

# (Matthew) ch.1:1-2:22

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon explores the significance of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the righteousness of Joseph, and the Holy Spirit's work in Mary, highlighting the importance of humility and salvation from sin.*

**Duration:** 55:01

**Scripture:** Genesis 5:1, Micah 5:2, Matthew 1:1-6

**Topics:** "Faith And Obedience", "Gods Sovereignty"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of not acting impulsively but instead taking time to consider and pray before making important decisions. He uses the example of Joseph, who thought and prayed before taking action. The speaker also highlights the fulfillment of prophecy in Joseph's life, showing that God knew and planned everything in advance. The sermon concludes with the message that we should humble ourselves and follow Jesus, obeying God's word and trusting in His protection and care.

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## Transcript

We turn today to the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 1 and verse 1. This is the beginning of the New Testament portion of the Bible, and it's very significant that it begins with these words, the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. If you turn to the Old Testament, we can say in a sense, with the beginning of creation and the fall of man, there is the record as we read in Genesis 5, verse 1, of the book of the generations of Adam. Here are two generations, the book of the generations of Adam and the book of the generations of Jesus Christ.

In Matthew 1.1, two different races, one human, the other divine. Everyone originally begins in the book of the generations of Adam, but some, by repentance and faith, are transferred to the book of the generations of Jesus Christ. And here in Matthew's Gospel, we actually have a record of the genealogy of Joseph, the husband of Mary, as we read in verse 16 of Matthew 1, of whom was born Jesus.

And we see that Joseph was of the kingly line of David, and the other kings that followed David on the throne, that we read of. Verse 6, we read of David, and verse 7 onwards, the other kings, Solomon, Ezra, Uzziah, Hezekiah, Josiah, and then after the deportation to Babylon, Zerubbabel, verse 12. These are the leaders, the kings and the leaders of God's people, Israel in the Old Testament.

And in a sense, we could say that if there was a kingdom and a king in Israel at that time, Joseph would have been entitled to it, and after his death, his legal son, Jesus. So this is to prove that Jesus is the heir

to the throne of David, legally, through his foster father, Joseph. In Luke's Gospel, chapter 3, we have another genealogy, slightly different, because that is the genealogy of Mary, the mother of Jesus, who also descended from David.

There we read in Luke chapter 3, in verse 23, Jesus himself was about 30 years of age, being supposedly, or as it was being thought, the son of Joseph. And then it says, in the rest of that verse, the of Eli. And the word son, in italics, means that it's been filled in.

He was actually the son-in-law of Eli, who was born of Mathat, who was born of Levi, and so on. That goes all the way up to David, in verse 31. But this time, as we read in verse 31 of Luke 3, not through David's son Solomon, as we read in Matthew 1 and verse 7, but through David's son Nathan.

And so, from Adam to David, the genealogies were the same for Joseph and Mary. But at David, they branch off into two trees, Mary coming through David's son Nathan, and Joseph coming through David's son Solomon. So, Jesus was physically born of the seed of David, which is an important thing, because in Romans chapter 1, Paul says, this has some connection with the gospel.

In Romans, in chapter 1, he says, in verse 1 to 3, that this gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerns his son, that is, Jesus Christ, who was born of the seed of David, according to the flesh. So, from these two genealogies, in Matthew and Luke, we find one thing, and that is that Jesus was the legal heir to the throne of David, through Joseph, at the same time, physically, of the seed of David, through Mary. He came in the flesh of David, which is our flesh.

And turning back to Matthew 1, we see the genealogy beginning with Abraham. Matthew was primarily writing to the Jews, and so he begins with Abraham. Luke, writing to the world in general, begins with Adam, in his genealogy.

And in Matthew 1, verse 2 onwards, we have the genealogy of Joseph, all the way up to verse 16, and we don't want to look at all the names, but there are some significant ones that we could look at. There are four women mentioned here, and it's very significant to see something about these four women mentioned in this genealogy. The first woman mentioned is Tamar, in Genesis 1, in Matthew 1, verse 3. And it says here that to Tamar was born Pyrrhus, and to Pyrrhus was born Hesron.

