

## **“The Birth of the King”**

Matthew 1:1-25

The story of Christmas is the most remarkable story ever told. It is the story of God’s love for the world and how His promise of sending a Redeemer was fulfilled. Without Christmas, there could have been no Easter. Had Christ not been born into the world of men, He could not have died for the world of men. And had He not died on the cross, He would never have been raised from the dead and we would still be hopelessly lost in sin.

Though this story is FAMILIAR, it also ought to be FASCINATING.

**J.I. Packer** - *“It is here, in the thing that happened at the first Christmas, that the profoundest and most unfathomable depths of the Christian revelation lie.”*

Ken Baugh, in his introduction to Warren Wiersbe’s book *Be Loyal*, tells the following account from the life of Thomas Jefferson:

**Ken Baugh** - *“In 1804, Thomas Jefferson sat down in the White House with a copy of the New Testament in one hand and a razor blade in the other and proceeded to cut and paste a Jesus of his liking. Being a Rationalist, Jefferson cut away parts of the Gospels that spoke of Jesus’ divine nature and miracles and left only what he believed to be the ethical teachings of Jesus. He titled his work *The Philosophy of Jesus a Nazareth*. Later, in 1819, Jefferson cut and pasted another version of Jesus’ teachings, titling his edition *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*. The real Jesus, according to Jefferson, was merely a man--a good man, an ethical man, and a moral teacher--but a mortal man nonetheless.”*

The gospel of Matthew is not simply the record of the philosophy of Jesus, nor is it merely about the life and morals of Jesus. The gospel of Matthew as inspired by the Holy Spirit is the record of how God became man, lived a sinless life, performed mighty miracles, died a substitutionary death on the cross, and rose again in order to secure the redemption of His people.

Like Jefferson and others just like him, many want to acknowledge a god of their own making because of their own refusal to simply believe and trust the God of Scripture.

Matthew’s purpose in writing is to present us with a simple account of the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. How does Matthew differ from the other gospel accounts?

- In John, Jesus is presented as the SON of God
- In Luke, Jesus is presented as the SON of man

- In Mark, Jesus is presented as the SERVANT who suffered
- In Matthew, Jesus is presented as the SOVEREIGN King

Matthew's gospel was given with the intention to show how Jesus is the promised and rightful King of Israel. The gospel record starts with the King's miraculous birth.

### **1. The King's CREDENTIALS (1:1-17)**

*"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah. Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon. And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, or whom was born Jesus who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations."*

When we come across genealogies in Scripture, we often are tempted to skim over them and get to the narrative. However, there is a reason that God has included these sections in the Bible.

In these opening verses, Matthew's purpose is to show how Jesus meets all the necessary credentials as King.

He is the SEED of Abraham (v. 1-5)

In descending order, Matthew traces the legal lineage of Jesus from Abraham. Jesus is the fulfillment of the promise that the Lord God made to Abraham.

His saving purpose is set forth in God's promise to Abraham:

**Genesis 12:2-3 - “I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”**

This passage reveals:

- God will form a covenant people
- God will give them a promised inheritance
- God will use them for a global purpose

**Genesis 22:18 - “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.”**

God promised Abraham that through his descendants, specifically through his ‘seed,’ all the nations of the earth would experience great blessing. This promise finds literal fulfillment in Christ, for the world has indeed been blessed through the gift of the Savior. Salvation is found in Him.

This is what prompted the angelic chorus:

**Luke 2:14 - “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”**

**Matthew 4:16 - “The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.”**

He is the SON of David (v. 6-15)

Here, we are shown that Jesus came from the Davidic line of the kings of Israel. God’s promise to David was that he would never fail to have a descendant seated on the throne.

**2 Samuel 7:12-13 - “When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.”**

Though spoken in reference to Solomon, this promise is literally fulfilled in Christ.

**Psalms 110:1 - “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’”**

This truth was emphasized by the Old Testament prophets:

**Isaiah 9:6-7 - “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom...”**

He is the SAVIOR of Man (v. 16-17)

*“...Jesus who is called Christ.”*

**“Christ”** - *Messiah; the Anointed One*

A variety of backgrounds are represented in Christ’s genealogy. In the record, you will find both men and women, princes and peasants, rulers and shepherds. There are prostitutes, adulterers, and social outcasts.

**David Platt** - *“All in all, this is one crooked family tree! Yet, this was the family tree through which the incarnate Son of God stepped onto the pages of human history.”*

The genealogical record of Christ is a testament to His grace. He is the Savior of both kings and commoners, and His grace is for those of every social class.

