

**Title:** Who is Jesus? Where is he from? What does it mean? Why does it matter?

**Text:** Matthew 1:1-17

**Date:** December 16, 2018 at FBCW

**INTRO.** Due to the traditional way that most of us celebrate Christmas, this can be hard to imagine. But think of a person suddenly appearing and claiming to be A) President or B) King or C) Messiah.

How awkward! We'd naturally have some very serious questions about his claim! What is his proof? What is his background? What are his credentials? Who supports him?

Matthew appears to anticipate these questions, so he begins the background of his Gospel very appropriately. Matthew seems to be saying:

*“Jesus is the Messiah who is offering a new beginning for all who believe in him.”*

**Background.** **Who wrote this Gospel?** Matthew, also known as Levi. He was a tax collector. He was one of Jesus' Twelve Disciples.

- As a tax collector in Galilee, Mathew was likely in the habit of keeping accounts – keeping good notes. It is quite possible that he jotted down the sayings/teachings of Jesus as he heard them, because it was his occupation to keep active/running notes of things, events, and records as they transpired.

Matthew tells the backstory of his own conversion and call in Matthew 9:1-13.

- Jesus was ministering in Capernaum.
- Jesus had just told a paralytic to rise and walk.
- The crowds were stunned and angry.
  - *“Who does this man think he is?”* they asked.
- Jesus, *“Which is easier → 1) rise and walk or 2) your sins are forgiven?”*
  - *So that you know I have power to do both, I said rise and walk!*
- The crowds were awestruck and gave glory to God.

Then Matthew reports as Jesus was traveling, he saw him (Matthew) sitting at the tax office.

- *“Follow me!”* Jesus proclaimed. And Matthew followed him.
- They go share a meal with a large group of friends.
  - Many tax collectors and sinners come up and join them for the meal.
- The Pharisees were angry!
  - Why does your Rabbi eat with tax collectors and sinners?

Jesus' response was unforgettable for Matthew and for the whole world (Matt 9:12-13):

- *You know who needs a doctor? People who are sick.*
- *Go and learn what this means: I desire mercy and not sacrifice.*
- *I didn't come for those who think they are righteous ...but I came for those who are willing to admit they are sinners!*

**Q:** why would Matthew keep good notes, remember the sermons, and tell the story?

**A:** Because this is what Matthew is telling us → For the first time in my life, I have met someone who knows all my sins, and loves me anyway.

Here is Jesus Christ...a man who knows my name, and knows my sins...yet dares to love and invite me to stay with him anyway!

**FACT:** Jesus Christ truly loves me!

**FACT:** What makes this so remarkable is that – he knows my sins – and still loves me!

Most of our friends:

- I like you for what you have.
- I like you for what we have in common.
- I like you for what you can do for me in return.
- I like you until you offend me or can't do anything for me.
- I like you because being with you either 1) elevates my status or 2) ensures I am not the worst one here or 3) at least I won't be alone.

Jesus, friend of sinners:

- I know all about you.
- I know your private, deepest sins.
- I know you can't do anything for me in return.
- I know you'll be tempted to abandon me and not be with me anymore.
- The truth is hanging out with you requires I completely lower my status, but I don't mind!
- Still I choose to love you, pursue you, and stay with you forever!

**What does Matthew contain in this Gospel?**

He calls it an account of the genealogy of Jesus Christ (1:1). Genealogies were important in the ancient world, especially for the Jews. It served as the record of a family's ancestors/descendants.

- Ancestry lists provided a practical and legal purpose: heritage, inheritance, legitimacy, rights, property, and so on.

Luke uses a genealogy in his Gospel. But his is different: he starts with Mary and goes to Adam.

Matthew begins with Christ, and he works back from Joseph to Abraham.

- Phrase – *account of genealogy of Jesus* – is unusual.
- OT genealogies are consistently named after the earliest ancestor because the Jews considered him/her to be the most honored/significant one: everyone else derived from that person.
- But Matthew names the genealogy after Jesus, the final descendant in the lineage. Matthew is likely saying → *Jesus is more important than anyone who preceded him!*
  - *Jesus is the most important member of the family!*

## His name is Jesus Christ.

**Jesus (1:1).** This was his historical, everyday name. In Hebrew it is Yeshua = *Yahweh saves*.

- In both the OT/NT the name Yeshua (Jesus) carries with it profound notions of salvation.
- “Jesus” is the name that describes his mission: God’s plan is to save sinners!
  - Name speaks of love, pursuit, value.

**Christ (1:1).** This is the title derived from the Hebrew word, “anointed one.” It carries the idea of oil running over a king’s head – signifying authority, leadership, and honor.

- Christ = Messiah → bringing hope to the nation of Israel and the whole world.

**Notice he is also called the Son of David, the Son of Abraham (1:1).** This is initially perplexing because chronologically Abraham appears long before David in the Bible.

There’s a likely clue in the promises made to both David and Abraham.

- David, 2 Sam. 7. → A king will perpetuate David’s throne and reign forever.
- Abraham, Gen 12. → One will rise from Abraham’s seed that blesses whole earth.

Lesson: This isn’t just a man who’s going to rise and bless people...Christ is a KING who has risen in time and risen from the grave to bless people who believe!

David = the revered, conquering king of Israel’s history.

Abraham = father of the nation, a light to the whole world.

Jesus is the new, better David = Christ is a King; nothing will stop his reign!

Jesus is the new, better Abraham = Christ is the Son of God come to bless/save, there’s no one he cannot reach!

**This is the overlaying theme of Matt 1:1** → Jesus’ birth brought fulfillment of God’s covenant in particular to the people of Israel, but it also brought fulfillment of God’s promise to bring universal hope to all nations.

