

**Discussion Questions for *The Gospel of Matthew* by Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri**

**Chapter 1 – A Royal Son: Genealogy and Birth of Jesus (1:1 – 25)**

1. What is the general importance of the genealogy at the opening of Matthew's gospel? What is the significance of this genealogy as specifically related to Jesus?
2. What are the literal meanings of the names *Jesus* and *Christ*, and what do they express about his identity and mission?
3. What is the significance of Matthew's associations of Jesus with David and with Abraham?
4. The authors point out that it was uncommon to include women in a Jewish genealogy. What are some of the possible reasons Matthew includes the four women he names in the genealogy of Jesus?
5. How did betrothal at the time of Christ differ from modern engagement? How does Joseph's response to the conception of Mary's child illustrate his righteousness?
6. What is the twofold importance of the angel's message to Joseph (see p. 34)?
7. What is the significance of the act of Joseph's naming of the child?
8. How is the description of the mission of Jesus, as found in the angel's announcement to Joseph, important in light of Israel's hope for a Messiah?
9. What meanings are expressed by the name *Emmanuel*?
10. Some deny the perpetual virginity of Mary by referring to Matthew's statement that Joseph did not have relations with her "until she bore a son." How is this phrase not in contradiction with the Church's consistent doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity?

**Chapter 2 – Magi and Flight to Egypt (2:1 – 23)**

1. In the introduction to this chapter, what "ironic pattern" do the authors note about the response to Jesus already from His birth? How does this prefigure the public ministry of Jesus?
2. What is the original meaning of the term *magi*? How did the magi who visited Christ become associated with kings?
3. How are both the magi and Herod linked to the prophecy of Balaam in Numbers 24?
4. What significance does the star have, and what possible explanations have been given for its appearance?
5. Why would Herod have been greatly troubled by the birth of Jesus, and why would the child's birth in Bethlehem heighten his fear?
6. How can Matthew's account of the magi finding the child and His mother in a house be reconciled with Luke's account of the child found in a manger? What is significant about the prostration of the magi, and what can it teach us about Adoration (see p. 54)?
7. What do the gifts and their bearers reveal about the identity and mission of Jesus?
8. Matthew's gospel is full of examples of Old Testament types whose fuller meaning is revealing in the New. How is the account of the flight into Egypt linked to Moses and the exodus from Egypt?

9. To what does the phrase “Rachel weeping for her children” refer? How do the dreams of Joseph in Genesis link to the dream of Joseph, husband of Mary?
10. How do the authors explain the fact that Matthew emphasizes Jesus as a Nazorean as a fulfillment of the prophets when no such prophecy is found in the Old Testament? How does this point to the value of learning the meaning of particular words and their usage in historical context?

### **Chapter 3 – John the Baptist and Jesus (3:1 – 17)**

1. Why were the Jordan River and the Judean desert of great significance to Israelites? What do these broader meanings teach about the baptism of John?
2. What does the call to repent imply? What is the meaning of the kingdom of heaven for the hearers of John and for us?
3. Why is it significant that John’s clothing and food link him to the prophet Elijah? What parallels exist between their missions?
4. How was the baptism given by John both like and different from customary Jewish rites?
5. What seems to motivate the Sadducees and Pharisees to come to John? What challenges do his words to them offer?
6. How does John portray the difference between himself and the one to come, as well as between his baptism and the one which will later be imparted?
7. Why, according to the authors, does Jesus allow himself to be baptized by John?
8. How is the baptism of Jesus like the anointing of kings in Israel? Is this experience Jesus’ first contact with the Holy Spirit?
9. How can the descending dove at Christ’s baptism show a connection to the story of Noah?
10. The authors note that God’s voice from heaven saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” contains several Old Testament allusions. What are the three allusions given, and what portrait of Christ’ identity and mission emerges?