The Prophets Prove Jesus is the Messiah

**Matthew. 2:13-23**

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**Introduction:** Matthew’s main purpose in writing is to confirm in the mind of anyone who believes God and knows what Scripture says that Jesus is the one and only authentic Messiah. There were always contenders and claimants who acted like Messiah and drew many, many followers away from God’s Word. Jesus himself warned that there would be many in the last days, but there have been many throughout history.

**Mk. 13:21-22** "And then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ'; or, 'Behold, *He is* there'; do not believe *him*; 22 for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order to lead astray, if possible, the elect.

Under inspiration, Matthew traces the genealogy of Jesus right back to David while confirming that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit in Mary and not by Joseph. Jesus’ human ancestry was exactly what God had said it would be. Chapter two records 4 prophetic fulfillments surrounding the birth of Christ Jesus. Born in Bethlehem! An Escape into Egypt! The slaughter of children in Ramah and Christ’s ultimate return to Nazareth rather than Bethlehem as one might expect. Matthew is off to an amazing start.

Our Scripture today describes details of events immediately after Christ’s birth that only God could have known about. By knowing them and telling us about them centuries before they occurred God is confirming, in no uncertain terms, that Jesus is the Christ. He is the Messiah / King of Israel and the Savior of the entire world. The story picks up just as the Wise Men leave the house where they found and Worshipped Christ Jesus.

**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 remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him." [13]:** The Wise Men came, worshipped and then headed home. Joseph, Mary and the Baby are alone now and they do not know about Herod’s plan. Normal people have a hard time imagining the cruelty, malice and evil that Satan is willing to unleash. Herod was a vicious and extraordinarily vile man. He knew he was an illegitimate King and if this baby was the legitimate descendent of David, he needed to kill him. For this reason, God sent an angel to just tell Joseph to flee. Who would have thought Herod would do anything so vile.

**So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt [14]:** Joseph believed God. That means he trusted God. He did not sit around and think about the arduous journey into Egypt. It would be 175 miles on foot to arrive in a town where they could safely stay. He had been told that Herod would kill his newborn son so he left immediately… in the middle of the night.

**He remained there until the death of Herod. *This was* to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON." [15]:** How long was the family there? We do not know for certain but we can come pretty close. Jesus was born around 6 BC. The census Luke describes took place in that year.

**Luke 2:1-2**  Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. 2 This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

History also tells us that Herod died in 4 BC. In all likelihood Herod died very soon after his murderous rampage. The family’s exile in Egypt might have been just a few months. Some people point out that Hosea was not talking about Messiah but about the nation of Israel when He wrote …

**Hosea 11:1** When Israel *was* a youth I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son.

But Matthew (also under inspiration) interprets this to be about Jesus who is also God’s one and only Son. ***John MacArthur explains***;

“The setting of Hosea is failure, decadence, and spiritual tragedy. Through the unfaithfulness of his own wife, Gomer, Hosea vividly portrays the unfaithfulness of Israel to the Lord. Gomer was a physical prostitute and Israel was a spiritual prostitute. God’s chosen people had chased after false gods as unashamedly as Gomer had chased after her lovers. Though Hosea’s heart was grieved and broken, he continued to love his wife and sought to win her back. She would up in a brothel, having lost all sense of decency and shame. The Lord then commanded Hosea to redeem her:

**Hosea 3:1** Then the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman *who* is loved by *her* husband, yet an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the sons of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes."

The prophet then bought Gomer’s freedom.

**Hos. 3:2** So I bought her for myself for fifteen *shekels* of silver and a homer and a half of barley.

He brought her home, gave her back her place of honor as his wife, and continued to love her as he had before. She was his wife, and he maintained his covenant. Hosea 11 tells how God taught the Israelites, carried them, healed them, led them, loved them, eased their burdens, and fed them. He called them from Egypt in order to faithful to them, in spirt of their unfaithfulness to Him.”

