

## Today's Sermon

# Christmas and Exodus, Part 2 (Matthew 2)

Pastor Phil Layton, GCBC, December 25, 2022

Merry Christmas! We want to make much of Christ every Lord's Day, today is extra special.

- I'm thankful for all who have helped make today special
  - o up front and behind the scenes, adults and children.

Turn to Mt 1 and there's no better place to be than in God's house and there's no better Word.

- The kids have been singing it, it's on the wall behind me, the word is **Immanuel**.

We looked at Luke's Christmas story last Sunday, today let's look at Matthew's account, Mt **1:22** *All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: <sup>23</sup> "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).* That's from Isa. 7:14

- and the next chapter of Isaiah applies that name to His land
- and how He'll be unstoppable, no opposition or sinful plan can stand against Immanuel:

*'wings will cover the breadth of your land, O **Immanuel!**...Listen, all you distant lands...propose your plan, but it will not stand, for **God is with us.**' (8:8, 10 NIV).*

A few verses later people are in deep darkness until this light from Galilee, then it says *to us a child is born, to us a son is given* and one of His names is *Mighty God* (He's the God with us).<sup>1</sup>

A couple chapters later Isaiah adds *'Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious ...the LORD shall set His hand again **the second time** To recover the remnant of His people who are left, From Assyria and **Egypt**... The LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the **Sea of Egypt**; With His mighty wind He will shake His fist over the River...And make men cross over dryshod. There will be a highway for the remnant of His people...**As it was for Israel In the day that he came up from the land of Egypt**' (Isaiah 11 NKJV).*

In **Mt 2**, Gentiles seek Him

- wise men of other nations (maybe Assyria) enquire of Him and His resting place.
- And Isaiah's prophecies of Messiah describe a 2<sup>nd</sup> Exodus
  - o it will be a 'second time' He gathers His people from Egypt
  - o by His hand, through the sea on dry land.
- Some of Isaiah's prophecies have symbolism or a vision of the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent
  - o but His 1<sup>st</sup> advent is a preview and part.

**Big idea today: Jesus is God is with us**

1. in history and in families
2. in Exodus and after Christmas
3. In His purpose and our worship

I love studying the book of Exodus and seeing how it connects with Christ and I loved last week studying how Exodus connects with Christmas in Luke 1-2. And there's even more in **Mt 1-2**:

- Almighty God promised Moses *'I will be with you,'* Mt 1:23 says Jesus is *'God with us'*
- Remember there were promises of Messiah or Christ in Genesis, then 400+ silent years
- Finally the angel of the Lord came to a shepherd in a field watching His flocks (Moses)
- He promised salvation at the burning bush, *'I will be with you, and this will be the sign'*<sup>2</sup>
- Same phrase an angel of the Lord used to Bethlehem shepherds in a field watching flocks
- Micah 5 promised Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, in the last book of the OT and it had been 400+ silent years again till the angel of the Lord came and told them salvation had come, *'and this shall be the sign, you shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths'*
- God's burning bush promise *'I will be with you'* is fulfilled in *'Immanuel...God with us'*

I mentioned last time

- Moses was also a baby found wrapped in cloths in an unusual wooden bed for a baby
- And in both cases there's a young girl named Mary with the baby
- (Miriam is the Hebrew of Mary, in Nazareth the Jews would've called Mary 'Miriam').
- She's named after a Hebrew teen living in Egypt before the exodus, so was her husband
- The NT Joseph was undoubtedly named by Jewish parents after the Joseph of Genesis.
- That teenage Joseph was sold into Egypt as a slave but God used him to save his family.
  - o Back in the OT, Joseph went to Egypt and brought his family there
  - o because they would've had died of starvation if they stayed in the land of Israel
  - o Joseph promised to provide for the little ones as he brought his family to Egypt
  - o that's how Genesis ends and Exodus begins.

