

Matthew 1

Bible Study

By Gary Eugene Howell



Verse 1

Ask for a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 1:1.

Observation: Notice that verse 1 doesn't include Moses, but rather Abraham. Moses represents the Law, and is not a part of Jesus's lineage. Abraham, however,

represents a promise made by God, and is Jesus's heritage.

Have your Bible study group now flip to Galatians chapter 3 and read verses 13 through 14. (if your group is very ambitious, continue reading all the way to verse 25). Then have the group discuss the fact that we are no longer under the law. What is the implication of no longer being under the law? If not the law, what then are we now under and what are its implications? How is this lived out in our daily lives?

Verses 2-16 (It's probably not necessary to ask your group to read aloud all these names.)

Observation: The list of Jesus's genealogy contains liars, thieves, prostitutes, adulterers, idolaters and even murderers. Jesus did not come from a line of perfect, noble people. He came through a long list of regular everyday people, some of whom had troubled and burdened backgrounds. Much the same as you and I might have had when reflecting upon our own lives, backgrounds and family.

Ask that someone volunteer to read aloud 2 Corinthians 5:17. Your past does not determine who you are today in Christ. Ask if someone can summarize in just one or two sentences, what it means to be a "new creation". According to this verse, how does God see you now — and how is this different from how you sometimes see yourself?

Verse 17

Observation: This summarizes the genealogy and emphasizes that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promises to both Abraham and David. However, any astute reader will notice that Matthew's list of Jesus's genealogy differs from Luke's account of Jesus's genealogy.

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The reason is simply that Matthew wanted to highlight Jesus's royal ancestry by tracing it through Joseph, connecting him to both Abraham and King David to show his fulfillment of prophecy, while Luke traces Jesus's lineage through Mary, going all the way back to Adam.

For skeptics & scoffers, however, these differences are frequently cited as a point of contradiction in the Bible. Anytime we see something in scripture that appears to be a contradiction we must conclude that the error is not God's but rather our own lack of understanding. We can also be rest assured that over the past few hundred years, scholars, more brilliant than ourselves have already examined and addressed these concerns and that all we need to do is a brief online search to see what others have said about it.

Why do you think it's important to approach Scripture with the assumption that it is true, even when we don't immediately understand everything?

Verses 18-25

Ask for a volunteer to read aloud verses 18-25. These verses discuss the pregnancy of Mary, and Joseph's reaction. In verse twenty an angel appears to Joseph in his dream. It should be noted that throughout the text of the Bible, God spoke to 14 different people through their dreams.

Cautionary Notice – For some Christians the following questions may be contentious. Some Christ followers believe that God speaks only through his Word and nowhere else. This author, however, holds the view that God can speak to us not only through the Bible but also through our pastor, elders, other spirit filled individuals, through dreams, through a still-small-voice, through our prayer time as well as other methods. It is recommended, however, that if any particular Bible study question causes quarrelling in your group, simply move on to the next question. Better to not discuss it, than to create division in your bible study group.

Questions: In what ways does God speak to us today? Group leader, make note of the answers given so that you can refer to them for this next question. Of the ways just mentioned that God speaks to us today, which would you conclude he uses most often and why? Which ones would you suspect he uses less frequently and why? Which ones should be treated with caution and why?

In verse 21 the angel is instructing Joseph that he is to give the child the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

Sin is what separates us from God. So how then do we become reunited with God unto salvation? (i.e. How does Jesus save us from our sins?)

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Free Bible Study Resources for Bible Study Leaders

By Gary Eugene Howell

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Dear Bible study leader: Here are a few tips on how to conduct a good Bible study that will foster spiritual growth in those attending.

First: Prepare for your Bible study by spending quality time in prayer in the days or week ahead of the study. Seek not to rely upon your own strengths and abilities, but instead rely upon the Lord.

Second: Begin your group bible study by taking prayer requests. If you have less than 25 people in your group, be bold by asking every individual, by name, what they would like prayer for. Then ask the group members to pray for one another. (You can ask, “who would like to pray for John?” or you can ask that everyone pray for the person on their left), however you choose to organize it is fine. Make sure you take notes on what people are asking prayer for. Then, before you begin the group prayer, ask if anyone needs a reminder of who and what they are praying for. If your group spends the whole hour praying and you never get to discuss the bible study, that’s perfectly fine.

Third: Do not take the route of preaching a sermon. Your Bible study attendees can hear a sermon on Sunday. Instead, set a goal loosely to be the person who speaks the least during your Bible study session. When you ask the group a question, you may have to sit in silence for several seconds until someone offers a response. If after 20 seconds, no one has said anything, try rephrasing the question and asking it again another way. Then give the members time to contemplate their response.

Fourth: Many Bible study sessions are shallow. Shallow Bible studies are produced by asking simple questions which require only one or two-word answers. Your goal, however, is to take your Bible study attendees deeper into God’s word. Lead your group in examining the context and meaning of the verses or chapter being studied. Then discuss the application but remember, the Bible is not a self-help book for behavior modification. Rather, the Bible tells us about Jesus. What he did for us, is doing within us, and how he saves us.

Fifth: Hopefully you will have two or three attendees who carry the discussion. These will be the individuals who are ready to talk about the word of God. However, be prepared (figure out what you’re going to say ahead of time), if one individual attendee seeks to dominate the discussion. If one attendee desires to monologue for five or ten minutes without giving anyone else a chance to speak, you will need to find a nice and polite way to keep that individual in check.

Sixth: It’s perfectly okay if you don’t get to all the questions presented in this bible study. If you ask the first question and your group spends the remainder of the hour discussing it, your job is done. You had a successful bible study. Don’t be concerned that you didn’t get to the rest of the questions.