

Matt 2:1-23

It is a daunting task to cover an entire chapter of the Bible in one sermon, but we are going to walk through it pretty swiftly.

1. Remember that we said Matthew is almost like a Holy Spirit inspired commentary on the Old Testament?
2. As we walk through this chapter, I want us to highlight 5 direct, or indirect, Old Testament prophecies that Matthew cites that point us to the birth of Jesus Christ.
3. Then I want us to see 3 implications of what we find here.

*Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, 2 "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."*

1. The magi were astronomers and scientist, most likely from Persia, who studied the stars.
2. Here we have a reference to a star they saw and connected to the birth of the King of the Jews.
3. This is likely an indirect reference to a prophecy in Numbers, written some 1400 years earlier.
4. Numbers 24:17 *I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, A scepter shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through the forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Sheth*
5. But how would they have heard this prophecy from Israel all the way in Persia?
  - a. 2 well known Jews, Daniel and Esther, among many others, spent several hundred years in Babylon and Persia.
  - b. The magi clearly had full confidence in the trustworthiness of Scripture to travel so far

*3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet: 6 AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL."*

1. This is a reference to Micah's prophecy some 700 years earlier.
2. Micah 5:2 *"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."*
3. What better place for the Son of David to be born than in King David's home town?
4. Obviously this prophecy came long before God chose Mary and Joseph from Nazareth.
  - a. Why didn't he just choose someone from Bethlehem and save the trouble?
  - b. He chose the people, and He chose the place and in His Sovereign power brought those 2 together to fulfill this prophecy from 700 years earlier.

*7 Then Herod secretly called the magi and determined from them the exact time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him." 9 After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the Child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 11 After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. 12 And having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way. 13 Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him."*

14 So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt. 15 He remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON."

1. This is a reference to the writings of Hosea from 700-750 years earlier.
2. Hosea 11:1 *When Israel was a youth I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son.*
3. Think of the love that God bestowed on Israel in Egypt.
  - a. He sent Moses
  - b. He sent plagues
  - c. He parted the Red Sea and called his children out of Egypt.
  - d. He provided quail and manna in the wilderness
4. Hosea reminds the people of this before they go into captivity, but ultimately to picture the Messiah, God's Son, coming out of Egypt.

16 Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from two years old and under; according to the time which he had determined from the magi. 17 Then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: 18 "A VOICE WAS HEARD IN RAMAH, WEEPING AND GREAT MOURNING, RACHEL WEEPING FOR HER CHILDREN; AND SHE REFUSED TO BE COMFORTED, BECAUSE THEY WERE NO MORE."

1. This is a reference to Jeremiah's prophecy written around 600 years earlier.
2. Jeremiah 31:15 *Thus says the LORD, "A voice is heard in Ramah, Lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; She refuses to be comforted for her children, Because they are no more."*
3. Jeremiah prophesies that Rachel's corpse will be so disturbed by her children being taken into captivity in Babylon that she will awaken and weep from her tomb (obviously figuratively).
4. The full fulfillment of this prophecy however is found here however.

19 But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and said, 20 "Get up, take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child's life are dead." 21 So Joseph got up, took the Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Then after being warned by God in a dream, he left for the regions of Galilee, 23 and came and lived in a city called Nazareth. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: "He shall be called a Nazarene."

1. The plural form of "prophet" would appear to suggest that no single Old Testament text is in view, but rather there is a general "theme" reflected in numerous prophecies about Messiah.
2. There were a number of Old Testament prophecies that foretold that the Messiah would be a despised person, rejected by many of his contemporaries
  - a. Psalm 22:6-8 *But I am a worm and not a man, A reproach of men and despised by the people. 7 All who see me sneer at me; They separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying, 8 "Commit yourself to the LORD; let Him deliver him; Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him."*
  - b. Isaiah 53:3 *He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.*
3. Nazareth was the community in north Galilee that housed the Roman garrison, and that may have "tainted" the city
4. "Nazareth" was used in a derogatory sense by Nathanael when he heard that Jesus was from Nazareth. He asked: Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?
5. It thus well may be the case that the epithet "Nazarene," in addition to suggesting the place where Jesus grew up, takes on a pejorative, figurative sense, i.e., a person disdained by his peers.

There are 5 clear prophecies quoted, interpreted, and fulfilled in this chapter. I want us to consider three implications of this before we close.

### **1. The Teaching of Scripture is True, Proven, and Valid.**

Did you know that the Bible is the only book of religion on planet earth that contains specific predictive prophecy and the actual fulfillment thereof.

Consider all of the Old Testament prophecies related to Jesus.

1. Place of birth, Time of birth, Manner of birth and circumstances surrounding it.
2. Betrayal for 30 silver coins, Manner of death, and His Burial in a rich man's tomb
3. Some sources say more than 400 OT prophecies point to Christ and His life.

Peter Stoner in his book, *Science Speaks* wrote, *"We find that the chance that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled 8 prophecies is 1 in 10 to the 17<sup>th</sup> power: that is 1 in 100 quadrillion (a 1 followed by 17 zeros). In order to help us comprehend this staggering possibility, Stoner illustrates it by supposing that we take 10 to the 17<sup>th</sup> power of silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state 2 feet deep. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing just 8 prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote them according to their own wisdom."*

1. What are the chances that one man would fulfill all 48 prophecies?
2. What about 400? Yet Jesus fulfilled them all.
3. 2 Peter 1:16-21 *For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17 For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased"-- 18 and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. 19 So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. 20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*

The Teaching of Scripture is True, Proven, and Valid.

### **2. The Messiah has come and is coming again.**

1. Born as predicted and prophesied, He came to live, die, and rise again and He is returning some day.
2. Philippians 2:5-11 *Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

### **3. We must be ready for His coming.**

THE GOSPEL

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What did you learn about God in this sermon and in the biblical texts used? About Christ? About the Holy Spirit?
2. What did you learn about yourself in this sermon and in the texts used?
3. Were there any clear promises or commands in the biblical texts used?
4. What is the hardest truth that stands out to you from this message or the verses referenced?
5. What is the most impactful point or statement from the sermon?
6. How can you respond to this message?