

**Matthew in Biblical Perspective:  
A Biography of Jesus of Nazareth the Christ –  
Seeing Jesus: From Bethlehem to the Battlefield**

**Matthew 2:13-23**

By [Dr. Harry Reeder III](#)

*January 11, 2009 – Morning Sermon*

May I strongly urge you in light of your membership vows and in light of the importance of our officer installation service tonight. The officers you have elected will be ordained and installed tonight. This is a very special time in the life of a church. You will also participate in that service even as you have done so by placing them there. Please come tonight as we ordain and install and pray for this coming year in life and ministry together. This is our fifth study in Matthew and we are concluding the first series of about 10 series that we're going to be looking at in the Gospel of Matthew. This is the series titled "Seeing Jesus" – the Word of God we've heard is the God of the Word is seen because of the incarnation. We have looked at it through the advent season and now this is the concluding study of the opening two chapters of Matthew. This is the Word of God, it's the truth. Matthew 2:13-23 says,

*13 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." 14 And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt 15 and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son." 16 Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. 17 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: 18 "A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more." 19 But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, 20 saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." 21 And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was*

*afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. 23 And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled: "He shall be called a Nazarene."*

The grass withers, the flower fades but God's Word abides forever by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached to you.

This is our fifth study in the book of Matthew. This is the first series in a series of series in Matthew, the Advent of Christ and we have been on a whirlwind. The first two chapters of Matthew have brought before us this cascading statement of events that Matthew has put together to introduce this book. Remember, why this book? The Holy Spirit has moved Matthew to write a biography of Jesus of Nazareth who is the Christ which is an evangelistic biography aimed at the Jews but profitable for us, obviously, that affirms Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ. Matthew is showing that everything in the Old Testament points to Jesus. Jesus fulfills it and Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ. Matthew is calling upon his brethren of the Jewish population to come to this Christ and trust Him as Lord and Savior. He is certainly addressing Gentiles but that's his aim and that's his thrust and what a whirlwind he has put us through. When you add in the biographies from Luke, Mark and John, look at what has happened.

There is Zachariah. I am going to give you the preparer who will prepare the way. Then Elizabeth is assured. Then an angel appears to Mary and tells Mary, "It is through you, you're the virgin that will give birth to the Redeemer" prophesied in the Old Testament. Mary submits. Then she goes to Elizabeth and Elizabeth encourages her and John the Baptist is quickened in the womb as the presence of Jesus in the womb of Mary is there. Then an angel comes to Joseph as we studied in Matthew 1. The angel says to Joseph, "That this Mary whom you are betrothed to, who you now have found out is pregnant, don't fear! She is still a virgin. What she has in her has been conceived by the Holy Spirit in order to fulfill the Scripture. This is the Messiah, this is God with us - one hundred percent God, one hundred percent man, Son of God, Son of Man, Emmanuel, God with us. - Take her. Marry her. Keep her a virgin and name Him Jesus, Jehovah saves His people." Joseph does as he is commanded. This man who wants to be righteous now knows he doesn't have to divorce Mary. This man who wants to be compassionate knows that he can now keep this wife and this man now embraces the fact that he is the adopted father of the Messiah.

Then the amazing flurry of events that God moves them all the way to Nazareth down to Bethlehem to pay a tax. Now the child is born in Bethlehem. The angels go to the Shepherds and the Shepherds come in and they give worship and praise to the Living God as they have been brought to the feet of the Messiah. Then the family moves back up into the house and sometime later here come people from a Royal Court, wise men from the East arrive. They affirm everything that has gone on and they bring gold, frankincense and myrrh. They adore Him

and they worship Him. They then go back another way. In the meantime, Luke tells us that they go up and see Simeon and Simeon says, "This is what I have been waiting for. Now I can die in peace for God has visited His people. A Savior has been born to His people and a light to the Gentiles. Now I can go in peace because I have held Him in my arms." Then Simeon makes an interesting statement, "and a sword shall be in the heart of His mother" (Luke 2:35). A sword is drawn.

This moment is about a nativity, baby, worship, joyful now war is declared through the sword. Now already Matthew 2 is where Bethlehem becomes a battlefield. War is on. Satan has got another political tyrant who does his bidding as a usurper and the Kingdom of God is in conflict with the kingdom of this world. Here in Bethlehem is manifested the first battlefield with death and casualties all around it. The battle is on. King Herod, the king of death and there's the baby, King Jesus, the King of Life. Here is Herod doing the beckoning of the kingdom of this world, a kingdom and a king of terror and here is the King of Grace. Here is a king of cruelty to the destruction even of little ones. Here is the King of Mercy and kindness even to little ones. Suffer the little children to come unto Me (Mark 10:13). Here is the kingdom of murder. Here is the Kingdom of Life and the war is on. Bethlehem is a battlefield.

