

SUNDAY SERMON

**Hidden Hills Sovereign Grace Baptist Church
Willow, Alaska**

Date: July 19, 2020

Scripture Read: Matthew 2:1-23

Text: Matthew 2:1-23

**Subject: Wise men visit; flight to Egypt; Herod kills babies;
return to Nazareth**

This chapter is more of the history of our Lord Jesus Christ. For ease of study, we can divide the chapter into four parts as follows:

Part 1 (verses 1-12) Visit of the wise men from the east:

Part 2 (verses 13-15) Joseph and Mary flee to Egypt with Jesus:

Part 3 (verses 16-18) Herod kills all children under 2 years of age in and near Bethlehem: and

Part 4 (verses 19-23) Joseph and Mary return from Egypt with Jesus and dwelt in Nazareth.

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- **Part 1 (verses 1-12) Visit of the wise men from the east.**

Matthew 2:1-2 (KJV) *Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, 2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.*

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, -- Two things come to us from the first phase of this verse. (1) that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea, and (2) his birth was in the days of Herod the king. Therefore, we have the place

of His birth and the approximate time of his birth. Bethlehem is about 143 road miles south of Jerusalem. Bethlehem of Judaea is so called to distinguish it from another Bethlehem in the tribe of Zebulun mentioned in Joshua 19:15.

Joshua 19:15 (KJV) *And Kattath, and Nahallal, and Shimron, and Idalah, and **Beth-lehem**: twelve cities with their villages.*

According to a prophecy which will be mentioned later, Christ was to be born in Bethlehem. The Jews expected that he would be born there because of the prophecy as we shall see in verses 4 - 6.

in the days of Herod the king – This Herod was called Herod the Great. He is to be distinguished from another Herod called Herod Antipas who ruled after Herod the great. Secular history tells us: Herod reigned as king of Judea from about 37 BC until his death in 4 BC. He reigned for 33 years.

Behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, – The term wise men is translated from the Greek word: μαγος magos . This word is found six times in the New Testament. This word appears in this verse; in verse 7, and twice in verse 16. It is also translated as sorcerer. Commentators have written a number of suppositions about these men.

Acts 13:6 (KJV) *And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain **sorcerer** <3097>, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus:*

Acts 13:8 (KJV) *But Elymas the sorcerer <3097> (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.*

2 saying, where is he that is born King of the Jews?– There can be no doubt that the wise men from the east spoke these words to Herod

and to his advisors – as well as to the Jews who may have been around him in that day. They said nothing to prove that the one born was the king of the Jews – they simply said it, and apparently believed it.

For we have seen his star in the east, – We have seen his ***star*** in the east. Some commentators think this was a comet. This preacher doesn't think so. The Greek word which is translated into the English word "Star" is: αστηρη aster *as-tare'*. This word is found twenty-four times in the New Testament and is always translated as star. Why was it these men saw the star? Why were they looking for it? I do not know the answers to these questions because the Bible doesn't reveal it. Enough for me that they saw His star and realized it indicated that the King of the Jews was born.

and are come to worship him. – There is nothing in the narrative about the wise men which make us believe they knew that the one born King of the Jews was the savior of the world. The term worship, therefore undoubtedly means they wanted to give him civil homage and respect, as an illustrious person, as being king of the Jews.

Matthew 2:3 (KJV) *When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.*

This verse shows us that Herod heard the wise men's words because when he heard these things, he was troubled – and all Jerusalem with him. It would have been very startling to them to hear of the birth of one who is King of the Jews. Herod had been given a great position in the land and was ruler over the Jews, so we can understand why he was troubled. The people of Jerusalem must have realized that there would be a change in the government if their King was born, therefore, they were troubled with Herod.

Matthew 2:4 (KJV) *And when he had gathered all the chief priests*

and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

Herod called for the chief priest and scribes to get some understanding about the place where Christ, the anointed – the messiah, should be born. Some of the people in the land believed the scriptures foretold that Christ would be born in Bethlehem.

