

Matthew 1:18-2:23 - A Bloody Christmas

To read:
1. Isaiah 7
2. Jeremiah 31

I. Introduction

A. This morning we are going to continue in Matthew, finishing chapter 1 and continuing through chapter 2

1. The stories we are going to look at this morning are what we would often call the Christmas story - the story of Jesus' birth and the earliest events in his life
2. The five stories we are going to look at this morning all take place in probably the first two years of Jesus' life and are the only stories that Matthew shares with us about Jesus before He starts His public ministry at about age 30
3. But the Christmas story in Matthew isn't exactly the lighthearted, joyous event that we often think of at Christmas - in Matthew there are no angels announcing good news and singing praises to God, in general the mood of Matthew's Christmas story is not lighthearted, but dark
4. Matthew tells a story of a man who is commanded to marry a woman who is already pregnant while others whisper of infidelity and fornication, the story of magicians who follow a mysterious star and are pulled into palace intrigue, the story of a king who is chased into exile by a rival king and the story of a jealous king slaughtering children to assuage his pride
5. When we read the stories in Matthew without overshadowing them with other stories in the Bible, at best they are confusing and at worse, they are dark and grim - Matthew doesn't so much wish us a merry Christmas as call us to see a bloody Christmas, a Christmas full of sadness and woe

B. And this is really how the Gospel of Matthew is

1. Matthew isn't a lighthearted, joyous book - Matthew isn't a shallow, happy story
2. Matthew is a book full of longing and anticipation, of despair and woe, of intrigue and betrayal and these dark, grim stories give the story of Matthew a depth and a beauty that a shallow joy could never obtain
3. Just as a great composition will not only use major keys, but also minor keys and dissonant notes to develop its beauty, so Matthew draws our attention to sad stories to help us see the beauty of who Jesus is
4. So, we shouldn't glide past the confusion and sadness of these first stories in order to celebrate the Christmas story, but understand how these stories are helping us see this Son of David in all His glory

C. Let's read Matthew 1:18-2:23 together

D. As we look at the first stories of Matthew, we should remember that Matthew's genealogy is his purpose statement

1. So the stories of Matthew are all somehow going to demonstrate the things that Matthew showed us in the genealogy
2. So the stories at the beginning of Matthew should help us see that Jesus is connected to Israel's history
3. The stories at the beginning of Matthew should help us see that Jesus is connected to God's promise
4. And the stories at the beginning of Matthew should therefore help us see who Jesus is and understand how we should respond to Him

E. And this is going to be our outline this morning

1. The first stories of Matthew aren't a biography like we usually think of biography - the stories of Jesus' birth and childhood aren't meant to help us understand how He became the man He grew up to be
2. The first stories of Matthew are a fulfillment story, a story of an antitype who came to fulfill the patterns and the promises of the Old Testament, and Matthew is going to show us pictures that help us to see that clearly

II. Matthew connects Jesus to Old Testament Events

A. The easiest purpose to see in Matthew's genealogy is connecting Jesus to the stories of the Old Testament

1. And in the genealogy, Matthew connected us to the whole of the Old Testament story, but particularly focused on Abraham, David and the Exile which connected Jesus to three major covenants of the Old Testament - the promise to Abraham, the promise to David and the promise of a New Covenant
2. If we look at the Old Testament, though, there is one major story that Matthew kind of glossed over - the story of the Exodus from Egypt and possession of the promised land, the story of the Mosaic covenant
3. But Matthew isn't going to forget this major event in Israel's history, but he is going to connect Jesus to it in a different way - the Mosaic Covenant was substantially different than the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants and Matthew is going to connect Jesus to it in a different way
4. The Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants promised a son, so Matthew connects Jesus to them with a genealogy, showing that Jesus is the promised son
5. The Mosaic covenant never promised a son, so Matthew connects Jesus to them not by genealogy but by typology, Matthew is going to show us that the story of the Exodus is replayed in Jesus - the story of the Exodus was really a precursor and a picture of a greater story that is going to happen in Jesus