Visit the battlefield with me as we study this passage. Jesus is being taken down to Egypt. In the text for this study it starts off with Joseph getting visit number two from the angel in dream number two with the same response. What happened in angelic visit number one? Don't fear, take her, she is still a virgin, name Him Jesus. As the angel visits Joseph through the dream, what does he do? He rises up, he takes her, he keeps her a virgin, the baby is born and he names Him Jesus. Joseph obeys. Now comes angel visit number two. As the angel visits the angel says in dream number two, "Herod is out to destroy the Child, rise up, take the mother and the Child and flee to Egypt." Joseph, with the same response, does what he is told. I will say this again later but I am going to say now, I love this man. I want to grow up and be like Joseph. God says it, he does it. He knows he doesn't earn his salvation and that he is saved by grace. But he loves his God, he loves his wife, he loves his family, God's Word says it and he does it. God says it and the next thing it says is that Joseph rose up and did it. He does again also. So he takes the Child and he goes.

Here is what happened. Herod had sent some wise men down there, right? Herod said to those wise men, "Seek out the child, let me know for I want to worship Him too." Now we find out what he really wanted to do. Now Herod is seeking Him out to destroy Him, kill Him. That is what he really wants to do. The battle is on. He wasn't seeking Him out to worship Him. He was seeking Him out to kill Him. By the way, in the original language this is really interesting where it says the wise men tricked Herod. The Greek word has its relationship and roots in the word that means ridicule or mock. Herod feels ridiculed and mocked by the

wise men going back another way and they didn't come back and tell him. Now he is enraged.

He has a lot of reasons to be enraged. Number one, if there is ever anyone who qualifies for a personality disorder its Herod. Secondly, he is neurotic and paranoid. Thirdly, he is probably suffering a lot of effects of sexually transmitted diseases that is about to kill him. We're in the last couple of months or year or so of Herod's life in this time period. So he goes into a rage and he sends these soldiers. Can you imagine that moment? All the people have gone home from the taxation because we are months past the taxation. So Bethlehem is back to their average population which is about 300 to 400 people, a small village about 5 miles from Jerusalem. Now coming into that small village is the soldiers of Herod one night and as they come in they take every male child from 2 months to 2 years old which Herod had calculated based on the wise men's visit. So he is going to slaughter every male child from 2 months to 2 years old that the soldiers bring back. I don't think its right to use the phrase slaughter of the innocence and I understand what people mean by that. In fact, none of us our innocent because we are all born sinners. So I prefer to call it the slaughter of the infants.

Did you know from what I just taught you in the text up to that point that this has become a reason for people to doubt the authenticity of Matthew? Do you know why? There was an extra Biblical historian by the name of Josephus who actually wrote a lot about Herod. Two things he wrote about Herod was one all the stuff he built which is why they called him Herod the Great and the second thing he wrote about was all the atrocities and I do not have time right now to give you every atrocity Herod did. Herod killed scores of thousands of people. When he knew he was going to die he even had people arrested to schedule them to be killed so that he would make sure people were crying when he died. That's how paranoid Herod was. He is unbelievable and Josephus never says anything about the slaughter of the innocence in Bethlehem. So of course liberal scholars say, "See that proves that was a made up story and there are probably a lot of other things made up in Matthew." No, folks it is common sense. Is everything that happens in the life of someone recorded in a history book? No. Please don't take this wrong. This atrocity didn't make it to the history book and here is why I think it didn't make it. I think it is because when Herod did most of his stuff it was hundreds and thousands and people in his own family but this was really not much of anything in Herod's atrocities. There were probably about 8 to 20 children that this affected in a village of about three to four hundred. This didn't even get on a radar screen where you're writing a history book in light of everything else that he did. But, clearly this is something that Matthew records as an historic event that becomes the occasion for Joseph to take his wife and his Child and flee because Herod was coming to slaughter and destroy the Child. Joseph does leave and he goes to Egypt.