John 7:40-42 (KJV) *Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. 41 Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? 42 Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?*

Matthew 2:5-6 (KJV) *And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, 6 And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.*

And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, -- The scribes and chief priests gave their answer. They quoted the scripture to tell Herod of the birthplace of the Messiah. This quote comes from Micah 5:2 and is not an exact quote, so the chief priests and scribes must have been paraphrasing.

Micah 5:2 (KJV) *But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*

Micah 5:2 (XXE - Septuagint) *And thou, Bethleem, house of Ephratha, art few in number to be among the thousands of Juda; out of thee shall one come forth to me, to be a ruler of Israel; and his*

goings forth were from the beginning, from eternity.

Matthew 2:7 (KJV) *Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.*

Herod was truly troubled and concerned about his position in Israel. These wise men, who were gentiles, had brought him some disturbing news. He wanted to know from them, privately, when the star appeared. If they gave an answer, it is not recorded for us.

Before proceeding with this section of scripture, I think it good that we compare scripture with scripture concerning the birth of Jesus Christ. We were told in the 1st chapter of Matthew that "...Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife; 25 and knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus." (**Mat.** 1:24-25). We need to consider the record of Jesus' birth from Luke's account so that we have an accurate biblical understanding of the events surrounding his birth. Let us now turn to the book of Luke, chapter 1, verses 1 through 20.

Luke 2:1-20 (KJV) *And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. 2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) 3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) 5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. 6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. 8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.*

9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. **10** And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. **11** For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. **12** And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. **13** And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, **14** Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. **15** And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. **16** And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. **17** And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. **18** And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. **19** But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. **20** And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

- **Let us consider what we just read about the birth of Jesus Christ.**
- **Now let us return to the 2nd chapter of Matthew, verse 8 to see the actions of Herod with the wise men.**

Matthew 2:8 (KJV) And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

There can be no doubt of what Herod had in mind when he sent the wise men away and told them to bring him word. It was in his mind to kill the

baby as the next verses show us.

Matthew 2:9 (KJV) *When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.*

Most interesting. The star, which they had seen in the east, went before them to guide them until it stood over where the young child was. The star moved with them and stood directly over the house, so that they had no need to inquire of any person for him.

Matthew 2:10 (KJV) *When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.*

What a blessing this must have been for these men who had come so far to see him who was born King of the Jews. The star guided them unerringly to the house where Jesus and Mary, his mother were. Notice this is a house and not a manger as many religionists try to depict with their Catholic Holiday Manger Scenes. Here is part of the mystery of Iniquity which doth already work.

Matthew 2:11 (KJV) *And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.*

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: --

Notice this closely: ***when they were come into the house***, -- The wise men did not come to a manger as the Roman Catholic mystery of iniquity would have us believe, but they came into the house where they saw the young child with Mary his mother. Since the wise men went to Bethlehem to seek the young child, it follows that this occurred later than

the manger scene. It could have been as much as a year later when they came because Joseph and Mary with their family went up from Nazareth every year to the feast of the Passover. Consider when the Passover was held. It was held on the 14th day of the first month which was Nisan or Abib in the spring of the year which months roughly correspond to our March and April.

After coming into the house and seeing the young child and Mary, his mother, the wise men fell down before the young child as the custom of their country was and worshipped him – that is, as a king; giving him the same civil honor and respect, as they were wont to do to their own kings and princes. There is not a word in all this narrative about the visit of the wise men from the east that they knew that the young child was the Savior of the world, but they saw him as the King of the Jews.

and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. – They had brought gifts to the King of the Jews. Gold, and frankincense, and myrrh – all wonderful gifts fit for a king. When the queen of Sheba visited King Solomon, she brought him many gifts because Solomon was the King of Israel. This was the custom of the people of that part of the world. Gold, frankincense, and myrrh – three things which do not indicate that there were “three kings of orient.” We do not know how many wise men there were. There could have been twelve of them for all we know. This is another of the innovations of the Mystery of Iniquity which is perpetuated by those unwilling to see the truth.

Matthew 2:12 (KJV) And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

Amen! I love this. God warned the wise men in a dream that they should not return to Herod. Why was that? This is God’s providential

protection of His son. God knew what Herod had in his heart toward this little one who was born King of the Jews – MURDER! So the wise men took another route back to their own country.

