

WIC  
WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS  
FOR WOMANHOOD

Bible Study Series



*Studies  
in*

The Gospel  
of Matthew

THE  
GOSPEL OF  
MATTHEW  
PART 1

Student Book

By Susan Hunt  
and  
Lynn Brookside

*Discipling God's Covenant Family*

---

© copyright 2003 by Christian Education & Publications  
All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise—except as expressly allowed herein or for brief quotations for the purpose of review or comment, without the prior permission of the publisher, Christian Education & Publications, 1700 North Brown Road, Suite 102, Lawrenceville, Georgia 30043.

Unless otherwise noted, Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible are from the New International Version. Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society.

Scripture quotation marked “NKJV” are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright ©1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Notes from *The Reformation Study Bible* are reprinted with permission from the Foundation for Reformation.

This text also includes quotations from the Adult Biblical Education Series, Vol. III, Book 1, *The Gospels*, Part 1 by Jack B. Scott, Ph.D. Copyright Christian Education and Publications.

ISBN: 0-9703541-8-5

## Introduction

Biblical Foundations for Womanhood Bible Study Series ....	5
Why? An Explanation from the CE&P - WIC Staff and WASC ...	7
Study Objectives ....	10
Studying Scripture from a Covenantal Perspective ....	10

## Lesson

1 The Origins of Jesus of Nazareth	
Preparation Worksheet ....	23
Class Worksheet ....	27
2 The Beginning of Jesus' Earthly Ministry	
Preparation Worksheet ....	33
Class Worksheet ....	37
3 The Content of Jesus' Teaching: Part 1	
Preparation Worksheet ....	43
Class Worksheet ....	47
4 The Content of Jesus' Teaching: Part 2	
Preparation Worksheet ....	55
Class Worksheet ....	59
5 The Content of Jesus' Teaching: Part 3	
Preparation Worksheet ....	63
Class Worksheet ....	67
6 The Content of Jesus' Teaching: Part 4	
Preparation Worksheet ....	73
Class Worksheet ....	77
7 Jesus' Mission	
Preparation Worksheet ....	83
Class Worksheet ....	85
8 The Incompatibility of Jesus' Mission with Pharisaical Judaism	
Preparation Worksheet ....	87
Class Worksheet ....	90
9 The Rising Resistance to Jesus' Mission	
Preparation Worksheet ....	95
Class Worksheet ....	98
10 Parables of the Kingdom of Christ	
Preparation Worksheet ....	103
Class Worksheet ....	106
11 The Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of Compassion	
Preparation Worksheet ....	111
Class Worksheet ....	115
12 Signs and Faith in the Kingdom of God	
Preparation Worksheet ....	119
Class Worksheet ....	123
Map	.... 127



---

## AN INTRODUCTION FOR BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR WOMANHOOD BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Christian Education and Publications provides two complementary tracks of discipleship materials for women. Each track reinforces the other. Track one, the Biblical Foundations for Womanhood books, contains topical studies that teach foundational principles of biblical womanhood. Track two is the Bible Study series.

### **THIS IS A SERIES FOR WOMEN THAT WILL:**

- Teach women to study Scripture from a covenantal perspective.
- Use the objectives and concepts of Biblical Foundations for Womanhood to help women apply Scripture to life.

The Adult Biblical Education Series books, by Dr. Jack Scott, are the commentaries for the Bible Study leader. The Biblical Foundations for Womanhood books provide the resources to assist the students in applying Scripture to life. The objectives, or foundational principles, of the Biblical Foundations for Womanhood books are:

1. To teach women a biblical perspective of their relationship with Christ, family, and church.
2. To challenge women to fulfill their helper design.
3. To help women examine the implications of the covenant in their relationships.
4. To train women to cultivate community by obeying the Titus mandate to nurture one another for God's glory.
5. To train women to be channels of compassion by obeying the Micah mandate. "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what

### BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR WOMANHOOD

Includes these books:

