

**The King Fulfills Prophecy, Part 1**

Scripture: Matthew 2:13-15

Code: 2185

Matthew chapter 2. Matthew chapter 2. And I'm just having a great time studying and preparing my thoughts for these wonderful accounts surrounding the birth of Christ, and I trust that the Spirit of God will really minister to us tonight as we share together in what's really going to be just a Bible study, rather than a sermon, but I think God will bless you in wonderful ways.

Matthew as we know by now is presenting Jesus Christ as the king. Presenting Jesus Christ not only as the king, but as the king of kings. Not only as the king of kings, but as the anointed of God. In other words, he is God's special choice as king, the monarch of all men, the monarch of all time, the ruler of the universe. And Matthew is starting out from the very beginning of this gospel of his look at Jesus Christ to do this. He just begins that way in the flow of the kingship of Christ, the royalty of Christ, the regency of Christ, just goes right on through all 28 chapters.

And even surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ it is Matthew's special emphasis that we would see Jesus as king. And so in chapter 1, you'll remember, he introduced Jesus as king by virtue of his birthright. And he traced very carefully the royal genealogy, beginning in 1:1 of Matthew, moving right on down to verse 17. We find that Jesus was born of the royal seed. He was born of the royal line. He had the right to reign, the right to rule in Israel.

We also saw that his virgin birth in chapter 1:18-25 was a confirmation of his royal right. God bypassed a certain curse in the virgin birth, which freed Christ from being disqualified and left him with the right again to the throne. So in the genealogy, as well as the uniqueness of the virgin birth, we learn that Matthew is emphasizing Christ as king.

Now as we come into chapter 2, we find again that Matthew is emphasizing that Jesus is king. And he really does it in two ways. Way number one, we've seen in the first 12 verses. And that is he shows us the royalty of Christ because he has these magi who are the official recognizers of kings in the oriental world, coming and recognizing Christ as king.

In other words, it is Matthew's way of saying he was a king because that's what the world said. And the world is represented by these wise men, these magi, who came from the orient. They were the official Persian kingmakers. Nobody was a king in that part of the world unless they said so. Nobody was a king unless he had been trained in their law, and when they said somebody was a king, he was a king.

And so Matthew says even the Persian kingmakers saw him as a king and they came and worshiped him, giving him gifts, verse 11 says, of gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. And of course, the first of those, gold, being fit for a king.

But there's a second way that we saw that unfolds in this chapter that shows us that he is a king, and that is by the antagonism of Herod. If he wasn't a king and he didn't have the right to reign, then why would Herod be so upset? It's a back door approach on Matthew's part, but nonetheless, he makes the point. He is a king not only by virtue of homage, but he is a king by virtue of hatred.

You can see his kingship by the fact that these important people recognize him as king and you can see that he's a real king because the king who is in his place, the false king, the usurper, as it were, Herod, who has no right to reign in Israel, who is an Edomite, not even a Jew, is threatened seriously by the existence of one that he fears really has the right to be the king of Israel. So both by homage and by hatred, Matthew is pointing to the royalty of Jesus Christ. It was a reason for worship and it was a reason for fear on the part of Herod.

And then there was a third thread that weaves its way through the third chapter in presenting the royalty of Jesus Christ, and that is that he fulfills Messianic prophecy. In the Old Testament, God laid down some prophecies regarding the coming king. Matthew selects four of these prophecies – and we're going to look at those tonight – he selects four of these prophecies as another way to say that this is indeed the king.

He is a king because he is born a king. He is a king through the virgin birth. He is a king because he has the genealogy of a king. He is a king because the Persian kingmakers saw him as one. He is a king evidenced by Herod's fear of his taking his throne. And he is a king because he fulfills the royal prophecies, the prophecies that spoke of this one who was to come.

And so Matthew continues, then to reinforce the kinship of Jesus Christ. And in our text tonight, we're going to see the extreme to which Herod went to kill the one that he feared had the real right to the throne. And we're going to see that threat and we're also going to see the unfolding of these four prophecies in which the coming king is presented.

Now let me add this. Somewhere around 332 Old Testament prophecies are made concerning Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ fulfills something about 330 or 332 prophecies. Now Matthew just picks out four of them, but these four are so unique and so complex that there is literally no way they could have happened by accident. There is no possibility that these four things could have been true of any one individual just by chance. The chance of that is so infinitesimal it couldn't be reduced to numbers, even though there are only four. And when you think about 332, it absolutely boggles your brain.

