CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 2 — The Visit of the Wise Men and the Escape to Egypt

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 1 told us who Jesus is.

He is the Son of David.

He is the Son of Abraham.

He is Immanuel, God with us.

Matthew Chapter 2 shows us how the world responded when He came.

Some came to worship Him.

Some wanted to destroy Him.

Some knew the Scriptures but did nothing.

Wise men from the east traveled a great distance following a star.

They came with one question:

“Where is the child who has been born King of the Jews?”

That question shook a palace.

King Herod already called himself king of the Jews.

He was not willing to share his throne with anyone.

The religious leaders knew exactly where the Messiah would be born.

But they did not go to see Him.

Foreigners from far away came to worship.

Leaders close by stayed home.

Then the chapter turns dark.

Herod plots.

Herod lies.

Herod kills.

But God protects His Son at every step.

He guides the wise men by a star.

He warns them in a dream.

He sends Joseph to Egypt.

He brings the family back at the right time.

He settles them in Nazareth.

Four times in this chapter Matthew shows that events happened to fulfill what the prophets had said.

Nothing in Matthew 2 is random.

Matthew 2 therefore shows two kinds of kings:

The true King in a humble house in Bethlehem.

And:

A false king in a palace in Jerusalem, afraid of losing his power.

The central truth of Matthew 2 is:

Jesus is the true King who deserves the worship of all nations, and no human power can stop God's plan to protect and fulfill His purpose in His Son.

I. JESUS IS BORN IN BETHLEHEM

Matthew 2:1 — Wise Men from the East

“Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea during the days of King Herod. Wise men from the east came to Jerusalem,”

Matthew gives us a place and a time.

The place was **Bethlehem of Judea.**

Bethlehem was the hometown of King David.

It was a small town only a few miles south of Jerusalem.

The time was **the days of King Herod.**

Herod the Great ruled Judea under the authority of Rome.

He was a skilled builder and a powerful ruler.

But he was also known for his cruelty and suspicion.

He even had members of his own family killed because he feared they would take his throne.

Into that world came visitors:

“Wise men from the east.”

The Greek word is **magi.**

They were likely scholars who studied the stars, possibly from Persia or Babylon.

Matthew does not tell us how many there were.

The tradition of three comes from the three gifts.

Cross References

Micah 5:2

> But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, even though you are small among the family groups of Judah, out of you will come One who will rule over Israel for Me. His beginnings go back to long ago, to the days of eternity.

Luke 2:4

> So Joseph went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem, the town of David, because he was from the family of David.

Numbers 24:17

> I see Him, but not now. I look at Him, but He is not near. A star will come out of Jacob. A ruler's scepter will rise out of Israel.

Spiritual Principle

God carries out His great plans in small places.

The King of kings was not born in Rome or Jerusalem.

He was born in little Bethlehem, just as God had said.

Key Truth

Jesus was born in real history, in a real town, under a real king.

II. THE WISE MEN SEEK THE KING

Matthew 2:2 — “We Have Come to Worship Him”

“asking, ‘Where is the child who has been born King of the Jews? We saw His star rising in the east, and we have come to worship Him.’”

The wise men did not ask whether a king had been born.

They were sure He had.

They asked only:

Where is He?

Notice the phrase:

“Born King.”

Herod had been made king by Rome.

Jesus was born King.

His kingship did not come from any human government.

Notice also why they came:

“To worship Him.”

They did not come out of curiosity.

They came to bow before Him.

Cross References

Numbers 24:17

> I see Him, but not now. I look at Him, but He is not near. A star will come out of Jacob. A ruler's scepter will rise out of Israel.

Isaiah 60:3

> Nations will come to your light, and kings will come to the bright shining of your new day.

Psalms 2:6

> “I have placed My King on Zion, My holy mountain.”

Spiritual Principle

Those who truly seek Jesus seek Him to worship Him.

The wise men traveled a long way, not for information, but for worship.

Application

True seekers of Christ are willing to:

- Leave what is familiar.
- Travel a long road.
- Ask honest questions.
- Follow the light God gives.
- Bow down when they find Him.

III. HEROD IS DISTURBED

Matthew 2:3 — A Troubled King and a Troubled City

“When King Herod heard this, he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.”

The news that brought joy to the wise men brought fear to Herod.

Herod saw Jesus as a threat.

He had spent his life protecting his power.

Now strangers from far away were talking about another King.

And **all Jerusalem** was disturbed with him.

Why would the whole city be troubled?

The people knew what Herod did when he felt threatened.

When Herod was angry, everyone suffered.

