

“Matthew”

Fall Series 1

Lesson 2

“Matthew 1:1-25”

Objective: To understand the message that Matthew meant to convey to his audience and then to come to understand what that message means for us today as those living in the 21st century. We will seek to ascertain what this message means and to determine how we are intended to live our lives as those who are disciples of Christ in our modern context, in light of the message it contains. We will place special emphasis upon application.

Materials: I will begin by examining carefully the Greek text of Matthew, examine other early translations such as the Syriac Peshitta, various modern translations, and any other sources relevant to the historical setting of the first century Roman world that can help us to understand the original meaning. I will then examine early interpretations and understandings and examine commentaries and modern interpretations to enlighten our understanding, help us make application to our current situation.

Procedures

1. We will begin by examining the text from the Greek text.
2. We will examine the contextual setting and seek to understand as much as we possibly can about the historical, cultural, and social settings, in order to understand the message Matthew intended and that God still intends for us.
3. From here, we will seek to find out how to best apply the words of Matthew, for the early disciples, then to our modern contextual framework as disciples of Jesus.
4. We will seek to understand the attitudes that we are called to have as disciples and to reflect not only the actions that are the calling of a disciple, but also to learn how to form our attitudes and thoughts in order to reflect our calling as followers of Jesus Christ.

Lesson

The Gospel of Matthew begins by giving a genealogical chart that is very much reminiscent of the one found in Genesis 5. The one in Genesis gives a list of the descendants of Adam, this one, the ancestors of the New Adam.¹ Matthew appears to be seeking to associate the genealogy in his Gospel with the genealogy of Adam in Genesis in some manner. The comparison he seeks to draw is that the birth of Jesus is an event along the lines of importance comparable (even greater than) to the original beginning of the human race. The birth of Jesus is a crucial component in God's plan of redemption of creation and of such significance that Matthew goes to great lengths to draw our attention to this fact. As the Book of Genesis recounts the origin of humanity and all creation, now Matthew indicates that Jesus is the progenitor of a new phase of human development and in God's plan of redemption that is in many ways different from the former origin and is powerfully linked with the promises of God for redemption given to His people Israel. This is a "record of origin."²

There is a lot of discussion about whether the phrase **Βίβλος γενέσεως** - *Biblios geneleos* that is used here by Matthew. Does it refer simply to the genealogy section itself, or more broadly to the entire Gospel account? The best

¹ **Βίβλος γενέσεως** - *Biblios geneleos* - The same two words occur in the Septuagint (Old Greek Translation) of both Genesis 5 and Matthew 1. This would have made the connection stronger for those familiar with the Bible in Greek than it is for us today.

² Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, in the Word Biblical Commentary series, Vol. 33A (Dallas TX: Word Books, Publisher, 1993), p. 9.

evidence indicates that it was meant to refer to the entire book and not simply to the beginning, genealogical, portion. That would mean that this phrase then represents the title of the entire Gospel, meaning the title given by Matthew to his work is “The Book of the Genesis of Jesus Christ.”³ This then begins at the starting point of a new era in history and a new era in God’s dealing with His creation. Matthew will seek to flesh out this beginning time, he will seek to draw our focus to the incredible magnitude of the birth, life, ministry, death, resurrection, and commissioning of disciples, with the strong reminder that He (Jesus) will be with them always (*Emmanuel*), they (His disciples) will never be abandoned, never be alone, never be orphaned.

In this account, Matthew puts forward the view that what he is about to recount represents the fulfillment of the great promise given by God to Abraham so many centuries before this time. This connection will have drawn upon a theme that carried with it a powerful resonance for the Jewish people who carefully traced their origin as a nation, as a people, who were called forth by God to the beginning point of all human history and that is now reaching a new phase with the coming of Jesus. The Jews were a people that were redeemed from slavery and likely would not have survived as a nation through the ravages of the centuries if it were not for their strong belief that they were in fact chosen by God. They believed they were called to be the people of *YHWH*. They were called to be different from the other peoples of the earth. This calling by God gave them

³ Ulrich Luz, James E. Crouch, trans, *Matthew 1-7*, in the Hermeneia - A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible series (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 2007), p. 69.

the will-power, the courage, the faith, the perseverance and a means to remain a coherent group through the annals of history.

