

Some introductory issues from the text of Matthew 2:

1. The lust mankind has for exaltation (2:8)
  - a. Outside of Christ
  - b. We also see the reality that Christ is no “mere man” (4:10) as He could have had the power if He desired it.
2. The significance of small things in the plan of God (2:5)
3. God speaks in dreams 2 through 4 to Joseph, the wise men, and Joseph.
4. Old Testament references 2 through 4
  - a. Micah 5:2 in Matthew 2:6
  - b. Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15
  - c. Jeremiah 31 in Matthew 2:17-18
  - d. Isaiah 11:1 in Matthew 2:23
5. Killing babies occurred before the arrival of the babies 2 times in history. This makes us consider the future.
6. Two Josephs in Egypt by the will of God (comparing Matthew 2:13 with Psalm 105:19)
7. Christ is better than Moses...and everything else (“coming out of Egypt” is the beginning to Matthew’s theme).

## 1:21

**for he shall save his people from their sins.** Now, think about the character of God that is continually finding Christians and saving them from their sins. The Messiah is actually saving his people from their sins. I understand the moment of salvation that when we put our faith in Christ he saves us from the wrath of God, but even today we trust the Lord in victory over sin in our life (whatever it is).

Now I want to show you some irony about this. The one whose name means "Jehovah saves," is in the very next chapter being saved by Jehovah.<sup>1</sup> Who does God use to get Jesus to Egypt out of the clutches of Herod but his earthly adoptive father, Joseph. And all of a sudden I realized that God is saving his Son from the human hand of Herod, we find from Revelation 12 it's from the hand of Satan. Remember, the dragon stood before the woman waiting for her to bear the man child who was caught up. So really Herod was an agent of Satan, we get that. So God saves his Son, Jesus, from the hands of Herod who is being used by Satan and he uses Joseph, a carpenter. We don't have to be superstars to be used of God.

We furthermore realize that this Satan is the very one who shows up in the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter to drive our Lord Jesus to blunder in His devotion to the will of God and to, probably, disqualify Him from returning to the right hand of His Father. Satan’s involvement is no marvel to us as it has been promised since the “enmity” promise of Genesis 3:15.

1. Joseph saved Jesus from Herod. Isn’t it a miracle to think about the Creator being vulnerable? Think about these wonderful truths of Jesus being vulnerable:

"Jesus, joy of the highest heaven,  
Born as a little baby  
Under a wondrous star.

**Like us, crying he takes His first breath**

Held by His mother, helpless  
Close to her beating heart.  
Jesus, laid in a lowly manger,  
**Facing a world of dangers,**  
Come to turn me a stranger  
Into a child of God.

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<sup>1</sup>It may even be said “‘Jehovah Saves’ is Jehovah Who needs saving!” See Appendix A

Jesus, King of the highest heaven  
**Learning to take His first steps,**  
That He might bring us life...<sup>2</sup>

2. Joseph saved Jehovah from Herod.
  - a. Out of Bethlehem
  - b. To Egypt
  - c. In Egypt
  - d. Out of Egypt
  - e. To Nazareth through Galilee
3. Joseph saved Jehovah from Satan (Revelation 12:4-5).
4. The Father saved Jehovah from Satan.
5. The Father saved His Son from Satan.
6. The Son trusted His Father to protect Him from Satan (Psalm 22:9-10).<sup>3</sup>
7. The Son trusted His Father to protect Him evil.
8. The Son trusted His Father to keep Him secure in a strange land (John 1:14 and the marvel of living in our camp).
9. The Son trusted His Father to keep Him secure in a strange land within a strange land (the marvel of taking Him to a land where His fathers were prisoners and slaves).

Marvels of any of this:

1. God uses people to accomplish things of eternal significance (the absolute understatement of the year given the context).
2. You can do what you ought to do.
3. You must only do what you must do.
4. God is mysteriously allowing things we cannot explain. “a miscarriage did not need to happen.” My old sermon “So God could bless him.”
5. It is within the realm of possibility that Satan desires to harm you and that angels are active, as here, in your protection. (conversation with JR about accidents)
6. All of this trouble came from worship (2:2). How little would there be from this story if some people worthy of adoration did not wish to give proper adoration to Jesus?

