

# Son of David



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## SABBATH AFTERNOON

**Read for This Week's Study:** *Matthew 1; Mark 12:35–37; Isa. 9:6, 7; Rom. 5:8; John 2:25; Jer. 29:13; Matt. 2:1–14.*

**Memory Text:** “‘He will save His people from their sins’ ” (*Matthew 1:21, NKJV*).

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Matthew began his book with a genealogy; not with just any genealogy but with that of Jesus Christ. And he began not only with a genealogy but with one revealing some ancestors that most people would not necessarily like to claim as their own.

Perhaps, as he himself was somewhat of an outcast, Matthew could relate to that ancestry. After all, he was a Jewish tax collector, who had sold out to the enemy and who actually *paid* Rome for the opportunity to sit there and tax his own Jewish people. Surely, he would not be a man beloved of his nation.

Nevertheless, humans might look on the outward appearance, but God looks upon the heart. And no question, looking at Matthew's heart, the Lord chose him, a despised tax collector, to be among His disciples. And, when called, Matthew accepted, giving up the life he had before for a new life in Jesus.

Thus, Matthew followed his Lord, kept records, and one day he would give something back to his people, and to the world. It would not be a tax receipt but, instead, a precious account of the life of Jesus.

\* Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, April 2.

## A Book of Genesis

“This is the genealogy of Jesus Christ . . . the son of David” (*Matt. 1:1, NIV*).

Right from the start, Matthew calls his work a “book” (from the Greek word *biblos*, which can mean a “sacred writing”), a “book of the genealogy,” of the ancestry of Jesus. In fact, the Greek word translated “genealogy” or “generation” is from a word that can be translated “genesis.” Hence, it could be said that Matthew started his Gospel with “a book of genesis.”

Just as the Old Testament itself began with a book about the Creation of the world, Matthew (hence the New Testament itself) starts with a book about the Creator Himself and about the work of Redemption that only the Creator could accomplish.

**What** do these texts tell us about Jesus? *John 1:1–3, Heb. 1:1–3, Mic. 5:2, Mark 12:35–37.*

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“From the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father; He was ‘the image of God,’ the image of His greatness and majesty, ‘the outshining of His glory,’ . . .

“By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,—God’s thought made audible.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 19.

The divinity of Christ, however, was not first and foremost in Matthew’s mind, as in contrast to John (*see John 1:1–4*), who immediately writes about the deity of Christ before going into the human side of Jesus (*see John 1:14*). Instead, Matthew focuses very much on Christ’s humanity, Christ as “the son of David, the son of Abraham” (*Matt. 1:1*). He then traces, from Abraham, the lineage of Jesus’ human ancestors up to the birth of Jesus, all in a desire to show his readers that, indeed, Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah predicted in the prophecies of the Old Testament.

**Of course, family and ancestry are important. At the same time, as far as the gospel is concerned, our parents or grandparents or any of our ancestry is irrelevant. What, instead, is important, and why? See Gal. 3:29.**

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## A Royal Line

Whatever the various views of the Jews regarding the coming of the Messiah, one thing was for certain: the Messiah would be from the house of David. (Even many religious Jews today who await the Messiah believe that He must come from the house of David.) That’s why Matthew began his Gospel as he did; he wanted to establish the identity of Jesus as the Messiah. Because the Messiah was to be the seed of Abraham (*Gen. 22:18, Gal. 3:16*), the father of the Jewish nation, and from the lineage of David, Matthew right away seeks to show Jesus’ lineage and how He was directly tied, not just to Abraham (to whom the Israelites were tied) but to King David. Many commentators believe that Matthew had a Jewish audience primarily in mind; thus, his strong emphasis establishing the Messianic credentials of Jesus of Nazareth.