Why did he go to Egypt? He is trying to get away from Herod, right? So he has to get beyond Herod's reach. The closest place to get beyond Herod's reach is Egypt. It is about 75 miles away. So Joseph leaves Bethlehem, heads to Egypt which is a couple of days journey. God has already funded the trip because one of the gifts given to Jesus at His birth was gold, frankincense and myrrh. So it wasn't planned but it was already funded. So he is able to stay for a period of time but it probably wasn't very long. Then comes angel visit number three, dream number three. By the way, do you know the most important reason why he went to Egypt? It was to fulfill the Scripture. This is God's guidance. This is God leading so that His Word is fulfilled; "Out of Egypt I called My Son" (Hosea 11:1).

Now, look at what happens while Joseph is in Egypt and Herod finally dies. By the way, Herod died a horrific death. I won't go into the details but you can fill in the details yourself. Looking on in the text Matthew 2:19, 20 says,

*19 But when Herod died, behold, an angel (third appearance) of the Lord appeared in a dream (third dream) to Joseph in Egypt, 20 saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." Guess what Joseph does next? He obeys. God says, "Take her as your wife," he obeys. God says, "Go to Egypt," he obeys. Now God says, "Go back home," and he obeys. Matthew 2:21-23 says, 21 And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. 23 And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled: "He shall be called a Nazarene."*

Here is something interesting that happens here. Joseph obeys. He loves his wife, he loves his child, he loves his Lord so he obeys God's Word. So I am reading between the lines here but it looks like when he gets back he is planning to settle in Bethlehem or Jerusalem which are in Judea. Herod is dead but when he died they had all this in fighting and they ended up dividing the kingdom into three parts for his sons. Archelaus got the Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Judah area and Joseph got afraid to go there. I think I know what happened. It is not in the Bible but I have to take you back to Josephus again.

Josephus writes about it. It is another atrocity that started by Herod and finished out under his son, Archelaus. Here's what happened. This is documented. Right before Herod died he wanted to put an eagle over the gate leading into the Temple. That got some people pretty mad in Jerusalem because you can't put any images in the Temple of God, much less an eagle which stood for Rome. I almost left this out but I just had to tell you this and now you are about to find out why. Two teachers got up and said, "Herod you can't do that" and they got an uprising against Herod to do that. Herod imprisoned them and had them killed.

Their names were Judas (but not the disciple Judas, Judas being a pretty common name then) and Matthias. Now for those of you who don't know that's my grandson's name. So Matthias and Judas were killed because they said to Herod, "No" and when they were killed there was this mass uprising in Jerusalem and Archelaus went to the streets with his soldiers and killed over 3,000 people.

Now, Herod got 8 to 20 in Bethlehem, Archelaus got 3,000 and Joseph is heading back and says, "You know I thought this was where I ought to bring the Messiah back to His roots in Bethlehem." They had lived there close to two years and made friends and had family. This is was their ancestral home. It was where our kings came from. He is the King, there's Jerusalem so we'll settle here. This is not sinful, this is just thinking through it. When Joseph arrives the Holy Spirit says "no" so this atrocity puts him where he will fulfill the Scriptures and he goes to Nazareth to fulfill what the prophets would say. He arrives in Nazareth where Jesus spends His childhood.

I want to draw from this text some practical takeaways that will be helpful in this concluding section of "Seeing Jesus – the Incarnate Savior." What does this section tell us? Here are three things. The first thing is the design of the Old Testament is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The Old Testament is divinely designed to be fulfilled in Christ and Matthew has given us one leg up on it. My favorite passage to learn that is Luke 24 where Jesus took the disciples on the road to Emmaus and beginning with Moses and all the Prophets He explained Himself in all the Scriptures. The Old Testament is there to proclaim, to prophesy, to portray and to prepare us for the coming of the Messiah who would save His people from their sins. That's what it is there for. So what Matthew does is he says I'm going to give you just around the birth of Jesus. We're going to get forty plus of these in the Gospel of Matthew and he says I'm going to give you six in the opening two chapters. I'm going to give you six that the birth of Jesus fulfills.

Let's look at them. Do you remember what Matthew 1:23 says? It has to do with the angel saying, "Take her as your wife because this is the fulfillment of the Scripture because she is a virgin. She is still a virgin. You don't have to doubt her virginity. That's why she is bearing the child because she is a virgin." Matthew 1:23 says, "*Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel.*" Jesus is the Redeemer, the Messiah, why? It is because the Messiah comes by a virgin birth and Matthew 1:23 is a statement of the fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14. The virgin birth has already been prophesied. The focus isn't on the virgin, praise the Lord for her but the focus is on the virgin birth fulfilling the Scriptures.

