

**“He Will be Called a Nazarene”** (Matthew 2:13–23)(12.25.22)

Matthew 2:13–23 (NIV84) *The Escape to Egypt*

<sup>13</sup> When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

<sup>14</sup> So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt,<sup>15</sup> where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

<sup>16</sup> When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.<sup>17</sup> Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

<sup>18</sup> “A voice is heard in Ramah,  
weeping and great mourning,  
Rachel weeping for her children  
and refusing to be comforted,

because they are no more.”

### *The Return to Nazareth*

<sup>19</sup>After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt<sup>20</sup> and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child’s life are dead.”

<sup>21</sup>So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.<sup>22</sup> But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee,<sup>23</sup> and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: “He will be called a Nazarene.”

## **The word of God for the people of God.**

LET US PRAY.

Title: **“He Will be Called a Nazarene”**

INTRODUCTION:

As strange as it may seem, this is part of the Christmas Story. It continues after the Magi have worshiped Jesus and given their special gifts. They were on their way back home. They were warned

in a dream to not detour back to Jerusalem and to avoid King Herod's evil schemes. Not all were so lucky.

This part of the story won't be found on a Christmas Card. There will be no Hallmark Movie with sweetness and festivities and a romantic conclusion. We don't give these details to our young children. Of course not. They are gruesome and graphic and how would we explain it? It is hard to comprehend.

But, here we go.

BODY:

My friends, there is a lot more going on here than meets the eye. The supernatural and the miraculous are still in play. An angel of the Lord guides Joseph at least three more times. The LORD uses dreams to divulge his revelation to mere mortals. Matthew tells us three prophecies are fulfilled in these events.

My challenge is that there are parallel thought trains that I want to communicate, but I am limited to sequential thinking. What parallel path do I start with and then how do I merge them together?

By invoking the fulfillment of prophecy, Matthew is venerating scripture. What God has spoken has come to fruition, as it always does. We will get into the specifics of each prophecy in a minute, but we will start with the significance of the Holy Scriptures.

### Luke 1:1–4 (NIV84) *Introduction*

**1** Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us,<sup>2</sup> just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,<sup>4</sup> so that **you may know the certainty** of the things you have been taught.

Doctor Luke is telling us that the Gospel of Luke is the result of a meticulous investigation.

### 1 John 1:1–4 (NIV84) *The Word of Life*

**1** That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.<sup>2</sup> The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which

was with the Father and has appeared to us.<sup>3</sup> We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup> We write this to make our joy complete.

The Apostle John starts this letter by saying this is an eyewitness account.

2 Peter 1:16–21 (NIV84)

<sup>16</sup> We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were **eyewitnesses of his majesty**.<sup>17</sup> For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”<sup>18</sup> We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

<sup>19</sup> And we have **the word of the prophets made more certain**, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.<sup>20</sup> Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation.<sup>21</sup> For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke

from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle Peter is telling us that not only is this a personal eyewitness account, but this account is the fulfillment of prophecy. You and I can be certain that our Bibles are true.

Now, we will look at the specific quotes that Matthew gives us in today's text. He starts by quoting Hosea 11:1 (NIV84) **11** "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.

This is a reference to the nation of Israel in its infant stage of a clan going down into Egypt to escape a famine. You will remember that there was another Joseph. His brothers had sold him into slavery but he didn't seek revenge. He told them what they meant for evil God used for good. This clan became a people of millions in the 400 years they were in bondage in Egypt.

Preacher David Platt said that Jesus was the inauguration of a second Exodus. The first Exodus was led by Moses. God had heard the cry of His people and sent Moses to effect their freedom. Through the ten plagues that the LORD sent, Pharaoh and the little g gods of Egypt were defeated. Books have been written to explain that each plague targeted a particular god of Egypt.

Some commentators say that Jesus is what Israel was intended to be. Another way to look at it though is that Jesus came through the Jewish people. So, even through all their sin and apostasy, God still used them. And even today, we see the LORD using the Church even though it is filled with human foibles and frailties – including sin and apostasy.

The next quote is Jeremiah 31:15 (NIV84)

This is what the Lord says:

“A voice is heard in Ramah,  
mourning and great weeping,  
Rachel weeping for her children  
and refusing to be comforted,  
because her children are no more.”