Leadership for Women  
In the Church

Spiritual Mothering

By Design

Treasures of  
Encouragement

The True Woman

---

does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

6. To equip women for leadership roles in the women's ministry of the church.

---

This Bible Study series recognizes that a women's Bible study does not stand alone. It is to be a part of the entire discipleship ministry of a local church. Therefore, this study does not attempt to duplicate or replace other aspects of the educational ministry of the church, but rather to focus on the specific calling to women to teach other women a biblical perspective of womanhood. Women encouraging and equipping women is the covenant way. It is a part of healthy church life. The Apostle Paul wrote to the young preacher Titus:

*You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance. Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. Titus 2:1-5*

# Why?

*An Explanation from the CE&P- WIC Staff  
and the Women's Advisory Sub-Committee*

In the March/April 2001 issue of *Equip for Ministry* Christian Education and Publications announced the publication of the Biblical Foundations for Womanhood Bible Study Series. Why has CE&P embarked on this venture to provide a Bible study series for women?


First, many have asked for inductive studies from a Reformed perspective, but this is not simply a reaction to those requests. It is an effort to provide Bible study materials that are in step with CE&P's whole approach to women's ministry in the local church. There are already good Bible study materials available, and there is no reason to publish another study unless it serves to sharpen CE&P's focus and to give cohesion to what is already being done in the area of women's ministry.

Second, these materials are written from a biblical, Reformed perspective, emphasizing covenantal theology. Often the "inductive method" tends to lift a passage out and dissect it, but it does not look at the passage in light of the over-arching covenant scheme of Scripture. That approach can lead to distorted understanding and application.

Third, these studies help to facilitate a context of covenant relationships. A covenantal approach guards against individualism that focuses only on a woman's relationship with the Lord. *The Westminster Confession of Faith* states:

All saints, that are united to Jesus Christ their Head, by his Spirit, and by faith, have fellowship with him in his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory: *and, being united to one another in love,* they have communion in each other's gifts and graces, and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man. (XXVI.1, italics added)

---



These studies will equip women to share their gifts and graces with one another by establishing and nurturing Titus 2 relationships. They will encourage women to build community within the church family and help women to be involved in ministries of compassion. One objective is that families and churches will be blessed because women gather to study God's Word.

Fourth, the Leader's Guides are intentionally designed to develop Bible study teachers within the church. It would be easy to provide a video of a dynamic Bible teacher, but then there is a danger that the ministry will become personality-driven. There is a place for the video format, but in a covenantal approach to women's ministry it is essential to build relationships between the teacher and students and among the students.

Fifth, this series is written specifically for women. It does not attempt to duplicate other educational programs of the church. These studies are driven by Titus 2 and have specific applications for women.

Sixth, there is a commitment to theological integrity and academic excellence. This objective has been achieved by using the *Adult Biblical Education Series* books as commentaries for the leaders.

## **Adult Biblical Education Series**

In 1977, CE&P Coordinator Charles Dunahoo hired Dr. Jack Scott to develop a Bible study survey for use in the Christian education ministry of local churches. The result was the Adult Biblical Education Series, a twenty-four-volume study of Genesis to Revelation.

Dr. Scott went to Korea as a missionary in 1952. He met and married Eleanor, a missionary nurse. They have four children. In 1957 they returned to the United States and Dr. Scott enrolled at Hebrew Union College to study Hebrew. He then pastored several churches and became one of the founding professors of Reformed Theological Seminary.



---

When Dr. Scott joined the church as a young child in Greensboro, North Carolina, the pastor assigned him a Scripture. “It’s something the minister did for all children,” explains Dr. Scott. “I’ll never forget the day. My Scripture was 2 Timothy 2:5: ‘Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.’” Dr. Scott says that he took his verse seriously and began reading and studying the Bible daily, compiling pages of notes and commentaries.

