

IMMANUEL

MATTHEW 1



A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

T. M. MOORE
The Fellowship of Ailbe

Immanuel: Matthew 1
Copyright 2020 T. M. and Susie Moore
The Fellowship of Ailbe
www.ailbe.org

Except as indicated, Scripture taken from the New King James Version. © Copyright 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. All psalms for singing adapted from The Ailbe Psalter. All quotations from Church Fathers from Ancient Christian Commentary Series, General Editor Thomas C. Oden (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006).

Matthew 1: Introduction

Matthew tells the Good News of Jesus, Son of Abraham, Son of David, Immanuel, and Christ. Chapter 1 of this gospel swings wide the door to the New Testament, on hinges firmly fixed to a framework of the Old, and thus connects the two Testaments as one powerful narrative.

Matthew roots the story of Jesus in Old Testament revelation. In the process, he teaches us how to read the Old Testament, so that we see Jesus on its every page. The story of redemption breaks into time and history with the birth of Jesus through two faithful and obedient people. God Who is with us has finally come! And He'll never leave us again.

We are happy to provide *Scriptorium* studies in PDF format at no charge. We hope you will find them helpful and encouraging as you press on in your journey toward spiritual maturity with the Lord.

Please visit our website, www.ailbe.org, to discover the many other resources available to serve your needs. The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Visit our website also to subscribe to our thrice-weekly devotional newsletter, *Crosfigell*, or our daily *Voices Together* devotional and prayer guide.

If you find these studies, or any of our other resources, helpful, we hope you will consider making a contribution to help support our work. You can do so by using the donate button at the website or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 360 Zephyr Road, Williston, VT 05495.

We hope you find this study of Ecclesiastes a challenging and stretching experience of journeying more deeply into the Word of God. Thank you for joining us.

T. M. Moore, Principal
tmmoore@ailbe.org

1 Long Time Coming

Pray Psalm 22.23-25.

You who fear the LORD, praise Him!
All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him,
And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel!
For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;
Nor has He hidden His face from Him;
But when He cried to Him, He heard.
My praise *shall be* of You in the great assembly;
I will pay My vows before those who fear Him.

Sing joyously Psalm 22.23-25.

(Darwall: Rejoice, the Lord is King)

All you who fear the Lord, now praise His holy Name!
You children of His glorious Word, declare His fame!
We stand in awe of our eternal God, and on His mercy call.

For He has not despised the anguish of our King,
Nor from Him hid His eyes, Who knew such suffering.
Let praise arise from all who love and serve the Ruler of the skies!

Read Matthew 1; meditate on Matthew 1.1.

Prepare.

1. How many different ways is Jesus described in this verse?
2. What is a genealogy, and why do we need to have a genealogy of Jesus?

Meditate.

The Gospel of Matthew is aptly placed at the beginning of the New Testament. From the beginning, it reaches back into Old Testament revelation to reconnect with God's covenant and to bring forward those precious and very great promises, to demonstrate how they are all fulfilled in Jesus.

Verse 1 is an ascending genealogy in summary. It begins with Jesus and works back through David then Abraham – the one to whom God outlined the promises of His covenant, including the promise that all the families of the earth will be blessed (Gen. 12.1-3). The theme of this book is clearly and boldly stated: Jesus the Christ, the Anointed One of God. Matthew declares his proposition at the beginning, and he will support that claim with Old Testament revelation and the teaching and works of Jesus. The promised Messiah has been a long time coming, but the Good News from Matthew is that He has finally arrived.

The early chapters of Matthew's gospel are reminiscent of the early chapters of Genesis. Here is a genealogy – a *toledoth* – many of which appear in Genesis from chapter 5 on. A man and woman become the object of God's attention and favor, as in Genesis 1 and 2. God communicates with the man, to reveal His will, not unlike God did with Adam in Genesis 2. A promise of life (salvation) is given, as was true for the couple in the garden in Eden.

But from this point on, the similarities end. Adam disobeyed; Joseph obeyed. Eve lost a son; Mary

gained an eternal Son and Savior. Blessing was forfeit; now blessing will be secured. Sin entered the world; through Jesus Christ, sin will be destroyed. The garden was lost; a world of lost sinners, and the entire creation, are to be gained.

