

A Study of Matthew 2

I. Outline. *Headings from NKJV.*

1. Visit of the Wise Men (Matthew 2.1-12).
2. Flight into Egypt (Matthew 2.13-15).
3. Herod Kills the Children (Matthew 2.16-18).
4. Jesus Returns to Nazareth (Matthew 2.19-23; cf., Luke 2.39).

II. Summary.

In this chapter we find a brief description of the birth of Jesus. It was, without doubt, the most amazingly UNIQUE birth ever! When Herod asked about the location of the birth of this child, without hesitation an answer could be provided, because His birth had been the subject of the prophet Micah’s prophecy (Micah 5.2). The paranoia of King Herod is seen in the **fear** he had of this new arrival into his territory. Herod certainly was not the first nor last to have misunderstood the spiritual nature of this King and His kingdom. That the wise men rejoiced exceedingly (v 10) about being led to the proper place to pay homage to Jesus awakens in us the beginning of an understanding of the majesty of that moment in time when Deity took on human flesh.

The connection this chapter shows between Jesus and Egypt, beginning in verse 13, is quite interesting to those who know something of the parallels and patterns that exist between the Old and New Testaments. The parallel between the bondage Israel suffered in Egypt and then the freedom they enjoyed when released from that bondage is a foreshadowing of the freedom from the bondage of sin we enjoy because Christ came and died, shedding His blood for the remission of our sins.

The brutality practiced by King Herod because of his fear of losing power is spotlighted in the actions he took to secure his power (v. 16). Even those actions of this gentile sovereign, were the subject of a prophecy from the great prophet Jeremiah.

Nathaniel once asked the question: **CAN THERE ANY GOOD THING COME OUT OF NAZARETH?** (John 1.46). Anyone who reads Matthew 2.23 can know for certain the answer to that question is **affirmative!**

III. Chronology.

BIBLE PERIOD: The Period of the Christ.

If you are not familiar with the 15 Bible Periods, please click here:

<https://maplehillchurchofchrist.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/15bibleperiods.pdf>

“...the inter-testamental period sees the rise and fall of the Greek Empire and the beginning, in 63 B.C., of the vast Roman Empire. These international developments were in fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy, Daniel 2.44—**And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.** Daniel’s interpretation of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar’s dream revealed a terrible image consisting of four parts representing four world empires beginning with the Babylonians. Rome was that fourth world empire [Gary McDade, in *A Homiletic Commentary on the Book of Matthew*, pp., 120-21].

A Harmony of Matthew & Luke on Birth, Infancy, and Childhood of Jesus	
The birth of Jesus	Matthew 1.18-25; Luke 2.1-7
Praise of the angels and worship of the shepherds	Luke 2.8-20

Circumcision of Jesus	Luke 2.21
Jesus presented in the temple and adored by Simeon and Anna	Luke 2.22-38
Wise men visit the newborn King	Matthew 2.1-12
Flight to Egypt and slaying of the infants	Matthew 2.13-18
Return from Egypt to Nazareth	Matthew 2.19-23; Luke 2.39
Childhood of Jesus at Nazareth	Luke 2.40
Visit of the Boy Jesus to Jerusalem at Age 12	Luke 2.41-50
The eighteen years at Nazareth	Luke 2.51-52

--Data in Table from Gary McDade, p. 116.