In commenting on his thoughts about the ABES being used as the commentary for the Biblical Foundations for Womanhood Bible Study Series, Dr. Scott said,

“I am delighted to learn that [it] will be used as a reference for your new Bible study project. . . . Preparing my studies over a period of eight years was one of the highlights of my own ministry. I learned so much, myself, about God’s Word in the process. My prayer in preparing them was that they would be a challenge to others, not just to go through what I said but to go into the Bible themselves, and learn more of the riches of God’s Word. Your project is certainly a fulfillment of my own desires for what I wrote.”



# OBJECTIVES FOR THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW: PART 1

**That the members of this study group will:**

1. Know God better (Jeremiah 24:7).
2. Know that God's relentless pursuit of His people is because of the covenant of redemption made between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit before the world began (Ephesians 1:3–14).
3. Understand that Jesus fulfilled the covenant promise and kept every covenant requirement.
4. Grow in their knowledge of the life and ministry of Jesus.
5. Grow in their knowledge of the privileges and responsibilities of citizens of God's Kingdom.
6. Rejoice in fulfilling God's design and calling for women in His Kingdom.

## **Studying Scripture from a Covenantal Perspective**

Four questions—These questions will help to explain a covenantal perspective of faith and life:

Question One: What is a covenant?

Question Two: What is a covenantal approach to faith and life?

Question Three: How do we study Scripture from a covenantal perspective?

Question Four: What are some characteristics of the covenant that can guide us to think and live covenantally?

---

## Question One: What is a covenant?

(From *Heirs of the Covenant*)

When God created Adam, He made a covenant with him. A covenant is a binding agreement with specific terms. The promise was God's presence. This is amazing because the Creator entered into an arrangement in which the creature had a claim. The Creator obligated Himself to the creature. The condition was perfect obedience. God would keep the covenant promise. Adam must obey the covenant obligation. He could not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This was the test. This would demonstrate Adam's conscious acceptance of the covenant promise. This is called the covenant of works, but it does not mean that Adam worked to earn his relationship with God. God sovereignly initiated that relationship. It means that Adam had to make a choice to remain in God's presence by subjecting himself to God's authority.


While Adam and Eve lived in God's presence, they reflected His glory to one another and to creation. So they lived in harmony with one another and with creation.

But Adam ate the forbidden fruit. He broke covenant. His covenant-breaking severed his perfect relationship with God. Because God is holy, there can be nothing unholy in His presence. His holiness will consume anything unholy. Now when Adam and Eve faced each other, and when they faced creation, they reflected their own selfishness. Adam was our representative in the covenant agreement. The consequences of His covenant-breaking thundered through creation, through history, and into every human heart.

One night after hearing the story of Adam and Eve, our three-year-old grandson Mac prayed, "Dear God, please let Adam and Eve go back to the Garden."

The good news is that God did just that. It was not a return to the literal Garden, but He made a way for them to return to His presence.

---



God was not obligated to do anything. He could have turned away from the creature and the creation. Instead He intervened. He came to the Garden. He called to the man. And He clothed Adam and Eve in garments of skin (Genesis 3:8, 9, 21). Here is the essence of the covenant of grace—God came, He called, He clothed. God comes to us while we are dead in our trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1–9). He calls us into a relationship with Himself (Acts 2:38–39). And He covers our guilt with the perfect righteousness of Christ so that we can once again live in His presence (Isaiah 61:10)—glorious, sovereign grace from beginning to end.

It has to be that way. The penalty of sin is death. And dead people can do nothing—absolutely nothing—to regain life.

As *The Westminster Confession of Faith* says:

“The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto Him as their Creator, yet they could never have any fruition of Him as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God’s part, which He hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.” (VII, 1.)

When God came to the Garden, He made a promise to the man and He pronounced a curse upon Satan. “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (Genesis 3:15).

This was not the establishment of the covenant of grace; it was the revelation of that covenant. This covenant was not established with Adam, but with Christ. This covenant was not an afterthought. It was not made in response to man’s sin. The divine agreement to redeem man was in place before man was created. Jesus, the Mediator and Head of this covenant, is the “Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world” (Revelation 13:8). Because redemption was in the divine

---

will of God, it was the same as done. “He will crush your head” was not a hoped-for future event; it was an accomplished fact. Neither were the beneficiaries of the covenant an afterthought. “For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves” (Ephesians 1:4–6). . . .