Now, if you turn to the Old Testament, in Genesis chapter 38, you read the story of how Pyrrhus was born to Tamar. And it's a pretty unsavory story of how Tamar disguised herself as a prostitute and committed adultery with her own father-in-law, Judah, and had a son called Pyrrhus. And it's very significant that Jesus, who came to save sinners, who did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, chose to come through such a line.

We must remember that none of us ever had the choice as to which family we would be born into. When we were born, we were born into a family which we had no choice of at all. There was only one person ever born into this world who could choose the family and the place and the time where he would be born, and that was Jesus Christ.

And he chose a family line, a family tree, which consisted of a shameful event that produced a son through Tamar. The second woman mentioned here in Matthew 1 is verse 5. In verse 5, Salmon was born Boaz by Rahab. Rahab we know from the book of Joshua, and the first six chapters, was the town prostitute of Jericho, who later on married Salmon.

And to Rahab and Salmon was born Boaz, who married Ruth. Here is another woman mentioned, and again, one who had a very evil background. A third woman mentioned is Ruth, in Matthew chapter 1, verse 5. And the significant thing about Ruth was that she was not even a Jewess.

She was not an Israelite. She was a Moabite. You read that in the book of Ruth.

And if we were to look back into Genesis chapter 19 in verse 34 to 37, you find there how Moab was born, the ancestor of Ruth. Again, a very shameful origin with lots of daughters committing adultery with their own father. That was how Moab was born.

And through Moab came Ruth. That's part of the family tree of Jesus Christ. The fourth woman mentioned here is in verse 6. Her name is not mentioned.

We know it's Bathsheba, who had been the wife of Uriah. And we know that shameful story from the second book of Samuel, where David committed adultery with Bathsheba and killed her husband Uriah. This is a very significant thing, that there is some form of immorality in the line of these four women mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

The reason I mention that is because many Christians are very often proud of their family line. They are proud that they belong to a particularly significant and dignified family line. Here was one person who could have chosen the most dignified family line in Israel and who didn't choose it, chose to come through a sinful line because he came to save sinners, because he came to help the least and the lowest.

And that should shatter any pride that any of us have in our family line. Jesus humbled himself to the lowest place to bring salvation. And he says to us, follow me.

Here is where we can profitably examine ourselves so that if we really want to be disciples of Jesus Christ, we never again think in terms of what makes us superior to other human beings. Anyone who has such feelings can never be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Let's turn again to the Gospel of Matthew and chapter one.

In our last study we were considering the genealogy of Jesus Christ described in these first sixteen verses of the New Testament. And we saw how Jesus chose a line marred by sin with the four women mentioned here having either some immoral relationship in their history or in their ancestry. Tamar, verse three, Rahab, verse five, Ruth, the descendant of Moab, verse five, and Bathsheba, verse six.

Another significant thing we see in the genealogy here is that among the kings of Judah mentioned here, commencing with David, Solomon, Rehoboam, verse seven, Mabijah, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joram, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Ammon and Josiah. The line was alright up to this point. But when it came to the next person, Jeconiah, mentioned in verse eleven, also known as Jehoiachin, that was at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

There is a statement concerning Jeconiah who is also known as Coniah in Jeremiah twenty-two, which is very significant. In Jeremiah twenty-two, in verse twenty-four, the Lord declares, As I live, even though Coniah, the son of Jehoiachin, king of Judah, were a signatory in My right hand, yet I would pull you off. And He goes on to say in verse twenty-eight, Is this man Coniah despised, shattered, jar? And verse twenty-nine, O land, land, land, hear the word of the Lord.

Thus says the Lord, Write this man down childless, that is, to have no more children than he already had, a man who will not prosper in his days. And listen to this, in the last part of verse thirty of Jeremiah twenty-two, No man of his descendants will prosper, sitting on the throne of David or ruling again in Judah. The fact that it speaks of his descendants proves that he did have descendants and that the earlier part where it speaks of his being childless meant no more children than he already had.

Otherwise, there wouldn't have been descendants if he didn't have any children at all. He had children, but he wouldn't have any more. No man of his descendants will prosper.

