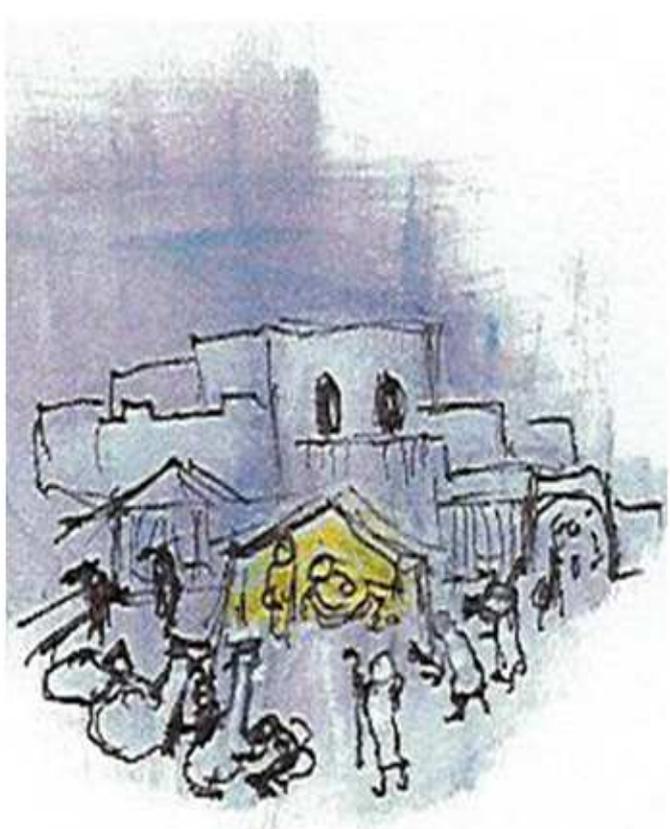


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IMMANUEL

Leader's notes
& Thoughts

Bible Studies DECEMBER 2016

MATTHEW 1

As 2016 draws to a close and our thoughts turn to Christmas and a the new year we begin this short series of devotions and sermons which lead both to the Christmas season and into our study of the Gospel of Matthew which will continue up to Easter 2017.

In his first chapter Matthew introduces us, by way of a brief story of his birth, to the main character of his gospel: Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham, who is God with Us – Immanuel.

May Jesus our Lord indeed be with us as we re-contemplate the timeless story of his incarnation and birth.

“All of us as Christians are called to solidify our faith in a careful and credible understanding of the earthly ministry of our Lord Jesus Messiah. This is one of the primary purposes for our study of Matthew’s Gospel.”

Michael.J. Wilkins Matthew (NIVAC) (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2004)

“Just a hurried line ... to tell a story which puts the contrast between our feast of the Nativity and all this ghastly “Xmas” racket at its lowest. My brother heard a woman on a ‘bus say, as the ‘bus passed a church with a Crib outside it, “Oh Lor’! They are bringing religion into everything. Look – they’re dragging it even into Christmas now!”

C.S. Lewis
Letters to an American Lady
(29 December 1958), p80.

MATTHEW 1:1-17 – Notes on the Questions

Study 1 ‘SON OF DAVID, SON OF ABRAHAM’

What does it Say?

1. What does verse one say this list is?

Carson*: *“The first two words of Matthew, biblos geneeseōs, may be translated “record of the genealogy” (NIV), “record of the origins,” or “record of the history.” The NIV limits this title to the genealogy (1:1–17), the second could serve as a heading for the prologue (1:1–2:23), and the third as a heading for the entire gospel.”*

2. What ‘name’ is given to Jesus.

The name is Jesus Christ.

Jesus we will look at more closely later in this series

Christ – means anointed one or in ‘Messiah’ in the Old Testament

3. Who are his important ancestors?

Jesus is called Son of David and Son of Abraham.

More on these later.

4. What is the focus of this passage?

The focus is JESUS. And his earthly heritage – his lineage, which was vital to any Jews understanding of who he is.

What does it Mean?

1. Why pick out David and Abraham in the heading.

David: Carson*: *““Son of David” is an important designation in Matthew. Not only does David become a turning point in the genealogy (1:6, 17), but the title recurs throughout the gospel (9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30–31; 21:9, 15; 22:42, 45). God swore covenant love to David (Ps 89:28) and promised that one of his immediate descendants would establish the kingdom — even more, that David’s kingdom and throne would endure forever (2Sa 7:12–16).”*

Abraham: Is seen as the father of the Jewish nation. THE Patriarch. It was to Abraham that God gave the promise that through his offspring all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3)

2. Note the women who are named in the list. Is there anything they have in common? Why do you think these women (and no others) are mentioned?