In spite of man’s performance, God returned to the Garden and said, “I will still be your God; you will be My people; I will provide the way for you to live in My presence; I will dwell among you.” This is grace. It is undeserved. Adam demonstrated his belief in the promise by naming his wife Eve, which means life. He believed that she would bear children, including the Child who would leave the glory of God’s presence in order to secure a place for us in God’s presence.

Throughout the rest of Scripture, God unwraps His covenant promise that He is our God, that we are His people, and that we live in His presence. (*Heirs of the Covenant*, pp. 24–27)

## **Question Two: What is a covenantal approach to faith and life?**

A covenantal approach is a relational model that flows out of the realities of covenant theology. This approach to teaching Scripture seeks to balance an educational and a relational component. Biblical discipleship combines teaching the content of the covenant in the context of covenantal relationships that validate the gospel of grace. Biblical discipleship imparts a way of life as we live in community with God’s covenant people.

The covenant motif runs throughout Scripture. The word is mentioned almost three hundred times. The biblical covenants give the framework of Scripture. Without understanding this framework, our approach to understanding and applying God’s Word will be cursory and convoluted.

**Psalm 78:5-7** "He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands."

## CONTENT — *Covenant of Grace*

**Psalm 119:130** "The entrance of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple."



People hide in caves of isolation and ignorance. The process of encouraging them to come out is both *educational* and *relational*. We are to shine the light of God's truth (education) *and* love (relation) so that it becomes safer to be outside the cave than it is inside the cave.

## CONTEXT — *Covenant Community*

**John 17:20-21** "My prayer is... that all of them may be one..."



**Colossians 3:12-14** "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."

A part of the teaching process in Christian education is to help our students develop covenant relationships with one another and with others in the church family. Covenant life is intergenerational.

## CULMINATION — *Covenant Compassion*

**Micah 6:8** “He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”



**Colossians 2:2, 3** “My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

The learning process is not complete until our students become covenant keepers who “put their trust in God . . . [and] keep his commands” (Psalm 78:7), who “act justly . . . love mercy, and walk humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8).

---

### **Question Three: How do we study Scripture from a covenantal perspective?**

*(From Heirs of the Covenant)*

The Bible is not simply a disconnected collection of stories. It is God's revelation of Himself. It is His story of the redemption of His people . . . .

The Bible is a covenant document. It reveals the Initiator, the promise, and the terms of the covenant. Christianity is not simply a moral code. It is a covenant relationship with the living God . . . .

In Scripture, God makes Himself known to His people. In the written Word, the living Word reveals Himself . . . .

In Scripture, God teaches me about myself. I learn that my sinful tendencies are a manifestation of my sinful nature. I learn that my sin separates me from God's presence. I learn of my desperate need for a mediator to go before God on my behalf.

In Scripture, I learn that Jesus, the Mediator of the covenant, is the fulfillment of the [promise] in Genesis 3:15. He is the Seed of the woman who crushed the head of the serpent so that we can live in God's presence. Jesus is the message of Scripture. We must see Him on every page of Scripture in order to understand God's message to us . . . .

We must see the overarching message [of Scripture] before we dip down to teach any individual part. If we "dip" without the rope, we may well drown in our own speculations about what it means. Simply telling the story of a person or an event is a superficial, fragmented view of Scripture and generally results in superficial, fragmented lives. This fragmentation usually carries us in one of three directions—legalism, liberalism, or moralism.

When we trivialize Scripture, we reduce the Christian life to formulas (legalism), or we rationalize away the demands (liberalism), or we concoct a list of things we are going to do for God (moralism). This eliminates the need for and the message of grace. A covenantal understanding



---

points us to God's sovereign grace. This enables us to have a biblical world and life view so that we see ourselves and our lives from God's perspective . . . .