In other words, anyone descending physically through Coniah could not prosper sitting on the throne of David or ruling in Judah. So if Mary had come through that line, there would have been a curse on anyone who sought to sit on the throne of David. See how that was bypassed, that it was Joseph who came through Coniah.

But Mary, as we saw in our last study, came through another line, through the son of David, Nathan, as we saw in Luke chapter 3, the genealogy of Mary, that Joseph is referred to actually as the son-in-law of Mary's father, Heli. And so we see how wonderfully God protected the line through which Jesus came, that he came of the flesh of David, and yet he did not come through that cursed line of Coniah, and yet he was the legal heir to the throne because he was the eldest foster son of Joseph, his foster father. And therefore, if Jesus was not born of a virgin, it would have been impossible for him to have prospered sitting on the throne of David.

According to Jeremiah 22.30, he had to be born of a virgin before Joseph was actually married to Mary. It's very beautiful to see this in Scripture. In Matthew chapter 1, we read in verse 17, Therefore all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen, David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen, and the deportation of Babylon to the time of Christ, fourteen.

Now, the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When his mother had been betrothed or engaged to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. The details are not described here.

We read of that in Luke chapter 1. But it's very significant what we read here in the very first chapter of the New Testament. Something very significant about righteousness. The New Testament deals with righteousness.

The righteousness of the law being fulfilled inside of us as opposed to it being fulfilled outside in the Old Testament. And what we see here is that Joseph, her husband, verse 19, that is, the one who was engaged to be her husband, her fiancé, we would say in today's terms, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly. Notice how his righteousness manifested itself.

He was not yet married. He was only engaged. And he did not realize that Mary had become pregnant through the Holy Spirit's work.

Certainly, you couldn't blame him for being suspicious when he found that the girl he was engaged to was pregnant for considering that she had been immoral. But notice his righteousness that he does not go broadcasting that information all over Nazareth. He kept quiet about it.

He did not want to disgrace her. And that is a primary characteristic of New Testament righteousness that we do not want to disgrace others even if they have sinned. And the other thing we see here is how easy it

is for us to misunderstand.

Mary had not sinned. Think how bad Joseph would have felt if he had gone around speaking to everyone about the immorality of Mary and then later on discovering that this was the work of the Holy Spirit. He could never have forgiven himself for spreading evil without any foundation for it.

And very often, dear friends, when we speak evil of others, it's usually the result of our own suspicious evil nature more than it is the result of evil in other people. So, there is a lesson we can learn from the first page of the New Testament that even if you think somebody is immoral, keep quiet about it. Do not seek to disgrace others.

There is a tremendous lust in our flesh to disgrace others because we want to show that we ourselves are better and superior. And there we can learn a lesson from the very first page of the New Testament. This is how the New Covenant begins.

The very first action mentioned in the New Testament by a human being is this action of a God-fearing man not wanting to disgrace his fiancée. Desire to put her away secretly. I wish we would meditate on that verse and learn a lesson that would transform our attitude when we find ourselves in such situations because very often we may find like Joseph that our suspicions are all unfounded that we are totally wrong.

We may think we are absolutely right. Joseph could have thought that. He could have said how in the world can a woman be pregnant without being immoral and yet he was wrong.

How much more we in circumstances where there is much more the possibility of being wrong. When he had considered this, he was thinking about it. He didn't act suddenly.

Another lesson we can learn. He who believes will not make haste, the Bible says. A righteous man doesn't impulsively act on the spur of the moment.

He thinks. It says he considered it. He thought about it.

In other words, he prayed about it. And it's good to pray about it before we take serious decisions in life. Making an engagement or breaking an engagement.

Think about it seriously. When he had considered this, think about how it would affect the other person. And then God speaks.

And when God sees a man like that who is willing to think about it and pray about it, God speaks to such a person. An angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus.

For it is he who will save his people from their sins. Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled saying, Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel which translated means God with us. God coming down in human form.

In the first page of scripture, we read of the deity of Jesus Christ that it was God indeed who came in the form of Jesus Christ and yet he came through the flesh of David. And Joseph arose from his sleep and did

as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took her as his wife. He set aside his suspicions.

