

# Rite of Passage Recognition Service 2015

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5.17.15

Today is the Sunday we have set aside to recognize this year's Rite of Passage participants. I look forward to this day each year, because our young people are so special to me. Counting this year's group, we have now had 66 young adults go through Rite of Passage over the last EIGHT years (since 2008). I'm ecstatic about that!

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What is ROP? It's simply a tool from Scripture, which points to a journey that is designed to move our children from childhood to young adulthood. It's a "raising of the bar of expectations." Because children will rise to our level of expectations as adults. Seldom will children reach further than our expectations of them.

The model for ROP comes from Luke chapter 2. You remember Jesus in the Temple? He was 12 years of old and yet, He knew exactly where he was headed in life and the ultimate purpose and goal of His life. He said "Didn't you know I had to be about my Father's business?" Yes, at 12 years of age, He knew exactly what He was to be doing. He was confident in His mission in life. And so, if Jesus is our example in all things, (and He should be), then He is certainly our example for 12 year olds.

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Thus, there was a transition in Jesus' life at the age of 12. He knew He had to be "about the Father's business." We learn from Luke 2 that Jesus was submissive to His parents and the Bible says He "grew in wisdom and stature and favor with God and men." And so we follow Jesus' example today. Thus, here at MPBC, at the age of 12, you can participate in our annual ROP here at the church.

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## **1 Corinthians 13:11**

**<sup>11</sup> When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.**

ROP indicates that our young adults who participate in ROP are going to be accepted to act like young adults and to behave accordingly. It means he or she is expected to accept accountability for mature actions and to assume greater responsibilities. Why? Because we know maturity does not necessarily come with age, but with the acceptance of increased accountability and responsibility.

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This year we have **3 young men** who have successfully completed a rigorous gauntlet of questions...a catechism of sorts...that had them digging in the Bible for hours. They answered a myriad of questions in great detail such as:

- How does a person become a Christian? (Where they described their salvation experience.)
- What does it mean to act like and behave like a young adult?
- What role should reading the Bible play in your life?
- What does it mean to be obedient and honor your parents?
- What does it mean to be responsible with money?

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This morning, we would like to recognize this year's Rite of Passage participants and I'd like for them to come forward, along with their families to the front as I call their names. **(Notice**

please...some are going to be in the other service...not all are here for this service. Those here for this service will come forward.)

1. Jonah Brooks (1<sup>st</sup> service)
  2. Michael Davis (1<sup>st</sup> service)
  3. Jonah Horton (2<sup>nd</sup> service)
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These young **men** have fulfilled the requirements set forth in Scripture to be considered young adults by completion of this journey. I'd like for them now to have an opportunity to accept an oath of their commitment to follow the Lord as a young adult. I'm going to read this oath of commitment and they will respond by saying, "I will."

**"Today in the presence of my family, my church and my God, I commit to put behind me childish ways and serve the Lord with His leading and guidance as a young adult. I agree to follow the teaching of Scripture as Paul told Timothy in...**

**1 Timothy 4:12:**

<sup>12</sup> Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

**If you will commit to keeping this oath, would you now say, "I Will."**

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**We are now going to show you a 2 min-video from this year's participants as they share about what ROP meant to them.**

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Anyone who knows me knows that one of my favorite verses in the Bible is:

**3 John 4**

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

Parents, we rejoice with you today as your young adult walks from this Rite of Passage into adulthood and now we will celebrate that accomplishment with a ceremonial "passing of the baton." The baton represents Jesus Christ, the Word of God and the principles of being a disciple of Christ and the family is passing this baton to their young adult. The parents are responsible for making this happen. We've all been to track races and have seen them on TV and we know how critical the baton pass is. If the baton is dropped, that team is disqualified automatically from the race.

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Fathers and mothers... we are called to pass our faith to our children so that they will in turn pass their faith in Christ to their children. So now, as your young adults face forward and reaches back, would you now pass the baton to your young adult. Young adult...don't look back...keep looking forward and hold that baton high...

