

Gospels Study and Discussion Questions

Lesson One: Jesus' Birth and Onset of Ministry – Matthew 1-4, Luke 1-2, and John 1

Unless otherwise noted, all questions in this lesson and subsequent lessons refer to the underlined Scripture references listed at the beginning of each of the five sections within the lesson (often given as readings).

Read Jesus' genealogy in Matthew 1:1-17.

- 1) What do the fourteen men listed after David have in common? See several of the following references to get the idea. One reference is listed for each man (Jehoiachin and Jeconiah are names for the same individual). 1 Chronicles 28:5, 2 Chronicles 9:30-31, 12:16, 14:1, 17:1, 21:1, 26:1, 27:1, 28:1, 29:1, 33:1, 33:21, 34:1, 36:9.
- 2) According to the Old Testament, the Messiah would descend from King David (2 Samuel 7:11-16). Based on what you learned in Question 1, for what likely reason did Matthew include Jesus' genealogy in his Gospel?
- 3) List the surprising facts you discover about Messiah's ancestors from the following passages: Genesis 27:36, 38:13-16; 2 Samuel 12:7-10; 1 Kings 11:4; and 2 Kings 21:6, 16. Read Galatians 4:4-5 and tell what encouragement you receive from all of the preceding passages about the fact that Jesus came to redeem *you* and make *you* God's child and heir.

Read Matthew 1:18 – 2:23.

- 4) To what Old Testament predictions does Matthew refer in 1:18-23; 2:1-6; 2:14-15; 2:16-18, and 2:23? What was Matthew intending to prove by them?
- 5) Reread Matthew 1:18, 22-23 with Luke 1:34-35. What clear statement is presented about whether or not Mary was sexually active? How do the verses explain her pregnancy (who was Jesus' Father)?
- 6) What do you learn about Jesus' person, origin, character, and mission from John 1:1-5, 9-18 (John calls Jesus "The Word" and "God the One and Only/the Only Begotten Son")?

- 7) As indicated by all the passages cited in Questions 4-6, the Gospel writers believed Jesus was no ordinary human being. Would you say that your view of Jesus is as lofty as that of the Gospel writers? If not, why not? If so, which current, personal decisions are being impacted by your high view of Him?

Read Luke 1:26-38, 46-55, and 2:1-51 (You may also refer to Matthew 1:18 – 2:23 and John 1 for your answers).

- 8) Use all of the above passages to very briefly (in a few words) describe:
- a) Mary
 - b) Joseph
 - c) Simeon
 - d) Anna
 - e) King Herod
 - f) The Shepherds
 - g) The Wise Men
- 9) Who made sacrifices (knowingly or without knowing) for (or as a result of) Jesus coming into the world as a baby? What were their sacrifices?
- 10) Based on what you have read in this lesson and any other Bible study you have had, what makes Jesus' birth sacred, awesome, and celebratory? How will you celebrate today (be as specific as possible)?

Read Matthew 3.

- 11) Skim Mark 1:2-11; Luke 1:5-25, 57-80; 3:1-22; and John 1:6-8, 15, 19-34 for additional information about John the Baptist.
- a) Who was John the Baptist and what was his message?
 - b) John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. Define repentance.

- 12)** According to Romans 6:1-5, what is the meaning of Christian baptism? Have you followed Christ's example and command (Matthew 28:19 and Acts 2:38) by being baptized? If so, plan to share about this experience with your discussion group. If you have received Christ and yet have not been baptized, whom will you ask this week to help you make the arrangements?

Read Matthew 4:1-25.

- 13)** Consider Jesus' temptation and read Hebrews 4:15 and 1 John 2:16.
- a)** Matthew 4:1 says Jesus was tempted by "the devil." What other names does the Bible give the devil (see Genesis 3:1, Matthew 13:19, John 8:44, 12:31 and Revelation 12:9)? Do these verses depict him as merely a concept of evil or an actual being?

 - b)** Describe the three ways Jesus was tempted and His method of resistance.

 - c)** Read James 1:13-15 and Philippians 4:11. Behind every evil desire that entices us lies a spirit of discontent. What temptation or inner restlessness can you trace to discontentment? What Bible verse can you use today to combat this discontentment?
- 14)** List the activities that were a part of Jesus' early ministry by skimming or examining any titles/headings given in your Bible for Matthew 4:12-25, Mark 1:14-3:19, Luke 4:31-6:16, and John 1:35-4:42.
- 15)** How could you follow Jesus' example this week by...
- a)** teaching someone you do not know very well something about the Kingdom of God?

 - b)** bringing healing in someone's life?

 - c)** building into the life of an individual you are intentionally training/discipling?