Cross References

Psalms 2:2

> The kings of the earth take their stand, and the rulers join together against the LORD and against His Anointed One.

1 Samuel 16:14

> The Spirit of the LORD left Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.

Proverbs 21:1

> A king's heart is like streams of water in the LORD's hand. He turns it in whatever direction He chooses.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is good news to those who want Him and a threat to those who want to stay in control.

The same Jesus who brings joy to the humble brings fear to the proud.

Spiritual Warning

Herod's problem was not a lack of information.

His problem was a heart that refused to give up the throne.

Like Saul before him, Herod became a troubled king who fought against God's chosen one.

IV. HEROD CALLS THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Matthew 2:4 — “Where Was the Messiah to Be Born?”

“He called together the chief priests and teachers of the law and asked them where the Messiah was supposed to be born.”

Herod gathered the experts.

The **chief priests** led the temple worship.

The **teachers of the law** were the scholars of the Scriptures.

Herod's question is revealing.

He asked where **the Messiah** was to be born.

Herod understood that the wise men were talking about the promised Christ.

He was not asking so he could worship.

He was asking so he could find his target.

Cross References

John 7:42

> Doesn't Scripture say that the Messiah will come from David's family, and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?

Micah 5:2

> But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, even though you are small among the family groups of Judah, out of you will come One who will rule over Israel for Me. His beginnings go back to long ago, to the days of eternity.

Malachi 2:7

> A priest's words should protect true knowledge, and people should look to him for teaching, because he is a messenger of the LORD who commands armies.

Spiritual Principle

Knowing the Bible is not the same as following the Lord.

The priests had the right answer.

But they did not have the right response.

V. THE ANSWER FROM SCRIPTURE

Matthew 2:5 — “In Bethlehem of Judea”

“They answered, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea. For the prophet wrote:’”

The religious leaders answered quickly.

They knew the passage.

They pointed to the prophet Micah.

The answer was clear:

Bethlehem.

But notice what is missing.

Not one of them went to Bethlehem.

It was only about six miles away.

The wise men had traveled hundreds of miles.

The scholars would not walk six.

Cross References

Micah 5:2

> But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, even though you are small among the family groups of Judah, out of you will come One who will rule over Israel for Me. His beginnings go back to long ago, to the days of eternity.

John 7:42

> Doesn't Scripture say that the Messiah will come from David's family, and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?

1 Samuel 16:1

> The LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you keep grieving over Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse in Bethlehem, because I have chosen one of his sons to be king.”

Spiritual Warning

It is possible to be close to the truth and still be far from Christ.

The religious leaders were near Jesus in distance and in knowledge.

But they were far from Him in heart.

Key Truth

Bethlehem was where God chose David.

Bethlehem was where God sent the Son of David.

VI. A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD

Matthew 2:6 — The Shepherd-King

“‘But you, Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah. For out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd My people Israel.’”

Bethlehem was small.

But God gave it great honor.

It would be the birthplace of the ruler of God's people.

Notice the kind of ruler Jesus would be:

A ruler who will shepherd.

Herod ruled through fear.

Jesus would rule through care.

Herod used people.

Jesus would lay down His life for His people.

David had been a shepherd boy from Bethlehem before he became king.

Jesus is the greater Son of David, the true Shepherd-King.

Cross References

2 Samuel 5:2

> The LORD said to you, “You will be the shepherd of My people Israel, and you will be the ruler over Israel.”

Ezekiel 34:23

> I will place one shepherd over them, My servant David. He will feed them and take care of them. He will be their shepherd.

John 10:11

> I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives up his life for the sheep.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus rules His people as a shepherd, not as a tyrant.

His authority is complete, but His heart is tender.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The King who has the right to command us is the Shepherd who was willing to die for us.

VII. HEROD'S SECRET MEETING

Matthew 2:7 — The Time of the Star

“Then Herod secretly called the wise men and carefully asked them when the star had appeared.”

Herod now acts in secret.

He does not want anyone to know what he is planning.

He asks carefully about the timing of the star.

Why?

Because the timing would tell him how old the child might be.

Herod was already planning murder.

Cross References

Numbers 24:17

> I see Him, but not now. I look at Him, but He is not near. A star will come out of Jacob. A ruler's scepter will rise out of Israel.

Exodus 1:10

> Come, we need a clever plan to deal with them. If we don't, they will keep growing in number.

Psalms 10:2

> In his pride, the wicked man hunts down the weak. Let him be caught in the very plans he has made.

Spiritual Warning

Secrecy is often the hiding place of sin.

Herod met in private because his plans could not stand the light.

Key Truth

Like Pharaoh before him, Herod made clever plans against God's people.

