

AM Matthew 2

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[0 : 00] We're going to read in the Old Testament Scriptures a couple of passages from the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah chapter 39, verses 1 to 10 to begin with.

Jeremiah chapter 39. This is a passage entitled, The Fall of Jerusalem.

The Babylonians have been persieging Jerusalem and this is the climax of this stage of events. In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and besieged it.

In the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, on the ninth day of the month, a breach was made in the city. Then all the officials of the king of Babylon came and sat in the middle gate.

Nerger Sarezzer, Samgar Nebu, Sarsekim, the Rabsaris, Nerger Sarezzer, the Rab Mag, with all the rest of the officers of the king of Babylon.

[1 : 09] When Zedekiah king of Judah and all the soldiers saw them, they fled, going out of the city at night by way of the king's garden through the gate between the two walls.

And they went toward the Arabah. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. And when they had taken him, they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon at Riblah, in the land of Hamath.

And he passed sentence on him. The king of Babylon slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah at Riblah before his eyes. And the king of Babylon slaughtered all the nobles of Judah.

He put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound them in chains to take him to Babylon. The Chaldeans burned the king's house and the house of the people and broke down the walls of Jerusalem.

Then Nebuchadnezzar, the captain of the guard, carried into exile to Babylon the rest of the people who were left in the city. Those who were deserted to him and the people who remained.

[2 : 14] Nebuchadnezzar, the captain of the guard, left in the land of Judah some of the poor people who owned nothing and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time. Then just a few verses in chapter 40, verses 1 to 6, entitled Jeremiah Remains in Judah.

The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord after Nebuchadnezzar, the captain of the guard, had let him go from Ramah when he took him bound in chains along with all the captives, Jerusalem and Judah, who were being exiled to Babylon.

The captain of the guard took Jeremiah and said to him, The Lord your God pronounced this disaster against this place. The Lord has brought it about and has done as he has said.

Because you sinned against the Lord and did not obey his voice, this thing has come upon you.

Now behold, I release you today from the chains in your hands. If it seems good to you to come with me to Babylon, come, and I will look after you well.

But if it seems wrong to you to come with me to Babylon, do not come. See, the whole land is before you. Go wherever you think it good and right to go. If you remain, then return to Gedaliah, the son of Ahicham, son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon appointed governor of the cities of Judah, and dwell with him among the people, or go wherever you think it right to go.

[3 : 38] So the captain of the guard gave him an allowance of food and a present and let him go.

Then Jeremiah went to Gedaliah, the son of Ahicham at Mizpah, and lived with him among the people who were left in the land.

Just there. May God bless to us these readings in his word. Matthew chapter 2. And we're going to read the whole of this chapter. Matthew's Gospel, chapter 2.

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Hedon the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?

For we saw his star when it rose, and have come to worship him. Sorry. Is this what I said I would read? Just a second. Yes, it is.

No matter. I'm just reading it now. When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

[4 : 50] And assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, In Bethlehem of Judea. For so it is written by the prophet.

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. Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly, and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared.

And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word that I too may come and worship him. After listening to the king, they went on their way.

And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose, went before them, until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him. Then opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

[5 : 59] And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way. 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. And he arose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod.

This was to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, Out of Egypt I called my son. 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.

Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah. 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. But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, 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.

[7 : 23] And he arose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. 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. 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. May God bless this reading also. Now we're seated. Now we're going to look at part of Matthew 2, beginning from verse 13.

The three incidents that are headed here, the flight to Egypt, Herod kills the children, and the return to Nazareth. And we're going to look particularly, at the fact that each of these, is said to be the fulfillment of prophecy.

So in verse 15, this was to fulfill what the Lord has spoken by the prophets, out of Egypt I called my son. And then in verse 17, then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah.

[8 : 42] A voice was heard in drama, weeping and loud lamentation, and so on. And then in verse 23, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, he shall be called a Nazarene.

Now, what is Jesus doing, sorry, what is Matthew doing in this chapter?

