

Matthew

1. Jesus - Immanuel, God with Us

6/29/2003

A. INTRODUCTION - WHY ANOTHER GOSPEL?

Between the end of Malachi and the beginning of Matthew, there is 400 years of silence from God to the people of Israel. Because they were not listening to His voice through His prophets. I hope that we don't fall into the same category as they were.

Before studying the book of Matthew, let's compare it to the other Gospels to see what makes it unique.

The Gospel of Matthew begins the biographical section of the New Testament, which is made up of the four Gospels-Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The Gospels (from the Greek word meaning "Good News") are biographical, but not in the sense that they are complete accounts of Jesus' life. Rather, the Gospel writers selectivity portions of Jesus' life according to their unique perspectives, which together provide a more deeply comprehensive portrait of Jesus.

But why didn't God just give us one complete picture of Jesus instead of four interdependent views? Because the different Gospels were originally written to different audiences with different purposes.

Matthew was written mainly for Jews to tell them about Jesus as the Israel's long awaited Messianic King. It is the second Gospel written.

Mark was written first before any other Gospel. It is for the Roman church people to strengthen them by focusing on suffering yet triumphant Savior and the Servant King. Luke was written by a gentile doctor Luke for other gentiles to show them a warm, human portrait of the Savior Jesus, the Son of Man.

John was written as the last Gospel to all people to encourage them to believe that Jesus is the Son of God and God Himself.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are commonly referred to as the "synoptic" Gospels (from the Greek *synoptikos*, meaning "seeing together"), because they are similar to one another in their viewpoint, content, narrative flow, and style. John's Gospel is much different. His is the most theological of the four Gospels, beginning with Jesus' pre-existence in heaven rather than His birth in the manger. In this way and many others, John emphasizes Jesus' deity. John also contains the greatest amount of unique material, while the other Gospel have more material in common.

The four Gospels come first in the New Testament canon, not because they were the first books written (James was probably the first New Testament letter), but because Christ is our foundation. All the rest - Acts, the epistles, Revelation-spring from Him. Together, the Gospel comprise about 46 percent of the New Testament.

Matthew, also known as Levi, was a Jew who collected taxes for Roman government. He was despised by his kinspeople. But after becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ, Matthew wanted to give to the Jews instead of take from them. He longed for them to know that Jesus Christ was their Messiah, the anointed King promised in their Scriptures.

He wrote his book, then, with a distinctively Jewish flavor. Matthew showed, more than any other Gospel writer, how Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies and was precisely linked to their whole history. The genealogy in chapter 1, for example, ties Christ all the way back to Abraham and confirms his descendancy from King David. Jesus is continually referred to as the Son of David. The Law is prevalent-Jesus clashes with the Pharisees over its interpretation and application throughout the Gospel.

Matthew makes no effort to explain Jewish customs, assuming that his readers already understand them, since he assumes they are Jews (unlike Mark, who takes time to explain them).

B. THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST

Matthew 1:1-2 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers.

The reason for Matthew starting with the genealogy is that genealogies were very important to the first-century Jews. Genealogy proves that person was indeed an Israelite.

Christ's genealogy is crucial to historic Christianity. Matthew traced the lineage of Christ Jesus back to Abraham to show that He was a Jew, but also back through David to inform the readers that Jesus is qualified to rule on the throne of David and fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies.

We find another Jesus' genealogy the third chapter in the Book of Luke. However, that genealogy and the genealogy in Matthew are not identical, because the one in Luke is from Mary's side. They are different up to David the king. But it goes up to Adam instead of stopping at Abraham.

Matthew 1:3-6 Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah.

In v3-6, the mention of women in a Jewish genealogy is rather unusual. But in addition to Mary, four women are listed in this genealogy. However, as you noticed that the three women out of the four are not exactly virtuous women. By including these women, Matthew is showing us four attributes of God.

1) Tamar – She was a daughter-in-law of Judah, but ended up having his child (Gen 38).

Judah was trying to cut off the lineage of his family by not giving his son to Tamar, but God restored the lineage through Tamar. - **GOD'S RESTORATION FOR MANKIND**

2) Rahab – the Canaanite harlot of Jericho (Joshua 2).

By faith, Rahab believed the God of Israel over her own pagan gods by hiding the Israel spies. God made the Israelites to keep their promise with her and saved them from the onslaught when they attacked Jericho. In spite of her occupation, God shows us His incredible promise to her. - **GOD'S PROMISE FOR MANKIND**

3) Ruth – She was not an Israelite, but a Moabite (Ruth 1:4).

