

The Nature of the King

Matthew

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Please turn with me in your Bibles to Matthew 1. We're going to be looking at verses 18 to 25 this morning. Matthew 1:18-25, a familiar story, the story of the angel appearing to Joseph. We've been looking at this first chapter of Matthew for the last couple of Sundays. We looked at the first 17 verses, the genealogy for the last two weeks. Last Sunday we talked about the character of his kingdom from the genealogy, that we saw there were some things, extraordinary things about the genealogy of Christ that show that his kingdom was going to be unique, something different than what they expected, and basically the theme of Matthew's Gospel, the message that he is articulating is essentially like the song we just heard, it is Jesus is the King, will you honor him, worship him, give yourself to him in submission? Because he is the King, will you allow him to be your King? Will you submit to him? It's the only sane thing to do but the problem is we're all, we're born in the sense insane. We're sinners who want to rule our own lives. We want to determine our own way and we use religion as a means to an end rather than to see God as he truly is and give him ourselves.

So Matthew is saying Jesus is God's King. It's essentially that's his argument throughout the whole Gospel and his goal is to have his readers to serve Jesus, to honor Jesus, to worship him. He's writing to a predominantly Jewish audience, we noted. He is writing to tell them that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah that the Old Testament prophesied and anticipated. Jesus is the one that we've been waiting for. In those first 17 verses, the genealogy, he spent so much time dealing with the genealogy, he was basically convincing his Jewish readers who would have been interested in those things to a great extent, he was pointing out to them Jesus is legally qualified to be the Messiah. He is legally qualified, that he comes in the line of David, not only he comes in the line of David, he comes through David's descendant Solomon, all the way down to the last king Jeconiah, or who was reigning at the time of the Babylonian deportation, and Jesus is in that line legally because his father, the one presumed to be his father, Joseph, is in that line. And kingship passes down through the father. It's not the mother. The queen's son doesn't become, I mean if there is a queen and she has a son, he will become king but in that day it was always a king anyway, so it had to be, the question was who is your father?

So he's made this point, Jesus is legally qualified to be the Messiah because he's legally in the direct line of David through Solomon. We come to a second passage which speaks also to the issue of genealogy. It's actually very interesting. The word translated "birth" in 18, verse 18 that we're gonna read, Matthew 1:18, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows..." That word "birth" is actually the same word translated "genealogy" in 1:1, "The record of the genealogy of Jesus." The word translated "genealogy" in 1:1 and the word translated "birth" in 1:18 are both from the word genesis in Greek. We transliterate that word into the English word genesis and it means origin or genealogy, and so the book of Genesis is called that because it's the book of origins and genealogies, it tells us where we came from. And so Matthew starts off his book using that loaded term to his readers to say, you know, what is urgent to establish the messiahship of Jesus, the fact that he is truly the King that was to come is to look at his origins and so he brings that up again. In verses 18 to 25 is another genealogy of sorts. It's answering the question just like the previous one did. The first genealogy said who's his father? Who did he descend from? And that earlier one said he's the son of Abraham. He's the son of David, the son of Abraham. He's legally qualified to be Messiah. This genealogy is going to say who's he descended from? Who is his father? This genealogy is gonna say his father is the living God; that he truly is the Son of God.

So Matthew 1:18-25 and the title is "The Nature of the King," or you could, natures of the King, because we're gonna see that this King is one person in two natures. He is fully God and he is fully man. One person, two natures, without division or separation or mingling. One person with two complete natures, a fully human nature and a fully divine nature. So let's read verses 18 to 25.

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. 19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. 20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." 22 Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 23 "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US." 24 And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, 25 but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

Let's pray together.

Our Father, we ask that You might open the eyes of our hearts by Your power, by Your Spirit, to see wonderful things in Your word, and we thank You that the written word of

God is perfect and that it ultimately reveals to us the living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. May we see Him. We pray this in His name and for His glory. Amen.

