

OPENING PRAYER

Proper 28¹

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written
for our learning:
Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn,
and inwardly digest them,
that we may embrace and ever hold fast
the blessed hope of everlasting life,
which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

MATTHEW 1² & 2

The Genealogy of Jesus the Messiah

1:1 An account of the genealogy[a] of Jesus the Messiah,[b] the son of David, the son of Abraham.

2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, 3 and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, 4 and Aram the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, 5 and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, 6 and Jesse the father of King David.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, 7 and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph,[c] 8 and Asaph[d] the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, 9 and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, 10 and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos,[e] and Amos[f] the father of Josiah, 11 and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

12 And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel, 13 and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, 14 and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, 15 and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, 16 and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.[g]

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah,[h] fourteen generations.

The Birth of Jesus the Messiah

18 Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah[i] took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19 Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. 20 But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a

¹ Episcopal Book of Common Prayer pp.236

² All Bible quotations and footnotes are from the New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” 22 All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

23 “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,”

which means, “God is with us.” 24 When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, 25 but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son;[j] and he named him Jesus.

The Visit of the Wise Men

2:1 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men[a] from the East came to Jerusalem, 2 asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising,[b] and have come to pay him homage.” 3 When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; 4 and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah[c] was to be born. 5 They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

6 ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd[d] my people Israel.’”

7 Then Herod secretly called for the wise men[e] and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. 8 Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” 9 When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising,[f] until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw that the star had stopped,[g] they were overwhelmed with joy. 11 On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

The Escape to Egypt

13 Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” 14 Then Joseph[h] got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, 15 and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”

The Massacre of the Infants

16 When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men,[i] he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men.[j] 17 Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

18 “A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.”
The Return from Egypt

19 When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, 20 “Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.” 21 Then Joseph[k] got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. 23 There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, “He will be called a Nazorean.”

Footnotes

Matthew 1:1 Or *birth*

Matthew 1:1 Or *Jesus Christ*

Matthew 1:7 Other ancient authorities (manuscripts) read *Asa*

Matthew 1:8 Other ancient authorities (manuscripts) read *Asa*

Matthew 1:10 Other ancient authorities (manuscripts) read *Amon*

Matthew 1:10 Other ancient authorities (manuscripts) read *Amon*

Matthew 1:16 Or *the Christ*

Matthew 1:17 Or *the Christ*

Matthew 1:18 Or *Jesus Christ*

Matthew 1:25 Other ancient authorities (manuscripts) read *her firstborn son*

Matthew 2:1 Or *astrologers*; Gk *magi*

Matthew 2:2 Or *in the East*

Matthew 2:4 Or *the Christ*

Matthew 2:6 Or *rule*

Matthew 2:7 Or *astrologers*; Gk *magi*

Matthew 2:9 Or *in the East*

Matthew 2:10 Gk *saw the star*

Matthew 2:14 Gk *he*

Matthew 2:16 Or *astrologers*; Gk *magi*

Matthew 2:16 Or *astrologers*; Gk *magi*

Matthew 2:21 Gk *he*

OUTLINE

Chapters 1-2 Genealogy, Birth, Gentiles

- 1) Comparisons
 - a) Greek/Roman Literature
 - b) Luke
- 2) Historical/Theological
- 3) Purposes
 - a) Fulfilling OT scripture
 - b) Humanity and Divinity
 - c) Proto-Trinity (God, Holy Spirit, Son)
 - d) Legitimate Messiah
 - e) Mission to Jews and Gentiles
 - f) Opposition of Jewish authorities
- 4) Birth of Jesus (1:18-25)
 - a) Divine incarnation
 - i) Role of the Holy Spirit
 - ii) Proto-Trinity
 - b) Names
 - i) "Emmanuel, which means, "God is with us."
 - ii) "Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."
 - c) Theology/Major Theme in names – "God with us" and "saving his people from their sins"
- 5) The Visit of the Wise Men (2:1-12)
 - a) Mission to Gentiles
 - b) Kingship/Danger from Jewish authorities
- 6) The Escape to Egypt (2:13-15)
 - c) Jewish authorities hostility
 - d) Role of angels
- 7) Moses Typology
 - a) The Escape to Egypt (2:13-15)
 - b) The Massacre of the Infants (2:16-23)

REFLECTION

How do I experience God's presence with me and being saved from my sins?

"Name him Emmanuel, which means, "God is with us."

"You are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

Do I see myself as being made in God's image?

CLOSING PRAYER

We thank you, heavenly Father,
for the witness of your apostle and evangelist,
Matthew, to the Gospel of Beatitude and Grace
which you have given us in your Son, our Savior;
and we pray that, after his example,
we may with ready wills and hearts obey
the calling of our Lord to follow him;
through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

The Rev. Zoila Schoenbrun

SLOW RELIGION: GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW



The Inspiration of St. Matthew,
Caravaggio, 1602

Slow Religion, The Gospel According to Matthew is a lay person-led adult education weekly series for Christians and seekers. Slow Religion uses a literary and historical approach to the ancient texts to identify and apply insights from the Gospel to today's world.