- Beautifully seen in Matt 1:1 AND Matt 28:19
- Is Christ the fulfillment of hope for Israel as a nation? YES.
- Is Christ the fulfillment of hope for the entire world? YES.
- Is Christ the key ingredient for personal fulfillment that our hearts long for? YES!

Christ was born in Israel long ago...

Christ is the Savior of the whole world today...

Christ is the only name given among men whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

**Big Idea.** Who is Jesus? Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Son of Man who was born the perfect King. And King Jesus willingly laid down his life to save sinners like you and me, that through Him we might live with God forever.

- Matthew’s point → no matter who you are, this story is wonderful, wonderful news!

God rest ye merry gentlemen  
 Let nothing you dismay  
 Remember Christ our Savior  
 Was born on Christmas Day  
 To save us all from Satan's pow'r  
 When we were gone astray  
 Oh tidings of comfort and joy  
 Comfort and joy  
 Oh tidings of comfort and joy

Fear not then, said the Angel  
 Let nothing you affright  
 This day is born a Savior  
 Of a pure Virgin bright  
 To free all those who trust in Him  
 From Satan's pow'r and might  
 Oh tidings of comfort and joy  
 Comfort and joy  
 Oh tidings of comfort and joy

**First**, notice the ebb and flow of good and bad, of righteousness verses evil, in the listing of the names in 1:2-16.

- It's like the text alternates between godly kings and wicked kings.
- Bad kings (Rehoboam/Abijah) had offspring that turned out good.
- Good kings (Asa/Jehoshaphat) had offspring that turned out bad.
- There's no pattern of righteousness in the lineage of Jesus. They're all there!  
 (Adulterers, prostitutes, Gentiles...soldiers, fighters, etc.)

The point is that the genuineness and unlikeliness of this genealogy must have stunned Matthew's readers!

- Jesus' ancestors were humans that contained all the faults and potentials of everyday people...yet God worked through them all to bring about His salvation.

**Note**, When we see the bad all around us, our tendency is to think it'll never get better and we get discouraged (this is what the devil wants you to think).

"My life, my world" = will never get better!

- But note, after wicked Ahaz, godly King Hezekiah arose.
- After wicked Amon, godly King Josiah arose.

**\*\*Jesus is assurance that things will get better. Jesus is the proof! Through him our life is new and better.\*\***

When we see all the good around us, we tend to think folks have it all together, and we get discouraged.

- The biggest lie in church: look at them, they have it all together.
- David had an affair and committed murder.
- Jotham completely abandon worship and made idols.
- Social media makes us think “look...they’re perfect...what’s wrong with me?” (lie)

**\*\*No one has it all together!\*\***

**Lesson:** the devil wants us to think our bad is too bad, and that our good is good enough. Neither one of these is true!

- Christ can forgive the worst of you...and the best of you doesn’t exist without Him.

**Second**, notice the list directly records the names of five women (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Mary).

- **Tamar:** Canaanite woman who posed as a prostitute to seduce her father-in-law Judah, and it worked (Gen 38).
- **Rahab:** Gentile and former prostitute (Josh 2) before she met God.
- **Ruth:** Moabite, offspring prohibited to enter the assembly of the Lord for 10 generations (Ruth 1:3) – they were the most hated people in the OT.
- **Bathsheba:** quintessential “other woman” – the mistress who committed adultery with David.

Incest, prostitution, hatred, prejudices! Wow!

Each woman had an unusual marriage, a perceived sex scandal, and suspicion of illegitimate children.

**\*\*God may have been reminding Israel of her history right out of the gate so as many would not rush to judgment concerning the young and innocent virgin girl, Mary.\*\***

Women had experienced increasing marginalization and even abuse within Jewish society. From the very beginning – Jesus came to restore the personal equality and dignity of women, men, and every human being.

What I love about these women → they are an object lesson of the mysterious workings of God’s grace.

- Hey girl, is your life, marriage, parenting, or body and soul messed up?
- Come to Jesus!
- He’s famous for loving people and making them new!

Hey women, take a deep breath – you don’t have to provide Christmas for anyone!  
Jesus has already provided Christmas (everlasting love and presence) for you!

**Third**, I love the awesome language lesson of the text as well.

- 40 occurrences in the text of the same verb in the active voice (begot, fathered, etc.).
- But in 1:16, the verb *gennaō* changes to the passive voice, where the subject (Mary) receives the action.
  - Point: scholars call this the “divine passive” – where God is the assumed agent of the action.
- Joseph is the physical daddy.
- But God is the one who “fathers/places” the child in the womb of Mary (1:16, 18).

**Who is Jesus?** (1:1) He is the Son of David. He is the Son of Abraham. He is the Christ. He is the perfect, eternal King-Messiah: born to save his people from their sins.

**Where is Jesus from?** He is from the Father in heaven. He was born of the virgin Mary. He is fully God, yet fully human. He is divinity and humanity in one perfect being.

- God = sufficient to save me from the power/penalty of my sins.
- Man = sufficient to be my substitute, to become my personal sin on the cross.

### **What does it mean? Why does it matter?**

It means → I am a sinner...I am unable to save myself...

It means → God loves me...God sent Jesus to do for me what I couldn't do for myself!

It means → God would rather send His Son to die than consider eternity without us!

The true, great gift of Christmas → is that God has given us His Son!

**Note**, Matt 1 contains a large list of names (a genealogical record) – every name is there for a reason – to show us the line where Jesus is from.

**Note**, there is another list of names mentioned in the Bible → it's called the Lamb's Book of Life.

- The names mentioned on this list are the most important names for all time.
- They are the names of those who have turned to Jesus and been saved.

Luke 10:20, *Don't rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.*

Rev 20:15, *Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.*

**CONCL.** You are sinful. But you are loved. If you will turn to Christ today, and call on his name, you will be saved!