The nature or natures of the King. Who is this King? That's the question that Matthew wants to address. It's interesting to think about this. I want to consider our time under two points this morning to help us organize our thoughts. I think the text leads to these two points. The first is the purpose of Matthew. The purpose of Matthew. The author of this passage, the author of this Gospel, the author of this book, what is his purpose in writing? I mentioned earlier, in a sense, his purpose is to proclaim the kingship of Jesus. That's his overarching thematic purpose, but there's a secondary or a part, a secondary part of that same overarching purpose to convince people that Jesus is truly the King, to convince the Jewish people and Gentiles and everyone who would believe or read it that Jesus is the King. He also has an additional purpose and that is to answer questions that those readers have that are perplexing them and causing them to stumble. There are a number of questions that Jews in the first century had that needed to be answered, that were hindering them from seeing Jesus as truly who he is, that he is the King that the Old Testament prophesied. He is the Messiah. He is the Christ. Remember, Christ basically equals Messiah. Messiah is just the Hebrew way of saying it and Christ is the Greek way of saying it. The same idea, the anointed one.

The Old Testament had anticipated an anointed one that would come who would fulfill the role of king and also priest, and he would bring man back to God, he would bring salvation, he would bring and usher in the kingdom of God, and so Matthew is writing to convince his readers that Jesus is the King but he knows – now think about this – he's writing around 60 AD, Jesus died on the cross and was resurrected probably around 33 AD so it's almost 30 years later after Jesus' resurrection and it's roughly 60 years after Jesus' birth, 65 years after Jesus' birth. So the events he's talking about in this chapter, 1:18-25, what happened when Joseph had this dream, was about 65-66 years before Matthew writes and it's helpful to put yourself in the mind and it's always important to do this when you're reading the Bible, to try to read it and put yourself in the sense of reading it for the first time. These are very familiar stories, right? And so you know what's gonna happen. You know that, yeah, Mary was a virgin and Joseph, he was going to put her away quietly. Yeah, I know that, and we don't, I mean, we try to read it reverently and honor the Lord in it, but still it's easy to forget how surprising this was for the original audience or how urgent it was for them to know it. They didn't know it. It wasn't old hat to them the first time they read it. If you put yourself in the place of a Jew in the first century AD, what's happened is the Gospel has gone out through the 40s and 50s AD, is that increasingly the church, the believers, are Gentiles in composition. The Gospel is going out and if you remember, if you read through Acts you'll see Paul does this, when he goes on his missionary journeys, he always goes first, where? To the synagogue. Go to a town, he'd go to the synagogue. Why? To preach to the Jews first because the Gospel is first to the Jews and after that to the Gentiles, the Greeks. That's us, most all of us. Maybe there's a few Jewish people here of Jewish lineage, but most of us are Gentiles. We are the nations. Well, what was happening in the first century already by 60 AD was that the church was largely composed of Gentiles, non-Jews. The Jews largely rejected the message of salvation through Jesus. They largely rejected his

messiahship, the fact that he was Christ, and there were a number of basic arguments or controversies around Jesus that Satan ultimately was using and unbelievers were grabbing onto, to keep from submitting to Jesus as their King and what I want to suggest to you is Matthew is aware of these controversies and he is intending as part of his proof of Jesus is the King, is he is knocking down these different objections. He knows there are questions.

So the purpose of Matthew in a sentence, the purpose of Matthew is to answer the questions of first century Jews that are hindering them from coming to submit to Jesus. I mean, it's also to say Jesus is King but part of that is to answer these questions and I want to under this first point, the purpose of Matthew, to answer the questions that are hindering Jewish people and hinder us because we have questions too. You may, Julius just mentioned reading online and, you know, you can go out there and find lots of good information, you'll occasionally stumble on that, but there's more bad stuff out there than there is good, isn't it? And so you can go out there and find a lot of high sounding arguments that make it hard to believe this book and the question is how do you deal with that? How do you deal with what this person is saying about the Bible or about Jesus? Or what this person has written or what these experts say? It's always experts, right? The experts, and you really look at their qualifications and you're like, "What makes you an expert?" "You know, I just call myself one. That's what makes me an expert." But anyway, so you hear what they're saying, what do you do? Well, you go to the Bible. Hear God on his own terms. Don't listen to what people are saying about the Bible but go to the Scripture itself, and this is what Matthew is doing for the Jews in that day.