B. So, the first story in Matthew recalls another story in the Old Testament

1. The first story in Matthew is the story of how Joseph was commanded to take Mary as his wife, but notice the flow of the story - this is important:
 - a. First, the story starts with a chronological pause, represented in English by the word 'now' - a word that indicates the start of a new story or a new event
 - b. Then, second, the marriage of the mother and father are introduced - Joseph takes Mary as his wife
 - c. Finally, third, the story of how Jesus got His name and what the name means is recorded - you shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins
2. There's another story in the Bible that follows exactly the same pattern - Exodus 2:1-10 - *Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months. When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the river bank. And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him. Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her young women walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant woman, and she took it. When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby was crying. She took pity on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the girl went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, "Because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."*
3. If we follow Moses' birth story, there are three things that happen
 - a. First, the story starts with a chronological pause, represented in English by the word 'now'
 - b. Then, second, the marriage of the mother and father are introduced - a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman
 - c. Third, the story of how Moses got his name and what the name means is recorded - She named him Moses, because, she said, I drew him out of the water
4. Matthew is subtly showing us that Jesus is going to fulfill this last great Old Testament story as well - the birth of Jesus is the birth of a better Moses, the prophet that Moses said would come after him, the prophet that Israel must listen to and obey

C. The other four stories are going to flesh out this connection to Moses and Exodus, the next story reminds us of how the Israelites ended up in Egypt in the first place

1. The next story that Matthew relates is the story of the wise men, the Magi, coming and worshiping Jesus - and at first glance, we might wonder how this connects to an Old Testament story
2. But an Israelite who was well versed in the Old Testament stories might remember another character in the Bible who had foreign wise men bow before Him

3. Genesis 41:39-43 - *Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command. Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you." And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt." Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck. And he made him ride in his second chariot. And they called out before him, "Bow the knee!" Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt.*
4. Matthew, having announced through Jesus birth story his intention to connect Jesus to Moses, now backs up in the story and starts from the beginning
 - a. In effect he says, 'Remember how Israel ended up in Egypt, it all started when one of Israel's sons was exalted by foreign rulers and foreign wise men.'
 - b. Having connected Jesus to Moses' story, now Matthew is going to go step by step through the story and show how Jesus is connected to the story
 - c. Jesus is going fulfill each step of the story, showing that the story was really about Him

D. A new Son of Israel is worshipped by foreigners, so the next step should be Israel travelling down to Egypt

1. And this is exactly what happens in Matthew 2:13-14 - *Now when they 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." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt.*
2. Again, reminding a good Israelite of Genesis 45:5-7 - *Then Jacob set out from Beersheba. The sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons that Pharaoh had sent to carry him. They also took their livestock and their goods, which they had gained in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob and all his offspring with him, his sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters. All his offspring he brought with him into Egypt.*
3. A Son of Israel was worshipped by foreigners and then Israel ends up in Egypt - Jesus is fulfilling the pattern of Israel

E. With Israel in Egypt, the next thing that happens is the enslavement of Israel which culminates in the slaughter of the Israelite boys

1. And this is exactly what happens in Matthew 2:16 - *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.*
2. Reminding us of Exodus 1:22 - *Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, "Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live."*
3. A foreign king who was ruling God's people, be it Herod or Pharaoh, commanded the Israelite children to be slaughtered so that his rule was not challenged - Jesus' story is fulfilling Israel's pattern

F. But, since Jesus is the better Moses, the story shouldn't end in Egypt, Israel must return to the promised land

1. So Matthew 2 ends with verses 19-21 - *But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, 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." And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.*
2. There isn't a short discrete passage that we can quote to match this event, but rather the entire story of Exodus through Joshua
3. Matthew uses the stories of the beginning of Jesus life to show that He is the fulfillment of the pattern of the Exodus - He is not only connected to Abraham and David, but Moses as well - He is not only the fulfillment of the promise and the king, but the redeemer as well

G. The pattern doesn't even end there, though, because if we have gone through the end of Genesis, the beginning of Exodus and then rapidly through Numbers and Joshua, we should be attuned to what Jesus' name was