Now the style and structure of these four prophecies indicate to me, at least, that this is a literary unit, that Matthew is purposely doing this. Matthew is not just floating around here and picking things out of the air. He is really committed to presenting these four things, and they wind their way through chapter two beautifully, showing us four specifics about the king.

Now note this. Each one of them is attached to a geographical location. And again, that helps us to see that Matthew is really developing a literary thought here. Each of them has a geographic location. All of them focus on Jesus Christ. Now the four locations that he deals with are Bethlehem, Egypt, Rama, and Nazareth.

In fact, these four places will be significant in the birth of Christ. Now that in itself is something amazing. Most people in their birth are associated with only one location. Jesus it says in the Old Testament, the Anointed, the Messiah, the Mashiah, the Christ, the King, the One Who is to Come, the Great Prophet will be associated with Bethlehem, Egypt, Ramah, and Nazareth.

All four of those things will have a place of significance in his birth. And as I said, the chance of anybody having that in that order, in that sequence, as it appears here, is infinitesimal. It must be by the plan of God. And it becomes one of the greatest evidences in all of the Gospel of Matthew to the royalty of Jesus Christ.

Now let's look at these. They are so specific as to eliminate any pretender and so specific as to solidify the real claimant to the throne, the Lord himself. Let's begin with the first one. We'll call it the birth at Bethlehem. The birth at Bethlehem. And for that we'll back up from where we're going to spend the time tonight into verses 4-6 because that's the first unit looking at it from this perspective.

And here we look back to what we saw in our last studies together, verse 4. Now, Herod is upset as the magi arrive in Jerusalem looking for this king that they say has been born. They have seen his star in the east and they know that he has arrived. And they want to know where. They arrive with this entourage of Persian soldiers and steeds and the whole thing, and Herod is really upset.

Step number one in Herod's mind is to determine where this threatening king is to be born. He's got to find this baby and kill it. Even though he's at the end of his life, he's so paranoid about his power and position that he wants to do the baby in. So in verse 4, he gathers "the chief priests, the scribes of the people together and demanded of them where the Christ should be born."

Isn't it interesting that he equated this king of the Jews that the magi talked about with the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One. He knew that and so did they, that this was one and the same. And so he was fearful. He had heard enough of Jewish prophecy. He had been exposed enough to Judaism in his years in the position of authority that he had to know that they were anticipating a Messiah.

And now when he knew the Messiah came or feared that he came, he wanted to know where so that he could kill that baby. And so he called a high level meeting of the chief priests, who were the politicians, and the scribes, who were the theologians, and demanded where he was, would be born.

Verse 5. "And they said unto him, 'In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet,' " Now Micah was the prophet who wrote that. The prophet Micah. In fact, that is stated in Micah 5:2. Now let me tell you a little about Micah because you need to know this as we look at the prophecy. Micah was a prophet who thundered judgment, and Micah's judgments were directed against the false prophets and the false rulers and the false teachers of his day.

In Micah chapter 2, for example, in verse 1. "Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil on their beds! When the morning is light, they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand. And they covet fields, and take *them* by violence; and houses, and take *them* away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage. Therefore thus saith the LORD; 'Behold, against this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks; neither shall ye go haughtily: for this time *is* evil.' "

In other words, he looks at these leaders, these lords, these princes, these rulers, who are usurping lands and taking fields and taking homes, doing what would be perhaps called a dictator, the role of a dictator. And he says, "I'll judge you." Chapter 3, verse 1. "And I said, 'Hear, I pray you, O heads of Jacob, and you princes of the house of Israel; *Is it* not for you to know justice? Who hate the good, and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones; Who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from them; and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and like flesh within the caldron.' "

Boy, that's pretty vivid. He says, "You're literally ripping my people apart, tearing their skin off, tearing their flesh off their bones and eating them and boiling them in a pot." This is the beginning of God's judgment. Verse 9 of 3, "Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor justice, and pervert equity.

"They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. Their heads judge for reward, - " in other words, they're bribed judges " - their priests teach for hire, their prophets divine for money: yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, '*Is not the LORD among us?*' - " They get real pious. " ' - no evil can come upon us.'

"Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed *like* a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest." It's going to become barren.

Now these are the judgments that Micah thunders against the false teachers. Having done that, he moves to an era in the future where there will come a true teacher, when there will come a true ruler and a true king who will reign with goodness and justice. And he speaks of that one further in the book. And in speaking of that one who is to come, that great and glorious one who is to come in the last days as he begins chapter 4, he opens up to look at the last days.

And as he speaks of the one who is to come, we come down to 5:2. And as we arrive at 5:2, we find out that this is the place that this one who is to come will be born. “But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *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.”

And here is the eternal king, the Son of God, the eternal second person of the trinity, who is to be born and he is to be born in one little place called Bethlehem, little among the thousands of Judean cities and villages. And so as Micah looks down through the centuries, he sees the birth of the king, sees the birth of the king in connection with an obscure place.

So that’s the first prophecy that Matthew deals with and just to make sure that it’s emphasized properly, I don’t think that the chief priests and the scribes really quoted the prophecy in this text anyway. I think they just said in verse 5 – look at it, Matthew 2:5. “And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet.”

And then I believe Matthew adds verse 6. Matthew gives the quote, “And thou Bethlehem, *in* the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: out of thee shall come a Ruler, that shall shepherd my people Israel.” And Matthew takes a little of the license of inspiration since the Holy Spirit has inspired him as much and equally as Micah and he has the right to do a little bit with Micah’s prophecy and add some things that are specifically stated for the time, while at the same time calling reference to Micah.

And so Matthew quotes Micah 5:2 and says out of Bethlehem Jesus comes. Little insignificant Bethlehem, from which no one would expect a great monarch, from which no one would look for a king. And that’s precisely from where the king will come. The king comes to Bethlehem. The birth is Bethlehem. Mark it. Nobody throughout all the history of God’s dealing with Israel who ever claimed to be the Messiah has any right to that claim if he was not born in Bethlehem. That’s the place. The king comes to Bethlehem. The birth is there.

Now let’s move to the second prophecy. We’ve already discussed that one in great depth. The birth at Bethlehem. And in that birth we see homage from the wise men, hatred from Herod. But we see prophecy number one fulfilled. That’s important to Matthew. The king will come to Bethlehem. Mark it. Jesus did.

Now number two – the first is the birth at Bethlehem. The second I call the exodus to Egypt. The exodus to Egypt. Now we're in verse 13. And we pick up the text where we haven't been yet. Verse 13. This is sometimes called the "flight into Egypt."

And I always think about the picture a little kid drew in the Sunday School class. Teacher said, "I want you to draw a picture of the flight into Egypt, and it should be done like the Bible says." So one little kid turns in a picture, and the teacher looked at it and she was aghast. Had a 727 jet and four people in the cockpit.

And she looked at the little kid and she said, "What is this?" He said, "This is the flight into Egypt." She says, "Well, who are these people?" "Oh," he said, "That's Joseph and Mary and baby Jesus." And he said, "But who is this other person?" And he said, "Oh, that's Pontius, the pilot." Not exactly the biblical flight into Egypt.

What happened in the exodus to Egypt? This is fabulous, fascinating fulfillment of prophecy. The coming of the magi, I believe when the magi finally got to Bethlehem and they were in a house by then and the child was some months old, I think that must have been a time of great joy, a time of great comfort because Joseph and Mary, up to that point, hadn't, as far as we know biblically had really no confirmation of that great message they had heard from the angel.

They really had known from God through the angel that this child was the be the Son of God, Emmanuel, God with us, the Savior, and all that. But I imagine finally when the magi came and affirmed that and confirmed that that it was a great time of confidence, a great time of joy, a great time of positive anticipating hearts. They must have remembered then the wonderful words spoken by the angel to Joseph, by Gabriel to Mary, by Elisabeth to Mary, by the shepherds to Joseph and Mary, by Simeon and thought and it's all true.

And here it is confirmed with these men. But Simeon, you remember, had also said that a sword was going to pierce Mary's soul. And it wasn't very long after the wise men arrived that it was all confirmation, and joy, and happiness, and positive, and wonder, and they were so thrilled and comforted that they, indeed, were right on the right track, and these people from the orient were confirming it. But it wasn't long after that until the sword was drawn and it began the beginning of its piercing.