IV. Words/Phrases to Study

- Matthew 2.1... **BETHLEHEM**—“This Bethlehem (house of bread, the name means) of Judah was the scene of Ruth’s life with Boaz (Ruth 1.1ff; Matthew 1.5) and the home of David, descendant of Ruth and ancestor of Jesus (Matthew 1.5). David was born here and anointed king by Samuel (1 Samuel 17.12). The town came to be called the city of David (Luke 2.11). Jesus, who was born in this House of Bread called Himself the Bread of Life (John 6.35), the true Manna from heaven.” [A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures of the New Testament*]. ||||| “WISE MEN translates *magi*, which originally described a Persian priestly caste. ‘Magic’ and ‘magician’ both derive from this word (Acts 13.6, 8). The magi of this chapter were obviously pious Gentiles who likely studied astronomy and/or astrology. Their appearance here reemphasizes, at an early stage in this Gospel, the universal implications of Christ’s mission” [Kenneth I. Chumbley, *The Gospel of Matthew*, p. 37].
- Matthew 2.2... **WE HAVE SEEN HIS STAR IN THE EAST**—“We are left in the dark, and should attempt no further explanation as to the identity of this astral phenomenon. Suffice it to say that the wisdom and kindness of God is evident from the fact that he ‘spoke’ to these students of the stars in a language which they could understand, namely, that of a ‘star’” [William Hendriksen, *Baker New Testament Commentary*, an e-Sword Module].
- Matthew 2.2... **ARE COME TO WORSHIP HIM**—“Was their worship a religious service or a mere expression of reverence for an earthly king? More likely the former. If so, the boldness with which they declared their purpose to worship proved them worthy of the benediction of Him who afterwards said, ‘**And blessed is he whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me**’ (Luke 7.23)” [J.W. McGarvey, *The Fourfold Gospel*, p. 43].
- Matthew 2.5-6... “The promptness with which the priests and scribes answered that the Christ was to be born in Bethlehem, shows that the matter was well understood by the Jews. The prediction cited from Micah (Micah 5.2), taken in connection with the fact that the Messiah was to be of the house of David, whose landed patrimony was at Bethlehem, was conclusive (1 Samuel 16.1)” [J.W. McGarvey, *The New Testament Commentary, Volume I: Mathew and Mark*, p. 27].
- Matthew 2.6... **A GOVERNOR THAT SHALL RULE MY PEOPLE ISRAEL**—“Quoting the prophet, this governor is further described as one who shall be shepherd of my people Israel The word translated here as SHEPHERD is correct; it involves the whole office of the shepherd, as guiding, guarding, folding, and feeding the flock. In ancient Greece the kings were called ‘the shepherds of the people.’ The people said to David, ‘**Jehovah said to thee, Thou shalt be shepherd of my people Israel.**’ (2 Samuel 5.2; Psalms 78.70-72). The meaning of Micah 5.2 seems to be that although Bethlehem was the least among the princes of Judah, from it would come the Messiah; though Bethlehem is one of the smallest cities of Judah, it will be one of the greatest in celebrity, as the birthplace of the Messiah; hence, this Messiah should ‘shepherd’ God’s people” [H Leo Boles, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew*, p. 44].

- Matthew 2.8... **THAT I MAY COME AND WORSHIP HIM ALSO**—“The king now sends the wise men to Bethlehem as his private detectives, ordering them: a. to conduct a thorough search for the child, and, on the presupposition that the search will be successful, b. to report back to him. With diabolical but characteristic cunning he adds, that I too may come and worship him” [William Hendriksen].
- Matthew 2.9-10... “Prophecy directed them to Bethlehem, but the star led the Magi directly to Jesus. Prior to this there is no indication the star actually moved. But it does now, south, toward Bethlehem. Obviously this star was a singular object created for a special purpose. Magi knew about the motion of stars and the movement of this star indicated supernatural guidance. Realizing this, the ‘sight filled them with indescribable joy’ (JBP). Eventually, the star—the original Global Positioning System—stopped over a house (which implies the star was some sort of low-hanging, astral phenomenon) ‘**where the young child was**’” [Chumbley, p. 42].
- Matthew 2.11... **THEY PRESENTED UNTO HIM GIFTS; GOLD, AND FRANKINCENSE, AND MYRRH**—“Those were the magi’s gifts to Jesus. **Gold** for his royalty, **frankincense** for his deity, and **myrrh** for his humanity. We do not know what was done with the gifts, but it seems reasonable that they were used to finance the trip to Egypt and to help support the family while there (see Matt. 2:13-15) [MacArthur, John F (2004-01-06). Matthew 1-28 MacArthur New Testament Commentary Four Volume Set (Macarthur New Testament Commentary Series) (Kindle Locations 1155-1156). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition].
- Matthew 2.13... **HEROD WILL SEEK THE YOUNG CHILD TO DESTROY HIM**—“Thus joy at the honor of the magi’s visit and worship gives place to terror at the wrath of Herod. The quiet days at Bethlehem are followed by a night of fear and flight. The parents of Jesus were experiencing those conflicting joys and sorrows which characterize the lives of all who have to do with Christ—Mark 10:30, 2 Timothy 3:12.” [J.W. McGarvey, Fourfold, p. 49].
- Matthew 2.15... **BY THE PROPHET**—“The meaning of a ‘prophet’ can be demonstrated from verse fifteen. He is a spokesman for the Lord. The prophet who made this statement for God was Hosea (Hosea 11.1). Hugo McCord wrote, ‘Hosea 11.1 is a vivid example of a prophetic statement with a double fulfillment. It was written about 760 B.C., and it referred in context back to Israel’s exodus from Egypt (Exodus 4.22). Its second fulfillment was about 5 B.C., when the baby Jesus was brought out of Egypt (Matthew 2.15)’ [McDade, p. 134].
- Matthew 2.18... **RACHEL WEeping FOR HER CHILDREN**—“The outcry of the mothers of Bethlehem to the massacre fulfilled Jeremiah 31.15. Ramah was a Benjamite city where the Judean captives were gathered for deportation to Babylon (Jer 40.1). In Jeremiah 31.15 the mothers of Judah are personified as Rachel—Jacob’s favorite wife and the idealized mother of Israel—who is pictured weeping inconsolably over her children’s misfortune. Her cry was a double lament: weeping first over the children of Israel’s captivity and now over their murder. It is frequently overlooked that 31.15, a verse of sorrow, is immediately followed by a message of hope. ‘Thus saith the Lord; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears ... there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border’ (31.16-17). Rachel’s sorrow would be temporary for the child who came to destroy death had escaped death. God’s purpose, not Herod’s, would ultimately prevail; thereby ensuring that bereavement would be turned into blessing and that death would be swallowed up in victory (1 Cor. 15.54).’ [Chumbley, p. 47].
- Matthew 2.22... **BEING WARNED OF GOD IN A DREAM, HE TURNED ASIDE INTO THE PARTS OF GALILEE**—“Archelaus possessed a cruel and tyrannical disposition similar to his father. At one of the passovers he caused three thousand of the people to be put to death in the temple and city. For his crimes, after he had reigned nine years, he was banished by Augustus, the Roman emperor, to Gaul, where he died. Knowing his character, and fearing that he would not be safe there, Joseph hesitated about going there, and was directed by God to go to Galilee, a place of safety [Barnes, Albert (2010-07-26). Barnes' New Testament Notes (Kindle Locations 1191-1194). Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Kindle Edition].

