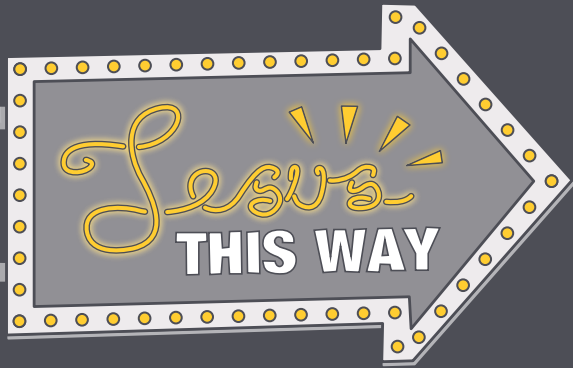


DIG INTO MATTHEW





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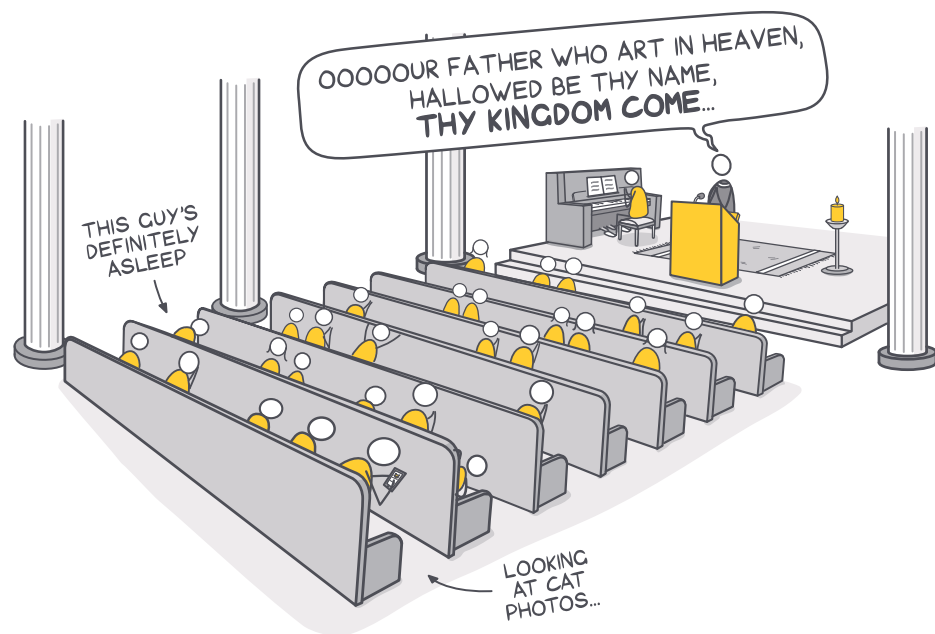
A DAILY BIBLE STUDY

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A JOURNEY BEGINS



Wow! Did you really just pray that? 'Your Kingdom come?' That is a huge thing to just mumble along with in church! Have you ever thought what it really means?

THERE IS A KINGDOM

Seems obvious now you read it, but it can be easy to miss: God has a Kingdom! It's not a physical place like the United Kingdom or the Kingdom of Tonga ... you can't catch a flight there. Instead, this Kingdom is made up of every person who lives like God wants them to.

But a Christian doesn't get a passport to prove they are in God's Kingdom. So how can you tell if you're in or not? It comes down to one simple fact: how do you respond to the King?

THERE IS A KING

Whoops! Nearly forgot! God's Kingdom has a King! If you pray for God's Kingdom to come, you're not only praying that you want things on earth to be like God wants them to be (peaceful, fair, loving, giving glory to Him) but you are also praying that God's King will come!

READ REVELATION 21:1-5

This King came once before and He turned the whole world upside down. Matthew wrote what happened in his history book, but that is not the end of the story. If you keep reading, you will see that God's King is right now sitting on a throne in heaven and He has promised to come again. This means that *in the future*, the Kingdom will come. When that happens all evil and rebellion against the King will be defeated. But right now, amazingly, it means that anyone in God's Kingdom has a powerful King working for their best – the King of the Universe is on their side, today!

DOESN'T THAT CHANGE THINGS?

God's King, the most powerful King in the world, wants the best for you. (Yes you, reading this book!) There are always other books you can read, other things you could be doing, friends you could be seeing – but why not set aside a little time each day so we can read Matthew's incredible true story? The King of Kings is calling you: do you want to hear what He has to say?

**QUESTIONS**

- If you could meet the King of the universe - what questions would you ask Him? Write them down and pray to God about them.
- As we go through Matthew, make a note of any answers you get.

