

Fulfillment In Jesus!

Our Text: **Matthew 2:13-23** *Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."*

When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."

Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: "A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more."

Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.

But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

So far, we've looked at several ideas within these two chapters of Matthew:

- We see that Jesus had the right to be King, High Priest, and Lord by looking at His lineage
- We have seen the miracle of the Virgin Birth and all that surrounded it
- We have seen the faithful lives of two individuals (Mary and Joseph), and how they were faithful to the Lord even during the most dire of circumstances
- We have seen God's faithfulness to protect and provide for those who are His and how much He loves us
- Today we will look at the promises and prophecies of God, and the opposition that will arise because of it.

Let's begin . . .

Escaping To Egypt!

Matthew 2:13-15 *Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."*

When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."

There were many things that Joseph could be extremely happy with:

- He was married to the girl of his dreams
- The angel told him they would be used of God to take care of His Son

- He had a new baby boy that was the promised Savior of the world
- God has kept His Word to them throughout this whole ordeal

But because God was going to keep His word, there was going to be a tremendous trial that they would have to escape . . .

An angel of God appears to Joseph in a dream. This dream was not a pleasant one but rather a warning . . . “Get up and take Jesus and Mary immediately to Egypt and stay there until I tell you otherwise.”

Talk about something God has said and we had better listen to! Imagine if just this once Joseph decided to put off obedience for a little more “rest”?!

Flee = **φεύγω** *pheugō* = *To make an escape. To take flight and run. (this is where we get our word “fugitive” from)*

The distance from Bethlehem to the border of Egypt was about 75 miles, and probably another 100 miles or so would have been required to get to a place of safety in that country. Traveling with a baby made the trip both slower and more difficult. BUT JOSEPH WAS OBEDIENT!

They were going to stay there until Herod was dead. (notice that those who oppose God to fare so well in the long run)

But Herod was not the only reason they had to go to Egypt . . . Over 700 years before that, a prophecy was given by Hosea:

Hosea 11:1 *“When Israel was a child, I loved him, And **out of Egypt I called My son.**”*

This was the primary reason Jesus had to go down to Egypt and it was why Matthew quoted it in verse 16!

The Old Testament writers were the Lord’s spokesmen. Just as they had no way of knowing, apart from divine revelation, that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, they had no other way of knowing that He would live awhile in Egypt. The flight to Egypt was one more piece of divine evidence that Jesus was God’s Son, the promised Messiah.

But most scholars will agree that the reference to “My son” in the book of Hosea is referring to the nation Israel. It was a historical statement about what God had done in delivering His people from bondage under Pharaoh, calling them out from Egypt under the leadership of Moses. Why, then, did Matthew interpret as predictive an event that occurred perhaps 700 years before Hosea and an additional 700 years before Matthew quoted Hosea?

The setting of the book of Hosea is failure, decadence, and spiritual tragedy. Despite everything, God promised to bring Israel back to Himself. Israel would suffer His rebuke and His judgment, but one day that people would return to their God, because He had called Israel to be His son. Thus God reminded His people of His great and long-lasting love for them. “When Israel was a youth I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son” (Hosea 11:1). God would never go back on that calling!

When Matthew quotes the last part of that verse from Hosea, he applies it to Christ. Though Hosea was not knowingly predicting that the Messiah would also one day be brought out of Egypt, Matthew shows that Jesus’ return from Egypt was *pictured* by Israel’s calling from that same country many centuries earlier. The Exodus, therefore, was a type of Jesus’ return from Egypt with Joseph and Mary. As God had once brought the people of Israel out of Egypt to be His chosen nation, He now had brought out His Son to be the Messiah to call all of those who were “chosen”!

Also, in a still deeper sense, Jesus came out of Egypt with Israel under Moses. Matthew clearly showed in his genealogy that Jesus descended from Abraham and from the royal line of David. Had Israel perished in Egypt, or in the wilderness, or in any other way, the Messiah could not Himself have come out of Egypt or even have been born!

A Bloodbath At Ramah!

Matthew 2:16-18 *Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: “A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more.”*

Another fulfilled prophecy that Matthew mentions in chapter 2 was the killing done by Herod to all of the first-born sons!

Matthew quotes Jeremiah 31:15 so let’s take a look at it:

Jeremiah 31:15 *Thus says the LORD: “A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted for her children, Because they are no more.”*

Jeremiah was speaking of the great sorrow that would soon be experienced in Israel when most of her people would be carried captive to Babylon. Ramah, a town about five miles north of Jerusalem, was on the border of the northern (Israel) and southern (Judah) kingdoms. It was also the place where Jewish captives were assembled for deportation to Babylon (Jeremiah 40:1).

Rachel, the wife of Jacob-Israel, was the mother of Joseph, whose two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, became progenitors of the two half-tribes that bore their names. Ephraim is often used in the Old Testament as a synonym for the northern kingdom. Rachel was also the mother of Benjamin, whose tribe became part of the southern kingdom. She had once cried, "Give me children, or else I die" (*Genesis 30:1*), and now her beloved "children," her immeasurably multiplied descendants, were being taken captive to a foreign and pagan land.

Rachel weeping for her children therefore represented the lamentation of all Jewish mothers who wept over Israel's great tragedy in the days of Jeremiah, and most specifically typified and prefigured the mothers of Bethlehem weeping bitterly over the massacre of their children by Herod in His attempt to kill the Messiah.