We must be focused and intentional as we read Scripture. We must look for Jesus on every page. The following questions can help to magnify our spiritual eyesight:

- What does this teach me about God's character and His promise?
- What does this teach me about Jesus, the Mediator of the covenant?
- What characteristics of the covenant do I see in this passage?
- What covenant privileges and responsibilities are mine because of who God is and what He has done and is doing for me through Jesus?

*(Heirs of the Covenant, pp. 70-76)*

Read Luke 24:13-35 and answer the following questions:

Why were their faces downcast?

How does Jesus describe their hearts in v. 25?

What did Jesus do? (v. 27)

What difference did this make in the condition of their hearts? (v. 32)

What did they do? (vv. 33-34)

**Question Four: What are some characteristics of the covenant that can guide us to think and live covenantally?**

- **The covenant is sovereignly initiated and sustained, and thus eternally secure.** The more we understand this divine initiative, the more we understand that we deserve nothing but have been given everything. It is a covenant of grace. Our confidence is not in self but in God.

*Implications for life and ministry*

This knowledge produces a humility that frees us to do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves, looking not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others (Philippians 2:3-4). We have the security to cast our cares on the LORD knowing that He will sustain us (Psalm 55:22).

A covenantal perspective begins with God—who He is and what He has done for us. Then we consider our covenant privileges and responsibilities because of who He is and what He has done.

Knowing that God is the Sovereign Initiator and Sustainer means that we teach about His grace, we rely upon His grace, we cultivate environments of grace in our homes and churches, and we develop ministries that are brought about in the power of grace. In 2 Corinthians 8, Paul says that he wants us to know about the grace that God gave the Macedonian churches. They gave out of the most severe trial and extreme poverty. They gave beyond their ability. If we live and minister out of the strength of our own resources, it is just self-effort. It is not until we get beyond our ability that we begin to live in the power of grace.

- **The covenant is relational.** The God of heaven and earth is a personal God who enters into an intimate relationship with us. He binds Himself to us in covenant faithfulness.


*Implications for life and ministry*

Our relationships with each other are to mirror His relationship with us. This is not a relational model built on sentimental, felt-needs theology. It is a relational model built on the covenant of grace. There is a huge difference.

The reference point for a needs-based model is experience and feelings.

The reference point for a covenant model is the character of God as He shows Himself to us in His Word.

---



This is a relational model built on doctrines such as justification and adoption. God declares us to be just in His sight on the basis of the merits of Christ. He adopts us as His children and accepts us into His family, not because of our performance but because of His grace. This is the basis for the covenant community. These are the reasons we accept and love one another.

Our relationships in the covenant community are not about living up to each other's expectations. They are about accepting one another and reflecting God's grace to each other as we are being transformed by the power of the gospel.

People today are unusually primed for covenantal ministry because they want meaningful relationships. They have seen the relationships around them crumble and they want substantive, lasting relationships. Meaningful, lasting relationships are characteristic of the covenant of grace. It is only grace that can move us beyond self-serving relationships.

- **The covenant is familial.** From the beginning, God worked through families. The covenant promise was given to Abraham and his seed.

#### *Implications for life and ministry*

The Christian family is to exist within the context of the covenant family, the family of families, the church.

It is imperative that we understand this context because our notions about family are usually shaped more by culture than by Scripture, and we live in a culture of individualism, selfism, and materialism. We must think covenantally about the family. Scripture teaches an interdependence of individual families and the household of faith. We acknowledge our commitment to God's design for families by helping those who are married to build strong families—whether or not we are married—and by loving and caring for the children and teens in the church—whether we have children or not. Families acknowledge their commitment to live covenantally by realizing that the covenant community is part of their heritage and is a resource to help them show and tell their children about the wonders of our God.

- **The covenant is corporate.** Salvation is personal, but God does not deal with us solely as individuals. God deals with us as His children.