AN ORIGIN STORY



MORE THAN A LIST (1:1-17)

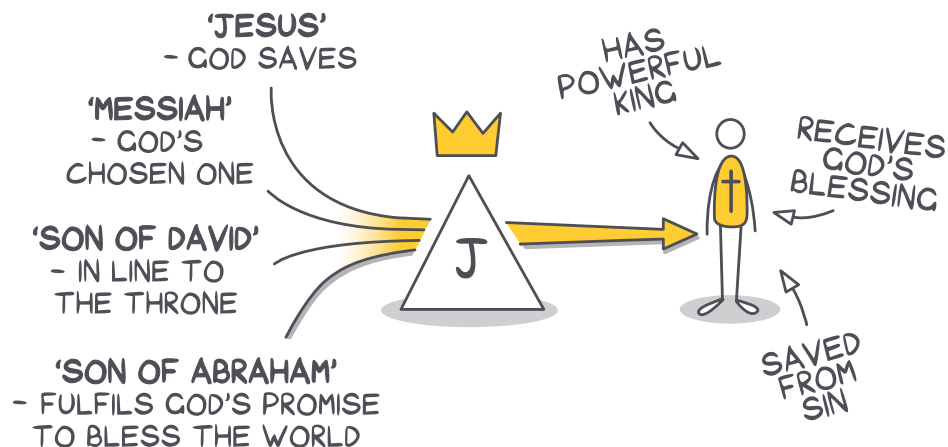
Think lists are boring? Think again! Matthew starts his action packed true story about Jesus with a long list of names called a 'genealogy'. Matthew isn't a nerd – he is using this list to tell us that Jesus descended from

mighty kings (like David) and also from everyday normal people (like Ruth).

For the Jews, who Matthew was writing to, this was really important. You see, God had made big promises to care for his chosen people throughout history. Starting with Abraham (name number one!) these promises were to be passed down through generations of God's people until they would one day reach the 'Messiah', the one chosen person to make all these promises come true – He is kind of a big deal.

WHAT'S IN A NAME? (1:1)

In his first line, Matthew manages to squeeze in *four* different names for Jesus, each with their own meaning. Is he just showing off? Nope! Each of



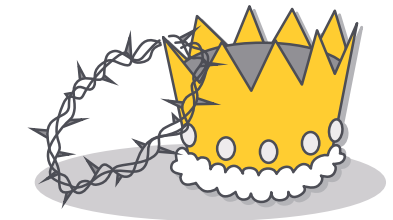
these titles tells us something very important about Jesus.

As we find out in Matthew 1:21, 'Jesus' means 'the Lord saves'. So when someone says 'Jesus', we are reminded that God saves his people through something that Jesus did. (John 3:16, Rom. 6:23)

'Messiah' is the same name as 'Christ'. These titles mean 'Chosen One'. When God made promises to His people, He also chose one individual to make the promises happen.

'Son of David' reminds us that Jesus is a direct descendent of King David, the greatest King in Jewish history. Things went well when David was in charge, but things will be perfect when King Jesus is on the throne.

'Son of Abraham' takes us back to the promise (or the covenant) that God made to bless all the people of the Earth through Abraham. The amazing promises God made to Abraham will only ever come about through Jesus. (You can see these promises in Genesis 12:1–3; 17:3–7.)



THE UNASHAMED KING

If you research this list of names, you will notice that many of them are utter rascals! Jacob was a scam artist, the brothers of Judah were bullies, Rahab was a prostitute and even David was a murderer; yet God used all these people to bring about the arrival of Jesus. King Jesus is not ashamed to welcome broken or bad people into His Kingdom. Quite the opposite! This genealogy tells us that God's promises of love and care are open to *anyone* who comes to Him through the King.

QUESTIONS

- The Old Testament promises that God made to love and care become real in Jesus. How can you get to experience these promises?
- Look again at the four titles of Jesus. Pick one and thank God for what it means to you.

GOD WITH US!

