

Episode #702 Matthew 2 Part 3-The Flight to Egypt

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. Last time we saw that the wise men, learning from Jerusalem that Christ was to be born in Bethlehem, headed for that city. But the star they had formerly seen in the east unexpectedly appeared and guided them to Nazareth where the Child was! They gave Him their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Yet God warned them not to return to Herod, so they headed back to Babylon a different way than they came.

III. The Flight to Egypt.

A. Verse 13. An angel, not THE Angel, for He was now born as a babe. Joseph’s second dream communicating from God. They are to flee to Egypt until the angel brings him word from God again. Herod seeks the child’s destruction. Some have tried to make out this word means “loss,” but clearly here destruction is meant!

B. Verse 14. Joseph went by night, an added precaution to what the angel said.

C. Verse 15. There until Herod’s life ended. Fulfilled is again “filled full.” “Spoken by the Lord through the prophet” tells us just how Scripture came. This is what Peter means in II Peter 1:20-21. Scripture is God-breathed, II Timothy 3:16. This is from Hosea 11:1. Considering Hosea 11:1-5 shows that this is not even a prophecy, but a review of history! Again this is about a filling fuller of the passage, not a prediction coming true. It was fitting God’s Son would come out of Egypt just like Israel.

IV. Herod Slaughters the Children.

A. Verse 16. Herod thinks he is mocked. The same word is used of what the Lord’s enemies did to Him at His trial. Here it means trifled with or not taken seriously or deceived. He loses his temper and commissions men to slaughter all the children in Bethlehem and its suburbs. This is to be from two years old and down, according to the time he had accurately discovered from the wise men. This gives us an idea of how old the Lord was at this time: not a newborn!

B. Verse 17. Thus was fulfilled (again filled full) the word (given) under (the power or the pen of) Jeremiah the prophet saying.

C. Verse 18. This is from Jeremiah 31:15. An examination of verses 15-17 reveals that this was speaking of the captivity in Babylon from which the children of the people would return, even from death. Again this is a filling fuller of the passage. Yet notice the conclusion of the matter: the children come again! This is fulfilled in resurrection. This would be the hope for the grieving parents in Bethlehem as well.

V. The Return to Israel.

A. Verse 19. After Herod’s death an angel of the Lord communicates with Joseph in a dream in Egypt, the third such dream he has had. There is no telling just how long this was, but it was probably a couple of years only. The Lord did not grow up in Egypt. They might well have gone to Alexandria, where there was a very large colony of Israelites. This flight and return were no doubt financed by the riches the wise men had brought them. Did they have much left afterwards?

VI. Conclusion: The Lord watched over Mary, Joseph, and the Babe by sending them to Egypt to escape Herod’s wrath. This wicked king wiped out all the children of Bethlehem, a sad chapter among the many sad sufferings of God’s people Israel. Yet Herod soon died his deserved death,

and God sent the blessed family back to the land. In all ways, God was in charge here. Praise God for His care! Do we trust Him with our lives the way Mary and Joseph did?