This is in reference to the defeat and destruction of Jerusalem. The Babylonians then carried off much of the population into exile. The prophets had warned against idol worship and following after other gods – the punishment would be exile. And so it came to pass. Families were split up. There was mourning at every turn. Likewise, Bethlehem would be bloodied by the murder of all the boys under two years of age.

King Herod the Great was a wicked man. He was paranoid and treacherous. He even murdered one of his ten wives and some of their sons and other relatives. He once had the whole Sanhedrin, the ruling body of Jewish government, assassinated. He was already an old man and he had to know he would be dead before this infant king could ever be a threat to him. Still, in a rage, he ordered these innocent children to be killed.

I read a book this week titled, *The Return of the Gods*. It was just published last September and the author is Jonathan Cahn. Wikipedia describes him:

“Jonathan David Cahn (born 1959) is **an American Messianic Jewish minister, author, and novelist** known for his debut novel *The Harbinger* and his prophetic claims about former U.S. President Donald Trump. He is the founder and leader of the Beth Israel Worship Center in Wayne, New Jersey.”

Cahn argues in this book that when God is shunned and the word of God is abandoned, that void is filled with the ancient powers and principalities – the little g gods. He quotes Jesus as a jumping off point: Matthew 12:43–45 (NIV84)<sup>43</sup>  
“When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it.<sup>44</sup> Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’”



When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order.<sup>45</sup> Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation.”

Cahn explains in detail that is what has happened here in America as we have gone through a dramatic national change in sixty years. Here is a short quote from his book:

“SO WHAT DOES the return of the gods tell us?

It tells us that there is more to human events, to world history, and even to our own lives, more than we can imagine. Behind the natural realm lies a more than natural realm. And that which is more than natural can be good or evil. We are largely unaware of how the other realm is affecting our world and lives. But at times it manifests so strongly that it becomes hard to rationalize or ignore.”

I tell you that the intersection of the natural and the supernatural occurred in the birth of Jesus. From a cosmic perspective Jesus’ birth was no secret. The whole night sky was illuminated by the heavenly host announcing the birth of Jesus, the Savior of the world. Do you think this happened without the Devil or his demons taking notice?

Remember that when the Magi went into Jerusalem to ask where the King of the Jews was to be born, the answer was found in the scriptures. We know that Satan knows the scriptures better than any person except Jesus. Surely, Satan knew Bethlehem was the birthplace. So, Satan was going to use King Herod to kill Jesus, but was thwarted by an angel of the Lord warning Joseph.

Notice Joseph's response. He immediately responded by obedience. "So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod." He didn't wait for morning. He didn't consult with a bunch of other people who would likely convince him he was imagining things. Or they might reason him out of it. "C'mon Joseph, if Jesus is the Son of God, how could the LORD allow him to be killed?" It sure does seem outrageous, but it is true.

The next quote by Matthew is "he will be called a Nazarene." I cannot give you the specific verse because there is not one. In this particular quote, Matthew says prophets, plural. This is a summation of what was thought about Nazareth. We hear it in the opening chapter of the Gospel of John.

John 1:45-46 (NIV84)

<sup>45</sup> Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

<sup>46</sup> “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked.

“Come and see,” said Philip.

Yes, to be called a Nazarene was a term of derision. It came to its climax on that Calvary Cross. Pilate the prelate of Roman – which was the center of the Pagan World – placed a sign over Jesus’ head. Jesus of Nazareth, or Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews. The Jewish leadership objected. Pilate believed it mocked Jesus and the Jewish leadership. Certainly, Satan thought he had finally succeeded in killing the infant born king of the Jews.

## CONCLUSION:

But it was not to be. Three days later, up from the grave he arose. Up from the grave he arose; with a mighty triumph o'er his foes; he arose a victor from the dark domain, and he lives forever, with his saints to reign. He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!

Why did Jesus come? 1 John 3:8 (NIV84) He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. **The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.**

But my friends, the battle is not over, although the outcome is guaranteed. Deuteronomy 10:17 (NIV84) For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. Psalm 95:3 (NIV84) For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods.

The Apostle Paul proclaims - 1 Corinthians 15:55-57 (NIV84)

<sup>55</sup> "Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?"

<sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We celebrate these truths at the Lord's Table, until He comes again in all His glory!

Amen and amen. Let us pray.