And we find it immediately in verse 13. "And when they were departed, - " that is the wise men, the magi " - an angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, - " and remember now, this is not a dream like you think of a dream. This is a semi-conscious state where there is not a dreamed up idea in the fantasy of the human mind.

There is an actual confrontation with an angel, something unique to biblical periods of revelation. It happened to Peter when he was trying to get some sleep up on the rooftop in Joppa. And it's happened time and time again. It happened to Daniel, Abimelech, Jacob, Joseph, Laban, the butler, and the baker. It even happened to Pharaoh.

And there are times when God does this, and this is one of those times. And there are multiple times that he spoke in a dream around the birth of Christ. And so it was a special kind of dream. And an angel appeared to Joseph and he said, "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, - ' " and note that every time you'll see those two together, you'll always see the child named first, because he is the story " ' - flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.' "

Now the wise men or the magi departed, according to the beginning of the verse. When they got away, they were warned of God, verse 12 says, in a dream also "that they shouldn't return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way." The devices of men can never thwart the plans of God. As Pharaoh was prevented by God from destroying the Israelites by a divine intervention on God's part, so Joseph is divinely warned to escape just as the wise men were.

God is protecting his son. God is protecting the Messiah. And the land of Egypt, which had once been a place of bondage and a place of oppression, now becomes a haven. It now becomes a home. It now becomes a hiding place. It now becomes a refuge for the little family escaping from imminent danger.

The word "departed" is interesting, just as a footnote. The word is *anachre*, not that that's important except for you Greek students, but it is used elsewhere in the Gospel of Matthew twice. And both times it means to run away from danger. It's a specific word that implies danger. To run away or to move away or depart from danger.

In fact, just to give you one illustration, Matthew 4:12, "when Jesus had heard John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee;" In other words, Jesus knew when they threw John into prison that he was in danger, and so he moved away. It's a word that means to flee in view of danger. And so they knew the danger and they fled. They went back to their country another way. And once they had gone, the angel came again and told Joseph to flee. Notice the word – he says, "Arise, and take the young child, and flee."

Interesting Greek word, *pheuge*, from which we get what? Fugitive. Flee. It's a present imperative, which means it's continuous action. "Begin the process of fleeing." It was a long trip, 75 miles to the border of Egypt and at least 100 miles further into the heart of the land. Could be 175 miles that they went, and that would take days and weeks because they couldn't move too fast with a baby. And they

were to flee to Egypt, a trip of many, many days.

Now let me talk about Egypt for a minute in this point in history so you'll understand what's happening. Egypt was a natural asylum for the Jews, especially from the time of the Maccabean revolt. Now let me give you a little background real quick. It won't take me but 30 seconds.

Between the Old Testament and the New Testament there was a period of rule in Israel in which the Greek government ruled. Rome we find ruling in the New Testament. The powers in the Old are Babylon and Medo-Persia. That little gap in the middle is Greek power. During the Greek period there was a revolution. That revolution was led by some people named the Maccabees, a Jewish family. They sort of got the revolution going. And from the time of that Maccabean revolution and what's called the intertestamental period, many Jews at that time began to flee into Egypt.

Even prior to that – now mark this – even prior to that, Alexander the Great had set up the fact that Jews could live in Egypt. In fact, in one particular city of Egypt, which was his special city, have you heard of the city of Alexandria? He named it that after himself. And so when he conquered Egypt, he set this city together, Alexandria, and he allowed the Jews to have that city as a place of refuge. They could go there. They could come there. They could populate that area. And many Jews had fled.

In fact, most historians believe that the Qumran community – the Qumran community is the community that was located, it was a sort of an ascetic sort of monastic sort of hermit type group of Jews that lived on the edge of the Dead Sea. They were the scribes who copied down the Old Testament which was found and is now called the Dead Sea Scrolls. That came out of the Qumran community.

And most historians believe that the Qumran community never even came, they fled long ago and they never even came back until long after Herod was dead. As long as Herod was ruling there, more and more Jews were fleeing into Egypt. It started in the Maccabean period, and then there was a trickle. And then under Herod there was a bigger than a trickle. And most people believed that it wasn't until about 31 or so, about 31 BC that the Qumran community finally bailed out and then they came back after Herod was dead.

