

Dr. Craig Keener, Matthew, Session 4

Introduction to Matthew, Matthew 1

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Keener, Matthew, Session 4, Introduction to Matthew, Matthew 1, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Craig Keener's lecture on Matthew 1 explores the Gospel's central theme of **mission to the Gentiles**, evident from the genealogy's inclusion of Gentile women and recurring references to Gentiles throughout the narrative. Keener analyzes the **Great Commission** in Matthew 28, highlighting its connection to earlier themes. He further examines the **significance of Joseph's righteousness** and its implications for understanding Jesus' birth and mission. Finally, Keener clarifies Matthew's use of **Old Testament prophecies**, arguing for a nuanced understanding of their application in the Gospel's context.

2. 21 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Keener, Matthews, Session 4 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Gospels – Acts → Matthew).



**Keener_Matthew_S
ession04.mp3**

3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Craig Keener's lecture on the Gospel of Matthew, specifically focusing on the introduction and Matthew chapter 1:

Briefing Document: Dr. Craig Keener on Matthew - Lecture 4

I. Overview and Audience:

- **Target Audience:** The Gospel of Matthew was primarily written for Messianic Jewish believers, Jewish Christians, and Jewish followers of Yeshua (Jesus), the Jewish Messiah.
- **Dating:** While Papias suggests Matthew wrote first, the current form of the Gospel was likely compiled sometime after 70 AD, though dating is debated and not conclusive. The arguments are quite different from those for Paul's letters.
- **Key Structure:** Ancient works often introduce major themes at the beginning and summarize them at the end. Matthew's Gospel concludes with the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) which ties together several major themes.

II. The Great Commission and Key Themes:

- **Thematic Climax:** The Great Commission summarizes the major themes of Matthew's gospel.
- **Multifaceted Command:** The Great Commission involves a single command, "making disciples," carried out in three ways:
- **Going:** To all nations (cross-cultural ministry).
- **Baptizing:** Signifying repentance and new life.
- **Teaching:** Christian education and passing on the commands of Jesus.
- **Global Scope:** The call to make disciples of all nations is not a new idea in Matthew's Gospel, but something for which the reader has been prepared from the beginning.

III. The Genealogy and Inclusion of Gentiles:

- **Unusual Genealogy:** Ancient genealogies typically included only men. Matthew's genealogy includes four women: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. This is atypical.

- **Gentile Connection:** All four women have strong Gentile connections:
- **Tamar:** Apparently from Canaan.
- **Rahab:** From Jericho (Canaanite).
- **Ruth:** A Moabitess.
- **Bathsheba:** Married to Uriah the Hittite (with some evidence she was from Judah).
- **Purpose:** By including these women, Matthew is doing the opposite of what would normally be done in a Jewish genealogy, highlighting Jesus' royal ancestry through Joseph, while also drawing attention to the Gentile roots in Jesus' lineage. This undermines the traditional focus on purity of Israelite ancestry.
- **Early Gentile Inclusion:** This inclusion in the genealogy foreshadows the gospel's later focus on including Gentiles, and shows that it wasn't an afterthought.

IV. Gentiles Throughout Matthew's Gospel:

- **Recurring Theme:** The inclusion of Gentiles and the idea of a universal kingdom are not isolated but are woven throughout the Gospel.
- **Examples: The Magi (Matthew 2):** Foreign astrologers (from Persia) come to worship Jesus, despite astrology being punishable by death.
- **Herod (Matthew 2):** The Jewish king acts like a pagan by killing male children.
- **John the Baptist (Matthew 3):** Preaches to crowds that they cannot rely on Abraham as their ancestor, pointing towards universal salvation.
- **Galilee of the Gentiles (Matthew 4):** Jesus relocates to Galilee, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy.
- **Roman Centurion (Matthew 8):** A man of faith whose faith is praised by Jesus, highlighting faith found among the Gentiles. Jesus even states that many will come from the East and West and will sit at a table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
- **Gentile Demoniacs (Matthew 8):** Jesus heals in predominantly Gentile territory.
- **Galilean Towns (Matthew 10):** Jesus instructs his disciples to treat Galilean towns as pagans when they reject the message, making them less favorable than Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment.