With the birth of Jesus we come to this creation-level moment in history. This is not for Matthew just a story for entertainment, for recreation, nor just a giving of a historical account, it stands as a monumental moment in salvation history to God and His grace. Matthew intends for his readers to understand the magnitude and scope of this event because it “changes everything.” Because of the plan of God, which is revealed in Jesus Christ, all of creation is now being transformed into something new. In this account, God will convey the magnitude and scope of His great love through the keeping of His promise to Abraham and renewed countless times among the generations of Jews after him. Matthew, throughout this Gospel account, will take great care to point out the many times that Jesus fulfills prophecies/promises from the Old Testament. He seeks to reveal the hand of God, a hand that many may not have recognized during their lifetimes, to be working all along, right in their very midst, in their time. The same is so often true for us today as we fail to see the hand of God moving in our world, in our country, in our community, in our family, and in our own life. Matthew will challenge his readers to come to recognize what God has done in sending Jesus, but he will also leave us with the challenge of recognizing the continual movement and presence of God in creation and especially in the hearts of those who “believe.” The promise of *Emmanuel* (*God with us*) was not just for them, it is still a promised fulfilled for us today.

For many, this is a part of Scripture (the Genealogy), that we normally just read over quickly, and maybe even skip altogether, looking forward to getting to the story, the real meaty parts, but in reality each name given here is meant to turn the key of memory and connect its readers to the continually unfolding story of a loving and gracious God, who never gives up, and always keeps His promises. We are to be reminded of the story of God's calling, and His interactions with Abraham, and to be reminded especially of the promise that He made to Abraham. This promise then passes down in the family line to Isaac, then to Jacob, and then on to Judah, and on an on through David and still into today. We in the midst of this genealogical account come to a name in the genealogical record that may be surprising for us, Tamar. Tamar was the wife of Judah's oldest son Er, who God killed.⁴ God also killed Onan, who did what was "wicked" in the sight of the Lord and so God caused him to die,⁵ (יָמַתְ - *yameth - Hiphil causative stem- ἐθανάτωσεν - ethanatosen*) and then we have that whole story about how Tamar tricked Judah into getting her pregnant while she was dressed as a prostitute. She then gives birth to twins after having relations with Judah, her father-in-law, and one of these twins is in the direct ancestral line of Jesus. Likely for us today this would not be a story we would wish to share as reflecting something honorable about our family tree.

⁴ Genesis 38:7 **But the LORD considered Judah's oldest son Er immoral, and the LORD put him to death.** CEB.

⁵ Genesis 38:10 **What he did was wicked in the Lord's sight, and the Lord took away his life also.** REB.

What Tamar did would most likely be considered highly unacceptable by today's standards, but according to the standards of the day her story is counted to be a heroic account and she is held up as a hero among the Jewish people.⁶ Her children were considered to be the result of an act of God and in their birth the hand of God is seen as upholding those who do right, who maintain covenant faithfulness with God.⁷ This is a story that sends a powerful message regarding the grace and love of God, through one who was unloved and in so many ways considered powerless and rejected. It is also perhaps meant to connect the message of Christ to its wider, more universal, appeal to include Gentiles: tradition considers Tamar to be Canaanite, though this is not stated in the Biblical text. Some scholars consider that this story is also perhaps meant to provide some precedent for the unusual circumstances regarding the unique pregnancy of Mary, the mother of Jesus. We know that there was stigma attached to the circumstances of Mary's pregnancy and we all know how people talk and speculate. It is no different today than it was then. Some see these two elements to be a part of the reasoning behind listing the name of Tamar, though not all would agree with these perceptions. To be sure Mary's pregnancy will have been a source of gossip and perhaps recrimination for her reputation and for the child (Jesus) born to her, as well as even to her husband Joseph. It seems to me that the story of Tamar will

⁶ Ruth 4:11-12 **Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD grant that the woman who is coming into your household be like Rachel and like Leah, both of whom built up the house of Israel. May you be fertile in Ephrathah and may you preserve a name in Bethlehem. ¹² And may your household be like the household of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah—through the children that the LORD will give you from this young woman."** CEB.

