. In their culture, to be betrothed was so much more binding than merely a proposal and engagement to marry at some future date. Their betrothal was a legally binding covenant they had made in the presence of witnesses, especially their two families. They were considered to be married even though their union had not been sexually consummated. Jesus’ conception was not a human conception—Jesus was physically and humanly conceived in Mary’s womb by the life-giving power of God, the Holy Spirit, when she was a virgin. Luke describes the angelic revelation to Mary of her conception in **Luke 1.26-38**. This is the unique, once-in-world-history miracle of the virgin conception of our Covenant Redeemer.

2 / v 19 / When Joseph discovered she was pregnant—and knew that the baby was not his—he was devastated. His only conclusion was that Mary had been unfaithful to him and had been with another man. This is the normal, natural, human ‘facts of life.’ Since the betrothal was culturally and legally binding, the only way the betrothal could be annulled was by divorce. They didn’t just ‘break up.’ But **Joseph, being a just [righteous, upright] man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her**

quietly before the representative family elders rather than make a humiliating public ceremony. Not only was Joseph a **righteous** man, but he truly loved Mary. And, of course, God is sovereignly orchestrating all these events to fulfill His covenant redemptive purposes and promises for our salvation!

3 / v 20 / But Joseph did what we all need to do in all situations: **But as he considered these things...**—he thought and prayed about his dilemma. As he agonized and prayed, **behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.”** [Compare this angelic visitation to Joseph with the one to Mary noted above...] NOTE that both Joseph and Mary were not only ‘in the family way’ themselves, but they were both ‘in the family way’ of the tribal family of David—descendants of David.

4 / v 21 / Jesus’ name was given to him by His Heavenly Father through the angel’s message: **She will bear a son, and you shall call His Name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.** The name ‘Jesus’ was a very common name in their culture—as it still is in ours in certain ethnicities. ‘Jesus’ has the name ‘Yahweh’ in it: “*Yeshua-Yahweh will save.*” It is a common OT name also. The one we are most familiar with is ‘Joshua, the son of Nun,’ the one who led Israel into their Promised Land and inheritance. The OT Joshua is a pre-enactment of the NT Jesus who will lead us—His people—into our eternal rest [Hebrews 4.1-13].

5 / vv 22-23 / Matthew quotes the OT extensively—more than any other of the four Gospel writers. Just here in chapters 1-4, Matthew will quote the OT eight times. We call it ‘*the OT fulfillment formula*’ because Matthew will use the words ‘*it is written*’ or give us some note of the OT prophecy the words or event fulfilled. In this case, Matthew says outright: **“All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ‘Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel (which means, God with us)’”** quoting from Isaiah 7.14. In the incarnation birth of Jesus Christ, God Himself has come to be with us—not only in His Holy Person and Presence, but even in a human body like ours [John 1.14]!

God has always been with His people from the beginning of time. In truth, that was God’s ultimate and eternal purpose and design in the very creation of the earth! And especially in the OT, God was always with His people to preserve His covenant purposes of bringing **The Christ** into our world to **save His people from their sins and reconcile the whole creation back to Him!** In the case of the **Isaiah 7** prophecy, the wicked king of Judah, Ahaz [see **Matthew 1.9**], was threatened by an invasion of two neighboring kings and kingdoms: Rezin king of Syria and Pekah king of Israel. They were threatening to destroy **the house of David** [v 2] [don’t overlook that!]. Yahweh sent Isaiah to Ahaz offering to Ahaz to ask Yahweh for a sign—any sign, however ‘impossible’—that He would save them from their enemies. Ahaz stubbornly pretended to be pious and said, **“I will not ask, and I will not put The LORD to the test.”** So Isaiah prophesied and told Ahaz that The LORD will give him an ‘impossible’ sign whether he asked for it or not. **“Therefore The LORD Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel”** [v 14]. ***God Himself would come and save His Kingdom from all enemies!*** And before that child reached the age of discernment and responsibility, both of those kings Ahaz so feared will be destroyed by the Assyrians. [This OT ‘virgin’ was a young woman who had not yet borne a child—or perhaps had not been able to conceive a child—but the ultimate fulfillment would be the covenant-promised birth of **The Christ, the Savior!**] Once God has come to be with us in the incarnated Person of Jesus Christ, He will never leave us—not now in this age [ch 28.20], and until He brings us into His eternal Kingdom and our Eternal Rest! **“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God”** [Revelation 21.3].

6 / vv 24-25 / Joseph did as he was told to do: **“...he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.”** So now, we have the four names and identities Matthew will develop over this Gospel account: **The Christ, King, Emmanuel, Savior!**