



The King Is Born

Matthew 1:1–25



LESSON GOAL

Students will see God's grace in human history through the birth of the Son of God.

BIBLE TRUTHS

- God is sovereign and shows grace to sinful men.
- Jesus is both God and man.
- Joseph showed faith when he obeyed God's commands.
- Jesus came to save people from their sins.

KEY VERSE

"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

APPLICATION

- Believe that God's Word is true.
- Obey your authorities as Joseph obeyed the angel.
- Thank God that He sent Jesus to live a perfect life and die for sinful men.

NEXT WEEK

The King Is Adored
Read Matthew 2:1–12.

Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



Age Group

Teacher Planning Sheet

PREPARE

Objectives/Truths to cover this week

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Personal Application

As a result of my study in this passage, God wants me to

- _____
- _____
- _____

Three ways students need to apply this passage are

- _____
- _____
- _____

Materials Needed

POINT

Choose from various ideas to point students to the coming Bible lesson.

- _____
- _____

PROCLAIM

Choose from various ideas to proclaim the Bible lesson.

Presentation Ideas

- _____
- _____

Praise/Music Ideas

- _____
- _____
- _____

PRACTICE

Choose ideas to help review and apply today's lesson.

- _____
- _____

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul.... You shall teach them to your children” (Deuteronomy 11:18–19).

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here to aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

The Purpose

Matthew has been described as a book written *by* a Jew, *to* Jews, *about* a Jew who was the *King* of the Jews. Matthew (who was also known as Levi) was a Jewish tax collector who left his sinful life to follow Jesus and become one of His 12 disciples (Matt. 9:9; Mark 2:14). His aim in writing this Gospel was to demonstrate that Jesus is the promised Messiah and King, the fulfillment of the Jewish Scriptures, which spoke of Him. In this book, Matthew presents Jesus as the Messiah who was revealed, was rejected, and will return.

Of the New Testament books, Matthew (along with James and Hebrews) has some of the strongest Jewish Old Testament emphases, and only Romans has more Old Testament quotes than Matthew. This distinct Old Testament focus is apparent in Matthew’s opening chapter, where he quotes Old Testament prophecy (Matt. 1:22–23), calls Jesus “the Messiah, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham” (1:1), and traces His lineage through Abraham, the father of the Jews (1:2–6), as well as through David’s kingly line (1:6–11), from which Mary’s husband, Joseph, also descended. The angel reminded Joseph of his ancestry when explaining God’s plan to him (1:20). In contrast, Luke’s genealogy (Luke 3:23–38), with its Gentile emphasis, traces Mary’s lineage back past Abraham all the way to Adam, the father of all races.

In Matthew’s Gospel, Christ comes as “the King of the Jews” (Matt. 2:2), but not in the sense of an earthly, temporal monarch. The Jews had been conquered by many nations and rulers, and they were looking for a Messiah to deliver them physically and politically. However, Matthew more than any biblical writer emphasizes “the Kingdom of heaven.” In fact, he uses this phrase 32 times, while it never appears anywhere else in the Bible. The Jews expected a royal ruler over Jerusalem—not a lowly, manger-born baby from a low-income Galilean family in the carpentry trade. Many expected the Messiah to ride in with his horse and army to conquer the Romans, but, instead, Matthew presents the Messiah-King as riding humbly on a donkey and teaching spiritual repentance rather than political revolution.

Why a Genealogy?

Knowing one’s “roots,” family tree, and origins is interesting, and many people have studied these things to gain perspective on who they are and where they have come from. To the Jews, tracing ancestry and heritage was not just interesting, but also extremely important, much more important than it is in our culture today. Although Joseph was not Jesus’ biological father, he was His legal father in the eyes of Jewish law. In keeping with the book’s purpose, the genealogy in Matthew 1 shows that Jesus had full Messianic legal and lineage credentials. The Jews knew that God had promised Abraham and David that the Messiah would be their descendant, and