A VIRGIN GIVES BIRTH? (1:18-21)

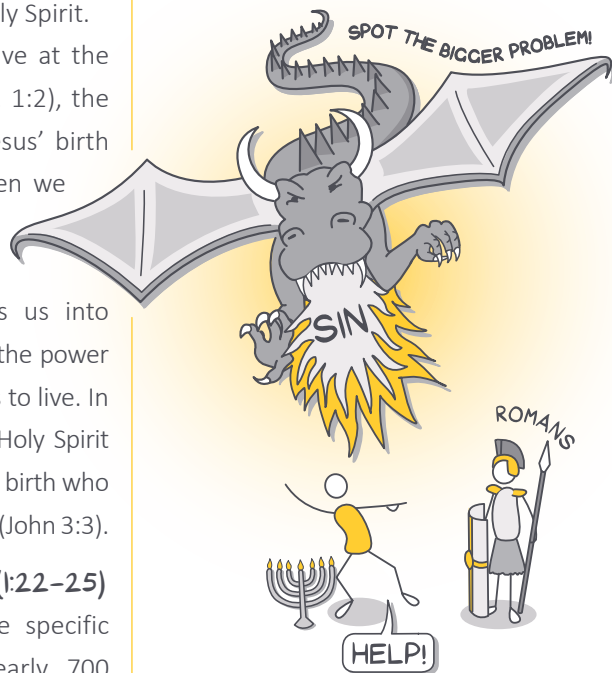
Quite the shocker! Mary became pregnant, even though she had never been romantically involved with a man. This miracle has never happened before in human history and will never happen again. Matthew tells us this child did not come about in any normal way – this was a miracle by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit was active at the creation of the world (Gen. 1:2), the Holy Spirit was active at Jesus' birth (Mat. 1:18), and today when we become a Christian, it is the Holy Spirit who makes us new people; He brings us into God's Kingdom and gives us the power to live the way God wants us to live. In other words, it is the same Holy Spirit who works a miracle at Jesus' birth who makes Christians 'born again' (John 3:3).

PROPHECY FULFILLED (1:22-25)

Isn't it amazing that these specific events were predicted nearly 700 years beforehand? It's hard enough to predict the weather where I live in Scotland (and the only options are rain or drizzle) never mind the birth of God's chosen King. But Matthew makes sure we realise this was all planned out

when in verse 22 he uses his trademark saying: 'All this took place to fulfil ...' God had planned from the beginning of time that one day He would live closely with His people. Our sin stops this from happening, but God had a plan to make the impossible possible – He would send this 'Immanuel' Jesus.



As the angel told Joseph in verse 21, Jesus will save His people from their biggest enemy. The Jews thought their enemy was the powerful Romans; many wanted Jesus to be a mighty warrior King who would kick the Roman army



out of the country. But Jesus came to save us from a much bigger enemy: the sin that separates us from God.

AN ADOPTED CHILD (1:25)

If you have a keen eye, you may have noticed that Matthew's genealogy in 1:1-17 tells us Joseph was directly descended from King David. This means Joseph's son would inherit the right to become King of God's people. But Jesus was only the *biological* son of Mary, not Joseph, so how can He rightfully become King? He had to be adopted! What Matthew carefully records in 1:25 is that Joseph formally gave Jesus his name, and in the ancient world this legally meant the child was now Joseph's. (Thankfully, when your mates at school give you a nickname today, they haven't adopted you.)

READ MATTHEW 3 1:18-25



'COVENANT' A PROMISE THAT GOD MAKES WITH PEOPLE SO THAT WE MAY KNOW HIM. IN THE OLD COVENANT PEOPLE NEEDED SACRIFICES AND TEMPLE WORSHIP TO APPROACH GOD. HOWEVER, THIS ALL POINTED TO JESUS.

JESUS ESTABLISHED THE NEW COVENANT WHERE HIS SACRIFICE ON THE CROSS IS THE ONLY SACRIFICE WE NEED. HIS PEOPLE (CHRISTIANS) ARE THE TEMPLE WHERE GOD DWELLS AND WHERE WE CAN WORSHIP.