They have questions that they're wrestling with. Let's think about four types of questions. This is point 1, the purpose of Matthew to answer their questions. There are four kind of questions that the Jews of the first century are having. First is they have theological questions. These are stumbling blocks for them. Jesus has articulated some things about the kingdom of God that are very different than they expected; that did not line up with their theology, their beliefs about the kingdom of God. And so Matthew is determined to explain to them under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he presents to them, you know, many places where Jesus goes off into long discourses expounding what his kingdom that he's come to build is about. Matthew 5-7, the Sermon on the Mount essentially is a manifesto of the kingdom of heaven. In fact, the key phrase from Matthew in his Gospel is "the kingdom of heaven." More than 30 times he says that, which actually one of the ways that you know it's written primary to Jews because he doesn't use the word "God." He tries to, I mean, he does use it but he tries to keep it to a minimum. So when he says the kingdom, normally you would say of God, he says of heaven which is very Jewish because they out of desire to not in an overly sort of scrupulous desire to not offend against the third commandment, remember the third commandment? You shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. Don't use God's name in a common way. So they would try to not say the name of God or the name of Jehovah, Yahweh, they would use other words.

So Matthew's doing that: kingdom of heaven, kingdom of heaven, kingdom of heaven, but he's teaching them about the kingdom and he lets Jesus, he lets them hear Jesus

expound beautifully, Matthew 5-7, the Sermon on the Mount, "This is what My kingdom is about. It's a spiritual kingdom. The citizens of My kingdom are people who come to be poor in spirit. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. They see themselves as impoverished spiritually before a holy God. My people are people who having seen themselves like that mourn over their sin, not over what other people have done to them as much, over their sin." Certainly there's reasons to mourn for what other people have done to us, many of you, many of us, but that's not the ultimate reason of mourning. The greater cause of mourning is when we see ourselves before a holy God and we see our sinfulness and our rebellion and our wickedness. That makes us mourn at the deepest level of the soul. "These are the citizens of My kingdom who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who are meek, who believe in Me." Essentially.

So Matthew 13, the parables of the kingdom. He expounds the kingdom. He corrects their understanding theologically of what the kingdom is about, but then the second area of controversy, it's not just theological questions but biblical and textual questions. They were looking at their Bible and they were majoring on places where they found things, "Hey, this doesn't seem to be fulfilled." And so what Matthew is concerned to do is to show them that everything about Jesus and his ministry is fulfilling the Old Testament.

Ten times in his Gospel, we had one of them in the passage we just read, it says something like this, like we read in verse 22. After he says what the angel said to Joseph, what does Matthew then add? "Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet," and then he gives a quotation from Isaiah 7:14. He says, "This happened to fulfill what God had promised 725 years before Jesus was born. This is fulfilled." He does that 10 times and he does it again and again and again in his letter. We'll see a couple of them in a moment. So he's making clear that the Bible, the Bible is fulfilled in Jesus. The Old Testament Scriptures all point to Christ.

So they had biblical questions, he's answering those. They had theological questions, he's answering those. They also had some other questions that really made them stumble at seeing Jesus as the Messiah. They had geographical questions. You know, remember what John, in John's Gospel how he starts it off in chapter 1:46 when the disciples are just beginning to find Jesus and they go and they find a guy named Nathaniel and they say, "You gotta come see. We found the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth." You remember what Nathaniel says? "Nazareth? Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" That's like, yeah, I don't know, I hate to pick something but I lived here for a while so I can say this, "Can any good thing come out of Mississippi?" I lived there for three years, two years. We actually liked it a lot there. But can any good thing? You would think that. That's how we thought going. Why would we want to go there? We went there to study. We didn't choose to go there other than we had to go there. No, really, we went there to study for seminary but it was a blessed time. Every place where people love Jesus is wonderful and you go there and you get used to it, right? But we had those kind of prejudicial attitudes, don't we, geographically?

In fact, you encounter it again in John. John makes this point in John 7 when the Pharisees are conferring about Jesus and what he said at one of the feasts, and they're

upset about what he's doing and they're plotting what they can do to stop him and Nicodemus says, "Hey, we need to hear him out," and one of the guys says, "Are you also from Galilee?" An insult. "Are you from Galilee too like He is?" And he adds, "Go search the Scriptures. No prophet comes from Galilee." That's not exactly right, Jonah came from Galilee. But you see they did think geographically and some of their geographical thoughts were correct, a lot of them weren't.

But they had these questions. So imagine you're a first century Jew and you're hearing, "Hey, believe in Jesus. He's the Messiah." But you think, "Man, His kingdom is so different than what we've been expecting." Theological questions. You've got biblical questions. "Wait, isn't the kingdom supposed to happen in this way? Is He really fulfilling the Old Testament?" You have geographical questions. "Wait a minute, Jesus of Nazareth? From Galilee? He's the Messiah?" Then you also had personal questions, a fourth, this is 1D. Not just theological, biblical, geographical, but personal questions and this would have been played up really big in the Jewish circles.