Additional Reference Materials

God in a Manger by John MacArthur

Matthew: MacArthur New Testament Commentary

Matthew demonstrates that Jesus qualified in every respect. It was normal in that day to list names of only the most significant Jewish males when tracing one's family. But in Matthew's account there are several unusual exceptions. There is the Canaanite woman Tamar, who was guilty of immorality (Matt. 1:3; Gen. 38), as well as Bathsheba, Uriah's wife (Matt 1:6; 2 Sam. 12), whom God used to continue the dynasty through Solomon despite David's adultery and murder of Uriah. The genealogy also includes Rahab and Ruth (1:5), who were not only women, but also Gentiles. The former was a harlot from Jericho and was saved from destruction by her faith (Josh. 2), and the latter was a Moabite woman loved by Boaz, her "kinsman redeemer" (Ruth 1–4). Even the best of men in this list, Abraham and David, were guilty of serious sin against God and desperately needed a perfect Savior to intervene. This is no dull list of names; it is a testimony to God's grace and faithfulness in using sinful people to accomplish His plan for the birth of the Messiah, who would save His people from their sins.

Betrothal

In Jewish life and law, betrothal was a formal ceremony and celebration in which a contract was signed in front of witnesses, payment was made to the bride's father, gifts were given, wills were drafted regarding property and possessions in the event of death, and the couple were considered husband and wife. Unlike modern engagement, betrothal could be ended only by divorce (Matt. 1:18–19; Deut. 24:1) or death, which was the penalty for adultery (Deut. 22:23–24). In every legal sense, a betrothed couple already functioned as husband and wife, although there was no physical union until the actual wedding ceremony, which could be up to a year later. Joseph probably was between 17 and 20 years old, and Mary between 12 and 16, since these were the normal ages at which couples were betrothed.

The Virgin Birth

Isaiah 7:14 prophesied Messiah's virgin birth, and Matthew's language makes it clear that Mary was a virgin who had never been intimate with any man. Her pregnancy was a miracle with no human explanation. Jesus truly was "God with us" (the meaning of the name Immanuel; God in human form). Mary was a sinner who needed a Savior like everyone else (Luke 1:47). God blessed her with the privilege of being Christ's earthly mother, while God alone was His Father. This unique conception was necessary for a Messiah who would be fully God and fully man, yet without sin. Many believe that Genesis 3:15 refers to Christ, the seed (singular) of a woman rather than a man, and the One who would crush Satan. Mary remained pure until after her wedding ceremony and after Jesus was born, but she did not remain a virgin all her life, as some teach. In fact, Mary and Joseph had a number of other children, including James and Jude, who later would believe and write the New Testament books named after them (Matt. 13:55; Mark 3:31–35, etc.).

Pregnancy outside of marriage would make any Jewish woman the subject of much rumor and scandalous ridicule. In fact, critics later would accuse Jesus of being a Samaritan (John 8:38), born from fornication (8:41), or even the son of a Roman soldier. The Gospels reveal Mary and Joseph's strong faith in God when probably few, if any, others believed the truth and most looked down on them.

Joseph was an honorable and righteous man and was obedient to the angel, even though his message may have been hard to understand or believe. Normally, a Jewish father and mother would carefully choose a name for their child, as names in their culture were very significant. Although Immanuel was one of many names Jesus would be called, the angel told Joseph and Mary to give Him the name "Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (1:21). Jesus is the Greek form of the

Hebrew name Joshua. Both mean “Yahweh saves” or “Jehovah will save.” This is the culmination of chapter 1 and again shows the purpose of Matthew’s Gospel and the reason Jesus came. In Him, God was with us (John 1:14) to save sinners who repent and trust in Christ alone, who is the only one through whom people can be saved (Acts 4:12).

Note: Although Jesus’ virgin birth is a foundational truth, teachers should exercise sensitivity and discretion when presenting it to students.

POINT TO THE TRUTH

“Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth” (Psalm 78:1).