So normally the fleeing people went right south into Egypt. So it became filled, literally, with Jewish residents from the period of the Maccabees on. And they had equal privilege. In fact, Alexander the Great said, "We'll give them equal privilege with Macedonians." And he was a Macedonian.

It's interesting, too, I think for you to remember that in 150 BC – that's 150 years before Christ – the Jews actually were given their own temple in Egypt, a separate temple was built for them there so that they could prosper as a community. And in fact, in 40 AD, which would be just after the death of Christ, Philo the historian says there were at least 1 million Jews living in Egypt.



So Egypt became rather highly populated with Jews, and it was a place of refuge and a place of safety and security where he wouldn't have to fear anything. And I personally believe that the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh were God's provision for the little family so that they could dwell in Egypt, because that would be very valuable, and no doubt they could sell that, or trade that off, for the things they needed to live on, at least until Joseph could find some work for the months in which he was there.

But the main reason they were directed there was not because it was a nice place for Jews to live, not because you could get out from under the oppression of Herod. The main reason they went there was simply because that was exactly where the Old Testament said the Messiah had to go. Now I'm not sure they knew that at the time. In fact, I'm pretty sure they didn't know that because of the obscurity of the Old Testament text. But God knew it and God was working out the plan.

You know, I used to wonder years ago when I was just little why in the world they had to go all the way to Egypt. Why didn't God – you know, I'd read about Jesus passing through the multitude and they couldn't touch him. And then I read about Philip, who was up in Gaza, and the Holy Spirit picked him up in some kind of a, I don't know, celestial spaceship and zapped him down to the desert. He was up in the north and took him down in the desert area.

And I often thought to myself, "Well, why didn't God just do that? Just pack that little family up and spin them up in space and hold them if he needed to, sort of like a divine helicopter, until everything settled and drop them back again?" Or, "Why did they have to take this long trip?"

But I think it was just part of the humanness. It was just part of the identification with the vicissitudes of life. This was a child like every other child, dependent upon its father and mother's care. And they had to take care. They had to make the move, and they had to walk and carry the baby the way any normal child would be carried. That's part of God becoming man and human experience was required in all points. And so I think they just did what any family would do.

Now Herod wanted to kill them, and Herod was just a pawn. It wasn't really Herod. It was the devil. It was Satan, who is a murderer. Read Revelation 12 and you'll find in Revelation 12 the whole story of how the devil continues to want to murder Christ. You've got the dragon chasing the child in Revelation 12 trying to kill him.

And so they were then sent into Egypt, and notice the end of the verse, "be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him." God knew Herod's mind. God knew Herod's plot. He couldn't be a hypocrite with God. He couldn't fool God at all. The angel said, "I'll be back. And you stay there until I come back and give you further word." So there was a promise that the angel would return.

Now, people, it is absolutely incredible what some pea-brained people have come up with about what went on in Egypt. Let me just say this. The only thing we know about what went on in Egypt is in verse 13. Now does that tell you a lot? “Flee into Egypt. Stay there until I tell you.” That’s it. And yet, there are literally volumes written on what went on in Egypt.

In fact, there is a book called *The Gospel of the Infancy of Our Lord* which discusses his life in Egypt. It’s a spurious or a phony work, like many phony books that grew up in early times. But it says that wherever the little child walked, idols automatically fell apart. It says that Jesus, when he was just very little in Egypt, ran across an Egyptian priest who had a three-year-old possessed of demons, and Jesus took a piece of his swaddling clothes – this time he was still crawling – and put the swaddling clothes on the head of this demon-possessed three-year-old and it was instantly delivered.

And anywhere Mary went – not the lamb was sure to go. That’s another false story. Anywhere Mary went, anybody who looked at her was healed. And anywhere the child went, robbers fled into the desert. And all manner of diseases were healed wherever he went. Now that’s just craziness. We don’t know any of that.

Celsus is quoted by Origen, the early church father, as asserting this, “Jesus, having been brought up as an illegitimate child and having served for hire in Egypt and then coming to the knowledge of certain miraculous powers in Egypt returned thence to his own country and by means of those powers proclaimed himself a god.” In other words, he went to Egypt to learn magic.

And you know what the Talmud says? The Jewish Talmud says this, “Ten measures of sorcery descended into the world. Egypt received nine of them and the rest of the world, one.” Now the Jewish rabbis in the Talmud believed that Egypt was the center of sorcery. And there were many Jews that taught that Jesus went into Egypt when he was young, learned sorcery, came back out and conned the world into believing he was the Messiah.