He set aside what his reason said and obeyed God and kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a son and called his name Jesus. Joseph is a tremendous example for us to follow in this area. And may God help us to learn the lesson that we should from his example.

Let's turn now to Matthew's Gospel chapter 1 and verse 18. In our last study, we concluded with thinking of how Joseph was such a righteous man that he did not want to disgrace Mary publicly even though in his own mind he was convinced that she had been immoral. And we saw how he was totally wrong in his suspicions.

But he didn't do anything foolish because he had this good habit of not acting impulsively on the spur of the moment, but considering it, as it says in verse 20, and no doubt praying over it. And as he prayed, God could speak to him. An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream.

There were one or two other things that we could notice here and one is this, that Mary was found with child by the Holy Spirit and perhaps nobody in Nazareth could understand it initially, perhaps not even her parents, certainly not Joseph or any of the others. Everybody was suspicious. And that can teach us that sometimes the Holy Spirit can do a work in us that other people can never understand or explain.

When the Holy Spirit came upon Mary, it brought not popularity, but misunderstanding and reproach. We must remember this too that when the Holy Spirit comes upon us, it need not bring popularity, very often it will not, but misunderstanding and reproach. That is the lesson we learn from the first page of the New Testament.

In the Old Testament, the working of the Holy Spirit through Samson, through David killing Goliath, etc., brought them honor. But in the New Testament, we read about the first person in whom the Holy Spirit did a work. Matthew 1.18, Mary, it brought her misunderstanding and reproach.

There is a shift of emphasis. It is not the external power now, but an inward work of the Holy Spirit that is going to be the distinctive feature of the New Testament age. The Holy Spirit came upon Mary not to help her to tear lions to pieces like Samson did, not to help her to slay giants like David did, not to help her raise the dead like Elijah and Elisha did, but to give her body so that Jesus could be born through it.

And this is why the Holy Spirit has come even today, that we might give our bodies to Him so that Jesus Christ and His character might be formed afresh in us. But this will lead not to popularity, but to misunderstanding and reproach as it led Mary too, as we see. And so we see here in Matthew's Gospel, chapter 1, that even Joseph, who was closest to her, could not understand.

Many who are very close to us may not be able to understand what the Holy Spirit is doing. But those who get revelation from God, like Joseph who got revelation from God, he understood. That, verse 20, which has been conceived in her, is of the Holy Spirit.

And so we see that it is only by revelation that people can understand the work of the Holy Spirit. And this significant factor must be borne in mind. The Holy Spirit comes in us to produce Jesus, His character in us, just like He came upon Mary to produce Jesus.

It's not that we go doing some stupid foolish thing which brings misunderstanding and reproach and say, well, that's because we are filled with the Holy Spirit. There can be misunderstanding and reproach

because of our own folly too. But if the Holy Spirit is working in us to transform us into the likeness of Christ, then we need not fear any misunderstanding or reproach that comes as a result of that.

Those who have revelation like Joseph will understand. The rest will not understand. And it says here that the Lord, the angel of the Lord told Joseph that this child to be born to Mary must be called Jesus, meaning Savior.

For He will save His people from their sins. This is the first promise in the New Testament. Jesus will save His people from their sins.

It's very significant that the New Testament's first promise deals with salvation from sin, not salvation from hell. Many people are more interested in being saved from hell than in being saved from sin. And that's why we need to go back to the first promise in the New Testament and see what it says.

It doesn't say that Jesus will save His people from hell, though He does save us from hell and from the wrath of God. But that is, as it were, a by-product of His saving us from sin. The primary emphasis is on His saving us from sin, saving His people from their sins.

We need to understand that salvation from sin is more than forgiveness of sins. God can forgive our sins and yet we may be defeated by sin day after day after day. To use an illustration, if I have warned my children not to go near a pit being dug outside my house and one of them disobeys me and falls into that pit and cries out for me and I go to him and I see him fallen in that pit and he says to me, Daddy, I'm sorry for disobeying you.

If I were to say him, All right, son, I forgive you. Goodbye. I would have forgiven him but I would not have saved him out of that pit.