**Read** the following texts. How do they help us to understand the point that Matthew was seeking to make?

2 Sam. 7:16, 17 \_\_\_\_\_

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Isa. 9:6, 7 \_\_\_\_\_

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Isa. 11:1, 2 \_\_\_\_\_

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Acts 2:29, 30 \_\_\_\_\_

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All this helps us to understand why the Gospel of Matthew begins the way it does: “This is the genealogy of Jesus Christ . . . the son of David” (*Matt. 1:1, NIV*). First and foremost, Jesus Christ is described as the “son of David.” And just as the New Testament begins with this depiction of Jesus, toward the end of the New Testament He says these words, as well: “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star” (*Rev. 22:16*). All else that Jesus is, He remains the “root and offspring of David.”

What a powerful testimony to the human nature of Jesus and to His essential humanity; our Creator has linked Himself to us in ways that we can barely imagine.

## Jesus' Early Family Tree

**Beyond** David, who else do we find in Jesus' family tree? *Matt. 1:2, 3.*

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Women weren't even typically listed in genealogies; so, why would a woman named Tamar be listed here? Who was she to begin with?

Tamar was a Canaanite woman who had been married sequentially to two sons of Judah. Both of these sons died in wickedness while Tamar was childless. Her father-in-law, Judah, promised Tamar that he would give her his third son in marriage when the son got old enough. But this never happened.

So, what did Tamar do? She disguised herself as a prostitute and got together with none other than Judah, who had no idea it was Tamar. Months later, when Tamar's pregnancy became evident, Judah took action to have the immoral Tamar put to death; that is, until Tamar revealed to Judah that he was the father of her baby.

However much this might sound like a tawdry soap opera, it's still part of the human ancestry of Jesus.

**Read** Matthew 1:4, 5. Who else is listed that is somewhat surprising?

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Rahab, the Canaanite prostitute? Apparently so. After helping to protect the Israelite spies in Canaan, she joined the people of God and, it seems, married into the ancestry of Jesus.

**Who** else was in the line? *Matt. 1:5, 6.*

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Ruth was a virtuous woman, but, through no fault of her own, she came from the hated Moabites—the product of an incestuous relationship between a drunken Lot and one of his daughters. Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, was, of course, the woman that King David selfishly summoned while her husband, Uriah, was out in battle. David, too, was a sinner needing a Savior. David had many outstanding qualities, but he was no model of a family man, to be sure.

**If God receives us despite our faults and shortcomings, how can we learn to do the same with others, despite their faults and shortcomings?**

## While We Were Yet Sinners

**What** do the following texts say about human nature? What powerful evidence do we have about the truth of these sentiments? *Rom. 3:9, 10; 5:8; John 2:25; Jer. 17:9.*

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As has often been stated, but is worth repeating, the Bible does not paint a rosy picture of humanity or human nature. From the Fall in Eden (*Genesis 3*) to the fall of Babylon in the last days (*Revelation 18*), the sad state of humanity is readily apparent. And though we tend to idealize, for instance, the early days of the church before the great “falling away” (*2 Thess. 2:3*), that is a mistake (see *1 Cor. 5:1*). We’re all fallen, broken people, and that includes the lineage out of which Jesus Himself arose.

“The genuineness, and unlikeliness, of this genealogy,” writes scholar Michael Wilkins, “must have stunned Matthew’s readers. Jesus’ ancestors were humans with all of the foibles, yet potentials, of everyday people. God worked through them to bring about his salvation. There is no pattern of righteousness in the lineage of Jesus. We find adulterers, harlots, heroes, and Gentiles. Wicked Rehoboam was the father of wicked Abijah, who was the father of good King Asa. Asa was the father of the good King Jehoshaphat . . . , who was the father of wicked King Joram. God was working throughout the generations, both good and evil, to bring about his purposes. Matthew shows that God can use anyone—however marginalized or despised—to bring about his purposes. These are the very types of people Jesus came to save.”—*Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), p. 9.

That’s the point we need to remember, not just when we look at others but when we look at ourselves, as well. What Christian, at some point in his or her walk, doesn’t get discouraged, doesn’t question his or her faith, doesn’t wonder whether or not he or she is truly converted? So often, too, what brings about this discouragement is indeed our fallen nature, our sins, our shortcomings. Thus, amid this despair we can and should draw hope that God knows all these things and that it was for people just like us that Christ came into this world.