And like Pharaoh, he would fail.

VIII. HEROD'S DECEPTION

Matthew 2:8 — “So That I Too May Go and Worship Him”

“He sent them to Bethlehem, saying, ‘Go and search carefully for the child. When you find Him, report back to me, so that I too may go and worship Him.’”

Herod spoke religious words.

“So that I too may go and worship Him.”

But his heart was full of murder.

He wanted to use the wise men as spies.

He wanted them to lead him to the child.

Cross References

Psalms 55:21

> His words are smoother than butter, but war is in his heart. His words are softer than oil, but they are really swords ready to strike.

Proverbs 26:24

> A person full of hate hides it with what he says, but inside he is storing up lies.

Genesis 37:20

> “Come on, let's kill him and throw him into one of these pits. We'll say a wild animal ate him. Then we'll see what happens to his dreams!”

Spiritual Warning

Not everyone who talks about worship wants to worship.

Herod used the language of faith to hide the plans of evil.

Spiritual Principle

God sees the heart behind the words.

Herod could fool the wise men for a while.

He could not fool God.

IX. THE STAR GOES AHEAD OF THEM

Matthew 2:9 — Guided to the Child

“After hearing the king, the wise men went on their way. The star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.”

The wise men left Jerusalem.

And the star appeared again.

It went ahead of them.

It stopped over the very place where the child was.

This was no ordinary star.

God Himself was guiding them.

Just as God led Israel in the wilderness with a pillar of cloud and fire, He led the wise men to His Son.

Cross References

Exodus 13:21

> The LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud during the day to show them the way, and in a pillar of fire at night to give them light.

Job 38:32

> Can you bring out the groups of stars at their proper times, or lead the Great Bear with its cubs?

Isaiah 60:3

> Nations will come to your light, and kings will come to the bright shining of your new day.

Spiritual Principle

God guides those who sincerely seek His Son.

The wise men followed the light they had, and God gave them more light.

Key Truth

The God who made the stars can use a star to lead people to Jesus.

X. GREAT JOY

Matthew 2:10 — “Filled with Great Joy”

“When they saw the star, they were filled with great joy.”

Matthew uses strong language here.

They were not just happy.

They were filled with **great joy.**

Their long journey was almost over.

The God who had guided them had not left them.

Contrast the wise men with Herod.

Herod heard about Jesus and was disturbed.

The wise men drew near to Jesus and were filled with joy.

Cross References

Isaiah 60:5

> Then you will look and your face will shine. Your heart will pound and be full of joy, because the riches of the nations will come to you.

Psalms 97:11

> Light shines on those who do right, and joy is given to those whose hearts are honest.

Luke 2:10

> But the angel said to them, “Don't be afraid. I am bringing you good news that will bring great joy to all people.”

Spiritual Principle

Coming to Jesus brings joy.

The closer the wise men came to Christ, the greater their joy became.

XI. THE WISE MEN WORSHIP JESUS

Matthew 2:11 — Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh

“They entered the house and saw the child with Mary His mother. They bowed down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and gave Him gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”

Notice several important details.

They entered **a house.**

By this time, Jesus was no longer in the manger.

Matthew calls Him **a child**, not a newborn baby.

They saw the child **with Mary His mother.**

But they worshiped **Him.**

Not Mary.

Not Joseph.

Jesus alone received their worship.

Then they gave their gifts.

Gold — a gift fit for a king.

Frankincense — incense used in worship, a gift fit for God.

Myrrh — a spice used in burial, pointing ahead to His death.

These gifts may also have helped provide for the family's journey to Egypt.

Cross References

Psalms 72:10

> The kings of Tarshish and of the faraway coastlands will bring Him gifts. The kings of Sheba and Seba will offer Him presents.

Isaiah 60:6

> Many camels will fill your land... All the people from Sheba will come, bringing gold and incense, and they will tell the praises of the LORD.

Song of Solomon 3:6

> Who is this coming up from the desert like columns of smoke, smelling of myrrh and incense?

Spiritual Principle

True worship gives.

The wise men did not come empty-handed.

They opened their treasures.

Application

Worship is more than words.

It includes giving Jesus:

- Our hearts.
- Our time.
- Our gifts.
- Our talents.
- Our obedience.
- Our lives.

XII. WARNED IN A DREAM

Matthew 2:12 — Another Route Home

“But God warned them in a dream not to return to Herod, so they went back to their own country by another route.”

God stepped in.

He warned the wise men not to go back to Herod.

They obeyed.

They went home **by another route.**

Herod's plan to use them was ruined.

There is also a spiritual picture here.