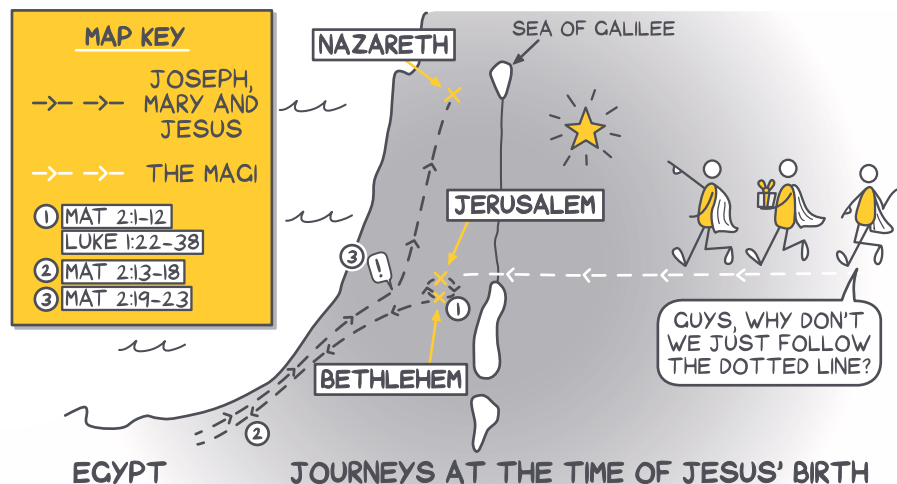
EPHESIANS 2:21-22

QUESTIONS

- If you're a Christian, God is with you at all times.
- How will knowing this help you when you face hard times?
- If you are a Christian and you sin, how do you think it affects the Holy Spirit who is within you?



LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION



WHERE IS JESUS FROM? (2:1-23)

If you have moved around a lot growing up, it can sometimes be hard to explain where you are from. Matthew had a trickier problem to explain in this section; where was *Jesus* from? Not only is He God (so He is not really 'from' anywhere – He has always existed) but the Old Testament prophecies spoke of the Messiah originating from three different locations on Earth:

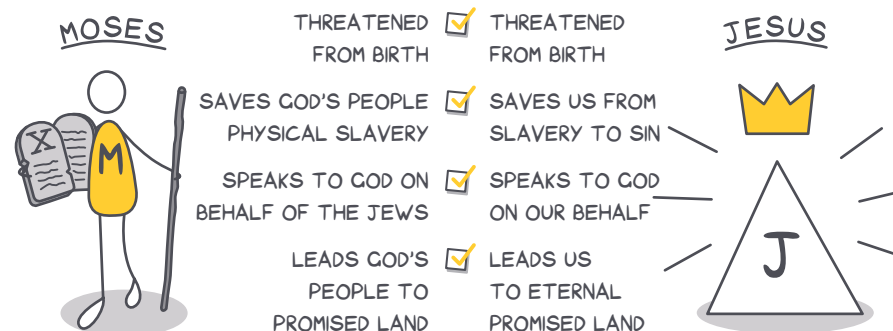
1. He was to come from Bethlehem. This was the birthplace of King David, and the new King would come from here too (Mat. 2:6).
2. God's Son (another title for Jesus), was to come out of Egypt like the

Israelites first came out of Egypt in the book of Exodus (Mat. 2:15).

3. He was also to be a 'nobody'. People would think He was from nowhere important, and Nazareth was well known as a nowhere kind of place (Mat. 2:23).

The map above makes it look as if Jesus' parents had got lost on holiday, but really they were being chased around by killer men! But is that all that's happening? As you read Matthew 2:1–23, you can see that God was using these scary events to carefully guide Jesus and His family around in order that all the prophecies about Jesus would be fulfilled. Jesus

READ MATTHEW 2:1-23



was from the birthplace of Kings, He was the Son of God called from Egypt and, despite all this, people rejected Him as a nobody from Nazareth.

THE NEW MOSES

If you read Exodus in the Old Testament (don't do it right now, it's a long book), you will see what Matthew saw; Jesus is a bigger and better Moses. Moses was one of the most important people to the Jews. With God's help, Moses rescued the Jews from slavery in Egypt and guided them into a land God promised to them. In a much bigger way, Jesus came to rescue us from slavery – slavery to sin! He makes it possible for us to follow Him instead of following our wrong desires. When we do this, Jesus guides us to

a place promised to us, a place of total peace and happiness. (You can read about this in Psalm 23.)

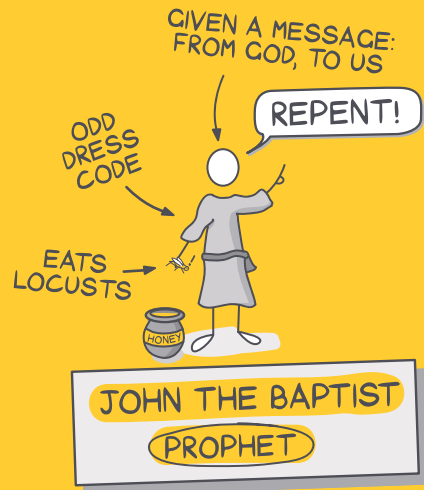
Despite the terrible evil that surrounded Jesus from the moment of His birth (1:16–18), God is still in control. When we feel that the dark things in life are getting the better of us, today we can remember that no matter what happens, God uses even the worst situations for our eventual good and His glory.

QUESTIONS

Jesus rules right now as King in heaven, but on Earth He was rejected as a 'nobody'.

