



Matthew: New King, New Kingdom

Cell Notes 2020

STUDY 1. Introducing a New King

Aim. To explore why Matthew chose to start his gospel like this, with reference to Jesus' background and his fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. Also, how knowing that Jesus is the fulfilment of God's long-term plan can encourage us to continue following that plan into the future.

You will need: A copy of the worksheet for each person, pens

To start with; Take 5 minutes to either;

- Discuss your favourite opening to a book, film or show? Why is it so memorable?

Or

- Give everyone a copy of the worksheet & on the blank side ask them to draw their family tree, going as far back as they can. *(People don't have to go through their tree with the group; that would take ages, but discuss how far back they can go, why that is, and how they respond to the exercise.)*

Engaging with the text;

Part 1 – 10 mins

Give everybody a copy of the genealogy of Jesus from Matthew 1 on A4 paper (enclosed). Before you read it ask people the following;

1. How do you react to lists like this in the Bible? Why do you think that is? What does it tell you about *our* culture and society?

Now read through the whole passage, get people to underline anyone they have heard of or whose story they know & anything else that strikes them.

2. Spend 5 minutes discussing what people noticed (you could do this in threes if your group is large to save time) and then ask:
 - o Why do you think Matthew included this list at the start of his gospel?
 - o How do you think the original readers would have responded to it?
 - o What does it demonstrate or teach us how might that be a helpful perspective?

Part 2 – 10 mins

Divide into 3 groups. Give each one of these passages;

- Matthew 1.18–25
- Matthew 2.1–12
- Matthew 2.13–18



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3. Ask them to do the following & then feedback;
 - o Summarise the passage in 3 sentences
 - o Why do you think Matthew included it in his introduction to the gospel? (What was he trying to show/communicate?)
4. Scholars think that Matthew was portraying Jesus as a new Moses to his Jewish readers. Moses was the great prophet who spoke 'like a friend' with God, led the people out of slavery and symbolised the Covenant.
 - o What parallels can you see between this account and the life of Moses?
 - o Why might Matthew be trying to introduce Jesus in this way?

(N.B. If you get stuck, Matthew is trying to present Jesus so Jewish readers would understand that he was the Messiah. Thus, as 'the new Moses' bringing in a 'new covenant'. He includes 5 blocks of Jesus' teaching to parallel the 5 books of Moses – the Torah.)

Application – 10 mins

5. We live in a time where knowledge of Jesus has largely been forgotten. Which aspects of his identity do you think might best introduce him or make him most accessible to those around us now?
6. How might being reminded of the length of God's plan – over millennia – encourage or comfort us in the challenges we face? Practically, what could we do to remember that when we are discouraged?

Finally, Spend some time praying for wisdom as to how we introduce Jesus in a way that makes sense to those who don't know him yet, and for encouragement for those who feel that they need a bigger perspective in general or on something specific in their life.