This section includes questions to review last week’s lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week’s lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Meaningful Names

Bring a baby-name book to class. Introduce the key verse, and emphasize the meaning of Jesus’ name. Then, as a class or in small groups, discuss the following questions:

Do you know how your mother and father decided on your name when you were born? *Allow two or three students to answer.*

Does anyone know how Jewish parents named their children around the time that Jesus was born? *Answer: the parents chose a name very carefully because a name was very significant in their culture.*

My first name is _____. Does anyone know what my name means? *Give your name and its meaning.*

Would anyone like to find out what their name means? *Use the baby book to look up the students’ names. Share the meanings with the class.*

Does anyone know what the name Jesus means? *Tell the students, “I’ll give you a hint: the meaning is found in Matthew 1:21.” Read the verse out loud.*

Explain the information on Jesus’ name from the Bible Background section.



Who’s in Your Family?

Bring in photos of your family members—your parents, grandparents, and even great-grandparents—and tell the students some stories about them. Ask the students about their families. How far back can they trace their family line? You could arrange your photos on a paper tree that you cut out before class time. Place the tree on the wall so the students can see how your lineage led to your birth. Tell the students that in today’s lesson, they will learn about the family tree and lineage of someone much more special than any of us.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

“Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done” (Psalm 78:4).

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students’ understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use during the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done directly from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

Our lesson today is from the book of Matthew. A man named Matthew wrote this book telling us about Jesus’ life. Matthew had led a very sinful life, but when he met Jesus, he decided to follow Him because he knew that Jesus could save him from his sin. Matthew was a close friend of Jesus and knew all about His life. He knew that Mary was Jesus’ mother and that she had married a man named Joseph. He also knew that Jesus was the King of the Jews and the Messiah.

God had promised hundreds of years ago that He would send the Messiah, and the Jews were waiting for this promise to be fulfilled. In order to prove that Jesus was the Messiah, Matthew tells us about Joseph’s lineage. A lineage tells about a person’s family. Joseph’s lineage tells us who his father, grandfather, great-grandfather, great-great grandfather were, and so on. Matthew goes so far back in Joseph’s family that we learn that Joseph is one of Abraham’s relatives. This is important because the Old Testament said that Jesus would come from Abraham’s family, and Matthew shows that He did. The lineage also reminds us that all the men and women in Joseph’s lineage were sinful. Jesus did not have a family of perfect people. He had a family of people who needed to be saved from their sin, just like everyone else in the world. This shows us that God will use sinful people, like you and me, as part of His plan to bring salvation to the world.

After telling us about Joseph’s lineage, Matthew tells us about Jesus’ birth. Jesus’ birth was unique because He is the only person who ever has been born without having an earthly father. Jesus’ Father is God, and His mother was Mary. This proves that Jesus is fully God and fully man. He was sent to the earth to save people from their sins. God chose Joseph and Mary to raise and take care of Jesus while He was a child because they were faithful and obedient to His Word.

Before Joseph married Mary, he learned that she was pregnant. He knew that he was not the father of this baby and planned to end his relationship with Mary. Because he was a righteous man, he decided that he would do so in secret. He continued to think about what he should do, and he fell asleep. While he was sleeping, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. The angel said to him, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1:20–21). This was a miracle! Mary was pregnant with the Son of God, who was coming to earth to save people from their sins. This was the long-awaited King and Messiah. Joseph woke up and did as the angel had commanded him. He believed the angel and took Mary as his wife. Although they were married, they did not live together as husband and wife until after Jesus was born.

Not many people believed Mary and Joseph when they said that Mary was preg-

nant with God's Son. It did sound very strange! But Mary and Joseph trusted God. When Mary gave birth to the baby, Joseph named him Jesus, as the angel of the Lord had commanded. The name Jesus means "the Lord saves," and this exactly describes Jesus. He is the Lord, and those who believe in Him and repent of their sin will be saved from hell and will live with Him in heaven. God was gracious to send Jesus to be the Savior. We should thank Him for His grace and faithfulness.



Lesson Questions

Why did Matthew write his Gospel?

Matthew wrote to prove that Jesus was the promised Messiah and King, the fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Who appeared to Joseph in a dream?

An angel of the Lord.

Did Joseph obey God and take Mary as his wife?

Yes.

What was unique about Jesus' birth?

Jesus was born of Mary, so He was fully man, but God was His father, so He was fully God.

What was special about Jesus' name?