- **Tyre and Sidon (Matthew 11):** Places will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than some towns that have rejected the message.
- **Nineveh and Sheba (Matthew 12):** They were better prepared for the judgment than the people of Jesus' time.
- **Canaanite Woman (Matthew 15):** A woman of the hated Canaanites petitions Jesus and is praised for her faith.
- **Caesarea Philippi (Matthew 16):** Peter's confession happens in a pagan city.
- **Preaching to the Nations (Matthew 24):** A sign of the end is that the gospel has to be preached to all people.
- **The Nations Judged (Matthew 25):** The nations are judged on their response to Jesus' agents.
- **Roman Centurions (Matthew 27):** The first to confess Jesus as God's Son after the crucifixion were the Roman soldiers.

V. Baptism and Repentance:

- **Baptism as Repentance (Matthew 3):** John the Baptist's baptism is an act of repentance, preparing people for the kingdom. This baptism was typically used for Gentile converts to Judaism, but John used it for Jewish people, signifying that all must repent on equal terms.
- **Continuity of the Message:** John's message of repentance for the kingdom is continued by Jesus and his disciples (Matthew 4:17, 10:7).
- **Changed Meaning:** In Matthew 28, baptism gains a clearer meaning. It is now in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, revealing a fuller understanding of the king (Jesus) and the Trinity.

VI. Jesus' Authority and Divinity:

- **Authority:** Jesus demonstrates authority over sickness, spirits, storms, and sin throughout Matthew's gospel.
- **Divine Claim:** In the Great Commission, Jesus claims "all authority in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18), showing the kingdom belongs to him.

- **Omnipresence:** Jesus says he will be with his followers to the end of the age, an act only God can do. Matthew has prepared readers for this, as he is referred to as "Emmanuel," meaning "God with us" (Matthew 1:23) and in Matthew 18:20, where Jesus says that where 2 or 3 are gathered, he is in their midst.

VII. The Theme of Teaching:

- **Discourse Sections:** Matthew contains five major discourse sections (some may see six), each with a specific focus:
- **Chapters 5-7:** Ethics of the kingdom (Sermon on the Mount).
- **Chapter 10:** Proclamation of the kingdom.
- **Chapter 13:** Parables of the kingdom.
- **Chapter 18:** Relationships in the kingdom.
- **Chapters 23-25:** Future kingdom and judgment on the religious establishment.
- **Discipleship:** Disciples are to be made *for* Jesus, not for themselves. They are to go out and make disciples, multiplying the work.

VIII. The Cost of Discipleship:

- **Forsaking Security:** Discipleship in Matthew requires forsaking:
 - Job security.
 - Residential security.
 - Financial security.
 - Social obligations.
 - Life itself (ready to die).
- **Absolute Standard with Grace:** These demands are implemented with grace, as seen in the disciples' repeated failures and Jesus' forgiveness and continued work with them.

IX. Matthew 1: Genealogy and Virgin Birth:

- **Official Lineage:** The genealogy traces Jesus' official royal lineage through Joseph, who was in the Davidic line and was his adopted father. This is more important than Jesus' genetic lineage through Mary.