Jesus is immediately set forth as the Son of David – thus, heir to the Davidic promise of an eternal Kingdom – and the Son of Abraham – the One Who brings the promises to their full realization. If you were a Jew, living in the first century, and you heard someone read this one verse aloud, you would gasp, your heart rate would increase, you would turn your ears to hear, and as the rest of the “book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ was read”, your mind will fill either with hope or with hate. And as we shall see, there’s no middle ground when Jesus is in focus. People either find Him a source of great hope, or an object of great hatred.

Let’s pray that, as we work our way through Matthew’s gospel, our hope will be greatly enlarged, and we will be emboldened like Joseph and Mary to be vessels through whom the exceeding great and precious promises of God in Jesus Christ may come to realization in our time.

Reflect.

1. Why are David and Abraham so central to the story of the Old Testament?
2. What is the effect of directly connecting Jesus with David and Abraham?
3. What does “Christ” mean? Why do you suppose Matthew wanted that title in the very first verse of his gospel?

He is before the centuries and of one substance with the Father himself, from the standpoint of eternity. But by this genealogy he is also numbered among the families of humanity according to the flesh. For in truth, while remaining God, Christ became man without ceasing to be God, unaltered till the end of time. Severus (488-538), Cathedral Sermons, Homily 94

Thank You, Father, for sending Jesus Christ for my salvation. Help me to live for Him today as I...

Pray Psalm 22.27-31.

Immanuel came among us to reconcile the world to God; now He sends us to restore that reconciled world by the Good News of the Gospel. Pray that these verses will light your path and focus your activities for the day ahead.

Sing Psalm 22.28-31.

Psalm 22.28 *(Darwall: Rejoice, the Lord is King)*

All nations shall repent and hasten to the Lord;

All those to whom His truth is sent shall praise His Word.

The Lord is King! His sovereign rule on high now we His people sing!

Psalm 22.29-31 *(Dix: For the Beauty of the Earth)*

All the prosp’rous of the earth shall before His mercy fall;

Bending low before His worth, hear them humbly on Him call.

Even those low in the grave He will by His mercy save.

Let the generations all witness to His saving grace;

Let them to all nations call, “Bow before His holy face!”

Let the children of the earth hear of Jesus' saving worth!

2 Son of Abraham

Pray Psalm 105.1-7.

Oh, give thanks to the LORD!
Call upon His name;
Make known His deeds among the peoples!
Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him;
Talk of all His wondrous works!
Glory in His holy name;
Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD!
Seek the LORD and His strength;
Seek His face evermore!
Remember His marvelous works which He has done,
His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth,
O seed of Abraham His servant,
You children of Jacob, His chosen ones!
He *is* the LORD our God;
His judgments are in all the earth.

Sing joyously Psalm 105.1-7.

(*Warrington: Give to Our God Immortal Praise*)

Give thanks unto the Lord Most High; call on His Name, before Him cry!
Make known His deeds in every land; sing praise for all the works of His hand.

Glory in God, rejoice in heart, all you who seek His holy part.
Him and His strength and presence seek; His works proclaim, His judgments speak.

You holy children of Abraham, You chosen ones of Jacob, stand!
He is our Lord, of wondrous worth; His judgments are in all the earth.

Read Matthew 1.1-6

Prepare.

1. Three women are mentioned in this part of Jesus' genealogy. Can you find them?
2. This genealogy bridges from Abraham to David. What significant events in Israel's history are encapsulated in this list of names?

Meditate.

Matthew wanted to establish that Jesus is the heir to the promises God made to Abraham. But He is more than the lawful heir of those promises; He is their complete fulfillment. The names "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" appear frequently together in Scripture, as a kind of trinity establishing the certainty of God's promises (cf. Ex. 2.24; 3.6; etc.; Lev. 26.42; Num. 32.11; 2 Kgs. 13.23; and in Matthew's gospel, 8.11 and 22.32; plus dozens of other occurrences throughout the Bible). In a certain sense, we might say these three *incarnate* the promises of God, and thus they are a type of the Seed of the woman (Gen. 3.15) Who became incarnate in Jesus.

This genealogy contains the names of three women, all Gentiles: Tamar (v. 3), Rahab (v. 5), and Ruth (v. 5). By incorporating these women into the genealogy of Jesus – a departure from standard

genealogical practice, which typically traced lineages through men only – Matthew planted two seeds that would grow from Jesus’ ministry: the incorporation of Gentiles into the covenant as co-heirs of the promises of Abraham (cf. Rom. 4.16-18); and the establishing of women as equal heirs with men of that which Jesus accomplished (cf. Gal. 3.7-9, 26-29). Here, right at the beginning of his gospel, Matthew threw wide the door of God’s promises to welcome those who for centuries had been regarded as second-class citizens. Reading these verses would have popped the ideas of Jews and caused the hearts of women and Gentiles to leap for joy.