The four women are Tamar, Ruth, Rahab, Bathsheba.

Carson*: *“Inclusion of these four women in the Messiah’s genealogy instead of an all-male listing (which was customary) — or at least the names of such great matriarchs as Sarah, Rebekah, and Leah — shows that Matthew is conveying more than merely genealogical data. Tamar enticed her father-in-law into an incestuous relationship (Ge 38). The prostitute Rahab saved the spies and joined the Israelites (Jos 2; 6). ... Bathsheba was taken into an adulterous union with David, who committed murder to cover it up. ... Several reasons have been suggested to explain the inclusion of these women. Some have pointed out that three were Gentiles and the fourth probably regarded as such ... the Jewish Messiah extends his blessings beyond Israel, even as Gentiles are included in his line. Others have noted that three of the four were involved in gross sexual sin; ...*

What should I Do?

1. What does this list contribute to our understanding as we consider how we think about Jesus?

I think this reminds us of a number of important things:

First is that Jesus is a part of a plan the beginnings of which are recorded in the Old Testament.

Second, through the emphasis on Abraham and the mention of the four women, we are reminded that this Jesus has not just come to the Jews but is for all nations.

Third, and implied in both of these above, is the Jewish heritage of Jesus.

Fourth, we see that Jesus has come for all of God's people, including those who are on the fringes both ethnically and morally (as implied by the inclusion of the women. So Jesus has come for 'us' as well.

What others have said:

These quotes are just for consideration or discussion.

"Matthew goes out of his way to show that the barriers between men and women are broken down: women share in the official genealogy of the Messiah alongside men. The barriers between Gentiles and Jews are broken down too: Ruth plays her part in the coming of one who was to be not only Messiah of Israel but Saviour of the whole world. And the juxtaposition of sinful women like Bathsheba and Tamar with Mary, the gentle mother of Jesus, shows that the barriers between good people and bad people have also come crashing down ... At the very beginning of the Gospel the all-embracing love of God is emphasized. Nothing can stand in its path. There is nobody who does not need it. Maybe the genealogy is not so dry after all!"

Michael Green, The Message of Matthew (Bible Speaks Today) (Leicester, IVP, 2000) p60

* Carson D.A. "Matthew" in Expositors Bible Commentary (Revised) (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2010)

MATTHEW 1:18-21 – Notes on the Questions

Study 2 'JESUS'

What does it Say?

1. Which characters are introduced here?

Mary and Joseph.

2. What was the origin of the child in Mary's womb? What 'conflict of interest' did this raise for Joseph?

The pregnancy is through the Holy Spirit.

Carson: *"This pregnancy came about through the Holy Spirit (even more prominent in Luke's birth narratives). There is no hint of pagan deity-human coupling in crassly physical terms. Instead, the power of the Lord, manifest in the Holy Spirit who was expected to be active in the messianic age, miraculously brought about the conception."*

Joseph is 'betrothed' (a bit stronger than our engaged – it was legally binding, divorce was necessary to get out of it, unfaithfulness was treated as adultery) to Mary – now she's pregnant, and not by him. He resolves to get out of the situation with due consideration for Mary

3. What are the angel's instructions to Joseph?

Proceed with the marriage, name the child Jesus.

The angel also reveals to Joseph the nature of the pregnancy.

Quite a bit for Joseph to deal with.

4. What do we learn of Joseph here?

First note the connection with the genealogy – Joseph is called 'son of David.'

He seeks to be righteous by 'divorcing' Mary, and compassionate, by doing it 'quietly'.

He is also obedient – as we will see.

What does it Mean?

1. Why do you think Matthew opens v18 the way he does? (Note v1 and v17)

Matthew is stressing the idea that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah (the terms are interchangeable).

This baby, born to Mary (and Joseph) is the long expected saviour of the Jews.

2. Consider the name Jesus. What does it mean? (the clue is in v21.) Who else in the Bible has this name and what similarities to Jesus do you see?