Matthew's gospel is worth studying because the author attempts to uphold Jesus' Jewish past, with Jesus ministry, death, and resurrection, in the context of the 1st Century CE Jesus movement and early church, and in a hostile Hellenistic and Jewish world.

21st Century readers recognize Matthew as the source of many of the best-known stories and sayings of Jesus as well as a social philosophy that many non-Christians believe in. Famous for its Sermon on the Mount, The Beatitudes, and other teachings, Matthew is often called the most Jewish of the Gospels, while also contributing with the Gospel of John to antisemitism.

The class is created and led by Joe Jennings and advisors include: the Rev. Zoila Schoenbrun and the Rev. Robert Gieselmann, St. Stephens Episcopal Church, Belvedere, CA; the Rev. Br. Richard Edward Helmer, Episcopal Church of our Saviour, Mill Valley, CA; Eugene E. Lemcio,

PhD, Emeritus Professor of New Testament, Seattle Pacific University; the Rev. Heather Wenrick, the Episcopal Church of the Ascension, Seattle; and the Father Vincent Pizzuto, PhD., vicar at St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Inverness CA and Full Professor at the (Jesuit) University of San Francisco, New Testament and Christian Mysticism, in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies.

Prior Slow Religion Classes include the Gospel of According to Mark (2021-22), the Foundations of Christian Faith (2020-21), the Holy Spirit (2020), the Gospel According to John (2019-20), and Paul's Letter to the Romans (2017-8).

For more information, bibliography or to join the Slow Religion mailing list go to: www.slowreligion.com

OVERVIEW³

Gospel Comparison⁴

The birth narratives appear in Matthew and Luke only.

Pericope ⁵	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Prologue	1:1	1:1	1:1-4	1:1-18
The Genealogy of Jesus	1:2-17		3:23-38	
The Birth of Jesus	1:18-25		2:1-7	
The Adoration of the Infant Jesus	2:1-12		2:8-20	
The Circumcision and Presentation in the Temple			2:21-38	
The Flight into Egypt and Return	2:13-21			
The Childhood of Jesus at Nazareth	2:22-23		2:39-40	

Matthew and Luke share with the biography of Herakles / Hercules the following elements of a narrative pattern⁶:

	Herakles	Jesus (Matthew)	Jesus (Luke)
Genealogy	Both parents	From Abraham	To Adam
Divine Father	Zeus	God/Spirit	God/Spirit
Human [Adoptive] Father	Amphytrion	Joseph	Joseph
Human Mother	Alkmene	Mary	Mary
Supernatural Conception	By deceit, sexual	Virginal, asexual, by Holy Spirit	Consensual, virginal, asexual, by Holy Spirit
Exalted Name(s) / Status	Hera's adopted son	"Son of David & Abraham" "Messiah," "Emmanuel"	"Son of Most High" "Christ, the Lord"

What Matthew and Luke have in common⁷:

Element	Matthew	Luke
Who is born	Jesus	Jesus
Parents	Mary and Joseph	Mary and Joseph
Time Period	During reign of Herod the Great	During reign of Herod the Great
Conception	Spirit of God	Spirit of God
Descendent	David's line	David's line
Birth Place	Bethlehem	Bethlehem
Final home	Nazareth	Nazareth

³ Sources include notes from Allison, Dale C. Jr., Barton and Muddiman, Biblegateway.com, Borg, Marcus J. & John Dominic Crossan, Brown, Raymond E., S.S., Harper Collins Study Bible, NRSV Version, France, R. T., Lemcio, Eugene, Levine, Amy-Jill, and Marc Zvi Brettler Editors, and Morris, Leon.

⁴ Source: <http://www.gospelparallels.com/>

⁵ an extract from a text, especially a passage from the Bible, "a book of pericopes"

⁶ Lemcio, Eugene, *A Common Narrative Pattern: Herakles / Hercules & Jesus in Matthew & Luke*, 2022

⁷ Source: Borg, Marcus J. & John Dominic Crossan, *The First Christmas, What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus' Birth*, 2007

How Matthew and Luke diverge:

Element	Matthew	Luke
Jesus represents	New Moses	New Adam
Genealogy	From Abraham	To Adam
Parent's home before the birth	Bethlehem	Nazareth
Point of view	Joseph	Mary
Angels visit	Joseph	Mary
Who else is pregnant?		Elizabeth with John the Baptist
Census		Census
Birthplace	Home in Bethlehem	Stable in Bethlehem
Star	Star	
Visitors	Magi with 3 gifts	Angels, Shepherds
After birth trip	Egypt	Jerusalem to be circumcised and blessed
Who is killed	Massacre of the Innocents by Herod	
Post birth story		12-year old's visit to temple

Chapters 1-2 Historical or Theological⁸

The practice of history (the reconstruction of the past) takes little if anything for granted. Reports (written or oral) of events and statements and artifacts are the results of human activity alone and must be interrogated and evaluated regarding the veracity of things said and done. Religious/theological claims of involvement by non-human agents cannot be considered historical since they transcend the realm of human activity—the only sphere of investigation open to historians, regardless of their race or religion.