There was a cloud of illegitimacy around Jesus all throughout his life because everyone knew that he was raised by a man who was not his father. That his mother got pregnant when she was betrothed. And what would you infer just logically infer from that? There's only one logical inference, isn't it? She had relations with somebody, this is how you would think, it's what Joseph thought, she had to have had relations with somebody besides him. So this was a scandal and the hint of that scandal was an aroma around them throughout I'm sure his growing up years. In fact, I think it's one of the reasons there was no room for them in the inn in Bethlehem. I think it's reasonable to infer that some of the people who might have taken them in didn't because they didn't want to be associated with a scandal. It's certainly something to consider.

There was also the fact that if you hear about this Jesus of Nazareth and you think about who are his disciples? His disciples are not made up of scribes or Pharisees, and Pharisees in those days was the good thing. This is where you've gotta go back into the first century. Pharisees were like the best of the best. They were the theological Marines. I mean, they could explicate and they really felt like, now they didn't have the heart of the Scriptures, they weren't born again so they were missing it all, but they were learned in the Scriptures just not in a true heart of the word. They didn't really understand because these things are spiritual discerned. You have to have the Spirit of God to understand the word of God and they didn't have the Spirit.

So his disciples, there's no Pharisees, there's no scribes, there's no priests. His disciples are fishermen and tax collectors, zealots. I mean, you can see how this would begin to, "Really? You're saying this guy's the Messiah and He gathers around Him a ragtag group like that?" Well, now the people he's writing to are all spread out throughout the whole Mediterranean world. They didn't get to talk to these people directly. They're just getting the second and third and fourth and fifth hand reports of it. But these are real questions.

Then you might have also heard that Jesus had a way of having people around him that were of ill-repute themselves. I mean, one of the women that is highlighted in all four

Gospels is a woman, Mary Magdalene, who was a prostitute, demon-possessed, and yet she was loved by Jesus and revered by him and revered by all of the people who followed Christ as a true woman who had been made pure by believing in the Messiah. But you understand now, you hear about that, just like the Pharisees would say, they would say, "Why is your Master eating with sinners and tax collectors?" So you see these personal questions. His own cloud of illegitimacy. His disciples, in fact, he was a friend of sinners. How do you make sense of this?

In a sense, I want to just walk through a couple of these. Speaking of the geographical questions and then we'll see personal where we'll really spend our time on today. Matthew actually addresses them and when you understand this, it makes sense of the way he tells things. After chapter 1, in chapter 2 he tells us about Jesus. Look at chapter 2, verse 1, "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea," what's he dealing with? A geographical question, and he goes on to show that, "Yeah, those Pharisees and scribes were right." Remember when the wise men come looking for Jesus. They see a star in the East. They come to find him and they go to Jerusalem which made sense. Stars in that area, I mean, you know, it looks like it's over that area so they would just go to, but you've gotta go to Jerusalem. That's where the king's gotta be. They go and they find out, "Well, no, the Messiah is not here." "What are you talking about the Messiah? We don't know anything about Messiah." And Herod sends for the scribes to tell him where is the Messiah supposed to be born, and the scribes say, "Clearly the prophet said in Bethlehem of Judea. That's where the Messiah will go forth from." Well, Matthew's pointing out that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Nobody knew this much, I mean, because he wasn't raised there.

So he's addressing that issue, the geographical questions they have. In fact, he goes on to explain why Jesus is raised in Nazareth. When you read the story, I'm gonna summarize it for you and invite you to read the chapter. It would be a great thing to do this week getting ready for Christmas. But remember that Herod hears about the wise men don't go back and tell him where they found Jesus. He says, "You go tell. Find Him and tell me where He is so I can come worship Him too." But Herod wants to kill the baby because he doesn't want any threat to his throne and the wise men are warned in a dream not to go back to Herod so they go back a different way. They make it back toward the East and they never tell Herod. Herod finds out about it and he sends word to have every child under two years old, male child killed in Bethlehem. He's going to eradicate whoever this Messiah was. But Jesus has escaped because Joseph was warned in another dream to get up and flee because someone's gonna come after the child and he goes into Egypt. Well, he stays down in Egypt for a while until Herod dies and he comes back. Rather than settle anywhere around Jerusalem it says in verse 22 of chapter 2, after being warned in a dream he goes to Galilee. He was afraid to go back to Jerusalem or the vicinity of Jerusalem. He goes to Galilee, back to Nazareth, and Matthew then adds at the end of chapter 2, verse 23, "He came and lived in a city called Nazareth. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets, 'He shall be called a Nazarene.'" He brings another Old Testament verse that says, boom, there it is again.