The second prophecy is the place of His birth. It will be in Bethlehem. Matthew 2:6 says, "*And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.*" Matthew 2:6 tells us where He was born which is a fulfillment of a prophecy in Micah 5:2. It is that He would be born in Bethlehem.

The third prophecy is His flight to Egypt which is found in Matthew 2:15; *This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son."* His flight to Egypt was prophesied because to come back to grow and be the Redeemer and enter into the ministry that has been called as the Christ, He would have to come out of Egypt according to the prophesy of Hosea 11 and Hosea chapter 2.

The fourth prophecy is found in Matthew 2:18; *"A voice was heard in Ramah (area of Bethlehem), weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel (buried in the Bethlehem area and the mother of Israel both north and south) weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more."* The lament and the assassination in Bethlehem was a fulfillment of Scripture in Jeremiah 31:15.

The fifth prophecy is not a specific prophecy from a prophet but a gathering from the Prophet. Notice where it says He gets moved up to Nazareth. Remember Archelaus did the killing, Joseph changed places and it was no longer Judah, no longer Bethlehem but they go back up to where they met each other, where they were betrothed which was Nazareth. So he goes back up to the land of Galilee, the land of the Gentiles and that fulfills the general theme from the prophets where He shall be called a Nazarene.

One may be thinking that I'm at the end of the text and I said there were 6 prophecies fulfilled in the first two chapters and you've only covered five. Number six is Israel. Israel was not only the chosen people through which God would bring the Redeemer but Israel became the pattern and portrait of the life and ministry of the Redeemer. Where did Israel have to flee? They had to flee to Egypt until the fullness of times just as was read earlier in the Old Testament. They were sent to Egypt until the fullness of time in which they were brought back to do battle to win the victory. In fact, when they come back and are delivered out of bondage from Exodus do you know how it is referred to? "Out of Egypt I have called my son, my firstborn." Not only does God call Israel His son and His firstborn but by doing so He is telling us through them will come My Son, the firstborn of Creation, the firstborn of Redemption, the Redeemer. By the way, as I called them out so I will call Him out of Egypt. So His life becomes a fulfillment that Israel had patterned already. Here is another affirmation that this is the Christ the Son of God. This is so amazing to me when I get into it.

I wish I could tell you all the stuff that's uncovered in this but let me just take this takeaway just to this point. God's Word is true. God's Word is inherent. God's Word is infallible. God's Word is trustworthy down to the details around the birth of Christ in these prophecies. Listen, prophecies in the Bible don't make it the Word of God, but if they're not fulfilled they could quickly not become the Word of God. The days in which I grew up every year about this time the Sunday newspaper had a magazine insert and I don't know the name of it but I would pull

it out and see prophecies from a woman named Jean Dixon. Do you remember her? She would have her 10 prophecies and somewhere on the back page of this magazine insert they would recount the 10 prophecies from the last year. Usually at best they could say that one of them might have had something that looked something like it. Everybody would say, "My, wasn't that great?" I thought, "What's so great about that?" That would just get you killed in the Old Testament. It would get you stoned to death in the Old Testament. Look at all the promises and prophecies. They are all intricately fulfilled as the Old Testament points us to Christ. The New Testament explains Him in His glory but it is all "yes" and "Amen" in Jesus Christ and God's Word is true. Let every man be a liar.

God's Word is true and that weighs on my heart because I know I live among people and I know it can easily reach into your life where we look other places for truth instead of God's Word as the foundation and formation of how we see life. God's Word has made some clear statements. They are true. If you come to Jesus Christ you will be saved. One may be thinking, "Harry, you don't know what I've done." I know what you've done, you've sinned and He saves sinners. Come to Him. I also know that God's Word says that there is no other way. He is the way, the truth and the life and no man can come to the Father but through Him (John 14:6). God's Word is true. There's not another way religion, there's not another way good intentions, there's not another way that maybe my life is better than it is bad and He'll grade on the curve at the judgment day. No, there's only one Way. That way is Jesus Christ and it's a free way. He freely offers Himself to you today and you can come to Him today. I want you to come to Him today. Will you not come to Him today?

I believe this is so true and that's why I'm so excited about these couple of weeks ahead of us as we go through Evangelism training. That's why I want 4200 of us in the most simple way to be trained to share our faith so that when we go to our home, our families, our holidays, our business, our school, our team, our fraternities, our sororities, we go with the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ because those whom we go to if they don't know Him they face a sure and everlasting judgment apart from Him and God's Word is true. It is true that they are headed for a Christless eternity and only Christ can deliver them and Christ surely will deliver them. That's why it's on our hearts. It's true. Do you want a changed life? Do you want freedom? Do you want the pathway to freedom from addictions and idolatry? Christ will change your life. If any man is in Christ he is a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). It's true.

