

DAILY BIBLE READINGS THAT CONNECT WITH YOUR LIFE

ENGAGE 365

VOLUME TWO

GET TO KNOW GOD'S PEOPLE

Engage 365: Get to Know God's People
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INTRODUCTION

Time to engage

HOW TO USE ENGAGE 365

- 1 Set a time when you can read the Bible every day.
- 2 Find a place where you can be quiet and think.
- 3 Grab your Bible and a pen.
- 4 Ask God to help you understand what you read.
- 5 Read the day's verses with *Engage 365*, taking time to think about it.
- 6 Pray about what you have read.

BIBLE STUFF

We use the NIV Bible version, so you might find it's the best one to use with *Engage 365*. But any modern Bible version will be fine.

If the notes say, "Read Matthew 1 v 1–17", look up Matthew in the

contents page at the front of your Bible. It'll tell you which page Matthew starts on. Find chapter 1 of Matthew and then verse 1 of chapter 1. (The verse numbers are the tiny ones.) Then start reading. Simple.

GET GOING

Each day's page throws you into the Bible, to get you handling, questioning and exploring God's message to you — encouraging you to act on it and talk to God more in prayer. And there's space along the side of each page to jot down what our great God is showing you.

And whenever you start a new book of the Bible, or a new section within it, there'll be a page introducing that book or section.

ENGAGE 365 CHART

There are many ways you can use *Engage 365*. If you'd like to read the Bible for a year, starting in January, the chart below gives dates to follow. Or you can start on any date you like by beginning with Day 1. Or just search for a Bible book you'd like to explore and jump right in. However you use it, *Engage 365* will help you to dig into God's great word for yourself.

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5	18	Jan 5	Matthew 3 v 1–12	28	42	Jan 28	Romans 5 v 6–11
6	19	Jan 6	Matthew 3 v 13–17	29	43–44	Jan 29	JOSHUA 1 v 1–5
7	20	Jan 7	Matthew 4 v 1–11	30	45	Jan 30	Joshua 1 v 6–18
8	21	Jan 8	Matthew 4 v 12–17	31	46	Jan 31	Joshua 2 v 1–24
9	22	Jan 9	Matthew 4 v 18–25	32	47	Feb 1	Joshua 3 v 1–17
10	23	Jan 10	Matthew 5 v 1–5	33	48	Feb 2	Joshua 4 v 1–24
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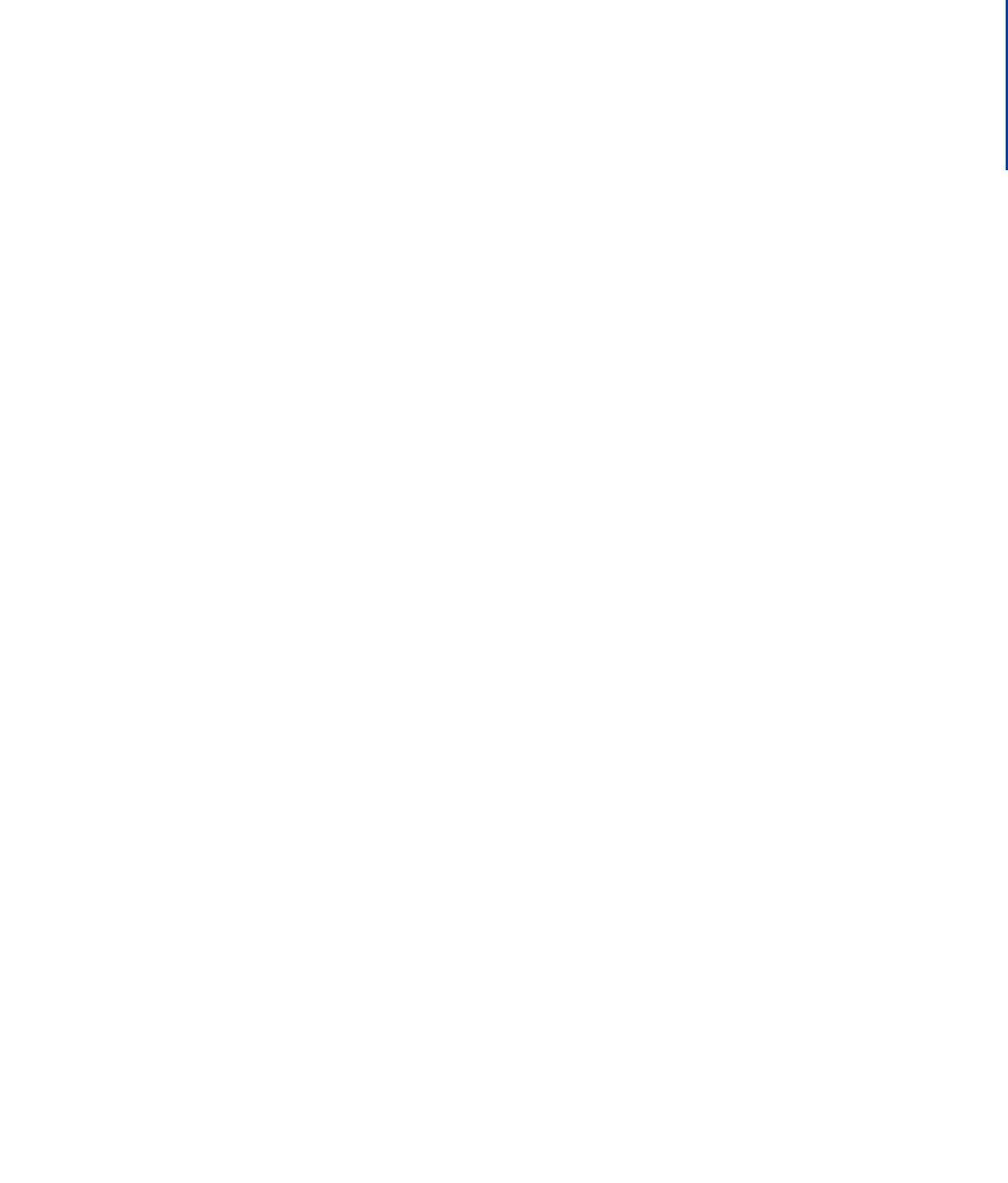
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MATTHEW