1. Remember Matthew 1:21 - *She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."*
2. I know I've said this over and over again, but it really can't be stressed too much - Jesus' name is Joshua, Jesus and Joshua are the same name, just the Hebrew or Greek forms
3. So, when we see Jesus fulfill the story of Joseph, Moses and Joshua, we should say - there's no surprise that His name is Joshua, because He is the deliverer of His people, He is the leader of the Exodus

III. Matthew connects Jesus to Old Testament prophecies

A. As we go through each of the stories in Matthew 1 and 2, we should notice that at the center of each of the stories is an Old Testament prophecy that Matthew says Jesus fulfills

1. In a way, Matthew is looking back on Israel's history but he is also looking forward to the fulfillment of the promise
2. So, he looks back at Israel's history and says that Jesus is fulfilling what happened, but he also looks at the prophecies given in the books of the prophets and says that this is what is supposed to be happening
3. Really, Matthew loves Biblical Theology - he looks back and he looks forward - Jesus is rooted in Old Testament events but He is accomplishing them in a better way so that the promise of the prophets is fulfilled

B. So, there is a prophecy from Isaiah at the center of the first story

1. The story of the angel appearing to Joseph and giving Jesus His name is centered on Isaiah 7:14 - *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*
2. Now, to understand the depth of what Matthew is trying to communicate here, we need to remember the situation going on in Isaiah 7
 - a. In Isaiah 7, the Israel has allied with the Syria to rebel against Assyria by attacking the Judah, perhaps to force Judah to rebel against Assyria as well - this is the beginning of the end of Israel
 - b. But Judah is actually in great danger from the attack of Israel and Syria and Ahaz, the King of Judah, is terrified, but God sends Isaiah to Ahaz to declare that Syria and Israel will not prevail
 - c. Then God tells Ahaz that He will give Ahaz a sign that His words will come true, a sign that Ahaz can hold onto and trust in, a sign that God will keep His promise to David and preserve Judah, but, Ahaz, being a wicked king, does not desire God's sign, and rather rests in the strength of the Assyrians to save Judah
 - d. But God promises a sign anyway - a young woman will conceive and give birth and bear a child named Immanuel, which means God with us, and before he is full grown, God will have saved Judah from Israel
 - e. But because Ahaz refused to trust God, judgment would come - God would be with Judah to save her, but only through judgment
 - f. And this prophecy came to its first fulfillment when the young woman, Isaiah's wife, bore a son and named him Immanuel and Maher-shalal-hash-baz and God saved Judah from Israel, but the passage longs for something more, a better savior who represents a better presence of God who will bring Judah through a greater judgment
3. And Matthew says that Jesus' virgin birth and his name calls us to look and see that Jesus is this better savior, He is the fullness of the presence of God with His people who will save them through judgment
 - a. Jesus' virgin birth fulfills Isaiah 7 better because the virgin did not marry a prophet in order to conceive a son, but conceived a son and then married
 - b. Jesus' identity as Immanuel is greater because He did not merely represent that God was with His people but was God with His people because He was conceived under the shadow of the Holy Spirit
 - c. And Jesus' work as savior is more significant because He doesn't merely watch God save Israel from a political danger but acts to save Israel from her sins - Jesus is the better promise that was to come!

C. And there is another prophecy in the center of the second story out of Micah

1. At the center of the story of the wise men the wise men ask where the messiah is to be born, and the priests and scribes answer from Micah 5:2 - *But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.*
2. Now, in Micah, especially in Micah 3-5, God is promising judgment against Israel and Judah in order to purge the land of those who disregard and dishonor the name of God
3. But the terror of this judgment will be good for the people of God, because out of the judgment God will restore a righteous remnant to the land and will give them a better king, which is the promise of Micah 5:2
4. And Matthew is telling us that Jesus is this better king who will bring God's people through the darkness of judgment in order to purify them and restore them to God's land - again, Jesus is the better promise that was to come!
5. But, notice that there is a theme emerging in the prophecies Matthew is quoting - Jesus is the Savior-King but He will save and reign through a time of judgment and destruction - restoration will happen through judgment, but Jesus will bring God's people through the judgment