Jesus didn't come only to forgive but to save. As a true father, I should not only forgive him when he repents but also deliver him from the pit into which he has fallen. There is a difference between forgiveness and salvation.

He has come to forgive us but also to save us from our sins, to save us from our lustful thoughts, to save us from our love of money, to save us from our covetousness, to save us from anger and bitterness and an unforgiving spirit and jealousy and strife and every other evil. He has come to bring salvation. He came to save his people from their sins.

Further, we see something else and that is in verse 24, Joseph arose from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him. There we see Joseph setting aside what his reason told him and simply doing what God said in faith. It was the obedience not of reason because reason told him Mary must have been immoral.

It was the obedience of faith that what God has said must be true though I can't understand it. Never mind, even if I can't understand it. God has said it and I believe.

And he did. Obedience to all that Jesus, all that God spoke through his angel is what we see again in the first page of the New Testament scriptures. And he took her as his wife.

That was a very big step. It was a lifetime decision and he was willing to base a decision that would affect the rest of his life on the basis of faith in God's word. Setting aside what his own reason told him.

A blessed example for us to follow. The New Testament speaks about this obedience of faith. And he kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a son.

And he called his name Jesus. In other words, after Jesus was born, they lived normally as husband and wife. And we read from Mark chapter 6 that Mary had other children who were the younger brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ.

In chapter 2, verse 1, we read of wise men or magi from the East who came to worship Jesus, the King of the Jews. One significant thing we see here is that right at the beginning of the New Testament again, we see that the first people mentioned who came to worship Jesus, not the first people who came. The first people who came, as far as we know, from Luke chapter 2, were the shepherds who were out in the fields of Judea.

But the first ones mentioned in the New Testament are here in Matthew chapter 2. Wise men from the East who were not Israelites at all. After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the days of Herod, behold, magi from the East arrived in Jerusalem. This was much after the shepherds came.

But they came from the East and the significant thing we see here is that it is the Gentiles who are mentioned first. This was the stumbling block that Jesus was to the Jewish people. That it's the heathen also whom He had concern for.

The New Covenant was bringing in a breaking down of the distinction between Jew and Gentile. Jesus had come to unite them in one body. And this is the significance of the wise men being mentioned as the first ones in the New Testament who came to see Jesus.

We praise God that God opened the door in the New Testament to both Jews and Gentiles. Let's turn today to Matthew's Gospel chapter 2. After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King, behold, magi or wise men from the East arrived in Jerusalem saying, 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. And when Herod the King heard it, he was troubled in all Jerusalem with him.

It's very significant that all the scholars, the chief priests, the high priests, the priests, the Bible scholars, we know that Gamaliel was running a Bible school there. Or there were others running a Bible school certainly. And all these men never knew when Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

But far away, many hundreds of miles away in the East, perhaps in the land of Persia, there were people, God-fearing people perhaps, who sought God and who got a revelation from God, which all these people who had the written Scriptures never got. Those who had the Scriptures, those who knew the Scriptures, those who studied the Scriptures did not get the revelation that God gave to people who didn't have one word of God's written Scriptures in their own language. This is a very humbling thing and a very fearful thing because today it is we who have the written Scriptures as Christians.

And it is possible for us to have the written Scriptures, to study it in our Bible schools and yet to be completely ignorant about Jesus Christ Himself. And that those like these Magi who have no written Scriptures can come to a knowledge of Him because they fear God and are seeking Him. God is no respecter of persons, but in every place where people seek Him and fear Him, He reveals Himself to them.

This is the message we learn right at the beginning of the New Testament. And God revealed Himself to them and they saw a special star and they followed that star and that star led them all the way to the land

of Israel. And when they came to Jerusalem, the star had not disappeared.

And if they had continued to follow the star, they would not have had to consult anyone. The star would have led them straight to Bethlehem. But here was the first mistake that the wise men made.

They followed the star for hundreds of miles and when they came to Jerusalem, they thought, well, now there is no need for us to follow the star because the King of the Jews must be born in the capital city of Israel, which is Jerusalem, of Judah, which is Jerusalem. And no doubt, He must be born in the palace. So they go to the palace where King Herod lives.

