

Fulfilled: The King Who is God's Son

Matthew 2:1-15

Perhaps you heard someone say that the year 2020 was 1918, 1929, and 1968 all rolled into one. It's an interesting way to describe a year and actually very vivid and helpful. It's helpful because as humans we often make sense of things by picking up on patterns and comparing one event to another. We do it in almost every area of life. I'm a sports fan and almost anytime you watch sports the way to build a compelling story is to show the similarities between two players, or seasons or teams. We do this in politics. This President is Ronald Reagan all over again in this area and he's like John F. Kennedy in this other area.

What are we doing when we make these comparisons? In one sense we are doing typology. We are picking up on patterns and similarities and using earlier events and people to help us understand later events and people.

I used the word typology last week to describe how Matthew is talking about the birth and early life of Jesus. When Matthew uses the word "fulfill" in these early chapters he's often pointing out patterns and similarities, types, in the OT that will help us grasp who Jesus is. Now, typology is not something accidental like it is with two quarterbacks who get compared. The Biblical authors were under divine inspiration and wrote their books in a way to draw attention to these patterns because God, by Divine providence, put these patterns in place. These patterns, or types, are acts of revelation to us. God makes Himself know through them.

And so, when we get to the birth and early life of Christ, we aren't just learning THAT His birth was promised in the OT. We are learning WHO He would be and what sort of ministry He would have. There's a richness to these accounts that can't be ignored.

So today, let's open to Matthew 2:1-15 and we are going to see **3 Roles of Jesus Christ Rooted in the OT.**

1. The Promised Shepherd King (vv. 1-6)

We saw the birth of Jesus described last time with a connection back to the OT in 1:18-25 and now look how chapter 2 begins. At this point we don't know how much time has elapsed since Jesus was born but we see that his birth was in the

days when Herod was king in Judea. We'll talk more about Herod in a minute here but let's focus on the other characters in this verse.

Obviously not a lot of detail about these guys. The ESV calls them wise men and you probably have a little note that says "magi." We don't know exactly where they are from, maybe Persia, but they are priests of some sort who are very interested in astrology. They are religious leaders and probably were important in their land. Now, let's be clear here, there's absolutely nothing in this passage to indicate there were 3 of them. People sometimes assume that because of the 3 gifts but there's no real reason to say 3. Could have been more. Regardless, they make the journey east to Jerusalem, which would have taken some effort during this time period. Why? Look at verse 2.

They are looking for a baby who has been born the King of the Jews. The point in the language used here is that this baby is the rightful heir to the throne. He's born to this position. Notice they got to Jerusalem by seeing a star that arose. What about this star made them believe the king of the Jews had been born? Obviously we don't know for sure, but there is a passage in Scripture that connects a rising star to the coming of Israel's Messiah.

In the book of Numbers there's this character named Balaam who gives a series of oracles that predict blessing for the nation of Israel through a future King. In the last one of these oracles he says this in Numbers 24:17-19. No matter how they found out about the king, look at their purpose in coming. They want to worship this King.

That's one way to react to the news of a newly born rightful heir to the throne. Look at verse 3 for another way. Let's talk about Herod for a minute. This is Herod the Great and he had been King in Judea since about 40BC. He was a magnificent builder, constructing the temple in Jerusalem, the seaport at Caesarea, and several fortresses. In fact, if you've been to Israel you have seen something Herod built, the western wall or wailing wall still stands to this day. Herod had 10 wives and 15 children and he was a very paranoid ruler. At one point he had two of his sons strangled because he thought they might be plotting a mutiny.

So, his reaction here fits that profile. He's disturbed and troubled and so are the rest of his leadership people. He calls in the Jewish leaders to try and figure this out. Look at verse 4. Look what they tell him in verses 5-6.

I told you last week that this is a clear example of a predictive prophecy. This is something clearly promised and predicted in the OT and the Jewish leadership at the time clearly grasp this.

Where is verse 6 quoted from? Micah 5:2. Of course we don't just want to read Micah 5:2 in isolation from the passage in which it's found so let's look at 5:1. This verse is a little vague but the first line is basically a call to the city of Jerusalem to find troops because a siege is laid against them. This is most likely talking about the siege the Babylonians brought against Jerusalem and the line about striking the judge of Israel on the cheek is talking about Zedekiah, the last king in Jerusalem who was blinded and carried off to exile in Babylon.

This makes the point of verse 2 a contrast with Jerusalem and King Zedekiah. Jerusalem was this magnificent city with amazing buildings and Bethlehem was this tiny little town. But a ruler of some significance will come from Bethlehem. Notice the last line in Micah 5:2, which, incidentally, is not quoted by Matthew. This king will be something even more than human in some way. But notice what Matthew does quote. It's from 2 Samuel 5:2 and the ceremony where David is officially anointed as King at Hebron and installed. The people saying this are reminding David of God's purpose for the kings in Israel to shepherd His people.

