

The Gospel According to Matthew pt 6

(My Lord)

(Mic 5:2) But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, 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.

Now Read Matt. 2:1-6

We closed our time together in our last study, considering the irresistible call of some unlikely characters, magicians, fortune tellers, uncommon men to the religious realms, and I wish to make one more point before we go on in this text!

We have in this passage a demonstration of that which ought to make our hearts rejoice. In quoting from the old testament, (v6) the religious, make a statement of truth that brings great peace to God's people; **“for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel”**.

Our heavenly Father rules all things in providence to accomplish his purpose of grace; (Rom 8:28-30) **And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.**

(Rom 11:33-36) O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever.

He caused a light to shine in the darkness, He made a star to guide these chosen men to Christ the Savior; (Rev 1:20) **The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.**

He moved Caesar Augustus to make his decree concerning taxation. He prevented Herod from following these men to Bethlehem. He provided what Joseph and Mary needed to flee to Egypt. He warned these men from the east in a dream not to return to their own country through Jerusalem. As He cared for Joseph and Mary, His servants, and our Savior who came into the world as His righteous Servant, so God's servants in this world are the objects of His special and unceasing care. All who are His are the apple of His eye. You may safely cast all your care upon Him, for **"he careth for you!"** (1Pe 5:7).

Let's move on now in our text; read verses 7-16 of matt. 2.

This too is of God's purpose! In Deu 32:39 **"See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand"**. Folks everything that happens is by the permissive will of God, He ether rules all that is or we waste our time in vanity!

Verse 17 declares; **"Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying"**, Then in (v18) we are given what what was prophized, **"In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not"**.

Brother Don Fortner wrote; *“From the beginning of time Satan has opposed his Creator. When God made known to his holy angels his intention to save sinful men by the blood and righteousness of Christ and thus to exalt manhood to the place of highest dominion over all creation, so that even the angels would be servants to chosen, redeemed sinners, Lucifer said, “No I will not be servant to man. I will be like the Most High” And he led one third of the heavenly host in rebellion against God and against the purpose of God. From the beginning of time Satan has been opposed to Christ and has attempted to nullify the purpose of God. And so it shall be until time shall be no more and the old serpent, the devil, is cast into the lake of fire”*.

What a horrific scene we have here in the attempt to destroy the lord of all; (v16) **“Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wrath, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men”**.

But it’s no less horrific than the day you and I live in, people are mercilessly killing people in pure hatred, all around the globe. The world is filled with men and women who worship other gods of their own imagination, belittling the one true God, again attempting to destroy the Lord of Glory, by glorifying themselves, Men living according to what they think is right, having no respect for the lives of others! Death reigns in this world! Folks this was as much of God’s doing, as anything that happens is of God!

Yet Some will spend an eternity praising God for His mercy, His graciousness, why? That’s the Gospel message! God will deliver a people from the curse of sin! Why, and how will God be gracious to some?

By providing Himself, the just, for the unjust, sending His only begotten Son to be our Propitiation, our atonement, our righteousness, our wisdom, our sanctification, our justification, our redemption, our all in all!

I Quoted back on page one (Rom 8:28) “**And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose**”. Do you know?

Do I know the curse of this world is for my Good?

If there was no curse, would I need God to send a savior?

If there was no curse, would I need the Righteousness of God?

If there was no curse, would I need the blood of the Spotless lamb of God?

If there was no curse, would I need one to intercede to God on my behalf?

If it were not for the curse, I would not know God’s Grace to me!

Herod stands before us as an example of the enmity of man’s heart against God and his opposition to Christ and His cause. The Lord Jesus came down from heaven to save poor sinners. What could be more noble and beneficial? But as soon as He came into the world Satan had Herod in place and inspired his heart with barbaric cruelty to “*seek the young child to destroy him.*”

Reprobate interpreters of history tell us that Christianity has been the cause of great cruelty and bloodshed. But if they were honest they would say, “It has not been Christianity, but man’s opposition to Christianity that has been the cause of great cruelty and bloodshed.”

Here are three things that we must never forget, or expect to change...