**What Bible promises can you cling to in moments of discouragement and spiritual despair?**

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## The Birth of David's Divine Son

Somewhere in the night air between Matthew 1 and Matthew 2, Jesus was born. It likely wasn't on December 25. Based on the timing of the priest Zechariah's temple service, scholars suggest that Jesus was probably born in the fall, when sheep were still out in the fields, perhaps in late September or October.

It's a great irony that some of the first people to seek out and worship the Jewish Messiah would be Gentiles. While most of Jesus' own people (and a paranoid half-Jew, King Herod) thought they knew what kind of Messiah to expect, these travelers from the East had open minds and hearts. The magi (wise men) were respected philosophers from Persia, who devoted their lives seeking for truth, wherever it may come from. No wonder, then, that they found themselves worshiping the One who was, indeed, "the Truth" Himself. Though the context is different, we can see here an example of the truth of words spoken centuries earlier, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (*Jer. 29:13*).

**Read** Matthew 2:1–14. What contrast is seen between the attitude of these wise men and that of King Herod?

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These pagans fall down and worship Jesus, in contrast to the king of the nation, who sought to kill Jesus instead!

This story should serve as a powerful reminder that church affiliation is no guarantee of being in the right relationship with God. It should also be a reminder, too, that a correct understanding of truth is very important. Had Herod and the priests a better understanding of the prophecies concerning the Messiah, Herod would have known that Jesus would not have been the kind of threat that he feared. He would have understood that this "King of the Jews" was not anyone to worry about, at least in terms of Herod guarding his own immediate political power.

**How can we protect ourselves as Seventh-day Adventists, a people blessed with much light, from the deception that this light automatically means that we are in a right relationship with God? At the same time, how can the light help us to have a deeper walk with God because of an appreciation of His character that truth does give us?**

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**Further Thought:** Look at this quote from Ellen G. White: “It is thus that every sinner may come to Christ. ‘Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.’ Titus 3:5. When Satan tells you that you are a sinner, and cannot hope to receive blessing from God, tell him that Christ came into the world to save sinners. We have nothing to recommend us to God; but the plea that we may urge now and ever is our utterly helpless condition that makes His redeeming power a necessity.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 317. What a powerful idea: it’s our “utterly helpless condition” that makes Christ as our Redeemer a necessity. This truth is no different when we first come to Jesus or if we have been walking with Him all our lives. Like those in the genealogy of Jesus’ human side, we are sinners in need of grace. Our obedience to the law, our overcoming sin and temptation, and our growth in Christ, however much these are parts of the Christian life, are the results of salvation and never the cause. Whether the thief on the cross or a saint translated at the second coming of Jesus, we are all in an “utterly helpless condition that makes His redeeming power a necessity.” How crucial that we never forget this foundational truth.

### Discussion Questions:

- 1 As we saw this week, Herod had grand misconceptions about prophecy that caused him to do some terrible things. Think about some of the false understandings of prophecy today. For instance, many believe that faithful Christians will be secretly and quietly taken up to heaven while family and friends are “left behind” to wonder why these people suddenly vanished into thin air. What are some of the potential dangers of holding such a false understanding of prophecy? Or, what about the idea that the temple in Jerusalem must be rebuilt and animal sacrifices reinstated as one of the final events in earth’s history? What other misconceptions about prophecy should help impress us with just how important a correct understanding of prophecy really is?
- 2 So often, in many cultures and societies, who your parents are and what class you were born into are deemed very important. This is a tradition that seems to be found all through history and is deeply ingrained in many places, even today. Why is this worldly idea so contrary to everything the gospel stands for? Also, how should the idea of being “born again” impact the way we look at the whole question of what class or social structure that we or others were born into?