Now let me just say something about this. The fact that he mentions 10 prophecies, you know, there are different numbers depending on how they are allusions to the Old Testament that you could say, "Hey, that's exactly what Jesus did." You know, in Psalm 22, "They pierced My hands and My feet," David says. "They bargained for My clothes." That exactly what happened on the cross, written 1,000 years before Jesus was born. That was fulfilled.

There was a study done by a guy, a professor of mathematics and astronomy at Pasadena College and he had his students, he assigned them the question: how, what is the probability of eight prophecies being fulfilled? Now there's probably more like, you know, somewhere between six dozen and 100. You can find things in like 55 that are real clear. But so eight. What's the probability of eight prophecies being fulfilled in the man Jesus? The Old Testament prophecies written at least 400 years before he's born, what's the probability of that one event? Here's the quick answer: 1 times 1 over 10 to the 17th power. That is, if I'm correct, that's a hundred thousand trillion. One in a hundred thousand trillion, 17 zeroes. And this guy went on to say they did some geographical work themselves and they said if you had silver dollars and you filled the state of Texas, the whole state of Texas, the area of the state of Texas, if everything was covered in silver dollars, that many, 1 to the 17th power, 1 times 10 to the 17th power, it would be two feet deep of silver dollars. And so put a blindfold on somebody and have them go find the one that you're looking for that you mark with a little thing on it. That's the probability of eight prophecies being fulfilled and yet we have, you know, dozens and dozens of prophecies. This is a certain hope that we have.

So he has these questions that he wants to answer. That's the purpose of Matthew, to answer the questions that are hindering people from coming to Christ as King. Now the person of Jesus, the second point, the second point in the outline, the person of Jesus. We saw the purpose of Matthew, now the person of Jesus. What is interesting to me, again if you try to read this as you're reading it for the first time, that you don't know what's coming, it kind of jumped out at me if I was a Jew reading this for the first time, reading back into the genealogy, how it would have surprised me that Matthew says what he says in verse 16. In the genealogy, remember it starts off Abraham, verse 2, was the father of Isaac. Isaac the father of Jacob. Jacob the father of Judah etc., all the way down, and then it says in verse 16, "Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary by whom Jesus was born who was called the Messiah." Now what's interesting is Matthew in giving this genealogy says Jacob was the father of Joseph but he doesn't say Joseph was the father of Jesus because he wasn't. But I'm just pointing out that he raises the question right there and he doesn't address it first. Like if were doing this, I would think, "Hey, I know you guys have heard this but Jesus is the Son of God." I'd start off there. I wouldn't have gone into the genealogy first.

But he starts off with the genealogy and in the English we don't hear it quite the same way. Actually the King James would be better in this particular place because what you would be reading is Abraham begat Isaac. Begat, remember that word? That's a great word, isn't it? Don't use that in a sentence very often, do you? Abraham begat Isaac. Isaac begat Jacob. And the word basically means to cause to be born. It's an active voice verb

which speaks of human procreation, the man fathering a child. It's a very appropriate way of saying it. There's no negative connotations but so it's the idea that he fathered. So we say was the father of, but if you hear it in the King James, it's like Abraham begat Isaac. Isaac begat Jacob. Jacob begat Judah. David begat Solomon. Solomon begat Rehoboam. Josiah begat Jeconiah, etc. all the way down. You know, Azor begat Zadok, verse 14. Zadok begat Achim. Achim begat Elihud. Elihud begat Eleazar. Eleazar begat Matthan. Matthan begat Jacob. Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary by whom Jesus was born. The word "was born" is the same verb but it's a passive verb. It's not the active "begat," it's "was born," and it's making it real clear and emphatic something was radically different about the birth of Jesus and his relationship to Joseph. There's a sense in which Matthew is raising the question. It's actually like he says as he's writing, he's writing and he's telling them about, you know, the genealogy and he says, "Hey, who is Jesus' father?" And the Jews reading it are like, "That's exactly what we wanted to know. You're trying to prove that He is the Messiah. Why would you be right?" This would be one of the things you'd want to kind of hide. You know how we can sort of hide facts we don't want people to see but Matthew raises it.