And I think he's doing what a good writer ought to do. Namely, this is serving as an introduction to his whole book. He's giving wee cameos, we might say, wee miniature pictures of Jesus here, and his experience in his early days, in order to prepare the people, for things that are going to come in the future.

So, we've got pictures of Jesus' experience, that are going to come to fruition, that are going to be developed, later on in his gospel. Key ideas, that are going to determine the whole course, of the narrative that he's going to follow.

You can see this perhaps, with a story that we're not going to look at, namely the story of the wise men. Now, there are different reasons why that is there, no doubt. But I think that one of them was this, that when Jesus later on says, I tell you, many will come from the east and west, and recline at

table, with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

[10:19] When he says that, some people are going to say, ah yes, now that fits in with the story, of the wise men. These were gentle, Gentile peoples.

These people came from the east, and they came, and they worshipped, or they came and acknowledged Jesus, as the king of the Jews. And they actually remained, to worship him. That's a foretaste, of what he's talking about here.

Many will come from east and west. Just what happened, in the experience of the wise men, is going to be the pattern, for things in the future. People coming from amongst the Gentiles, and joining in the kingdom of God.

So that story of the wise men, is a preparation, for what Jesus is going to say, in the rest of his gospel. What Matthew is going to say, in the rest of his gospel.

And that's the way, we're going to look at these three incidents, that we're going to study, in a bit more detail. They're miniatures, of what is going to be developed, in the course of the gospel.

[11:22] They give us pictures, of what Jesus' outlook, and ministry, is to be like, as Matthew describes it, in the remaining chapters, of his book.

And that you see, is of use to us. Because it brings to us, fresh picture of Jesus, it brings before us, the one that's most important, for us all, who are true Christians.

Namely, who is Jesus? What did he come to do? How does that ministry, impact upon us today? So, this is a study, in God's word, that will help us, to understand the scriptures.

But I hope it will lead us, to look upon Jesus, and appreciate, better who he is, and what he has done, on our behalf. So, let's look at these three, incidents here, all of which, are, come to their climax, in their being, fulfillment, of Old Testament scripture.

First of all, in verses, 13, to 15, there is the experience, of Exodus, we might see. And, as we've read already, the climax, of this, bit of the story is, this was to fulfill, what the Lord has spoken, by the prophets, out of Egypt, I called my son.

[12:42] Now, some people think, that Matthew just takes, words from the Old Testament, and makes them mean, whatever he wants them to mean. Whether they refer to Jesus, or no, he, he, he just uses them, to, to give the impression, that the Old Testament, is being fulfilled.

And some people think, that here, Matthew is just, using these words, and he's ignoring, the original meaning, of them. Now, that's not the way it is.

And I want to try, and bring that out, because, that's the key, to understanding, this passage, and the next one too. This is a quotation, from Hosea, chapter 11, and verse 1.

When Israel, was a child, I loved them, and out of Egypt, I called my son. Now, what is Hosea, referring to there? And I don't think, there's any doubt, that he's referring, to the people of Israel, when they were brought out, of Egypt, at the time, of the Exodus.

He calls Israel, his child, his son. And you may think, that that is not, something, that is very commonly, applied, to the people of Israel.

[13:55] But in fact, in connection, with the Exodus story, it was applied, to Israel. Here's what, Moses says, to Pharaoh, in Exodus chapter 4.

This is what the Lord says, Israel is my firstborn son, and I told you, let my son go, so that he may worship me.

But you refuse, to let him go, so I will kill, your firstborn son. So, Moses is saying, Israel is in a special, relationship with God.

Like a firstborn son, who had a certain, preeminence in the family. That's the way, that it is with Israel. There's a preeminence, amongst the nations, in regard to Israel.

They're the special, possession of God. They're like, a dear son to him. So that idea, that Israel is God's son, is not foreign, to the scriptures.

[14:57] And when, Hosea speaks of him, as God's child, as God's son, then we can really think, he's talking about, the people of Israel. And then he says, that they were called, out of Egypt, out of Egypt, I called my son.