No one who truly meets Jesus goes back the same way they came.

Cross References

Genesis 31:24

> Then God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream at night and said to him, “Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.”

Job 33:15

> God speaks in a dream, in a vision at night, when people are in a deep sleep as they lie in their beds.

Genesis 20:3

> But God came to Abimelech in a dream at night and said to him, “You are about to die because of the woman you have taken. She is a married woman.”

Spiritual Principle

God protects His plan by guiding His people.

God used a warning to protect the wise men and to protect His Son.

Key Truth

When God gives direction, wise people change their route.

XIII. FLEE TO EGYPT

Matthew 2:13 — The Angel Warns Joseph

“After they left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. ‘Get up,’ he said. ‘Take the child and His mother and flee to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, because Herod is going to try to kill the child.’”

For the second time, an angel speaks to Joseph in a dream.

The message is urgent.

Get up.

Take the child and His mother.

Flee to Egypt.

Stay there until I tell you.

Egypt was outside Herod's control.

It also had a large Jewish community.

Joseph was told to go without knowing how long he would stay.

He had to trust God one step at a time.

Cross References

Genesis 46:3

> God said, “I am God, the God of your father. Don't be afraid to go down to Egypt, because I will make you into a great nation there.”

Exodus 2:15

> When Pharaoh heard what had happened, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses ran away from Pharaoh and went to live in the land of Midian.

1 Kings 11:40

> Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam ran away to Egypt, to Shishak the king of Egypt. He stayed there until Solomon died.

Spiritual Principle

God's protection sometimes comes through a hard road.

God did not remove Herod immediately.

He moved Joseph's family to safety.

Key Truth

Jesus, the Savior of the world, began His life as a refugee.

XIV. JOSEPH OBEYS AT NIGHT

Matthew 2:14 — Immediate Obedience

“That night Joseph got up, took the child and His mother, and left for Egypt.”

Joseph did not wait until morning.

He left **that night.**

Once again, Joseph does not speak.

He simply obeys.

His obedience protected the life of Jesus.

Cross References

Genesis 46:6

> They took their animals and everything they owned in Canaan, and Jacob and all his family went to Egypt.

Exodus 2:15

> When Pharaoh heard what had happened, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses ran away from Pharaoh and went to live in the land of Midian.

Genesis 12:10

> There was a famine in the land, so Abram went down to Egypt to stay there for a while, because the famine was very bad.

Spiritual Principle

Delayed obedience can be dangerous obedience.

Joseph's quick response kept the child safe.

Application

When God makes His will clear, faithful people:

- Do not argue.
- Do not wait for perfect conditions.
- Do not need every detail.
- Get up and go.

XV. OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON

Matthew 2:15 — Jesus Relives Israel's Story

“They stayed there until Herod's death. This fulfilled what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: ‘Out of Egypt I called My Son.’”

Matthew quotes Hosea 11:1.

In Hosea, those words describe Israel coming out of Egypt in the Exodus.

God called Israel His son.

Matthew shows that Jesus, the true Son of God, now walks the same path.

Israel went down to Egypt.

Jesus went down to Egypt.

Israel came out of Egypt.

Jesus would come out of Egypt.

But where Israel failed, Jesus would be faithful.

Jesus is the true and perfect Israel.

Cross References

Hosea 11:1

> When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.

Exodus 4:22

> Then say to Pharaoh, “This is what the LORD says: Israel is My firstborn son.”

Numbers 24:8

> God brought him out of Egypt. He has strength like a wild ox.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus succeeds where we have failed.

He lived the faithful life God's people could not live.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus does not only fulfill the prophecies of Scripture; He fulfills the story of Scripture.

XVI. HEROD'S CRUELTY

Matthew 2:16 — The Killing of the Children

“When Herod realized that the wise men had deceived him, he was furious. He ordered all the boys in Bethlehem and in the surrounding area who were two years old and younger to be killed. This was based on the time he had learned from the wise men.”

This is one of the most painful verses in the Gospels.

Herod was furious.

His plan had failed.

So he struck out in rage.

He ordered the killing of every boy two years old and younger in and around Bethlehem.

Bethlehem was a small town.

The number of children killed may not have been large compared to other events in history.

But to every family, the loss was unbearable.

This was the same evil Pharaoh showed when he ordered the Hebrew baby boys to be killed in the days of Moses.

And behind both was the same enemy who has always tried to destroy God's promised Seed.

Cross References

Exodus 1:16

> "When you help the Hebrew women give birth, watch closely. If the baby is a boy, kill him. If it is a girl, let her live."

Exodus 1:22

> Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: "Throw every Hebrew baby boy into the Nile River, but let every girl live."

