

## Week 2:

### Jesus revealed

#### Matthew 1-2: bringing Jesus alive

How do you reveal yourself each day? Do you do your hair or put on makeup? How about wearing nice clothes, straightening your tie, or brushing your teeth? Would you possibly put on a tee-shirt, live in the worst part of town, or do a job that no king of nobility would touch? If God decided to come down to earth then what would he look like? It seems ridiculous that he would expose himself as a defenseless baby. That would be putting himself in harm's way. In a way, relying on humans to protect him. How do you portray yourself to others? Do you try and look nice?

The Jewish nation were always looking for a sign. How many times throughout these gospels did someone request a sign? They knew the scripture. It was so popular that even the Roman leader Herod knew. It bothered him so badly that he had all the boys up to two years old killed. The Christ to come was considered a serious threat. I feel that Jesus came because the religion of the day was a serious threat to God's plan. The people had lost their way. Jesus came down to reset the kingdom of God. What signs would convince you that God is with us?

Matthew 2:2 **"and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."**

Numbers 24:17 **"I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel. He will crush the foreheads of Moab, the skulls[a] of all the people of Sheth."**

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The birth of Jesus is controversial. I recommend that you read the Matthew and the Luke account. They complement each other. Luke goes deeper into what's going on. Matthew tells a more surface story. We have angels and shepherds. Magi and Herod. This is a story that skims over the whole event to give you an over view. It's interesting that Mark does not record the birth. John describes the person coming like Mark does. Matthew has a different purpose. It's about prophecy. It's about the coming king. It's about the kingdom of God arriving. How do you see the birth of Jesus?

Matthew 2:15 **"where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."**

Hosea 11:1 **"When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son."**

Matthew goes out of his way to say a virgin will be with child. This is not just an assumption with Matthew. There are no inferences. He makes it clear. Matthew 1:16 says that Joseph is the husband of Mary and that Jesus was her child. It's on purpose that Joseph is not called the birth father of Jesus. Of the other three women in the genealogy, the husband is the father of the next descendant but not with Joseph. It's sad and mysterious but Joseph is never mentioned again after Matthew 2.

With Matthew, it's about telling his readers that prophecy is complete. All through this book he reminds us that these prophecies are finished. The Old testament is many things to many people. To the Jewish nation, it's about restoration. They believed with all their soul that God had to restore them to the land. Not just any land but the promised land. I will go further and say that this promised land was connected to heaven. It was connected to Eden. Matthew mentions Messiah 16 times but does it 5 times in the first two chapters. This Messiah was to bring Israel home.

Jesus came as a baby. In this rendition of the birth we have instructions for the father. In Luke, we have instructions for the Mother. Joseph is told to name this child Jesus. There is no prophecy prediction of that name. Instead we have the name Emanuel. Matthew quotes that prophecy from Isaiah 7:14. Why name him Jesus and not Emanuel? It's because Emanuel means "God is with us." It is a term like Messiah. Jesus means deliverer. God is delivering the messiah.

It's interesting because this prophecy comes down to interpretation. Many Old Testament verses point to the line of Abraham, Jacob, and David. Throughout history, God and the prophets have said a king in this line will restore the land and bring peace. Israel believed it would be a mighty ruler (Daniel 2:44). Someone who would crush their enemies. The problem begins with Jesus as a baby. He fits the birth prophecies (Isaiah 11:1). The Messiah was seen as a restorer. He was not assumed to be a baby. Yet, more than that, he was seen as a man. The baby growing into a man was assumed but the baby being God was not.

Matthew is making his claim that the man baby is in the line of the promised Messiah. The crowds that followed Jesus years later believed in that man, that messiah. Matthew went further to claim this man baby was God. There were other people in this story that believed in prophecy. It's true that these people were not Jews (ironically). Magi (men of wisdom) traveled from the far east. Did they know the prophecy? Did they just follow the star they saw? The answer is they inquired of the child. They knew the prophecy or heard of it. They were looking for a baby (not a man). This also freaked Herod out. So, although he was not Jewish, he took serious any chance of a rebellion.

Again, this comes back to Prophecy. This comes back to who the Jewish people believed in. In some instances, in Jesus life, there is the mention of people asking if Jesus is greater than the pivotal men in Jewish history. Matthew mentions those men several times throughout his book. Not only is Matthew connecting Jesus to Jacob, Abraham, and the Messiah. He is calling Jesus the new Moses.

Matthew tells the story of Herod wanting to kill the baby boys and Jesus flight to Egypt as a baby. These things are similar to the Moses story. Matthew completes the connection by adding throughout this book that Moses was a man but Jesus is the Messiah. The Jewish readers considered Moses, Abraham, and Jacob to be important. Matthew is trying to argue that Jesus is above them all.

Matthew 2:16 **“When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.”**

Jerimiah 31:15 **“A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.”**

*Read the verses below and again read Matthew 1-2. For extra reading check out Jerimiah 31. It's very interesting.*

1. To begin to study Jesus is to make the connection to the Old Testament. Matthew points out that Jesus said in Matthew 5:17 *he came to fulfill the law and the prophets rather than abolish them*. Jesus is not so much adding to but confirming the old book of the Bible. Jesus is also the real interpretation of the Messiah. Jesus is the promise in the Abrahamic line; the Jacob line; and the Davidic line. To just read this Gospel for fun or for confirmation that Jesus is a good teacher misses the point of Matthew. This writer wants us to know who we are reading about from God's plan to restore us. In Jesus, the Christ Messiah is revealed.