## The Tooth: Part 1

*The newly married Colin and Melva Winch took up their first mission assignment in the Solomon Islands as nurses in 1956. While on furlough in Australia in 1962, Colin obtained his commercial pilot's license and, working with fellow pioneer pilot Len Barnard, flew the first Seventh-day Adventist mission planes, reaching the remote areas of Papua New Guinea and the islands of the South Pacific. The following account is one of Colin's first challenges at an outpatient clinic.*

It was an early morning session at the outpatient clinic at Amyes Memorial Hospital. Colin and Melva recently had arrived in Kukudu, and this was one of Colin's first clinic sessions.

The first ten patients had only minor maladies, but this changed when Jacob—a large, well-built Solomon Islander with a mop of curly hair—came, holding his jaw. Assuming he had a tooth problem, Colin seated the patient on the folding dental chair that had been donated by the United States Army.

Inspection revealed an excellent mouthful of shiny white teeth, but the crown on a huge molar had broken off, creating the discomfort. Colin discovered Jacob had already sought dental treatment from another “doctor” who had failed in his attempt to remove the offending molar and snapped off the crown in the process.

This was to be Colin's first real extraction, the only previous one being at the dental hospital in Sydney and that tooth had almost fallen out of its own volition. He knew this extraction would be a real challenge, even more so since some of the village people would be watching the skill of the new “dentist.”

Having prepared a mandibular block, Colin approached Jacob with the gleaming needle at the ready. Jacob knew all about that needle and withdrew his head as Colin endeavored to inject the anesthetic.

Lukana, the clinic assistant, sensed the problem and positioned himself behind the patient. Grabbing Jacob's hair with powerful hands, he said, “Shoot him, Doctor! Give the injection! He won't move now!”

To make sure of deadening the area, Colin injected the anesthetic into the gum beside the tooth as well. While waiting for the anesthetic to take effect, Colin noticed the audience below the clinic windows, listening to the commentary provided by the observers at the door. The outpatients were curious to know whether the new “doctor” could be trusted as a dentist.

*To be continued in next week's Inside Story.*



## The Lesson in Brief

► **Key Text:** *Matthew 1:21, 23*

► **The Student Will:**

**Know:** Appreciate the reasons for which Matthew wrote his Gospel.

**Feel:** Recognize the unique mission for which Jesus came to this world.

**Do:** Abide in the saving power of Jesus.

► **Learning Outline:**

**I. Know: Matthew's Purpose in Writing His Gospel**

- A** Who was Matthew? What do we know about him and his occupation?
- B** To whom did Matthew write the Gospel? Why?
- C** How is Matthew's Gospel related to the other Gospels?
- D** What are some unique features of Matthew's Gospel, and what do they teach us?

**II. Feel: The Uniqueness of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel**

- A** What do the differences in the genealogy given by Matthew and Luke teach us?
- B** From the narrative of Matthew 1, what evidence is there to believe that God is in control of history and that history marches toward the fulfillment of God's purposes?

**III. Do: The Gospel's Effect on Life and Relationships**

- A** What do we learn from Matthew's genealogy about human equality and relationships?
- B** How do the two names of the Incarnate Word—Jesus and Immanuel—affect our life and experience? Do we have any support from the Old Testament for such claims?

► **Summary:** Matthew's account of the birth of Jesus provides us the assurance that (1) God is with us, (2) salvation from sin is ours, and (3) we are of royal lineage.

## Learning Cycle

### ►STEP 1—Motivate

**Spotlight on Scripture:** *Matthew 1:18–23*

**Key Concept for Spiritual Growth:** Who is Jesus? Is He God or man? Or both? Is He a disillusioned, self-opinionated, meandering wanderer from Galilee? Or is He the best teacher the world has ever known? Is He the most brilliant philosopher and ethicist whom humanity has ever encountered? A martyr par excellence, put to death by a jealous and power-hungry mob? The resurrected Lord? How we discover and relate to the identity of Jesus affects our life and spiritual growth, both now and for eternity.