**What great symbolism!! Let's give them a hand!!**

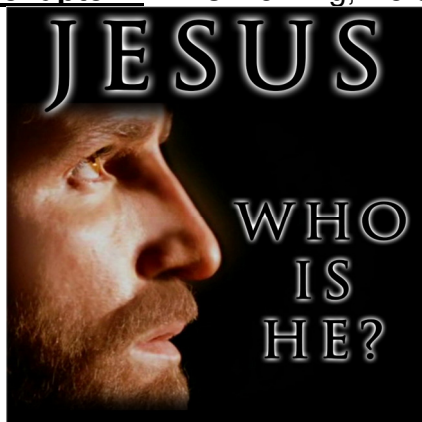
**Matthew 2:13-23, Jesus: Who is He?  
"Fulfillment of Prophecy"**

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Scripture Readers: Kaity Dowell, Dawson Ellis  
 Last Song: "" Invitation: ""

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**Turn in your Bibles to Matthew, chapter 2.** This morning, we continue in our series:



Jesus: Who is He, by looking at Jesus, the "Fulfillment of Prophecy."

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This morning I want us to understand that we are on a journey that's already been planned, written and authored by the Creator of the Universe, God for our lives. However, that plan can only be fulfilled to the degree that we seek and then surrender to God's will for our lives.

What we are going to see today in the life of the infant/toddler Jesus, are episodes which wonderfully give example to how God leads His children. We are going to see this morning how God provides for us and sustains us and His plans for us and our lives will not be thwarted by Satan. God knows Satan seeks to take us down. God knows Satan has cruel plans to derail what God has ordained for our lives. But we know that Satan cannot win, unless we choose not to follow God and His will for our lives.

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Today we pick back up in Matthew chapter 2 and we will see three (3) fulfilled prophecies about Jesus in the span of 11 verses. Now church family, I want you to remember something about Jesus. Jesus fulfilled over 300 Old Testament prophecies that indicated that He would be the Messiah, the Son of God, the Savior of the world. Mathematicians tell us that odds of one man fulfilling all these prophecies and somehow not being the Messiah, is zero...it's statistically impossible. Today we are going to look at just three (3) of these prophecies.

Let me now set the scene. You will remember from last week that King Herod's plan to find Jesus has been foiled. The wise men were warned not to go back and tell Herod where Jesus was and they left the home where Joseph, Mary and Jesus were staying in Bethlehem and returned to their home country. Matthew records what happened after they left...

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### **Matthew 2:13-15**

**13** Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." **14** And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt **15** and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son."

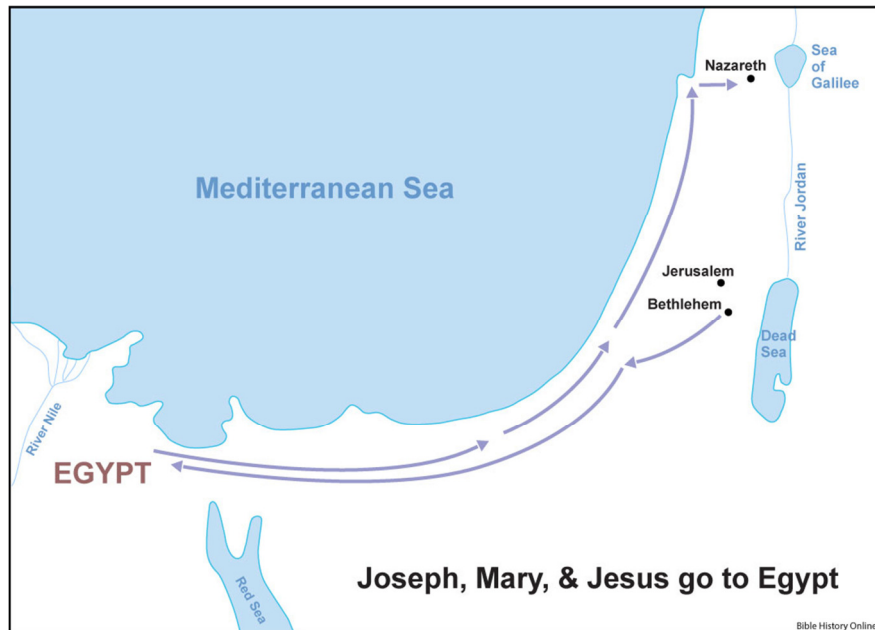
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This is the fulfillment of prophecy number 1 of the three we will see this morning. Remember, Matthew is a Jew and he is writing to a Jewish audience, seeking to give evidence that Jesus is truly the Messiah...the One they've been praying for and longing for centuries. Matthew quotes the OT more than any other of the Gospel writers. Here in what we just read, he quotes Hosea from Hosea 11:1, where Hosea records the fact that the Messiah would come out of Egypt.

