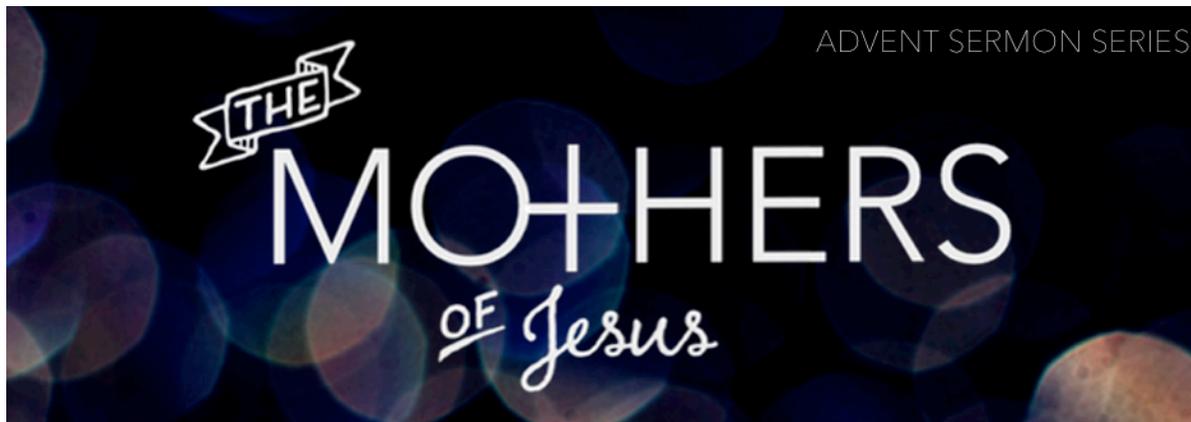


**WEEK 1 | WAITING FOR THE REAL KING: URIAH'S WIFE
MATTHEW 1:1-17**



ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER (5-10 MINUTES)

Catch everybody up to date on what's going on with New City. You can use your bulletin or the [Weekly Roundup](#) as a tool to do so (especially remind folks of Christmas Party and Hymnsing on Friday and that Christmas Store gifts are due in this Sunday)

Take a few moments to pray for any needs you know of in the church. Please include the following:

- Praise God for the generous giving to the Philippines disaster relief. We were able to send over \$3,000 to Mission to the World. Also give thanks we have 11 folks committed to the spring Mazatlan trip
- Pray that things would go smoothly with the building loan and that we could close on the Floral Ave property by early December. We are still in process of finalizing the loan.
- Pray for the Christmas Store: that families would be blessed in a tangible way by the store

ENGAGE (10 MINUTES)

Starter Questions: What is your favorite Christmas movie?

REFLECTION AND STUDY (30-35 MINUTES)

In December we are going to be looking at the genealogy of Jesus.

- 1.) Do you have any interesting stories in your family tree?
- 2.) Read Matthew 1:1-17. Why do you think Matthew begins his account of Jesus with a genealogy? How does this affect the way we read the whole of the book of Matthew?
- 3.) What do you know about the five women mentioned in this genealogy? What does this tell us about Christmas?
- 4.) Jesus is called “the son of Abraham” (v.1) Read Genesis 12:1-3. In what ways is Jesus a fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham?
- 5.) How has the fact that Jesus was born in Palestine a little over 2,000 years ago affected the history of the world?
- 6.) Verse 1 calls Jesus “a son of David.” In what ways is Jesus like David?
- 7.) Why do you think Matthew refers to “the wife of Uriah” (v. 6) rather than using Bathsheba’s name as he does with the other women?
- 8.) Optional: Pass out copies and read the summary handout as a group. Does anything jump out to you as significant?
- 9.) How are you going to make Advent meaningful this year?

PRAYER (15 MINUTES)

Break up into smaller groups of men and women. For those who are comfortable, share your applications and pray for one another.