- **Midrashic Wordplay:** Matthew uses wordplay (midrashic) on scripture by altering the names of some of Jesus' ancestors in the genealogy (e.g., changing "Ammon" to "Amos" and "Asa" to "Asaph") to make spiritual points, demonstrating that Jesus is the heir of the prophets and Psalms as well as the Davidic line.
- **Genealogy as Summary:** The genealogy summarizes history, indicating that the time for a major event in Israel's history has come (i.e. the time of the Messiah's arrival).
- **Descendants vs Ancestors:** Usually the book of Genesis has the formula of "book of the genesis of..." and this is followed by listing descendants, but here it lists ancestors which climax in Jesus. Jesus is the reason for all of Israel's history.
- **The Women Included:** Instead of including the matriarchs, he includes four women who are either Gentiles or connected to Gentiles.
- **Joseph's Piety:** Matthew highlights Joseph's piety, particularly his righteousness, as a key lesson.
- **Commitment to Marriage:** Joseph's intention to divorce Mary shows his seriousness about marital fidelity and demonstrates an important teaching that divorce is only allowed for adultery (Matthew 5:32, 19:9).
- **Compassion and Mercy:** Joseph's decision for private divorce demonstrates compassion in an age that highly valued public shame.
- **Consecration/Obedience:** Joseph's willingness to marry Mary despite the shame shows his obedience to God.
- **Self-Control:** Joseph and Mary's abstinence from sexual intercourse before Jesus' birth is an example of self-control.
- **Isaiah 7:14:** Matthew interprets the "Immanuel" prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 as ultimately fulfilled in Jesus. Matthew is aware of the context of Isaiah 7 and 8, knowing that it pointed to Isaiah's son and then ultimately a more complete fulfillment by the time of the Messiah.
- **Jesus Saves from Sin:** The lecture concludes by highlighting Matthew 1:21, noting that Jesus saves his people from their sins.

X. Conclusion:

Dr. Keener uses Matthew's introduction and genealogy to highlight major themes that are present throughout the gospel. He emphasizes that Matthew is intentional in his writing, preparing the audience for the inclusion of Gentiles and for an understanding of Jesus' authority and identity. The lecture also touches upon the nature of discipleship, which requires deep commitment and a willingness to forsake comfort and security.

4. Matthew Study Guide: Session 4, Introduction to Matthew, Matthew 1

Matthew Study Guide: Introduction and Chapter 1

Quiz

Instructions: Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. According to Dr. Keener, who was the Gospel of Matthew primarily addressed to?
2. What is the key command within the Great Commission, and how is it carried out, according to the lecture?
3. What is significant about the inclusion of the four women in Jesus' genealogy in Matthew?
4. How do the Magi and Herod in Matthew chapter 2 exemplify contrasting reactions to Jesus?
5. What does Jesus mean when he tells his disciples to "shake the dust off your feet"?
6. How does the Canaanite woman's encounter with Jesus in Matthew 15 highlight a key theme in Matthew?
7. According to the lecture, what is significant about the inclusion of baptism in the Great Commission?
8. What is important about the name "Emmanuel" in the Gospel of Matthew?
9. What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus according to the lecture?
10. How does Dr. Keener relate Isaiah 7:14 to Matthew's Gospel?

Answer Key

1. The Gospel of Matthew was primarily addressed to Messianic Jewish believers, Jewish Christians, and Jewish followers of Yeshua, the Jewish Messiah, Jesus. These were the people who were already familiar with the Hebrew Bible.
2. The key command is "making disciples," which is carried out through going to all nations, baptizing them, and teaching them what Jesus commanded. It is presented as a single command with three aspects.

3. The inclusion of Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba, all of whom are either Gentiles or have strong Gentile connections, is unusual for Jewish genealogies, which typically emphasize the purity of Israelite ancestry. It foreshadows the inclusion of Gentiles in Jesus' mission.
4. The Magi, pagan outsiders, come to worship Jesus, while Herod, the king of the Jews, seeks to kill him. This juxtaposition demonstrates God's surprise choice of the outsiders and the opposition of some established leadership.
5. Shaking the dust off their feet was an act conservative Jewish people performed when leaving Gentile areas, indicating they were to treat those Galilean towns as if they were pagan. It symbolizes a judgment on those who do not receive the message.
6. The Canaanite woman, a figure despised by many Jewish people, demonstrates great faith and receives praise from Jesus, highlighting that salvation is offered to all, regardless of their background. It also contrasts her response to that of many in Israel.
7. Baptism, while a continuation of John the Baptist's practice, now has a specific Trinitarian message of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit connected to it. This illustrates a fuller understanding of who the King in the Kingdom of Heaven truly is.
8. The name "Emmanuel," meaning "God with us," emphasizes Jesus's divine nature and omnipresence. Matthew connects this idea to Jesus' promise in Matthew 28 to be with them always.
9. Being a disciple of Jesus in Matthew's gospel means surrendering personal ambitions, security, and even one's life to follow Him. It requires a willingness to forsake job security, financial security, social obligations, and even life itself.
10. Dr. Keener asserts that Matthew knew the full context of Isaiah 7:14 and that it points beyond its original context to a greater fulfillment when God would truly be with us in a greater sense. He also suggests that Matthew's sophisticated use of scripture, while potentially different from modern interpreters, was still very intentional.