Now that’s a Jewish teaching about Jesus Christ. And they get that all in the white spaces in verse 13. He went into Egypt. Well, all we know about it is that he went into Egypt, and that’s all we know. And he stayed there. But believe me, he didn’t learn sorcery and come out and con the world by his magic. He went to Egypt because that was a part of the prophecy.

Joseph obeyed the angel. Verse 14. “When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:” He went. In the darkness, it says, by night. They escaped. And I’m sure they didn’t tell anybody because if the word got out at the pace they could go, which would be so slow, Herod’s soldiers would be hot on their trail. It would be a disaster. And so I’m sure they just stole away at night and never told a soul. And by the way, Matthew omits the details because he’s not concerned with the details, he’s concerned with the prophecy.

Now look at verse 15. “And was there - ” departed into Egypt “ - and was there until the death of Herod:” Stop there. They stayed until Herod died. And I don’t believe it was very long. He died shortly before the passover in March or April of 4 BC. It would just be a very brief time, maybe a couple of months. It’s hard to be sure, but that might be a fair guess.

Look at verse 19, which picks it up again. It says, “when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt.” So it was when Herod died that the angel came back and said, “Now you’re all right. Now you can go.” So sometime after they left, Herod died. And then the angel appeared. But why did they go to Egypt? What was the prophecy?

Look at the end of 15. All of this, not that they might be saved. Well, God could have done that any way he wanted. You see, God wanted to verify the credentials of the Messiah. And so he attached it to a prophecy. And it says, “in order that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet.”

Listen, that’s one of the most important statements you’ll find anywhere in the Bible, because it tells you that the prophets who wrote the pages of the Word of God were inspired by God himself. “Spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, ‘Out of Egypt have I called my son.’ ”

In other words, the Old Testament prophet was saying that the Son, the king, the Anointed, the Mashiah, the Christ is to come out of Egypt. Well, listen, how could the child come out of Bethlehem and out of Egypt unless God works in marvelous circumstances? God had set it all up long ago with Alexander the Great. God got Egypt ready for a couple of months stay when he came there as a child. God runs history and it all comes together in his plan. “Out of Egypt have I called my son.” Where does that come from? Hosea 11:1. Hosea 11:1.

Now I want you to see something of the context of that prophecy. Hosea 11:1 says, “When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.” Now notice something very interesting there. To whom does he refer in Hosea 11:1? Who is the son there? Israel. Who is the Son here? Christ. How can that be? Some people have said, “Well, now wait a minute. When the prophecy was given, it was given in reference to a historical statement about Israel. There’s not even a prophecy there. It’s a past thing.” “When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.”

And any Bible scholar who studies the Book of Hosea will simply tell you God is reflecting upon the time when he called Israel out of bondage in Egypt. Now what’s the prophecy? It isn’t future. How does it relate to this thing? Well, that’s what we want to talk about. Let me give you the message of Hosea for a minute.

He's one of my favorite prophets and I'm sure would be one of yours if you read his book with diligence. The message of Hosea is one of failure. It's one of decadence. It's one of tragedy in Israel. Hosea looks at Israel and says, "You've been disobedient. You've been unfaithful. You've been sinful. You've been decadent." In fact, he says, "You are a spiritual harlot. You are a spiritual prostitute. You are a spiritual adulteress," he says to Israel. In fact, this is the worst condition Israel has ever been in when Hosea writes.

Now he is pouring out against Israel these judgments. "You harlot, you adulteress, you prostitute, you whore," is a term that's used. "This is what you've been. Unfaithful to God who betrothed you, racing after false gods who have become your lovers."

Hosea really, really dramatically illustrates this with his own life. Got brought into his life the most tragic personal experience you could ever imagine. He married a woman. Her name was Gomer. That's a bad start. But anyway, he married her. And she was untrue and she became what the Bible calls a "wife of whoredom." She ran off after every lover that she wanted. She went after so many lovers I'm sure Hosea lost count. She conceived children by these lovers and dear Hosea's heart was so filled with love for her he just waited and took all of this abuse, and it shattered his heart.