It's clear from Micah 5:1 that David's descendants did not properly shepherd God's people but Micah predicts one who would realize this role and Matthew recognizes Jesus as fulfilling this role. Let's look at our second role.

2. The Worshipped King (vv. 7-12)

How will Paranoid Herod react to this quotation and news? Look at verses 7-8. At this point we don't know for sure that this is a plot to destroy this potential rival but based on Herod's initial reaction in verse 3 it's quite easy to read this as disingenuous. Do we really think Herod wants to worship the king too? No.

But the Magi aren't aware of Herod's plot yet and they continue on their way. Look at verse 9. Up to this point the star may not have moved as we see here. There have been attempts to connect this star to comets or certain movements of planets but verse 9 is obviously describing something unique and supernatural. This brings them great delight. Look at verse 10. What a contrast between the reaction of Herod and the Jewish leaders and the Gentile Magi. The Chief Priests

and Scribes were supposedly committed to God's Word as found in the OT but their true commitment seems to have been to power and their own position.

But the Magi, somehow, are believing what the OT has promised. Look at verse 11. Now, notice a couple of things here. First, they worship the baby Jesus. This could mean they simply paid homage and bowed the knee to him but from the standpoint of the entire Gospel of Matthew this is completely appropriate and points to who Jesus truly is. In Matthew 28:9 we find the resurrected Jesus coming face to face with his disciples and notice their response.

The second thing I want you to notice about this section is the gifts offered by the Magi to Jesus. Over the years people have tried to make specific connections between each of these gifts, gold is for this, frankincense for this and so on. I'm not sure we can know for sure what each of these individually symbolized. But there's this amazing pattern in the OT that in the future foreign kings and rulers will come to Israel and offer their gifts to the nation and to a future Davidic King.

These expectations are all over the place in the Psalms and the Prophets but I want to just draw your attention to one particularly clear passage. Isaiah 60:1-6 anticipates the future restoration of Israel after exile and how God's glory will once again be on His people. Listen as I read these verses.

No doubt the Magi were bringing these gifts as acts of worship to the King and I think this is a small window into what the OT promises will happen as this King is rightly worshiped by people from all over the earth. After the Magi have worshiped, they are warned to go out a different way because of Herod's treachery. Look at verse 12. This brings us to our last role rooted in the OT.

3. The Needed Son (vv. 13-15)

Look at verse 13. Once again Joseph gets guidance from God directly through an angel and he obeys immediately. Look at verse 14.

Now, this was obviously to keep the baby Jesus safe from Herod and his evil plot, but there's actually an entire other level to this that is also important. Look at verse 15.

Here we see our word "fulfill" again, for the second time in Matthew's book. So Matthew is saying that the events unfolding in the life of Jesus, his going out of

Israel and into Egypt and then returning again happened according to God's sovereign plan and actually fulfilled the Scripture. Which passage is Matthew quoting here? Hosea 11:1. Here's what this verse says.

You can see here that this is definitely not a prediction of the future Messiah. God is specifically speaking of Israel as a nation and the time when the nation was young. When would that have been? At the beginning when the entire nation was in bondage in Egypt and God called them out of Egypt. Now, notice here that God calls Israel His son.

This idea of divine sonship is what Matthew is picking up on and this is the pattern that he wants to emphasize in this quotation. If you go all the way back into Exodus 4:22 you will see God call Israel His firstborn son. They are special to Him and divine sonship means He has a specific role for them as His representative among the nations. We read about this role later in Exodus 19. But of course, Israel does not fulfill this role, as we saw in the book of Exodus and they sin and sin again.

Later in the OT we find God making a covenant with David in 2 Samuel 7 and I want you to hear these words that God says about the Kings who will come from David as a part of his kingly line. 2 Samuel 7:12-17. God commits to the nation and the Davidic Kings by His covenant love and loyalty as a Father to a son. But what do we find coming from the nation and the Davidic Kings? Well, let's go back to Hosea 11 and keep reading past verse 1 all the way to verse 7. And yet, God says in verse 8 that He cannot give up on His people.

And this compassion is exactly why Jesus comes and fulfills this pattern of divine sonship. It's like Jesus is going back over the history of Israel to do it the right way and realize God's purposes and plans where Israel and the Davidic Kings failed. He's the true son. Listen to what God says in Matthew 3:17 as Jesus is baptized.

And it's this obedient Kingly son that Israel needed and we need as well. Here's the beauty of Christ coming as the true son and the needed representative for all of us. Any time you see Him win the victory, or overcome sin, or succeed where others have failed, that victory counts for you because of your union with Christ.

"Through faith you are so closely united with Christ...that you can say with confidence... Christ's righteousness, victory, life, etc., are mine; and Christ, in turn,

says: I am this sinner, that is, his sins, death, etc., are Mine because he clings to Me and I to him; for through faith we have been joined together into one flesh and bone.” -Martin Luther