

Twenty-Eight Days With Matthew

Day 1 – John 1

Prayer:

Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of Abraham and Son of David, open our hearts to learn from the pages of Matthew's Gospel. Send us Your Holy Spirit so that we may recognize and revere You as the Christ, the Messiah, the chosen One of God. We pray this in Your holy name. Amen.

Meditation:

Matthew, Chapter One. It's the first book of the New Testament. As one might expect, the first book of the New Testament ought to serve as a bridge from, a connector to, and the fulfillment of God's promises in the Old Testament. *And it is.*

Commentators often note that Matthew emphasizes Jesus' role as one greater than *Moses*. Throughout the Gospel, Matthew will note how people were amazed at Jesus' teaching. Note for example, Matthew 7:28-29.

“When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because He taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.” (NIV)

In the Old Testament, the ultimate teacher of the Law was Moses. In the New Testament, Matthew unveils a Teacher who far surpasses Moses. That Teacher, of course, is Jesus, the One foretold even since before the time of Moses.

Matthew abounds with Old Testament citations. The *very first* reference is in the *very first* verse of Matthew 1. Matthew's genealogy of Jesus is essentially a summation of Old Testament prophecy, beginning with God's covenant with Abraham.

The significance of Matthew's genealogy is that Jesus is the prophesied Offspring of Abraham through which all the nations would be blessed. He is greater than Abraham, David and any others listed in Matthew's three-part genealogy (cf. 1:17). He is greater...because He is the Messiah, the Christ of God.

Prophecy is another major aspect of Matthew. Though not specifically quoted in Matthew 1, one might find it hard to believe that Genesis 22 would not be in the background. Genesis 22:17-19 is the account of God's promise to the great Jewish Patriarch, Abraham.

“I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed Me.” (NIV)

If Matthew's readers accept that Jesus is the Blessed One promised to Abraham, what questions might they have about Jesus? Examples of questions inquiring readers might suggest include:

- 1) Where did Jesus come from?

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- 2) What actions and teachings did Jesus do to confirm and validate His superiority over Abraham?
- 3) What Scriptures confirm and validate that this is the promised Messiah?
- 4) If He is the Messiah, what is His Kingdom like?
- 5) If Jesus is the Messianic King, how do those in His kingdom respond and show devotion to Him?

In His Gospel, Matthew will address—and answer—these and other questions...beginning with the account of Jesus' birth (1:18ff.). Note Matthew's simple, straight-forward description of Jesus' birth. No bragging, no exaggerating, no defensiveness. It's just a plain, straight-up account of the Messiah told using familiar Old Testament imagery and content the covenant people of the Old Testament would expect.

What things would they expect? Here's a partial listing: mention of the Holy Spirit of God (v. 18), reference to the Old Testament Law regarding out-of-wedlock pregnancy (v. 19), and God-sent "angels" and "dreams" (vv. 20ff.). Matthew, however, left no doubt as to the significance of all this Old Testament-type phenomena.

"All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet." (Matthew 1:22 [NIV]).

To Matthew, there's really *nothing* surprising, unusual or unexpected about the Virgin Birth of Jesus. After all, it was all spelled out for centuries in the pages of the Old Testament. Peeking ahead to chapter 2, note how Matthew noted even pagan Magi recognized Jesus' birth. If Magi could recognize Jesus, bring priceless gifts and worship Him, why not the Jews...or anyone else for that matter!

Matthew One ends one reminding us that His name was "Jesus." He is the one Who will save us from our sins. He is the promised One through whom all the world will be blessed. How do we know? How can we be sure? Read through the rest of Matthew's Gospel. Then you'll know what Matthew recognized: Jesus is the promised One.

Prayer:

Jesus, our virgin-born Savior, by Your coming You have fulfilled the Scriptures and God's promises to the people of old. Fulfill also in us Your promises, today, that we might live in Your Kingdom of grace and thus be saved. In Your name we pray. Amen.

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