And that is simply, a way of saying, that it was through, God's will, and purpose, under his direction, and his providential care, that this came about.

It wasn't by human initiative. It wasn't that Moses, called them out of Egypt. It was that God, called them out of Egypt. He ordained, that this should happen, and brought it about, by human agency.

He called Moses, to do this task. He sent his plagues, to tell the Egyptians, how wrong it was, to hold these people, as slaves. He, he, he, he, brought the waters, of the Red Sea, over the Egyptians, who were pursuing, and guaranteed, the safety of his people.

It was all, in the hands of God. So much so, that it is quite right, and proper, to say, that God, called them out of Egypt. So if we're looking, at Hosea, chapter 11, and verse 1, from which this passage, is taken, from which this quotation, is taken, then we can see, yes, that was a reference, to the fact, that Israel, as the special, son, child of God, if you like, was taken, from Egypt, at the Exodus, and was brought, to their own land.

[16:25] And you might, therefore ask, how on earth, can you say, therefore, that this refers, to Jesus? And that, it seems to me, is the thing, that is of first importance, here.

What is happening, here, is that Matthew, is saying, look, who is Jesus? He's one, that identifies himself, with the people of God. He's one, that's come amongst us, as one of us, to share our experiences.

And he even shares, the experiences, of the people, of the Old Testament. And he's fulfilled, the experience, of Israel, who were brought, out of Egypt, at the Exodus.

So, that there's a parallel, between what happened, to the people of Israel, at the Exodus, and what happens, to Jesus, on this occasion. Both, were in Egypt.

The one, was there, as a slave, enduring hardship. Jesus, was there, as a refugee, enduring hardship. At the moment, that it was appropriate, God called, Israel out of Egypt.

[17:27] At the moment, that it was appropriate, God called, to Joseph, so that Jesus, would be taken, out of Egypt. In the old days, Israel was brought, to the promised land.

In these days, that Matthew, is speaking of, Jesus, Jesus was brought, to the promised land. The experience, of Israel, coming out of Egypt, and the experience, of Jesus, runs parallel, with each other.

And that's, so, because that's, the sort of thing, that Jesus, came to do, amongst us. He came to be, one of us, to share in our experiences, and not least, to share in our, difficult experiences, in life.

So that the people, can look at Jesus, and say, he really is one of us. He's gone through, an exodus, just like we went through, an exodus, long ago. And they can feel, a closeness, and they can, understand his sympathy, with them.

So that, I think, is the basic idea, that there is there. Jesus fulfills, this passage, by experiencing, the same thing, at a different level, from what the people, of his soul, experienced, at that time.

[18:33] And so, it demonstrates, that he came, to be one of us, and to share, our lot in life. And that's the basic idea, that lies behind, the second thing, that's spoken of here.

Because, it's not just, the experience, of exodus, there's also, the experience, of exile. And that's what we've got, in verses 16 to 18. We've got here, Herod, killing all the male children, in Bethlehem, in all that region, who were two years old, and under.

Now, that was a terrible, atrocity. Some people think, that it couldn't have happened. Or else, it would have found a case, in history books. What does find a place, in the history books, is not this event.

But very many, other events, very similar to this. This Herod, is called Herod the Great. Mainly because, I think, he had a big building program, and he left, significant buildings, cities behind him. But otherwise, he was not great at all. He was a monster, he was a tyrant, and he committed, atrocities, killing members, of his own family, whenever he felt, they might be a threat to him.

[19:48] So, to think, that he killed the babies, in Bethlehem, is not a stretch, of the imagination, at all. It's entirely, in line, with the sort of atrocities, that he is well known for.

So, we can say, well, there's every reason, to think, that this actually, did happen. It may be, that the number, of children, or baby boys, at least, in Bethlehem, from two years old, and under, was not great.

Maybe, we think, in terms of hundreds, but it's more like, in terms of tens, at the most. Maybe not even 20. Some people think, we don't really know, because we don't know, how big Bethlehem was. And, we don't actually, actually know, how many families, which children there were.