The big picture

Ever read a biography? Maybe a sporting one or a celebrity memoir? You get to see how the big-name star in question started out. Perhaps with some embarrassing baby photos and the awkward teenage years with a bad haircut and goofy teeth, before they hit the big time and became impossibly glamorous.

Well, the book of Matthew is one of the four Gospels — biographies of Jesus — and seems to have been written for a largely Jewish audience. No amusing childhood pranks or Oscar wins here though. The opening verses of chapter 1 give us a big clue about what's important to Matthew as he writes. In verse 1 he points out that Jesus is descended from Abraham and David. In short, Jesus is heir to the promises of the Old Testament and heir to a throne.

Matthew wants to show how Jesus Christ came as the completion of Old Testament teaching and prophecy (words from God about

the future). Matthew has 53 direct Old T quotes and loads more passing references. He's showing us how Jesus fits into the big picture of God's word.

MEET THE MESSIAH

Matthew uses the Old Testament to prove that Jesus is the long-awaited *Messiah* — the King God promised He would send to rescue His people — and the Saviour of the world. He'd come for all people, not just Jews. The news of this big rescue was now for everyone.

Matthew wants his readers (and that includes us) to realise just how significant Jesus' arrival on this planet was. The promised one, the perfect Son of God, the King of the universe was here. Will you bow the knee to Him now, or will you be forced to when He returns in glory? Will you take this biography to heart?


1

Family album


Does your heart sink when you see a long list of names in the Bible? Well this one is full of hidden treasures and surprises — it's also a neat summary of God's dealings with His people from the Old Testament 'til Jesus' birth.


 **Read Matthew 1 v 1-17**

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

 *What words or phrases are used in verse 1 to describe who Jesus is?*


The Messiah or Christ was the king promised in the Old Testament who would lead God's people. In fact, prophets such as Isaiah claimed this king would be God Himself! So why are David and Abraham mentioned? Take a look at the promises God made to both of them. This descendant, Jesus, was about to make God's promises come true!


 *What did God promise to Abraham in Genesis 12 v 1-3?*

 *And to David in 2 Samuel 7 v 12-16?*

A few names are worth mentioning — Abraham was a big hero, but his grandson Jacob was a bit of a mixed bag. Perez had a tough start in life. Rahab and Ruth weren't even Israelites; they were hated outsiders.

King Ahaz was evil, but Hezekiah had his heart in the right place.

 *What does this tell us about who God uses in His plans?*

 *What does this tell us about God?*

Matthew picks up on some major landmarks in Jewish history as he gives us a snapshot overview, not only of Jesus' human origins, but of God's dealings with His people over hundreds of years.

PRAY ABOUT IT

Thank God that He uses ordinary people to bring His plan of rescue to the world. Thank Him that He keeps His promises. Thank Him that He chose you despite your sin. Ask Him to help you learn more about Jesus — the Christ — as you read through Matthew.

5

Make way for the King

Time has moved on. Jesus has grown up now and just as a king has a herald announcing his arrival, here we see John the Baptist doing exactly that.

 **Read Matthew 3 v 1–12**

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

▶ *What is John's message? (v2)*

Repenting means turning away from our sins and turning back to God.

The kingdom of heaven is near because the King is near!

▶ *Who does Isaiah say John is? (v3)*

▶ *So who is coming? (v3)*

Some people have called John the Baptist the last Old Testament prophet. He is pointing to the coming King, the Messiah. As Isaiah's prophecy makes clear, John's call means that the Lord, God Himself, is on His way. Cue Jesus!

