

## WEEK 2

### CHAPTER 2: INFANCY STORIES

#### The Visitation of the Magi

As with the genealogy, Matthew's narrative is theological more than historical: Jesus is the true King of the Jews.

1. (2:1-12) Astrologers from the East and their homage to the child in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2)
2. (2:13-15) The Flight to Egypt
3. (2:16-18) The Slaughter of the children in Bethlehem
4. (2:19-23) The Return from Egypt and the Move to Nazareth

**2** Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men **from the east** came to Jerusalem, **2** saying, "Where is he who has been born **king of the Jews**? For **we saw his star** when it rose and have **come to worship him.**"

Who are these 'wise men' and how did they know to look for a star? What does their coming signify?

- "Wise Men"= Designation for Persian Priests, here, a general word for Astrologers "from the east"
- How did they know to look for a star: Oracle of Balaam in Num 24:17

**3** When **Herod the king** heard this, he **was troubled**, and **all Jerusalem with him**; **4** and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where **the Christ (Messiah)** was to be born.

Contrast Herod's (Father was Jewish) and 'All Jerusalem's (Divine Visitation) response to the Gentile Arabians.

**5** They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

**6** "And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel." (Micah 5:2, the birthplace of Jesse and David)

7 Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. **8 And he sent them to Bethlehem**, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.”

9 After listening to the king, they went on their way. **And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. (Bethlehem)**

SLIDE: Note how God continues to guide them supernaturally by a natural sign.

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. **11 And going into the house**, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and **they fell down and worshiped him**. *The Greek implies they prostrated themselves before Israel’s Christ*. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense, and myrrh.

- Kings of Arabia: Isaiah 60:4-6
- Gifts fitting a Savior-King: Ps 72:10-20 / Gold: King; Frankincense (incense): God; Myrrh: Burial. Jesus: The Divine King Born to Die.
- Jesus is the Greater Solomon: Queen of Sheba Ch 12
- (Isa 2:1-3) Matthew’s Point: The Magi signal the flowing of the Nations to the God of Israel.

(Luke 2:6) Manger [SLIDE] Israel comes first to adore the child (Shepherds), Kings in Matthew come a year later or more to a ‘home’; to the Jew first then the Gentile.  
Manger: food, altar, sarcophagus, burial imagery, Isaac

12 And being **warned in a dream** not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way. *Now, God gives the Magi greater revelation and Divine protection from harm; they are to take what they have seen and worshipped back to their lands.*

### **The Flight to Egypt**

*A demonstration of God’s guidance and protection of ‘Israel’ his Son.*

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.”

(Exodus 1:8, 15-17, 22, 2:2) Moses = God protects Israel by protecting her deliverer

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.”**(Hosea 11:1)

Jesus' flight to Egypt is a sign of the Messiah-Savior, the new Moses to lead his people out of exile.

(Hosea 11) “Out of Egypt”= God called Israel his Son now he calls Jesus his True Son. And the Son is calling us from the bondage of sin and death.

### **Herod Kills the Children**

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.”

Jeremiah 31:15 (Rachel, mother of Joseph and Benjamin, arises her voice in Rahama [height], bewailing Israel's deportation into Babylon

- applied (1) as an expression of the lament over the death of the children
- Deeper meaning= Rachel who bewails “her children” stands for Israel who still lies in exile.

### **The Return to Nazareth**

The return to Judea was announced in v.13 but also the move to Nazareth, which is the main idea of this final story.

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.**” (Moses, Ex 4:19) returned to Egypt after the death of “all who were seeking his life.”

“The Land of Egypt” the only NT use found here in Matthew is the promised holy land to which Israel is to return from its banishment in Exile (Ezek 20:40-44).

**21** And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.

In Jesus the Messiah, the old Mosaic exodus is being repeated and fulfilled in a new way.

**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.

What prophecy does Matthew have in mind? No specific prophecy exists, however...

Jesus was “from Nazareth” Nazara, root word ne·tser, נִצְּר, meaning 'branch' or 'shoot'.

1. Shoot= Isa 11:1 (netser)
2. Nazir, (Nazarite) a man dedicated to God whose hair is uncut as a sign of the vow taken (Sampson Judges 13:5, 7)

A Messianic and Christological interpretation is very important to Matthew:

Exercise (Psalm 22; Jonah 2; Num 21:6-9)

In the person of Jesus Christ, the Law and the words of the Prophets are fulfilled and in the Christian understanding, the Old Testament points to Jesus the Messiah.