In these verses Matthew also signaled that his gospel would rely extensively on the Old Testament – although not without comment and clarification. Verses 3-6 are an exact quote of Ruth 4.18-22, with the exception that Matthew inserted the names of Rahab and Ruth, because he understood the implications of Immanuel’s coming, and he wanted to prepare his readers from the beginning for the broad scope of the Good News he would report. We recall that, at the end of Matthew’s gospel, Jesus commissioned women and men to make all the nations disciples (Matt. 28).

Here is the seed that sprouted to bloom in the Great Commission, and has been bearing fruit for 2,000 years.

Reflect.

1. What can we learn from these verses about the nature of God’s covenant?
2. How does Matthew teach us to read and understand the Old Testament?
3. Why is it important that we understand that Jesus is heir to the promises made to Abraham (Gen. 12.1-3)?

*Abraham was the father of the faithful, and when God wished him to be an example for the virtuous, he said to him, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.” So that all who should wish to be the sons of Abraham might know how to receive that living land of promise, it was written, “I believe that I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.” Anonymous (date unknown), *Incomplete Work on Matthew, Homily 1**

Thank You, Lord, that in Jesus Christ I am an heir to Your precious and very great promises. Help me to lay hold on those promises today as I...

Pray Psalm 105.8-11, 42-45.

Christ fulfills all the covenant promises God made to Abraham, and we are the offspring of Abraham, and heirs of the promises in Him. Give thanks and praise to God for Jesus, and seek His direction for laying hold on the promises today.

Sing Psalm 105.8-11, 26-45.

Psalm 105.8-11, 26-45 ([*Warrington: Give to Our God Immortal Praise*](#))

He will His covenant faithfully guard – His oath, the promise of His Word.
That which He to our fathers swore, He will perform forevermore!

He brought His people from Egypt alive, and made their joy and song revive.
He made the nations’ land their own, and all the wealth that they had known.

To them He granted the promised land, the portion of His gracious hand.
Though they were few, and wandered far, He kept them close within His heart.

So let us all in our Savior confide, and in His holy Law abide.
Let us observe His glorious Word, and praise our sovereign, faithful Lord!

3 Son of David

Pray Psalm 132.8-10.

Arise, O LORD, to Your resting place,
You and the ark of Your strength.
Let Your priests be clothed with righteousness,
And let Your saints shout for joy.
For Your servant David's sake,
Do not turn away the face of Your Anointed.

Sing with expectation and conviction Psalm 132.8-10.

(Finlandia: Be Still, My Soul)

Arise, O Lord, come to Your resting place;
Your holy presence meet with us in might.
Clothe us with righteousness in Jesus' grace,
and we will shout to Your divine delight!

For David's sake, turn not away Your face,

but look upon us in Your holy light.

Read Matthew 1.6-11.

Prepare.

1. Who are the people in this list?
2. What was Israel like at the time of the people at the beginning of this list? What was Israel like at the time of the people at the end of the list?

Meditate.

Matthew supplies us with the kings of Judah, from first to last. This part of Jesus' genealogy shows Him to be the Son of David and heir to the throne of Israel, as promised in 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 132. We note that this genealogy begins in a time of glory – the kingdom as it existed under David and Solomon. However, even at this high place, Matthew spun the genealogy to point at David's sin, and to suggest the trend that would devolve from him: David's sin with Bathsheba would be a fly in the ointment of God's promise.

It's mostly downhill from there, however, with intermittent periods of revival. This part of the genealogy, in knowing readers, would have created a tension of discouragement and anticipation, as readers looked back to David and longed for the fulfillment of God's promise to him.

We observe that many of the names of the kings of Judah contain morphemes of the divine name: -*jab* and *jebo-* in particular. Kings of Judah thus expressed their hopes for their first-born sons, that the Presence and blessing of God would be upon them, and that even their names would cause them to remember that they belonged to Him.