Essay Questions

Instructions: Answer the following questions in essay format. Your essays should include material covered in the lecture.

1. Discuss the significance of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20 as the climax of the Gospel of Matthew. How does it relate to the themes introduced earlier in the narrative?
2. Analyze the role of women in Matthew's genealogy (Matthew 1:1-17). How do these women challenge traditional Jewish notions of ancestry and foreshadow Matthew's later concerns about Gentiles?
3. Explore the theme of the inclusion of Gentiles in Matthew's Gospel. How is it anticipated in the genealogy, and how does it develop throughout the narrative, culminating in the Great Commission?
4. Examine the character of Joseph in Matthew 1:18-25. What does Matthew emphasize about his character, and how does this contribute to our understanding of Jesus' birth and mission?
5. Evaluate the way Matthew uses Old Testament quotations, particularly Isaiah 7:14. What does this reveal about Matthew's understanding of Scripture and his interpretation of Jesus' role as the Messiah?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Great Commission:** The command given by Jesus to his disciples in Matthew 28:19-20 to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching them.
- **Messianic Jewish Believers:** Jewish individuals who believe that Jesus is the Messiah prophesied in the Hebrew Bible.
- **Genealogy:** A list of ancestors tracing a person's lineage, used to establish heritage and significance.
- **Gentile:** A person who is not of Jewish origin or faith; a non-Jew.
- **Magi:** The wise men from the East who came to worship the infant Jesus. The lecture suggests they would be considered "pagan outsiders" by many Jewish people.

- **Herod the Great:** The king of Judea at the time of Jesus' birth, known for his cruelty and paranoia. The lecture notes he was an Edomite or Idumaeon by birth, not a Jew.
- **Midrashic word plays:** Rabbinic interpretive practices of the Hebrew Scriptures that utilize wordplays, puns, and other literary devices to derive new meanings.
- **Emmanuel:** A Hebrew name meaning "God with us," used in Matthew's Gospel to emphasize Jesus's divine presence.
- **Galilee of the Gentiles:** A region in northern Israel with a significant Gentile population, playing an important role in Jesus' ministry.
- **Discourse Sections:** Major teaching sections within the Gospel of Matthew where Jesus imparts significant lessons. The lecture discusses five major sections.
- **Disciple:** A follower or student of Jesus, committed to learning from and imitating his teachings and way of life. The lecture emphasizes that this requires forsaking personal ambitions and comfort.
- **Betrothal (Arison):** A formal engagement period in ancient Jewish culture, legally binding and preceding the actual marriage ceremony.
- **Git:** A certificate of divorce in Jewish law.
- **Bride Price:** A payment made by a prospective groom to his bride's family, meant to show gratitude and honor the bride.
- **Shame Culture:** A culture where social status and honor are very important, and dishonor can have serious social consequences.
- **Makom:** A term the later rabbis used for God, meaning "the place" or "the omnipresent one."