And that was the mistake the wise men made and many people make today as well. The star is a picture of the Word of God, a type and a picture of God's Word that is like a light that leads us. In 2 Peter chapter 1 we read that the prophetic Word is like a lamp shining in a dark place, 2 Peter 1.19, which is to lead us until the morning star rises in your hearts and the day dawns, which is the second coming of Christ.

For Christ is called the morning star in Revelation 22.16. Until we see Jesus face to face, we read in 2 Peter 1.19, we must let the prophetic Word guide us as a lamp in a dark place, just like the star led the wise men to Jesus. But this is the mistake we too can make, like those wise men, that we can follow the Word of God up to a certain point and a certain point comes where we can think, well, here I don't need the guidance of God's Word, my reason is good enough. And the wise men went astray.

They thought Jesus should be born in the palace and they were mistaken. We too can think according to our reason that God should act in a certain way and He doesn't. The things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to the natural mind.

The wise men would never have imagined that Jesus was born in a stable. This was some days after He was born and He was not in the stable then, but He was still in some little house in Bethlehem, but not in the palace. If only we can learn this lesson that we considered in our last study also, that Joseph had to go by the obedience of faith in God's Word and not by what his reason told him concerning Mary's being pregnant.

The same thing we learn at the beginning of Matthew chapter 2, that our obedience to God's Word must come apart from reason, like we read in Proverbs 3.5, trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean upon your reason or your understanding. And so when they sought for Jesus' birth in the palace, Herod had never even heard about it. But he was troubled when he heard that there was a king born.

His position was threatened. People were not rejoicing. They were troubled when they heard that a king was born.

Here is a picture of an old religious system that is disturbed by revelation of new truth. People who are secure in their thrones that they have built for themselves in their religious Christian empires, like Herod, are troubled by the fact that Jesus is seeking for something else. Their throne is threatened by the new covenant message and they are disturbed.

And we know that Herod the king wanted to kill this baby later on, as we read. And that is how it is even today that those who have comfortably settled themselves in thrones in their religious Christian empires are threatened by the new covenant gospel of simplicity that they would like to kill and get rid of those who proclaim such a message. And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he began to inquire of them where the Christ was to be born, where is the Messiah to be born.

And they said to him in Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet. They knew the scriptures, but they had no revelation. Revelation was given to these wise men who had no written scriptures.

A tremendous warning for us that an academic knowledge of scriptures accumulated through years of Bible school study or personal study is quite useless apart from the revelation of the Holy Spirit. We can know the scriptures so that we can answer promptly any question asked like these scribes could do. They even could quote the verse from the book of Micah.

And you Bethlehem, land of Judea, verse 6, are by no means least among the leaders of Judea, for out of you shall come forth a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel. Then Herod secretly called the Magi and ascertained from them the time the star appeared. He appeared to be interested and actually he was only trying to safeguard his own kingdom.

We are not to be deceived by many people who claim to be interested in the gospel, the new covenant gospel, when they are not willing to give up their private kingdoms. Herod could not be a disciple of Jesus Christ unless he is willing to give up his kingdom. And this is why many cannot be disciples of Christ today because they cannot give up their financial kingdoms or their religious kingdoms.

And so he sent them to Bethlehem and said, Go and make careful search for the child and when you have found him, report to me that I too may come and worship him. What a lie! He wanted to kill him. But he pretended to be interested and the Magi were so gullible, they believed him.

Till they were warned later on by God not to believe him. We too need to be wise, wise as serpents, harmless as doves. And having heard the king, they went their way and lo the star which they have seen in the east went on before them.

If only they had followed the star all the way, they need not have consulted the scribes or Herod. There is no need for us to consult scholars. They will only give us theoretical knowledge.

The star, the inspired word of God revealed to us by the Holy Spirit is sufficient. And where does the star lead them? To Jesus. The star, the God's word will always lead us to Jesus.

Not to a doctrine, but to Jesus. The Holy Spirit has come not to reveal doctrines to us, but Jesus Christ in the fullness of the glory of God and the fullness of his word. And when they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.