Carson: *"Jesus" (Iēsous, GK 2652) is the Greek form of "Joshua" (cf. Gk. of Ac 7:45; Heb 4:8), which, whether in the long form yēhōsūā' ("Yahweh is salvation," Ex 24:13) or in one of the short forms, e.g., yēšūā' ("Yahweh saves," Ne 7:7), identifies Mary's son as the one who brings Yahweh's promised eschatological salvation. There are several Joshuas in the OT, at least two of them not very significant (1Sa 6:14; 2Ki 23:8). Two others, however, are used in the NT as types of Christ: Joshua, successor to Moses and the one who led the people into the promised land (and a type of Christ in Heb 4), and Joshua the high*

priest, contemporary of Zerubbabel (Ezr 2:2; 3:2–9; Ne 7:7), “the Branch” who builds the temple of the Lord (Zec 6:11–13). But instead of referring to either of these, the angel explains the significance of the name by referring to Psalm 130:8: “He [Yahweh] himself will redeem Israel from all their sins”

What should I Do?

1. What do you learn about faith in this short passage? (Note Mary and Joseph).

Just a prompt to think about how this must have impacted these two young people (they were probably in their mid to late teens) to have these events happen to them.

And yet their trust in what God is saying and doing is exemplary for us.

2. How have you experienced God’s guidance or direction? Have you ever experienced it through a dream?

God guides in various way.

This is just an opportunity to think this through.

What others have said:

“Joseph is immediately obedient, as he will be throughout the infancy account. Not only is Mary seen as a godly woman, but Joseph takes the lead in carrying out the angel’s instructions. Matthew specifies that “he [Joseph] gave him the name Jesus” (1:25). Joseph conducts himself as an obedient leader in his marriage and family and as a godly man throughout, an emphasis surely not lost on a Jewish-Christian audience.”

Michael.J. Wilkins Matthew (NIVAC) (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2004)

MATTHEW 1:18-23 – Notes on the Questions

Study 3 *IMMANUEL*

What does it Say?

1. What new element does Matthew introduce here?

Looking at v 22-23 only the concept of fulfillment is introduced here though it is implicit in most of what has gone before.

Carson: *“Matthew is not simply ripping texts out of OT contexts because he needs to find a prophecy in order to generate a fulfillment. Discernible principles govern his choices, the most important being that he finds in the OT not only isolated predictions regarding the Messiah but also OT history and people as paradigms that, to those with eyes to see, point forward to the Messiah”*

There is the possibility that the Angel continues to speak here.

Otherwise this is Matthew’s editorial comment.

Note: There is much, and then some, discussion in the literature about this idea of a virgin birth and what it means. Suffice to say that Matthew is not a fool and he knows how ‘unbelievable’ in human terms what he is saying is. Yet this is what he asserts “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”—which means, “God with us.””

2. What does v22 say is the reason for all this happening. (Note Isaiah 7:14)

It is all happening to fulfill what God has been planning.

Isaiah 7:14 is quoted in v23

France (NBC): *“Virgin is the meaning of the Gk. text of Is. 7:14, though the Heb. is less explicit. The prophecy related to events in the late eighth century BC, but Matthew sees in the name Immanuel and in the developing theme of a special child in Is. 7-12 a foreshadowing of a greater fulfillment in the future.”*

3. What new name for Jesus is introduced here?

Immanuel: which means “God with us.”

4. What does v22 say is the reason for all this happening?

OOPS – same answer as for question 2.

What does it Mean?

1. How do v1-17, v18 and v23 relate to one another?

Fulfillment is the connection.

Verse 1 begins this process with the reference to David and Abraham, the genealogy then highlights it so that we come to the story from v18 on with the Old Testament firmly in the background with the expectation of the Messiah and then v22 makes it explicit.

2. Why is the name ‘Immanuel’ so important? Is this still true of Jesus now? (Note: Compare Matthew 28:20 with John 14:3. What does this add to the ‘meaning’ of the name?)

Immanuel means, we are told “God with us”

And yes it is still true NOW:

The verses:

Matthew 28:20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

Add to the concept – Jesus, God, is now with his people in an intimate way to the end of the age and then even more closely.

Carson: *“No greater blessing can be conceived than for God to dwell with his people (Isa 60:18–20; Eze 48:35; Rev 21:23). Jesus is the one called “God with us” (the designation evokes Jn 1:14, 18). As if that were not enough, Jesus promises just before his ascension to be with us to the end of the age (28:20; cf. 18:20), when he will return to share his messianic banquet with his people (25:10).”*

What should I Do?

1. “God with Us” – What does that mean to you day by day?

Green (BST): *“So here, at the annunciation of Jesus’ birth, we are brought face to face with the central theme of the Gospel. God, who has been at work on his people since the times of Abraham, has come among them in person. And he has come for the specific purpose of rescuing them from the mess they have got themselves into.*

Christianity is not good advice about morals. It is good news about God and what he has done for us.”

