

Know the God of Scripture

Volume 1

(revised 10/04/2024)

Week 40: Introducing Jesus! - Answer Guide

Below is the answer guide for this week's lesson. By no means are the answers complete or the only possible responses to each question. They are a guide to fully understanding the intent of the questions posed.

1. Matthew lists the genealogy of Jesus through the lineage of Joseph, His “adopted” father, who actually wasn't His biological father! A unique feature of Matthew's genealogy is his inclusion of four Old Testament women: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba, who are all of questionable character. It is highly unusual to include women in any Jewish genealogy, much less women of ill repute. Matthew probably did this to emphasize God's grace in preserving the lineage of David, an underlying theme throughout the Old Testament after 2 Samuel 7.

Also, in his genealogy there are three divisions of 14 generations each. It is interesting the name “David” in Hebrew numerology adds up to 14.

In recording this genealogy Matthew answers the question every Jew asked before considering Jesus as the Messiah. Is Jesus from the lineage of David? And the resounding answer is yes!

2. There are many conjectures as to why the Magi are recorded by Matthew only. We must remember that Matthew's audience were his fellow religious Jews. His purpose for this gospel, in short, was to convince them that Jesus was the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament. Some thoughts are:

- Matthew wanted to illustrate that even the pagan world recognized the birth of the Messiah in Bethlehem. Magi, derived from the Latin word for magic, were professional astrologers and by no means believers in Yahweh. For them to follow a bright object in the sky to Bethlehem, which was very far from the Persian area where they were known to have lived, is a miracle in and of itself. The Messiah's birth in Bethlehem (house of bread) was prophesied by the prophet Micah (Micah 5:2).
- The Magi's inclusion in the story of Jesus' birth may be the beginning of many stories pointing to the drawing of Gentiles to the Savior recorded in Matthew. Jesus' birth and life certainly provoked Jewish hostility while slowly winning Gentile acceptance.
- Matthew's account of the Magi's trek may have roots in Numbers 24:17 from the prophecy of Balaam. The “star” may be what the Magi followed to Jesus. In addition, the gifts the Magi gave point to the three offices Jesus was to fulfill, those of Prophet (myrrh), Priest (frankincense) and King (gold).

3. Matthew's Sermon on the Mount is the 1st of five discourses (teachings) in his gospel. These discourses have several things in common that are unique to Matthew. Each discourse opens and closes with similar pronouncements. For example, each discourse opens up with a statement introducing the teachings of Jesus and ends with a statement dispersing the people. This is illustrated below:

- The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7; Open: 5:1-2, End: 7:28-29)
- Commissioning of the Twelve (Matthew 10; Open: 10:5, End: 11:1)
- Parables of the Kingdom (Matthew 13; Open: 13:1-3, End: 13:53)
- Talking about the Church (Matthew 18; Open: 18:1-3 End: 19:1)
- Olivet Discourse (Matthew 23-25; Open: 23:1, End 26:1)

Each of these discourses add to the literary structure of the gospel of Matthew. In short, they all support the retelling of the Old Testament, demonstrating Christ is the fulfillment of all the prophets foretold.

4. Jesus recognizes that John the Baptist is linked (Matthew 11:14) back to Malachi's prophecy (Malachi 4:4-6) as the next Elijah. Matthew is intent on revealing God's sovereignty projected from the Old Testament. He wants to assure his audience that John the Baptist was the true forerunner of Jesus Christ. For his audience of scholarly Jews (scribes and Pharisees) he wants to show them how the Old Testament was coming alive in Jesus's ministry.

5. Jesus performs several healings and even resurrects people. He calms the waters and walks on them. He feeds 5,000 people with just five loaves of bread and three fish. He exorcises demons and makes money appear in fish. The miracles reflect the divine nature of Jesus which Matthew was attempting to illustrate in his gospel. They are included to solidify who Jesus was, not mere human, but the very Son of the living God.

The miracles recorded in all the gospels are there to solidify our faith in Jesus. We don't believe in Jesus because He performed miracles. They simply add to the faith we already exhibit in Christ.

6. The literary bookends found in Matthew 12:46-50 and 13:54-58 both include run ins with Jesus' family. In between these bookends we find a main point. Jesus is presenting seven (number representing wholeness) parables describing the Kingdom of heaven to the crowds. Each of the parables are unique and have similarities pointing to the glory of the Kingdom of heaven.

7. Jesus is returning for His bride, spotless in nature and pure in motive. The church is left with the power of the Holy Spirit to clean up itself while living in a darkened world. Sin, like yeast in a batch of flour, is not welcomed and must be swiftly dealt with by either repentance and forgiveness or removal from among themselves. This same concept of purifying the "called out" ones is prevalent throughout the Old Testament. A little leaven (sin) leavens the whole loaf.

In administering church discipline, it is vitally important to do so in the spirit of love and reconciliation, not in revenge of spite. There is a correct way to do church discipline and a wrong way.

8. Jesus predicted His forthcoming death three times (Matthew 16:21; 17:9; 20:18) and foretold His resurrection (Matthew 20:19). The parable of the vineyard workers highlights self-sacrifice and living as an alien in this lost world. On His way to Jerusalem, He performed several miracles of healing and fulfilled Zechariah's prophecy (Zechariah 9:9).

9. The religious scribes and Pharisees were supposed to be versed in Old Testament scripture. Yet, they missed His coming which was richly prophesied. They also misinterpreted the Law and imposed upon the people over 600 burdensome laws which they claimed stemmed from the Law of Moses. Matthew is highlighting the fact that the Law was being lived out by the Messiah Jesus. They could not grasp the Law through the eyes of the Messiah.

10. Answers will vary depending on one's interpretation of these Scriptures paired with Old Testament apocalyptic literature and Revelation. Pre-, Post- and A- millennialism perspectives will vary. One thought is that the tribulation is a seven-year period following the rapture of saints where severe afflictions will be imputed upon those remaining.

11. The Great Commission is to proclaim the Good News of salvation found only in Jesus Christ and to make disciples after baptizing them. Baptism and continuous discipleship should follow the act of salvation. The active, imperative verb here is NOT "Go" (it's a passive verb), but "make" as in "make disciples." We should be compelled from the indwelling Spirit of God to "go" out and share the Gospel, but we should actively and deliberately be continuously discipling new converts as they grow in Christ.

Additional Questions:

1. Answers will vary depending on personal experience.
2. Answers will vary depending on personal experience.
3. Answers will vary depending on personal experience.

