

Matthew

God's Promise Fulfilled

Marilyn Kunz & Catherine Schell

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Matthew 1—2

Jesus' Birth

The Old Testament's description of the Messiah created great expectations for a king who would free the Jewish people from oppressors and establish a powerful kingdom. Matthew presents Jesus as the Messiah who would rule Israel, but with some surprises.

Read Matthew 1:1-17

1. Why would the three titles given to Jesus in verse 1 be important to Matthew's Jewish audience?

*Note: The Hebrew term **Messiah** means "the anointed one," and is translated Christ in Greek.*

2. Into what major sections does Matthew divide Jewish history?

What significant event or person concludes each section?

Why do you think Matthew includes five women when it was not the Jewish custom to include women in a genealogy?

Read Matthew 1:18-25

3. How does Matthew describe the circumstances surrounding the conception and birth of Jesus from Joseph's point of view?

4. What four things does Joseph learn in his dream?

What impresses you about his response?

5. While Jesus' lineage is traced from Abraham to Joseph, Mary's husband and Jesus' legal father, how does Matthew emphasize the fact that Joseph is not the father of Jesus (verses 16, 18-21, 24-25)?

6. According to the angel's message, what Old Testament prophecy is fulfilled in Jesus' birth?

7. What picture do you see of Jesus from the meaning of the words **Messiah**, **Jesus**, and **Immanuel** (verses 1, 21, 23)?

Read Matthew 2:1-18

8. Why did the Magi make this long journey?

*Note: **Magi** (**wise men** in the NLT) were students of the stars who were able to calculate the orbits and conjunctions of planets.*

9. How do Herod and all Jerusalem react to the Magi's questions (verses 3-8)?

Why does their search for the **king of the Jews** prompt Herod to ask about where **the Messiah** (Christ) will be born?

10. Describe the emotions and actions of the wise men when they see the star again and when they see the child.

What was Herod's ultimate aim (verses 8, 16)?

11. What happens to Herod's plan?

Imagine yourself as Joseph. What would you have felt and said to Mary during this abrupt departure for Egypt?

How are Joseph's flight to Egypt and Herod's actions part of what the Old Testament said would happen?

Read Matthew 2:19-23

12. Like many other powerful people, Herod used his position to exercise control over others, even to the point of destroying people to protect his own position. What perspective does verse 19a give you of the actions and value judgments of people in power?

13. How does God guide Joseph to a safe location that fits into God's plan?

Why is obeying what you already know often necessary before you receive further guidance?

What part does logical reasoning play in the way God guided Joseph and guides us today?

SUMMARY

1. How would you contrast Herod and Joseph in terms of:
 - power
 - resources
 - motivation
 - the importance of their lives

2. What part did Joseph's obedience play in the Old Testament prophecies being fulfilled (1:21-25; 2:14-15, 21-23)?

3. Christians struggle with keeping a balance regarding God's guidance, tending to overemphasize either the intuitive, feeling-oriented ways of guidance or the totally rational, intellectual approach. God has made us capable of being guided by his Spirit using both our mind and our emotions. What do you learn about guidance and obedience from Joseph's life?

PRAYER

Lord, help me to be like Joseph—to value humility, sensitivity, faithfulness, obedience, justice, that I too may walk in your will. May you fulfill, Lord, what you want in my life. You entrusted your servant Joseph with what looked like humble tasks; yet he played an important part in your great plan! Help me to be like him. By your grace, amen.

CHART

Use the chart on pages 188-189 to help you follow the chronology, locations, and major events in Matthew. After each study, write a brief title of that chapter to help you to remember the contents.