After Solomon, the kingdom of Israel broke into two kingdoms. The line of David descends through the kings of Judah. The first of these, Rehoboam, was a self-centered, spoiled, and bumbling failure. His son, Abijah ("my father is Jah"), trusted the Lord, but he reigned only three years. Asa, his son,

built on his father's foundation and brought many great reforms to the nation; but he faltered in faith at the end. Asa's son, Jehoshaphat ("Jehovah judges"), continued to reform the nation, sending priests to every city and village to teach the Law. Joram (Jehoram) was greedy, murderous, and wicked. Hezekiah ("strengthened by God") again sought the Lord and worked to bring reforms to the nation, as did Josiah ("salvation of Yah"), his great-grandson. But none of the reforms was greater than the previous ones, and with Jeconiah, the glory departed Israel, and the people were taken captive to Babylon.

Which might leave readers with the question: What about the King promised to David? The eternal King? Has the kingdom come to its end, never to be revived?

This section of Matthew's genealogy displays the line of kings, reminding people of Israel's (Judah's) former greatness, and sparking the hope that such might be the case again. Yet this part of the genealogy ends with the people captive in Babylon, and no new king in sight. Something would have to happen to remove the fly and purify the ointment.

Matthew will show us that Immanuel is the long-expected and sincerely hoped-for King over God's people.

Reflect.

1. How can names like these help us to recall key events in Old Testament history?
2. Why was it inevitable that, from David and Solomon to Jeconiah, the kingdom would be only partially realized, then not at all?
3. The people of Jeconiah's day languished in captivity in Babylon. What about the people of Matthew's day? To whom were they captive?

Matthew could have written, "David became the father of Solomon by Bathsheba" (the name of the woman involved). In deriding, so to speak, adultery itself, he rather stated clearly, "And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah." He thus showed that Christ, who descended from such a degenerate race by generation, "took up our infirmities and bore the burden of our ills," as one of the prophets said. Severus (488-538), Cathedral Sermons, Homily 94

Thank You, Lord, for granting me rest in Jesus. Today, help me to be more fully restored in all my ways as I...

Pray Psalm 132.11-18.

Claim God's promise that He will teach You His way, rest and abide with you, and bless you in all your daily needs because of Jesus.

Sing Psalm 132.11-18.

Psalm 132.11-18 (*Finlandia: Be Still, My Soul*)

Remember, Lord, the oath You swore to David;
do not turn back, do not deny Your Word:

"One of your sons, with your throne I will favor,
and He shall keep My cov'nant evermore,
and walk within My testimonies ever,
thus He shall ever rule as Israel's Lord."

God dwells among us, and He will forever,
to meet our needs and clothe us with His grace.

He has to us sent Jesus Christ, our Savior,
and made us His eternal resting-place.
His foes are banished from His presence ever,
but we shall reign with Him before His face.

4 To Set the Captives Free

Pray Psalm 137.4, 5.

How shall we sing the LORD's song
In a foreign land?
If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget *its skill*.

Sing contemplatively and with a heart sorry for your sins Psalm 137.4, 5.

(Gift of Love: [Though I May Speak](#))

How can we sing, exalt Your Name, or praises bring amid our shame?
If we forget Your Church's fame, O Lord, then let our hands grow lame.

Read Matthew 1.12-17.

Prepare.

1. This part of Jesus' genealogy begins in captivity in Babylon. How does it end?
2. How does Mary fit into this genealogy?

Meditate.

In Luke 4, in His first public proclamation, Jesus deliberately chose a passage that includes these words: "To proclaim liberty to the captives..." (Lk. 4.18). Jesus applied those verses from Isaiah to Himself. His coming signaled the release of the captives and the bringing of liberty to all who are oppressed.

Matthew's genealogy of Jesus does not mention the return to Jerusalem from captivity in Babylon. The message to his first readers was clear: We are still a captive people. But, as he would show, beginning in chapter 4, the people of his day were captive and oppressed by a foe far stronger than the Babylonian kings, a foe that Jesus would overthrow and one day destroy with a violence described as the crushing of his head (Gen. 3.15; cf. Ps. 137.9).

Matthew's genealogy ends with Joseph, the legitimate heir of David's throne. Mary is his wife, so her first-born would be in line to assume the kingship of Israel. We know this First-born as also Shiloh, the One for Whom the Kingdom of God has been prepared (Gen. 49.8-12), with Whom the Davidic dynasty ends. He receives the Kingdom from God and gives it to the saints of the Lord, as He puts all His enemies under His feet, until all nations bow and obey Him (Dan. 7.13-18, 27; Ps. 110; Phil. 2.5-11).