- Matthew 2.23... **NAZARENE**—“Native or inhabitant of Nazareth, a NT town in lower Galilee. Nazareth was Jesus’ hometown during the first 30 years of His life. Since the name Jesus was a common name among the Jews, and since surnames were not used, perhaps the designation Nazarene differentiated Jesus of Nazareth from others with the same name... In the original texts, the designation Jesus the Nazarene was used by demons (Mark 1.24; Luke 4.34), the crowd outside Jericho (Mark 10.47; Luke 18.37), a servant girl (Mark 14.67), soldiers (John 18.5-7), Pilate (John 19.19), the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24.19), and the angel at the tomb (Mark 16.6)” [*Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, p. 938].

V. Lessons & Applications.

- Matthew 2.12-15... **ARISE AND TAKE THE YOUNG CHILD AND HIS MOTHER**—“This is the direction which Joseph received in a dream from an angel of the Lord. We are not given directions in such manner today, but we should be as quick to heed the admonitions and directions of the Lord given us in the Bible as Joseph was to heed the directions given him in dreams. The fact that God’s word is written makes it no less effective or binding than if it was given to us in dreams and visions. This is a truth which many religious people are slow to believe and accept. They think they would do anything the Lord tells them to do provided He would tell them in a dream or a vision. But our disobedience stems not from the manner in which we are informed of the Lord’s will, but in the disposition of hear we have toward the Lord and His expressed will (Luke 16.27-31)” [Roy H. Lanier, Sr., *Teacher’s Annual Lesson Commentary*, 1952, p. 97].
- Matthew 2.13-15... “The Bible does not set out the details of the flight into Egypt. Rather, it says only that Joseph and Mary fled by night from Jerusalem and returned only when Joseph had been assured in a dream that it would be safe to take Jesus back to the land of the Jews. This, in connection with other passages, makes clear here that our loving Father will graciously care for His people.. It should be a part of the life of each person to remember such marvelous passages as, **‘The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want’** (Psalm 23.1) and, **‘Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding: in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths’** (Proverbs 3.5-6). We know, of course, that neither angels nor the Holy Spirit speaks *directly* to men today. God speaks to men today only through His written word. However, the loving care of God for His people is as real now as it was during Bible times. Since we can know that God exists (Romans 1.18-32; Psalm 19.1), that the Bible is His word (2 Timothy 3.16-17; 2 Peter 1.20-21), and that faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10.17), then we can know that the Bible is a means of obtaining *knowledge* of God’s will for man. Thus, we can know that if the Bible tells us that God will be with us, then we can *know* that He will be with us. We are not to ‘waver through unbelief,’ but, as did Abraham of old, we are to be fully assured that what God has promised, **‘he is able also to perform’** (Romans 4.20-21). One of the greatest lessons man can learn is that of the overruling providence and care of God as He deals with men” [Thomas B. Warren, *Teacher’s Annual Lesson Commentary* 1973, p. 18].
- Matthew 2.16... “The reader is initially met with two contrasts in this passage. The first concerns Herod’s irony when he said he wanted to worship Jesus. His real motive was to kill Him. The one trying to trick the wise men into being his emissaries in the end is tricked by them. And, second, the ‘wise men’ rejoiced with exceeding great joy when they saw the star finally indicate the house where Jesus was staying, but Herod was exceeding wroth when he saw the wise men foil his plans. The two were at opposite extremes because one was trying to please God and the other himself. Doing God’s will brought happiness into the wise men’s lives; defying God’s will brought misery into Herod’s life” [McDade, p. 135].