*Implications for life and ministry*

We are a family and there should be a deep oneness that reflects the unity of the Trinity. God's Word is to be taught in the context of a loving community. Every ministry in the church, including the women's ministry, should be diligent in seeking to cultivate a sense of community throughout the entire church family.

A covenantal perspective has a high view of and love for the church. A covenantal approach to women's ministry teaches women about the beauty and protection of the church. Even when people in the church fail us, our Savior calls us to love His bride and to pursue her peace and purity.

A covenantal perspective means that we are our sister's keeper. We have covenant privileges and responsibilities to one another. Titus 2 says that older women have responsibilities to nurture, encourage, and instruct younger women.

- **The covenant is generational.** Throughout Scripture there is the emphasis that one generation is to tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord and the wonders He has done. This is the covenant way. This was not just the responsibility of the parents. It was the responsibility of Israel. In Titus 2 this is gender specific, but it is the same covenant principle. This is why this instruction was given to the pastor of the church—it is a church issue.

You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine . . . “teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God” (Titus 2:1, 3-5).

---

*Implications for life and ministry*

Titus relationships are covenant relationships. Without this framework, they will become self-focused and self-serving. The Titus mandate calls women to teach the next generation of women about biblical womanhood. A women's ministry should challenge and equip women for a lifestyle of Titus 2 ministry to one another.

- **The covenant is compassionate.** God is a God of compassion, and we are to be a people of compassion.

*Implications for life and ministry*

A women's ministry should care for women and teach them to love and care for others. Opportunities should be provided for involvement in ministries of compassion. It's the covenant way of life.

“He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8).

- **The covenant is integrative.** The covenant is the thread that holds Scripture together. The covenantal framework of Scripture shows the purpose, harmony, and connections of Scripture. It is all about Jesus. The ultimate question of life is how we relate to Him, for it is “in Him [that] we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen” (Romans 11:36).


*Implications for life and ministry*

This integrated framework of Scripture gives us an all-encompassing worldview so that we can think about God's truth and apply that truth into all of life.

A covenantal approach to ministry means an integrated approach to ministry. All ministries of the church are to be united in purpose, vision, philosophy, and strategy.

Classes or ministries are often clustered by ages or interest, and there is nothing wrong with that. However, we must

---



be intentional in merging the vision for the various ministries into a whole.

- **The covenant is exclusive.** “You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol. . . . You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God . . .” (Exodus 20:3-5).



*Implication for life and ministry*

We must pray for wisdom and grace to demolish all idols in our lives.

- **The covenant is inclusive.** We are commissioned to “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation” (Mark 16:15).

*Implication for life and ministry*

We must always be outward focused and zealous to extend the boundaries of the covenant community to include others.



# THE ORIGINS OF JESUS OF NAZARETH

*Matthew 1–2*

LESSON

## Biblical Foundations for Womanhood

A brief look at the women who are listed in Matthew 1 is a shocking and splendid lesson.

Tamar's story makes us blush. Her husband died before they had children. According to Levirate law, the brother of a deceased man with no heir was to marry the widow and thus preserve the line. Tamar's father-in-law, Judah, told his next son to marry her. "But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so whenever he lay with his brother's wife, he spilled his seed on the ground, to keep from producing offspring for his brother. What he did was wicked in the LORD's sight; so he put him to death also" (Genesis 38:9–10). Judah sent Tamar back to her father's house and told her to wait until his next son grew up. Judah was afraid that son would die too, and Tamar eventually realized that he had no intention of sending for her. She was desperate. She dressed as a prostitute and tricked Judah. In payment, he promised to send her a goat from his flock. She insisted that he leave his signet, cord and staff as a pledge. When he sent his friend with the goat, he could not find the prostitute. Three months later, when Judah heard that Tamar was pregnant, he said, "Bring her out, and have her burned to death!" (Genesis 38:24). Tamar produced the signet, cord and staff and said they belonged to the father of the child. Judah realized the child was his and responded, "She is more righteous than I, since I wouldn't give her to my son Shelah" (v. 26). John Calvin wrote:



The Son of God might have kept his descent unspotted and pure from every reproach or mark of infamy. But he came into the world to “empty himself, and take upon him the form of a servant,” (Phil. ii.7;) to be “a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people,” (Ps. xxii.6;) and at length to undergo the accursed death of the cross. He therefore did not refuse to admit a stain into his genealogy, arising from incestuous intercourse which took place among his ancestors. . . . the astonishing goodness of God strove with the sin of [Tamar and Judah]; so that, nevertheless, this adulterous seed came to possess the scepter.