The cross of Christ and the gospel of God's free grace in him are an offence and stumbling block to unregenerate man; (1Co 1:21-24) **For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.**

While He was upon the earth, our Savior said, "*They hated me without a cause,*" and nothing has changed. The offense of the cross has not ceased. Men do not object to Christ being a Savior. The offense of the cross is that the gospel insists that Christ is the only Savior. Men do not object to Christ being a partial Savior. The offense of the cross is that the gospel declares that Christ alone is Savior.

The gospel of God, the gospel we believe runs in direct opposition to the religious world in which we live. The gospel of God's free and sovereign grace in Christ is contrary to all the natural religious sentiments of all men. To all men by nature, to all lost, unregenerate men, religious or irreligious, the cross of Christ is an offense. It is not possible to make the gospel palatable to lost men. Every attempt to do so, of necessity, involves compromise. It is not possible to faithfully preach the message of salvation by God's free and sovereign grace through the merits of Christ's sin-atonement death and imputed righteousness without offending those who reject and deny it.

Second, The great, powerful, influential men of this world, though they are almost always religious, are the foes, not the friends of righteousness. Josiahs are few. Herods are a legion.

Third, The cause of Christ does not depend upon and must never seek the power and patronage of political figures and civil government. It is written, "**Put not your trust in princes**" (Psa 146:3).

It is as common today, as it has been throughout history, for churches and religious leaders to seek approval and authority from political leaders and by civil law.

While we are and should be happy to be free from the fear of political persecution, believers ought to quietly submit to civil authority and never seek to promote and build the church and kingdom of God by civil law; read (Rom 13:1-7) with me.

Let those whose god is weak and needy, seek the laws and swords of men to give their gods power, do what they will, we are to do everything within our power to lead a quiet and peaceable life with all men (1Ti 2:1-3) **I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.**

In all that is recorded in these verses we are again reminded of the sovereign rule and wondrous mystery of divine providence. Satan wanted the Christ child destroyed. So he moved Herod with the rage of petty jealousy to kill him. But God had other purposes and designs, which he used the wickedness of Herod to accomplish; (Psa 76:10) **Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.**

Let us close with verses 19-23 of Matt. 2

What humiliation surrounds the birth of The Lord, born with no inn to lay His head, coming into this world and being sought after by some to kill Him from such a young age, does this not fulfill scripture, “He was hated without cause”, then going down into Egypt, only to return unto Nazareth, can anything good come out of Nazareth?

Nazareth is a small, obscure despised town in Galilee. No one lived in Nazareth except those who could not afford to live anywhere else. This is where the Son of God chose to reside. Let us learn from his example.

When it comes to seeking great things for ourselves, we are warned;

(Jer 45:4-5) Thus shalt thou say unto him, The LORD saith thus; Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land. And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest.

It is not nearly as important as people imagine it is to have property, position, power, praise, and money. It is a very great sin to be covetous and proud. But it is no sin to be poor. As J. C. Ryle puts it; *“It matters not so much what money we have, and where we live, as what we are in the sight of God. Where are we going when we die? Shall we live forever in heaven? These are the main things which we should attend.”*

Don Fortner wrote; *“The fact is great wealth is a great danger to any man’s soul. Those who seek the riches of this world know not what they seek. They are likely to fill our hearts with pride and chain our affections to this world. Our Master said, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God!” “How hardy shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God?” Seek not riches, but righteousness. Seek not money, but mercy. Seek not greatness, but grace”.*

If I may add one last thing, death is a great leveler. “Herod was dead!” Death enters the palace of kings just as it does the dens of paupers. None can resist its power. The murderer of helpless infants was himself helpless before the Lord God when the hour of his departure from this world had come. At the hour appointed, we too shall die. After death, we will stand before God in judgment. After judgment we will spend eternity somewhere, either in heaven, or in hell. Where will you spend eternity? Are you prepared to meet God? Am I? The only way to be accepted with the Holy Lord God is to be washed in Christ’s precious blood and robed in his perfect righteousness. For that, we must trust him. May God the Holy Spirit give us grace to **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.”**