The name Jesus means "the Lord saves."

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards

Use appropriate A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards with the lesson.



Betty Lukens Flannelgraph

Use appropriate flannelgraph pieces with the lesson.

Praise and Worship

ABCDEFG

Away in a Manger

Praise the Name of Jesus

Silent Night

The B-I-B-L-E

Trust and Obey



J-E-S-U-S

(The following hand motions are the American Sign Language alphabet letters.)

J is Jehovah who saves us from sin.

(Trace a "j" with pinky finger, keeping other fingers tucked in.)

E is eternal; there's no one like Him.

(Bend all four fingers to palm, holding thumb underneath fingers.)

S is the Son, who came down from above.

(Bend all four fingers to palm, with thumb closed over fingers.)

U the unspeakable gift of His love.

(Hold up ring and index fingers side by side, bending other fingers to palm, thumb on top.)

S is the Savior; our debt He did pay.

(Bend all four fingers to palm, with thumb closed over fingers.)

He is the life and the truth and the way.

(Point upward.)

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

“That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments” (Psalm 78:7).

Choose ideas from this section to review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



“Joseph Obeys God”

Materials: copies of the “Joseph Obeys God” craft page, crayons

Directions: Give the students each a copy of the craft page, and have them fold inward along the first dotted line, outward along the second dotted line, and inward along the third dotted line. When reading Matthew 1:18–19, leave the picture folded so that only Joseph turning away from Mary is visible. After reading the angel’s announcement, flip the picture of Joseph over, hiding the first verse and showing the second. Joseph now is being obedient to the angel and taking Mary as his wife.



“Unspeakable Gift”

Materials: Christmas wrapping paper, scissors, glue, copies of the “Unspeakable Gift” craft page



“Christmas Family Tree”

Materials: copies of the “Christmas Family Tree” craft page, pencils, crayons

Directions: Give the students each a copy of the craft pages, and have them connect the dots to form a Christmas tree shape. The dots are numbered and identified with each generation from Abraham to Jesus, with Jesus being the top dot on the star. After they connect the dots, the students can color their pictures.



“Family Portraits”

Materials: copies of the “Family Portraits” craft page, pencils, crayons

Directions: Give each student a copy of the craft page, and have him draw his family in one picture frame and Jesus’ family in the other. Talk about Jesus’ being the Son of God.



“Begot” Relay

Materials: one crown, one chair, masking tape

Directions: Before class, place a long masking-tape line on the floor. Place the chair about 10 feet from the tape. Cut out and assemble a crown. During class, have the students line up single-file across from the chair. Place the crown on the head of the first student. At your signal, he should run to the chair, around it, and back, and then should place the crown on the next student’s head and say, “Begot!” Continue until 14 trips around the chair have been made, illustrating the 14 generations in Matthew 1:17.

Coloring Pages

Give each student the coloring sheets from the back of the lesson. Students can color the pages in class or at home.