D. The third story centers on a prophecy from Hosea

1. As Jesus goes down to Egypt, Matthew quotes out of Hosea 11:1 - *When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.*
2. Now, the first thing we need to notice is that this isn't a prophecy in the sense that we usually think of prophecy - this wasn't a predictive promise of the future that Hosea wrote down, in fact Hosea is acting more as an historian in Hosea 11, recording what had happened in Israel
3. And Hosea is recording Israel's history to demonstrate that Israel is ripe for judgment and destruction - God had called Israel out of Egypt, but she had rejected Him - to recall another picture from Hosea, she was like a faithless wife, an adulterous prostitute
4. So, Matthew isn't so much saying, Jesus is keeping a promise in this passage, but rather Matthew is directing our attention to this book of prophecy and saying that if we are seeing this same thing happen in Jesus, then we should be understanding that the prophecies of Hosea are about to come true in a better way
5. So, God's people are about to face a greater judgment, they are ripe for judgment by God and they are going to be destroyed - which really is the story of Matthew, showing how Israel is so ripe for judgment that they reject their king and savior
6. But, Matthew also wants us to remember the minor theme of Hosea - that in the midst of judgment, God will save - He will call the adulterous wife back to Himself and restore her position, He will pay her ransom and bear her punishment and somehow Jesus is going to fulfill these promises
7. And Jesus is going to make sense of the confusing parts of Hosea, places like Hoses 13, where God promises that death will come to Israel but in the midst of judgment and death says, Hosea 13:14 - *Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from Death? O Death, where are your plagues? O Sheol, where is your sting?*
8. Jesus going down to Egypt isn't just a nice story about how Jesus is like Israel, but a powerful statement that Jesus is again going to bring His people through judgment and restore them to God, He will bring them through death into life again

E. The fourth story brings us to Jeremiah

1. When Herod slaughters the children, our attention is drawn to Exodus, but Jeremiah's attention was also drawn to Exodus during some of His prophecies, and so Matthew connects this event to Jeremiah 31:15 - *Thus says the LORD: "A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more."*
2. Jeremiah is describing the coming Babylonian exile and the horrors that will happen in the midst of destruction and exile, but we can't stop at verse 15, continuing on in verses 16-17 - *Thus says the LORD: "Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears, for there is a reward for your work, declares the LORD, and they shall come back from the land of the enemy. There is hope for your future, declares the LORD, and your children shall come back to their own country"*
3. Or again, verses 27-28 - *"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and the seed of beast. And it shall come to pass that as I have watched over them to pluck up and break down, to overthrow, destroy, and bring harm, so I will watch over them to build and to plant, declares the LORD."*
4. Jeremiah is saying that the exile will be disastrous, but all hope will not be lost because God is still going to keep His promises and He will bring Israel back to the land again
5. But Jeremiah doesn't even just stop with a promise of return, but also a promise of a better covenant, a covenant that will not fail and not be broken, verses 31-34 - *"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."*
6. So, when Matthew sees the slaughter of the children, he recalls the promise of Jeremiah - Rachel will weep for her children, but do not weep overlong because after weeping God will restore Israel and make a better covenant
7. And he tells us that Jesus is going to be the one who does this - Jesus will return God's people to God's place and He will make a better covenant with God's people that will never be broken

F. The last story has a short prophecy that is actually hard to connect to any specific Old Testament prophecy

1. When Jesus returns to Israel and goes to live in Nazareth, Matthew records, Matthew 2:23 - *And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled: "He shall be called a Nazarene."*
2. We need to start by being honest - there is no recorded Old Testament prophecy that says that the Messiah would be from Nazareth, so what is Matthew referencing?
3. There is some argument about this, but I think the answer is actually quite beautiful when you see it and it involves some Old Testament prophecies, the history of the town of Nazareth and things that might seem like complete accidents but really are God's sovereign purposes being worked out in this world
4. So, Nazareth is a small town in Galilee and from archaeology, we know that it was a town during the Kingdom of Israel before the exiles, but at the exiles there is a several hundred year period where it was uninhabited
5. At the end of the exiles, though, apparently the remnant came and rebuilt the town and lived there again, and they probably gave it the name 'Nazareth' when they returned and it was probably a statement of who they were
6. The name Nazareth probably derives from a Hebrew word '*nezer*' which means branch - you see, there was a prophecy in Isaiah 60 about the return from exile and restoration of Israel that ends with Isaiah 60:21 - *Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I might be glorified.*
7. When the exiles returned and rebuilt their town, they called it *nezereth* - the branch - because they had received the promise of God, the branch had been replanted
8. And now, hundreds of years later, Jesus comes and lives in Nazareth and is called a Nazarene - a man of the branch - and Matthew says, this recalls and fulfills another prophecy from Isaiah, Isaiah 11:1 - *There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.*
9. The messiah would be a branch from the stump of Jesse that bore fruit, He would be the remnant of the line of David who inherits the promise to David and now Jesus is living in the town that means the branch of the remnant!
10. Through intersecting prophecies and years of seemingly unconnected events, Jesus comes to be known as the branch - all of this might seem like accident or cheap coincidence but Matthew says that this is the sovereign hand of God orchestrating history to literally fulfill His promises

