

Word Alive — Matthew 1–2: King and Messiah

Participant Handout

Overview

- Focus: How Matthew presents Jesus as King and Messiah, with practical Bible study tools.
- Tools: BibleHub.com Interlinear and Atlas, cross-references, videos, colored-pencil method.
- Key themes: Kingdom, fulfillment, names/titles of Jesus, guidance by dreams.

Key Terms

- Synoptic Gospels: “Seen together” — Matthew, Mark, Luke share a common perspective. See PDF in the Resources page: <https://higherpursuitministries.com/resources/>
- Betrothal: Binding Jewish engagement requiring divorce to dissolve (unlike modern Western engagement).
- LXX / Septuagint: Ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures; widely used in the 1st century.
- Immanuel: “God with us” — God’s presence in the person of Jesus.
- Yeshua/Jesus: Hebrew/Aramaic form meaning “Yahweh saves.”

BibleHub.com Quick Links

- BibleHub.com main: <https://biblehub.com>
- Interlinear — Matthew 1:18: <https://biblehub.com/interlinear/matthew/1-18.htm>
- Interlinear — Matthew 2:1: <https://biblehub.com/interlinear/matthew/2-1.htm>
- Atlas — Judea: <https://biblehub.com/atlas/judea.htm>
- Atlas — Jerusalem: https://biblehub.com/atlas/second_quarter.htm

Matthew 1:18–25 — Words That Matter

- “Birth” (v.18) = Greek genesis — signals a new beginning; echoes Adam themes.
- “Betrothal” context: Legally binding; Joseph’s intention to “divorce” fits Jewish practice (v.19).

400 Years of Silence and the Septuagint (LXX)

- From Malachi’s closing promise (Elijah to come) to John the Baptist’s arrival.

- Septuagint basics:
 - “Seventy” (LXX) from the tradition of 70/72 translators.
 - Translated in Alexandria (3rd–2nd c. BC) as Greek became common.
 - Many NT quotations follow LXX wording.
 - Takeaway: Faithful translations convey God’s authoritative Word.

Silent no more!

- Joseph’s four dreams: Divine guidance that preserves Jesus’s life.
- After long silence, God speaks through dreams, angels, Scripture, and signs.

Marking and Following Themes (Colored-Pencil Method)

- Read the chapter normally, then slowly.
- Note words/phrases to look up; use interlinear and cross-references.
- Track repeats/themes with colors.
- Example (Matthew 1–2): Use purple for supernatural moments (dreams, angels, heavenly signs).

Names, Lineage, and Covenant (Matthew 1:20–23)

- “Joseph, son of David”: Highlights Davidic lineage and covenant hope.
- “Jesus” (Yeshua): “Yahweh saves” — name matches mission (v.21).
- “Immanuel”: God with us — from temple/tabernacle presence to God in flesh among us (v.23).

Word and Spirit Together

- Bible literacy and spiritual discernment both matter.
- Pharisees knew Scripture but missed the God of Scripture.
- Satan quoted Scripture to tempt Jesus; we need God’s voice and context.
- Joseph models hearing and immediate obedience.

The Concept of hearing

- In biblical Hebrew, the word for ‘hearing’ is *shama* and it carries a semantic range that English splits into separate words: to hear, to listen, to heed, to understand, and **to obey**.

- Dr. Lois Tverberg, a scholar of Jewish context in the New Testament, puts it well:
- "*Shema* actually has a much wider, deeper meaning than 'to perceive sound.' It encompasses a whole spectrum of ideas that includes listening, taking heed, and responding with action to what one has heard." ourrabbijesus.com
- From the University of Iowa's Bible & Archaeology program, Dr. Robert Cargill (PhD) confirms the same linguistic reality:
- "The Hebrew verb *shama* (שמע) means 'to hear,' but is also used in related contexts as in English, such as 'to listen,' 'to obey,' and 'to understand' — all of which are the result of hearing." bam.sites.uiowa.edu
- The practical implication is that the phrase "hearers only" would have struck a Hebrew-thinking person as nearly a contradiction in terms. The New Testament letter of James (1:22) picks up exactly this tension when it warns against being "hearers only and not doers." To a Jewish audience, that phrase would have landed with particular bite: a hearer-only wasn't just a slacker, they had failed at the very act of hearing itself.

Cross-Referencing the Gospels

- Compare parallel accounts to see the fuller portrait of events and teachings.
- Watch for where parables/miracles appear across Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.
- Use a parables/miracles index (PDF link provided by host) to locate parallels quickly.
- Harmony of the Gospels PDF: <https://higherpursuitministries.com/resources/>

Matthew 2:1–12 — Time, Place, and Kings

- Note time markers: “Now after Jesus was born...” and Matthew’s frequent “now” to signal scene changes.
- Geography matters: Bethlehem (of Judea) and Jerusalem shape the narrative (see Atlas)
- Herod:
 - “Herod” is a title; here it’s Herod the Great (ruler under Rome).
 - Theme word: “King.” Track mentions to see Matthew’s emphasis on Jesus as true King.
 - Irony: Herod is called “King of the Jews,” yet the Magi seek the newborn “King of the Jews.”

The Magi, Prophecy, and Guidance

- Likely Babylonian/Persian astronomer-sages; linked to wisdom traditions like Daniel's.
- OT backdrop: Numbers 24:17–19 (star and scepter) points to a royal deliverer.
- Herod's advisors cite Micah 5:2 — Bethlehem as Messiah's birthplace.
- God's guidance: The Magi are warned in a dream not to return to Herod.

Reflection

- “God with us”: What does it mean to you that the Son was born of Mary, conceived by the Holy Spirit, to be “Immanuel” — God with us?

Live Chat Prompts (you'll be asked to respond quickly)

- “Synoptic means...?” and “Which gospels are synoptic?”
- “Spot the irony in ‘king’ (Matt 2:1–12).”
- “Who are the Magi and where are they from?”
- “Why might Matthew alone mention the star?”
- “How did God warn the Magi?”

Homework This Week

- Review Matthew 2 and begin Matthew 3
- Track repeat words: “kingdom,” “repent,” “fulfill”
- Note time/movement markers (“now,” “after...”).
- Look up 3 Greek words in the Interlinear in BibleHub; journal one insight each.
- Use the Atlas to locate places mentioned in the reading.

Resource Links

- BibleHub: <https://biblehub.com>
- Atlas — Judea: <https://biblehub.com/atlas/judea.htm>
- Atlas — Jerusalem: https://biblehub.com/atlas/second_quarter.htm
- Interlinear — Matthew 1:18: <https://biblehub.com/interlinear/matthew/1-18.htm>
- Interlinear — Matthew 2:1: <https://biblehub.com/interlinear/matthew/2-1.htm>
- BibleProject classroom (Herod/Second Temple context): <https://bibleproject.com/classroom/rise-of-the-messiah/sessions/8>

- The star (Michael Heiser): https://youtu.be/pWTeJfUa_3s?si=mK3qWKpZOBfzweE_
- The star (Answers in Genesis): <https://youtu.be/ozxqp0B1npU?si=gypVXPtr7wQY50pR>
- Gospel cross-references PDF (add your link): [https://yourdomain.com/gospel-
parallels.pdf](https://yourdomain.com/gospel-parallels.pdf); <https://www.slideserve.com/melora/g1-the-synoptic-gospels>

Study Reminders

- Pray before reading; let the Holy Spirit “slow you down.”
- Use your tools when something stands out: interlinear, atlas, cross-references.
- Mark themes with color to see patterns over time.
- Aim to both know Scripture and walk with the God of Scripture.