⁷ God truly works in mysterious ways.

have gone some way to addressing the unusual circumstances of Jesus' birth and yet still seeing the hand of God being present in that unusual birth. It may have at least challenged people to wonder if perhaps God could be working in this situation. Levirate marriage was something that was prescribed by God to be practiced among His people.⁸

When we get to verse 5 there is the name "Rahab." Most scholars consider this to be the Rahab, of Jericho fame, as the name is given no further explanation, but to be fair there are some issues with this assumption. One of the things that is important for us to note is that the genealogy given by Matthew is highly stylized and is not meant to be strictly forensic in nature. For instance, there is a tremendous amount of debate as to the exact significance of the 3 sequences of 14s given by Matthew.⁹ I will not spend time exploring the various options given for the sequences as it does not appear to me to have any really impact on how we are called to live as disciples of Jesus. Whatever, the reasoning for Matthew doing this, it is unclear to us today. This genealogy also does not

⁸ The story of Tamar represents the account of Levirate marriage in the Bible. Ruth represents another example of Levirate marriage in the Bible. Later Levirate marriage would become a part of the Law Deuteronomy 25:5-10 - **If brothers live together and one of them dies without having a son, the dead man's wife must not go outside the family and marry a stranger. Instead, her brother-in-law should go to her and take her as his wife. He will then consummate the marriage according to the brother-in-law's duty. 6 The brother-in-law will name the oldest male son that she bears after his dead brother so that his brother's legacy will not be forgotten in Israel. 7 If the brother does not want to marry his sister-in-law, she can go to the elders at the city gate, informing them: "My brother-in-law refuses to continue his brother's legacy in Israel. He's not willing to perform the brother-in-law's duty with me." 8 The city's elders will summon him and talk to him about this. If he doesn't budge, insisting, "I don't want to marry her," 9 then the sister-in-law will approach him while the elders watch. She will pull the sandal off his foot and spit in his face. Then she will exclaim: "That's what's done to any man who won't build up his own brother's family!" 10 Subsequently, that man's family will be known throughout Israel as "the house of the removed sandal."** CEB.

⁹ Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, pp. 5-9. There is even a difficulty in that one of the fourteens only has 13 names.

perhaps have the specificity that we might expect today, but the names that are listed are given to further the purpose of Matthew, in writing his Gospel. He wants to remind his audience of the hand of God working among people.

With regard to Rahab, if this is meant to be the Rahab of the conquest narrative, which is what most commentators agree to be the case; then she would appear to be several generations (two centuries) too late.¹⁰ The tradition recorded in the *Babylonian Talmud*¹¹ is that Rahab married Joshua and that numerous prophets of Israel were descended from her.¹² Either the Rahab here is a different Rahab from the one in the time of Joshua, or Matthew is following a different tradition than the one which is recorded in the *Talmud*. It is my opinion that Matthew intends for us to understand this name (Rahab) as indicative of the Rahab of the conquest of Jericho and the “Promised Land” fame. Her questionable character¹³ would seem to make “Rahab the prostitute” the likely person that Matthew intends for us to understand as being in the ancestral lineage of Jesus. Once again, the implication seems to be that this woman, who is a non-Jew, and has some cloud surrounding her sexual conduct is intended to draw attention to the Gentile ancestors in the family line of Jesus as well as once again

¹⁰ Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, p. 11.

¹¹ The Jewish rabbinic writings that recount interpretations, rulings, traditions and many other matters from Judaism. Dating them is notoriously difficult and a much of it comes from a time after the first century A.D.