Now, He may not microwave you. He'll probably crock pot you. Every once in a while He'll microwave you. I remember when I became a Christian. I am teaching the Bible with this tongue and you do not know how blasphemous and profane it once was. That was the area where Jesus microwaved me. The day I was converted I guess it was the new heart because there is Scripture that says out of the heart the mouth flows (Matthew 12:34) but mine was just gone the day I got saved. I have a whole list of things that He has been crock potting for the last



forty years and we've been working on it. Praise the Lord for three steps forward and two backward, five forward and one backward, four backward and two forward, I praise the Lord because we're moving. We're growing. A changed life is yours. It's the truth in Jesus Christ, a new life is yours, a new family, a new home, a new record, a new heart, and a new spirit is yours. This is all yours in Jesus Christ. It's true; Christ centered, Gospel driven, Holy Spirit empowered, grace drawn, that's a life of glory and majesty. It's true in the One that the Bible has designed to bring you to – Jesus Christ. Won't you come to Him today? Won't you come to Him who is life and life forever?

Here is a second takeaway from the text that is unmistakable for our lives. It is that when God works in our lives we can depend upon God's providence. God's providential plan is not only designed to save us from our sins and grow us by grace but it insures that He will guard you and guide you. God's providence will guard you and guide you as you submit to Him. Faithful is He who calls you and He will bring it to pass (1 Thessalonians 5:24). He who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:6).

Let me put it this way. Look at God's providence. Zachariah, we're going to bring John the Baptist through you. Elizabeth, get ready because you've got a ministry of encouragement to Mary. Mary, we're going to bring the Messiah through you the virgin. Joseph, you're going to be His adopted father. Look at God's providence not only calling them but guarding them and keeping them. Look at Joseph making what we would say as a rational right decision – "Let me go back to Bethlehem and live, that seems to be the right place" but God guided him and guarded him not only by getting him to Egypt but getting him to where He wanted him to be. This is the hand of God.

In 1967 I flunked out of East Carolina University. That was the hand of Harry. I played ball, did other things and forgot to work in class. I made the Dean's list but it was the wrong Dean. It was the Dean of Students who was also the assistant baseball coach. He told me I had to leave. So I left and decided to go join the Marine Corp. I had a couple of months in between and ended up getting a physical for the Marine Corp, signed it and I'm still waiting for orders. When they say stand up for the Marine Corp hymn I never whether to do it or not because I signed on, I'm ready to go but I'm still waiting for orders. Three months later I get a message. It says, "We just changed you to one "Y" from one "A"." One "Y" is when they will only call you into uniform when it is a national emergency or they declared war in which Vietnam never was. To this day they never gave me a reason why I wasn't accepted.

In the meantime I met Cindy. In the meantime I went to church. In the meantime a guy preached the Gospel. I became a Christian. I could have been over in a rice patty. Boy, wasn't I lucky? No, that's the hand of God ruling and overruling. That's the hand of God working in, through, and among accomplishing not only to keep us but to guide us and to guard us and to move us forward. God calls us to

be responsible but we never put our confidence in our plans we put our confidence in God. A man plans his way but the Lord establishes (directs) his steps (Proverbs 16:9). Even when we have reasonable plans like Joseph, God says, "No, I have a better plan Joseph. You obeyed Me, you obeyed My revealed will, you came up out of Egypt but I'm not going to let you land. I have another place I want you to land to fulfill the Scriptures and where I want Jesus to come from childhood. That's what I want to happen." That's what He accomplishes. It's God's sovereignty, man's responsibility but God is accomplishing His purposes.

What I love to see are people who try to undo God's providence like Herod. Just stop and think for a minute. Herod, you're going to try to kill Jesus? This is the One. Herod wait just a minute. This is the One the Bible says is coming and you're going to stop this? Remember the wise men got all the way here from the Far East and by the way how did they know a star would come up? How did they know a Messiah was born? It was because they had the Scriptures over there that were left when Israel was in captivity. Don't you understand God has had a plan in this thing? Folks, it is so insensible to kick against God in rebellion and sin. It is absolutely irrational. So don't ever sit down with someone as I am always trying to do and say, "I wonder why they did that?" Sin never makes sense. Rebellion never makes sense. Walking away from a marriage, walking away from a family, walking away from children, walking away from the Lord, never makes sense. It's insensible. So ask God to give us sense and the greatest sense is put your trust in Him alone.