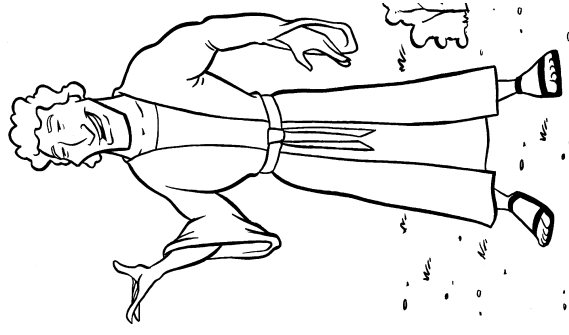
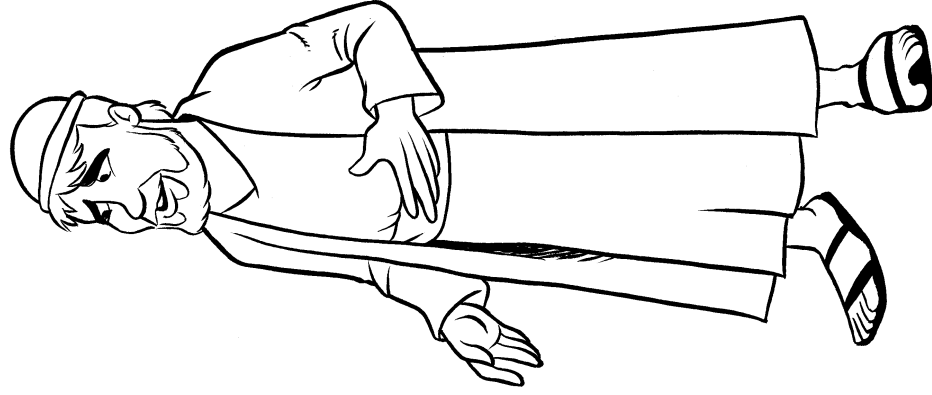
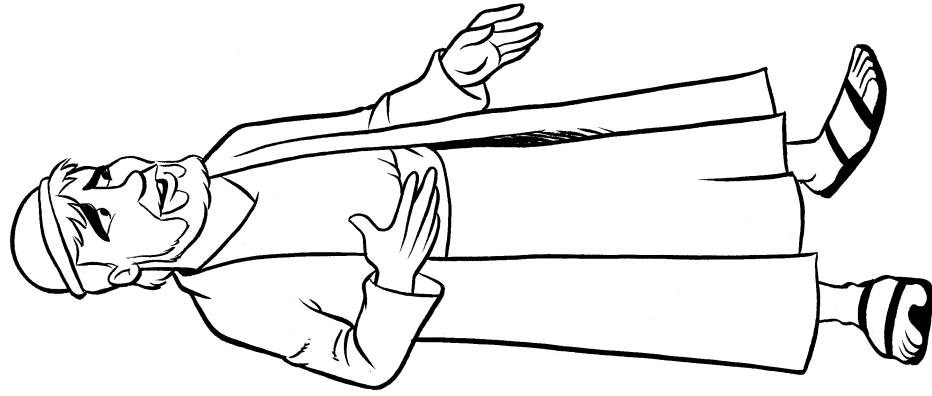
MEMORY VERSE

“And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

Joseph Obeyes God



“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly” (Matthew 1:18–19).