They were depressed when they went to men. They were depressed when they leaned upon their own reason. And many today are depressed because they leaned upon their own reason.

They went astray because they leaned upon their reason. They are depressed when they listen to the scribes and to kings. But when they come back to God's word, then comes that exceeding great joy which no man can give.

And the star led them straight bang on top of the house. Not the stable now. They had moved out of the stable, obviously.

It was a small little hut somewhere. And they saw the child with Mary, his mother. And they were very wise.

They did not fall down and worship Mary like some do today. They worship the child, Jesus Christ. And they opened their treasures and presented to him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh.

Prophetic gifts speaking of him as a king, gold. As a priest, frankincense. And as a suffering prophet and servant, myrrh.

Bitter, speaking of suffering. And so we see that these men, when they sought for revelation from God, they were led aright. A warning for us, never to lean upon our own reason, but always to lean upon the revelation of the Holy Spirit given to us from God's word.

Let's turn now to Matthew's Gospel, chapter 2. We were considering in our last study how the wise men or the Magi from the East came and worshipped Jesus. We don't know how many there were among them. But we know that they brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

And we saw that they went astray when they followed their reason and looked for Jesus in the palace in Jerusalem when he was actually born in a stable in Bethlehem. And if they had followed the star, we saw that they would have gone straight to the house where Jesus was and would not have gone astray. A warning for us, not to follow our reason, but to follow the star of God's written word revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.

But we also read that after they had worshipped the child, verse 12 of Matthew 2, they were warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod. And there we see the need again not to lean upon our own reason. Herod had told them when you find the child, come back and tell me because I also want to come and worship him.

And according to human reason, the Magi could have thought, well, that would be a very wonderful thing if we could get the king of this land, Herod, the great king Herod, to come and worship this child Jesus. What a wonderful thing it is! What a lust there is in the flesh of many Christians to get great men and rulers and leaders to come and acknowledge Jesus Christ. If only they would listen to the voice of God, we will find that God is not so interested in Herod that it would be for quite another reason why Herod wants to come actually to kill the child.

And so again we see how our reason can lead us astray. They were very wise men, very intelligent, clever men, but their reason would have led them astray. And so God warned them and they followed the warning of God in a dream.

And they departed for their own country in another way, not fearing what Herod would do. We have to be careful that we are not fooled by great people and big people. But to listen to God, this is what we find again and again and again in the beginning of the New Testament.

God is seeking to lead us to live by faith in His word and by His leading and not by our own reason. And when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt and remain there until I tell you. Again we see God warning Joseph through a dream.

Notice how often this happens. We saw that in chapter 1 where God spoke to Joseph in a dream concerning taking Mary as his wife. We saw that in chapter 2 where the Magi were warned by God in Matthew 2.12 in a dream.

And we see again in Matthew 2.13 Joseph being warned in a dream, saying, Arise and take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt and remain there until I tell you. Don't go by your reason now. Go by My word.

For Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him. And look at the implicit obedience of Joseph. He doesn't say, No, he won't do any such thing.

He doesn't go by reason. He doesn't argue with God and say, Lord, why don't you kill Herod? That would be easier. And when you come to think of it, we wonder why God didn't kill Herod.

Because it says here later on how all the male children in Bethlehem below the age of two years were killed by Herod. Why did God permit that? It would have been easier for God to take away Herod's life. We read in Acts chapter 12 of another Herod whose life God took away.

Very quickly when He didn't give the glory to God He could have done the same thing. Worms could have eaten up this Herod the Great. That we read of in Matthew chapter 2. And there is where we have to admit that as human beings we can't understand God's ways perfectly.

No doubt there was a very good reason which we may not be able to explain properly. Many people ask this question, Why doesn't God destroy Satan? For all the havoc He causes in the world. Certainly, that's another thing that we don't have the full answer to though we may have a partial answer.

We don't understand God's ways. We see that in the beginning of the New Testament. But it's good for us to humble ourselves and obey.

God doesn't ask us to understand His ways. He has only asked us to obey. He has told us very clearly in Isaiah 55, verse 8 and 9 that His ways are not our ways.