Revelation 12:4

> The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he could eat up her child the moment He was born.

Spiritual Warning

Pride and the love of power can lead to terrible evil.

Herod was willing to destroy innocent children to protect his throne.

Spiritual Principle

Evil is real, but it does not have the final word.

Herod could kill children in Bethlehem.

He could not stop the plan of God.

XVII. RACHEL WEEPING FOR HER CHILDREN

Matthew 2:17–18 — A Voice Heard in Ramah

"Then what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: 'A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and she would not be comforted, because they are gone.'"

Matthew quotes Jeremiah 31:15.

Rachel was the wife of Jacob.

She died near Bethlehem and was buried there.

In Jeremiah, Rachel is pictured weeping as her descendants were carried away into exile.

Ramah was the place where captives were gathered before being taken to Babylon.

Matthew sees that same sorrow repeated in Bethlehem.

Mothers were weeping again.

Notice that Matthew does not say Herod's evil fulfilled God's will.

He says the prophecy was fulfilled.

God does not cause evil.

But God knew this grief would come, and He did not ignore it.

And the very next verse in Jeremiah gives a word of hope:

“Stop your crying... they will come back.”

Cross References

Jeremiah 31:15

> This is what the LORD says: “A voice is heard in Ramah, crying and weeping bitterly. Rachel is crying for her children. She refuses to be comforted, because her children are gone.”

Genesis 35:19

> So Rachel died and was buried beside the road to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.

Jeremiah 31:16

> This is what the LORD says: “Stop your crying and wipe away your tears, because your work will be rewarded,” says the LORD. “They will come back from the land of the enemy.”

Spiritual Principle

God sees the tears of those who grieve.

Scripture does not hide sorrow.

It names it.

And it points to the hope beyond it.

Key Truth

The Savior was born into a world of real grief, and He came to bring that grief to an end.

XVIII. HEROD DIES

Matthew 2:19 — The Angel Appears Again

“After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt.”

Herod died.

The man who tried to kill the King of kings could not keep himself alive.

Herod died around 4 B.C.

History records that his death was painful and that he was hated by many.

Then God spoke to Joseph again.

For the third time, an angel appeared to him in a dream.

Cross References

Exodus 4:19

> The LORD said to Moses in Midian, “Go back to Egypt, because all the men who wanted to kill you are dead.”

Genesis 50:20

> You planned to do evil to me, but God planned it for good, to do what is happening now, to save the lives of many people.

1 Kings 11:21

> While he was in Egypt, Hadad heard that David had died and that Joab the army commander was also dead. Then Hadad said to Pharaoh, “Let me go, so I can return to my own country.”

Spiritual Principle

The enemies of God do not last, but the purposes of God do.

Herod's reign ended.

Christ's reign will never end.

XIX. RETURN TO THE LAND OF ISRAEL

Matthew 2:20 — “Those Who Wanted to Kill the Child Are Dead”

“The angel said, ‘Get up. Take the child and His mother and go back to the land of Israel, for those who wanted to kill the child are dead.’”

The angel's words echo what God said to Moses:

Go back, because the ones who wanted to kill you are dead.

Moses was rescued as a baby from a king who killed children.

Jesus was rescued as a child from a king who killed children.

Moses led God's people out of slavery.

Jesus would lead His people out of slavery to sin.

Jesus is the greater Moses.

Cross References

Exodus 4:19

> The LORD said to Moses in Midian, “Go back to Egypt, because all the men who wanted to kill you are dead.”

Exodus 2:23

> After a long time, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned because of their slavery, and they cried out. Their cry for help went up to God.

1 Kings 11:21

> While he was in Egypt, Hadad heard that David had died and that Joab the army commander was also dead. Then Hadad said to Pharaoh, “Let me go, so I can return to my own country.”

Spiritual Principle

God's timing is always right.

Joseph waited in Egypt until God said it was time to go.

Key Truth

God tells His people when to leave and when to return.

XX. JOSEPH RETURNS TO ISRAEL

Matthew 2:21 — Obedience Again

“So Joseph got up, took the child and His mother, and returned to Israel.”

The wording is almost exactly the same as verse 14.

God spoke.

Joseph got up.

Joseph obeyed.

Joseph's life shows a steady pattern of obedience.

Cross References

Exodus 4:20

> So Moses took his wife and his sons, put them on a donkey, and started back to the land of Egypt.

Genesis 46:5

> Jacob's sons put their father Jacob, their children, and their wives in the wagons Pharaoh had sent to carry him.

Hosea 11:1

> When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.

Spiritual Principle

Faithfulness is built through repeated obedience.