But, it's not a great number. But, each one was a tragedy. Each one was a terrible loss, for, for, for, for, the community. Think of the atrocities, that are going on, in places in the world today.

And, the first that's made of them. And, rightly so. Well, what an atrocity this was. And, how does Matthew see it? Well, he sees it, as something, that, it reminds him, of an Old Testament situation,

where there was, the same suffering, the same distress, that, that was caused, by the slaughter, of the children there.

[21 : 07] And, that's why he brings this passage, from Jeremiah, chapter 31, and verse 15. A voice was heard, a drama, weeping, and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping, for her children.

She refused, to be comforted, because they are no more. So, what's Jeremiah, talking about there? And, how can that be applied, meaningfully, in Jesus' situation, here?

Well, that's why, I read in Jeremiah, I hope you didn't find it, a boring part, of the scriptures, because there's quite a lot, of action in it, and I hope you grasped, what was going on. Here are God's people, in the land, of Palestine, they've been invaded, by the Babylonians, over a number of years, their cities have fallen, to the Babylonians, the countryside, the countryside, the countryside, has been destroyed, all the goods, would have been taken, by the Babylonians, to support their armies, their archers, would have been cut down, for firewood, or, for siege ramps, and that sort of thing, complete and utter, devastation, of the country, the sort of thing, that warfare, does even today, more so, perhaps even today, and here is Jerusalem, besieged, and eventually, it falls to the Babylonians, after some time of siege, and the Babylonians, destroy the walls, and burn the palaces, and so on, as we've read, and also, they take people exile, they gather them together, and put them in chains, and they're prepared, and lead them off to Babylon, and you may not have noticed it, that Ramah, was mentioned, in the passage we read, and it seems to me, that Ramah, was the place, where the exiles, were gathered together, in chains, preparatory, to being led off, to Babylon, and Jeremiah, was amongst them, although he was released, by the Babylonians, but I'm only mentioning Ramah, because that's the place, that's mentioned here,

Ramah, was mentioned here, because it's that terrible site, of all the people, after the terrible slaughter, the survivors, are gathered together, in chains, to be taken, as exiles, hundreds and hundreds, of miles away, to Babylon, a foreign part, of the world, so, you can imagine, what was going on there, there was lamentation, over the dead, there was weeping, because some people, were being taken off, and others left, there was a sense, of deep mourning, that this had come, to God's people, that this had happened, to their nation, and all this, is summed up, in this quotation, from Jeremiah, a voice was heard, in Ramah, the place that was mentioned, a weeping, a loud lamentation, Rachel weeping, for her children, Rachel was the mother, of Benjamin, and of Joseph, and Ramah, is in the territory, of Benjamin, so,

Rachel here, is used, as a poetic description, of the mothers, of Benjamin, weeping over their children, that have been, destroyed in the battle, or weeping, because, people are being taken off, to exile, and it's a poetic description, it's not literally Rachel, that they're talking about here, Rachel stands for, the mothers in Israel, if you like, the mothers in Benjamin, and it's a way, of telling of the terrible distress, over exile, and Matthew, puts this in here, because he says, look, it's the same thing, that's happened to the Exodus, just as there was a second Exodus, when Jesus was called, from Egypt, so, there was a second exile, the same sort of thing, was happening, his early life, was bound up, with these circumstances, of atrocities, and murder, and distress, and mourning, and crying, by the women, in Israel, it's the same thing, being repeated, history is repeating itself here, the experience of Israel, is being summed up, in the early experience of Jesus, and he's so identified, with his people, that he's going through, these situations too, and that's the same picture, as we had before, we'll develop it later, but you see, the line that he's been following, in these two things,