The way He does things is quite different from the way man does. If we were there in God's place we would have wiped out Herod, but God doesn't do it that way. There are many things concerning suffering in the world.

It's not that God is ignorant. It's not that God doesn't care. But there is a wisdom in God which is way beyond our wisdom.

And it's good for us to humble ourselves and accept that fact. And so, Joseph, without any questioning, again, the obedience of faith, how often we have seen it in these two chapters, the beginning of the New Testament. Took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt.

And went. It's a long way to go with a small baby. And yet God in His wisdom ordained it.

And they went and they were there until the death of Herod. See the provision that God made for this. It's very wonderful to see God's provision.

Joseph, we know, was from a poor home. We read in Luke chapter 2 that when they brought the child to be circumcised, to be offered in the temple, that they didn't even have money to buy lambs. They brought two turtledoves, we read in Luke 2. The offering of poor people.

How could such poor people go and live in Egypt for such a long time? He had his home in Nazareth. He had to go and live in a strange country. Was God going to make provision for it? He certainly did.

The Magi had just brought gold and frankincense and myrrh, expensive gifts which would be more than sufficient to take care of the financial needs of that family during their stay in Egypt. See the wonderful way God provides the needs of His people without their having to depend on men or to borrow or beg. God knew their needs and provided for it before the need arose.

Wonderful to see that in the beginning of the New Testament. How God provides our needs. And that is to encourage faith in us.

That before a need arises, God will make provision for it if we trust Him. All things are possible if we trust Him. And Joseph stayed there, verse 15, until the death of Herod, so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, Out of Egypt did I call my son.

That's a verse from Hosea 11, verse 1, and it's actually referring to Israel coming out of Egypt in the time of Moses. But here we see another illustration of the wonderful dual fulfillment of prophetic scripture. That scripture sometimes has more than one meaning.

One reading, Hosea 11, one would never dream of thinking that it refers to Jesus coming out of Egypt. It refers to Israel coming out of Egypt in the days of Moses, and yet it had more than one fulfillment according to Matthew 2, verse 15. No, we cannot understand scripture with our natural mind.

We need the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Some verses mean something much more than what our analytical human mind thinks that it means. Then when Herod saw that he'd been tricked by the Magi, he became very enraged, and he sent and slew all the male children.

He was determined to wipe out this threat to his kingdom, but he did not succeed. No man can fight against God and succeed. When God wants to establish His testimony, no man sitting on the throne of a business empire or financial empire, religious empire, can ever crush the work of God.

He may think he has, when he slew all the children below the age of two. He may have thought, well, that's finished off that, and he didn't finish it off at all. God had already protected His son, and God protects His testimony even now.

Throughout the centuries, God has protected that pure testimony of the church in every age, even though, just like Herod, many have sought to wipe out a pure testimony for Christ in every generation, but they've never succeeded. He thought of two years, because he had ascertained that time from the Magi. Then that which was spoken through Jeremiah, the prophet was fulfilled.

Even that was a fulfillment of prophecy. God knew it beforehand. A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping in great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, she refused to be comforted because they were no more.

When Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared again in a dream. It is the third time Joseph has a dream. The fourth time.

Dreams are mentioned here in the first two chapters of the New Testament. Saying, Arise and take the child and the mother, go to the land of Israel. For those who sought the child's life are dead.

And he arose and took the child and his mother and came to the land of Israel. Notice the implicit obedience of Joseph in chapter 1, verse 24, in chapter 2, verse 14, in chapter 2, verse 21. He didn't go by

reason, went by God's word.

And when he came to Judea, he heard that Achilles was reigning over Judea in the place of his father Herod. He was afraid to go there. And a fourth time, he was warned by God in a dream and he departed for the regions of Galilee, came and resided in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled.

See how dangers in the way, like Achilles reigning in Judea, only helps in the fulfillment of God's word, again in a dream. And he moves. And he comes to Nazareth.

Even that's in fulfillment of scripture. Everything that God does in His sovereignty, is to fulfill what is already planned for us. And we too can walk exactly like Jesus and be protected like He was and cared for like He was if we live by faith in God's word.

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