

**MATTHEW (THE KING, HIS KINGDOM AND ME)
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SERIES: Matthew (The King, His Kingdom And Me)

TITLE: Program 4 – Our Sovereign God

THURSDAY

OPEN

You've sung it many times, "O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie." As you sing that you get this sense of peace. You get this sense of joy. And yet Bethlehem, which is in my background, became a city of great wailing, a city of unbearable anguish because Herod the king was in conflict with the King of kings. And Herod the king did not want any ruler to contest his rule. O Precious One, have you bowed the knee to the King of the Jews? We'll talk about it today.

PART ONE

Let's go to Matthew chapter 2. In Matthew chapter 2 it talks about the magi. And it says in verse 12, "...**Having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way. Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up! Take the Child and His mother**

and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him.” (Matthew 2:12-13) You know it’s so wonderful to read this because you see who’s in control. You see and you understand the sovereignty of God. You see that God knows the hearts of kings. He knows the hearts of men. He knows the plots. He knows what’s going on. God is omniscient. He is all-knowing and there’s no hiding from Him. It says, [“If I sit down He’s there. If I rise up He’s there. If I speak a word, a word’s not formed on my tongue but what He knows it all together.”] (Psalm 139:2, 4) [“If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea He’s there.”] (Psalm 139:9) [“If I say I will hide in the darkness of the night there is no hiding from Him. He is there.”] (Psalm 139:11-12) And so God moves upon men to accomplish His will. [“He gives the magi a dream and sends the magi home another way. Do not return to Herod. Do not tell him where the Child is.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 2:12) And then having the magi go home He gives Joseph a dream. It’s interesting and so important to see that although Joseph is not the earthly father of Jesus Christ, although Mary is His mother, it is Joseph that God appears to. It’s the head of the house that God appears to. It is the head of the wife that God appears to. [“And God appears to Joseph and He tells Him in a dream that Herod is coming to destroy his Child.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 2:13) God knows that. And God is going to spare Jesus. He says, **“...Take the Child and ... flee [in]to Egypt....” (Matthew 2:13b)** Now remember what we want to do is, we want to watch the geographical references in the Bible because this tells us where. And so double underline that in green. The other thing that I want to pause and tell you about is as we mention “Herod the Great” you’re going to find other “Herods.” You’re going to find Herod Antipas and others and you might get confused. Who are these different Herod’s that are ruling over the land of Judea? Well in your study guide there’s a wonderful, wonderful chart and it’s called “Herod’s Family Tree.” Now God knows that although Herod the Great is

going to die, he's going to seek to put Jesus to death. He knows that the Herod that is going to come after his father is going to seek to put Jesus to death also. And so God is always previous. **"...His sovereignty rules over all,"** as Psalm 103 says. **(Psalm 103:19) "...He does according to His will in the [army] of heaven..."**, as Daniel 4 says, **"...and among the inhabitants of [the] earth; none can [stop God's] hand..."**, **(Daniel 4:35) "...and none can...say unto Him 'What doest Thou?'"** **(Daniel 4:35, KJV)** Because He is God. So watch Him move in His sovereignty. But as I say all this I want you to know that He is the God that knows the times of peace and quiet in "O Little Town of Bethlehem." But He is also the God who knows the times of conflict and pain and wailing. **"So Joseph got up..."**, verse 14, **"...and took the child and His mother while it was still night, and [he] left for Egypt. [And] he remained there until the death of Herod..."** **(Matthew 2:14-15a)** So I would put a time clock around **"...Until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken [of] by the Lord through the prophet..."** **(Matthew 2:15)** Now one of the things that you want to do is you want to mark every reference to the "prophet" because what Matthew does is he's going to give you prophecy after prophecy after prophecy. He's going to show you the Old Testament prophecy and the New Testament fulfillment. And so what I do is for a "prophet". I draw a megaphone in green and then I color it yellow because yellow is my color for God. The prophet is the one that is speaking. But he's speaking not of his own prophecy, if he's a true prophet, but he's speaking the Word of God. And so I color that yellow so then I know that this "prophet" is speaking for God. And so you want to mark that and watch it throughout Matthew. He's going to say this was to fulfill this prophecy. This was to fulfill this prophecy. Now it's not just to know it was to fulfill a prophecy but it was to know that God knows what is going on. He knows the beginning as well as the end. He is the One **"...who is...who was and who is to come..."** **(Revelation 1:4)** He is the Almighty God. ["He is Alpha and