[25 : 33] Jesus, is so close to us, he's so much one of us, that our experiences, are his experience, and here's, two examples of it, he experiences in Exodus, like they did, he experiences in exile, like they did, these circumstances, that he goes through, are reminiscent of, and in some sense, a fulfillment of, these Old Testament events, that's the picture, that he's giving us, of a Jesus, that is so close to us, that he's identified to us, in these terrible experiences, of life, now the third thing, we've got here, is a wee bit different, but it's nonetheless, part of the picture, that we're wanting to, draw out, we've got here, the experience of rejection, now this is a difficult passage, we've got it, beginning in verse 19, through to the end, of the chapter, now the situation, is this, that Herod, wants to kill Jesus, so that they, can take him down, to Egypt, and he stays there, until Herod dies, and then, an angel of the Lord, appeared, to Joseph 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, and so he rose, and took the child, and his mother, and went to the land of Israel, some people ask, how old was Jesus, when he came back, from Egypt, and it's another, of these things, that we don't know

exactly, some people say, two, four years, we don't know, but it's possible, you see, that Jesus actually, would remember, some of this, he might have remembered, something of what it meant, to be in the land of Egypt, he might have remembered, something of the journey, but in a sense, it doesn't really matter, but it's an interesting question, that some people ask, would Jesus have remembered this, and in my mind, he may well have remembered, some aspects of it, but at any rate, they come back, to the land of Israel, but all is not well, there's a problem, with that, he hears, that Archelaus, was reigning over Judea, in place of his father,

Herod, well, this is a wee bit history, we might mention, Herod was a puppet king, he was only there, because the Roman authorities, allowed him to rule, and as long as he didn't, step out of line, he could rule, and he even, divided his kingdom, amongst his four sons, and each, each of, each of four of his sons, got a quarter part, of the kingdom, to rule over, and by the way, that's what the word, tetrarch means, it comes up in Luke's gospel, and I'm pretty certain, that folks generally speaking, don't know what it means, it means, the ruler over a fourth part, of the country, so he divided his country, his kingdom up, into four, and this son of his, Archelaus, was reigning over Judea, in place of his father, Herod, and that's something, that gives cause, for concern, to Joseph, as he comes back, from Egypt, he was afraid, to go there, and why was he afraid, to go there, because Archelaus, was just as big a tyrant, if not a bigger tyrant, than his father had been, and it is said, that after nine years, the Romans deposed him, because he was so tyrannical, and so cruel, in his rule, which is saying something, if the Romans deposed him, for cruelty, he must have been cruel, indeed, it is said, that, on coming to the throne, of Jerusalem, and the surrounding area, Judea, he killed three thousand, prominent Jewish people, just to secure his reign, three thousand, prominent people, that's a mighty big, war crime, to put it mildly, that's the sort of man, that Archelaus was, so here's Joseph, and he comes, into the promised land, up into the outer regions, of Judea, and he stops, for the night at the house, and they tell him the news, and they say, three thousand people, he's killed already, what's Joseph going to think, about that, am I still on the hit list, he's afraid, and so, he's diverted, from going back, to Bethlehem, where it seems, he was intending to go, and he goes off, to Nazareth, instead, and that, is something, that the writer, Matthew, seems to think, appropriate, because he sees it, as the fulfillment, of a prophecy, that this happens, so that what was spoken, by the prophets, might be fulfilled, he shall be called, a Nazarene, now, here's a big problem, this is not a quotation, from the Old Testament, and people struggle, to find out anything, that is close to it, there's others, as we'll see tonight, all be well, that don't exactly, correspond to the Old Testament, but this one, people cannot find, anything, that's really very similar, to this at all, and I can say, quite honestly,