And “Immanuel (23) means ‘God is with us’. It is not a prayer. It is a statement. ... What a claim, right at the outset of the Gospel! It is so ultimate, so exclusive. It does not fit with the pluralist idea that each of us is getting through to God in his or her own way. No, says Matthew. God has got through to us in his way. And Jesus is no mere teacher, no guru, no Muhammad or Gandhi. He is ‘God with us’. That is the essential claim on which Christianity is built. It is a claim that cannot be abandoned without abandoning the faith in its entirety.”

Blomberg (NAC): *“As ‘God with us’ Jesus enables us to come boldly before God’s throne (Heb 4:16) when we accept the forgiveness of sins he made available (Matt 2:21) and develop an intimate relationship with him.”*

What others have said:

“Thus man is not only saved but enabled, brought into the nearest relation to him that sitteth upon the throne, and can say, He is our Lord, our Shepherd, our Saviour, our Friend, Emmanuel, God with us.”

John Newton

Sermon Series: Messiah, No.5 {6/6}, Isaiah 7:14

MATTHEW 1:18-25 – Notes on the Questions

Study 4 **CHRIST IS BORN**

What does it Say?

1. **What does Joseph do in v24-25? What does he not do? Why is this detail included?**

He does what the angel had commanded.

He marries Mary.

He does not have sex with her until after the birth.

Carson explains the significance: *“Matthew wants to make Jesus’ virginal conception quite unambiguous, for he adds that Joseph had no sexual union with Mary (lit., he did not “know” her, an OT euphemism) until she gave birth to Jesus (v. 25). The “until” clause most naturally means that Mary and Joseph enjoyed normal conjugal relations after Jesus’ birth (see Matthew 12:46; 13:55).”*

2. **What does Joseph do when this Son is born? Why?**

He gives him the name ‘Jesus’ – probably on the eighth day at the baby’s circumcision. (see Luke 2:21)

3. **How would you react in either Joseph’s or Mary’s place?**

Who knows? It must have been perplexing, challenging and somewhat stressful.

Still we need to remember that they were Jews of the time and probably had a heightened expectation of the arrival of the Messiah – but probably not expecting Him quite so close to home.

4. **What character trait would you use to describe Joseph and Mary.**

I would use obedient and faithful.

What does it Mean?

1. **The other, somewhat longer, account of these events is in Luke 1 and 2. Read this briefly. What information does this add to the account?**

You will note a different focus here. Luke is primarily about and focuses on Mary and her reactions. Luke tells us about the journey to Bethlehem and the Shepherds and the manger.

2. **“She gave birth to a son” is also recorded in Revelation 12:5. What does this startling story (Revelation 12:1-17) tell us about the significance of Jesus birth?**

This the behind the scenes look. Behind the ‘quiet’ birth of Jesus in Bethlehem is the cosmic story of God’s defeat of Satan – of the casting down and defeat of the Dragon.

What should I Do?

1. **Consider the names given to Jesus in Matthew 1:1-25 (Christ, Jesus, Immanuel). What do each of these mean for us in Kiama/Minnamurra in 2016/7?**

Christ – the anointed one.

Prophets, Priests and Kings were the prominent groups anointed in the Old Testament.

Jesus – God saves

Throughout the OT God constantly saves his people. Think of Moses, Joshua (the Hebrew form of Jesus incidentally), David etc.

Immanuel – God with us.

'I will be your God, you will be my people' is a regular refrain in the Old Testament.

Now all of these come together in this one small baby – Jesus son of Mary and Joseph.

And all these things are still true of Jesus

He is our Prophet, Priest and King, He is our saviour, He is God with us when we are 'in Christ'.

What others have said:

*"At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,
Every tongue confess him King of Glory now;
'Tis the Father's pleasure we should call him Lord,
Who from the beginning was the mighty Word"*

Caroline Maria Noel (1817-1877)

English Hymn Writer, Hymn: 'The Name of Jesus' 1870

It would be a pity if all these questions which arise in modern minds were to rob us of the main significance of this marvellous chapter. The Father loves us enough to send his Son, the one who shares both God's nature and ours. He comes to rescue his people from their sins, enemies far more deadly than Rome. If God loves like that, it is good news, *gospel*, indeed.

Michael Green: BST

On the incarnation

The Second Person in God, the Son, became human Himself: was born into the world as an actual man—a real man of a particular height, with hair of a particular colour, speaking a particular language, weighing so many stone. The Eternal Being, who knows everything and who created the whole universe, became not only a man but (before that) a baby, and before that a foetus inside a Woman's body. If you want to get the hang of it, think how you would like to become a slug or a crab.

C.S. Lewis: Mere Christianity.