*(Calvin’s Commentaries Vol. XVI,  
Harmony of Matthew, Mark, Luke, pp. 89 & 90)*

Rahab, another name in Matthew’s genealogy, was the harlot from Jericho who sought refuge with the people of God.

Ruth, the daughter-in-law of Rahab, was also an outsider.

Bathsheba is identified but not named: “David was the father of Solomon whose mother had been Uriah’s wife (Matthew 1:6) . . .” John Calvin explains:

This taint, at the commencement of the kingdom, ought to have taught the Jews not to glory in the flesh. It was the design of God to show that, in establishing this kingdom, nothing depended on human merits. (ibid, p. 91)

Mary fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14, “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.” Mary carried in her virgin womb the promised Seed who would crush the head of Satan.

This genealogy’s unlikely sisterhood is a picture of God’s daughters. Wayward women became daughters and were guardians of the covenant lineage of King Jesus. We are His by grace. He loves us. He accepts us. We are to extend that grace to one another. (*The Legacy of Biblical Womanhood*, pp.116-117)



## The Covenant Promise

## LESSON

I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you (Genesis 17:7).

I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God (Exodus 6:7).

I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart (Jeremiah 24:7).

“This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people” (Jeremiah 31:33 and Hebrews 8:10).

I will put my dwelling place among you, and I will not abhor you. I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people (Leviticus 26:11, 12).

The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel—which means, “God with us” (Matthew 1:23).

The Word became flesh and lived for awhile among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).



Study Questions

**Day 1: Romans 1:1-7.**

- List what the passage says about the gospel of God.

**Day 2: Read Matthew 1.**

- List the names used to refer to Jesus. List the women named in the genealogy.

**Day 3: Read the stories of the women listed in the genealogy of Jesus.**

- Tamar: Genesis 38:6-30
- Rahab: Joshua 2
- Ruth: Ruth
- Uriah's wife, Bathsheba: 2 Samuel 11
- Mary: Mary fulfills Genesis 3:15 and Isaiah 7:14

**Day 4: Read Matthew 2. Then read:**

- Micah 5:2
- Hosea 11:1
- Jeremiah 31:15

**Day 5: Read Matthew 1 and 2 and circle the word "fulfill."**

# THE ORIGINS OF JESUS OF NAZARETH

*Matthew 1–2*

## 1. Gospel:

“In the margin of the celebrated Geneva Testament, printed A.D. 1557, Gospel is thus defined: ‘This worde signifieth good tidnges, and is taken here for the storie which containeth the joyful message of the coming of the Sonne of God.’” (*Calvin’s Commentaries, XVI*, p. xxxv, editor’s note.)

## 2. Responsive Reading

Leader: Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

**People: Through him and for his name’s sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ (Romans 1:1–6).**

## 3. John Calvin wrote:

First, this passage shows that the Gospel is a testimony of the revealed salvation, which had been formerly promised to the Fathers in an uninterrupted succession of ages.

Secondly, Paul means not only that Christ is the pledge of all the blessings that God has ever promised, but that we have in him a full and complete exhibition of them . . .

The *Gospel*, therefore, is a public exhibition of the Son of God *manifested in the flesh* (1 Tim. iii.16), to deliver a ruined world, and to restore men from death to life. It is justly called a *good and joyful message*, for it contains perfect happiness. Its object is to commence the reign of God, and by means of our deliverance from the corruption of the flesh, and of our renewal by the Spirit, to conduct us to the heavenly glory. (*Calvin's Commentaries, Vol. XVI, Harmony of Matthen, Mark, Luke.* Baker, p. xxxvi.)

