

**Expository Thoughts
on the Gospels
Matthew**

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Matthew 1:1–17

¹The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

²Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. ³Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. ⁴Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. ⁵Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, ⁶and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah. ⁷Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. ⁸Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. ⁹Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. ¹⁰Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. ¹¹Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon.

¹²And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. ¹³Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. ¹⁴Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. ¹⁵Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. ¹⁶And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

¹⁷So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations.

These verses begin the New Testament. Let us always read them with serious and solemn feelings. The book before us contains not the word of men, but of God. Every verse in it was written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Let us thank God daily for giving us the Scriptures. The poorest person who understands their Bible knows more about religion than the wisest philosophers of Greece and Rome.

Let us remember our deep responsibility. We shall all be judged at the last day according to our light. To whoever much is given, of them much will be required.

Let us read our Bibles reverently and diligently, with an honest determination to believe and practise all we find in them. It is no light matter how we use this book. Eternal life or death depends on the spirit in which it is used. Above all let us humbly pray for the teaching of the Holy Spirit. He alone can apply truth to our hearts and make us profit by what we read.

The New Testament begins with the life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. No part of the Bible is so important as this, and no part is so full and complete. Four distinct Gospels tell us the story of Christ's doing and dying. Four times over we read the precious account of His works and words. How thankful we ought to be for this! To know Christ is life eternal. To believe in Christ is to have peace with God. To follow Christ is to be a true Christian. To be with Christ will be heaven itself. We can never hear too much about Jesus Christ.

The Gospel of Matthew begins with a long list of names. Sixteen verses are taken up with tracing a pedigree from Abraham to David, and from David to the family in which Jesus was born. Let no one think that these verses are useless. Nothing is useless in creation. The least mosses, and the smallest insects, serve some good end. Nothing is useless in the Bible. Every word of it is inspired. The chapters and verses which seem at first sight unprofitable are all given for some good purpose. Look

again at these sixteen verses and you will see in them useful and instructive lessons.

Learn from this list of names, that God always keeps His word. He had promised that in Abraham's seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. He had promised to raise up a Saviour of the family of David (Genesis 12:3; Isaiah 11:1). These sixteen verses prove that Jesus was the son of David and the son of Abraham, and that God's promise was fulfilled. Thoughtless and ungodly people should remember this lesson and be afraid. Whatever they may think, God will keep His word. If they do not repent, they will surely perish. True Christians should remember this lesson and take comfort. Their Father in heaven will be true to all His promises. He has said, that He will save all believers in Christ. If He has said it, He will certainly do it—He is not a man that He should lie. "He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself" (2 Timothy 2:13).

Learn next from this list of names the sinfulness and corruption of human nature. Observe how many godly parents in this catalogue had wicked and ungodly sons. The names of Rehoboam, Joram, Amon, and Jehoniah should teach us humbling lessons. They had all godly fathers, but they were all wicked men. Grace does not run in families. It needs something more than good examples and good advice to make us children of God. Those who are born again are not born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:13). Praying parents should pray night and day that their children may be born of the Spirit.

Learn lastly from this list of names, how great is the mercy and compassion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Think how defiled and unclean our nature is; and then think what a condescension it was for Him to be born of a woman and made in the likeness of men. Some of the names we read in this list remind us of shameful and sad histories. Some of the names are those of persons never mentioned elsewhere in the Bible. But at the end of all comes the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Though He is the eternal God, He

humbled Himself to become man, in order to provide salvation for sinners: “Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor.”

We should always read this list with thankful feelings. We see here that no one who partakes of human nature can be beyond the reach of Christ’s sympathy and compassion. Our sins may have been as great as those of any whom Matthew names. But they cannot shut us out of heaven, if we repent and believe the gospel. If Jesus was not ashamed to be born of a woman, whose pedigree contained such names as those we have read today, we need not think that He will be ashamed to call us his brothers and sisters, and to give us eternal life.



Matthew 1:18–25

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. ²⁰ But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.”

²² So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ²³ “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”

²⁴ Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, ²⁵ and did

not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

These are very mysterious things, with depths which we cannot measure. They are truths which we have not mind enough to fully understand. We will not try to explain things which are above our limited reason. Let us be content to believe with reverence and not speculate about matters which we cannot understand. Enough for us to know that with Him who made the world nothing is impossible. Let us rest in the words of the Apostles' Creed: "Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary."

Let us observe the conduct of Joseph described in these verses. It is a beautiful example of godly wisdom and tender consideration for others. He saw the appearance of evil in Mary, who was his engaged wife, but he did nothing rashly. He waited patiently to have his duty made clear. In all probability he laid the matter before God in prayer: "Whoever believes will not act hastily" (Isaiah 28:16).

The patience of Joseph was graciously rewarded. He received a direct message from God about his anxiety and was at once relieved from all his fears. How good it is to wait upon God! Whoever has cast their cares upon God in believing prayer, and found Him fail? "In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:6).

Let us observe the two names given to our Lord in these verses. One is Jesus, the other Immanuel. One describes His office or role; the other His nature. Both are deeply interesting.

The name Jesus means "Saviour." It is the same name as Joshua in the Old Testament. It is given to our Lord because He will save His people from their sins. This is His special office: He saves them from the guilt of sin by washing them in His own atoning blood. He saves them from the dominion of sin by putting in their hearts the sanctifying Spirit. He saves them from the presence of sin when He takes them out of this world to rest with Him. He will save

them from all the consequences of sin when He will give them a glorious body at the last day. Blessed and holy are Christ's people! From sorrow, cross and conflict they are not saved. But they are saved from sin for evermore. They are cleansed from guilt by Christ's blood. They are made fit for heaven by Christ's Spirit. This is salvation. He who clings to sin is not yet saved.

Jesus is a very encouraging name to heavy-laden sinners. He who is King of kings and Lord of lords might lawfully have taken some more high-sounding title. But He does not do so. The rulers of this world have often called themselves Great, Conquerors, Bold, Magnificent, and the like. The Son of God is content to call Himself Saviour. Souls who desire salvation may draw near to the Father with boldness, and have access with confidence through Christ. It is His office and His delight to show mercy. "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17).

Jesus is a name which is especially sweet and precious to believers. It has often done them good, when the favour of kings and princes would have been of no help. It has given them what money cannot buy—inward peace. It has eased their wearied consciences and given rest to their heavy hearts. The Song of Solomon speaks the experience of many when it says, "Your name is ointment poured forth" (Song of Solomon 1:3). Happy is that person who does not trust merely in vague ideas of God's mercy and goodness, but in Jesus.

The other name in these verses is scarcely less interesting than that just referred to. It is the name which is given to our Lord from his nature, as "God manifest in the flesh." He is called Immanuel, "God with us."

Let us take care that we have clear views of our Lord Jesus Christ's nature and person. It is a point of the deepest importance. We should settle it firmly in our minds that our Saviour is perfect man as well as perfect God, and perfect God as well as perfect man. If we once lose sight of this great foundation truth we may