Now think about this. We studied a few weeks ago how the prophet Micah prophesied that Jesus would be come out of Bethlehem and yet here is another prophet saying he's going to come out of Egypt. How is that possible? Well it's no more crazy than I (as a one person) am a Father, Brother, Husband, Cousin, Preacher, Uncle and Grandfather all rolled up into one.

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Indeed Jesus would be born in Bethlehem, but He would also come out of Egypt. Take a look at this map...



We know that Egypt was about 90 miles from Bethlehem and so off they went.

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But you might ask, "How did they afford to go to Egypt?" After all this is a long journey and it takes money to travel. Where did they get the funds to go? Do you remember these guys?



They brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. I'm certain the gold was used to fund the trip. Isn't God good? He knows what we need before we even know we have a need and listen... when we seek Him and trust Him, He will provide for us. And so to Egypt they would go and we see that Hosea's prophecy that the Messiah would come out of Egypt would be fulfilled.

And isn't it interesting that the nation of Israel would come out of Egypt as well. Remember, the children of God would be delivered by Moses out of Egypt so that they could end back up in the Promised Land. And we see this is all playing out again. Now it's God's son coming out of Egypt as a descendant of Abraham, so that He could be the deliverer of not only Israel, but the entire world!

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By the way, you know who was behind King Herod's desire to kill Jesus don't you? Satan, of course! Yet Satan, like a pawn in the hand of God, played right into the prophecies of the OT and God will now use the paranoia of Herod to fulfill another prophecy.

### **Matthew 2:16-18**

**16** Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. **17** Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

**18** "A voice was heard in Ramah,  
weeping and loud lamentation,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
she refused to be comforted, because they are no more."

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Here's fulfillment of prophecy #2 and this one is so sad. King Herod was so wicked and vicious. Remember his cruel paranoia led to the killing of wives and several sons for fear of losing the throne. He was vicious, much like ISIS of today and therefore, to protect his kingdom; he had precious, innocent baby boys killed because of this ruthless jealousy. But what blows my mind is the fact that Herod was already close to 70 years old at the time. What in the world was he thinking? How in the world would a 2-year-old boy ever be a threat to his kingdom? Answer: He wouldn't!

Yet, when you are all about yourself, (listen to me this morning), you will do things you never dreamed of. When your life becomes all about your happiness, your success and your wishes, you don't care who you step on to either get to the top or try to stay on top. That was Herod and so the prideful fool fulfilled prophecy #2, which was recorded by Jeremiah (In Jeremiah 31:15), that there would be weeping in Bethlehem (the area of Ramah) because of the death of these innocent children. I had another thought as I was studying and preparing...isn't it interesting...if you think about it...these infant boys became the first martyrs because of the name of Jesus?

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Well... we move on and now we're going to see where King Herod would get his due...

### **Matthew 2:19-23**

**19** But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, **20** saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." **21** And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. **22** But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. **23** And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.

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Do you remember from last week how Herod died? First century historian Josephus recorded that he had a "...burning fever, ulcerated entrails, foul discharges, convulsions, and died with a great

stench.” And he’s in hell today. Indeed, what shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world, but loses his own soul... Herod reaped what he sowed and so will we...good or bad.

Well, Matthew records there was one son Herod didn’t kill and that was Archelaus. Yet, he was ruthless like his dad and so Joseph was told by an angel, “Don’t go back to Bethlehem. Go home!” And so to Nazareth they went...and voila...the fulfillment of prophecy #3. Jesus would come out of: Bethlehem, Egypt and Nazareth. Folks you can’t make this up! This is absolutely amazing and phenomenal! One man coming from three places...all to fulfill prophecy!

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By the way, regarding the fact that Jesus would come from Nazareth...throughout His life the question was asked of Him over and over, “Can anything good come from Nazareth?” Each time that question was asked, the prophecies of the OT prophets were fulfilled. Even one of the men who would later be called by Jesus to be one of His Apostles asked:

**John 1:46**

**46 Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”**

You see the word “Nazareth” was a term of derision and reproach. Nazarenes were detested and throughout His life, Jesus would be maligned and mistreated by the religious elite...and all of this was to fulfill OT prophecy. Amazing!

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So we see who Jesus is the fulfillment OT prophecies! You can bank your life on the fact that Jesus is exactly who He said He is...He is the Son of the Living God...the fulfillment of all Scripture!

