

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

These notes are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye, mistakes can possibly be found. Therefore, he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: **October 7, 2018**

Sermon Title: **Shock and Awe**

Sermon Series: Matthew

Text: Matthew 2

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Date: October 7, 2018
Title: "God is on the Move"
Text: Matthew 2
Theme: God is on the move. God is making good on His promise to save His people from sin. And the magnitude of how He is going about fulfilling His promise is breath-taking.

[The story of Elvita Adams.]

The Prophet Malachi is the last of the writing prophets. He wrote/ministered around 433BC. The years following Malachi are called "*the four-hundred years of silence.*" It is a period where we have no prophets, no revelation, and no writings from God. God is not inactive nor silent, but it would appear such from our vantage point. After a long period where there were many claiming the office/title of Messiah and the Jews looked and longed for the Messiah, that our *Story* resumes in the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus the Nazarene.

The first "break" into history is with the angel sent to a virgin named Mary and her Uncle named Zachariah. What are we to make of this? This is that *Story*.

The *Story* isn't telling us what is permissible, but what is redeemable. Only God can turn water into wine. Only God can fix what is broken, deliver what is indebted, and redeem what is enslaved. God is making good on His promises.

Introduction:

The intent of this introduction is to make the reader raise their eyebrows. When we read the first two chapters, we flinch and grimace as if in some type of emotional or physical pain. The desire of the author is not to shock us unnecessarily. It is not to be crass or crude, but real and transparent. Our word choices are not designed to be tactless, insensitive or gross, but we do need to feel the weight of what we are reading.

No one reading these opening stories would assume any degree of normality. Although this is reflective of humanity at large, no one openly speaks of such things so as to prove their credibility or legitimacy. In every one of these scenarios, there are disqualifiers.

Yet, the Scripture operates on two levels. It tells us the same *Story* over and over, but we see it from two very different vantage points.

- The first vantage point shows us what we see.
- The second vantage point tells us what is actually going on.

This duality exists all the way through the Bible from the beginning of Genesis to the end of the Revelation.

The Bible is telling an incredible *Story* that confirms Jesus as Messiah. No one else would tell such unbelievable tales and ask you to believe it.

The front end of Matthew's Gospel seeks to set the stage for who we are about to encounter. Here, the Wise men ask a rather straightforward question, "Where is He who is born king of the

Jews?" The question will be answered in the book and by the end, "This is Jesus, King of the Jews."

As we back our *Story* up, we ask ourselves how we can identify God's Messiah. Our text is telling us this will be possible. Six "proofs" are provided by Matthew to help us see how this all happened in the first seven chapters.

First, His lineage.

Second, His virgin birth.

Third, His *Story* – The Serpent's Assault.

Fourth, His Baptism

Fifth, His temptation / vetting / testing

Sixth, His "stump" speech / Sermon on the Mount

Our present chapter takes the entire *Story* of Scripture and condenses it into a single event. To help us understand the enormous impact this *Story* is to have, I would like to pull it out of its Christmas setting and place it into the biblical setting.

The intent of our passage is to prove Jesus is King and the fulfillment of all Old Testament promises, pictures, and prophecies. Four evidences are stated in this one *Story*.

- His Usage of "Kingship" Language
- His Usage of the Old Testament
- His Imagery

Now let us consider what we have seen in chapter 1 and what we are seeing in chapter 2.

Four evidences are provided and each one in their own way is shocking and unbelievable, yet we are called on to believe.

I. A questionable lineage (1:1-25)

A. Honorable whores, half-breeds, and hussies (1:1-17)

1. Tamar (she sleeps with her father-in-law; v. 3)
2. Rahab (her tagline is "Rahab the Harlot;" v. 5)
3. Ruth (incest, the descendent of a drunken Lot and his daughter; v. 5)
4. Bathsheba (an adulterer who conspired with King David to have her husband killed in order to cover her sin; v. 6)

Because there is a solidarity to our shared experiences, I have to believe you have had moments when you simply shake your head and wonder what God is actually up to. From your vantage point nothing seems to make any logical or reasonable sense. Thus, the response in direct address, "Oh my God." It is the cry of the human heart heard throughout the Psalms. It is that response we hear as we read Matthew 1 and 2.

The reader's response is one of direct address, "'Oh my God! You have got to be kidding me. This is too fantastical to be real.'" And yet . . . we are called upon to believe.