We should meditate a bit on Matthew's threefold mention of fourteen generations. Three is the number of the Trinity, and it suggests that this genealogy derives from God's plan and was sustained by His sovereign will and power. Fourteen is twice seven, the number of perfection, suggesting that the One with Whom this genealogy ends is doubly perfect – Son of God and Son of Man. Forty-two can be regarded as six sevens or "weeks" of generations, which terminates in a seventh generation that begins with Jesus, comprised of all those who, descending from Him by faith, enter the rest of God (cf. Heb. 4.1-10). Matthew's readers would have pondered those three fourteens from every conceivable angle. Those who had come to believe in Jesus would surely have seen in them a statement concerning the Person and work of our Lord.

In the final verse, Matthew recapitulates the genealogy and its message: Jesus is the Heir of God's promises, the King of Israel, and One Who has come to set the captives free.

Reflect.

1. Why should we slow down and meditate a bit whenever we come upon numbers in the Bible? Do *all* numbers have spiritual significance? How can we know which numbers might?
2. Before someone can be set free in Christ, he must first recognize that he is a captive. Explain.
3. In what sense does Jesus "crush" the head of Satan? What is the effect of this?

The reason why forty-two generations are given according to the flesh of Christ being born into the world is this: forty-two is the product of six times seven. Six, however, is the number that signifies work and toil, for the world was made in six days—it is a world made in work and toil and pain. So, appropriately, there are forty-two generations before Christ being born into the world in toil and pain, and these generations contain the mystery of work and toil.

Anonymous (no date), *Incomplete Work on Matthew, Homily 1*

Thank You, Jesus, for crushing the devil's head and setting me free to know, love, and serve You, as I will this day by...

Pray Psalm 137.1-3, 6-9.

This bitter, angry psalm betrays a heart in deep distress for the sin that led to judgment and captivity. We can pray this psalm against the enemy of our soul, and call on the Lord to cleanse us of all our sins and bring our spiritual foes to ruin. This is why Jesus came, as we shall see in Matthew's gospel.

Sing Psalm 137.1-3, 6-9.

Psalm 137.1-3, 6-9 (*Gift of Love: [Though I May Speak](#)*)

We sit beside the waters deep in broken pride, to mourn and weep
for Zion's woes and all our sin: How great our foes, without, within!

No songs have we of joy to sing. Our enemy, to taunt and sting,
bids us rejoice, as they oppress: We have no voice to praise or bless.

If ever praise forsake my tongue, if Zion's ways no more be sung,
if greater joy by me be found, my lips destroy, no more to sound.

Remember, Lord Your boasting foes, who hate Your Word and visit woes
on your dear sheep that they may die: Cause them to weep and mourn and sigh.

How blest are You, our sovereign Lord, Who judgment true shall soon accord
to all who seek Your sheep to kill. Preserve the meek who serve You still.

5 Born to Save

Pray Psalm 85.1-3.

LORD, You have been favorable to Your land;
You have brought back the captivity of Jacob.
You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people;
You have covered all their sin.

Selab

You have taken away all Your wrath;
You have turned from the fierceness of Your anger.

Sing gratefully Psalm 85.1-3.

(Lyons: O, Worship the King)

O Lord, You Your favor showed to Your land;
Your people You saved by Your mighty hand.
Their sins You forgave, all Your wrath You withdrew.
You turned back the anger which to them was due.

Read Matthew 1.18-21.

Prepare.

1. Why was Joseph described as “just”?
2. Mary “was found with child of the Holy Spirit.” What does that mean?

Meditate.

Matthew’s genealogy of Jesus begins at Abraham and, through his descendants and those of David, recapitulates most of the Old Testament, depositing that unfinished story in a manger in Bethlehem.

But just to make sure we understand that *all* the Old Testament is fulfilled in Jesus, Matthew began his account in a way reminiscent of how the Bible itself begins: God spoke to a man, gave him a woman, and a child was born to them. The story of Adam, Eve, and Abel is reenacted in the birth of Jesus. Only He is not Abel, but the promised Seed of the woman who, though wounded, would utterly destroy the enemy of God’s people (Gen. 3.15).

Mary and Joseph were betrothed, that is, engaged to be married, and thus committed to one another. When Mary was found to be with child (albeit by the Holy Spirit), Joseph moved to divorce her (vv. 18, 19). In this he was only doing what the Law of God provides, though wanting to spare her the public disgrace and punishment indicated (cf. Deut. 22.23, 24).