5. FAQs on Keener, Matthew, Session 4, Introduction to Matthew, Matthew 1, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions about the Gospel of Matthew

1. **Who was the intended audience of the Gospel of Matthew, and what is the general consensus on its date of writing?** The Gospel of Matthew was primarily written for Messianic Jewish believers, Jewish Christians, and Jewish followers of Jesus (Yeshua). While some early sources like Papias suggest an earlier date, many scholars believe the Gospel in its current form was likely written sometime after the year 70 CE. The dating of the Gospels is often debated and is not as conclusive as the dating of some of Paul's letters.
2. **How does Matthew's Gospel use genealogy, and what is significant about the women mentioned in Jesus' genealogy?** Matthew uses Jesus' genealogy to establish his royal lineage through Joseph and to make spiritual points. While ancient genealogies typically included only men, Matthew names four women: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. These women are significant because they were either Gentiles or had strong Gentile connections, highlighting Jesus' inclusive heritage despite the purpose of Jewish genealogies often being to emphasize the purity of Israelite ancestry. This signals the gospel's message is for all people and not just Jews.
3. **How does the theme of inclusion of Gentiles and outsiders unfold throughout Matthew's Gospel?** The theme of Gentiles and outsiders is present from the beginning, with Gentile women in the genealogy and the Magi worshipping Jesus. The theme continues with Jesus' ministry in Gentile regions, the faith of a Roman centurion, and Jesus stating that many will come from the east and west and sit at the banquet table in the kingdom. Jesus also uses the example of Canaanites to demonstrate faith and challenge the views of his listeners. The gospel climaxes with the Great Commission at the end of Matthew, where Jesus commissions his followers to make disciples of all nations.

4. **What is the significance of baptism in Matthew's Gospel, and how has the message surrounding it changed since the time of John the Baptist?** Baptism is presented as an act of repentance, similar to John the Baptist's ministry, but with a more developed understanding. While John's baptism was tied to repenting for the coming kingdom, Jesus' baptism, as presented in the Great Commission, is in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This signifies a more profound understanding of the nature of the king and the Trinity, as well as the need to baptize those who follow Jesus. It emphasizes the divinity of Christ.
5. **How does Matthew depict Jesus' authority, and what is his claim regarding his presence with believers?** Matthew portrays Jesus with authority over sickness, spirits, storms, and the power to forgive sins. Jesus declares that "all authority in heaven and on earth" has been given to him. Furthermore, Jesus claims that his presence will be with his followers until the end of the age, drawing upon the Jewish understanding that only God can be omnipresent. This echoes the earlier claim that Jesus is Immanuel, God with us.
6. **What are the major discourse sections in Matthew, and what do they teach about the kingdom of heaven and discipleship?** Matthew includes five main discourse sections: (1) the ethics of the kingdom (Sermon on the Mount), (2) the proclamation of the kingdom, (3) parables of the kingdom, (4) relationships in the kingdom, and (5) the future kingdom and judgment. These teachings cover the ethical and relational implications of the kingdom, and its present and future aspects. Discipleship entails making disciples for Jesus, preparing laborers for service, and multiplication of that service.
7. **What demands does Jesus place on his disciples in Matthew's Gospel, and what does it mean to "take up your cross"?** Jesus demands a radical commitment to discipleship that goes beyond typical securities and obligations. He calls for disciples to put him above job security, residential security, financial security, social obligations, and even life itself. Taking up one's cross means being willing to suffer and die for Jesus' sake, similar to how he himself is going to the cross, highlighting the challenging nature of following him. Yet it is also noted that Jesus' demands are implemented with grace and forgiveness.

8. **How does Matthew's use of Isaiah's prophecies relate to the birth of Jesus, and what character qualities are highlighted by the story of Joseph?** Matthew quotes Isaiah 7:14 (the virgin birth) within its larger context, recognizing that while it had an immediate fulfillment in Isaiah's time, it ultimately points to the greater fulfillment of Jesus as Immanuel, "God with us." Joseph is portrayed as a righteous man who demonstrates commitment to marriage, compassion, mercy, and obedience to God through his choice to stay with Mary. He also exhibits self-control by abstaining from sexual relations with his wife until the birth of Jesus.