- **Part 2 (verses 13-15) Joseph and Mary flee to Egypt with Jesus:**

Matthew 2:13 (KJV) *And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.*

And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, -- The angel does not say take thy wife and son; for though Mary was properly his wife, yet Christ was not properly his son. The child is also mentioned before the mother, not only because of his divine nature and office, in respect to which he was her God and Saviour; but because it was the preservation of the child which was the reason for the angel appearing to Joseph. This is a marvelous instance of the providence of God.

And be there (in Egypt) until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. – The LORD’s words are clear. Stay in Egypt until I tell you differently. The LORD certainly knew the heart of Herod the great that he was bent on the destruction of the young child, Jesus.

Matthew 2:14-15 (KJV) *When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: 15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my*

son.

Joseph did as the LORD instructed him and left by night to Egypt. They remained there until the death of Herod. Notice the wonderful fulfilment of the scripture – the thus is must have been because the scriptures cannot be broken.

Out of Egypt have I called my son – As we can see from this prophecy from Hosea, it has a dual meaning. First of Israel coming out of Egypt, and secondly of the son of God coming out of Egypt.

Hosea 11:1 (KJV) *When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.*

- **Part 3 (verses 16-18) Herod kills all children under 2 years of age in and near Bethlehem.**

Matthew 2:16 (KJV) *Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wrath, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.*

What a tragedy done by wicked Herod. He did as the Pharaoh of Egypt did in the infancy of Moses – destroyed all the newborns from two years and under in Bethlehem and all the coasts (suburbs) of it. He was meticulous in doing so because he did it according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. This means the wise men must have told him when the star appeared to them in the east.

Matthew 2:17 (KJV) *Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, 18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.*

O, beloved, here is another fulfilment of the Old Testament scriptures. Let's read Jeremiah's prophecy which is here fulfilled. I am going to quote two additional verses because there is an important concept about this which many hold to prove the salvation of babies who die in infancy.

Jeremiah 31:15-17 (KJV) *Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. **16** Thus saith the LORD; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. **17** And there is hope in thine end, saith the LORD, that thy children shall come again to their own border.*

This passage, say some of the primitive Baptists coupled with David's statement about his dead son prove (for them) that babies who die as infants are the elect of God. Let's consider David's words when the baby borne to David by Bathsheba died.

2 Samuel 12:19-23 (KJV) *But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead. **20** Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat. **21** Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. **22** And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? **23** But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? **can I bring him back***

again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

- **Part 4 (verses 19-23) Joseph and Mary return from Egypt with Jesus and dwelt in Nazareth.**

Matthew 2:19-20 (KJV) *But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, 20 Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.*

The LORD kept his word to Joseph, as He always does, and told him that Herod was dead and commanded him to take the young child and his mother and go back into the land of Israel.

Matthew 2:21 (KJV) *And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.*

So, Joseph obeyed the word of the Lord and brought the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

Matthew 2:22 (KJV) *But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee:*

[Matthew Henry on Matthew 2:22-23] "God gave Joseph further direction in these two verses, about which way to take his family, and where to find a home in the land of Israel. God could have given him these instructions with the former, but God reveals his mind to his people by degrees, to keep them still waiting on him, and expecting to hear further from him. Joseph received these orders *in a dream*, probably, as those before, by the ministration of an angel. God could have signified his will to Joseph by the Child Jesus, but we do not find that in those removes he either takes notice, or gives notice, of anything that occurred; surely it was because *in*

all things it behoved him to be made like his brethren; being a Child, he spake as a child, and did as a child, and drew a veil over his infinite knowledge and power; as a child he increased in wisdom."

"Now the direction given this holy, royal family, is, 1. That the family might not settle in Judea. Joseph might think that Jesus, being born in Bethlehem, must be brought up in Bethlehem; yet Joseph is prudently afraid for the young Child, because he hears that Archelaus reigns in Herod's stead, not over all the kingdom as his father did, but only over Judea, the other provinces being put into other hands. See what a succession of enemies there is to fight against Christ and his church! If one drop off, another presently appears, to keep up the old enmity. But for this reason Joseph must not take the young Child into Judea. Note, God will not thrust his children into the mouth of danger, but when it is for his own glory and their trial; for precious in the sight of the Lord are the life and the death of his saints; precious is their blood to him.