You say, “Well Hallelujah!” some of you might be thinking, “But I’ve heard all of this before... I know Jesus is the fulfillment of all prophecy and I believe He is the Messiah...you don’t have to convince me. So why are you telling me all of this?”

Well, for two reasons, #1 it’s where we are in the text and #2 because Jesus’ story is no different from your story or mine as a human being. You say, “What are you talking about?” Listen, God has a plan for your life and mine just as He had a plan for His son’s life. Remember what we talked about at the beginning of the message? We are all on a journey that’s already been mapped out and planned out, written and authored by the Creator of the Universe, God. However, each of us has a choice as to whether or not we are going to submit to that plan and surrender our will to God.

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I want you to look back with me all the way back to verse 13 and let me show you something that’s going to help us today...

**Matthew 2:13**

**13 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.”**

Did you catch the phrase, “remain there till I tell you?” Where’s the rest of the information? Herod is searching for Jesus and is trying to kill Him. Come on Lord! Are we going to make it out of this thing?

If you're Joseph, don't you want more information? I sure would! But the Lord said, "remain there till I tell you." Did Joseph obey? He sure did.

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Listen carefully, God has a plan for your life, just like he had a plan for His Son's life. Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem, come out of Egypt and He was to live in Nazareth and Jesus' life was a fulfillment of God's plan for His life. **Let me ask you a question.** Are you trusting in God's plan for your life? You say, "Truth is I don't really know what God's plan is for my life?" Why not? "Uh...well, God doesn't talk to me like He does you." Why not? Well, I'm not a preacher...uh...I'm not super spiritual. (I'm not super spiritual either.)

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Listen, this is the heart of the message today...God has a plan for your life, but the problem for most of us is that we've bought into the lie from Satan that we can't really know the will of God for our lives and so we just meander along in life believing we can never REALLY know God's design for our lives. Therefore, we just relegate ourselves to living a life of "random chance." Oh we may spiritualize it a bit and look for God's "open doors," but even then, we aren't sure if God opened the door or we did.

This is not what God wants for our lives! He has a specific plan for us and He's not playing hide and seek with His will. Yes, He's got a plan...but, He's not going to force it on us. We are going to have to seek Him. Jesus said to: "Ask, seek and knock." But, instead...oh how we fret, worry and cross our fingers. We fret and worry that we're making the right decisions...and then cross our fingers hoping against hope that we don't make the wrong ones!

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Can I remind us... Joseph was a man...a human just like us... and God spoke to him and He obeyed and God will speak to us too! Why? Because he has a plan and he wants us to be in fellowship and in a relationship with Him. You see, in this life...we are all on a journey...a journey to know and love God more and more and to make Him known. But, we've got to be okay with the fact that our lives are going to be a lot like a Roller Coaster. That's how Joseph's life was. Going from Nazareth to Bethlehem to Egypt and back to Nazareth! Up and down...up and down...up and down. And isn't that the way life goes.

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**Let me ask you to turn to Psalm 139.** As you are doing so, I want you to tell me who you think this lady is:



She's a roller coaster operator. See the smile on her face? That's comforting to me when I get on a roller coaster. We want them smiling! ☺ How about this young man...



He's smiling too. Yeah...that's the look I want to see on the roller coaster operator's face.

Listen... the roller coaster operator of our lives (as believers) is God. And he's smiling! Because He's got a plan that He's even written down. It's like prophecy for our lives. Let me show you.

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### **Psalm 139:13-16**

**13** For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. **14** I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. **15** My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. **16** Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

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Did you know God has a book about your life that your days are already planned out? In fact, it's better than that...He's even keeping up with your tears in that book.

### **Psalm 56:8**

**You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?**

Listen...our loving, gracious and merciful Heavenly Father is somehow (in His omniscience) keeping up with all of our tears...they are counted and numbered in His book. Amazing!

He has plan. He's got it all worked out...just like He did for Jesus...to come out of Bethlehem, Egypt and Nazareth.

Yes church family, if He wanted to...God could reveal everything to us all at once, but they would take away the opportunity for us to seek him, to trust Him to wait on Him, to rely on Him in faith, as our Heavenly Father.

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Oh yes...He's got his hands on the controls of your life... So...





...lift up your hands...let go...and trust Him to fulfill that which He has planned for your life!

Jesus is the fulfillment of all prophecy!