She was a slave to the sins of sex, but he deeply loved her. And dear old Hosea, instead of rejecting her, instead of turning her off, instead of walking away, found her at the haunt of her shame, sought her out, went in there, and laid out 15 pieces of silver and brought in a homer and a half of barley and paid and said, "Here, I'm going to buy her back." And he bought back that harlot. He bought back that prostitute, restored her to the place of his wife, restored her to the place of honor, and gave back to her all the love that she had spurned. That was his own personal experience.

And he says to Israel, he says, "Look. When I talk to you about how God's heart is broken by your spiritual idolatry, I know what God feels. I've been there." That's what he's saying. Just as Hosea had married Gomer, God had become Israel's husband. Just as Hosea loved her, God loved Israel. Just as Gomer was unfaithful to Hosea, so was Israel unfaithful to God. Just as Gomer was enslaved by her lovers, so was Israel enslaved by her idolatrous idols. Gomer put her trust in lovers and they made her a slave. Israel put her trust in idols and they made her a slave.

And just as Hosea's tender love reached out and bought back his wife, so Jehovah reached out in love and took back the remnant that was willing to come back. That's the message of Hosea. So when Hosea's heart was broken, when he had seen the idol and the ideal of his dreams wrecked before his eyes, when he had suffered the worst agony that a human being could ever know, then God said, "Hosea, now you know how I feel. Now be my preacher. Now tell them what's in my heart. Now make them understand."

And this tragic training of the prophet is at the heart of his message. And God wants Israel to know how much he loves him, and God wants Hosea to know how much he loves him. And God wants Hosea to know how much this hurts. And so he says in 11:1, Look, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him." This love affair for an adulteress wife goes all the way back to when Israel was a child. And it was then that I "called my son out of Egypt." This isn't something late. This isn't way down the line. This isn't sort of the last lover in a long line. This is the one that I started to love when Israel was a child.

In other words, this passage emphasizes the incredible love that God has for Israel and always has had, from the time Israel was just a child and in bondage in Egypt, held under the power of Pharaoh, it was then that God set his love and sought to redeem his people. Deuteronomy 32 says, "For Jehovah's portion is his people. Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." He found him in a desert land and he kept him as the apple of his eye. In Exodus 4:22, God said, "Israel is my son." Israel is my firstborn.

Now I'll go to Matthew and let's see the connection. When Matthew quotes Hosea and applies it to Christ, what is that saying? He says here this is that "which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, - " would be fulfilled " -Out of Egypt have I called my son." And here, beloved, you're introduced to one of the most fabulous concepts in all the Bible. We call it "types." Israel is a type of whom? Christ.

You know what a type is? A type is a non-verbal prediction. It student a non-verbal prediction. A prophecy is a verbal prediction of a future event. A type is a non-verbal prediction. There are texts in the Old Testament that tell us God is going to send a savior who will die. There are other texts that don't say that, they just tell us about the sacrifice of a lamb, but every little lamb that ever died was a picture of whom? Jesus Christ. A non-verbal picture.

And listen to me, non-verbal predictions called types in the Bible are no less potent, no less powerful, and no less direct than a verbal prophecy. One of my favorite studies is the study of types. I remember doing a paper in seminary which was so rich for me. I read in that area, because it fascinates me, a great book by Patrick Fairbairn on types. There's been tremendous effort given in that field.

And I'll tell you what I believe about types. I believe - I'm kind of a narrow guy on this - I believe the only types legitimate, true types, are those stated in the New Testament to be a type. Okay? Otherwise, we're going to do havoc with the Old Testament. You know, every hair on somebody's head is a picture of something. We'll go wacko if we're not under control.

So I believe that types are ultimately - now listen - types are ultimately fulfilled in and only in the New Testament writers' definition. So that Israel is a type because Matthew, inspired by the Spirit of God

here, makes Israel a picture of Christ. What they were without even saying it is a picture of what he will be as God called his son Israel out of Egypt, that is a picture of what he'll do when his Son the Lord Jesus Christ is called out of Egypt. You see? That's a biblical type, non-verbal prediction.

And by the way, Christ and Israel are often closely identified in the prophetic word. For example, in the Book of Isaiah, sometimes it's hard to tell whether the servant is Israel or the Messiah because he calls both of them the servant of the Lord. Israel is God's child and God's firstborn, and so is Christ. Israel is called out of Egypt, and so is Christ. Beautiful picture.