From this perspective, divine involvement as reported in the Birth Narratives cannot be regarded as historical. They are theological in that God is claimed to be the primary agent of the things said and done. They are Christological in that a claim was made that Jesus was God's Messiah. Historians are incapable of saying whether or not he was or wasn't. All that s/he can do is report that some (including the Gospel writers) claimed or believed that he was.

Still, this is not to say that none of the statements or events reported actually happened "in history". However, those who claim that they did are obliged to justify them according to the standards and methods of modern historians. We should be wary of this sort of maximalist, negative approach: "There is no good reason for thinking that they could not have happened." Of course, many will say, "The Gospels were written from the perspective of faith; and I take them by faith."

Chapter 1

1:1-17 The Genealogy of Jesus the Messiah

1:1-2:23 The author presents Jesus twofold "origin" (gk *genesis*). First, he is human, having the legitimate prerequisites (son of Abraham and David) to be Israel's Messiah. Second, he is divine, by virgin birth, by the holy Spirit of God. The language "book of origin, or book of genesis" may be purely a genealogical view of Jesus ancestors, and/or a view of the whole story of Jesus as the new creation.

4 OT women are mentioned. The first three are not Israelites, and the fourth is not married to an Israelite. The women themselves are instruments of God in continuing the messianic line: 1:3 **Tamar**, a Canaanite who played the prostitute with her father-in-law, Judah. (Genesis 38); 1:5 **Rahab**, a Canaanite prostitute who helped Joshua's spies to escape (Josh 2:1-21, 6:22-25); 1:5 **Ruth**, a sexually aggressive widow from Moab (Ruth 2-4); and 1:6 Wife of Uriah, **Bathsheba**, with whom David committed adultery (2 Samuel 11-12).

⁸ Source: Lemcio, Eugene E., PhD, Emeritus Professor of New Testament, Seattle Pacific University

Matthew presents Jesus as the one who will now complete what the law of Moses sought to achieve: He will rescue his people, not from slavery in Egypt, but from their sin, their exile is not from the Temple in Babylon, but in their own hearts and lives from God.

1:18-25 The Birth of Jesus the Messiah

Matthew's task is to explain how the new Messiah is Jesus of Nazareth. 1:18-2:23 are 5 scriptural proofs that Jesus of Nazareth is the messiah. These 31 verses are one of Matthew's most distinctive contributions to the Christian story. They are in fact a set of arguments, not a narrative per se, to show how in the coming of Jesus a wide range of scriptural material is fulfilled.⁹

Matthew tells the reader who Jesus is, the Messiah, the one uniquely conceived by the Holy Spirit, and how that was brought about. The main point is that Mary has conceived through an action of God, and this fulfills prophecy (Isaiah 7:14). The prophecy does not entail that Jesus is God in the sense of the John or the Nicene Creed.

Incarnation/Virgin Birth

Immanuel means "God with us". It can be interpreted as God's presence in Jesus himself so that Jesus' declaration in 28:20 is drawing out what has been true since his birth, the God is present in the person of Jesus. Thus Matthew's interpretation of "Immanuel" takes him close to and explicit doctrine of incarnation such as is expressed in John.

The role of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' conception reflects the OT concept of God active in the origin creation (Gen 1:2; Psalms 33:6), and in the giving of life (Ps 14:30; Isa 32:15; Ezek 37:1-14). The Spirit is also thought of in the OT as having an eschatological role in connection with the coming of the Messiah (Isa 11:2; 42:1; 61:1).

Joseph

Joseph is called just, which means Torah observant, and righteous before God, meaning he is compassionate and merciful. *Dream* is a means of divine communication with mortals. The angel addresses Joseph as "son of David", to remind the reader of what is at stake – Jesus' royal pedigree – and Joseph is called to and does do two things, accept Mary as his wife, and give her son a specific God-chosen name, Jesus.

Holy Spirit

The Spirit (*Ruach* in Hebrew, *pneuma* Gk(breath)) is holy, an adjective not used in the OT except in Isaiah 51, Philo or Josephus and is a distinctively Christian idea. The role of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' conception reflects the OT concept of God active in the origin creation (Gen 1:2; Psalms 33:6), and in the giving of life (Ps 14:30; Isa 32:15; Ezek 37:1-14). The Spirit is also thought of in the OT as having an eschatological role in connection with the coming of the Messiah (Isa 11:2; 42:1; 61:1). The Spirit not just to Jesus' post-baptism ministry, but to his entire being and life.

