

Preview of Matthew

Matthew, sometimes called Levi, one of the twelve apostles, is thought to be the writer of this Gospel that bears his name. Being a Roman tax collector placed him in a despised class of people. His willingness to leave all (Luke 5:27-29) to follow Jesus is a manifestation of the effects that the grace of God had on his life.

The Gospels are sometimes called portraits of the person and work of the long-promised Messiah. As such they present four different poses of one unique personality. Matthew presents Christ as King; Mark, as a servant; Luke, as the Son of Man. and John, as the Son of God.

The Book of Matthew was written primarily to a Jewish audience to show that Jesus of Nazareth was the kingly Messiah of Jewish prophecy. The book begins by showing that Jesus came through Abraham's seed. The frequent reference to Hebrew prophecies with their fulfillment and the numerous quotations from the Old Testament show how this book is a vital link between the Old and New Testaments. The place of this book at the beginning of the New Testament was not a coincidence: it was planned by Almighty God as He progressively revealed His redemptive plan to mankind. This very familiar account of Jesus' birth has much profound truth for us to ponder. We see an emphasis on the execution of the divine plan. God had everything prepared and carried out according to His plan "from the foundation of the world." Many Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled at this time. There is the need for simple faith to believe the doctrines of the virgin birth and the Incarnation. Everything does not need to be humanly explainable.

Satan's best efforts to destroy God's plan could never thwart God's work. We see here the need for every Christian to be involved in God's divine will. He uses men today just as He used Joseph and Mary when Jesus came to this earth.

May the study of this "kingly" book inspire a greater appreciation for the plan of redemption and provide the needed essentials to live in victory. Then we will be prepared for the Second Advent of the King when He comes to complete the salvation of the saints.

Lesson – 1 August 2010

The Birth of the King

Lesson Scope: [Matthew 1 and 2](#)

Lesson Focus

The four Gospel accounts are four complimentary perspectives of the work and ministry of Jesus Christ. None is exhaustive, with each writer choosing details according to his purpose.

Only Matthew and Luke record the Nativity. Matthew, writing to a Jewish audience, presents JESUS as their Messiah and King. Beginning with Abraham, he traces Jesus' genealogy to Joseph, who was Jesus' legal father (Matthew 1:1-16). Matthew assumes that his readers are familiar with Jewish Customs and Messianic prophecies. His account in Matthew 1 and 2 portrays events as Joseph experienced them. On the other hand, Luke wrote to Greeks. It seems that he traced Jesus' genealogy from Adam through Mary, His mother. He focused on Mary's experiences surrounding Jesus' birth.

Matthew emphasizes the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ. He mentions the virgin birth (Matthew 1:20-23) from Isaiah 7:14, the Nativity in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:6) from Micah 5:2, sorrow for the children slain by Herod (Matthew 2:18) from Jeremiah 31:15 and Jesus' identity as a Nazarene (Matthew 2:23). which has no specific prophecy.

God's desire to dwell with men was realised through the Incarnation. Christ's birth fulfilled the Scriptures and was a significant step in the plan to "save his people from their sins."

Lesson Aim: To discover significant details of Jesus' birth and early life.

Theme Verse: [Isaiah 9:6](#). For unto us a child is horn, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God. The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Lesson Text

Born of a Virgin

Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. ¹⁹Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. ²⁰But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. ²¹And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. ²²Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, ²³Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. ²⁴Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: ²⁵And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS. .

Worshipped as a King

Matthew 2:1-6

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, ²Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. ³When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. ⁵And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, ⁶And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

Matthew 2:8

And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

Matthew 2:11

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had

opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

Preserved From the Enemy

Matthew 2:13

And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

Matthew 2:16-18

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wrath, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. ¹⁷Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, ¹⁸In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

Questions for Study

Born of a Virgin

1. List qualities of Joseph and Mary (see Luke 1:38) that indicate godliness.
2. What was significant about Jesus being born into the kingly of David?
3. What qualities of godliness are evident in God's people today?

Worshiped as a King

4. What truth do we gain from the wise men's search for and worship of Jesus?
5. Why were Herod and all Jerusalem so troubled about the King that the wise men spoke of?
6. What evidences of a worshipful life should God's people display?