Joseph, you remember, was a type of Christ, because the New Testament says that. Did you know that even Jonah was a type of Christ because the New Testament says that as Jonah was three days and three nights, so shall what? The Son of Man be. He was a picture. Dr. Gaeblein says, "Israel's history beginning with Egypt has been a history of sin, disobedience, apostasy and shame. Therefore, the true one had to come. The true servant of the Lord in obedience, obedience unto death, he had to go through the history of his people." I like that.

Jesus actually went back through the history of his people to fulfill the type, the picture. And just as Pharaoh, that cruel king, had tried to destroy Israel, so another cruel king by the name of Herod was attempting to kill the Son of God. Just as God protected his son Israel in Egypt and delivered them, so God protected Christ his Son in Egypt and delivered him. The Messiah is a recapitulation of the picture in Israel, a type. And believe me, don't you ever underestimate the solidity and the absolute nature of biblical types. When the New Testament writer says that's a picture, that is what it was intended to be.

And I think there's a sense in which the type here is even more than a type. Because there's a sense in which the bond is closer than that. Israel is not only a type of Christ, there is almost a bond that's indivisible in this sense. You see, Christ was in the loins of Israel then, and if Israel had never been brought out of Egypt, he would never have even been born. So he was really there, in a sense. Had Israel been destroyed, the Messianic prophecy could never have been fulfilled at all. So when Israel was called out, Christ came out then with them, didn't he?

So the message of Hosea was long forgotten. The time of degeneration went on even to Jesus' day. The days of Israel's whoredom and prostitution were still going on. But finally the prophecy of Hosea came back like a bolt of lightning out of the sky. "Out of Egypt have I called my son." As of old, God loved Israel when a child and brought him out of Egypt. So now his love centers on the Messiah and brings him out of Egypt.

In fact, beloved, let me tell you something. The great prototype of salvation in the Old Testament is the act of God delivering Israel from Egypt. That's the prototype. Let me add a footnote. And I love this thought. When the Lord Jesus returns in righteousness to reign over the earth, when he comes

as king of kings and Lord of Lords, did you ever notice what the prophets tell us? Just mark these down. Isaiah 19, Zephaniah 3. Isaiah 19 and Zephaniah 3. You know what they tell us? Listen to this. Don't look them up. Just listen.

When the Lord Jesus returns to reign in righteousness over the earth, one of the nations that is going to be given a special place of blessing in the millennium kingdom is Egypt. Did you know that? You say, "Egypt? Oh, man. You mean, Egypt, the Egypt that held them in bondage, oppressed them, made them make bricks without straw? You mean rotten, idolatrous, phony Egypt?" And lately we've been hearing all about King Tutankhamun and all that baloney about life after death and solar boats and so forth.

And we say, "Egypt? Why in the world would Egypt ever have a place in the millennium?" They've been so hostile to Israel. Could it be, could it be that the blessing of Egypt in the millennium is a token of divine gratitude for a country that granted sanctuary to the Son of God when he was a baby? Maybe.

So, the birth at Bethlehem, the exodus from Egypt. Let's pray. Lord, I just feel in my heart overwhelmed again at how beautifully, marvelously, carefully you plan history, every little piece. History is really his story. You set the boundaries of the nations. You chart the course of men, kings, and slaves. You take the wrath of men and make it praise you. You turn it all around. Thank you for the king who came because the prophet said he'd come to Bethlehem, and who came because the prophet said he'd come to Egypt.

Thank you that this eliminates the pretenders and solidifies the rightful king. Thank you that Jesus is the one who fulfills at least 332 prophecies and who fulfills more than that the deep hunger, the need in the heart of every man who comes in faith.

And Father, we can't help but realize, too, that if he's a king – and he is – that kings require worship, homage, and obedience. And since he's a king of love, such obedience and homage is a joy. We hear Matthew. We hear him as he lifts high the banner of the king and cries that we crown him, no matter what the world does.

Oh, there are always Herods. There are always the chief priests and the scribes of any age, misguided. Some hate, some are indifferent. But there are always the wise men who come and worship because they see that this is the king. Thank you, Father, for how clearly your word has painted the picture so that we can never miss. And as the Old Testament says, "A wayfaring man, though he be a fool, need not err." Help us to crown him in our lives king. We pray in his name. Amen.

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