

We jump back into the Gospel of Matthew this morning and I have said that one of the main points of this book is to show that the story of Jesus fulfills the story of Israel. In our Text this morning, Matthew lays out three events that fulfill three prophecies that cover the years between the wise men and John the Baptist. The Gospels just don't give us a lot of detail about Jesus growing up. They focus on his birth, his ministry, and of course his death and resurrection. Let's look at these three prophecies: the trip to Egypt, Herod's murderous rage, and the return to Nazareth, then 5 ways to respond. First narrative:

**I. The Trip to Egypt - 13-15** – After the wise men left, an angel told Joseph to take Jesus and Mary to Egypt for their safety. It would have taken them a year to get there and it was rare and dangerous to travel by night, but Joseph was told and so he goes. God is at work in a miraculous way. He has brought forth the Christ child and now he will ensure he is safe. Herod is out to destroy him. Remember Herod the Great was power hungry. Herod thought he was clever: **2:7-8**. The only person Herod was interested in worshipping was himself. He was a sick man. He killed 3 sons to keep his crown (2 of them strangled), killed his brother in law, his mother in law and his favorite wife Mariamne. I shudder to think how treated his least favorite wife. One time there was an assassination attempt against him, and he gathered the ten conspirators and executed them all with their families. He had even planned to have all the Jewish nobility murdered right after he died to ensure there was genuine mourning in the land. Sick dude.

Remember Gen 3:15? There will be perpetual hostility between the offspring of the woman and the offspring of the Serpent. The antithesis. Here it is. Herod is the offspring of the Serpent, seeking to destroy the offspring of the woman. Herod hears of this king and needs to extinguish him. And we have a reversal of what we expect. Egypt was the enemy. Remember Exodus? Jerusalem should be the refuge of the King but instead he must flee to enemy territory for safety. The true King of Israel had to flee to Egypt for refuge from the fake King of Israel in Jerusalem.

Right from the beginning the church has had its persecutors, to no avail. No need to be greatly moved. No need to fear. What has become of the Pharaohs, the Neros, the Diocletians, The King Charles, Bloody Mary of England. the greatest persecutors of the church?<sup>1</sup> They are in the grave, being eaten by worms and the church marches on.

Btw, there was a theory among the Jews that Jesus went to Egypt in order to learn magic so that he could come back and lead Israel astray. Not exactly. / And Matthew says this happened to fulfill Hosea 11:1, which says "Out of Israel I called my Son." Matthew is showing that Jesus is the true Israel. Hosea 11:1 is about the people of Israel. Now many commentators think Matthew is misusing Hosea here but I submit that we go with Matthew, not modern commentators. The NT helps us understand the OT. As Augustine put it, "The New is in the Old Concealed, the Old is in the New Revealed." Or as Nehemiah Coxe put it, "The best interpreter of the Old Testament is the Holy Spirit speaking to us in the new."

So, how can a verse about the people of Israel find fulfillment in Jesus? Well, because Matthew is presenting Jesus as the true and faithful Israel, the Messiah, the one who embodies his people, a corporate personality.

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<sup>1</sup> Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on Matthew*, 12-13.

The Messiah is a corporate person. He represents and embodies the nation. Israel is summed up in her King.

The true character and destiny of Israel is wrapped up in Jesus.

Matthew is not misusing Hosea. We need to do some Bible study to show you why. Often times, the majority of times, when the NT quotes the OT, it does not just have that specific verse in mind, but the broader context from which it comes. So we want to go look at all of **Hosea 11:1-11** (709), which is about Israel's future restoration from the nations. **1:** first Exodus. Israel is God's Son. This is from Exodus 4:22-23a: "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son, and I say to you, 'Let my son go that he may serve me.'" / **11:5** Egypt is a type of Assyria. The point is exile. / **11:11** A new Exodus. The pattern is repeated. The first Exodus will be recapitulated at a New Exodus. The First foreshadowed a Second. Hos **2:14-15**.

Hosea 11 teaches that the Exodus is a type of something greater. So Matthew is not misusing Hosea. He is following Hosea's lead in seeing the first Exodus as a type of a later Exodus God would accomplish.