IV. Matthew displays who Jesus is and therefore how we must respond

A. Having connected Jesus to Israel's history and to God's promises, Matthew wants us to see who Jesus is

1. These stories are meant to root Jesus firmly in God's story in the Old Testament, but they aren't merely meant to root Jesus in that story, they aren't merely meant to be knowledge and history
2. These stories root Jesus in the Old Testament to prepare us to receive Him for who He is - to help us see who He is and what He is going to do and react rightly to Him
3. So, as we finish this morning, I want to go back through the story one more time and see who Jesus is to Matthew, what does Matthew want us to understand about Jesus and what do we need to do about it

B. Jesus is Savior

1. We touched on this briefly last week, but it bears mentioning again - in his first story, Matthew is clearly holding up Jesus as the savior for the world
 - a. We saw last week that He would save Israel from the exile, that He would be the new Joshua leading the people back into the land
 - b. But Matthew doubles down on Jesus as Savior this week, because Jesus is not merely saving Israel from a geopolitical disaster, but from the root cause of that disaster - Jesus will save His people from their sins
 - c. In fact, this theme runs through several of the stories we've looked at this morning - when Herod slaughters the children, Matthew quotes Jeremiah 31 which climaxes with verses 33-34 - *But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.*
 - d. Jesus will be the answer to the exile because Jesus will be the answer for sin - through Jesus God will forgive iniquity and wash Israel's sin away and inaugurate a new covenant that will never be broken or destroyed by rebellion
2. So, as we study the book of Matthew, we must embrace Jesus as the Savior
 - a. And, as we know from all of Scripture, this means we must humble ourselves, acknowledge our sin and our need for a savior, and trust Christ to save us
 - b. But even in this first story we see an example we shouldn't overlook - we see how Joseph responds to the announcement of Jesus the savior, Matthew 1:24 - *When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife,*
 - c. When Joseph heard the angel announce that Jesus was the savior, he simply believed and submitted himself to the savior's command - and that is what we must do as well, perhaps we don't have the same command to submit to, but we must respond with the same attitude, a humble submission to our Savior's design

C. Jesus is God

1. Matthew calls us to see something else in the first story as well, not only is Jesus Savior, but Jesus is God Himself
 - a. Interwoven in the announcement of a savior is an explanation of what is going on - why has the virgin conceived? She conceived by the power of God so that the Son to be born would be Immanuel - God with us.
 - b. But really, this doesn't only explain the temporal events of the virgin birth, but also the very announcement that Jesus is the Savior - how could Jesus be the Savior? Only because He is God with Us - He is the power of God present to save His people from sin.
 - c. So, in the first 17 verses of Matthew, in the genealogy, Matthew defends Jesus' human lineage and shows that from humanity's side, Jesus is the promise and the king, but in the first story, Matthew takes us past Jesus' earthly lineage to His heavenly identity - the direct Son of God
2. So, as we study the book of Matthew, we must embrace Jesus as the Savior, but also Jesus as God
 - a. This calls us to be prepared to honor and worship Jesus - He is no mere man, but God Himself come down to dwell among us and we should debase ourselves before Him and worship, much like the wise men do in the next story - fall on our faces before Him and worship
 - b. But this isn't Matthew's primary purpose, Matthew upholds Jesus as God to give us a reason to believe that He is the Savior - our situation is hopeless, yet we can believe because God Himself has come near
 - c. So, we should honor and worship, but in a large sense, we honor and worship by resting and believing, we worship in hope, we worship in trust, we worship by throwing ourselves completely on His grace and His power, forsaking any hope we have in ourselves