**Just for Teachers:** As John 1:1–3 tells us, the life of Jesus did not begin at Bethlehem. The entire Scripture bears witness to the eternity of the Son and His oneness with the Father and the Spirit. The four Gospels make it clear that the One who is God and with God from eternity has become incarnate in human flesh to “save His people from their sins” and to be “Immanuel . . . God with us” (*Matt. 1:21, 23, NKJV; see also Luke 2:11, Mark 2:5, John 3:16*).

**Opening Discussion:** After 400 years of prophetic silence since Malachi, God’s Word through Matthew opens with the announcement of the birth of Jesus Christ, “the Son of David, the Son of Abraham” (*Matt. 1:1*). Thus Matthew becomes a bridge builder between the anticipation of the Old Testament and the fulfillment in the New Testament. How does the gospel of Jesus build in you a lasting relationship between your hope and its fulfillment? Shall we meet Him, listen to Him, and accept Him as the way to eternity?

**Discussion Question:** The Jews were fond of preserving their pedigrees. A priest was expected to produce a pure pedigree back to Aaron; his wife to at least five generations. We have two accounts of genealogy for Jesus—one in Matthew, another in Luke 3:23–38. What is the difference between the two, and why?

### ►STEP 2—Explore

**Just for Teachers:** It is “self-evident” that “all men are created equal,” wrote Thomas Jefferson in the 1776 American Declaration of Independence. The same fertile mind went to work some thirty years later and put together a book called *The Philosophy of Jesus*

*of Nazareth.* The book was a result of Jefferson’s systematic chopping away from the Gospels all references to deity, miracles, and manifestation of power not available to humans.

A few years later, after some more cuts, Jefferson produced a new version entitled *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*. The man who saw the roots of human dignity, equality, and freedom in the act of being “created equal” could not face the reality of the Creator. Instead, he chose to have a Jesus according to his own image: a good man, an exemplary teacher, but nothing more. But Jefferson and others like him have not had a personal, experiential encounter with the power and the presence of Jesus. This quarter’s lessons invite you to experience Jesus for who He is—God with us, and God for us.

## Bible Commentary

### I. Matthew: The Author and His Narrative (*Review Matthew 9:9, 10:3, and Mark 2:14 with the class.*)

**The author.** Although the first Gospel does not name its author, ancient sources have generally attributed it to Levi Matthew, whom Jesus called out of his tax booth to be His disciple (*Matt. 9:9, 10:3, Mark 2:14, Luke 5:27*). Eusebius (d. A.D. 341), the father of church history, quotes Papias (A.D. 140), bishop of Hierapolis, as saying that Matthew authored the Gospel. Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Irenaeus, Origen, and other early church leaders have held to the authorship of Matthew, and we have no reason to think otherwise. Matthew means “gift of the Lord.” Surely the author has given to us a beautiful gift in the narrative of the King.

**Jesus’ genealogy.** That the kingship of Jesus is important to the Gospel of Matthew is evident in the way the writer organizes his genealogy. The organization lists three sets of 14 generations (*Matt. 1:17*), each linked to an important aspect of royalty. The first one stretches from Abraham to David, under whom the kingdom reached its pinnacle; the second stretches from Solomon to Jeconiah, under whom the kingdom suffered the tragedy of Babylonian exile; the third set forwards the historic line to the birth of Jesus, “the King of the Jews” (*Matt. 2:2*).

This Messianic genealogy mentions four women, something not normally done in a Jewish chronology. The first three are Gentiles, the last one is married to Uriah, a Gentile: Tamar, a seducer; Rahab, a harlot; Ruth, a Moabite; Bathsheba, an adulteress. The inclusion of these flawed and Gentile women in the genealogy of Jesus affirms that with the coming of the new King, biblical anthropology returns to the Creator’s original principle:

In Christ there “is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female” (*Gal. 3:28, NKJV*). All are God’s children.

**Discussion Question:** Matthew’s Gospel begins with the Messianic “genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the son of Abraham” (*Matt. 1:1, NKJV*), and ends with the Great Commission that the gospel was to “make disciples of all the nations” (*Matt. 28:19, NKJV*). What lessons can we draw from this thematic movement, from the particular to the universal, from the Son of David to the Lord of all nations?