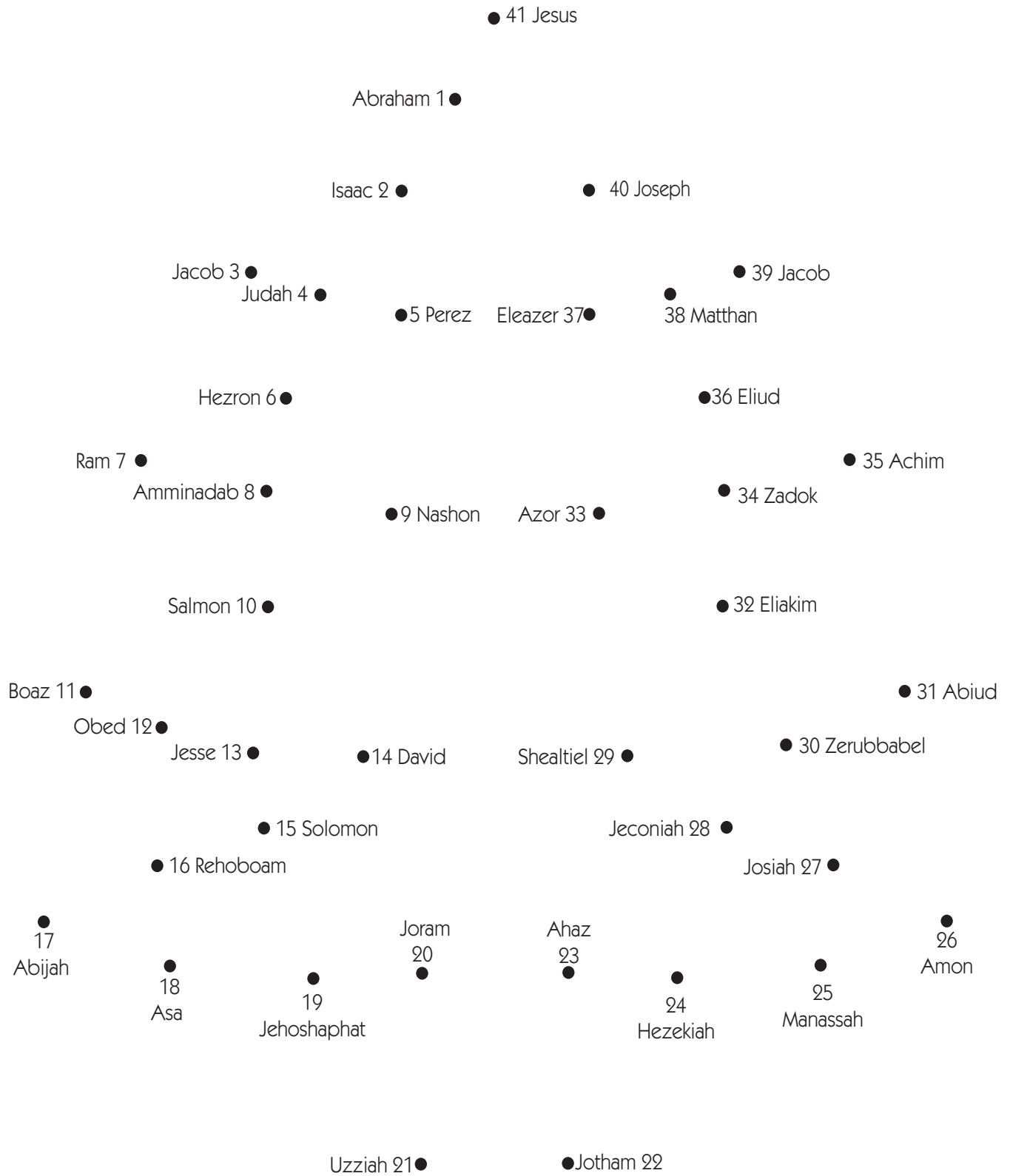
“But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.’” (Matthew 1:20–21).

Unspeakable Gift

JESUS

*“And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus,
for He will save His people from their sins”
(Matthew 1:21).*

