

## Sermon Notes on Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23, I Christmas

1. The text dwells on the flight to and return from Egypt. Therefore, verses 16-18 have been omitted.
2. Three times we are told that the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream (1:20; 2:13; 2:19). In all three cases these words are introduced by "Behold." This is like saying: "Note this." It calls our attention to an important item. It demanded faith in God's Word to be as obedient as was Joseph in each case. He did not argue. He acted.
3. King Herod was a very cruel man. He ordered the death of all babies two years and younger around Bethlehem. God rescued the baby Jesus from cruel Herod. After Herod died, Archelaus his son became ruler over Judea. He was as cruel, if not crueler, than his father Herod. God rescued the baby Jesus from cruel Archelaus. Already when Jesus was a baby, Satan and his allies were pursuing Jesus. But God delivered His Son from all His enemies.
4. Some Bible scholars think that Matthew 2:15 is a second fulfillment of Hosea 11:1. They think that Hosea 11:1 refers first to Israel coming out of Egypt and only secondly to Jesus Christ. We think that Matthew 2:15 is a direct fulfillment of Hosea 11:1 and does not refer to Israel in the Old Testament.
5. Verse 23 says that the prophets foretold that Jesus would be called a Nazarene. It says "prophets" not "prophet." Therefore Matthew must be referring to more than one prophecy. But there is no passage in the Old Testament which says: "He will be called a Nazarene." How do we solve this? The Hebrew word for "branch" is "nazar." Perhaps from this word the word "Nazarene" was derived. Jesus was later known as "the Nazarene" sometimes in derision, sometimes by way of complement. Cf. Matthew 26:71; John 18:5-7; 19:19; Acts 2:22; 3:6; 4:10; 6:14; 22:8; 24:5; 26:9. And even Pilate used this name to identify Jesus in the superscription on the cross. Very likely it means that Jesus would be of lowly birth and from a small despised town. The Old Testament often depicts the Savior as a despised man. Psalm 22:6; Isaiah 49:7; 53:3.
6. When Jesus was a baby He became a fugitive. Because of the sins of people He had to flee several times. Like Jesus, His children are pilgrims and strangers in this world. Hebrews 11:13.
7. The Psalms are full of prayers for the Lord's guidance: 5:8: "Lead me, O Lord, in Your righteousness because of my enemies. Make Your way straight before my face." 25:5: "Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation. On you I wait all the day." 27:11: "Teach me Your way, O Lord, and lead me in a smooth path, because of my enemies." 31:3: "You are my rock and my fortress; therefore, for Your name's sake, lead me and guide me." 43:3: "Oh, send out Your light and Your truth! Let them lead me." 61:2: "When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I." 139:23-24: "Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me, and know my anxieties, and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." 143:10: "Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness."
8. The word "dream" appears four times in Matthew 1 and 2. At 1:20 Joseph is told not to fear but should take Mary his wife. At 2:13 he is told to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt. At 2:19 he is told to return to Israel. At 2:22, when Joseph feared, he was told to go to Galilee. The prayers for guidance in the Psalms are the prayers of David, of the Messiah (see Luke 24:27), and of every Christian. The Lord leads His children when they are afraid and even when they do not see danger ahead.
9. God used dreams to warn Joseph and the wise men (2:12). Note that the dreams are based on the Word of God (1:23; 2:15 and 2:23). Joseph and the wisemen did not have the Bible as we have it today. Now we are directed to the message of His Son in the Scriptures (Hebrews 1:1-2). He Himself said: "Search the Scriptures." John 5:39. God has not promised to appear to us in dreams. He may choose to do so but He has not promised that He will.

## Second Sermon Outline for Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23, I Christmas

### Theme: JOSEPH, OUR MODEL

**Introduction:** Children model their lives after those around them. God-fearing parents usually have God-fearing children because the children model their lives according to the parents. Children model their lives after their teachers. All of us think back on teachers who have served as models for us. Children model their lives after the lives of their pastors. Very often young men wish to study for the ministry because of the influence of the pastor. Today Joseph is our model. He is our model of obedience to the Word of God and his companionship to Jesus.

#### I JOSEPH, OUR MODEL OF OBEDIENCE TO GOD

Hebrews 11:7 tells us that Noah, 120 years before the flood, obediently prepared the ark although he could see no signs of its necessity. Hebrews 11:8 tells us that Abraham obeyed to go to a strange land although he did not know where he was going. Similarly, the story of Joseph is a story of obedience to the voice from heaven. When he and Mary became engaged to be married, before they slept together, they discovered that Mary was pregnant. He did not know that this was of the Holy Spirit. In a dream the angel of the Lord told him that Mary was pregnant because of the Holy Spirit and that Joseph should take her as wife. But he did not sleep with her until Jesus was born. Matthew 1:25. He even told Joseph what the name of the boy should be. Joseph obeyed. Joseph obeyed the decree of Caesar when he went, with Mary, to Bethlehem. Luke 2:4. He obeyed the Scriptures about circumcision and presenting Jesus at the temple. Luke 2:21-24. Then they returned to Bethlehem and were visited by the wisemen. When Jesus' life was threatened by Herod, Joseph obeyed the voice from heaven which told him to take Jesus and Mary to Egypt. 2:13. This required sacrifice, just as God required sacrifice from Noah and Abraham. Obedience very often requires sacrifice. After some time in Egypt the voice from heaven told Joseph to return to Israel. Matthew 2:20. Herod was dead, no longer a threat to Jesus. Joseph promptly obeyed. But Archelaos, Herod's, son was ruler in Judea. He was a very cruel man. Therefore, the heavenly voice once more directed Joseph to go, not to Bethlehem, but rather to Nazareth. Matthew 2:23; Luke 2:39. Joseph and Mary obediently went to the Passover in Jerusalem every year. Luke 2:41. They were pious, God-fearing parents who were a model to Jesus and also to us.