- Whose opinion was more important to Jesus: God's or other people's?
- Whose opinion is more important to you?

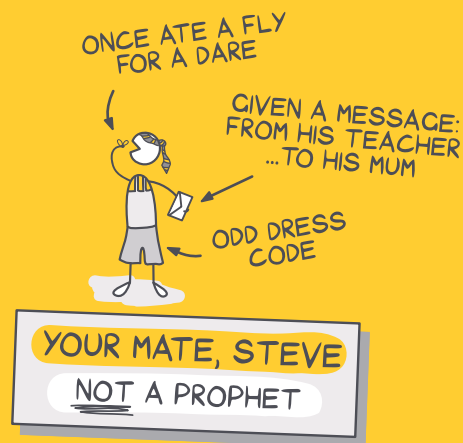
THE KING'S FIRST MOVES



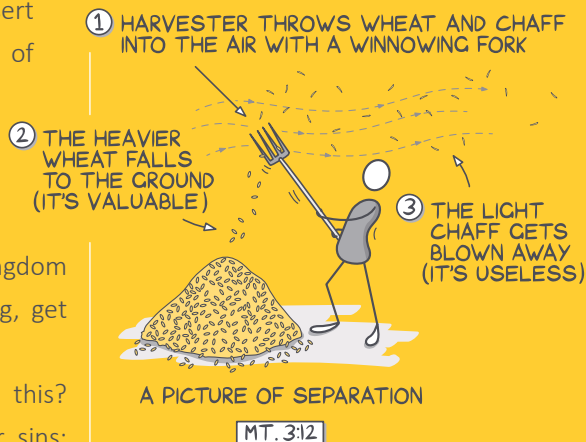
ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM (3:1-6)

Read John's lips – 'no turning back!' When God's people crossed the Red Sea in Exodus, they escaped Egyptian slavery forever. When God's people crossed the River Jordan in Joshua, they escaped 40 years of desert wandering. Now, thousands of years later, John the Baptist stood in the same River Jordan calling for God's people to leave behind their lives of sin and prepare to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. 'The King is coming, get ready to follow Him!'

How did God's people do this? First, they would confess their sins;



they would say how they were living in ways disobedient to God's laws. Second, they would be baptised to mark a point of change called repentance. This meant they had turned away from a sinful life, in order to live the way God wants.



This is a big deal, but John explains in verse 11 that his baptism points towards a more important one that Jesus would bring: a baptism with the Holy Spirit. Jesus' baptism could do more than John's. Jesus' baptism would make followers of God totally clean from sin and able to live in His coming Kingdom.

A WARNING (3:7-12)

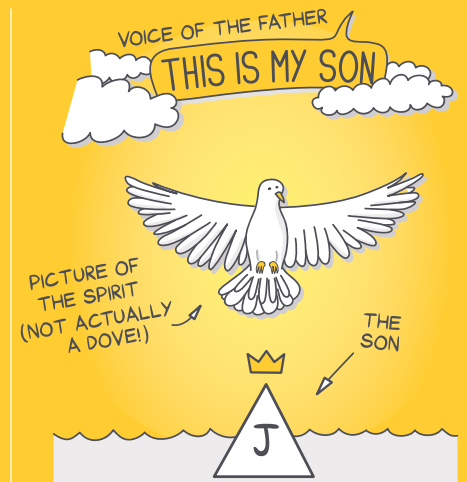
The Jewish religious leaders at the time thought John was nuts – not because of the locust munching, but because of what he said! They thought being a biological descendant of Abraham automatically made them part of God's Kingdom, but John said they needed to repent. Outrageous! Or is it?

John gives a serious warning to this kind of thinking. Going to church does not make you a part of God's Kingdom. Jesus came to deal with our sin so that we can live with God. Therefore, only those who repent and have their sin forgiven by Jesus are part of His Kingdom. These Jewish leaders were in trouble!

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS (3:13-17)

Even though Jesus had never done anything wrong to repent of, our King chose to identify with His people by

READ MATTHEW 3:1-17



being baptised. We are to look at Jesus and see a perfect example of how to live. If our King lives like God wants, then we should too.

After His baptism, Jesus comes up from the water and we get a quick 'behind the scenes' look at something amazing, an incredible moment. This newly arrived King is actually part of the Holy Trinity of God – King Jesus is God!

QUESTIONS

- Repentance should be a part of our daily lives. Do you need to turn away from something that does not belong in God's Kingdom? Pray about this today and ask that God will help you to leave this sin behind.