He is Omega.”] (PARAPHRASE, Revelation 1:8) And when it says the prophets said, “...**Out of Egypt [will I call] My son,**” (Matthew 2:15) it’s from a very interesting, interesting reference. It’s from Hosea chapter 11, verse 1. So I want you to go to the Old Testament prophet Hosea. And you’ll find Hosea just before Daniel if you’re headed for Genesis. In Hosea chapter 11 now watch what he says. “**When Israel was a youth I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.**” (Hosea 11:1) Now we know that they were slaves in Egypt. We know that they were under the oppression of Pharaoh. We know that after 400 years He brought them out of the land of Egypt, according to Genesis chapter 15. And so when they came out of the land of Egypt, “...**Out of Egypt I called My son.**” (Hosea 11:1) The implication is “My son” is Israel. You see God talking about Israel as His wife. You see God talking about Israel as His Son. You see in Hosea He’s talking about Ephraim, “My son,” a portion of Israel. Now what God does is He shows us under divine inspiration in Matthew that it is Jesus that He has also called out of Egypt. So Joseph takes Jesus, flees into Egypt and when he flees into Egypt then he’s going to bring Him out of Egypt. But what is going to happen in the meantime? It says, “**Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became...enraged, and [he] sent and [he] slew all the...children who were in Bethlehem and all [of] its vicinity, from two years old and under, according to the time [from] which he had determined from the magi.**” (Matthew 2:16) What I want you to see, Precious One, is what happened in this city was it went from peace to chaos as he came and, and he slew all the children just as He had prophesied by Jeremiah the prophet. (Jeremiah 31:15) He was trying to determine the time when they saw the star in the east when they began their journey. Of course the star could have begun before Jesus Christ was born. But the issue is not when the star came. The issue is that a star came from Jacob, the King of the Jews. And King Herod, the king of the Jews, was not going to have that Child live. And yet God in His sovereignty had protected the Child through

sending the magi home another way, through giving Joseph a dream and sending him to Egypt. And yet there were those that did not escape. In Matthew chapter 2, in verse 17 it says, **“Then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet...,”** and you want to mark “prophet” again, **“...was fulfilled.” (Matthew 2:17)** What did Jeremiah say? It says, **“A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; and she refused to be comforted, because they were no more.” (2:18)** I want us to go back and look at that prophecy. It’s in Jeremiah chapter 31, verse 15. It’s a very interesting, interesting prophecy because it takes us beyond the pain of the moment to the promise of the future. Remember if you are a child of God there is pain for a moment, but you can endure it because there is a promise of a future. It says [“All those who suffer with Christ shall reign with Him,”] (PARAPHRASE, Romans 8:17) pain but a promise. In Jeremiah 31, verse 15 it says, **“[And] thus says the Lord, ‘A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.’” (Jeremiah 31:15)** But listen, God goes on after pain. There is a promise. There’s a promise of a future. **“Thus says the Lord, ‘Restrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears; for your work will be rewarded,’ [says] the Lord, ‘and they will return from the land of the enemy. There is hope for your future,’ declares the Lord, ‘and your children will return to their own territory.’” (Jeremiah 31:16-17)** Now Jeremiah is writing about the captivity that is about to come. He is writing about the destruction that is going to come to Israel because of their sin. But he’s saying, **“There is hope for your future...and your children will return to their own territory.” (Jeremiah 31:17)** [“Yes, I’m going to take you into captivity, but you will return.”]

PART TWO

Isaiah 9:6 says, “...Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: ...and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor ...mighty God, ...everlasting Father ... Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6, KJV) That night the angels sang in the shepherds fields around Bethlehem, “Glory to God [on] the highest, and...peace [on earth toward] men with whom [God] is [well] pleased.” (Luke 2:14) And yet as I told you, this city then became a city of wailing, a city of despair. Before I taught this lesson I took out my novel that I wrote, “Israel, My Beloved” which is a true story in novel form. It’s the history of Israel from 586 B.C. all the way through modern history into the future, the future that is recorded for us that is sure and certain, recorded for us in the Prophets, recorded for Israel. And I sat down and I read the portion that I had written that described this time. My heart was caught up in the story. My heart was grieved with pain as the Roman soldier came to the door and asked if there were any little baby boys there, as he took the baby and threw the baby in the air and brought him down on his Roman spear, as Rachel grabbed her child, blood all over her and then went out to find her husband amidst the wailing of other women who had lost their baby boys two years and younger. And when Herod died it says in Matthew chapter 2, “...When Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt....” (Matthew 2:19) Remember he said, [“You stay in Egypt and you stay there until I tell you to return.”] (PARAPHRASED 2:13) So once again we have the angel appearing. We have the word “dream” and you want to mark every reference to the “dream.” And it says “...[He] appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and said, ‘Get up, take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel....’” (2:19-20) You shall return. Do you know what’s happening in this land right now? Do you know that Jews are coming from all over the world? They’re making “aliya.” They’re going up, they’re returning to the land of Israel, the land that was given in an everlasting covenant to