VI. Questions.

True or False

01. _____ The warning to leave for Egypt was given by Mary’s family.

02. ____ The number of wise men who came to see Jesus is part of the record.
03. ____ Matthew tells us the name of the prophet who wrote about Jesus' birthplace.
04. ____ Not any prophets' names are mentioned in this chapter.
05. ____ Nazareth of Galilee became an early home of Jesus.

Multiple Choice (Select the BEST Answer)

06. ____ Bethlehem children less than this age were murdered by King Herod: (a) 5; (b) 3; (c) 2.
07. ____ When Herod had a question about the king of the Jews, he asked: (a) the chief priests; (b) the scribes; (c) a & b.
08. ____ Son of the king who killed the babies of Bethlehem was: (a) Archelaus; (b) Archippus; (c) Archimedes.
09. ____ A word which describes the way Herod called the wise men to him is: (a) urgently; (b) privily or secretly; (c) boldly.
10. ____ Who warned the spies not to return to Herod: (a) the scribes; (b) God; (c) his wife.

Fill in the Blanks

11. The _____ of _____ was the event which resulted in Joseph moving his family back from Egypt.
12. As amazing as it sounds, this chapter actually tells of a man having sought the LIFE of a _____.
13. Though we are NOT told how many wise men came, many people count the gifts brought and draw their own conclusion that they were _____ in number.
14. When the wise men saw the star it caused them to _____ with _____.
15. _____ by the _____ was the basis for the answer given to King Herod about the birthplace of the King of the Jews.

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be found on next week's handout

ANSWERS to Matthew 1 Questions... **01**—True (3,5,6,16); **02**—True (17); **03**—False (11-12); **04**—True (6); **05**—True (22-23; Isa 7.14); **06**—Joseph (22); **07**—David (17); **08**—Boaz (5); **09**—Matthan (15-16); **10**—Joseph (20-24); **11**—Perez, Zerah, Tamar (3); **12**—Bathsheba (6); **13**—Josiah (10-11); **14**—Holy Spirit (20); **15**—Isaiah, fulfilled (22).

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle. The words may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. -DRL

B E H O L D - S D F P L B
 E D E P A R T E D J M A O
 T I F U L F I L L E D N E
 H L R J M O T H E R O D G
 - I T U C H I L D U B Y Y
 L G H D I S W O R S H I P
 E E E A S T I S R A E L T
 H N N E B A C C A L L E D
 E T I A P R O P H E T S S
 M L D R E A M - E M H A K
 I Y J I O B E C A M E Y W
 K P U S P O L O R D R I H
 W I S E L R U Y D B E N E
 S P O K E N F S K I N G N

ARISE	BEHOLD	BETH-LEHEM	BORN	CALLED
CAME	CHILD	COME	DEPARTED	DILIGENTLY
DREAM	EAST	EGYPT	FULFILLED	HEARD
HEROD	ISRAEL	JERUSALEM	JUDAEA	KING
LAND	LORD	MOTHER	PEOPLE	PROPHET
SAYING	SPOKEN	STAR	THEN	THERE
WHEN	WISE	WORSHIP		

VIII. Crossword Puzzle.

Matthew 2 (KJV)														
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IX. EXTRA CREDIT FOR “SUPER” Bible Students...

Will you please consider answering these three SIMPLE questions based on the Bible text of this chapter? I will try to make use of your answers. Bring them with you next week. Tear out this last sheet from the Study Guide and be prepared to put it in a basket. I think it will be a great help to all of those in the class if you will do so. Thank you in advance for your marvelous cooperation!

W O R D: What word would you like to know more about in this chapter?

W O N D E R: I wonder what this phrase, verse, or series of verses means...

W I S H: I wish myself—or others whom I know or even don’t know—would understand this fact, principle, or concept from this chapter...