

Matthew 2: The Power of Prophecy

Summary

Jesus is born and King Herod is trying to find and kill him, because it had been prophesied that he would be King of the Jews, who Herod currently ruled.

Some wise men who were known as magicians went to see Jesus to bow to him. (Magicians were scientists and apparently astronomers) Herod tried to trick the astronomers into leading him to Jesus, but they had been warned of his trickery in a dream so they did not lead Herod to Jesus.

A messenger of God told Joseph, Jesus's daddy, to run and hide Jesus in Egypt. So they did.

When Herod could not find Jesus, he began killing all male Hebrew children under the age of 2 years.

After some time, God sent a messenger to Joseph again to tell him the coast was clear since Herod had died. So they left Egypt and went to Israel.

Joseph was fearful to go to Judea because Herod's son was now king, so instead they went to Galilee where they lived in the city of Nazareth.

Instructions: Read Matthew Chapter 2 in the King James Version and answer the questions below.

1. What are some deeper ideas and themes you notice about the story in Matthew 2?
2. Does anything stick out to you?

Insights:

Although Matthew 2 tells the story of Jesus coming into position as the King of Hebrews, there is a much deeper significance to the story.

Did you notice all the prophetic events that took place in chapter 2?

Prophecy is divine inspiration or communication that ultimately comes from God. It could be in the form of a dream, vision, inspiration, a strong feeling, hearing God's voice, etc.

The first instance of prophecy in chapter 2 of Matthew appears in Matthew 2:1. It's not exactly clear to us up to this point, but how else would the wise men know about Jesus being born and his birth being connected to the appearance of a particular star in the sky? Someone had to have been divinely inspired to come to this conclusion.

The next prophetic event is explained in verses 5 and 6. The Young's Literal Translation is a translation of scripture that attempts to leave the original writers messages intact and not try to modernize it.

It reads, "And thou, Beth-Lehem, the land of Judah, thou art by no means the least among the leaders of Judah, for out of thee shall come one leading, who shall feed My people Israel."

The writer points out a prophecy which indicated a leader would come out of Bethlehem who would feed God's people, Israel. In other words, Jesus' birth in Bethlehem was confirmation that he was the coming messiah.

The next evidence of the power of prophecy appears in verse 12. Herod lied to the wise men requesting they return to him and tell him Jesus' location so that he could also go and worship Jesus. The wise men had already been warned in a dream that Herod sought to kill Jesus, so they did not go back to Herod and give Jesus' location.

This is another example of a dream prophecy that altered the course of history. Had the wise men not been forewarned of Herod's deceitfulness Jesus' may have been killed as an infant.

In the very next verse, a messenger appears to Joseph in a dream. This messenger warns Joseph of impending danger and directs him to safety. The angel tells Joseph to take the Jesus' to Egypt. Another prophecy is connected to this event. Prophets of the old testament had foretold Jesus coming out of Egypt. This was another confirmation that Jesus was surely the prophesied messiah.

In his fury with the wise men, Herod goes and kills all Hebrew children under the age of two years old. This event correlates to another old testament prophesy mentioned in verse 18. The prophecy foretold descendants of Rachel, who was the wife of Jacob also known as Israel. She was the mother of Joseph and Benjamin, from whom came the tribes of Benjamin, Manasseh, and Ephraim.

Verse 19 gives us another example of prophecy, where another messenger appears to Joseph in a dream. This time the messenger tells Joseph the people who were trying to kill Jesus was dead and it was safe to return to Israel. Joseph obeyed and returned to Israel, but in fear he did not go back to Judea, where Bethlehem was. Instead, he stopped in Nazareth and lived there.

Which brings us to the next prophetic event, which is another confirmation of the Messiah. Old Testament prophecy held that the messiah would be called the Nazarene, meaning from the city of Nazareth.

The above explanations and Matthew 2 demonstrate how Jesus came into this world by the Spirit of Prophecy and lived because of it. Yet there are deeper lessons to be learned from each event.

Instructions: Take a second look at each of these events in Matthew 2 and find the lessons hidden within each event.

Insights for Application to Life:

- Each time God communicated with one of the characters in Matthew 2, they obeyed Him. Had they not obeyed, the story of Yeshua would have been a short one.

