

# The Gospel of Matthew

Title: The King Fulfills Prophecy

Text: Matthew 2:13-23

**Introduction:** We have four prophecies fulfilled in the first two chapters of Matthew. The first was from Micah 5:2 (Matthew 2:6) *“But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.”*

**Point 1 - The Escape To Egypt.** Let’s consider one thing that may be beyond our human understanding. God uses the wickedness of men to accomplish His will. There was comfort and great joy and the announcement of Christ to be born and was affirmed by the magi and the divine work of God in their life. We have seen this in our life. We have witnessed such things. But then comes the warning, the battle, the evil one to try to destroy. Matthew 2:12 the magi were warned not to go back to Herod.

The word flee is where we get the english word “fugitive.” It’s a present imperative meaning the beginning of this action is to be continued. The journey to Egypt was about 75 miles with an addition 100 miles or so to reach a natural Jewish asylum in Egypt. The gifts of the magi likely paid the way for this trip to Egypt. The fact is Joseph was fleeing wicked men and in a rather odd spiritual analogy we flee wickedness as well. In 2 Timothy 2:22 *“Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”* I am not going to draw a parallel here, but it’s an important point for the believer to be sensitive to where evil and wickedness lie, and flee.

The real reason for the flee to Egypt is in vs. 15. In Hosea 11:1 *“When Israel was a youth I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son.”* Herod’s threat was no surprise to the Lord, God had long planned to foil the wicked king’s plans. The reference to “My Son” in Hosea is to the nation of Israel. It was about God’s deliverance from bondage. But why did Matthew make reference to this? The setting of the book of Hosea is about failure, decadence, and spiritual tragedy. (**Illustration of Gomer as a physical prostitute and Israel as a spiritual prostitute**) Hosea loved his wife and she rebelled and wound up betrothed and God told Hosea to win her back, Hosea 3:1 *“Then the Lord said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by her husband, yet an adulteress, even as the Lord loves the sons of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes.”* And for 15 shekels of silver, homer and half a barley he bought her freedom. He brought her back home, gave her the honor of his wife, loved her as he had before and maintained his covenant. And in spite of Israel’s unfaithfulness, spiritual adultery and failure, God loved them and redeemed them, Hosea 11:3-4 *“Yet it is I who taught Ephraim to walk, I took them in My*

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arms; But they did not know that I healed them. <sup>4</sup> I led them with cords of a man, with bonds of love, And I became to them as one who lifts the yoke from their jaws; And I bent down and fed them." The exodus from Egypt for Israel, was a type of Jesus' retrun from Egypt with Mary and Joseph. As God once brought Israel from bondage out of Egypt, He will again bring His Son to be the Messiah.

**Point 2 - The Slaughter.** This is a fulfillment of another prophecy, and yet the bloodiest, cruelest and vilest of actions. The word "deceived" or "tricked" in vs. 16 indicates what Herod thought of their intentions. However, the magi did not intend to do so, they simply obeyed the commands of God, cf. vs. 12.

Herod's response was "exceedingly angry" and the word is *thummo* which is made even stronger by the imperative before it. The Greek is in the passive voice indicating that Herod had lost complete control of his passion and was now controlled by it. His senses and judgements were now blinded, and this is a dangerous place for anyone to be in. This resulted in the slaughter of any male child up to two years old, in case the magi were wrong about their dates. This horrific tragedy only begins the bloodshed that will result around the Messiah. The text quoted from Matthew represented the lamentation of all Jewish mothers who wept over Israel's great tragedy in the days of Jeremiah. It prefigured the mother of Bethlehem weeping over their children.

No one (or at least me) can explain how God uses such wickedness in His will. In human wisdom, there's no explanation that satisfies. Yet, we know God is sovereign and uses the wickedness of men to accomplish His divine will. Such was this case.

**Point 3 - The Divine Direction.** Herod was dead. And before he dies he had his other son executed. His son Archelaus was now reigning, and although not as wicked as Herod, he still was not a kind man. Archelaus posed a more general threat, he had two popular rabbis executed for stirring up disciples to remove an offensive Roman eagle erected over the temple gate. Furthermore, after passover he executed some 3,000 Jews. The truth is no Jews were truly safe under his rule.

God divinely warned Joseph of such. He came and resided in a city called Nazareth. In all of this God simply orchestrated events to fulfill the OT prophecy of the coming Messiah. I note two points from this chapter that are glaring (1) divine revelation as indicated by angelic instruction for every move (2) the fulfillment of a divine plan revealed in the OT.

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As a means of application in our own lives, God in His divine wisdom, arranges events in our lives to accomplish His will. It does not mean we are not responsible for our decisions nor are we to take a back seat approach to our life, but He does intervene when we can't see what's ahead.

Finally, Jesus was given the name often "Jesus The Nazarene". It was accustomed that nothing good came from Nazareth. Thus again filling the prophecy of the OT about Jesus being hated and depicted as "despised and forsaken of men" cf. Isaiah 53:3. Jesus was hated by men, leaders and the world, yet it was God's plan. Today, He is hated too. He is despised by rulers and leaders today. But He is our Savior!