He asked the question. "You're probably concerned about who the father of Jesus is." Yeah, because they've heard about the illegitimacy and they're wondering, "Yeah, Joseph raised Him but who really is His dad?" And this is furthered, I think, in verse 18 when he says that word I told you before the birth, the word "birth" is actually the word "genesis" which means genealogy. It's like he's underscoring and highlighting, "I want to address this question that you have and that you've heard about. You've heard a lot of slanderous things said about Jesus and I want to just deal with them directly and openly and frankly."

This is how God deals with things. When you have a heart to hear from him and really learn, he deals with your questions directly and openly. You don't have to be afraid to come to God with your questions. Now you come humbly and if you're not gonna come willing to submit, he won't talk to you. It'd just be judgment on you, more judgment when you go to hell because you didn't want to listen anyway. But if you're open and willing to listen, he will speak to you through his word.

So he raises the question. Who is his father? Who is Jesus' father? And in a sense with that word "genesis," where did he come from? And like the way he's crafted it, it's sort of like makes it really stand out. This is one of the things I was thinking about. I've been in studying, you know, counseling and ministry and stuff, one of the things we've been learning is that so often we just go to making statements. We see something wrong in somebody's life, you know, especially with family, friends that we're close to or whatever, especially family we feel like we can say what we need to say, right? So we see something wrong and we're like, "Oh, I have the answer for you. You're just doing this wrong and this wrong. You need to do this." And one of the things that's really interesting is God throughout the Bible has a different way of addressing problems. He addresses them directly but he doesn't address them directly right up front. What he does is he asks a question and by asking the question, he makes the person actually ask the question themselves.

I mean, think about this, the first, after Adam and Eve sinned, what does God do? What's the first thing he says? He's gotta come down and fix things. He knows what's happened. He knows where Adam is but what does he say? He says, "Where are you, Adam?" God does not need that information. Already has it. Why does he ask it? Adam needs to say and think about, "I'm hiding from You." He says, "What have you done?" That's the next question. God already knows what he's done. He has to tell him and, "What have I done?" You see, it makes you step back from it, "Where am I? What am I doing here? What have I done?" Now your heart is ready to receive the word. What happens is we often say something when somebody's not even ready, they don't even know they need it and you're already giving them solutions and just like water off a duck's back. But if you can learn to ask the question, raise the question, really get them thinking, "Yeah."

This is what Matthew's doing. He's really getting them thinking, "Yeah, who is Jesus' father? Where is He from? What are you going to tell us about that?" Now he gives it to them, the answer. The person of Jesus, the second point, you could say the first subpoint was I just gave you, A., it's already completed, raises the question. And then secondly, he answers the question and essentially what he says is, his answer to the question, "Who exactly is Jesus? He's the Son of God. Where did He come from? He came from heaven." That's his answer and he gives it to us by giving us the account of what actually happened in the life of Jesus' earthly father, the one who raised him as his son, that is Joseph.

And he lets us experience even the question through Joseph's eyes. I mean, we get to imagine what it would be like to have been Joseph who loves Mary, she obviously was a godly woman. We know from Luke's Gospel what the Lord said to her when he came to her. Joseph is a godly man, a righteous man the Scripture says. These are two people who, I think, have already been born again by hoping in the future Messiah. Godly people.

So Joseph's so excited. You know how, I mean, when you're getting ready to get married as a young man and you love your wife and you can't wait to be married, what a joy that is. Isn't that just tremendous? Like so happy. Everything's wonderful. Joseph is feeling like that. He's doing the period of betrothal. When you engaged in the Jewish culture, an engagement could last up to a year but it was as if you were married but you could not be together physically because that must wait until the vows have been said before God, the marriage ceremony. Now they had been betrothed. Joseph is anticipating that moment but one of the things that's common about betrothal is they go ahead and pay the dowry up front, the money is given, the plans are made, and then they spend almost all of their time apart for the entire betrothal period.