Now let's get back to how Herod got torqued because he was deceived:

Deceived = ἐμπαίζω *empaizō* = *Mocked. Laughed at with ridicule. Laughed at because a trick was played upon.*

We have already studied how the family of the Herod's was a blood thirsty group. The thing that seems funny is that Herod got mad because he became the laughing stock of the time. (pride is a killer) In God's eyes, due to his opposition to God, he was already the laughing stock:

Proverbs 1:7-33 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction. My son, hear the instruction of your father, And do not forsake the law of your mother; For they will be a graceful ornament on your head, And chains about your neck. My son, if sinners entice you, Do not consent. If they say, "Come with us, Let us lie in wait to shed blood; Let us lurk secretly for the innocent without cause; Let us swallow them alive like Sheol, And whole, like those who go down to the Pit; We shall find all kinds of precious possessions, We shall fill our houses with spoil; Cast in your lot among us, Let us all have one purse"— My son, do not walk in the way with them, Keep your foot from their path; For their feet run to evil, And they make haste to shed blood. Surely, in vain the net is spread In the sight of any bird; But they lie in wait for their own blood, They lurk secretly for their own lives. So are the ways of everyone who is greedy for gain; It takes away the life of its owners. Wisdom calls aloud outside; She raises her voice in the open squares. She cries out in the chief concourses, At the openings of the gates in the city She speaks her words: "How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? For scorers delight in their scorning, And fools hate knowledge. Turn at my rebuke; Surely I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you. **Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded, Because you disdained all my counsel, And would have none of my rebuke, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your terror comes, When your terror comes like a storm, And your destruction comes like a whirlwind, When distress and anguish come upon you. "Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me. Because they hated knowledge And did not choose the fear of the LORD, They would have none of my counsel And despised my every rebuke. Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way, And be filled to the full with their own fancies. For the turning away of the simple will slay them, And the complacency of fools will destroy them; But whoever listens to me will dwell safely, And will be secure, without fear of evil."***

Those who fight against God will ALWAYS be on the losing side!

However, this did not stop him from becoming “exceedingly angry”:

Exceedingly Angry = **θυμῶ** *thumoō* = *To be enraged due to a provocation to anger!*

Who made Herod angry? His pride did! How do we know that? Let’s think about this logically:

- He knew the magi tricked him into thinking they were coming back . . . but they didn’t
- Therefore, he should have known that the same “Person” (God) who told the magi the secrets of Herod’s heart also told Joseph and Mary
- Therefore, he should have known that they would be long gone with the baby, Jesus
- He knew Jesus was the Messiah:

Matthew 2:4 *And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them **where the Christ was to be born.***

- But, he then goes against all logic and kills all the firstborn of his followers (*those who were loyal to him*)
- This shows the senseless perversion of his mind due to his pride!
- Even though he was not able to guarantee killing Jesus by killing the other babies, he would kill them in place of Jesus. (this is a strawman fight) And, ultimately God was going to win!

This was a bad decision:

1 Corinthians 16:22 *If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!*

To sum it up . . . The least of Herod’s intentions was to fulfill prophecy, but that is what his slaughter did!

Coming Home To Nazareth!

Matthew 2:19-23 *Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, “Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child’s life are dead.” Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.*

But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

Just to show how bad the families of Herods were . . . In one of his numerous acts of brutality shortly before he died, Herod had executed two popular Jewish rabbis, Judas and Matthias, who had stirred up their disciples and other faithful Jews in Jerusalem to tear down the offensive Roman eagle that the king had arrogantly erected over the Temple gate. The following Passover an insurrection broke out, and Archelaus, reflecting his father’s senseless cruelty, executed three thousand Jews, many of whom were Passover pilgrims who had no part in the revolt.

However, we see that Matthew simply writes, “Now when Herod was dead”. It’s amazing how we forget this . . . One day were going to die! Are we going to be on God’s side or fighting against Him?

In fact, in his *Antiquities* Josephus reports that Herod “died of this, ulcerated entrails, putrified and maggot-filled organs, constant convulsions, foul breath, and neither physicians nor warm baths led to recovery.” A disgusting end for a disgusting man!

We therefore see the angel reappear to Joseph as promised, telling him, Arise and take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child’s life are dead. Notice, Joseph was not instructed to return to any particular city or region but simply to take the Jesus and Mary back into the land of Israel.

But when Joseph arrived in southern Israel, he heard heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, and so he was afraid to go there. The ones who had previously sought to kill the infant Jesus were dead, but knowing the Herod fruit doesn’t fall far from the family tree, Archelaus posed another, more general, threat, knowing how he treated the Jews previously.

Therefore, another dreams comes and another prophecy is fulfilled!

There seems to be a problem though because the specific statement that the Messiah would “**be called a Nazarene**” does not appear in the Old Testament!

• I want to point out something interesting though . . . Other sayings and events unrecorded in the Old Testament are nevertheless quoted or referred to in the New. ***Jude 14–15*** *Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”*

Yet no such prophecy is mentioned in Genesis or in any other part of the Old Testament.

• In a similar way we know of Jesus’ teaching that “It is more blessed to give than to receive” only because of Paul’s later reference to it: ***Acts 20:35*** *I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, “**It is more blessed to give than to receive.**”*

Yet, this saying is not mentioned by **ANY** of the gospel writers, **INCLUDING LUKE**, who reported the account in Acts!

Why is this? Well, John tells us that he did not even attempt to record everything that Jesus said and did during His earthly ministry:

John 21:25 ***And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.***

Just because we don't have it recorded, doesn't mean it was never said!

I want to end today's study with this question:

John 1:46 ***And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"***
Philip said to him, "Come and see."

Some may be asking,

- What good can come of the past 4 weeks of getting to know more about Jesus?
- What good will surrendering my life to Him do?
- Can God make anything good of this mess I've created?

I will quote to you the same answer Philip gave to Nathaniel, **"Come and see!"**

God, Who knew how to get everything right that first "Christmas" has still got everything right this Christmas . . . **"Come and see!" Come meet the One Who was the gift from Nazareth for you and I!**

Let's pray . . .