

Weekly Message Study Guide

ChristChurch.us/SmallGroups



Date _____ Speaker _____

THICKER THAN WATER | Give and Receive | Week 1 | February 21

Matthew 1:1-23

These study guides are designed for individual or group study but highly encouraged to be experienced in community with a small group or other friends on the journey with Jesus.

CONTEXT | Covenants are those circles of commitment from which come the best things in life. Through our Lenten series this year, we'll be looking at seven such circles that God invites people into in order to bless us and make our lives a blessing to others. We'll also learn why Jesus and his kingdom are the fulfillment of the great promises of history and the hope of the human heart.

- What do you think of when you hear "covenant"? What word would you use instead?
- As you think about the two words what, in your mind, is the difference in meaning?

An Issue of Fulfillment | We experience different forms of fulfillment. An Amazon order delivered is "order fulfillment." A planned objective or outcome that is realized is "plan fulfillment."

- Read Matthew 1:22-23. What do you make as the fulfillment? What plan is in progress here, state it as you would tell a friend over coffee?
- Now go back and consider the phases represented in Matthew 1:1-21. Have you ever contemplated a "fulfillment" this vast?
- What stirs in your heart and mind as you consider God's work to fulfill this plan to bring Jesus into the world?

A Swinging Door | OK, you say, you've heard that many times before. And Christmas is over. But swing the door the other way. Where did Christmas come from? 52 generations, roughly 2000 years it's been in the making.

- Using the people who make up the genealogy of Jesus in verses 1-17, talk about some of the stories you know of that are illustrations of the following, "We'll encounter people who give up hope that their needs will be met or their world can be fixed and so settle for solutions that are actually deeper problems. But, as we'll see, God never gives up on them. He keeps working out his good purposes in spite of his peoples' doubts and failures." How does these stories encourage your faith?
- *Bonus: Be sure to listen to [this Monday's Lenten audio devotional](#) for a special perspective on the genealogy of Jesus.*



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The Nature of COVENANT | *"I... do promise and covenant, before God and these witnesses, to be your loving and faithful husband or wife."* This "promise and covenant" requires some explanation.

- For each of the following features talk about the difference between "promise" and "covenant":
 - Basis of relationship between parties: why being entered, shared mutual goals.
 - Defining conditions: each party give and receive, attitudes.
 - Consequences of failure: defined for clarity and motivation.
- What difference does it make if one of the parties is God?

The God of COVENANT | One of the defining aspects of God's character is that God is a COVENANT maker, keeper and fulfiller.

- Talk about what you know right now about God's covenants with his people--not a test, just brainstorm what the group knows before we start the series.
- Read Luke 22:20. What does that passage mean to you?

Practice of the Week | Our Lenten season has many different aspects and practices, a lot depending on your personal history and tradition. It is, in simplest form, walking toward the cross with Jesus. What does that bring up in you? Consider how you might "keep Lent" this year. Use this [Lenten guide](#) as a resource to usher you deeper into God's covenant love and commitments to you. Start by subscribing to our [weekly Lenten audio devotionals](#) by texting to 630.206.3230. Use "TDEVO" to receive them by text directly to your phone, use "EDEVO" to receive them by email.