When the people of God were in exile because of their sin, the way the prophets described what God would come and accomplish a New Exodus (Isa 43:16-21 51:9-11 Jer 16:14-15 Hos 2:14-15). Isa 40-55 is all about the new exodus that God would bring about. New Exodus is synonymous with Kingdom. God will come, defeat Israel's enemies, and be enthroned as King.

And in Hosea, how would this new Exodus be accomplished? **1:11, 3:5**. It is all coming together. In Matt 1:1, we have a new New Genesis, Matt 2 New Exodus led by a Davidic King. The story of Jesus completes the story of Israel.

**II. Herod's Murderous Rage 16** - Surprise surprise, Herod gets furious. He was maniacal. As his power increased, so did his paranoia. Heavy is the head that wears the crown. So he had all the boys two and under in Bethlehem killed. The population of Bethlehem at the time was just under 1,000 people. Can you imagine? Absolutely brutal. The height of self-centeredness and wickedness. He crushed lives to maintain power.

Matthew is setting us up for Jesus as a new Moses. Herod is to Jesus what Pharaoh is to Moses. The offspring of the serpent wants to destroy the offspring of the woman (Exod 1:15-22).

**17-18** – Here we are again. This tragedy fulfills Scripture, and Jeremiah 31 in particular. A voice was heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping. The exiles were gathered in Ramah to march to Babylon. Jer **40:1**. Ramah was the staging ground for their deportation to Babylon! Rachel weeping for her children. Now, Rachel has long been dead. She was Israel's wife, the symbolic mother of the people of God weeping because her descendants are going to exile. This is tears for those being taken to exile.

But remember, we have to think about the broader context of Jer 31, which is about hope and restoration. It is actually a good news chapter. **3-4, 12-17, 31-34**. So although what is happening in Bethlehem is tragic, the tears of exile are being brought to completion with these tears in Bethlehem. So zoom out and notice what Matthew is doing. Both Jer 31 and Hos 11 speak of exile due to sin, but

restoration. The people of God have been exiled, but exile is not the last word. God would accomplish a NE and inaugurate a NC. God will come back to redeem his people and end their exile.

Matthew connects these prophecies to the birth of Jesus. **1:17, 22-23**. Matthew is saying, these prophecies are fulfilled in Jesus. God has come – Immanuel – to ransom captive Israel. God is restoring his people around his Messiah Jesus. Exile is over. Freedom is here. The New Moses has brought a new Exodus.

**III. The Return to Nazareth 19-23** – He starts to settle in the land of Israel but an angel warns him to head to Galilee. Archelaus was better than his father but still a dangerous and wicked man. Archelaus began his rule by killing 3,000 Passover celebrants. So Joseph wants to protect his family and he heads to Galilee.

Again, Matthew is setting up Jesus as a new Moses. Look at **20**. Now listen to Exod 4:19: “And the LORD said to Moses in Midian, ‘Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are dead.’” Exod 2:15 says Pharaoh sought to kill Moses but Moses fled. Jesus is the new Moses, the new leader who delivers through a new Exodus.

Then here we have it again: That what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled. Matthew wants us to know that Jesus is the fulfillment of the OT Scriptures: **1:22, 2:5, 2:15, 17, 23, 3:3**. Jesus brings the OT to completion. He is the fulfillment.

But this particular quote is challenging. There are different types of prophecies in the Bible. Sometimes is a direct prophecy with a direct fulfillment. This will happen: then it happens: **1:22, 2:6**. But there also themes and patterns and types. A type is some person or event or institution in the OT that points forward and finds its fulfillment in Christ. Adam, Moses, Exodus, Temple, Sacrifice, Lamb, Sabbath.

This prophecy in verse 23 is challenging because Nazareth is not found anywhere in the OT. And notice it says prophets plural **23**. So this is not a specific quotation from a prophet but a theme from the prophets. And the theme is that the Messiah would be despised and rejected when he comes. The Messiah would be a non-recognized and disdained figure.<sup>2</sup> He would be obscure, socially unimpressive. **Isa 53:1-5**.