Joseph did not obey once.

He obeyed every time God spoke.

XXI. WARNED AGAIN — GALILEE

Matthew 2:22 — Archelaus and a New Direction

“But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Being warned in another dream, he went instead to the region of Galilee.”

Herod's kingdom was divided among his sons.

Archelaus ruled Judea.

He was known for being as cruel as his father.

Joseph was afraid.

His fear was reasonable.

And God did not scold him for it.

Instead, God gave him another warning in a dream.

This is the fourth dream of guidance Joseph received.

God directed him north to Galilee.

Cross References

Genesis 26:2

> The LORD appeared to Isaac and said, “Don't go down to Egypt. Live in the land I will show you.”

Proverbs 29:25

> Being afraid of people is a trap, but whoever trusts in the LORD will be kept safe.

Job 33:14

> God does speak, once and even twice, though people may not notice it.

Spiritual Principle

God meets our fears with His direction.

Joseph's fear did not stop him from following God.

It made him listen more carefully.

Application

When you are afraid:

- Be honest with God.
- Wait for His guidance.
- Do not let fear of people rule you.
- Trust Him to show you the way.

XXII. HE WILL BE CALLED A NAZARENE

Matthew 2:23 — Settling in Nazareth

“They settled in a town called Nazareth. This fulfilled what was spoken by the prophets: ‘He will be called a Nazarene.’”

Nazareth was a small, unimportant town in Galilee.

It is never mentioned in the Old Testament.

People looked down on it.

Notice that Matthew says this was spoken by **the prophets** — plural.

He is not quoting one verse.

He is summing up a theme found in several prophets.

Bible students have seen at least two connections:

First, the Hebrew word **netzer** means **“branch.”**

Isaiah said the Messiah would be a Branch from the family of Jesse.

Second, the prophets said the Messiah would be looked down on and rejected.

Being called **“a Nazarene”** meant being from a despised, unimportant place.

The King of kings grew up in a town people mocked.

Cross References

Judges 13:5

> You will become pregnant and give birth to a son. No razor may be used on his head, because the boy will be set apart to God as a Nazirite from birth. He will begin to save Israel from the Philistines.

Isaiah 11:1

> A new branch will grow from the stump of Jesse's family. A Branch will grow from its roots and produce fruit.

John 1:46

> “Nazareth!” Nathanael said. “Can anything good come from there?” “Come and see,” Philip answered.

Spiritual Principle

God is not limited by where someone comes from.

People asked whether anything good could come from Nazareth.

The answer was Jesus.

Key Truth

The Savior of the world was willing to be looked down on so that He could lift us up.

XXIII. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 2

1. Jesus Is the True King

Even at His birth, rulers and nations were moved by His arrival.

The wise men recognized Him as worthy of worship.

Principle:

Every heart must decide whether Jesus will be worshiped as King or resisted as a rival.

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2. God Directs Those Who Seek Him

The star guided the wise men.

Dreams directed Joseph.

God's hand was in every step.

Principle:

God has never left His people without guidance.

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3. Evil Resists God's Plan

Herod tried to destroy Jesus.

But God's protection and prophecy could not be stopped.

Principle:

No one can defeat what God has determined to do.

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4. God Fulfills His Word

Jesus' birth, escape, and upbringing fulfilled several Old Testament prophecies, including Micah 5:2, Hosea 11:1, and Jeremiah 31:15.

Principle:

God's Word can be trusted because God always keeps it.

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5. God Redeems Humble Beginnings

Though raised in the small town of Nazareth, Jesus is the Messiah and Savior of the world.

Principle:

God often does His greatest work through the places and people the world overlooks.

XXIV. THREE RESPONSES TO JESUS

Matthew 2 shows three very different responses to the news of Christ.

Herod — Hostility

Herod saw Jesus as a threat to his power.

He tried to destroy Him.

The Religious Leaders — Indifference

They knew the Scriptures.

They knew where the Messiah would be born.

But they did nothing.

The Wise Men — Worship

They traveled far.

They searched.

They rejoiced.

They bowed down.

They gave their treasures.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Every person still responds to Jesus in one of these ways:

- Fighting against Him.
- Ignoring Him.
- Worshiping Him.

There is no neutral ground.

XXV. FOUR FULFILLED PROPHECIES IN MATTHEW 2

Matthew wants his readers to see that every step of Jesus' early life was in God's plan.

Born in Bethlehem

Micah 5:2 — The ruler of Israel would come from Bethlehem.

Called Out of Egypt

Hosea 11:1 — “Out of Egypt I called My Son.”

