

MATTHEW

Lesson 1

Matthew Chapters 1-2

We begin a brand new study, the study of the book of Matthew. In this lesson, we will look at the lineage and birth of Christ, and sort out some old myths about the Nativity story.

Matthew used his extensive knowledge of Old Testament scriptures in his preaching. We will see why our having a good knowledge of these scriptures as well will help us better understand the impact of Christ on the Jews of the day and the growth of the early church. The Christians at that time only had the "Old Testament" as their "scriptures", and yet the evidence that Christ was the true Messiah was so overwhelming that it gave birth to the church. A solid grounding in the Old Testament and prophecy enables us to clearly see that Christ is indeed our promised Savior!

Matthew wrote this gospel to show the Jews that Christ was the King, the Messiah, the Savior; and in doing so, he penned a gospel full of insight regarding how to live the Christian life. Matthew's gospel is packed with practical instructions from Christ on how we are to live and conduct ourselves as His followers. Our study will teach us much about His kingdom, the Church, and living in the midst of a lost world.

Covering everything from Jesus' lineage to His Second Coming, Matthew's gospel is an exciting and powerful one, and one that has great relevance for us today.

Read Matthew Chapters 1 and 2 and consider the following:

1. Let's start by debunking a few of the Christmas, or Nativity, myths. After reading the story of Christ's birth, answer the following questions. Be sure to cite the verse in which you found the answer.
 - a. What was Mary riding on when she arrived in Bethlehem?
 - b. What did the innkeeper actually say to Mary and Joseph?
 - c. How many Magi visited the baby Jesus?
 - d. Where did the Magi visit Jesus?
2. Why was it so important that Jesus' mother be a virgin? (Matt. 1:22-23 and Isaiah 7:14)
3. Compare Matthew 1:21 and Philippians 2:9-11. What do these verses tell us about the name of Jesus?

4. Compare Matthew 1:6 with Isaiah Chapter 11, especially verses 1-5. Can you see why Jesus' lineage would be so important to the Jews? Do you suppose that this is why Matthew cites it here? Is it reasonable to expect that Matthew would have had knowledge of Isaiah's writings?
5. Compare Matthew 2:2 with Matthew 27:29, Matthew 27:32 and Isaiah 53:3. What did you observe?
6. Did the Jewish leaders of the day know of the prophecies about Christ and the coming Messiah? (Matt. 2:4-6)
7. Review Matthew Chapter 2; and for each of the verses below, jot down the prophecy reference.
 - a. Matthew 2:5-6
 - b. Matthew 2:15 (see Hosea 11:1)
 - c. Matthew 2:16-18
 - d. Matthew 2:19-23

Based on our findings in this lesson, it is very evident that Matthew wanted to ensure from the outset that the Jews understood that Christ was the Messiah. Matthew clearly wanted them to see that Christ fulfilled all of the prophecy regarding the Messiah. Yet, in spite of this evidence, the Jews rejected Christ and crucified him.

So, we have begun our study with a lesson that examines the prophecy and birth of our Savior, and we will ultimately end our study of Matthew by studying Christ's death, resurrection and return for us as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

What a powerful God we serve, who is faithful in fulfilling all of his promises to us, even when we are not deserving of them. Keep the hope of heaven in you and let the Holy Spirit radiate through you as you face the many challenges laying ahead of you, knowing that Christ our Savior lives!

In Christ,

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