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER – MATTHEW 1:1-17

Most of us start reading the Gospel of Matthew, read a few names in the genealogy, and skip ahead to “the good part”. But Matthew is not wasting his breath. Embedded in this list of “begats” are some clues to the meaning of Christmas.

1.) *Christmas is about history* – Matthew doesn’t begin “Once upon a time” or “Long ago in a galaxy far, far away.” This is because Matthew is not writing a myth or a fairytale. He begins with the family tree of Jesus to root what he has to say about Jesus in the well-known history of ancient Israel. This is Matthew’s way of indicating that this is an historical account. A real child was born in Palestine 2,000 years ago that changed the history of our world.

“I have been reading poems, romances, vision literature, legends and myths all my life. I know what they are like. I know none of them are like this. Of this [the Gospels] there are only two possible views. Either this is reportage [historical account]... Or else, some unknown [ancient] writer... without known predecessors, or successors, suddenly anticipated the whole technique of modern, novelistic, realistic narrative... The reader who doesn't see this has simply not learned to read.” (C.S. Lewis)

2.) *Christmas means you can trust God* – The first part of the genealogy connects Jesus to Abraham and the patriarchs (v.2-5). God made a promise to Abraham that the whole earth would be blessed through him. When Mary was told by the angel that she would give birth to the Messiah, she responded by saying that God had remembered his promises to Abraham (Luke 1:54-55). Christmas reminds us that God always comes through on his promises, though not always in the timing or the manner we expect. Israel expected a Messiah; they didn’t expect to wait so long. Israel expected a King; they didn’t expect he would be born in a manger to poor parents. Christmas reminds us that God can be trusted to make good on his promises.

3.) *Christmas is about grace* – In the ancient world genealogies were like resumes. You’d do everything you can to overlook the blots and blemishes in your family tree. Yet, Matthew doesn’t polish Jesus’ background. He includes five women, though the names of women did nothing to enhance a resume in the ancient world. The first four women were racial outsiders (non-Jews), and all of them were moral outsiders (Tamar sleeps with her father-in-law; Rahab was a former prostitute; Bathsheba has Solomon as result of an adulterous affair; Ruth seduces Boaz; and Mary is an unwed teenage mother).

“One gets the impression that Matthew poured over his OT until he could locate the most questionable liaisons possible in order to insert them into his record and so, finally, to preach the gospel even in his genealogy.” (Frederick Dale Bruner)

“Christ is the kind of person who is not ashamed of sinners – in fact, He even puts them in His family tree”. (Martin Luther)

4.) Christmas is about waiting for the real King – Verse 6 simply refers to Bathsheba as “the wife of Uriah.” Matthew could have mentioned Solomon as the heir of David without this information, but Matthew goes out of his way to highlight the story of David’s adultery, and that murder of Uriah. Matthew is reminding us that even the best guy in the whole genealogy doesn’t belong in God’s family on his own merits. Christmas highlights the failures and futility of all our kings and heroes. But Christmas tells us the real King, a greater King than David, has been born.

5.) Christmas is about peace – You’ve heard it said that Christmas is about “peace on earth and good will toward men.” At the first Christmas, peace on earth was the last thing the Israelites were experiencing. They were an occupied people since the time of the Babylonian deportation. They longed for peace, for rest from their enemies.

In verse 17 Matthew counts up all the generations, and gets three sets of 14. There is no real scholarly consensus as to why Matthew counts them up this way. One theory plays off 7 as the Sabbath principle. God rested from the work of creation on the 7th day; we are to observe a Sabbath rest; in the OT every 7th year the land would lie fallow; and every 7th Sabbath year was a Jubilee (debts were forgiven, slaves freed, etc). Anyway, Matthew counts three 14’s, or six 7’s. Jesus then is the seventh 7. He is the real rest that all these other Sabbaths are pointing to. Who knows if this is what Matthew had in mind? But at the very least, it fits with his larger presentation of Jesus as the Prince of Peace.