



Who is Jesus?

Matthew 1

Jesus of Nazareth asked his disciples, "Who do people say I am?" (*Mark 8:27*) People had different ideas or beliefs about Jesus, and that has not changed over the centuries.

1. In our world today, how do people answer the question "Who is Jesus?"?

The first book of the New Testament is the Gospel of Matthew.¹ The first chapter of Matthew provides answers to the question "Who is Jesus?" as it talks about Jesus' genealogy and birth.

Son of Abraham

Matthew begins his Gospel, "This is the genealogy² of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham" (*Matthew 1:1, NIV*). Verses 2-16 provide a genealogy to show that Jesus was a legal descendent of Abraham and David.³ The New Testament reveals the following:

- Jesus is the ultimate "seed (offspring) of Abraham" in whom all peoples and nations on earth can be blessed (*Genesis 12:3; 22:18; Galatians 3:16*).

Son of David – The Messiah

- Jesus, the son of David, is "the Messiah" (*1:1, 16-17*).⁴ As the angel told Jesus' mother Mary...

📖 "The Lord God will give [Jesus] the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end" (*Luke 1:32b-33, NIV*).⁵

More Answers to the Question

So Jesus is *the* "seed of Abraham" & the promised Messiah. What else? Read Matthew 1:18-25.⁶

2. Though a virgin,⁷ Mary "was found to be pregnant" (*1:18*).⁸ How could this be? What explanation is given? (See verses 18 & 20. Also see Luke 1:34-35.)

- Jesus is "the Son of God" (*Luke 1:35*).



¹ Matthew, one of Jesus' disciples, certainly knew 'who Jesus is' and he wanted his Gospel to make it clear to others.

² *biblos geneseōs* – 'book (record, account) of genesis (origin)'

³ It is interesting that verses 3-6 mention four women (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba ['Uriah's wife']). At least three of them are Gentiles. Anyway, the genealogy is traced through men (fathers) until verse 16. In verse 16, Joseph is not listed as the *physical* father of Jesus but rather 'the husband of Mary' who is the physical mother of Jesus.

⁴ *Christou* ('Messiah' or 'Christ') – anointed one. The Old Testament prophecies said that *the* Messiah (a great king in the line of David) would deliver God's people and establish God's rule.

⁵ Jesus is the fulfillment of the promise to David (*2 Samuel 7:11b-16*) and numerous 'messianic prophecies.'

⁶ 'birth' (*genesis*) – same word translated 'genealogy' in verse 1. 'pledged to be married' – binding commitment. Only a divorce could break it, and unfaithfulness was adultery. 'before they came together' – before they were married; before the marriage was consummated in sexual union.

⁷ 'virgin' – a person, especially a woman, who has never had sexual intercourse.

⁸ It was reasonable for Joseph to think Mary had been unfaithful. Since Joseph was a 'righteous man' – a man 'faithful to the law' (*NIV*) – divorce seemed appropriate. However, Joseph did not want her to be publicly judged so 'he had in mind to divorce her quietly' (*1:19*). But his mind was changed when the angel explained the situation (*1:20-21, 24*).

When the angel appeared to Joseph, he said Mary would give birth to a son. The angel also told Joseph to name the baby "Jesus."

3. Based on verse 21, what is the significance of the name "Jesus"? What does this tell us about Jesus' identity (who he is) and mission?⁹



Jesus is the fulfillment of Old Testament promises and prophecies. The prophecy quoted in verse 23 comes from Isaiah 7:14.¹⁰

4. What does verse 23 say about Jesus? What does this mean? (Also see John 1:1 & 1:14.)¹¹

Who is Jesus?

- Jesus is the Savior (1:21), who saves people from their sins, including the controlling power of sin and the everlasting consequences of sin.
- Jesus is "God with us" (1:23). He is God the Son who entered humanity to reveal the eternal God and provide the way for fallen humans to be restored to God.

Our Response to the Answers

5. Matthew 1 makes great claims about Jesus of Nazareth. Which of these claims do people have difficulty accepting? Why do people have difficulty accepting them?
6. Matthew wanted people to know "who Jesus is," and so should we. As believers, in what practical ways can we share "who Jesus is" with others?

Reflection/Application

- How do *you* answer the question "Who is Jesus?"? If you are not sure, seek to know! If you don't believe the Bible's claims about Jesus, seek to know why so many people do believe.
- Brothers & sisters, are you realizing "who Jesus is" on a daily basis? Humble yourself, and seek to grow in your knowledge of Jesus through God's Word, prayer, fellowship, worship and faithfulness. Reflect on question 6 and commit to share "who Jesus is" with others.

⁹ The name 'Jesus' (*Iēsous*) is the Greek form of 'Joshua,' which means 'Yahweh (the LORD) is salvation' or 'Yahweh saves.' '[The LORD] himself will redeem Israel from all her sins' (*Psalms 130:8*). The Jewish concept of the Messiah's salvation/redemption included deliverance from their enemies (e.g., the Roman occupation), but the manner, nature and extent of salvation in Jesus would differ from expectations. For example, salvation through Jesus' *death* did not fit Jewish expectations concerning the victorious Messiah. While Jewish expectations were nationalistic, the identity of 'his people' in verse 21 would not be limited to ethnic Israel but would include all who believe in Jesus and follow him.

¹⁰ Scholars disagree over Isaiah's original intent, including the meaning of the Hebrew word '*almāh*, translated 'virgin,' and the identity (or identities) of 'Immanuel.' Like many Old Testament prophecies, this prophecy may have dual fulfillment: 1) a more immediate, partial and temporal fulfillment, and 2) an ultimate fulfillment. In any case, it is obvious from Matthew, that Jesus *is* the ultimate fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14. It is also obvious that Isaiah 9:1-7, which is in the same context as Isaiah 7, refers to the ultimate 'child born' and 'son given' (9:6) – that is, Jesus Christ.

¹¹ In his historical physical presence on earth, Jesus was 'God with us' (*John 1:18; Philippians 2:5-7, Colossians 1:15-20*). Jesus is still present with his followers in His Spirit (*Matthew 28:20; John 14:23-27; Galatians 4:6*).