**Ex 1:5:** *All the descendants of **Jacob** were seventy persons; **Joseph** was already in Egypt. <sup>6</sup> Then Joseph died ... <sup>8</sup> Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know **Joseph**.*

- The OT Joseph, son of Jacob, was a Jewish hero of the faith
- and many centuries later a family in Nazareth kept the names alive.

Look at **Mt 1:15:** *Eliud [was] father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, <sup>16</sup> and **Jacob the father of Joseph** the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.*

-This family named a son Jacob, and his son Joseph, just like the family in Egypt in Ex. 1.

-another family in this little village named their daughter Miriam/Mary from the same story

-in God's providence the parents of Jesus are named after those who went in and out of Egypt.

-the OT Joseph generation went in Egypt, the OT Mary/Miriam generation was delivered out

**Matthew doesn't list every generation, but he highlights key names from Exodus<sup>3</sup>**

In the law, when Mary and Joseph married, Joseph become the legal adopted dad of her child.

- This is key: Mt 1 is tracing the legal ancestry of Jesus, rightful Messiah-King of the Jews.
- Joseph's line is the royal line, an adopted son could rule (Caesar Augustus was adopted)

Joseph did you know that your little boy you taught to tie his shoes,  
That this son that you adopted would die to adopt you?<sup>4</sup>

## **God is with us in history and in families, and #2. In the Exodus and after Christmas**

Look at **Mt 2:13** *Now when they [the Magi] had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." <sup>14</sup> And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt <sup>15</sup> and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son." <sup>16</sup> Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men.*

Friday night we sang: O bless all the children who wake in the night

Who rise in confusion and cry out in fright

Who run now from Herod or fall to his sword, O bless them, dear Jesus, bring peace to our world<sup>5</sup>

This is as much a part of the story of little Jesus as the wise men

- but there's no ceramic sets of the family of Jesus fleeing,
- much less infants being killed (doesn't sell well).

Many of us are wearing red today, remember Bethlehem was red in blood of toddlers that night.

No walking in a winter wonderland, this is running for their lives in a warzone.

- There's no singing, v. 18 says there's '*weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children*' (OT mom of Joseph).
- Rachel was Jacob's wife who gave birth to Joseph and Benjamin
  - o but she died in Bethlehem before the family moved to Egypt.
  - o Here she symbolizes Bethlehem moms mourning their lost sons

Matthew's Christmas story speaks to those who mourn lost loved ones (many here this year).

- If you have grief or fear for the future

- know it was more uncertain for Joseph and Mary after the Magi left.
- They're not home for the holidays, they're homeless.
- The first Christmas they were in a barn or cave, there was no room in the inn,
  - and now they're refugees seeking asylum.

But the name Immanuel reminds us God is with us as we weep, wait or wonder if we'll make it

**The God of Exodus and Christmas is with us and will help us. He calls us to help others**

So when you picture the Magi worshipping little Jesus and leaving,

- don't picture a cozy scene with reindeer like a Disney movie.
- It's more like a horror movie, even R-rated movies won't show babies being slaughtered,
  - but that's what Matthew tells was happening when the Magi left.

We forget the discomfort and danger little Jesus was in as they lived in pagan NE Africa.

- We don't know how long He was in Lower Egypt,
  - I think less than 2 years based on v. 20 and the date of Herod's death.
  - But from the start Jesus is savior for the world, Africa, Arabia, etc.

**Matthew's gospel ends 'make disciples of all nations...lo, I am with you' (cf. 1:23)**

**Mt 2:19** *But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,*<sup>20</sup> *saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead."*<sup>21</sup> *And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.* Almost word for word from Ex 4, the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses and said those who sought your life are dead, he told him to go to the people of Israel, and it says Moses took his wife and children on a donkey.

Joseph did you know when you fled to Egypt, that baby from the manger, Is the Lord who rescued Israel from Egypt you're rescuing from danger?!<sup>6</sup>

**Mt 2:15** says this fulfills what God said in the OT calling His son out of Egypt in the exodus.

- God told Pharaoh through Moses '*Israel is my son, my firstborn, let my son go...*' (Ex 4).
- Israel is God's son but Jesus is the ultimate Son and true Israel He calls out of Egypt.