God's gracious hands extended to the tribe God forbid. Through the marriage between Boaz and Ruth, the lineage of Abraham continues. The Book of Ruth portrays our Savior Jesus as the Kins man Redeemer. - **GOD'S REDEMPTION FOR MANKIND**

4) Bathsheba – the wife of Uriah, a woman who committed an adultery with king David (2 Sam 11:1-12:23)

Even though David and Bathsheba brought a tremendous sin unto themselves and the nation of Israel through their adultery and murder of her husband Uriah, God forgave them because David came to God with a broken heart and contrite spirit. - **GOD'S FORGIVENESS FOR MANKIND**

From the beginning of his Gospel, Matthew shows how God's grace gives the darkest of sins and reaches beyond the nation of Israel to the world.

Romans 5:20 Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,

Matthew 1:7-17 Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon. And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ. So 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.

Through this genealogy, Matthew is trying to show us the connection to the royalty between the ancestors of Joseph and Jesus. Moreover, he was careful to point out that Joseph was not the father of Jesus.

No Jew today has his legal genealogy. All the records were destroyed in A.D. 70 when the temple was ruined. Jesus Christ is the only Jew alive today who can prove His rights to the throne of David.

Christ means Messiah in Greek and Anointed One in Hebrew.

C. THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

Matthew 1:18 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.

Universally, the basic element of marriage is a contract (Mal 2:14). In Jewish culture, this covenant was made about a year before the consummation of the marriage. It was during the one-year period of betrothal that Mary was found to be pregnant.

Mal 2:14 Yet you say, "For what reason?" Because the Lord has been witness Between you and the wife of your youth, With whom you have dealt treacherously; Yet she is your companion And your wife by covenant.

Matthew 1:19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.

This refers to breaking an engagement by divorce. Remember that betrothal (engagement) was binding in Jewish culture, and one needed a divorce to break an engagement. Joseph her husband shows that even though they were not formally married, Joseph was still considered Mary's husband by engagement.

According to Deut. 22:23-24, Mary could have been stoned. It took great faith for Joseph to believe God's message in the dream. His love for God and for Mary made him willing to "bear reproach" for Christ.

Matthew 1:20 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.

We find that Matthew establishes Jesus as a legal son of Joseph whose lineage goes to the king David for Jesus' royal right and the great Jewish ancestor Abraham for the Jewish heritage in v1-17. But from v18-25, he painstakingly explains that Joseph is not the physical father of Jesus to establish Jesus' qualifications to be the Savior of all people: Jesus was God's Son and not merely Joseph's. Matthew elaborated on Jesus' kingship while Luke detailed His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 1:21-23 And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

These three verses are the summary of the entire New Testaments.

The name Jesus ("the salvation of Yahweh") was fairly common in that day.

Immanuel - This title of Jesus refers to both His deity (God with us) and His identification and nearness to man (God with us).

Matthew 1:24-25 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.

The words 'did not know her till' imply that Joseph and Mary had normal marital sexual relations after Jesus' birth. This denies the Roman Catholic dogma of the perpetual virginity of Mary. This is an unbiblical, doctrine, which did not appear earlier than the fifth century after Jesus. It should be placed with the dogmas of Mary's immaculate conception, assumption into heaven, and present role as a mediator and co-redeemer with Jesus for believers. Each one of these is man's invention, meant to exalt Mary in an unbiblical manner.

The simple obedience of Mary and Joseph in naming the baby Jesus is worthy of notice.

In the Bible, only four ways are noted to get a body:

- 1) without a man or a woman—God did to Adam, made from the dust of the earth
- 2) with a man, but no woman—God did to make Eve, made from Adam's side
- 3) with a man and a woman—as all humans are born

4) with a woman, but no man—as Jesus was born, having an earthly mother but no biological father. It was important that Jesus be born of a virgin that He might have a sinless human nature, conceived by the Holy Spirit (see Luke 1). Since He existed before the creation of man, how could He ever be born of a human father and mother? Every new baby is a being that has never existed before. The modernist who denies Christ's virgin birth denies His eternal Godhead and deity. Either He is God, or He is an imposter.

D. APPLICATIONS

1) No matter what other religion tries to say about Jesus, He is God, the second person in Trinity.

Jesus came to die for our sins, so that we may live eternally in heaven with Him. What a loving God we serve!

2) Mary was just an instrument who was used by God bring forth our Redeemer Jesus into this world.

She is not a savior as some religion wants to make her to be.

3) Because the Israel people were not willing to listen to God, He simply kept His silence to them for four hundred years. May we hear His voice and are willing to do what He tells us to do.

The Bible is His voice and His Word. When we read the Word of God, and when He speaks to us through it, we should not ignore it, but we should do what it says to us.

James 1:25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.