

Matthew's Gospel—Chapter 1

By Glenn Rymsza

1. ^{RSV} **Matthew 1:1:** “**The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.**” The first line of any work is very important, not less the first line of our Gospel. One could say the Gospel is summed up in this first line. How many titles are given here for God's Son? Most probably you will have studied the meanings of each of these titles in your section on Christology. If not, your teacher will flesh out these titles with you. List each of the titles and what they mean:

2. **The Genealogy: (Mt 1:2-17):**
 - a. There are many genealogies in the Old Testament. One of the first genealogies is in Gen 5:1-32). Read a few verses of this.
 - b. Why are genealogies important to the Jews? Read Genesis 15:1-21 to answer this question. Your teacher can help you with this.

 - c. In the genealogy, Matthew proves right away the claims that he makes in the first line of the Gospel. How does he do this? Take each of the titles and explain how Jesus proves that Jesus fulfills each one. Your teacher can help you with this as well.

- d. As you read the genealogy from the Old Testament, were there any women listed? (look again). Are there women mentioned in Jesus' genealogy? How many? Who are these mystery women? Why are they in Jesus' genealogy? Are they saints, sinners, Jews or Gentiles. Use a concordance to find their stories in the Old Testament and then write a short summary of each below. List their name first and what scripture passage from the Old Testament tells their story. Then write your summary of each story. What is the significance and payoff of all this for Jesus story?

- e. How does the genealogy of Matthew differ from that of Luke 3:23ff?

3. The Birth of Jesus: (Mt 1:18-25):

- a. Upon betrothal a woman was legally a man's wife even though she continued for a time to live in her family's home. Read the regulations concerning adultery in Deut 22:13-24. What should Joseph have done with Mary?
- b. Joseph is described as being "righteous", "just," "upright," "a man of honor," etc. A righteous Jew was one who obeyed the law. By not stoning Mary is Joseph being righteous? How is Joseph a righteous man? Maybe Mt 5:20 will shed some light on this?
- c. Is it unusual for an angel to announce the birth of a child? What would a Jew be reminded of when reading about the angel appearing to Mary? Look up these key texts: Gen 16:7-16, Gen 18:1-15 (These men are considered angels of the Lord). Who are the woman and children being described? Are they important figures? How are these stories similar and different to the Annunciation to Mary?
- d. Read the following stories and describe who the mother is and who her son is and what is similar about all of them:
 - 1) **Genesis 11:30; 18:10:**
 - 2) **Gen 25:21:**
 - 3) **Gen 29:31; 30:22-24:**
 - 4) **Judges 13:**

5) **1 Samuel 1-2:**

6) **2 Kings 4:8-44:**

7) **Isaiah 54:1: (your teacher can help you with this one):**

8) **How do these stories relate to Mary and the Birth of Jesus?**

- e. Matthew 1:21: “he will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, **for** he will save his people from their sins.” Why does this passage use the word “for”? One could also swap the word “because” for “for.” You learned the answer to this above? What was Joshua's role in salvation history? Read Deut 31:1-8. Can you make a parallel with Jesus' life?
- f. Immanuel is a familiar word to us. However, it is only mentioned once in Isaiah 7 and twice in Isaiah 8. Read Isaiah 7:10-14. The Lord will give Ahaz a sign, the sign of “God with us.” The Gospel of Matthew (in verse 23) begins with the declaration, “God is with us.”
- 1) Was God to be with us only for Jesus’ lifetime? Read Mt 28:19-20.
 - 2) The Gospel of Matthew begins with Immanuel (God with us) and ends with “I will be with you always...” In the middle of the Gospel there is the following passage: “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Mat 18:20.) In the Old Testament, the Temple is where God would dwell. His Shekinah (Tabernacling) Presence would descend on the Temple. The Temple was Holy because it was where God dwelt. During the Babylonian exile, the Jewish Temple had been destroyed and they were living far away in a city with no Temple of their own. At this time, the Jews in exile started studying the Old Testament more faithfully. One expression that is recorded in a Jewish book called the Mishnah, tractate *Avot* (3:2), reads, “But two who are sitting together and there are words of Torah [spoken] between them, the Divine Presence [*Shekhinah*] rests with them.” How does this relate to Mat 18:20 and furthermore to Immanuel and Mat 28:20?

3) In Ex 3:1-14 God meets Moses in a burning bush. Read this passage. For the first time, God reveals his name. This is because Moses asked to know his name. He wanted to know which of the gods he was. At first, God doesn't give a name. He conceals it with an answer that clarifies that he is not one god among many, he is above all gods and thus all names, he's above all categories, he's above being defined as one thing among many. He is existence itself!! So, he responds with the phrase, "I am who I am." But, God is also a personal God who has invited Moses and the People of Israel into a relationship with him and thus, he gives Moses a name that he can call him. The name he gives Moses is "Yahweh" which means, "He who is." This name still sounds philosophical and distant. But, I think one could say that God also has a middle name that needs to be added to this one--which is given in Exodus 3:12. I think a Biblically complete understanding of God unites these two. What does Ex 3:12 say and how does it relate to Immanuel?

4) Where have you seen God at work?