

Together with Jesus

Week 1 – Matthew 1 and 2

Matthew 1:1-17

Genealogy

Matthew begins his Gospel account with a listing of Jesus' ancestry. While this may seem odd to us, it was an essential part of providing evidence for the Jesus having been a real person. It also shows that Jesus is "of the line of David," an important concept that shows up throughout Matthew's gospel account.

- **Reading through the list, what names do you recognize that Matthew brings up?**

Matthew 1:18-25

Joseph's View of Jesus' birth

Matthew largely gives us Joseph's perspective of Jesus' birth, rather than Mary's perspective that is given to us in Luke. This story also features Matthew alluding to Old Testament prophecies, another hallmark of Matthew's gospel.

- **What emotions can you imagine Joseph having during these moments?**

Matthew 2:1-12

The Magi

The Magi or "wise men," were probably Syrian astrologers who came to visit after having seen a star behaving differently. The arrival of the Magi (who were non-Jew Gentiles) also signals in the book that Jesus is not going to be just for Jewish people.

- **Notice the text never actually says that there are three Magi. Can you figure out why three are traditionally pictured as being there.**

Matthew 2:13-15

Holy family flees

Matthew shows that Jesus begins to take on the character of the whole people of Israel, starting off in Egypt as the people of Israel did.

- **What Old Testament prophet does Matthew quote here?**

Matthew 2:16-18

Herod slaughters children

When Herod realizes that the Magi did not return to reveal the location of the "new king," he attempts to kill this king by killing all the male children of Bethlehem.

- **How do Herod's actions show what Christ has come to stand against?**

Matthew 2:19-23

Jesus Returns to Nazareth

An angel reveals that it is safe to return to Israel after Herod's death. Herod's land has been split up into four "tetrarchies" or territories. Herod's son keeps control of Bethlehem, but not of Nazareth where the family moves to.

- Jesus was probably a young child at this point, maybe around 4 years old. What questions do you think He was asking?

Law and Gospel

As a community, we believe that the basic “heartbeat” of Scripture is “Law and Gospel”. The Law shows us the perfection that God intends for us, but that we can’t live up to on our own. The Gospel shows us that God has included us because of Jesus Christ.

- Where do you see Law in these two chapters?
- Where do you see Gospel?

Red Letter Living

This week, take Jesus’ words from John 8:31 “Abide in my word,” to heart. Take 10 minutes to read this week’s 2 chapters from the Gospels or any Scripture you feel led to read.