▶ *What warning does John have for those who show no evidence of repentance? (v7–10)*

▶ *What does John tell us about the coming King? (v11–12)*

Jesus came to bring judgment (v12). We know that when He returns He will judge the earth, but that process began when He came the first time. People's reactions to Jesus — as we will see over the course of Matthew's Gospel — would either save them or condemn them.

GET ON WITH IT

The Pharisees and Sadducees thought they were OK because they were descended from Abraham, but they faced Jesus' judgment. Do you think you're OK because you go to church, or your parents are Christians, or you're a nice person? Repent! Turn to the King — He alone can save you.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The King is coming! Get ready!

6

Making a big splash

The King arrives. Jesus is now 30. The next big event confirms who He is. It's surprisingly soggy.

Horizontal lines for writing on the right side of the page.

Read Matthew 3 v 13-17

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- Why has Jesus come to the Jordan? (v13)
Why does John not want to baptise Jesus? (v14)
Why does Jesus say John should baptise Him? (v15)

You can understand John's hesitation — here's the person he's just been talking about, someone massively above him, the King Himself, and He's asking to be baptised? John's baptism is for repentant sinners, not the perfect Messiah!

But what sort of a Messiah is Jesus? What sort of King is He? He's not up there with John telling sinners to repent, although He does preach that message later. No, He's down there in the water with the sinners; showing He's one of them even though He has no need of cleansing.

What is God the Father's verdict on Jesus? (v16-17)

Bearing in mind Jesus' actions here and His Father's words, why is the cross such an extraordinary, amazing happening?

PRAY ABOUT IT

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5 v 21)

Think about what this meant for Jesus, and what it means for you, and then talk to God about it.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Jesus came for sinners.

7

Temptation situation

The heavens opened and God spoke, confirming who Jesus was. Here, on earth, was His Son, the unique God-man. Would Jesus live up to that and complete His task? Or not trust God and disobey Him, like the rest of us?

 **Read Matthew 4 v 1–11**

Answer the following questions:

	Israel	Jesus
<i>How long were they tested?</i>	Numbers 32 v 13	Matthew 4 v 2
<i>How do they respond to lack of food?</i>	Exodus 16 v 1–3	Matthew 4 v 3–4
<i>Do they put God to the test?</i>	Exodus 17 v 1–2	Matthew 4 v 5–7
<i>Do they worship God alone?</i>	Exodus 32 v 1–6	Matthew 4 v 8–10

God's people failed to live His way again and again. They couldn't overcome their sin, but with Jesus' arrival we see a new Israel: a Jew who is totally obedient to God, someone who fulfils all the promises of the Old Testament. This is the start of something exciting.

PRAY ABOUT IT

Thank God that Jesus is the one perfect human being. Say sorry for the times when you fail to trust God, grumble and put other things before serving Him. Thank Him that Jesus was not only totally obedient to His Father but that His obedience led Him to die so that you could be forgiven.

8

Light and life

The preparation is over. Now this unique God-man can begin His public ministry. Again we see Jesus living up to prophecies made many hundreds of years before. God's plans are made reality.

Read Matthew 4 v 12

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

What has happened to John?

Read Matthew 14 v 1-12 for the distressing outcome.

Read Matthew 4 v 13-17

Are you prepared to face the consequences of living God's way, no matter how serious?

What does Isaiah say about Jesus? (v16)

What does Jesus say people need to do to enter His kingdom? (v17)

Repenting doesn't just mean feeling sorry for the things we've done wrong — most people feel like that at some point. No, it's an active decision to turn away from one way of living and to turn back to God.

Remember how John the Baptist preached the same message? But this time, the King is calling us to repent! It's His kingdom of light and life which is near. Get out of the darkness!

PRAY ABOUT IT

Have you done that? Pray for people you know who are living in darkness, that they would see Jesus' light and turn to Him.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Jesus is light and life.

Horizontal lines for writing.

9

Something fishy

The kingdom is near and things are starting to gather momentum. Here we see Jesus calling the first disciples.

 **Read Matthew 4 v 18–22**

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- ▶ *Who does Jesus see? (v18)*
- ▶ *What does He say to them? (v19)*
- ▶ *What do they do? (v20)*
- ▶ *How about verses 21–22?*
- ▶ *What is so surprising about their responses?*

Jesus is the King. When a king tells you to do something, you do it. Peter, Andrew, James and John don't fully realise who Jesus is yet, but they recognise something of His authority.

- ▶ *Are you following the King?*
- ▶ *What do you think Jesus means by "fish for people" / "fishers of men"?*

Being a fisherman wasn't a glamorous job. Antisocial hours, hard work, often with little success, and smelling fishy. Nice. We might

not have to deal with the personal hygiene part but fishing for people will often be similar — hard work, often with limited "success" — but remember verse 16. We have a wonderful and life-saving message to share.

 **Read verses 23–25**

... and remind yourself what a powerful and compassionate King Jesus is.

PRAY ABOUT IT

Ask for God's help to fish for people.

GET ON WITH IT

As you head out into whatever you face this week — school, college, work, home — leave a mental "gone fishing" sign on your bedroom door.