We now know that Israel’s return from Egypt by the mighty hand of God was a type of Christ coming from Egypt to be their promised Messiah. The key word being promise. Even though Israel had been unfaithful and did not stay in the land as God commanded them…even though they were unfaithful in so many, many ways, God was absolutely faithful to them. God’s promises are unshakeable and irrevocable. Israel could not sin enough to make God unfaithful. They would not be able to reject their Messiah so strongly that God would reject them. We too stumble and fall in our faithfulness, but God has promised that your salvation does not depend on how faithful you are to obey God. It depends on how faithful God is to keep His promise to you. God has promised to be with us to the end of the age. He has promised to make us His eternal children. He has promised to raise us from the dead or to rapture us into heaven (whichever comes first).

**2 Tim. 2:13** If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

**Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi [16]:** Christ’s birth in Bethlehem was the first fulfilled prediction of Scripture.

**Mic. 5:2** "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Too* little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity."

Christ’s brief sojourn in Egypt from Hosea was the second and the slaughter of the innocent children spoken by Jeremiah is the third.

The word “tricked” has the idea of being mocked or played for a fool. The Wise Men were in truth just obeying God and not returning to Herod, but Herod was a psychopath and this was his interpretation of their actions. Like so many wicked men, even in our day, they assign to others the motives and purposes that they themselves profess. They accuse others of the very things they themselves think about and do. Herod was absolutely trying to trick the Magi into finding the Christ child so that he could kill him. It was God who mocked Herod and made a fool out of him and not the Wise Men.

Enraged is related to the word “burn.” He was beside himself with rage. Jesus was not two because the star appeared two years before and Jesus was only born a short time before the Magi arrived, but never mind that. If you are a murderous thug you would do whatever it took to make sure you got Him.

And if all this were not bad enough, Herod knew he was murdering the Messiah of God. He knew it and went after him with a fury that killed hundreds of innocent others.

**Then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: 18 "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." [17-18]:** Ramah was a small town about 5 miles north of Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar rounded up the children of the Jews (Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego) carried them to Ramah and from there, deported them to Babylon.

**Jeremiah 40:1** The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD after Nebuzaradan captain of the bodyguard had released him from Ramah, when he had taken him bound in chains among all the exiles of Jerusalem and Judah who were being exiled to Babylon.

Matthew (under inspiration) tells us that Jeremiah was prophesying about this very event that would be intimately connected with the coming of God the Son to enter the human race as our blessed Savior and eventually our Glorious King.

The mothers of Ramah and then centuries later the mothers of Bethlehem would weep for the loss of their dear children. In many ways the reasons for these tragedies is the same. Satan has been trying to stop God the Son from coming into the world since day one in the Garden of Eden. Satan understood God’s promise to Eve better than she did. In fact the first promise of the Messiah made in the Bible was made to Satan and only overheard by Eve.

**Gen. 3:15** And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

Eve actually thought that her first born son might be the savior who would cancel and reverse her sin.

**Genesis 4:1** Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, "I have gotten a manchild with *the help of* the LORD."

Satan provoked Cain to kill Able because Able was the righteous one of the brothers through whom Christ would come. Satan so corrupted the world that they had to be blotted out and removed from the earth.

**Gen. 6:5-8** Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7 The LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them." 8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

Man again became so corrupt that God had to chose a pagan idol worshipper named Abraham and vow to make a people for His name from this one man. Again Abraham failed to believe God and had a child with Hagar but God miraculously have a son to Sarah in her old age. Isaac chose Esau over Jacob. Jacob went to Egypt and enslaved the nation there for 500 years. Pharaoh sought to destroy them when Moses led them out. Every tribe they encountered hated them. Once in the land they rejected God as their king and ended up with Saul. God passed over all the sons of Jesse to pick the youngest (David) who was also a despised shepherd as the King. Saul sought to kill his rival David. David nearly lost his soul by sinning with Bathsheba. The nation ended up in Babylon and then in Persia where Haman sought to kill every single one of them. They were miraculously restored to the land but were hunted like animals and killed like sheep by Greeks, Syrians, Egyptians and Romans. They were eventually destroyed a second time and scattered over the face of the earth. There capitol was burned and the temple destroyed. Hadrian would have killed them all but could not. Every nation they were scattered in hated them and tried to kill them. Hitler and Stalin killed 12 million of them in the 20th century alone while England and America stood by. 2000 years after they left Jerusalem God brought them back again to their land and every neighbor sought their destruction. To this day they are hated by every nation in the UN. They are hated by American politicians and by the EU. The Moslems have sworn to never rest until they are driven into the sea and die there. Why? Why? Why? Because “The god of this world” knows they are the chosen people through whom God the Son would become a sinless man and be the Savior of all men….not just the Jews. Through all of this time they have been faithless to God. They did not keep His commandments. They did not love Him. They actually killed their own Messiah when He arrived and the all knowing God knew all that from eternity past. And He still said things like this:

**Jer. 31:31-33** "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. 33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

**Jer. 31:35-37** Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for light by day And the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; The LORD of hosts is His name: 36 "If this fixed order departs From before Me," declares the LORD, "Then the offspring of Israel also will cease From being a nation before Me forever." 37 Thus says the LORD, "If the heavens above can be measured And the foundations of the earth searched out below, Then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel For all that they have done," declares the LORD.

**Ezek. 11:19-20**  "And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, 20 that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God.

**But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and said, 20 "Get up, take the Child and His mother, and go into 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 [19-21]:** God is the counterpoint to every sin and every scheme of Satan and mankind. He creates a star! He sends Wise Men! He sends angels to warn them, lead them and protect them. He is always several steps ahead of what Satan and godless men plan to do. That is because He knew everything 10,000 years ago in the Garden of Eden. He knew every trick and every hateful plan. Like Joseph you can trust God. You can trust His Word to you. It is perfect and it is spoken with love and kindness, mercy and compassion.

**Eph. 1:4-6 ….** He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

**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, 23 and came and lived in a city called Nazareth. *This was* to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: "He shall be called a Nazarene." [22-23]:** Bethlehem was in Judah and Herod’s son was now king there. The acorn does not fall far from the tree. The year after Herod died Archelaus brutally executed 3,000 jews who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover feast. No Jew was safe around this king, particularly The Promised Jew…Jesus the Messiah.

Joseph was only told to return to Israel but when he got to Judah and heard there was still a Herod on the throne he just kept going and returned to his home town. The place where Gabriel had announced the conception of Jesus to Mary and the place where God had determined for His Son to grow up.

There is no specific prophecy saying that Messiah will be a Nazarene. Nevertheless, Matthew tells us that there were prophets (plural) who said this. Here is the most likely explanation: Several prophets did speak about how the Messiah would be despised and hated by men.

**Ps. 22:6-7** But I am a worm and not a man, A reproach of men and despised by the people. 7 All who see me sneer at me;

**Isa. 53:3-4** He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. 4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted.

**Micah 5:1** "Now muster yourselves in troops, daughter of troops; They have laid siege against us; With a rod they will smite the judge of Israel on the cheek.

At the time of Christ and when Matthew wrote this Scripture Nazarene had long been a term of derision and disgust. It was used to describe a person of low standing, education and culture. After Jesus had found Philip…

**Jn. 1:45-46** ….Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and *also* the Prophets wrote-- Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." 46 Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

God, in keeping with His purpose to call sinners to repentance caused His dear precious Son to be numbered and identified with the lowliest of men. Not the rich! Not the educated! Not the religious but the despised and apparently there were few places in Jesus’ world that were more despised than Nazareth.

**CONCLUSION:** So where does this leave us? The world hates Jews and it hates The King of the Jews. Satan also hates all of humanity because the Savior will be a human. He hates the Jews in particular because Christ will be and is a Jew. So why didn’t Jesus make Himself more palatable to mankind? So that He would receive all the glory for our salvation. Natural men hate God. They hate God’s Word and they hate Christ and yet…God still saved us and caused us to love Him. What an amazing Savior and King.

**1 Cor. 1:27-31** … God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, 29 so that no man may boast before God. 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31 so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

**1 Cor. 2:4-5** … my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.