## II. The Gospel’s Major Themes (*Review Matthew 2:2, 14, 15; 5–7; 24:14; and Mark 16:13–20 with the class.*)

At least five major themes mark the Gospel of Matthew.

*First, the kingship of Jesus.* The Gospel affirms that Jesus is the Son of David (*Matt. 1:1*). The wise men found in Jesus the King of the Jews (*Matt. 2:2*); Jesus enters into Jerusalem as a triumphant king (*Matt. 21:1–11*); He tells His followers that He is the eschatological King and Judge (*Matt. 25:31–46*). Jesus acknowledges His royalty before Pilate (*Matt. 27:11*). Even the cross carried His title as King (*Matt. 27:37*).

*Second, Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy.* The four Gospels refer to this at least 27 times, with Matthew affirming 14 times (Mark, twice, Luke does it three times, and John in eight instances). Matthew specifically mentions that the following events were in fulfillment of Scripture: Christ’s birth (*Matt. 1:22, Isa. 7:14*); His flight to Egypt (*Matt. 2:14, 15*); His home in Nazareth (*Matt. 2:23*); His teachings through parables (*Matt. 13:35*); His triumphal entry into Jerusalem (*Matt. 21:1–5*); His arrest (*Matt. 26:54–56*); the betrayal price (*Matt. 27:9*); and casting lots for His robes (*Matt. 27:35*). By showing that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies, Matthew wants his Jewish readers to be convinced that Jesus is the *Christos*, the Messiah.

*Third, Matthew is the teaching Gospel, systematizing and summarizing the great teachings of Jesus in the kingdom context:* the ethics of the kingdom (*Matthew 5–7*); duties of the leaders of the kingdom (*Matthew 10*); parables of the kingdom (*Matthew 13*); greatness in the kingdom (*Matthew 18*); and the coming of the King (*Matthew 24, 25*).

*Fourth, the church.* Matthew is the only Gospel that details the establishment of the church after Peter’s confession (*Matt. 16:13–23*), although the confession itself also is found in Mark and Luke. This, and Matthew’s counsel that disputes should be settled within the church (*Matt. 18:17*), indicate that Matthew sowed the seeds of an early understanding of ecclesiology.

*Fifth, eschatology.* Matthew takes special interest in the second coming of Jesus, the end of the world, the readiness for the kingdom, and the final judgment that would separate the sheep from the goats (*Matthew 24, 25*).

**Consider This:** Why is the kingship of Jesus emphasized so much in Matthew? In what ways does Matthew’s portrayal of Jesus as King differ from the expectation of the Hebrew people of the times?

### ►STEP 3—Apply

**Just for Teachers:** Back to the question: Who is Jesus? Matthew’s Gospel begins with a crucial proclamation that the life and ministry of Jesus are not just simply events in the ebb and flow of history. If Matthew 1:1–17 shows that Jesus was born in history, the rest of the chapter affirms that He is above and beyond history. Indeed, He is the Lord of history about whom Paul would write later: that in “the fullness of the times He [God] might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him” (*Eph. 1:10, NKJV*). Indeed, the coming of Jesus on the world stage provides meaning to history: in and through Him the questions of good and evil, sin and redemption, life and death, God and gods find a conclusive and satisfactory answer. Matthew’s Gospel proclaims that Jesus is not another founder of another religion but that He is “Immanuel” (God with us) and that He is Jesus (God for us).

#### Thought Questions:

❶ How does the virgin birth of Jesus show that Jesus came in history and above history? Why is the virgin birth important to the Gospel story?

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❷ Immanuel (God with us) and Jesus (God for us, our Savior) are two names announced by the angel for the Second Person of the Godhead. Discuss the importance of this.

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### ►STEP 4—Create

**Just for Teachers:** Matthew presents Jesus as God, King, and Savior. Help your class see that each portrait of Jesus demands a specific response from us.

**Activity:** Invite class members to consider what each of these three portraits means to them. Discuss as many of the reactions as possible.