

The Gospel According to Matthew

Study # 2

Chapter 2

Outline

I. Wise Men From the East Come to Worship Christ (2:1-12)

II. Joseph Flees to Egypt with Mary and Jesus (2:13-15)

III. Herod Massacres the Innocent (2:16-18)

IV. Joseph Settles in Nazareth with Mary and Jesus (2:19-23)

V. Applications

Summary:

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the days of Herod the King, wise men came to Jerusalem trying to find Jesus. They saw His star in the East and came to worship Him. Herod and all Jerusalem were troubled. Herod asked of the chief priests and scribes (experts in the Old Testament scriptures) where the Messiah would be born. They told him that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem of Judah in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy. Herod was very crafty and wanted to kill Jesus. He instructed the wise men to find Jesus so he can come worship Him also but his true motives were to kill Him. The wise men found Jesus and presented their gifts to Him and worship Him. They were divinely warned in a dream not to return to Herod but to return to their own country. The angel of the Lord also appeared to Joseph in a dream and warned him to take Jesus and His mother and flee to Egypt because of Herod in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy "Out of Egypt I called My Son" (Hos. 11:1). Herod was very angry when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men and ordered that all the male children in Bethlehem and in the surrounding region be put to death from two years old and under "according to the time which he had determined from the wise men" (Matt. 2:16). That was also a fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy found in Jeremiah 31:15. When Herod was dead, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph again in a dream and instructed him to return to the land of Israel. Joseph was afraid to go dwell in the land of Judea after he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of Herod his father, so he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth.

Notes:

Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea. The word "Bethlehem" means "house of bread." Jesus is "the bread of life." Jesus said in John 6:35, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." Jesus chose to be born in Bethlehem, a very small town in Judea. This shows His humility. It was also a fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy in Micah 5:2 which was written in the eighth century B.C. Since Jesus was born at the time of Herod (Herod died at 4 B.C.), then Jesus must have been born sometime between 6-4 B.C. In Micah 5:2 we see the deity of Christ. Christ's going forth (origins) "are from of old, from everlasting." Christ has no beginning

or end. He has always existed from eternity. In John 1:1-3, we read "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."

The Herod mentioned in Chapter 2 is Herod the Great who ruled from 37-4 B.C. He was a descendant of the Edomites who were the offspring of Esau. The Edomites were the traditional enemies of the Jews. He was a very wicked and cunning King. One of his famous projects was the rebuilding of the Jewish temple which was completed many years after his death.

Who were the wise men (Magi)? They were not kings but magicians and astrologers from Persia (Daniel 5:11). The Bible does not say how many "wise men" came to see Jesus. Tradition says there were three because of the three gifts that were offered. They presented three gifts to Jesus - Gold, Frankincense, and myrrh. Gold represents His Kingship, Frankincense His priesthood, and myrrh His death. Myrrh was one of the burial spices used for His body (John 19:39). They saw "His star in the East" and came to worship Him in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy in Numbers 24:17, "A Star shall rise out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel." Notice how they give preeminence and worship to Christ alone in Matthew 2:11. They fell down and worshiped Christ alone not Mary or Joseph. Notice the term "the young Child and His mother" in verse 11, 13, 14, 20, and 21 which shows Christ's preeminence over Mary. All worship and honor belong to Christ alone. The wise men probably arrived about a year or two after Christ's birth. Matthew 2:11 speaks of them coming "into the house" not a stable. Also that would make sense why Herod would kill all the male children who were in Bethlehem who were "two years old and under."

In verse 23 we have a fulfillment of a prophecy that Jesus would be called a "Nazarene." There is no direct prophecy in the Old Testament but the Old Testament speaks of the Messiah that He would be treated with contempt. Nazarene was very obscure and viewed with contempt by the people. Nathaniel said in John 1:46, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Jesus was "despised and rejected by men" (Isaiah 53:3) and scorned by the people (Psalm 22:6).

Applications

Are you seeking Christ like the wise men? The Bible says that if you seek Him with all of your heart that you shall find Him (Jer. 29:13-14). Are you giving Him all the preeminence in your life that He deserves?

Prayer Topic

Pray that Christ would have all the preeminence in your life.

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