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**Study of the Gospel of Matthew**

**Chapters 1 - 3**

Brief introduction to the Gospels:

There are four Gospels found in the Bible: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (these are the names of the authors of these books). The word ‘gospel’ literally means ‘good news’. So each book is the good news written by the particular author it is named after (Matthew, Mark…etc.) But what is the good news that they are talking about? Each book focuses on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and His announcement that the Kingdom of God is near. This is Jesus’ main message and therefore the good news. The Kingdom of God has come and, through the death and resurrection of Jesus, we can all be a part of this Kingdom.

So do we really need four books, couldn’t we just have one? The Bible is long enough as it is! Well, each author has a different emphasis within their book. Although the main message is the same, the stories the authors use are in different orders and some authors use stories that others don’t. Each author uses different skills and ways of writing to make their message about Jesus clear.

Matthew’s emphasis

We are going to be looking at the Gospel of Matthew; so what is the emphasis Matthew has within his Gospel? Well, Matthew focuses a lot of his attention on Jesus being the hoped for Messiah of the Jews. In Matthew more than any other Gospel account we see lots of references to the Old Testament, especially to prophecies and how Jesus fulfilled those prophecies. Matthew wanted his readers to see that Jesus was Messiah from the line of King David (the most important King Israel ever had), that He was a new authoritative teacher like Moses (the greatest teacher Israel ever had), as well as being ‘God with us’ (in Hebrew this is the word ‘Immanuel’).

Matthew orders his book in three main sections – an introduction (Chapters 1 – 3), a conclusion (Chapters 26 – 28) and between those sections there are 5 chunks of teaching; these five chunks emulate the five books of Moses (the first five books of the Old Testament). This is already a way of showing us how Jesus is the New Moses.

So with all that in mind, let’s get stuck into the first chapter of Matthew!

**Matthew Chapter 1**

**The Genealogy of Jesus the Messiah**

**1**This is the genealogy ***a*** of Jesus the Messiah ***b*** the son of David, the son of Abraham:

**2**Abraham was the father of Isaac,

Isaac the father of Jacob,

Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,

**3**Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar,

Perez the father of Hezron,

Hezron the father of Ram,

**4**Ram the father of Amminadab,

Amminadab the father of Nahshon,

Nahshon the father of Salmon,

**5**Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab,

Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth,

Obed the father of Jesse,

**6**and Jesse the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah’s wife,

**7**Solomon the father of Rehoboam,

Rehoboam the father of Abijah,

Abijah the father of Asa,

**8**Asa the father of Jehoshaphat,

Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram,

Jehoram the father of Uzziah,

**9**Uzziah the father of Jotham,

Jotham the father of Ahaz,

Ahaz the father of Hezekiah,

**10**Hezekiah the father of Manasseh,

Manasseh the father of Amon,

Amon the father of Josiah,

**11**and Josiah the father of Jeconiah ***c*** and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.

**12**After the exile to Babylon:

Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel,

Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,

**13**Zerubbabel the father of Abihud,

Abihud the father of Eliakim,

Eliakim the father of Azor,

**14**Azor the father of Zadok,

Zadok the father of Akim,

Akim the father of Elihud,

**15**Elihud the father of Eleazar,

Eleazar the father of Matthan,

Matthan the father of Jacob,

**16**and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah.

**17**Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Messiah.

**Joseph Accepts Jesus as His Son**

**18**This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about ***d*** : His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. **19**Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet ***e*** did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

**20**But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. **21**She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, ***f***because he will save his people from their sins.”

**22**All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: **23**“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” ***g*** (which means “God with us”).

**24**When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. **25**But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

**Footnotes:**
***a*** **1** Or *is an account of the origin*
***b*** **1** Or *Jesus Christ. Messiah* (Hebrew) and *Christ* (Greek) both mean *Anointed One*; also in verse 18.
***c*** **11** That is, Jehoiachin; also in verse 12
***d*** **18** Or *The origin of Jesus the Messiah was like this*
***e*** **19** Or *was a righteous man and*
***f*** **21** *Jesus* is the Greek form of *Joshua,* which means *the Lord saves.*
***g*** **23** Isaiah 7:14

(I am aware that the genealogy is boring and seems pointless, but there’s a really good reason for it! Genealogies were really important for many people in those days, and still are today for historians. Don’t worry about how to pronounce the names. There is a lot of interesting things here, but let’s just focus on one (see tasks below).

**Tasks**

1. Go back through the text and highlight every time Matthew writes the name “David”. How many were there?
2. Why do you think Matthew uses David’s name so often?
3. Why did Matthew want to show the link of Jesus to David and Abraham?
4. Go back through the text and in a different colour, highlight each time the word “Messiah” appears in this text. (in some translations the word used is *Christ*). – The Greek for *Christ* is: Χριστός (christos) – it can also mean Anointed One, Messiah. The Messiah is the Son of David, an anointed leader expected to bring in an age of peace and liberty from all oppression. How many times did the word “Messian” appear?
5. Why do you think Matthew starts his gospel account with so many references to “Jesus the Messiah/Christ”? What was he trying to achieve?
6. In verse 22 we can see Matthew writes, “All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).” – This is direct quote from Isaiah 7:14:

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

What effect does Matthew create in writing this?

1. The name Immanuel wasn’t used as a personal name, but more of a statement of who Jesus would be – so why was Jesus known as Immanuel? What does it teach us of Jesus?
2. Summarise what this first passage has taught you about Jesus?
3. Why is this important?
4. Use what you have learnt to write a prayer – it could be a prayer of thanks, or for help.