¹² *Megillah 14b*. Prophets said to be descended from after her conversion to Judaism and marriage to Joshua: Neriah, Barukh, Serayah, Mahsaiah, Jeremiah, Hilkiyah, Hanamel, Shalum and Huldah.

¹³ At least during the early part of her life before encountering the spies of Israel.

to recognize the hand of working in the midst of unusual and controversial circumstances.

Then we come to Boaz, who was the husband of Ruth, the Moabitess. Once again the focus would seem to be upon her non-Jewish ancestry as one being in the lineage of Jesus. There are subtle hints of an unusual sexual nature that may exist embedded in her story. These are not really apparent in our English translations, but would have been visible to the original readers. At verse 6, we are also led to one of the major ancestors related to the promises of God, King David.¹⁴ From there, we are given a list of numerous other ancestors of Jesus who were kings.¹⁵ Obviously, having such a pedigree among people of Jewish ancestry would powerfully speak to the fact that God keeps His promises not only to Abraham, but also to David. It is also noteworthy that in verse 6, there is mention made of the mother of Solomon who was the “wife of Uriah.” It perhaps seems to be significant that Bathsheba is not mentioned by name as were the other 3 women in this list. Some see here an indication that Matthew is trying to draw attention to the righteousness of Uriah in contrast to the sinfulness of David.¹⁶ This is perhaps reinforced by the manner by which Matthew refers to the ancestry of Solomon as literally “out of Uriah” (*ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Οὐρίου - ek tes tou Ouriah*). The word here for “wife” is not actually written in the text, it is simply

¹⁴ This name is not all unexpected and as a matter of fact is necessary to indicate that Jesus fulfills the promises of God to Israel.

¹⁵ Jesus is born of the kingly line of Judah.

¹⁶ Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, p. 11.

understood by us from Matthew's usage of the feminine article that is used here.¹⁷

Bathsheba has a sexual stigma attached to her story and it is possible that she too was of non-Jewish lineage as she was married to a Hittite. Despite this God uses her and her descendants in powerful ways to accomplish His will.

From this point on there is nothing that is immediately surprising to us in the list of the Kings listed until we come to verse 16 where we find the name of Joseph, the husband of Mary, out of which was born Jesus the one being called Christ. Ulanov says that, "These women are examples of the unexpected means God uses to triumph over obstacles and to prepare the way for the Messiah. Their scandalous behavior both forecasts and supports Mary's scandalous pregnancy."¹⁸ It is perhaps the case that Matthew wants his audience to see how God, time and time again, brings about His will through surprising means and in ways that are unexpected and unanticipated. One of the hallmarks of the God of Israel is that He is mysterious, complex, and inscrutable. It is in this contextual frame that Matthew sets out the beginning of his account of the coming of the Messiah. He wants his audience to understand that the coming of Jesus was planned and implemented by God. The genealogy demonstrates the actions and plan of God through the centuries. Only *YHWH* could orchestrate such events. We are reminded of the point made so ably by C.S. Lewis regarding Aslan (who

¹⁷ This is the way Bathsheba is referred to in the context of 2 Samuel 11:3, 26; 12:9, 10, 15. This is also the way Matthew refers to her (Matthew 1:6). It is still unusual that Matthew does not use the word "wife" as it is used in the Septuagint translation of 2 Samuel. Wim. J.C. Weren, "The Five Women in Matthew's Genealogy," in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (1997) 59:2, pp. 288-305.

¹⁸ Ann Belford Ulanov, *The Female Ancestors of Christ* (Einsiedeln, Switzerland: Daimon Verlag, 1998, 2006), p. 84.

represents Jesus in his Chronicles of Narnia series) that He is not a tame lion. He is unpredictable and even dangerous. He refuses to be taken for granted and to do that which is expected and anticipated of Him.

There is much dispute over the significance of verse 17 and the issue of the 3 sets of fourteen generations as I mentioned earlier. Whatever the significance as I said it appears that it is lost for us today. What it does seem to convey is the idea that God has been involved in history working through the generations to bring His plan into being. All that we have had up to this point is intended to set the scene for the narrative of the birth of Jesus Christ. In some senses this narrative has provided the introduction to the crescendo of history, which is the birth, life, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.