And so Joseph doesn't get to see her every day. It's not like he's coming over and sitting on the porch and talking to Mary, you know, on the swing, porch swing. No, he's not seeing her. He gets word that somebody has seen Mary and something is not right. She's beginning to show. Can you imagine? His heart is broken and he's dealing with the disappointment. Now she's been, "I can't believe she's been unfaithful but there's no other explanation." She's not saying that she was raped. That's not been reported to him. But being a righteous man, he doesn't want to put her to anymore pain. He plans to divorce

her quietly, secretly, put her away secretly, that is, to end the marriage arrangement and to say, "No, I'm not gonna marry you. It's not appropriate." But he's not gonna do anything retributive to her to hurt her. God says this is good that he was that way.

"But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.'" What that must have been like to hear that. I mean, to hear an angel. Of course, he had it in a dream which I would prefer if I was gonna see an angel, to see it in a dream, wouldn't you? It seems a little better. Mary got the angel directly, bam, there it is. Anyway, I don't think any of us are gonna have to worry about that.

An angel in a dream comes to him and he speaks very clearly to him and he tells him, "Listen," and Joseph receives it as a command. That's what we're told in verse 24, he "did as the angel of the Lord commanded him." It's an interesting word translated "command." It actually, it speaks of prescription instructions, details, and like a sequence of events. And so what he's saying is that what we have what he said, the angel said, "Don't be afraid. So stop being afraid. Take her as your wife but the child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit, and that's holy." And so Joseph knows he should not have relations with her until after the child has been born and they don't until after the child is born and then they have several other children. And then the instruction is, "But you must name Him Jesus." Why? "For He shall save His people from their sins."

The answer of who Jesus is and where he came from, he is the Son of God. The reason that Mary was pregnant in betrothal was because the Holy Spirit did something that has only happened once in history, God entered time and space in the person of Jesus as an embryo in the womb of a poor Jewish girl and the message is told even in the name. In fact, there's an emphasis on the phrase "call His name." Three times in the passage you see that. First of all in verse 21, "She will bear a Son and you shall call His name Jesus." Verse 23, after Matthew says, "This was spoken to fulfill what the prophet said. Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son and they shall call His name Immanuel." And then in verse 25 after "she gave birth to a Son; he called His name Jesus." The name is very significant in Jewish culture. The name speaks of the character of a person. Our names are just labels. You know, we don't have anything attached to them, at least most of us. I don't know anybody that has a name that they just talk about what my name means. I mean, you do that when you're getting ready to name a child, you know, you look it up in the books, right, or online, I guess, now. They didn't have, we didn't have online when my kids were being born so we looked it up in the books, name books. But names for the Jews, their names meant something and Jesus actually literally in Hebrew would have been pronounced Yeshua or Yahshua. It actually means "Yahweh is salvation," and the name meant that, and so it was like actually walking around if I said, "Hey, Yahweh is salvation, come here. I need to talk to You for a moment." Or, "Hey, God is my judge, over here right now." That's Daniel. But that's what it would have sounded like to them. They heard the concept in the name.

So the name is very important and what's interesting here is we're told call his name at the beginning and end, Jesus, but in the middle they shall call his name Immanuel, which translated means "God with us." That's the prophecy from Isaiah 7. Interesting to read that portion of Isaiah but what I want to point out is if you don't already know what's happening and you think about it for the first time, "Hey, why did the angel say call His name Jesus but Matthew says this fulfilled what was said, they're gonna call Him Immanuel. They didn't call him Immanuel, they called him Jesus." Well, this opens up one of the realities that we see in the Scripture is you have multiple names for occasionally for the same people, but what you have is you always have multiple names for God. When you read through the Bible, there are all kinds of names for God. There's a couple of main names, Elohim and Yahweh, but they're often accompanied by other words with them.

You need to read through like Genesis 14. Abraham finds out that the God he's worshiping, Yahweh, is also known as El-Elyon, God Most High. Genesis 16, we find that the God Abraham worships also known as El-roi, the God who sees. That's Hagar. Genesis 17, God, Yahweh, appears to Abram and says, "I am El Shaddai, God Almighty." Genesis 22 when Abraham and Isaac, the story of Abraham offering Isaac, he finds, remember the ram in the thicket, and he says, "The Lord will provide." He names him the Lord will provide. That's Jehovah Jirah or Yahweh Yira.