Rachel Weeping

Jeremiah 31:15 — Grief in Ramah pictured the sorrow in Bethlehem.

Called a Nazarene

The prophets — The Messiah would be the Branch and would be looked down on.

Key Truth

Jesus' life did not simply happen; it was planned and foretold by God.

XXVI. JESUS AND MOSES

Matthew draws clear connections between Jesus and Moses.

Both Were Threatened as Children

Pharaoh ordered the Hebrew boys killed.

Herod ordered the boys of Bethlehem killed.

Both Were Protected by God

Moses was hidden in a basket.

Jesus was taken to Egypt.

Both Were Told to Return

God told Moses, “Those who wanted to kill you are dead.”

The angel told Joseph, “Those who wanted to kill the child are dead.”

Both Delivered God's People

Moses led Israel out of slavery in Egypt.

Jesus leads His people out of slavery to sin.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Moses brought God's people out of Egypt; Jesus brings God's people out of sin.

XXVII. WHAT MATTHEW 2 TEACHES ABOUT GOD'S GUIDANCE

God guided His people in many ways in this chapter.

Through Creation

A star led the wise men.

Through Scripture

The prophet Micah told where the Messiah would be born.

Through Dreams

God warned the wise men and guided Joseph four times.

Through Circumstances

The death of Herod and the rule of Archelaus shaped where the family went.

Key Truth

Today, God's clearest guidance comes through His written Word.

Any guidance that contradicts Scripture is not from God.

XXVIII. WHAT MATTHEW 2 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 2 presents Jesus as:

The Born King

He did not become King; He was born King.

The One Worthy of Worship

The wise men bowed down before Him.

The Shepherd-Ruler

He shepherds God's people.

The Son of God

God called His Son out of Egypt.

The Greater Moses

He was rescued as a child to become the deliverer of His people.

The Humble Nazarene

He grew up in a despised town and was willing to be rejected.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The child the world tried to destroy is the King the whole world will one day bow before.

XXIX. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Who were the wise men?

They were magi from the east.

They were likely scholars who studied the stars, possibly from Persia or Babylon.

Matthew does not tell us how many came.

The idea of three comes from the three gifts.

Question 2

Why was Herod so disturbed by the news of Jesus' birth?

Herod saw Jesus as a rival king.

He was suspicious and cruel and had already killed members of his own family to protect his throne.

He was not willing to give up his power to anyone.

Question 3

Why was all Jerusalem disturbed with Herod?

The people knew that when Herod felt threatened, he became violent.

They feared what he might do.

Question 4

What does it teach us that the religious leaders knew where the Messiah would be born but did not go?

It teaches that knowing the Bible is not the same as following Christ.

They had the right answer but not the right heart.

Bethlehem was only about six miles away, yet they did not go.

Question 5

What do the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh represent?

Many Bible teachers have seen meaning in each gift:

- Gold — a gift fit for a King.
- Frankincense — incense used in worship, pointing to His deity.
- Myrrh — a spice used in burial, pointing to His death.

The gifts may also have helped provide for the family in Egypt.

Question 6

Why does Matthew say the wise men found Jesus in a house?

By the time the wise men came, the family was no longer in the place where Jesus was born.

Jesus is called a child, not a newborn.

Herod's order to kill boys two years old and younger suggests that Jesus may have been up to two years old.

Question 7

How did God protect Jesus in this chapter?

God:

- Warned the wise men not to return to Herod.
- Warned Joseph to flee to Egypt.
- Told Joseph when it was safe to return.
- Warned Joseph not to settle in Judea.
- Led the family to Nazareth.

Question 8

What does “Out of Egypt I called My Son” mean?

In Hosea 11:1, it refers to Israel coming out of Egypt in the Exodus.

Matthew shows that Jesus, the true Son of God, repeats Israel's journey.

Where Israel failed, Jesus would be faithful.

Question 9

Why does Matthew quote Jeremiah's words about Rachel weeping?

Rachel was buried near Bethlehem.

In Jeremiah, she is pictured weeping for her children taken into exile.

Matthew sees the same grief in the mothers of Bethlehem.

The next verse in Jeremiah offers hope that God will restore what was lost.

Question 10

What connections does Matthew make between Jesus and Moses?

Both were threatened as babies by an evil king.

Both were protected by God.

Both were told to return after those who wanted to kill them had died.

Both became deliverers of God's people.

Question 11

What does it mean that Jesus would be called a Nazarene?

Nazareth was a small, looked-down-on town.

Being called a Nazarene meant being from a humble, despised place.