I don't know, what it means, last time I preached, I gave one idea, and this morning, I'm giving a different idea, because I don't think, anybody can say, with any certainty, this is what this means, but I'm giving something, that it may be, I think it's a reasonable suggestion, of what I'm giving, this morning, there is this idea, that Nazareth, was a backwater, well, that's pretty true, it was away, to the north of the country, at the back of beyond, in the hill country, of Naphtali, was it Naphtali, way up at the top anyway, the back of beyond, out of the mainstream of life, and thought of, as a bit of a backward place, nobody of importance, is going to come from Nazareth, that's not, that was the sort of place, it was, if you said, you were from Nazareth, then the idea, was that you were despised, well, maybe so, because, there is something, in John's gospel, along these lines, Jesus called Philip to him, and Philip found Nathanael, and said to him, we have found him, of whom Moses and the law, and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph, and Nathanael, can't believe it, can anything good, come out of Nazareth, now that's the sort of thing, that apparently people said, about folks from Nazareth, can anything good, come from there, it's a backwater, it's a way at the back of beyond, the least important place, in the whole country, that sort of idea, so people from Nazareth, are despised, that's the idea, so, when it says, he's been called a Nazarene, the implication is, he's been called, somebody that's despised, he's somebody, that is rejected by men, somebody that, folks look down on, and when you think of it, in these terms, it's not difficult, to find, that this sort of thing, was prophesied about, in the Old Testament, and indeed, the obvious case, is in Isaiah chapter 53, where Isaiah says, he was despised, and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and as one, from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not, and folks think, and I'm not saying, it's correct, [33 : 16] I'm just saying, it's a probability, it's a possibility, that that's the sort of thing, that Matthew is trying to direct, our minds to, Nazarenes are despised, and the prophecies are full, or there's

enough prophecies, in the Old Testament, that speak, about the suffering servant, about the servant, described in Isaiah 53, who was despised, and rejected, so he's saying, this is the sort of lifestyle, that Jesus was exposed to, from his earliest days, coming back from Egypt, he was associated, with folks that were despised, because he was a Nazarene, and that was the style of his life, despised, and rejected by people, well you may think, that that's a wee bit far-fetched, but to get honest, any other explanation of this, is at least equally far-fetched as well, but it's the best we can do, and it's certainly true to life, and it fits in, with the sort of picture, that we've got here, so you see, by these three incidents, what Matthew is trying to say to them, is this, look, this is the sort of picture, that I'm going to give you, here in his early days, you see him, coming so close to us, that he fulfills our history, he goes through the same sort of experiences, in exile, in exodus, and in rejection, and suffering, that's the sort of man we've got, somebody so close to us, that he understands these situations, because he's been associated with them, he's gone through them to some degree, and that's the sort of person, that I'm going to speak to you about, so that's what Matthew, is trying to say to us here, and it remains for us, to develop that, a bit, and show, how this actually was the case, and what it says to us today, well, is this true, to the picture, that Matthew gives, in the rest of his gospel, was Jesus, a man of the people, close to us, sympathetic to us, going through the sort of things, that we go through, was he despised, was he rejected, and of course, that's the sort of picture, that we do have, in the gospels, some elements are clearer than others, but nonetheless, that's what we do have, something simple, the common people, held him gladly, he was one of them, and he knew that, and he spoke as one of them, and they responded to that, he was just an ordinary person, in his approach, and in his outlook, and in his sympathies, and the common people, heard him gladly, he himself said, foxes of holes, and birds of the air of nests, but the son of man, is nowhere to lay his head, he was poor, he didn't have a place, of his own, he was a traveler, he went around, from place to place, without a place of his own, sympathy, sympathy with common people, would naturally come to him, because, he lived that lifestyle, not in palaces, although he could go with rich people, and have a nice feast with them, but he was basically, a poor person, a friend of publicans, and sinners, who made common cause, with the outcasts in society, like the publicans were, and with the sinners in society, because that's the sort of people, that he came to be identified with, we'll get that, right through the story, and when we think of him, identifying us, identifying with us, in our varied positions, there's this big thing, that isn't really mentioned here, but it comes out immediately, in the next chapter,

