

# Matthew 2

by John Nelson Darby

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*Jesus is presented as the Son of David, Jehovah the Saviour, and the Son of God, fulfilling the prophecies of God and taking the place of a stranger among His people.*

**Scripture:** Isaiah 49:3, Isaiah 53:3, Hosea 11:1, Matthew 1:22-23, Matthew 2:1-15, Matthew 2:19-23, John 12:24, John 15:1

**Topics:** "Fulfillment of Prophecy", "The Humility of Christ"

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## Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the significance of Jesus' birth as the fulfillment of prophecies, highlighting His recognition as King of the Jews by Gentiles while the Jewish leaders remain indifferent. He illustrates how God's providence protects Jesus from Herod's plot, positioning Him as the true Branch of Israel and the new Adam. Darby explains that Jesus' return to Israel signifies His humble beginnings among the despised, fulfilling the role of the Messiah amidst a nation that has failed to recognize Him. The sermon underscores the contrast between the divine acknowledgment of Jesus and the rejection by His own people, showcasing the grace of God in establishing a new remnant through Christ. Ultimately, Darby presents Jesus as the embodiment of hope for Israel and humanity, fulfilling God's redemptive plan.

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## Transcript

Thus born, thus characterised by the angel and fulfilling the prophecies that announced the presence of Emmanuel, He is formally acknowledged King of the Jews by the Gentiles, who are guided by the will of God acting on the hearts of their wise men. [See Footnote #4] That is to say, we find the Lord, Emmanuel, the Son of David, Jehovah the Saviour, the Son of God, born King of the Jews, recognised by the heads of the Gentiles. This is the testimony of God in Matthew's Gospel, and the character in which Jesus is there presented. Afterwards, in the presence of Jesus thus revealed, we see the leaders of the Jews in connection with a foreign king, knowing however as a system the revelations of God in His word, but wholly indifferent to Him who was their object; and this king, the fierce enemy of the Lord, the true King and Messiah, seeking to put Him to death.

The providence of God watches over the child born unto Israel, employing means that leave the responsibility of the nation its full place; and that accomplish at the same time all the intentions of God with regard to this only true remnant of Israel, this only true source of hope for the people. For, out of Him, all would fall and suffer the consequences of being connected with the people.

Gone down into Egypt to avoid the cruel design of Herod to take away His life, He becomes the true Branch; He recommences (that is, morally) the history of Israel in His own Person, as well as (in a wider sense) the history of man as the second Adam in relation with God: only that for this His death must come in-for all, no doubt, for blessing. But He was Son of God and Messiah, Son of David then. But to take His own place as Son of man He must die (see John 12). It is not only the prophecy of Hosea, "out of Egypt have I called my Son", which thus applies to this true beginning of Israel in grace (as the beloved of God), and according to His counsels (the people having entirely failed, so that without this, God must have cut them off). We have seen, in Isaiah, Israel the servant giving place to Christ the Servant, who gathers a faithful remnant (the children whom God has given Him while He hides His face from the house of Jacob), that become the nucleus of the new nation of Israel according to God. Chapter 49 of that prophet gives this transition from Israel to Christ in a striking manner. Moreover this is the basis of all the history of Israel, looked at as having failed under the law, and being re-established in grace. Christ is morally the new stock from which they spring (compare Isaiah 49:3, 5). [See Footnote #5]

Herod being dead, God makes it known to Joseph, in a dream, commanding him to return, with the young child and its mother, into the land of Israel. We should remark, that the land is here mentioned by the name that recalls the privileges bestowed by God. It is neither Judea nor Galilee; it is "the land of Israel." But can the Son of David, in entering it, approach the throne of His fathers? No: He must take the place of a stranger among the despised of His people. Directed by God in a dream, Joseph carries Him into Galilee, whose inhabitants were objects of sovereign contempt to the Jews, as not being in habitual connection with Jerusalem and Judea, the land of David, of the kings acknowledged by God, and of the temple, and where even the dialect of the language common to both betrayed their practical separation from that part of the nation which, by the favour of God, had returned to Judea from Babylon.

Even in Galilee Joseph establishes himself in a place, the very name of which was a reproach to one who dwelt there, and a blot on his reputation.

Such was the position of the Son of God when He came into this world, and such the relationship of the Son of David with His people, when, by grace and according to the counsels of God, He stood amongst them. On the one hand, Emmanuel, Jehovah their Saviour, on the other, the Son of David; but, while taking His place among His people, associated with the poorest and most despised of the flock, sheltered in Galilee from the iniquity of a false king, who, by help of the Gentiles of the fourth monarchy, was reigning over Judea, and with whom the priests and rulers of the people were in connection; the latter, unfaithful to God and dissatisfied with men, proudly detesting a yoke which their sins had brought upon them, and which they dared not shake off, although they were not sufficiently sensible of their sins to submit to it as the just infliction of God. Thus is it that the Messiah is presented to us by this evangelist, or rather by the Holy Ghost, in connection with Israel.

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#### Footnotes for Matthew 2

4: The star does not lead the wise men from their own country to Judea. It pleased God to present this testimony to Herod and to the leaders of the people. Having been directed by the word (the meaning of which was declared by the chief priests and scribes themselves, and according to which Herod sent them to Bethlehem), they again see the star which they had seen in their own country, which conducts them to the house. Their visit also took place some time after the birth of Jesus. No doubt they first saw the star at

the time of His birth. Herod makes his calculations according to the moment of the star's appearance, which he had carefully ascertained from the lips of the wise men. Their journey must have occupied some time. The birth of Jesus is related in chapter 1. The first verse of chapter 2 should be read, Now Jesus having been born"; it speaks of a time already past. I would also remark here that the Old Testament prophecies are quoted in three ways, which must not be confounded:-"that it might be fulfilled", "so that it was fulfilled"; and, "then was fulfilled." In the first case it is the object of the prophecy; Matthew 1:22, 23 is an instance. In the second it is an accomplishment contained in the scope of the prophecy, but not the sole and complete thought of the Holy Ghost; Matthew 2: 23 may serve as an example. In the third it is simply a fact which corresponds with the quotation, which in its spirit applies to it, without being its positive object-chapter 2: 17, for instance I am not aware that the first two are distinguished in our English translation. Where the sense may require it, I shall hope to point out the difference.

5: In verse 5 Christ assumes this title of Servant. The same substitution of Christ for Israel is found in John 15. Israel had been the vine brought out of Egypt. Christ is the true Vine.

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