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By Dan Maines

## **Matthew 2**

### **Matthew 2:1-2**

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east, and have come to worship Him."

† The birth in Bethlehem fulfills Micah 5:2, where the Messiah would come from the city of David. The magi, likely scholars from Persia or Babylon, represent the nations coming to Israel's

Messiah. Their question, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?" is politically dangerous, as it challenges Herod's authority.

† Josephus describes Herod as paranoid and cruel, murdering even his own family to protect his throne (Antiquities 16.394; Wars 1.431). The arrival of foreign dignitaries announcing another king would have stirred deep fear in him.

† To us today, this shows Christ's kingship wasn't just over Israel but extended to all nations. The nations recognized Him, while Israel's rulers resisted.

### **Matthew 2:3-4**

When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

† Herod's fear spread to Jerusalem, since any challenge to his throne could bring Roman retaliation. The priests and scribes knew the Scriptures but didn't seek the Messiah themselves. This exposes the hardness of Israel's leadership.

† Philo criticizes rulers who live in fear of losing power rather than leading with justice (On the Embassy to Gaius 351). Herod fits this perfectly.

† To us today, it warns us not to know Scripture only with our minds while resisting it in our hearts.

### **Matthew 2:5-6**

They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; for from you will come forth a Ruler who will shepherd My people

Israel."

† The priests quote Micah 5:2, identifying Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Messiah. The irony is they knew the prophecy but had no interest in seeking Him, while Gentiles traveled far to worship Him.

† The Dead Sea Scrolls show the expectation of a ruler from David's line who would lead the faithful (4QFlorilegium). Matthew is making it clear this prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus.

† To us today, it reminds us that prophecy fulfillment is exact. God doesn't fail in detail.

### **Matthew 2:7-8**

Then Herod secretly called for the magi and determined from them the exact time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him."

† Herod pretends piety but plots murder. His secrecy reveals his deceitful heart. This foreshadows the hostility Jesus will face from the rulers of Israel and Rome.

† Tacitus wrote of rulers who masked cruelty with pious words (Annals 1.11). Herod's hypocrisy is a textbook case.

† To us today, it warns against false religion that hides evil under the appearance of devotion.

### **Matthew 2:9-10**

After hearing the king, they went on their way; and behold, the star, which they had seen in the east, went on ahead of them until it came to a stop over the place where the Child was to be found. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with

great joy.

† The star is not explained scientifically but understood as God's sign guiding the magi. They rejoiced because they had reached the promised King.

† Origen suggested the star was a supernatural sign rather than a common celestial event (Against Celsus 1.58).

† To us today, this reminds us that God guides those who truly seek Him.

### **Matthew 2:11**

And after they came into the house, they saw the Child with His mother Mary; and they fell down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

† The magi worshiped the Child, not Mary. The gifts symbolize kingship (gold), deity (frankincense), and suffering (myrrh). This reveals His identity and mission.

† Early church fathers like Irenaeus saw the gifts as prophetic symbols of Christ's role as King, God, and sacrifice (Against Heresies 3.9.2).

† To us today, it shows that true worship offers our best to Christ, recognizing His authority and sacrifice.

### **Matthew 2:12**

And after being warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way.

† God protected the Child by redirecting the magi. Human schemes cannot overthrow God's plan.

† To us today, this proves God directs the steps of those who obey Him, even when rulers oppose His will.

### **Matthew 2:13-15**

Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to kill Him." So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt. He stayed there until the death of Herod; this happened so that what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet would be fulfilled: "Out of Egypt I called My Son."

† Hosea 11:1 originally spoke of Israel, God's son, being called out of Egypt. Matthew shows Jesus as the true Israel, the faithful Son.

† The Mishnah emphasizes Egypt as a place of refuge in Jewish memory (Sotah 1:9). Matthew uses this history to highlight Jesus as the fulfillment of Israel's story.

† To us today, it reminds us that God brings deliverance in His timing, calling us out of bondage into freedom in Christ.

### **Matthew 2:16-18**

Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent men and killed all the boys who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi. Then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: "A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; and she refused to be comforted, because they were no more."

† This massacre fulfilled Jeremiah 31:15. Herod's cruelty reflected his desperate grip on power. Josephus confirms

Herod's ruthless nature, even killing his own sons when he feared plots against him (Antiquities 16.394).

† To us today, it shows the world's rulers often resist God's kingdom violently, yet their schemes fail. Christ's kingdom cannot be stopped.

### **Matthew 2:19-23**

But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and said, "Get up, take the Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child's life are dead." So Joseph got up, took the Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Then after being warned by God in a dream, he left for the regions of Galilee, and came and settled in a city called Nazareth. This happened so that what was spoken through the prophets would be fulfilled: "He will be called a Nazarene."

† Jesus' return to Israel after exile mirrors Israel's own story. Settling in Nazareth fulfilled the prophetic pattern, though not a direct quote of one prophet, but a summary of themes that Messiah would be despised (Isaiah 53:3).

† Eusebius noted that Nazareth was considered insignificant, yet it was the place God chose to raise His Son (Ecclesiastical History 1.7).

† To us today, it shows that God exalts what the world despises. Christ's kingdom doesn't come with worldly glory but with humble power.

**† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †**

## Source Index

- † Josephus, Antiquities 16.394; Wars 1.431
- † Philo, On the Embassy to Gaius 351
- † Dead Sea Scrolls: 4QFlorilegium
- † Tacitus, Annals 1.11
- † Origen, Against Celsus 1.58
- † Irenaeus, Against Heresies 3.9.2
- † Mishnah, Sotah 1:9
- † Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 1.7

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