Matthew wants us to see there's a new Exodus in Immanuel for believing Israel and Gentiles.

**'Out of Egypt I called my son' isn't a prophecy, it's a picture or pattern Jesus fulfills (fills full?)**

In the Christmas Exodus, the NT Joseph is like the OT Joseph and the Messiah is like Moses:

- Moses also had to flee for his life in Ex 2 (same terms in Greek OT translated in Egypt)
- **Mt 2:14** says Joseph fled quickly at night, like Israel fled Egypt at night in haste (Ex 12)

- Baby Moses was also rescued when the king was tricked and angry, killing baby boys
- Both Jesus and Moses are adopted, raised without a biological dad, and delivered people

### **God is with us in Exodus and Christmas and #3. In Christ's purpose and our worship**

Christ's purpose in Christmas and the 2<sup>nd</sup> exodus was to let His people go from sin to worship

The kids sang worship to Emmanuel, 'grace and majesty...come on bended knee, adore Him.' His purpose 'born to set Thy people free, from our fears and sin release us, let us find our rest in Thee.'

- **Jn 1:16** 'the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ'
- In the wilderness Jesus quotes from Moses 3x to defeat temptation so His people can too
- Jesus defeated the serpent in His temptation and He taught like Moses and 'the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believes' (**Jn 3**)
- The purpose of Christ in Mt 2 was to experience what Moses and Israel went through
  - o into Egypt and out of Egypt and back into the Promised Land.
  - o He fulfills the imagery and typology and is faithful where Israel failed.
  - o He identifies with Israel. They were hungry in the desert, so was Jesus (Mt 4).
  - o They were tempted, so was He, but He was victorious for whoever believes in Him
- Moses gave the law on a mount, in Mt 5 Jesus gave a sermon on the mount interpreting it
- Mt 1-5 is showing Jesus as the greater lawgiver and liberator from slavery, sin, and Satan
- It's amazing how this is all one story with one Savior. Do you know His saving grace?
- The law can't save, good works can't save, only Christ lifted up to die and rise for sin.

**He's greater than Moses, freeing from slavery to sin for all who repent and trust Him**

Last week we saw in Exodus 10 the thick darkness covering Egypt's land and people. Isa 60: 'darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but...his glory will be seen upon you. And **nations shall come to your light**, and kings to the brightness of your **rising** ...They shall **bring gold and frankincense**, and shall bring **good news**, the praises of the LORD.' (v. 2-3, 10, 6).

- One translation 'will come, worshipping...' (NLT).
- That same chapter in Isaiah talks about camels, wealth of nations brought to the light
- Matthew 2 starts with Magi who see this star rising in the East

○ and come to worship the newborn King, bringing gold and frankincense. The glory of the Lord was seen first as it shone from angels on shepherds in dark fields by night

- they heard '*we bring you good news of great joy for all the people*'
  - Other nations had wise men seeing a light, a star pointing to Jesus, light of world

In **Mt 2:4-6** there were Jewish religious leaders who knew the prophecy about Bethlehem

- But they don't come and worship. Religion and right answers don't save
- But Gentiles come to worship. Were they from ancient Asia or Arabia or Assyria?
- Probably not technically kings, but maybe nobles (Magi rulers)?

Where do we read of wise men first in the Bible? Egypt and Exodus.

- **Ex 7:11** says Egypt's king '*summoned the wise men...*'
- And Babylon also had 'wise men.' It's possible Torah scrolls were left in Babylon by Daniel who was '*over all the wise men of Babylon*' (Dan 2:48).

Where would they get this idea that a star would lead them to a King?

- The writings of Moses say this after the Exodus: '*A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel...Out of Jacob One shall have dominion*' [NKJV, 'a ruler' NIV].
- That's Balaam's oracle in the 3<sup>rd</sup> book of Moses.