He would come from obscurity. Nazareth had a population of around 480. It was a non-entity. It was no-where-ville, Podunk town. As one who grew up in Eula, TX, I can appreciate this. In John 1, Nathanael asked Phillip, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see” (1:46). He is not Jesus of Bethlehem, the house of David, but of Nazareth, the sticks. He’ll be called a Nazarene.

How should we respond to these three events and the prophecies they fulfill? 5 ways:

1. Believe. If you do not know King Jesus, turn to him. Jesus is the promised savior of the world. Judgment is coming. Hell will be unending misery. In love, God sent his Son Jesus to be a propitiation – that is a sacrifice that absorbs God’s wrath. Jesus suffered the wrath of God on the cross so you don’t

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<sup>2</sup> France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 91, 95; Leithart, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 77.

have to, if you will turn from your sin and trust in Christ.

2. Behold the wisdom and sovereignty of our God. He is at work, guiding history. He had made various prophecies hundreds of years prior and he guides 1<sup>st</sup> C history to match what he said would take place. God is sovereignly orchestrated history to fulfill what he had promised in the OT. Consider his power and his wisdom and his kindness. God has an angel warn Joseph so that ultimately he'd have you forever. These events protect the Son of God so that he could complete his mission of living a perfect life, dying in our place, rising from the dead, and ascending to the right hand of God.

This also helps us when we read the OT, know that it is headed somewhere. This is One story with One author and Jesus is the hero. He is the culmination of the Scriptures. As the Jesus Storybook Bible says: every story whispers his name.

3. Trust the Lord: Look at how God has kept his Word. You can trust him. He will make good on his promises. Our hope is secure. If you ever have doubts, look at what he has done! Be concerned and prayerful, but do not fret the state of our nation. God is in the business of moving nations, raising them up and lowering them to accomplish his purposes. That hasn't changed.

4. Obey His Word. Trust and Obey for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus. Obey. Starting with Joseph, the response is immediate obedience. We'll see this pattern with Jesus and his disciples. His followers. They follow Him. Joseph hears the Word, then does the Word.

5. Rejoice because you are free. Exile is over. In Jesus, God has returned and is restoring his people. You say, I was never in exile, I live in America. Don't speak too soon. One of the things we'll learn in the gospel of Matthew is that physical exile is not our greatest problem. Yes, the people of God are in exile under the authority of Rome, but Jesus comes to take care of the enemy behind the enemy. Our battle is not against flesh and blood. Not against people. But against the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers over this present darkness, the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. The real enemy was never Egypt or Babylon or Rome. The enemy is back of them. And we were not enslaved to Herod, but to Satan, sin, and death.

And Jesus frees us through a new Exodus, a liberating event, which is the cross. Listen to Luke 9:31 at the Transfiguration: Moses and Elijah spoke of Jesus departure which was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. The word departure is *exodus*. Jesus accomplishes the new exodus that the prophets foretold at Jerusalem on the cross.

The Messiah, the new Moses, leads us out of exile, out of the grip of the curse. Rejoice Christian, you are free. Free from the grip of Satan. He has no hold over Jesus and therefore no hold over you. He has been bound. His days are numbered. You are free.

Free from sin. Free from both the penalty and power of sin. Jesus paid the penalty of our sin. By the Spirit we are freed from the power of sin. That's why we sing "Be of sin, the double cure: save from wrath and make me pure."

Free from the sting of death. O death, where is your victory? Because of the resurrection of Jesus, we will be raised. Death is no longer a period, just a comma. We're free we're free, forever we're free. Come join the song of the redeemed.

Redemption means to buy back. The word "redeem" is introduced to us in the first Exodus 6:6: "I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment." When we think redemption we should think new Exodus. God has redeemed us, defeated our enemies and purchased our freedom. Jesus is our gracious redeemer. No guilt, no shame, no curse, no chains, new life, You gave, Redeemer. My debt is paid, my soul now saved, oh God, You came, Redeemer.