It also connects to Isaiah's prophecy that the Messiah would be a **Branch**, from the Hebrew word **netzer.**

Question 12

What should Matthew 2 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 2 should cause believers to live:

- Seeking Jesus with their whole hearts.
- Worshiping Him with joy and generosity.
- Moving from knowing Scripture to obeying it.
- Trusting God's protection in danger.
- Obeying God's direction quickly.
- Not letting fear of people control them.
- Valuing the humble places where God works.

XXX. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 2 asks several important questions.

Am I Seeking Jesus Like the Wise Men?

They traveled far and searched carefully.

How much effort am I willing to give to know Christ?

Is Anything in My Life Competing with Jesus for the Throne?

Herod would not give up his throne.

What am I holding onto that Jesus should rule?

Do I Know the Bible but Fail to Act on It?

The religious leaders knew the answer but stayed home.

What Am I Giving Jesus?

The wise men opened their treasures.

What treasures am I holding back?

Do I Obey God Quickly?

Joseph got up that very night.

Do I Trust God When the Road Is Hard?

Joseph's family became refugees.

God was still in control.

Do I Let Fear of People Control My Decisions?

Joseph was afraid, but he listened to God.

Do I Look Down on Humble People or Places?

Jesus grew up in Nazareth.

God often works where the world does not expect.

XXXI. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Two Thrones Cannot Rule One Heart”

Herod heard that a King had been born.

He did not ask whether the news was true.

He did not ask whether he should worship.

He only asked how he could keep his throne.

Herod's problem was not that he did not know about Jesus.

His problem was that he wanted to remain king.

The wise men were different.

They also had wealth, learning, and position.

But when they found Jesus, they bowed down.

They placed their treasures at His feet.

This creates a powerful principle.

Every person has a throne in their heart.

Either Jesus sits on it, or we do.

We cannot share it.

Principle:

The question of Christmas is not only, “Who is Jesus?” but also, “Who will rule my life?”

XXXII. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 2 shows the world's first response to its King.

Far away, men who studied the stars saw a sign and started a long journey.

In Jerusalem, a powerful king trembled in his palace.

In the temple, scholars opened their scrolls and gave the right answer.

In Bethlehem, a young family lived quietly in a small house.

The wise men found the child.

They bowed.

They worshiped.

They gave.

Herod lied.

Herod raged.

Herod killed.

But Herod failed.

God moved the family to Egypt.

God brought them back.

God settled them in Nazareth.

And every step fulfilled what God had said.

Matthew 2 therefore reminds us:

The powers of this world cannot stop the purposes of God.

Kings rise and fall.

Plans are made in secret.

Evil strikes with rage.

But God guides, warns, protects, and fulfills His Word.

The story of Christ's early life did not depend on human strength.

It depended on:

A faithful God.

A guiding star.

An obedient father.

And a promised King.

The same response is still needed today:

Seek Jesus.

Worship Jesus.

Give your best to Jesus.

Obey Jesus.

Trust Jesus when the road is hard.

And until He returns:

Keep seeking.

Keep worshiping.

Keep obeying.

Keep trusting.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for sending Jesus, the true King, into the world.

Thank You that He was born in Bethlehem just as You promised.

Thank You for the wise men who traveled far to worship Him.

Give us hearts that seek Jesus like they did.

Fill us with the great joy they felt when they drew near to Him.

Teach us to bow down before Him and to worship Him alone.

Help us open our treasures and give Him our very best.

Keep us from being like Herod, holding onto our own throne.

Show us anything in our lives that we have not surrendered to Christ.

Keep us from being like the religious leaders who knew the truth but did not act on it.

Make us people who hear Your Word and obey it.

Thank You for protecting Jesus from every plan of evil.

Thank You that no power on earth can stop Your purposes.

When we face danger, help us trust Your care.

When the road is hard, help us remember that You are leading us.

When we are afraid, help us listen for Your direction.

Give us the quick obedience of Joseph.

Comfort those who grieve, as You saw the tears of the mothers of Bethlehem.

Thank You that Your Son was willing to be looked down on as a Nazarene so that we could be lifted up.

Help us never to look down on humble people or humble places.

Use our lives to lead others to Jesus, just as the star led the wise men.

May every nation come to worship Him.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“They entered the house and saw the child with Mary His mother. They bowed down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and gave Him gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” — Matthew 2:11

Central Truth

Jesus Christ is the true King who deserves the worship of all nations, and God faithfully guides, protects, and fulfills His Word so that no human power can stop His plan.

Matthew 2 in One Sentence

Wise men from the east worship the newborn King, while Herod tries to destroy Him, but God protects His Son through Egypt and back to Nazareth, fulfilling the words of the prophets at every step.