## Chapter 2

### 2:1-2

**Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king,<sup>4</sup> behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem.** There shouldn't be any question in our minds why they went to

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<sup>2</sup><http://www.metrolyrics.com/jesus-joy-of-the-highest-heaven-a-childrens-lyrics-keith-kristyn-getty.html> [accessed December 13, 2016]

<sup>3</sup>Listen here for more: <http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=1212121937452> [accessed December 12, 2016].

<sup>4</sup>Herod the Great ruled from 37-4 B.C. and was a generally wicked king who did things such as this infanticide, and also heavily taxed the people to build monstrous fortresses such as Masada (Ibid), Bethelhem, and Machaerus (Scott, 96). He was obviously very manipulative as seen in his dealings with the Magi here.

However, He did have glimmers of benevolence in ways which he assisted the people during famine and destitution—even restoring their center of worship, yet this too seems pragmatic as the temple was almost five decades in building this temple to bring himself notoriety (Lea, 25). Nonetheless, the white marble (Ibid) edifice had a platform that was instrumental in virtually flattening the top of Mount Zion and making it the very center of so much of early church history (and that of Christianity).

Religiously, he was hardly a Jew. He was half-Jew at best (Scott, 95) and was more Hellenistic in his philosophy (Ibid).

He was not much of a family man. He had more than seven wives and was afraid of many of them and their offspring to the point of deposing many of them (Lea, 25). When he died his kingdom was willed to three sons: Archealus, Antipas, and Philip who reigned over Judea, Samaria, Galilee, Perea, and Northeast of Lake Tiberias respectively (Scott, 97). These boys of Herod the Great were some incestuous hellions themselves—conniving to get one another's wives and kingdoms (Ibid). For that matter, it was Antipas who was lusting after his step daughter (who, by the way, was also his great niece) when he offered up to half his kingdom to her on his birthday and ended up giving away the life of a man of God (Mark 6:22-28).

Jerusalem and why they went to King Herod to find this new king. Why wouldn't they assume it was King Herod's son? A new king born, right? And here they are coming to the king of the Jews who was Herod. He's the king of the Jews. He's in Judea. He's king; he would be the king of the Jews.

**2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews?** Imagine the wise men coming and saying, "Where's the new King?" That would've been popular. Probably Herod had no problem believing that he had a son somewhere.<sup>5</sup> He was not a chaste man. He was not good. He was constantly killing off his sons that were competition for him. He had many female interests and he had many sons by them perhaps and he was constantly suspicious of them taking over his kingdom.

Here come the wise men. Why did they come to Jerusalem? Because that's where the king reigns and so they go to the place where the king reigns and ask the king, "Where is your new son?" basically. "Where is the one that is being born King of the Jews?" Naturally, that caused kind of an uproar in Jerusalem. The city wasn't happy because it meant another Herod was going to reign.

**we have seen his star in the east,** It seems like what is described in Matthew 2 can happen to a star or a combination of planets forming a star and it can appear to move and disappear and appear to move again if it's somewhere around the horizon of the earth. For example, if you're in Jerusalem and you're looking towards the southern sky towards Bethlehem, it looks like the star is above the city if the star is somewhere close to the horizon, right? And how does it disappear? It disappears below the horizon and so why does it disappear when they go to Jerusalem? Probably because on the travel path of that heavenly body, it disappeared below the horizon. Incidentally, the star's disappearance and reappearance (2:9) seems to rule out explanations of planets merging or reappearances of new stars.<sup>6</sup>

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Later, the Great's grandson, Agrippa I did his best to get his uncle Antipas in trouble with Rome and this ended with exile to present day France (Ibid, 99). This same Agrippa was apparently quite religious towards Judaism and as such was quite popular with the Jewish populace of Palestine. Agrippa's young son Agrippa II and his daughter Bernice along with his other daughter Drusilla and son-in-law Felix the Roman governor round out the significant history of the Herods and their mention in the canon (Ibid, 101).

<sup>5</sup>His mom was an ethnic Arab and his dad was a person of Idumea which is Old Testament Edom and so he's really not even Jewish, but in any case, he's the "king of the Jews."

<sup>6</sup>John Peter Lange and Philip Schaff, *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Matthew* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 57.