

Wil Owens

Jesus Must Be The Christ; Matthew 2:13-23

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Introduction – Sometimes you hear in athletics and sports, that was a one-in-a-million shot or score, meaning rare or unique. Or if something good comes easy, someone may remark, the stars must have been aligned, meaning something beyond you must have been involved. This is precisely the kind of reasoning Matthew is building in his gospel account that Jesus is indeed the promised one. He is stacking evidence upon evidence to demonstrate Jesus is in fact the Son of God. This is unique and something beyond us is at work.

Remember he began with Jesus' genealogy, establishing Jesus as a descendent of Abraham and David. He continues with the word "fulfillment" showing that Jesus fulfilled the OT prophecies and promises regarding the coming savior.

In ch2 Matthew unpacks specifically the background of the Christ's upbringing. How can it possibly be that the Messiah will come from 3 different places? It would be impossible for any man to attempt fulfillment by his own means, and yet, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, came out of Egypt, and grew up in Nazareth. The evidence is overwhelmingly clear and irrefutable and impossible to manipulate or mimic by an imposter; Jesus MUST be the Christ.

- I. His Coming Represents Complete Fulfillment
 - a. Vv13-15 – "Out of Egypt I called my son." Matthew is quoting Hosea 11:1.
 - i. If you're familiar with the prophet Hosea, throughout his book the relationship between Hosea and the prostitute Gomer is related to God's relationship with Israel. Just as Hosea married Gomer, so God would set His love on Israel. Just as Gomer was unfaithful to Hosea, so Israel would be unfaithful to God. Just as Gomer would be enslaved by her lovers, so Israel would be enslaved by the nations she trusted rather than trusting in God. Just as in love Hosea would restore Gomer, so God in His love would restore the remnant of Israel.
 - ii. Hosea's main message is the faithfulness of God over against the unfaithfulness of His people. The grace of God and the

undeserving recipients of His grace. The unmerited love of God to an unworthy people. And of course we know the story of Hosea and Gomer is our story as well. We are Gomer.

- iii. Specifically in Hosea 11:1, the immediate fulfillment is referring to God's deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt. "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son." Throughout the OT, the saving actions of God toward His people is often personified as an action of a father to his son, which set the stage for the complete fulfillment of God's saving actions toward His people to find their fullness in Christ.
 - iv. Just as Pharaoh, a cruel king, would try to destroy Israel and God would bring them out of Egypt, so Herod, a cruel king, would try to destroy Christ, with the end result being that God would bring His Son out of Egypt.
 - v. This identification of Jesus with the people of God would be carried on into the NT. Remember in Acts 22:7 when Jesus appeared to Saul on the Damascus Road? Saul had been persecuting Christians and was on his way to persecute more, and Jesus asks Him, "Why are you persecuting me?"
 - vi. You see, Jesus is the complete fulfillment. He not only fulfills the words of prophecy and promise spoken in the OT, He fulfills their deepest meaning. He not only fulfills the logistics of being called out of Egypt, He fulfills the analogy of God's children being identified with God's Son. He MUST be the Christ.
- b. Vv19-23 – "so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that He would be called a Nazarene."
- i. If you look in v15, Matthew references the prophet and uses a direct quote. In v23 you'll notice Matthew references the prophets and does not refer to a direct quote. That's because nowhere in the OT does a prophet specifically say that he would be called a Nazarene.
 - ii. So what is Matthew doing here? Is he pulling a fast one on his readers? Did he not think we would go back in the OT to look? Is he stretching the facts here to try to force his argument? Is he overreaching and making a false claim about Jesus being the Christ?

- iii. NO! What Matthew is doing here is drawing a parallel between the commonly held view that Nazareth is insignificant and meaningless and its residents are viewed as nobodies with the common OT prophecy that the Messiah would be despised and rejected of men.
 - 1. 11 times the OT speaks of the Messiah being despised and rejected – 12 times the NT speaks of Jesus being from the despised Nazareth or scorned and abhorred by men.
 - 2. Remember in John 1 when Philip became a follower of Jesus he went straight to Nathaniel and announced, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” Remember Nathaniel’s reply? “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”
 - 3. In fact, during the days of the early church, the label “Nazarenes” was used as a derogatory term for Christians, Acts 24:5.
 - 4. Indeed, even in our own day, believers in ISIS controlled areas are still referred to condemningly as Nazarenes.
- iv. Matthew’s point here is to say all the prophets agreed that Jesus would be despised, and he grew up in Nazareth! How much more despised can you get than that. He’s from the wrong side of the tracks/town!
- c. Jesus completely fulfilled the OT prophecies of the coming Messiah not only specifically but even generally – Jesus MUST be the Christ!

II. His Coming Turns Sorrow into Joy – vv16-18

- a. Matthew is quoting Jeremiah 31:15
 - i. Rachel is being used here figuratively to represent both Israel and Judah – the divided kingdoms.
 - ii. Remember Rachel was Jacob’s most beloved wife, but for a long time she was unable to bear children. She did finally have Joseph, who was the father of Ephraim – Ephraim often represents the ten tribes of Israel, simply called Ephraim. She also gave birth to Benjamin, who could represent the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

- iii. Jeremiah is referring here to the exile of God's people. Because of their rebellion against God, first Assyria takes Israel into exile, and then Babylon takes Judah into exile. So many of Israel and Judah are killed, taken to a foreign land, and enslaved. Rachel weeps for her children.
- iv. But then look at v16. There is the promise of hope, deliverance, salvation. But what hope? What deliverance? What salvation?
- v. Jer 31:31ff – The promise of the new covenant!
- vi. You see what Matthew is saying here don't you? Just as Rachel wept for her children in the exile and God comforted her with the promise of the New Covenant, so Rachel weeps again for her children in Bethlehem and God comforts her by fulfilling the New Covenant! Jesus is the new covenant promise fulfilled! He is the hope. He is the Deliverer. He is the Salvation of God's people! Rachel weep no more – your salvation is here!
- vii. Remember what Jesus said in Luke 22:20 when He instituted the Lord's Supper – "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."
- viii. We don't deserve salvation. We, like Israel and Judah of old, have rebelled against God numerous, numerous times. But He has put His law in our hearts and in Christ has forgiven our iniquities and because Christ has paid for our sins, He will remember them no more!
- b. Jesus MUST be the Christ! When Matthew quotes Hosea's "Out of Egypt," he is saying that Christ is who the Old Covenant points to and when quotes Jeremiah's "Rachel weeping," he is saying that Christ fulfills the new. His coming turns sorrow unto joy.

III. His Coming Demonstrates the Sovereign Hand of God

- a. Five times in these 2 chapters there is a dream – in three an angel of the Lord appears giving Joseph insight into the plan and purposes of God and instruction. Instruction that thwarts the evil plan to destroy Christ and direction so that every word God has promised concerning His Son is accomplished. He MUST be the Christ.

- b. One of the beauties of Scripture is that it pulls back the veil and allows us to see the unseen hand of God.

Conclusion – Since Jesus is without a doubt the Christ, only He can satisfy; only He can save. This past week Kate Spade, famous, successful, millionaire designer, took her own life. Before we recovered from that news we learned that Anthony Bourdain committed suicide. I don't know all the details and I don't know anything about their relationship with God, but I do know this - something was horribly missing – something was horribly wrong – and only Jesus satisfies!

Only Jesus satisfies – only Jesus saves! He is the Christ!