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and his sons forever and ever. They're coming back. And you know who's going to return not from Egypt but return from the heavens? It's Jesus Christ. And when He returns then ["His kingdom will come and His will, will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."]

(PARAPHRASE, Matthew 6:10) He said, **"Get up, take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child's life are dead."** **"So Joseph got up, took the Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in [the] place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Then after being warned by God in a dream, he left for the regions of Galilee, and came and lived in a city called Nazareth. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: 'He shall be called a Nazarene.'"** (Matthew 2:20-23) Do you know what I've done in my Bible? Every time there's a prophecy I've written "prophecy." And then if I know the exact Scripture it was taken from, then I write the exact Scripture. They don't have an exact Scripture of to the fact that **"...He shall be called a Nazarene."** (2:23) But they thought that because He was from Nazareth, because He was a root that that's what He would be called. Now what you and I have seen is, we have seen God's Word taking place in a time, in a place, in a land. And you've come here with me and it's wonderful, isn't it, to sit and know that this is the land of Israel and that this nation will remain a nation forever and ever because they are God's chosen people. What does that show you, Precious One? It shows you that although Israel has gone through pain, still there is a promise. God said to Israel, ["I know the thoughts I have for you, thoughts of good and not thoughts of evil, to give you a future and to give you hope."] (PARAPHRASED, Jeremiah 29:11) Precious One, because you belong to God, or if you belong to God, then you can know that God has thoughts for you, too, thoughts of good and not thoughts of evil. He wants you to have a future. He wants you to have hope. How do you discover that future? How do you have hope? These are the

words of life. These are the words of hope. These are the words that you can base your life on. And that's why it's my joy and my privilege to open the Book, to read the Book, to study the Book, to discover truth for yourself. But make sure; make sure, Precious One, that you get the study guide. Make sure that you look at the maps. Make sure that you look at the charts so you know where we're going, so you have a perspective of the things that took place in time in a land, the land of the Book. So what are your precepts for life or your precept for life as I sit here in the shepherd's field outside of Bethlehem? Your precept for life is this, Beloved. So many times we think that when we come to know Jesus Christ, when we finally surrender our lives to Him, then all is going to be absolutely wonderful. God is going to work miracles. He's going to part the sea of distress and trouble and we're going to walk through. We have access to God. We're children of the King. We can pray. He'll answer. He'll give us what we need and and we'll live like King's kids. O Precious One, just know this when you come to know Jesus Christ, He calls you to a cross. We're going to see that as we continue our studies in Matthew. He calls you to a cross and the cross always comes before the crown. You can know this, that there is pain. But pain is followed by promise. So what's the purpose of pain? The purpose of pain is to refine you. The purpose of pain is to prove your faith because faith is not faith until it's tested. And so when you walk through the fire and you find out that He's there, when you hold His hand even in the midst of weeping and wailing, there is a promise of a future. As there was a promise of a future for Israel, there's a promise of a future for you. So when you think, "O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie," and then you talk about that "peace and gentle sleep as the stars go by," you have to know that in Bethlehem there was also weeping and wailing, **"...Rachel weeping for her children...."** (Matthew 2:18b) Why? Because we're in a conflict, because two kingdoms have clashed. But you can know this, Precious One, we win. We win. The King is coming. And when He comes in all His glory then He

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will take us and [“He will wipe away our tears. There will be no more pain, no more tears, no more sorrow because the former things will have been pass, will have passed away.”] (PARAPHRASE, Revelation 21:4) So your precept for life today, Beloved, is know this, that when you walk through the fire [“He’s holding your hand,”] (PARAPHRASED, Isaiah 41:10b) as Isaiah 41:10 says. And the fire and flood will not overcome you because you’re in the hands of the King of kings, the sovereign Ruler of all the universe. And as we sit here in the Shepherd’s Fields in Bethlehem what do we say? [“Even so, come quickly Lord Jesus. Come quickly.”] (PARAPHRASE, Revelation 22:20)