But notice the wisdom of Joseph, a most careful, just, and circumspect man. He did not immediately act on his thinking, but waited, undoubtedly hoping for some confirmation from the Lord that divorce was the right course (v. 20). We notice further that, as God gave Adam a wife while he slept (Gen. 2.21-23), so, in an analogous way, He gave Joseph a wife while he slept. God used an angel to communicate His will to Joseph, and this itself reminds us of how often God spoke to His Old Testament saints through an angel. The angel confirmed what Mary may have told Joseph; or perhaps this was the first time the truth of the situation was presented. We don’t know. What we do know is that the Holy Spirit accomplished a work of conception in Mary. A Son was promised, and

He was to be named Jesus, which means “salvation”. That’s all Joseph needed to know.

Jesus Christ does not merely make salvation possible. He accomplishes salvation. Salvation is a done deal because of Jesus. As the Old Testament Jesus – Joshua – led Israel into the land of promise, *this* Jesus would do the same by *becoming the promises of God’s covenant* and fulfilling everything necessary to accomplish salvation (2 Cor. 1.20).

But for whom? For His people, those whose names have been written in the Lamb’s Book of Life, those who have been chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1.4). Those who receive Jesus as the Christ, the One Who fulfills God’s covenant, the Savior of the world.

Reflect.

1. What can we learn from Joseph about making difficult decisions?
2. Names matter, as the angel explained to Joseph. What did Miriam (Hebrew for Mary) do when Israel was delivered (cf. Ex. 15.20, 21)? What did Mary (Miriam) do when she learned salvation was to be accomplished through her Child (Lk. 1.46-55)? Is this just coincidence?
3. Matthew 1.18-21 adds detail to Matthew 1.16, just as Genesis 2 adds detail to Genesis 1.26-28. Why does this matter?

Shame on those who attempt to pry into the miracle of generation from on high! For this birth can by no means be explained, yet it has witnesses beyond number and has been proclaimed from ancient times as a real birth handled with human hands. What kind of extreme madness afflicts those who busy themselves by curiously prying into the unutterable generation? For neither Gabriel nor Matthew was able to say anything more, but only that the generation was from the Spirit. But how from the Spirit? In what manner? Neither Gabriel nor Matthew has explained, nor is it possible. John Chrysostom (344-407), Gospel of Matthew 4.3

Your Spirit, Who brought life to Mary, has given me life in Jesus as well. Help me to live for Jesus today as I...

Pray Psalm 85.4-13.

The salvation Jesus has won for us is unto mercy, truth, righteousness, peace, and abounding good works. Pray that God will prepare and use you for these today.

Sing Psalm 85.4-13.

Psalm 85.4-13 (*Lyons: O, Worship the King*)

Restore us, O God, renew us in peace,
and cause all Your wrath against us to cease.
Will You evermore all Your wrath to us show?
Revive us that we may Your joy again know.

Lord, show us Your love; restore us, we pray!
And help us to hear the words that You say.
Speak peace to Your people; in truth let us stand.
We fear You; let glory and grace fill our land.

In Jesus God’s grace and truth are combined.
Both goodness and peace in Him do we find.
Truth springs from the earth as He walks in our midst,
and righteousness flows from the heav’ns as a gift.

The Lord by His grace will give what is good.
Our land will produce abundance of food.
And righteousness will go before the Lord's face,
and make of His footsteps a way in this place.

6 Immanuel, at Last

Pray Psalm 23.6.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

All the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD
Forever.

Sing joyfully Psalm 23.6.

(*Taladh Chriosda: [Song of the Christ Child](#)*)

Thus goodness e'er shall follow me;
mercy all my path shall see;
Your house shall my dwelling be,
forever after still.

Refrain

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Read Matthew 1.22-25.

Prepare.

1. How do the two names of Mary's Child summarize His mission?
2. How does Matthew connect the birth of Jesus to the Old Testament?

Meditate.

The birth of Jesus was foretold hundreds of years before the events recorded in our verses for today. Isaiah was not the only one who told of the coming of the Messiah. Dozens of prophecies and types of Jesus are scattered throughout the Old Testament. Faithful Israelites could only glimpse the future, and hope that it might be soon, as they waited for the promised Shiloh/Immanuel/Messiah. God's promises can take a long time to be fulfilled, but we must never lose hope, nor ever consider that His Word might not be true. In Jesus, Immanuel has come at last, and we say "Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!"