## **2. The King’s CHARACTER (1:18-21)**

*“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”*

The Bible records many remarkable births, such as the birth of Isaac to Abraham and Sarah, or the birth of Samuel to Hannah and Elkanah. But none are as remarkable as the birth of Christ.

His intrinsic NATURE (v. 18-20)

*“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she as found with Child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord*

*appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.”*

Some interesting traits about Joseph stand out in these verses:

- the CONFLICT that he faced

In Jewish culture, marriage involved three stages. First came the engagement period, which often was arranged by matchmakers. Then there was the betrothal period, which served as the formal ratification of the marriage agreement. This typically lasted for a year, and was as legally binding as the marriage itself. During this stage, the couple would get to know one another before coming together intimately. The third stage was the marriage ceremony itself, which took place after the betrothal period. It was at this stage that husband and wife would come together in a physical sense.

When Mary became pregnant, she and Joseph were in the second stage, the betrothal period.

Can you imagine the conflict that was going on in his mind?

- the CHARACTER that he possessed

The way that Joseph chooses to hand this dilemma reveal him to be a man of integrity.

Joseph had a clean life:

*“Then Joseph, her husband, being a just man...”*

**G. Campbell Morgan** - *“The idea behind the expression is that Joseph was a man who desired to do the right thing.”*

Joseph had a compassionate heart:

*“...and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.”*

He was a man who had as much compassion as he had conviction. He wasn't someone who held up law without love, a legalist. He is a man who thought of his betrothed wife before he thought of himself. We need this type of men today!

- the COURAGE that he demonstrated

*“Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.”*

This is the same message that the angelic messenger gave to Mary according to Luke's gospel account.

**“Fear Not”** - *don't be afraid of what might happen; trust Me*

Even though the neighbors were sure to criticize and through the rumor mill would start turning out hurtful gossip, Joseph obeyed the voice of God. His love for God and his love for Mary resulted in his willingness to bare reproach for Christ.

Joseph was informed that the Child conceived in Mary's womb was of the Holy Spirit. This is the doctrine of the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, a key and cardinal truth of our faith.

**Isaiah 7:14** - **“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”**

Jesus was born of an earthly mother without an earthly father.

**Warren Wiersbe** - *“Every child born into the world is a totally new creature. But Jesus Christ, being eternal God, existed before Mary and Joseph or any of His earthly ancestors. If Jesus Christ were conceived and born just as any other baby, then He could not be God.”*

**Galatians 4:4-5** - **“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”**

The Son of God became the Son of man so that the sons of men could become the sons of God.

**Daniel Akin** - *“The biblical record reveals that Jesus Christ was born without a human father, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary. The virgin birth impacts our understanding of the incarnation. The incarnation teaches that God became man in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The virgin birth emphasizes both the reality of Jesus' humanity and His divinity as God's Son.”*

Without the virgin birth, we have no gospel.

Man had sinned and man was under the curse. Jesus could not have substituted Himself for sinful man on the cross had He not taken upon Himself the likeness of men.

Jesus had to be God to have the POWER of Savior, and He had to be man to have the POSITION of Substitute.

His intentional NAME (v. 21)

*“And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”*

**“Jesus”** - Greek equivalent of Hebrew Joshua; literally means the Lord is salvation

Notice that the message is that He will save HIS PEOPLE from their sins, meaning that salvation is kept for those who come to Jesus in faith and receive Him as personal Savior and Lord.

### **3. The King’s CONFIRMATION (1:22-25)**

*“So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, ‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, God with us.’ Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.”*

He is the fulfillment of God’s PROMISE (v. 22-23a)

For centuries, the Old Testament prophets had been preaching about the coming of the Lord.

Specific details are given as to how He would be born, where He would be born, and even to whom He would be born. In fact, there are some 300 prophecies about the Lord’s coming:

**Genesis 3:15** - **“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”**

**Micah 5:2** - **“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from old, from everlasting.”**

He is the fullness of God’s PRESENCE (v. 23b-25)

*“...and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, God with us.”*

The glory and grace of Christmas is found in the truth that Jesus is Immanuel, He is God with us:

- Glory - “God...”
- Grace - “...with us”

**David Platt** - *“You are not at the center of history. I am not at the center of history. Our generation is not at the center of history. The United States of America is not at the center of history. Billions of people have come and billions have gone; empires have come and empires have gone; countries, nations, kings, queens, presidents, dictators, and rulers have all come and gone. At the center of it all stands one person: Jesus the Christ. This is the bold claim of Matthew’s gospel. And if this Jesus is the King of all history, then it follows that He should be the King of your life.”*

This is a fitting question: “Is Jesus the King of your life?”