Lesson: Our protection and guidance comes through the ability to hear and obedience to God.

- People of those days had great faith. They did not question God's instruction rather it came through a dream or vision. They simply did what God told them to do, whatever the means were. Because they obeyed they were protected.

Lesson: We must have faith which balls down to acts of obedience. When we demonstrate our faith by acting on it, this is true faith. It doesn't matter what it looks like to us, God knows best.

- God communicates with us divinely in order to lead us in our role of the coming kingdom of God.

Lesson: God speaks to us in different ways with the purpose of leading us to the right place at the right time to fulfill his will and purpose.

- Even when what we here don't seem to make sense or it is not easy, we should obey God and know that he has great purpose in his instruction.

Lesson: Understand that God has great purpose in everything he does, even in things that seem to small or too great to us.

- God did not instruct anyone to kill Herod before he killed Jesus, instead he lead them away from danger.

Lesson: Know the character of YOUR God.

- God told Joseph to hide in Egypt with Jesus'. Egyptians of that day were black African people. How could one hide in the midst of a people that looked very different from him?

Lesson: Jesus was black.

- The wise men were warned of Herod's deception; therefore, they did not fall for it.

Lesson: God will give us truth that overcomes all lies and deception. Sometimes the devil tells us lies to hinder God's plans for his people. If you are connected to our Father, he will expose the devil's lies, that you and God's will be not affected by the deception.

- Herod did not come right out and say "I want to kill the kid." Instead he said he wanted to worship him.

Lesson: Everything that looks and sounds Christian is not like or of Christ. This is how the enemy works. He pretends to be a friend, while his intent is to destroy God's children and His will with deception. We know that through Christ we

have already won the victory, but it will not stop evil from trying to destroy us with deceit.

- Joseph's fear led him to Nazareth, which was right where he needed to be to confirm the prophecy of the coming Messiah. Joseph was always obedient, but he wasn't perfect to man's standards. He dealt with fear which dictated his actions.

Lesson: Even our imperfection is perfection according to God's will. He already planned for our weaknesses. When we obey and are in relationship with Him, he turns our weakness into our strength, our trial into our triumph and testimony, and our pain into our prosperity.

Joseph and Mary had a great responsibility to protect God's salvation to the earth. God used Jesus' parents to keep him while he was a vulnerable child. In order to do so they had to hear and obey God. On their own they could not keep him safe from Herod.

As parents we often forget that our children are not our own. They have been entrusted to us by God. We are to keep them until they can keep themselves. Keeping them is nourishing, not only their body but also their soul. In order to do that, we ourselves must be able to hear from and obey God.

If they had failed at their God-given task, we would not have salvation through Yeshua. If we fail, there is someone out there who may not obtain that same salvation through our own children.

This was Joseph and Mary's purpose in the will of God, which is the coming fullness of the Kingdom of God.

Deep Thought:

1. Do you know your purpose in God's kingdom? If so, what is it?

2. Are you hearing from God? Yes or No
3. Are you obeying God? Yes or No
4. What can you do to build a closer relationship with God that will allow you to hear his voice for guidance, direction, security, truth, and so much more?

Step 1:

Step 2:

Step 3:

Step 4:

Step 5:

Step 6:

Step 7:

Jesus came that we might have knowledge of God, so that He could instruct us for an eternity. It is how he came into this world – by the hand and instruction of our Father through divine prophecy and dreams.

True salvation, is in understanding this and doing what it takes to gain that knowledge that brings us to the understanding of our relationship with God and with Jesus.

Jesus says later in Matthew “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all these things shall follow.” This is seeking the Kingdom, it is a relentless search for truth and knowledge of the true God who is our Father.

If you went to seek knowledge that would allow you to become a medical doctor, would you have the expectation that you can go in once per week, ask your professors for good grades every day and become a doctor in eight years? Gaining spiritual maturity requires just as much work, if not more. You must dedicate yourself to finding truth.

Taking the journey toward truth; thus toward God, is one that begins in a single step. Commit to step one, *Seek ye first the kingdom of God*, and all these things will be added to you.

Considering you are reading this, you have already taken step one, now all you have to do is commit to it!