Matthew teaches us how to read this passage, which, in its original context, is a word to the king of Judah (Is. 7.14). In that setting, the Hebrew word for *virgin* is "young woman". But the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Old Testament), uses the Greek word for *virgin* (*παρθένος*, *parthenos*), which shows how Jewish scholars before Christ understood this term; and this is the source of Matthew's quotation.

God's Word cannot fail. What He has spoken, He will bring to pass. Joseph named Mary's Son Jesus; Matthew adds Immanuel from Isaiah 7. Jesus is His Name; Immanuel – like Christ – is more like a title or role – even a summary of His mission. Jesus comes as "God with Us". Matthew's account of Jesus' life and ministry begins with the assertion that, in Jesus, God has come to be with us. His gospel ends with the same reminder: "I am with you always" (Matt. 28.20). Keeping this in mind as we work our way through Matthew's gospel, let us seek to know Jesus with us, as we see Him in this book, in all His holiness, beauty, power, goodness, truth, courage, and love.

Matthew makes the point of reporting that Joseph “did not know” Mary until after Jesus was born. After that, they enjoyed the normal relations of married couples, and Mary gave birth to several other children (cf. Matt. 13.55, 56). There is no Biblical support for the idea of Mary’s perpetual virginity, just as there is no Biblical support for the idea of her “immaculate conception”. We must honor Mary to the full extent that Scripture does, even to acknowledging in her the fulfillment of Israel and the birth of the Christian Church (Rev. 12); but we must not go beyond Scripture in giving Mary more honor or devotion than does the Word.

Luke fills in more of the wondrous and glorious details concerning Jesus’ birth and His early days (Lk. 2). Taken together, these accounts should lead us to rejoice and say, “Hallelujah!”, for God has come to be with us always, and to save us from our sins.

Reflect.

1. What does it mean for you to know Jesus as “God-with-you”?
2. How should Matthew’s use of the Old Testament guide us as we read the Old Testament (cf. Jn. 5.39)?
3. What can you say about Joseph and his faith from what we see in these verses? In what ways is he an example for us?

Why then do they not call him Emmanuel instead of Jesus Christ? Because the text says not “you shall call” but “his name shall be called.” This means that the multitude and the outcome of the events themselves will cause him to be called Emmanuel. For here he puts the event as a name. This is customary in Scripture, to substitute names for the actual events. Therefore to say “they shall call him ‘Emmanuel’ ” means nothing else than that they shall see God among us. Admittedly God has always been among us, but never before so openly. John Chrysostom (344-407), The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 5.2-3

Jesus, I know that You will be with me throughout this day, so I will...

Pray Psalm 23.1-6.

Give thanks for Immanuel, and seek His Presence with you for the day ahead.

Sing Psalm 23.1-6.

Psalm 23.1-6 (*Taladh Chriosda: [Song of the Christ Child](#)*)

The Lord my Shepherd is, and I
shall not want; He makes me lie
in green pastures, leads me by
refreshing waters, still.

Refrain

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Restore my soul, Lord, day by day!
Lead me in Your righteous way
for Your Name’s sake, Lord, I pray,
according to Your will.

Refrain

And though through death's dark vale I go,
I no fear of evil show,
for Your rod and staff, I know,
shall guard and comfort still.

Refrain

A table You before me spread
in the midst of those I dread,
and with oil anoint my head;
my cup You over fill.

Refrain

Thus goodness e'er shall follow me;
mercy all my path shall see;
Your house shall my dwelling be,
forever after still.

Refrain

7 Unto Us a Child Is Born

Pray Psalm 66.13-16.

I will go into Your house with burnt offerings;
I will pay You my vows,
Which my lips have uttered
And my mouth has spoken when I was in trouble.
I will offer You burnt sacrifices of fat animals,
With the sweet aroma of rams;
I will offer bulls with goats. Selah
Come *and* hear, all you who fear God,
And I will declare what He has done for my soul.

Sing joyfully Psalm 66.13-16.

(Regent Square: Angels from the Realms of Glory)

To Your house we come with offerings, what we vowed, Lord, help us do.
O, receive our praise and homage as we give ourselves to You.
Come and listen, all who fear Him: hear what this great God can do!

Read aloud and meditate on Matthew 1.

Prepare.

1. How does Matthew show us that the story of Jesus begins in the Old Testament?
2. This chapter assigns four titles to Jesus. What are they?

Meditate.

Matthew 1 opens the door to the New Testament. It is a hinge on an Old Testament door frame. Thus it enables us to look back and look ahead at the same time.