Jesus Identity and Name

By agreeing to name the baby Jesus, Joseph is legally accepting responsibility for him as his son and heir. Through the act of Joseph naming Jesus, Jesus becomes an heir to the line of David. The angel says, "you are to name him Jesus, for he will *save his people from their sins.*" (1:21), this is an important Matthean concept.

The name Emmanuel is not used by Jesus. It is perhaps too dangerous. It means "God with Us." Matthew's whole gospel is framed by this theme: and at the very end, Jesus promises to be with us to the end of the age (28:20). God is present, he does not intervene from a distance, but is active in the most unexpected ways. And God's actions are aimed at rescuing people from a helpless plight.

⁹ Source: France, R. T., The Gospel of Matthew Notes

Matthean Formula/Scriptural Quotations/Fulfillment Theme

The Matthean Formula¹⁰, “All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet” (1:22). One half of the formula quotations in the gospel appear in these 31 verses. They are one of the distinctive features of the gospel. They are not merely editorial comment, but rather an underlying structure for the narrative. Matthew uses different infancy stories to make specific scriptural arguments to support his thesis that Jesus was the Messiah. These formula quotations emphasize that events fulfill prophecy, and thus God’s will.

Isaiah 7:14

Three elements in this Isaiah text attract Matthew’s attention: a child born to a virgin mother, the naming of the child, and the underlying Theology/Christology of “God with us”. Two problems with Matthew’s quote of Isaiah: The Greek LXX translation of the Hebrew Pentateuch which Matthew follows unambiguously refers to “the virgin”, and the English translations of the Hebrew usually translate the Hebrew as “young woman”; and Isaiah’s 735 BCE prophecy, uttered to Ahaz, is not about an event in the distant future. Its point is to specify the time of the imminent destruction of both Judah’s enemies and Judah itself by the Assyrian invasion. It will be before the son, soon to be born, has grown up (7:15-17¹¹).

Chapter 2

The Visit of the Wise Men

2:1-12 Two central themes: the Davidic kingship and the homage of the Gentiles (Magi). 2:1-12 The gentile magi appear to pay homage to the King of the Jews, the true king, not the king of Rome or the king appointed by Rome. Asking for the king of the Jews is a subversive statement – it undermines Herod’s position as a Roman-appointed king. The gifts: frankincense (a fragrant resin), gold and myrrh (a resin used for anointing and embalming).

The passage also anticipates the story’s ending: Jesus status as King of the Jews (2:2; 27:11, 29, 37); the Jewish authorities and leaders gather against Jesus (2:3-4; 26:3-4, 57); plans are made in secret (2:7; 26:4-5); and Jesus’ death is sought (3:13, 16; 26:4). Artistic contrasts: The light in the night sky proclaims Jesus’ birth (2:2), at the end the darkness during the day announces his death (27:45)

The Escape to Egypt

2:13-23 The story shifts witnessing, and gift giving to murder and flight. **Moses:** Matthew asserts that the histories of Moses, the first deliverer, and Jesus, the messianic deliverer, are in the mysterious providence of a consistent God. Matthew shows a conscious intention for the connection between Moses and Jesus to be perceived by the reader/audience. The direct parallel is between “those who were seeking your life” which is Moses in Exodus, and “those who were seeking the child’s life” which is Jesus’ life. This compels the reader to see the story of Jesus and the story of Exodus, which is the story of Moses, side by side and ask: how exactly are they similar?

The Massacre of the Infants

There is also a Moses typology (2:19-21) borrowing the language of Exodus 4:19-20 after Moses is told to return to Egypt because all who were seeking him have died. By going down to Egypt and then returning to Israel, Jesus’ story recapitulates the experience of Israel. 2:23 “He will be called a Nazorean” does not appear in the OT. It may reflect that the early Jesus movement was not called Christian until later. Matt’s community may have been referred to as Nazoreans.

¹⁰ Matthew will use this device 14 times to introduce quotations from the OT in this gospel. (2:5-6; 2:15; 2:17-18; 2:23; 3:3; 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 13:14-15; 13:35; 21:4-5; 25:56; 26:54; and 27:9-10)

¹¹ Isaiah 7:13-17 13 Then Isaiah[d] said: “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? 14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman[e] is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.[f] 15 He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. 16 For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted. 17 The Lord will bring on you and on your people and on your ancestral house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria.”

Footnotes: Isaiah 7:13 Heb *he*; Isaiah 7:14 Gk *the virgin*; Isaiah 7:14 *That is God is with us*