namely, that he identified himself, with sinners, he doesn't just identify, with us, in our outward difficulties, and problems, but in our sinfulness, he came to be baptized, by John, a baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins, but he had no sins, to repent of, he had no need, to seek for remission of sins, so why was he baptized, because that's what he came to do in life, to be identified with his people, and share their lot, so he took the place of the sinner, when he was baptized, and of course, that's the place that he took, throughout his life, and especially, at the end of it, as he died on the cross, and that he was despised, and rejected by people, is quite obvious as well, even his own disciples, didn't understand him, or appreciate what he was going to do, when Jesus said, I'm going to die, Peter said, don't think about it, he had no sympathy from them, he was rejected by them, his ideas were rejected by them, when Jesus told three of his disciples, to watch and pray, they fell asleep, and left them alone, when things were coming to a climax, and Jesus was about to offer himself, on the cross, they were discussing, who would be greatest in the kingdom, people that didn't understand his purpose, and rejected his ideas, and had no sympathy with him, and he was betrayed by a kiss, a kiss from one of his followers, a sign of devotion, that was what betrayed, the means by which he was betrayed, despised and rejected by people, and the disciples all forsook him, and fled, and we know the story of his trials, and his crucifixion, despised and rejected by people, that's what it was all about, and of course we know the reason for that was, because he was being identified with us, in our sinfulness, he took our lot upon himself, so that he didn't just suffer, all the miseries of this life, but he suffered the punishment, that was due to sin, and he was being identified, with his people in that respect, to taking upon himself, the punishment, that was due to them, that's the sort of thing, that Matthew, is leading us to think about, by giving these, three little cameos, of what happened in Jesus' early life, he's displaying somebody, that's close to us, who identifies with us, who takes upon himself, our sinful status, and is despised and rejected, by men, and from whom God, turns away, in anger, because he's taking upon himself, the sins of his people, that's the Jesus, that is displayed here, now, it seems to me,

that here we've got, of course, the saviour's work, clearly delineated, and this is the way, we have to look at this, if you need a saviour, if you need somebody, that understands your situation, and can deal with it, in regard to being right with God, or the feelings of guilt, or the fear of death, or judgment, then this is the one, you have to look to, he came, and identified with us, in all our situations, not least, in the idea, that he was bearing our sins, in our name, and on our behalf, and that's the one, you have to look to, and to rest upon, come in your sin, and turn from it, and give yourself to Christ, and acknowledge him, as your only hope, because he loved you, and gave himself for you, he was identified fully, with you, in his life, and in his death as well, in a general way, that speaks to us, of the saviour, more specifically, it seems to me, that it speaks to his, to us, of his sympathy, with the poor, and the oppressed, we can all feel, that he has sympathy with us, because he took our position, in life, but those who are the lowest, of the low, can feel so particularly, our daughter, used to work, in Colombia, and when she first, worked in Colombia, the terrorism, was just, absolutely, terrible, and there were, terrorist groups, and government forces, no much difference, between them, when it came to murder, and killing, and the whole country, was in considerable turmoil, and all sorts of atrocities, on both sides, were being committed, and she said, she was out of her depths, because she couldn't, didn't know what to say, to people, who told them, told her, their problems, what do you say, to a girl, who says, they took away my brother, and I got him back later, in a black plastic bag, cut into pieces, what do you say, oh I'm sorry, it's so weak, we've never gone through, anything like it, we can't, very easily at least, have sympathy, with those, that have gone through, atrocities like that, and who have suffered terribly, in this life, but Jesus can, Jesus can look the refugee, in the face, and say yes, I was a refugee too, they took me at night, down to Egypt, or they might have killed me, he can look in the face, the person that has suffered, from terrorism, and atrocities, of one kind or another, and say yes, I understand, it almost happened to me, my mother told me, of how they killed, all the babies in Bethlehem, trying to get me, I understand, and that's Jesus, sympathetic with everybody, not least, with the poor, and the oppressed, and the suffering folks, and that's the Jesus, we can take to people, and we can say to him, here, we have a sympathetic, high priest, we do not have a priest, who is unable, to sympathize with us, in our weaknesses, we have this Jesus, who is identified, with his people, in the experience of exile, in the experience of exodus, in the experience of rejection, who sympathizes with us, to him we can go, a sympathetic high priest, may God bless to us, his word, and I thank you, and thank you.

Thank you. Thanks. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.