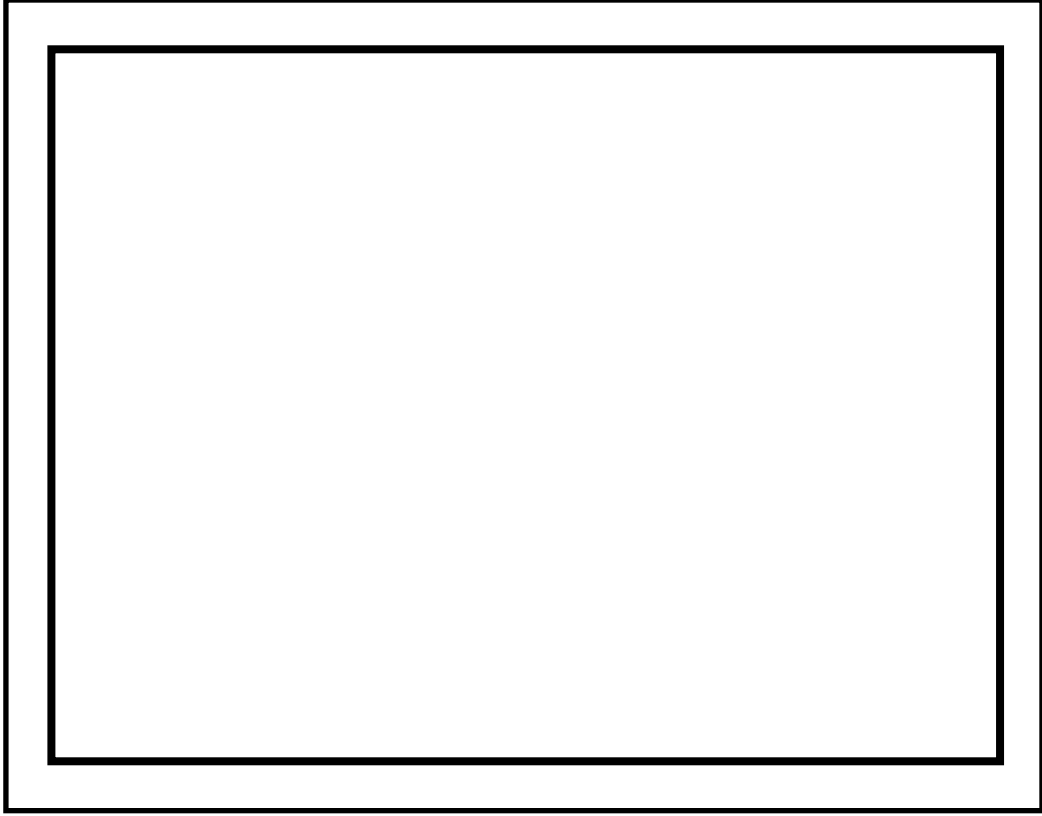
Christmas Family Tree



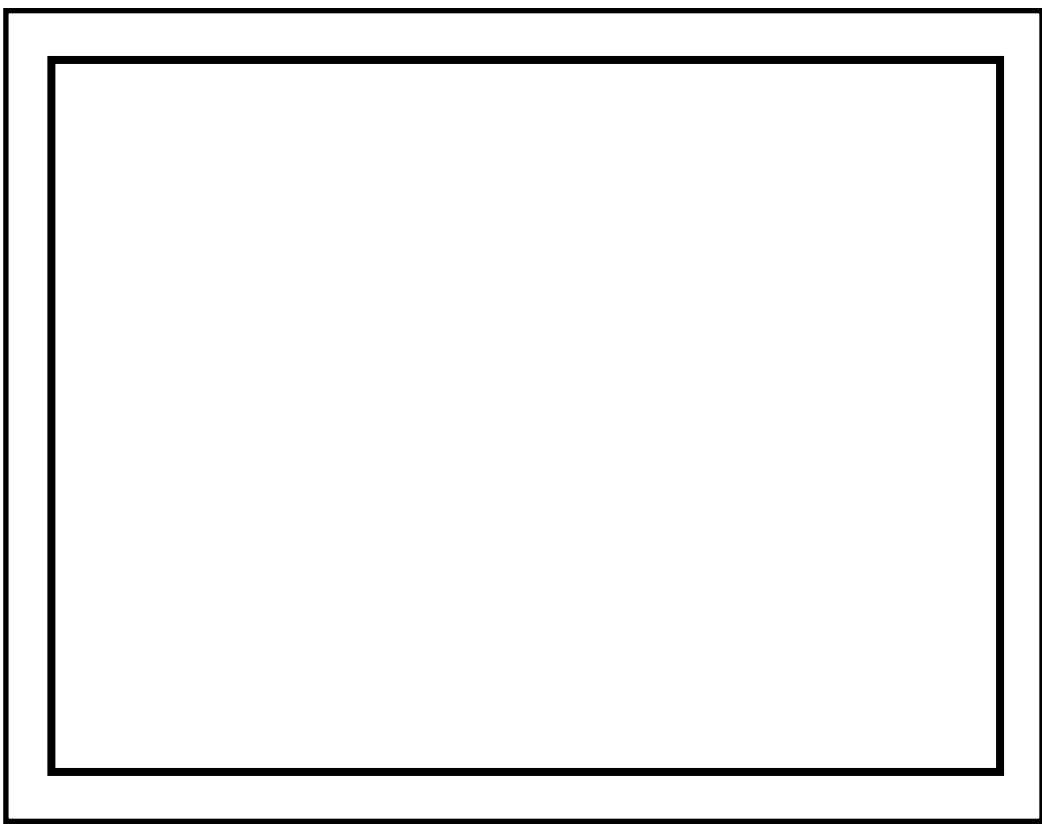
**“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life”
(John 3:16).**

Family Portraits

My Family



Jesus' Family



“Now the birth of Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 1:18).



An angel appeared to Joseph and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:20).



**Joseph did as the angel of the Lord commanded
and took Mary as his wife (Matthew 1:24).**