One of the things that I think that shows you the deity of Jesus Christ is that the man Jesus has all kinds of names just like God. Think about all the names of Jesus. He's Jesus. He's Immanuel. He's the Son of Man. He's the Son of God. He's the Lord. He's the Lord of glory. He's the Lamb of God. He's the Great I Am. He's the Prince of Peace. I mean, we could go on and on and on with the names of Jesus. They are names that show you the glory of who he is and Immanuel is one of his names and it means "God with us." Isaiah prophesied that there would be a day when a virgin would give birth and it would straighten everything out because that virgin would give birth to a child whose name would be Immanuel, that is, that child would be in his coming God becoming into our world and being with us.

Immanuel, God with us. That's who Jesus is. He is fully God who has come into full humanity. I mean, do you ever think about the fact that he was, God is in the womb? I mean, that just seems if you really ponder it, that's amazing. God is in the womb of Mary experiencing that. He comes into this world through the birth canal, the birthing process. Why? Because that was necessary for God to come all the way down to where we are to experience everything that we experience so that he could also do the other name that's here, the two names that are highlighted and the one that's highlighted most is the name Jesus, Yeshua, Yahweh is salvation, Yahweh saves. He has come to save. He has come all the way down to where we are so that he can save us.

It's important to note, what does he save us from? This is something that people get really mixed up about. Julius mentioned in his testimony about the extremes and errors of much of modern evangelical theology, the charismatic movement and others, they believe, many people believe Jesus came to save us from suffering or they believe that he came to

save us from difficulty. We're not supposed to have any difficulties anymore. We're supposed to have all good circumstances. He came to save us from poverty. Now he's promised he'll give you enough to eat but he's not promised us wealth and riches. No, Jesus has come to save us from sin, something much more important than the physical circumstances of your life. In fact, he tells us in this world, to his disciples before he is about to be crucified, "In this world you will have," what? "You will have tribulation. You will have trials and you will have tribulations but be of good cheer, I've overcome the world and I am with you in it."

So the biggest issue always in our lives is our sin. That's why we need to come to faith. We need to repent and believe the Gospel and turn from our sins. The biggest issue, the biggest problem that you or I could ever have is being separated from God by our sins. You can think about all the things around you that you don't like, all the people that have failed you, it pales in comparison to the one dominant issue, you are separated from God because you're a sinner just like me and your only hope is to repent and place your faith in the Savior, Jesus Christ.

Then as a Christian, our greatest problem is always, my greatest problem is always my sin. I don't think that. I have to constantly remember that, be reminded of that. I tend to think my greatest problem is that driver in front of me. My greatest problem is that nobody will just get on my agenda. If everybody would just do what I'm saying to do. You know, do you ever feel like if everybody would just do what, I figured this out. It's really ridiculous that we think that way but I confess, it's part of sin. We think we know more than we know. If everyone would just do what I say, we would just really, this thing would work so much better. And we get frustrated they don't do that, like they're really going to. They're thinking the same thing. We're all a bunch of kings thinking if everybody would do what we think ought to be done, it would all work. None of us are willing to submit and the reality is there's only one who can be king, there's only one who is worthy to be king, there's only one who has the knowledge to be king, the grace to be king, the righteousness to be king, and his name is Jesus and the reality is all of us need to stop trying to be king and we need to bow the knee. He's worthy. He's so worthy he came and experienced everything that you have ever experienced or ever will experience. You experience rejection, you experience betrayal, Jesus knows what you're going through. He knows everything that you will ever suffer. He has experienced it and this is what Hebrews 2:14 says, he had to become like us in every way so that he could be a faithful high priest and make atonement for our sins.

Isn't that amazing that God went to that much trouble to save sinners? That is the good news of Christmas. The good news of Christmas is God is like that. You want to know what God is like? Look at Jesus. How wonderful, how glorious a Savior. Why would you not submit to such a loving King? The good news is all you have to do is come to him. You don't have to clean yourself up, you just come to him and you surrender. Come to him as you are and surrender and he will start changing you on his own, by his own grace and power. Why? Because his name is Jesus. He saves you from your sins.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Our Father, we rejoice in the glory of our great Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank You that He is able to save to the uttermost the one whose hope is in Him. Father, we thank You that He is not just the Son of Man but He is the Son of God, that in Him true salvation happens, full penalty is paid on the cross as He died on the cross He paid for the sins of everyone who would ever trust in Him and He makes salvation available to all who will call upon Him. What a glorious Savior. We pray that He would be exalted in our hearts and we pray for those that are here that need to repent and believe today, that they would know that today is the day of salvation, that they would run to Jesus and, Father, that all of us would rejoice in His glory this holiday season. We pray in His name. Amen.