In Exodus, God used a burning fire in the sky to guide the Jews by night

- across the desert to where He wanted the Jews to worship.

Now God guides Gentiles with some sort of ball of fire in the sky by night

- Across the desert to show where He wanted them to go to worship the King of the Jews.

**Do you worship King Jesus? Look to the light of His Word.  
Does He have dominion over your heart, your ruler, rejoicing?**

**Mt 2:9** says after they talked with King Herod, '*they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was.*'<sup>10</sup> *When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.*<sup>11</sup> *And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary*

... Notice it was a house

- This isn't the stable/manger scene the shepherds visited that first night.

So it's not too late to fix your nativity sets, wise guys across the room on the way (in the East).

- The number 3 is based on the 3 gifts
- but what's important isn't the number or nature of the star, it's the nature of their gifts

v. 11 ends '*opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.*'

Keep a finger here and turn to Ex 30

Even what the wise men did and gave is Exodus language

- the Egyptians offered gifts to Israel as they left,
- they opened their jewelry to give gold after the last plague (we'll see that next week).
- In Egypt, the Valley of the Kings has many gold treasures (ex: King Tut's tomb).
- For the King of the Jews they bring gold.

In God's providence, this gift provided for this poor family to be able to travel and live in Egypt

The Christmas-Exodus story encourages us: **God knows the future, holds it, provides our needs**

Did you know frankincense and myrrh comes out of Exodus? Look at **Ex 30:34** *The LORD said to Moses, "Take sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum, sweet spices **with pure frankincense** (of each shall there be an equal part), <sup>35</sup> and make **an incense blended...***

- Frankincense was in the incense blend
- next verse says this was to be put in the holy place where God's presence met Israel.
  - o It signified God would come near.
  - o Pure frankincense was part of offerings for worship in Lev. 2.

We sang: 'Over the skies of Bethlehem appeared a star...Wiseman seeking truth, traveled from afar...

Falling on their knees, they bow before the humble Prince of Peace

We bring an offering of worship to our King, No one on Earth deserves the praises that we sing  
[Our application] Jesus, may you receive the honor that you're due, O Lord, I bring an offering to you'<sup>7</sup>

**Do you? How do you offer and honor Jesus as King? Trust Him and treasure Him?**

**Ex 30:22:** *The LORD said to Moses, <sup>23</sup> "Take the finest spices: of liquid **myrrh** 500 shekels...<sup>25</sup> And you shall make of these a **sacred anointing oil...** v. 29 says this holy oil with myrrh sanctified everything and everyone it touched. <sup>32</sup> *It shall not be poured on the body of an ordinary person...**

- This is no ordinary person in Bethlehem.
- This is the holy child who sanctifies others who He touches with grace.

**v. 30** says oil with myrrh anointed men who would serve as priests who would offer sacrifices.

- Jesus is the ultimate Anointed One and High Priest
- who offered Himself as a sacrifice in death
- **Jn 19** says in His tomb the faithful Jews anointed his body with spices and myrrh, 75 lbs.

Our closing song: Frankincense to offer have I, Incense owns a Deity nigh [i.e., God is near] ...

Myrrh is mine, Its bitter perfume, breathes a life of gathering gloom.

Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, Sealed in the stone cold tomb...

Glorious now behold Him arise, King and God and Sacrifice!<sup>8</sup> He's risen and returning!

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 8:22-9:6.

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 3:12.

<sup>3</sup> The first 2 chapters of Exodus talk about God's promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the sons of Jacob that came to Egypt. The first 2 verses of Matthew 1 mention Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and his sons, as part of the promise of Christ. Mt 1:4 mentions other names from Exodus ch 6 to show the family tree of Messiah connected to the family tree of Moses (Levi and Judah).

<sup>4</sup> <https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/1224122125327.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://garyware.me/2022/12/14/away-in-a-manger-altered-verses-christmas-songs-2022-day-14/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/1224122125327.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Casting Crowns, "Christmas Offering."

<sup>8</sup> John Henry Hopkins, Jr., "We Three Kings."