D. Jesus is King

1. In Matthew's second story, he returns to the theme of the line of David and calls us to see that Jesus is the King
 - a. The visit of the wise men is one of the most mysterious but also most poignant demonstrations of Christ's kingship and the scope of His kingship
 - b. In Matthew 2, Jesus is the King of the Jews - the wise men come asking the question, "*Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.*"
 - c. But the very question calls us to see that the King of the Jews is taking the kingship of the world because the first people to bow their knee to this king were Persian or Babylonian nobles, magicians from the east - Jesus is the king of the Jews and this makes Him the king of everyone as the nation's submit to the royal son
 - d. So, Jesus is the king of the Jews and the king of the nations, but He is also the king of kings - the wise men were not mean peasants but royal servants and King Herod himself understands Jesus claim, even if he rejects it - Jesus has come to be king of everyone, not even kings will escape His rule
2. So, as we study the book of Matthew, we must embrace Jesus as the King
 - a. Which means, we must do what the wise men did - *And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him.*
 - b. Jesus' kingship calls us to bow the knee, to be ready to hear His summons and obey, to submit ourselves to His command - in other words, we must be prepared to make Jesus our king, He has claimed the kingship, will we embrace our king?

E. Jesus is Opposed, Despised and Rejected

1. After the wise men bow before Jesus, the remainder of our story this morning takes a different tone and timber
 - a. Through the rest of the story, Jesus' kingship is not honored and obeyed, but rejected - and not only rejected, but His very life is threatened to destroy His claim - Jesus was despised and rejected by men - His claim of kingship was absolute, but often the response to His claim was outright rejection and opposition from men
 - b. But this is no surprise, in fact, I'm a little surprised that Matthew didn't quote on more prophecy, the prophecy of Isaiah 53:3 - *He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*
2. So, as we study the book of Matthew, we must embrace Jesus not only as the King, but as the Rejected King
 - a. Which means, if we are to submit to this king, we must submit to being despised and rejected ourselves, to being the outcast of the world, opposed by those who desire to claim kingship for themselves
 - b. The story of Christ's kingship is not a story of a conquering king - that will come in time and it is gloriously promised even in Matthew - but the story of Christ's kingship is the story of a rejected king, rejected by His people, even killed by His people - if we follow this king, can we expect anything else?
 - c. So, we must embrace Christ for who He is and follow Him through suffering and rejection - our call isn't to conquer this world any more than our king came to conquer this world, our call is to follow our king
 - d. If Jesus is our king, we can look forward to His eventual reign when every enemy is conquered, but until then we can suffer patiently, waiting for His return

F. Jesus is the Remnant

1. As we come to the last story of Jesus' childhood, Matthew calls us to see that Jesus is the Remnant of Israel
 - a. God had promised that a remnant of Israel would return from the exile and Jesus comes, returning to Israel and dwelling in the city of the branch of God's planting calling us to see that the remnant is Jesus
 - b. Jesus is the one and the only one who truly returned from exile, the only one who merited the favor of God and could return to God's place, Jesus is the only one who received God's promise
 - c. This is glorious, but also in a way sad - everyone else was cut off, no one else was worthy to return, Jesus alone is the remnant of Israel
2. And so, as we study Matthew, we must embrace Christ as the Remnant
 - a. We must recognize that we have been cut off from everyone of God's promises - we don't deserve them and we cannot obtain them
 - b. But, when we see that Christ is the remnant of Israel and He has welcomed all who hear to come and join Him, then we can obtain the promise - not on our own merit but in union with Christ, by being in Christ
 - c. Those who are in Christ are the remnant of Israel regardless of nationality or ethnicity, regardless of class or status, those in Christ are the remnant, those in Christ receive the promise
 - d. So, if Christ is the remnant, then we must set aside our very selves and identify with Him, embrace Him and seek Him because only in Him can we obtain the promise