

# "THE REST OF THE STORY"

## Matthew 2:13-23

The story of Jesus saturates this book that we call the Bible. For the last few weeks, we've given our attention to the dynamics of the virgin birth . . .

- **the ministry of angels**
- **the relationship of Joseph and Mary**
- **the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem**
- **the worship of the Magi**

This part of the Christmas story makes for great Christmas cards, great Christmas carols, and great Christmas sermons. I love this part of the Christmas story. However, there is another side to the story we often neglect. It's what I call, *"THE REST OF THE STORY."*

One striking feature of Matthew's presentation of the birth and early childhood of Jesus is the way he weaves the story of Jesus by referring to the

fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. He does this five times in the first two chapters of his gospel account . . .

- Isaiah 7:14 in 1:23—700 years
- Micah 5:2 in 2:6—700 years
- Hosea 11:1 in 2:15—700 years
- Jeremiah 31:15 in 2:18—600 years
- An oral prophecy in 2:23

Understand this. A prophecy is pre-written history. God's not looking down the tunnel of time to see what's going to happen. He knows everything, including the future.

**God inspired Isaiah to prophesy that His Son, the Messiah, would be conceived in the womb of a virgin. He inspired Micah to prophesy that His Son would be born in Bethlehem. The details and the precise fulfillment of these prophecies should leave us stunned and in awe!**

Take your Bible and turn to Matthew 2. Today we're going to look carefully at 3 more

December 21, 2025

CFBC... "Joseph's Christmas Story"

prophecies. Contextually, the Magi have come to worship the Lord and they've gone home without reporting to King Herod. Jesus may be between 1 and 2 years old. Now for *"THE REST OF THE STORY."*

**Matthew 2:13... 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."**

Egypt was a natural place for the family's escape. The border was only about seventy miles from Bethlehem. Besides, Egypt was a well-ordered Roman province well beyond Herod's jurisdiction, and it had a large Jewish population, roughly one million strong. I'm sure Joseph used the valuable gifts of the magi to pay for the trip to Egypt and to sustain his family while they lived there.

**Matthew 2:14-15 ... 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."***

This prophecy reminds us that the Lord Jesus is *IMMANUEL*—God with us in a corrupt, evil, unjust, devil-inspired, sin-loving, war-mongering, baby-killing world.

God didn't send Jesus to a rich family that lived in the lap of luxury. He didn't make sure that He was born in a state-of-art hospital. The Son of God entered the real world with all its evils and dangers. Before He could call His first disciple, preach His first sermon, or do His first miracle He was the object of a death threat. Even as a young boy, the shadow of the cross fell across His path. The flight to Egypt for Jesus and His family was about telling a story—*the greatest story ever told!*

The prophecy from Hosea primarily focused on God delivering the nation of Israel from Egyptian bondage. Matthew quoted this prophecy to show that the merciful and gracious God was now

providing a new deliverance through His only begotten Son.

**Matthew 1:21...** "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

**John 3:16–17...** "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. **17** "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

Do you get the picture? The Holy Spirit inspired Matthew to point to this prophecy in Hosea to remind us that. . .

## **1. JESUS CAME TO SAVE US.**

This is a huge piece of "*THE REST OF THE STORY.*" Yes, we live in a broken, sin-wracked world. The Son of God entered this world to deliver us from sin's penalty, sin's power, and ultimately from sin's presence. Glory to God!

Now, let's move back into the text and *"THE REST OF THE STORY."*

**Matthew 2:16... 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.**

Herod was an evil, merciless cut-throat—a ruler who was not beyond killing his own wife and children if he felt they were a threat to his power. Murder and mayhem were his middle name.

The population of Bethlehem at this time was probably less than a thousand people. There were somewhere between 10 and 20 families that lost a son that day in a tragedy that surely shook the entire town to the core.

Herod's crime was made even more vile and heinous because he knew that the Child he sought to destroy was the Jewish Messiah. Herod's rejection of Christ reflected and represented the

Jews' own rejection of Him. Once again, Matthew points to the fulfillment of an O.T. prophecy. . .

**Matthew 2:17–18... 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."**

This quotation is taken from **Jeremiah 31:15**. The prophet's immediate reference was to the Jewish people being taken into Babylonian exile. The Babylonians took all the people to **Ramah**, a place just north of Jerusalem. At Ramah the people were put into caravans for the treacherous journey to Babylon. Picture families being separated, being ripped away from their homes, and being treated like scum. **The people wept and mourned!**

Jeremiah reminded them that God had not forgotten them and that He would initiate a new covenant with them and that He would bring them back to the Promise Land . . .

**Jeremiah 31:16–17,31...** Thus says the LORD, "Restrain your voice from weeping And your eyes from tears; For your work will be rewarded," declares the LORD, "And they will return from the land of the enemy. **17** "There is hope for your future," declares the LORD, "And *your* children will return to their own territory....**31** "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah."

## **PRAISE GOD FOR THE REST OF THE STORY!**

These prophecies remind us that Jesus came to save us. Secondly...

## **2. JESUS CAME TO GIVE US HOPE.**

Yes, we live in a broken, messed up, corrupt world where bad things happen to good people. In the midst of tragedy and heartbreak, we must cling to this powerful truth! **Jesus brings hope in the midst of hurt and life in the midst of death.**



Let's move back to the rest of the story. . .

**Matthew 2:19–20... 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.”**

The Jewish historian, Josephus, reported that Herod “died of ulcerated bowels, putrefied and maggot-filled organs, constant convulsions, foul breath, and neither physicians nor warm baths led to recovery.”<sup>1</sup>

Joseph seems to have thought about returning to Bethlehem in Judah. However, he had some concerns. **Herod’s son, Archelaus, had come to the throne in Judah, and he was known to be as ruthless as his father.** God warned Joseph to move into Galilee to a place called Nazareth.

---

<sup>1</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., [Matthew](#), vol. 1, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985–1989), 46.

**Matthew 2:21–23...** 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."*

"Nazarene" was used as a slang term for an individual from a very remote or obscure place. This interpretation would fit well with the attitude toward Nazareth reflected in John 1:46.

**John 1:45–46...** Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and *also* the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." **46** Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

## PRAISE GOD FOR THE REST OF THE STORY!

These prophecies remind us that *Jesus came to save us*. Secondly, *Jesus came to give us hope*. Finally...

### 3. JESUS CAME TO SUFFER FOR US

Joseph never utters a word that is recorded in the Bible. However, his immediate obedience to the Lord reflects his commitment and his desire to please the Lord. As a result, God guided him!

This prophecy reveals that Jesus would be scorned and rejected. He would be called *Jesus the Nazarene*. The Jewish Messiah would be a despised person, the victim of slurs such as this.

**Luke 24:46–47**... and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, **47** and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

**1 Peter 2:24...** and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

**PRAISE GOD FOR THE REST OF THE STORY!**

## **CONCLUSION**

Matthew proved his point. Jesus of Nazareth is Israel's legitimate Messiah and the fulfillment of its Scriptures. We can live in the peace of Christ because we know the rest of the story. . .

**1. JESUS CAME TO SAVE US.**

**2. JESUS CAME TO GIVE US HOPE.**

**3. JESUS CAME TO SUFFER FOR US.**

Will you trust Him as your Savior and Lord? Will you commit to a lifestyle of obedience? Will you share the rest of the story with others?