God is on the move. God is making good on His promise to save His people from sin. And the magnitude of how He is going about fulfilling His promise is breath-taking.

B. A pregnant virgin (1:18-25)

Come on, really?

The reader's response is one of direct address, "'Oh my God! You have got to be kidding me. This is too fantastical to be real.'" And yet . . . we are called upon to believe.

The second thing noted in our text is . . .

II. A power hungry politician (2:1-12)

The whole story is embedded in sharp-edged political oppression and intrigue. Each one grappling and clawing their way to the top then pounding and oppressing any who would challenge.

"Ironically, the story [compares] 'King Herod' with this one who is 'born king.'"¹

"Historians tells us that King Herod (or Herod the Great, as he liked to be called) was a cruel, power-hungry ruler who destroyed anyone he feared was trying to topple him from his throne. He even killed several members of his own family because he thought they were plotting against him."²

"[He] was a jealous king, placed in power by the Roman Empire. Like most kings he wanted more power, not less power."³

"Another important thing to note is his status as ruler. Herod knew his status as ruler was tenuous. He gained and maintained his power by brute force and manipulation. He had little support from the common people around Jerusalem. Discontent with his rule was so high that a small spark could create a firestorm of revolution. Herod lived in constant fear - no matter how many enemies he tortured or executed; he knew their numbers would continue to grow."⁴

What are we to do with this?

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The third thing noted in our text is . . .

III. A suspicious sorcerer (2:1-12)

Wise men from the East (v. 1) / From Babylon. It is of interest to note how Israel is left in the Babylonian Captivity (1:11, 17). Now, here, Babylon brings wise men to seek Him.

Magos; a Magian, i.e. Oriental scientist; by implication, a magician:--sorcerer, wise man.

- “Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem” (Matt. 2:1).
- “Then Herod, when he had privately called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared” (Matt. 2:7).
- “Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men” (Matt. 2:16).
- ⁶ “And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: . . . ⁸But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith” (Acts 13:6, 8).

We wish to soften or downplay the awkwardness of this scenario, yet not only do we have magicians identified, but they are in all probability coming from Babylon! Yet, these magicians/sorcerers are seekers. They desire the newborn king.

The reader’s response is one of direct address, “‘Oh my God! You have got to be kidding me. This is too fantastical to be real.” And yet . . . we are called upon to believe.

Why, because God can . . . [Luke 4:18]

PREACH THE GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR.

ANNOUNCE RELEASE (pardon, forgiveness) TO THE CAPTIVES,

RECOVER THE SIGHT OF THE BLIND,

AND SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED (downtrodden, bruised, crushed by tragedy),

This is what God can and will do. God is on the move. God is making good on His promise to save His people from sin. And the magnitude of how He is going about fulfilling His promise is breath-taking.

The fourth thing noted in our text is . . .

IV. A dubious history (2:13-15)

Two things are at play in our text. Both places are places of captivity and enslavement.

A. Babylon

The Babylonians took the Southern Nation of Judah into Captivity in 606, 597 and 586BC. They held them there until 536BC after 70 years and then under the Persians were allowed to return and rebuild the city/temple.

No Jew looked/looks at Babylon as anything other than disdain.

Babylon was a place of judgment, but would become a sender of seekers.

The reader's response is one of direct address, "'Oh my God! You have got to be kidding me. This is too fantastical to be real.'" And yet . . . we are called upon to believe.

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B. Egypt

The Egyptians held the Jewish people in captivity for well over 400 years.

No Jew looked/looks at Egypt as anything other than disdain.

Egypt was a place of captivity, but would become a place of refuge and protection. Instead of fleeing *from* / *departing* Egypt, they are told to flee *to* / *remain in* Egypt (vv. 13-15). The paradox of Israel's deliverance from Egypt and the Holy Family returning to Egypt must be weighed.

The reader's response is one of direct address, "'Oh my God! You have got to be kidding me. This is too fantastical to be real.'" And yet . . . we are called upon to believe.

Everything is getting turned around. God is on the move. God is making good on His promise to save His people from sin. And the magnitude of how He is going about fulfilling His promise is breath-taking.

In addition, the first century Jew would have easily and quickly picked up the parallelism between the structures of Matthew's Gospel and the history of his own people.