As we read this chapter, the saying about the Scriptures – sometimes attributed to Augustine – comes alive which goes, “The New is in the Old concealed; the Old is by the New revealed.” Matthew pulls forward, in summary form, important aspects of Old Testament history, literature, and narrative, and deposits them in Jesus. He teaches us that the Old Testament has one guiding purpose – to direct our hearts and hopes to Jesus. And he makes it clear that this is his purpose as well: to introduce us to the God Who has come to be with us always, even to the end of the age.

While his was not the first written gospel – Mark probably has that distinction – the placement of Matthew’s in the canon of Scripture lays down a cornerstone for the next generation of revelation – that of the apostles. Following the lead of Matthew’s gospel, the rest of the New Testament looks back to Jesus in the Old Testament and in His incarnation, and forward to His coming, when we shall realize in full the promise of His being with us always. Matthew reminds us that every word of Scripture matters – even the genealogies – and that what God has spoken in the past will be fulfilled in His time. The rest of the New Testament follows suit.

Here, at the beginning of the New Testament, we gain insight into how God carries out His eternal plan to “save His people from their sins” (v. 21). He intervenes into history, coming to the world in the form of a Man, to bring the reign of sin to an end and inaugurate the day of salvation. History

takes on a new aspect from this moment on, as God works through faithful people to establish His Presence and rule on earth, as it is in heaven.

For in Jesus Christ, Son of David and Son of Abraham – Immanuel – God has come to be with His people, and to accomplish all His Word for their salvation. All the disappointments of the past will be replaced with renewed hope; and all the promises of the ages will be put within reach for those who believe, to lay hold on them here, now, and forever. Matthew’s announcement comes like the *good news* of a Roman runner, breathlessly declaring the *evangelion* that a great war has been won and a mighty empire has been overthrown and plundered. The Seed of the woman has arrived at last; Immanuel is among us for salvation!

It’s a new day in the world, says Matthew the tax man. And he wants us to understand that, as exciting as this wondrous birth is, we ain’t seen nothin’ yet.

Reflect.

1. How does Matthew 1 help us in understanding the Old Testament?
2. What do we learn from Matthew 1 about the role of people in God’s plan for salvation?
3. What do you learn from Matthew 1 to help you know more of God’s Presence with you always?

Do not speculate beyond the text. Do not require of it something more than what it simply says. Do not ask, “But precisely how was it that the Spirit accomplished this in a virgin?” For even when nature is at work, it is impossible fully to explain the manner of the formation of the person. How then, when the Spirit is accomplishing miracles, shall we be able to express their precise causes? John Chrysostom (344-407), Gospel of Matthew, Homily 4.3

Let me know You with me today, O Immanuel Jesus, that I may be faithful to obey You and bold to...

Pray Psalm 66.1-12.

Thank God for the coming of Immanuel! Praise His Name, and rejoice in Him! Ask Him to give you someone to whom you can proclaim this Good News today.

Sing Psalm 66.1-12.

Psalm 66.1-12 (*Regent Square: Angels from the Realms of Glory*)

Shout for joy to God, all people, sing the glory of His Name!

Give Him glorious praise and say, “How great Your pow’r and great Your fame!

All the earth shall worship gladly as they praise Your glorious Name!”

Great and awesome is our Savior in the works which He has done.

He the sea and river dried to let His people cross as one.

Then our joy was great to worship Him our mighty, sovereign One.

He the nations watches ever – all you rebels, humbled be.

Bless our God, all men and nations, praise His Name eternally!

He preserves our souls, and He will keep His paths beneath our feet.

You have tried us, Lord, as silver, and have brought us into nets,

made us carry heavy burdens, let men trample o’er our heads.

But through all Your grace sustained us and has brought us through to rest.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. Why is Matthew 1 such an important chapter of the Bible, for understanding both the Old Testament and the New Testament?
2. How does Matthew 1 serve to bolster our confidence in all the words of God in Scripture?
3. What four titles are appointed to Jesus in this chapter, and what does each signify?
4. What do we learn about the role of people in God's plan to bring salvation to the world?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from Matthew 1? How are you putting that lesson to work in your Personal Mission Field?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

The Fellowship of Ailbe offers many opportunities for training, prayer, personal growth, and ministry. Visit our website at www.ailbe.org to learn more.

We hope you found this study helpful. If so, please consider making a gift to The Fellowship. You can contribute to our ministry by using the donate button at the website, or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

Thank you.