#### II JOSEPH, OUR MODEL OF BEING WITH JESUS AND HIS WORD

Not everyone who was with Jesus physically will be saved. Read Matthew 7:21-23. They did not do the will of Jesus' Father in heaven. But when the Jewish authorities saw Peter and John's boldness they recognized that they had been with Jesus. Acts 4:13. Peter and John had been with Jesus not only physically but also spiritually. Joseph spent his time with Jesus in obedience to the Word of God. Peter and John spent three years with Jesus listening to His Word. The enemies of Jesus spent time with Jesus but His Word found no place in them. John 8:37. The disciples spent time with Jesus and He gave them God's Word. John 17:14. Right from the beginning the disciples believed Him. John 2:11. They stayed with Jesus in His temptations. Luke 22:28. Eleven of the twelve believed that Jesus had the Word of Life and therefore they believed in Him. John 6:68. They went to the ends of the earth preaching the forgiveness of sins for Jesus' sake. They were models of faith and faithfulness. Likewise Joseph was a model of faith and faithfulness. God spoke to him in dreams. But now since Christ has fulfilled all, He speaks to us through His Word. Hebrews 1:1-2; John 8:31-32. Now we have the Bible. Joseph did not have the New Testament as we have it today.

**Conclusion:** Joseph is our model of obedience to the heavenly message of the Word of God. God shows us our sin in the Law. God brings us forgiveness in the Gospel. We should be like Noah, Abraham, Joseph and the disciples.

Sermon Outline for Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23, I Christmas

Theme: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS

Introduction: Often on crucifixes you see the letters I.N.R.I., the Latin abbreviation for "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." This is found at John 19:19. The Jews did not object to "Jesus of Nazareth" but they did object to "King of the Jews." Jesus admitted to Pilate that He was a King and that for this reason He had come into the world. John 19:37. The Jews resented this deeply. John 19:12; John 19:21; Matthew 27:42. But Christians love Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. Luke 19:38; I Timothy 6:15; Revelation 17:14; John 18:37. The Bible had foretold that Jesus would be a King, Psalm 45, and that He would be from Nazareth. Isaiah 11:1. Our text introduces these ideas and shows how the world and the church differ on the words "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

I HOW THE WORLD LOOKS AT THESE IDEAS.

A Jesus of Nazareth. It is clear from the book of Acts that, at the time of Jesus, people knew Him by the title "Jesus of Nazareth." See Acts 2:22; 3:6; 4:10; 6:14; 10:38; 22:8; 26:9. Jesus even identified Himself to the Apostle Paul by this title. Acts 22:8. Philip told Nathanael that he had found Jesus of Nazareth. John 1:45. But Nathanael said: "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" which means "How could the Savior come from such a little unknown town?" Even the evil spirits addressed Him as Jesus of Nazareth. Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34. They were saying that Jesus came to destroy mankind. ("Us" very likely means "us people" not "us demons"). To the unbelieving Jews "Jesus of Nazareth" meant that Jesus was a mere man, not the Savior of the world.

B The King of the Jews. The wisemen asked Herod: "Where is He Who is born King of the Jews?" Herod and Jerusalem were disturbed by this question. The scribes directed Herod to Micah 5:2. When Herod realized that he had been deceived by the wisemen, he tried his best to have Jesus killed. In his unbelief he misunderstood the term "King of the Jews." At John 6:15 the people who had been fed wanted to make Jesus their king, a bread-king. When the people brought Jesus to Pilate for trial they said: "We found this man disturbing the people, preventing to give tribute to Caesar and saying that He is Christ, a king." They hated him. Pilate asked Him: "Are you the King of the Jews?" He said: "You say I am a King," which means: "Most certainly I am." Pilate taunted the Jews by having the words: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" placed on the cross. The Jews tried to change this but Pilate would not change it. John 19:19-22.

II HOW THE CHURCH LOOKS AT THESE IDEAS

A Jesus of Nazareth. Our text tells us that the prophets said that Jesus would be called the Nazarene. And, as we showed above, He was called and known as the Nazarene. But where in the Old Testament is this said? Very Likely, Matthew is referring to Isaiah 11:1 where, in the Hebrew, the word "Branch" is "nazar" which is very similar to "Nazarene." The great tree of the family of David had disappeared from history. Jesus was descended from David. But he did not come as a great earthly king like David but lowly, insignificant, from a very small town in Galilee. Read Isaiah 53:2-3. This is a prophecy of Jesus. It says that people found no beauty in Him. He was despised and rejected by people. He was despised and we did not esteem Him. At Psalm 22:6 He calls Himself a worm and no man, one at whom the people laugh. But Christians love this despised man who took their place, who took their sins away.

B The King of the Jews. But this Jesus, chased from Bethlehem to Nazareth, is THE King. When Pilate asked Him: "Are you, then, a King?" He answered: "Of course I am a King. For this purpose I was born and came into the world in order that I might testify to the Truth. Everyone who is of the truth, hears My voice." Jesus is the King of Truth. He is the Way, the Truth, the Life. Paul calls Him the King eternal and King of kings. I Timothy 1:17; 6:15, the Savior.