#### 4. Purpose:

“Matthew’s approach and purpose are well summarized by the word ‘fulfilled.’ He wishes us to see how the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth is the fulfillment not only of certain Old Testament passages but of the entire Old Testament revelation. Jesus completes The Old Testament and brings it to its anticipated conclusion . . . Ultimately, Matthew’s goal is to show to the readers, unquestionably, that the Jesus of Nazareth, whom he introduces to us in these first two chapters, is the Lord of the Old Testament, who has come, as He promised, to fulfill all the promises He made to His people long ago. Matthew, as Paul, stresses the importance of our knowing that Jesus is *the Lord*, the sole object of our faith unto salvation (see Rom. 10:9–10).” (Scott, p. 1)

## 5. The Covenant Connection, Matthew 1:1-17

It is amazing that something as glorious as Jesus' birth would begin with something as boring as a genealogy—unless you understand the covenant. The glory of the genealogy is that it shouts to us that God is keeping His promise! The account of the Incarnation begins by looking back to the Old Testament because the coming of Jesus is a fulfillment of the Old Testament promises. This reference to the Old Testament shows the covenantal structure of Scripture.

## 6. Jesus Human Genealogy, Matthew 1:1-17

## 7. Jesus Divine Origin

- Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.
- Isaiah 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

## 8. The Westminster Larger Catechism:

### **Q. 36. Who is the Mediator of the covenant of grace?**

- A. The only Mediator of the covenant of grace is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, of one substance and equal with the Father, in the fullness of time became man, and so was and continues to be God and man, in two entire distinct natures, and one person, forever.

**Q. 37. How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?**

A. Christ the Son of God became man, by taking to Himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance, and born of her, yet without sin.

**Q. 38. Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be God?**

A. It was requisite that the Mediator should be God, that He might sustain and keep the human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God, and the power of death, give worth and efficacy to his sufferings, obedience, and intercession; and to satisfy God's justice, procure his favor, purchase a peculiar people, give His Spirit to them, conquer all their enemies, and bring them to everlasting salvation.

**Q. 39. Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be man?**

A. It was requisite that the Mediator should be man, that He might advance our nature, perform obedience to the law, suffer and make intercession for us in our nature, have a fellow feeling of our infirmities; that we might receive the adoption of sons, and have comfort and access with boldness unto the throne of grace.

9. The Testimony of Foreigners,  
Matthew 2:1 2, 9 12

- Prophecy: Numbers 24:17
  - Colossians 2:15
  - 1 Corinthians 15:25, 26
  - Revelation 20:10, 14

The Feast of Epiphany has often been linked with the coming of the wise men from the East. Popular tradition often portrays three wise men seeking the newborn king.

The story would have us believe that, following a successful search, they *appeared* before Christ. After all, doesn't *epiphany* mean appearance? But that's not what happened! It was Christ, or rather God's grace, which appeared to them! It was Christ's epiphany, not theirs! It was God who initiated the call which brought them. . . .

When they found the child in circumstances very contrary to what they had probably expected, they still opened their treasures. . . . Christ was not a king like any other; He was not known by everyone but was a gift of God and known only by faith. He was an "epiphany," an appearing. (*Promise and Deliverance*, pp. 31–32)

## 10. The testimony of His enemies, Matthew 2:3 18

## 11. The testimony of Scripture, Matthew 2:19 23

What does each of the passages below prophesy?

- Micah 5:2
- Hosea 11:1
- Jeremiah 31:15–17

## 12. Terms:

Incarnation: The Word, Jesus, became flesh.

Immanuel: God with us.

Christ: This title comes from the Greek word *Christos*, which means "anointed." The Hebrew word for "anointed" is *Messiah*.

Jesus: Savior, or Yahweh saves.