Verse 18 begins by relating the story surrounding the birth of Jesus. After the initial reminder of how God has worked through history, through connections, with the many stories embedded in the Genealogy he now begins to lay out the extraordinary tale of the unusual circumstances surrounding the actual conception of Jesus. The account begins before the marriage, while Joseph and Mary were only engaged. We are told that she was “found” to have a child, though the word child is not actually in the text, in her “womb.” This child is the result of the “Holy Spirit” (*πνεύματος ἁγίου - pneumatos hagiou*). This is an action from God, not some scandalous, or even a natural happening. It is in the truest sense of the word “supernatural.” Can you imagine what a disturbing set of circumstances this

was for Joseph? How would you have felt if you found this to be the case to someone to whom you were engaged to be married?

At verse 19, we are first informed that Joseph, “her husband,” is “righteous” and that he had no desire to “disgrace” (*δειγματίσαι - deigmatísai*) her. The word used here indicates that he did not wish to make a spectacle, or a show. He wished to dismiss her quietly without making a big scene. I think Joseph’s attitude toward Mary, wanting to dismiss her quietly, is connected to his righteousness. He does not wish to inflict pain, despite the fact that I am sure he feels betrayed and hurt himself. We would today describe him as a “good” and “gentle” man. This, however, is not the end of the story because as Joseph is contemplating these actions he is visited by a heavenly messenger (angel) who delivers a message to him. Note the message is directed to Joseph as a “son of David.” The message challenges Joseph to be “fearless.” How many of the decisions that you make are based in fear? Do you think fear is a good motivation for decision making in every instance, or only some of the time?

Joseph is informed by God’s messenger that the child that Mary is carrying is a child that is from the Holy Spirit. Mary has not been unfaithful to Joseph. At verse 21, Joseph is informed that the child was to be a son. Today, this knowledge regarding the sex of the child before birth is not extraordinary, but it certainly was during the time of the first century. The birth was not known until the child was born. This is supernatural knowledge. Joseph is told that the child would be called “Jesus.” The Name “Jesus” would reflect the shortened form of

the name of a great hero from Israel's past "Joshua" (*Yehoshua*).¹⁹ The meaning of names was much more significant among the ancient people of Israel than it is for us today. Names were often used to express a great moment in a person's life with the name being changed to mark such a moment in life such as when the name "Jacob" was changed to "Israel," "Abram" to "Abraham," and "Hoshea" to "Joshua." The name given for Jesus is at first a prediction that He will save His people and also a proclamation after the fact that He has indeed saved His people.

The phrasing "his people" given here instead of Israel is perhaps an indication of the more universal mission of Jesus to include both Jews and Gentiles in the one people of God. Note how the verse is phrased, "He will save His people from their sins." This is perhaps a verse that aligns well with what the Apostle Paul says when he says, "For the wages of sin is death"²⁰ At verse 22 we Matthew indicates he will quoting words spoken by the Lord: he then quotes from Isaiah 7:14. This is almost an exact quote from the Old Greek translation of the Old Testament commonly known as the Septuagint. The only change is to change from 2nd person singular verb "you will call" (*καλέσεις - kalesis*) to the third person plural "they will call" (*καλέσουσιν - kalesousin*). This Old Testament translation would become the Bible of the church in those early years before the growth of Latin. In the early 4th century, when the Emperor Constantine ascended the throne as the Emperor of Rome, he would give a royal

¹⁹ The shortened form is *Yeshua*, which becomes in Greek *Iesous*. *There is not a "J" in Hebrew, Greek, or Latin.*

²⁰ Romans 6:23.

gift to the churches in the form of 50 copies of the Bible. The text of the Old Testament he gave would be the Septuagint as this was the Old Testament of the church, not the Hebrew Masoretic text.