2. The family must settle in Galilee, **Mat. 2:22**. There Philip now ruled, who was a mild, quiet, man. Note, The providence of God commonly so orders it, that his people shall not want (lack to have) a quiet retreat from the storm and from the tempest; when one climate becomes hot and scorching, another shall be kept more cool and temperate. Galilee lay far north; Samaria lay between it and Judea; thither they were sent, to Nazareth, a city upon a hill, in the centre of the lot of Zebulun; there the mother of our Lord lived, when she conceived that holy thing; and, probably, Joseph lived there too, **Luk. 1:26-27**. Thither they were sent, and there they were well known, and were among their relations; the most proper place for them to be in. There they continued, and from thence our Saviour was called Jesus of Nazareth, which was to the Jews a stumbling-block, for, "*Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?*"

Matthew 2:23 (KJV) *And he came and dwelt in a city called*

Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

So, we see how the providence and direction of the LORD brought the young child with Joseph and Mary to Nazareth which had been their home. Here is another fulfilment of scripture. The prophecy fulfilled comes from Isaiah 11:1.

Isaiah 11:1 (KJV) *And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:*

Isaiah 11:1 (OLB) ¶ And there shall come forth <03318> (8804) a rod <02415> out of the stem <01503> of Jesse <03448>, and a Branch <05342> shall grow <06509> (8799) out of his roots <08328>: The English word “branch” comes from the Hebrew word נֶצֶר netser *nay'tser* in this verse. This word appears four times in the Old Testament and is always translated as Branch.

John Gill says this of this verse: “**And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth**, -- Which was a city of Galilee, and where Joseph and Mary had both dwelt before, [Lu 1:26](#) here they came and fixed their habitation.

that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet. – Joseph, Mary, and Jesus going into Galilee, and settling at Nazareth, was brought about to accomplish what had been foretold by the prophets. The fulfilment in question comes from the prophet Isaiah in chapter 11, verse 1.

Isaiah 11:1 (KJV) *And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a **Branch <05342>** shall grow out of his roots:*

The English word “Branch” comes from the Hebrew word: נֶצֶר netser *nay'tser* which is found four times in the Old Testament and is always translated as branch.

[John Gill's Commentary] This prophecy was believed by the Jews themselves to belong to the Messiah, and which was now fulfilled in Jesus; who as he was descended from Jesse's family, so by dwelling at Nazareth, he would appear to be, and would be "called a Nazarene, or Netzer, the branch"; being an inhabitant of Natzareth, or Netzer, so called from the multitude of plants and trees that grew there.

As you can see, we have considered the visit of the wise men and compared the birth of Jesus in Luke with that of Matthew. We saw wise men (don't know how many) come from the East being guided by a star. They announced the star indicated to them that one was born who was king of the Jews. This upset Herod the great. He tried to engineer a means to find the child and destroy him. The scribes and chief priests said the child was to be born in Bethlehem, so the wise men were directed by Herod to go there. As they came, they went into the house where the young child and Mary his mother were. They opened their treasures and gave the young child gold, frankincense and myrrh. Being warned of God in a dream, they went back to their country another way. Herod then, being angry and upset, had all the babies under 2 years of age killed who were born in Bethlehem and the surrounding area.

The shepherds believed the words of the angel of God to them as they watched over their sheep by night – and they hastened to Bethlehem where they found Mary and Joseph and the child laying in a manger. When they had seen it, they made it know what they had heard and seen concerning this child. The angel said, "*...unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*" These words were "*...good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*"

Christ is the LORD and is the savior of all who believe in him. Do you believe in him as your savior and LORD? Are you following him? Do you

rejoice that he was born in Bethlehem of Judaea, then died on a cruel Roman cross about 33 years later, was buried, and rose from the dead the third day? Now, being risen, Jesus has ascended to the right hand of God where he ever lives to make intercession for His people as their great high priest. Soon, He shall come again as King of kings and Lord of lords! Are you ready for his coming?