- A. The Beginning of Genesis - The Retelling of the Single *Story* - [The Visit of the Wise Men (vv. 2-12)] - Just as the *Story* begins with two Seeds; so also the *Story* continues with two Seeds.
- B. The Ending of Genesis - The Flight to Egypt - Just as Israel was in Egypt; so also is Jesus in Egypt (vv. 13-15)
- C. The Beginning of Exodus - Herod Kills the Children - Just as babies were killed at the birth of Moses; so also are babies killed at the birth of Jesus (vv. 16-18)

D. The Ending of Exodus - The Return to Nazareth / Promised Land – Just as Israel left Egypt and returned to the Promised Land, so also Jesus will leave Egypt and return to the Promised Land (vv. 19-21).

The reader's response is one of, "Oh my God!" You have got to be kidding me. This is too fantastical to be real. There is no way this can be true." And yet . . . we are called upon to believe.

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The reader is identifying Jesus as the New Israel. What God did in Israel as shadow, He is fleshing out in Jesus as substance. Whether or not the reader would accept Matthew's conclusion is somewhat irrelevant. The point is JESUS FULFILLS ALL OF THE PROMISES, PICTURES, and PROPHECIES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT TEXT.

In addition, the role of dreams in directing God's people (1:20; 2:12, 13, 19, 22; 27:19). I am of the opinion that what we see in chapters one and two are the fulfilling of Joel 2 and Acts 2.

¹⁴ "But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: 'Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words. ¹⁵ For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day; ¹⁶ but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ 'AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,' God says, 'THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY, AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS; ¹⁸ EVEN ON MY BONDSLAVES, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT And they shall prophesy. ¹⁹ 'AND I WILL GRANT WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BELOW, BLOOD, AND FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE. ²⁰ 'THE SUN WILL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD, BEFORE THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD SHALL COME. ²¹ 'AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.' ²² Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know-- ²³ this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. ²⁴ But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. ²⁵ For David says of Him, 'I SAW THE LORD ALWAYS IN MY PRESENCE; FOR HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, SO THAT I WILL NOT BE SHAKEN. ²⁶ 'THEREFORE MY HEART WAS GLAD AND MY TONGUE EXULTED; MOREOVER MY FLESH ALSO WILL LIVE IN HOPE; ²⁷ BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT ABANDON MY SOUL TO HADES, NOR ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY. ²⁸ 'YOU HAVE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE; YOU WILL MAKE ME FULL OF GLADNESS WITH YOUR PRESENCE.' ²⁹ Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ And so, because he was a prophet and knew that GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT one OF HIS DESCENDANTS ON HIS THRONE, ³¹ he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY. ³² This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. ³³ Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. ³⁴ For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, ³⁵ UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET.'" ³⁶ Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified.' ³⁷ Now when they heard this, they were pierced

to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brethren, what shall we do?' ³⁸ Peter said to them, 'Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.' ⁴⁰ And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation!' ⁴¹ So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:14-41).

The birth of Jesus is the inaugurating of God's Kingdom/Garden program. What He invites us to pray is now coming to pass, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth even as it is in heaven."

God has not stopped working or suspending His program. God is intentionally, flawlessly, and lovingly moving His *Story* forward and your story is a part of that single *Story* with Jesus at the center.

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Shepherding the Sheep: {What's our NEXT STEP?}

1. Friend, if you have never considered the claims of King Jesus, then perhaps today you will. God calls you to believe.
2. Perhaps today you find yourself in a dark place. None of what you see makes any sense. Your family is falling apart, the government is in upheaval, right is wrong, wrong is right, the body is failing, you have no sense of direction, no comfort, and God seems distant and detached. Friend, what you see is real, but there is something else going on. God is moving His *Story* forward and you and your life are a part of that *Story*. God is winning and one day all of this will give way to a moment that you cannot in this life imagine. But it awaits you, He awaits you and there is a homecoming that only He can imagine and only He has and is preparing.
3. Hold fast, stay the course, and keep believing in Him.

¹ <https://www.enterthebible.org/resourcelink.aspx?rid=777>

² <https://billygraham.org/answer/why-did-king-herod-try-to-kill-jesus-shortly-after-his-birth-after-all-what-difference-could-a-tin/>

³ <http://www.beliefnet.com/faiths/christianity/articles/why-king-herod-really-feared-baby-jesus.aspx>

⁴ <http://www.beliefnet.com/faiths/christianity/articles/why-king-herod-really-feared-baby-jesus.aspx>