This passage from Isaiah 7:14 has proven highly controversial in that some have tried to use it as evidence of the “virgin” birth. In the original context, the sign was not to be found in the virgin birth of the child, but in the destruction of the enemies of Israel by the time the child born to the “young woman” was about two years of age.²¹ The sign was meant to indicate that God was with His people and as long as God was with His people they would be blessed by His protection and His fellowship. This truth is powerfully expressed in the name *Emmanuel*. In Hebrew this name is actually two words (עִמָּנוּ אֵל - *immanu El*). It literally means “with us “God” (*El*). This name strikes a powerful cord of resonance with the Jewish people and reminds them of the presence of God in the very midst of the people in a cloud and in a pillar of fire in the context of the wilderness wanderings. The tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting, was right in the midst of the people any time that they camped and as they travelled. It also perhaps is meant to remind us of Genesis 3:8 when God would walk in the Garden of Eden during the cool of the day with Adam and Eve.


The idea conveyed by this name (*Emmanuel*) is of a close fellowship with God. In the future sense this same sentiment is expressed in Revelation 21:3 **I**

²¹ The young woman in Isaiah 7:14 was likely present when the prophecy was given and could be seen as Isaiah pointed to her. There is even speculation that the young woman was the wife of Isaiah himself. The sign was not that the child would be born or in anything miraculous about the birth. The sign was that the kingdoms of Reza and Pekah would be destroyed before the child grew old enough to be weaned.

heard a loud voice from the throne say, “Look! God’s dwelling is here with humankind. He will dwell with them, and they will be his peoples. God himself will be with them as their God.”²² Jesus is both the realization of the presence of God and the promise of an even greater and even closer presence in the future. There is no need to be alone, afraid, or to feel unloved, God is dwelling with His children. The presence of God takes away loneliness, fear, and powerfully expresses His deep and abiding love. Presence is a powerful indicator of love. What can be more powerful? This is perhaps why Matthew makes this such a strong emphasis in his proclaiming of the Gospel. The name *Emmanuel* draws upon this powerful indicator of love in a way that touches our soul and can remove one our deepest fears, to be alone.

The message to Joseph from the angel comes to him while he is asleep. When he awakens he does just as God “commanded” and he took Mary to be his wife. He continues to be righteous and this righteousness is expressed in his obedience. Verse 25 then expresses in clear and powerful terms, along with the context of the other parts of this section, the “virgin birth” of Jesus. It is expressed clearly and powerfully. What takes place with the birth of Jesus is an act of God and not just of God, but with a special emphasis on the holiness of God and this is expressed in the phrase the “Holy Spirit.” The birth of Jesus comes about through the express power and forethought of Almighty God in His Holy Spirit.

²² CEB.




This Gospel begins mapping out the past activity of God and then demonstrates the continued activity of God while all along forecasting that there is more to come. God was the source of meaning and being in the past, He is the source of strength in the present, and He is the hope for the future. When we truly look we will see that He has always been there, throughout history, seeking the restoration of relationship and the redemption of creation. He seeks people of community; family, that will be loyal and true to God. He demonstrates continuously that He is loyal and true to us, especially in the midst of our disloyalty and disobedience to Him. God creates real community, real family. He seeks to dwell in the midst of His family, a family of loyalty and trust.

Synopsis

Matthew begins his account of the story of Jesus by laying the foundation for His birth firmly within the context of Israel's history. He connects the ancestry of Jesus within the context of the line of Abraham, Judah and David. The way he gives us the names of different women in the genealogy perhaps draws us into comprehending that the nature of God's calling stresses loyalty and faithfulness in rich and powerful ways. Perfection does not seem to be greatly highlighted with the trait of loyalty seen as being expressed by those acting in good faith toward the calling of God in confusing and challenging circumstances.