Does anybody think your stocks are going to deliver you today? Does anybody think we're in control? I know Who is in control and I know what it means to trust Him and be free from fear and walk by faith. He says, "I'll not only providentially protect My Son by bringing him to Egypt and providentially bring him back at the right time, now in the name of My Son all who belong to Him this is what I tell you. All things work together for good to those who love Him and to those who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28)."

I'm old enough to remember Red Auerbach. Red Auerbach coached the Boston Celtics and you knew when he thought the team had won the game because he would light a cigar. I played basketball in high school and I knew when we had won the game. The coach would look down the bench and say, "Reeder, go in." That's when I knew the game was sure. I had a baseball coach and he knew how to tell when the game was won. He didn't do it much but when he knew we had won we could hear him down at the end of the bench say, "Boys you can pack that one away." Folks, you can pack this one away. If you put your hope in Jesus Christ you will not be disappointed. He will guard you and guide you. He will use His Holy Spirit GPS system whenever He is ready; "Wrong turn, recalibrate - not Bethlehem but Nazareth." He'll guide you. He will guard you. Follow His Word by His Spirit. Fix your eyes on Him.

The third and final take away is the battle in Bethlehem continues today. Jesus goes to Egypt and then He comes back to fight the battle. The sword is drawn and the battle in Bethlehem will move 33 years later to a battle at Calvary. There He will win the victory. You see the battle. Herod it is not just an assassin, he is doing the work of the master assassin, Satan. He assassinated Abel. He assassinated the children when God was raising of Moses. He tried to assassinate Israel, assassinate the prophets and church history is full of God's people who have laid down their lives as he has assassinated them and are God's sovereign plan and what God has allowed to be accomplished. Bethlehem contains the slaughter as the assassin does his work. By the way, he hasn't quit today. When we read this passage our stomach is turned just to think he marched down there to kill those baby boy's less than two years of age and they are just so helpless. We have done over 50 million in the womb. Churches won't even speak about the issue anymore. I know this issue of the sanctity of life is much more than a debate. I know it is. I know it is a ministry to women in crisis. I know it is a ministry to children. I know its mercy. I know its adoption. I know it's all of those things but I know another thing and it's not silence while the helpless are drug to destruction. I know that. I know the arguments make no sense and I know that the world really doesn't care that it doesn't make any sense. It makes no sense for this country that has understood the sanctity of life and has been on a journey of the application for that, that would eradicate slavery and its despicable presence, that would eradicate this and eradicate that, now they have said, "No we are going back to paganism. We will kill them in the womb. We'll kill them in nursery and we'll kill them when they get too expensive at the end of their life." This is a culture of death just like Herod's and it's not 8 to 25. It's 50 million and counting and we're not looking even at infanticide and euthanasia, enforced euthanasia. We're not even looking at that.

But I do know this; we're in the battle and we need to stay in the battle. This is the great thing about this battle. Our Savior has won the victory. Our God is sovereign, just read Psalm 2:4; "*He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision.*" There is a King who is the King of life. He has now come. Have you seen Him in these two chapters of Matthew and have you come to Him so that He is your life? This One the Scriptures have pointed to, this One the Word of God we've heard, has now brought us to the God of the Word that has been seen. We're going to trace the battle through Matthew and let me tell you, He won. If you are in Him you are more than a conqueror. Come to Him. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments that we could be together in Your Word. Thank You for the privilege that we have to study it. Dear friend, you may be reading this and you may have put your trust somewhere else and wondered is there anyplace to put my trust? There is a victorious King, this baby in these chapters was not simply outcast to Egypt. This baby was outcast to Jerusalem

and went outside the walls, mounted Calvary, embraced a cross, and paid for your sins. He now invite you to come freely. I paid it all. Come to Him. Jesus I come, I turn from me and my sins and I put my trust in You. Father, would you cause us as a people to rise up to take that message to this world, to live that message in the battle and to put our trust in our glorious Savior and King Jesus Christ? Lord, may we have absolute confidence as we seek to faithfully follow Him like a Joseph. Our faith will not be in our following but in Him who we follow, will cause all things work together for good. In the days of adversity He will grow us. In the days of prosperity we will praise Him. In all things we will lift Him up and trust Him. Christ is Lord, our Lord, praise His Name forever, Amen.

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