Matthew 1:1 **“An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”**

Micah 5:2 **“But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.**

2. It's interesting that the Birth of Jesus is attached to chapter one. The Bible was not written by chapters but the men who divided it believed the birth account belongs in chapter one. Why? I think it's because it caps off the genealogy. Matthew meant to show that God had a plan from beginning to end. Chapter two tells the story of how Jesus continues to fulfil prophesy. Somehow the Messiah had to be in Bethlehem, Nazareth, and in Egypt. That would be some trick. Matthew records these events to show how God pulled it off.

I suppose it would be easy to take old scripture and apply it to a made-up Jesus. Is that possible? Sure, it's possible, using the scripture of the Messiah and his lineage of Abraham, Jacob, David, and even Rahab the Prostitute. Would you use a prostitute connected to a historical figure? Would a Jewish writer place a king's lineage with non-Jews? Why did Matthew want to make the connections to obscure verses so prominent? Why do numerous authors of different time periods point to the same Messiah and the same scripture? They believed it.

Matthew 1:18 **“Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah 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.”**

Isaiah 9:6 **“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”**

3. There are several problems in this Birth story. The messiah was supposed to be a man. A man who would rule as king. There is no mention of God as a baby in prophesy. That is the twist that nobody saw coming. Several years after Jesus death, some men tried to discount that Jesus was God. Several religions today depict Jesus as a teacher or prophet. There is also the account of the Wise men. They came from the east following a western star. If it was an Eastern one, then they would have been going the wrong way. These men were following an eastern Star to the west. The wise men were most likely more than three. They tended to travel in caravans of a dozen or more. Then there is Herod. How can Herod die if he is talked about in Jesus ministry as being alive? It's the line and house of Herod. They were the Herodian's. Not, one man but a line of men.

It's interesting that certain events in the old scripture are repeated in some fashion in the New Testament. Jewish writers paint their heroes in hero's clothes. What I mean is that Jesus is painted as a better version of Moses. The readers picked up on the references to Moses life. They may have seen it as important because it related to Moses. Jesus was hiding as a baby. Baby Moses was hiding in the reeds. Jesus spent forty days in the desert while Moses was 40 years. Pharaoh killed all the boys 2 years and younger. So, did Herod. I am not saying the stories are fabricated. Yet, it would be foolish not to notice the similarities. Matthew clearly wrote it this way for a reason.

Matthew 2:19-20 **“When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, “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.”**

Matthew 14:1 **“At that time Herod the ruler heard reports about Jesus.”**

4. At the end of the chapters (Matthew 1 and 2) it points to something. We always say that it points to someone. I read a book where the author reminds us that Jesus always spoke of the Kingdom and of the Christ. Jesus refers to himself several times as the Son of Man. That Son of Man is a prophesy in the Old Testament that points to Messiah. Jesus came to fulfill. Jesus came to point the way. Jesus came to leave a legacy. Jesus never came as this baby to rule at this time. It's never been about the man or baby Jesus. It's about the message that God is with us.

In my way of thinking we should never call Jesus “Jesus Christ.” Jesus is the Christ. He is the one promised to come. I believe he taught his disciples that fact. Many religious rulers asked Jesus if he was the one. What one? The messiah or Christ. Matthew uses prophesy to show the way from Prophet to Jesus from lineage to Jesus. The line is interesting. Matthews is Mary while Luke's is Joseph. Yet, it's here we see “Born of Mary.” In Luke it's told Jesus has no birth Father. This is done to make way for Jesus to be fathered by the Spirit of God. That would make Jesus both human and divine.

Matthew 2:23 **“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.”**

Matthew 16:15-16 **““But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”**

### **What does it mean?**

It means that God's old testament words say that God would provide a savior. In fact, it says that the savior would be from God. Nobody thought that God himself would come. God's do not come down and dwell with the creation. We are the pinions of this planets. Insignificant to a powerful god. Matthew is stating that God did fulfill his promises. Matthew is also telling us how God kept his promise. The fact that Jesus is the God man was stunning. Many don't believe in Jesus or that he was God. The book of Matthew reports the same thing. The Jewish leaders did not believe God would come down either.

The people in Jesus day were under oppression. Maybe oppression is a wrong word. Maybe it's occupation. Either way, the Jewish people since 587 BC, have only known foreign rulers. To make matters worse, these Jewish people were being oppressed by their own religious rulers. Times were not great for the common person. Today, we might say we are free. Are we free from government? Are we free from social media or the politically correct? Are we free to do as we please and say what we want? In many ways we know oppression. So, what does it mean?

It means we need a savior. The same savior that the book of Matthew depicts. The Messiah. The problem is our hearts. We want a savior that will give us all we desire and want. We want a savior that will let us rule. The person depicted in Matthew is a savior but not like what most of them wanted. They wanted judgment and kingdom reign. Jesus begins his kingdom rule differently. He will deliver us from hatred. He will rescue us from being selfish. He will lend a hand to the poor and the evil. Matthew is pointing out that God had a plan to rescue us from outside Eden. To bring us to a better place. "Us all" is the tricky part. How it will happen is the tricky part. It's just did not happen the way we planned it out. It came God's way with *God is with us*.