Preserved From the Enemy

7. What are some evidences of Herod's cold, hard heart?
8. What do we understand from the fact that Jesus' life was preserved from Herod's efforts?

Analyzing the Passage

This lesson includes a sequence of geographical settings. Luke records that the angel Gabriel was sent to Nazareth to address Mary concerning the coming birth of Christ (Luke 1:26-27). Joseph and Mary were at Bethlehem for the purpose of taxation at the time of Jesus' birth. Joseph, at the angel's warning, took Mary and Jesus and went to Egypt to escape Herod's wrath. Later they returned again to Nazareth.

"Mary was espoused to Joseph" (Matthew 1:18). This refers to the betrothal or promise to be married. They were not yet officially married neither were they living together. Legally the bond was as strong as marriage and could together not be broken except by divorce.

Joseph, spoken of as a just and considerate man, "was minded to put her away privily" (Matthew 1:19). This was to spare her from public shame. The Mosaic Law specified that a betrothed adulteress be publicly accused and stoned (Deuteronomy 22:23, 24). Joseph was inclined to divorce Mary by handing her a formal letter of divorce in the presence of two witnesses. Joseph's compliance with the angel's urging him to take Mary as his wife indicates his close, obedient walk with God.

The common Jewish name of Jesus means "Saviour." Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:18) combines this with the title of Messiah, "the anointed one."

The wise men from the east were likely Oriental astronomers or astrologers whose quest for truth motivated their journey to become the first Gentile worshipers of Christ. The Scriptures nowhere tell us that there were three wise men. His star (Matthew 2:2) was apparently a supernatural heavenly light to lead them to Christ.

Principles and Applications

Born of a Virgin

1. God chose Jesus' earthly parents (Matthew 1:18-20). Joseph and Mary were apparently common, godly people. They were ready to be used in God's purpose of bringing Jesus into the world, even though their understanding of God's plan was limited.

Godly people are still used for His work. Those who submit to God's plan for their lives experience great blessings and the satisfaction of pleasing Him. Godliness is the primary requirement for service to God, even above native abilities or gifts.

2. Jesus' virgin birth gives evidence of His deity. (Matthew 1:18,23). An

element of mystery and the miraculous surrounds Jesus' birth. The power of the Holy Ghost coming upon Mary and the power of the Highest overshadowing produced the incarnate Son of God (Luke 1:35). The people of God need no additional explanation. This virgin birth was a direct fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14.

3. Jesus was born into the kingly lineage of David (Matthew 1:20). This was prophesied in Isaiah 9:6, 7, where the prophet speaks of "the increase of his government and peace ... upon the throne of David." He is "the Lion of the tribe of Juda" and "King of kings."

4. An angel directed Joseph and Mary in naming the child (Matthew 1:21). The name of Jesus Christ was significant in its indication of Jesus becoming the incarnate Son of God. He is our "Saviour," the "Anointed One," and "God with us." Truly His Name is "above ... every name"

Worshipped as a King

5. The place and timing of Jesus' birth were providential (Matthew 2:1,5-6). The place of Jesus' birth had been prophesied by Micah the prophet (Micah 5:2). The taxation of Caesar Augustus was significant in that it brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem precisely at the time of Jesus' birth.

6. The Lord assists seeking souls in finding the Saviour (Matthew 2:1-2,5). These wise men apparently were led supernaturally in their search for the "King of the Jews." God led them to the place where they could find help from other people to lead them on in their search.

God still leads seeking souls supernaturally to those who can help them on in their search for truth and satisfaction in life. May we as God's people be available and ready to be used in helping others to have salvation and a scripturally consistent church life and homelife. Revival meetings, foreign missions, street meetings, cottage meetings, prison work, and personal contacts are some of the ways God uses to bring seeking souls to Himself.

7. The visit of the wise men focused attention on Jesus' kingly role (Matthew 2:2, 6, 11). We are not told how the wise men had knowledge of the coming "-King of the Jews." It seems God used them to give His people their first notice of His sending of their King. They worshiped Christ when they saw Him and offered to Him treasures, no doubt their best.

Preserved From the Enemy

8. Angels guarded the life of the child Jesus (Matthew 2:13). God knew that Satan would endeavor to use his agents to destroy Him. He therefore planned to preserve Jesus' life by warning Joseph to take Him to Egypt and

later to Nazareth. God's purposes in providing salvation for mankind would not be thwarted.