Matthew wants his readers to understand that what is being accomplished in Jesus Christ is of great importance and compares to the original creation of humanity. The process of God's calling of people to be apart of His plan is meant to be recalled to memory as the readers will have had great familiarity with the various characters mentioned by Matthew. It is especially interesting that Matthew mentions so many women and that each of them is associated in history with being Gentile and with unusual



circumstances. This is surely meant to convey that the message of the Gospel is for Jews and Gentiles combined into the one people of God. This is a message meant to tell the world that God is fulfilling His plan to bring about the His one family. God keeps His promises.


In the midst of the promise that God made to Abraham is set the hope of the presence of God to dwell in the midst of His people. Matthew proclaims that Jesus is the fulfillment of this dream that is proclaimed powerfully in the exodus account by God's presence. God fulfills this plan through ordinary, yet faithful people, and through the actions of the Holy Spirit. Matthew sets the stage for amazing and startling things that come in the life and ministry of Jesus.

Main Points

- To give an account of the genealogy of Jesus that would powerfully demonstrate the active hand of God throughout history.
 - Matthew wants his readers to understand that Jesus represents a new beginning, a new creation, for the cosmos and especially for human beings.
 - Matthew wants us to understand that the coming of Jesus is the way God keeps His promise to Abraham and the way He creates the one family of Abraham of both Jew and Gentile.
 - God will dwell in the midst of His people Jesus is the dwelling of God amongst His people and He will not ever leave them abandoned. His disciples are never left alone by Him.
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Questions

1. What are some ways that you seek to apply things that you learn from the Bible in your own life?
2. How important do you think it is to understand the things that Jesus did in His life as a reflection of the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies?
3. Why do you think Matthew lists 5 women in the genealogy of Jesus?
4. How important do you think a person's genealogy is? Why?
5. What are some ways that knowing your family history helps you to understand your life and your family better?
6. Why do you think there are so many unusual stories to be found in the genealogy of Jesus?
7. How important is it to you that when someone makes you a promise they follow through and keep it? Why?
8. What are some ways that others can build trust with you?
9. What are some stories from the Old Testament that remind you of the faithfulness of God?
10. Why do you think God made a promise to Abraham and David?
11. What does it mean to be "righteous?"
12. Why do you think Joseph was contemplating breaking off the engagement with Mary?
13. Why do you think Joseph was going to break off the engagement quietly?

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14. Why do you think Matthew tells us the story of the Mary's engagement and Joseph's vision?
 15. How do you think you would respond if God sent you a message through an angel?
 16. Why do you think Matthew tells us that Mary's pregnancy was the result of the Holy Spirit?
 17. Why do you think Matthew quotes the ancient prophecy from Isaiah 7:14?
 18. Why do you think it is desirable to have God present in your life?

To Take Home

What is Important to know?

It is important to know that in the coming of Christ God is beginning something new, something of unprecedented proportions. He is redeeming the entire cosmos and He begins at the source of the infection by redeeming the disloyalty (the sinfulness) of human beings. Through Jesus, God launches the new Genesis. What are some ways that you have had people be disloyal to you in your lifetime? How did that make you feel about them?

Where is God in these words?

God is to be found in these words continually pursuing His plan of redemption of creation, starting with human beings. Over and over again we can see in the genealogy, and in the lives of Joseph and Mary, God working out His plan using imperfect humans and in imperfect circumstances. The great power and love of God are seen in these workings as His plan is woven deftly into the fabric of human history. What are some ways that you are aware of God continuing to work His will in our world today?

What does any of this mean for how I live my life?

The message of Matthew challenges us to live our life in the presence of God. God is always with us, *Emmanuel*. The children of God are never orphans. Matthew demonstrates the hand of God working in the way he presents the genealogy of Jesus. He also sets examples in place of God working through people that do questionable things and yet still the will of God is accomplished. How does knowing that God can work through imperfect and flawed people challenge you to be more loyal to God?

What is the word of God calling us to do?

The word of God is calling all of humanity to understand that God seeks their redemption and that He is fulfilling His plans in spite of the flaws and imperfections of the vessels He uses. The calling of God is not just for certain, special, particularly righteous people, it is for all people. What are some ways that you have sensed the calling of God in your life?