9. The events surrounding Jesus' childhood fulfilled Old Testament prophecies (Matthew 2:13, 10-18). Hosea 11:1 refers to God bringing Christ from Egypt. Jeremiah 31:15 speaks of the lamentation of Rachel weeping for her children. This refers to the cruelty of Herod in destroying the children under two years old in the area of Bethlehem in a desperate attempt to destroy Jesus.

10. Jesus' childhood in Nazareth identified Him with the common people (Matthew 2:23). It seems that the Galileans were generally considered to lack culture and that the people of Nazareth had a reputation for lack of religion. Jesus said that He came to save that which was lost (Matthew 18:11).

Answers to Questions

1. List qualities of Joseph and Mary (see Luke 1:38) that indicate godliness.

Joseph was a just man, and he was considerate in not wanting to make Mary a public example. He was in close contact with God as evidenced by the Lord's revealing His will in a dream. Joseph obeyed God, even though he did not fully understand.

Mary was ready to submit to God's will for her life, even though she did not understand all the involvements of His will.

2. What was significant about Jesus being born into the kingly line of David?

Jesus came of David's line as a fulfillment of prophecy (Isaiah 9:6, 7). Jesus came to be king of the lives of His saints and will yet be honored as King by all (Philippians 2:9-11).

3. What qualities of godliness are evident in God's people today?

Evidence of the new birth is seen in God's people. Attitudes of submission to God, His Word, and His people are forthcoming in the lives of those who are godly. Readiness to be used of God when and where He directs through His Word, His Spirit, and the church indicates a life that is in close fellowship with Him.

4. What truths do we gain from the wise men's search for and worship of Jesus?

We understand that God is well able to lead men to Christ regardless of

distance or difficulty, that God not only uses supernatural means but also the help of other men to assist those who are searching for Him, and that all who truly understand who Jesus is will give Him appropriate worship.

5. Why were Herod and all Jerusalem so troubled about the King that the wise men spoke of?

Herod, a very ungodly man, was distressed at the thought of his authority being challenged. He had the Jews largely under his control at the time. He did not welcome any change that would be brought to his kingdom. The religious leaders later proved their own hardheartedness concerning Jesus. They may well have been selfishly motivated at this time as well in relating to an obscure baby king.

6. What evidences of a worshipful life should God's people display?

We should diligently seek God's will for our lives. We should readily give the Lord our best and hold nothing back.

7. What are some evidences of Herod's cold, hard heart?

He covered his wicked intentions with a claim of desiring to worship the newborn king as well. He stopped at nothing, even the slaying of many innocent children, to fulfill, his purpose.

8. What do we understand from the fact that Jesus life was preserved from Herod's efforts'?

Nothing is impossible with God. Regardless of the wicked attempts of man, God's plan will not be thwarted, now or ever.

Important Teachings

1. God chose Jesus' earthly parents (Matthew 1:18, 20).

2. Jesus' virgin birth gives evidence of His deity (Matthew 1:18, 23).

3. Jesus was born into the kingly lineage of David (Matthew 1:20).

4. An angel directed Joseph and Mary in naming the child (1:21).

5. The place and timing of Jesus' birth were providential (Matt. 2:1, 5-6).

6. The Lord assists seeking souls in finding the Saviour (Matt.2:1, 2-5).

7. The visit of the wise men focused attention on Jesus' kingly role (Matthew 2:2, 6, 11).

8. Angels guarded the life of the child Jesus (Matthew 2:13).

9. The events surrounding Jesus' childhood fulfilled Old Testament prophecies (Matthew 2:13, 16-18).

10. Jesus' childhood in Nazareth identified Him with the common people (Matthew 2:23).

Summarizing the Lesson

The birth of Christ the King revealed the condition of people's hearts in Jesus' day. They either believed and worshiped Him or rejected Him and were troubled at His coming. May we, with those who believed, receive Christ continually as the King of our lives.

Research Guide

1. Read and study the parallel passage in Luke 2:1-20.
2. Read from *Fulfilled Prophecies* by Menno J. Brunk, chapter XIV on "Jesus Christ," numbers 1-16.