

Jesus is the Promised Son

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[0 : 00] Good morning, church family. If you're a guest here or you've never been to Maranatha, my name is Luke Fawcett. I'm a pastoral intern here. I have the privilege of serving you guys in that way.

Thank you once again for giving me the privilege of opening God's Word with you and considering the implications of it for our lives. The title for the message this morning is Jesus is the Promised Son.

Jesus is the Promised Son. We're finishing our Advent series by looking at the final section of Matthew 2, verses 13 to 23.

Matthew 2, verses 13 to 23. This time of year reminds me a lot of my childhood, when I would ride with my mom in her old minivan and listen to a lot of classic Christmas tunes.

For you teens, this was before Spotify and commercial-less streaming, so that was how I enjoyed music. But more than any other holiday, I think Christmas is set apart by its festive songs.

[1 : 13] While many are concerned with Santa Claus and sleigh bells and snow, others actually reflect true elements of the biblical storyline.

Wise men and wonder, shepherds and stars, angels and anticipation, heaven and earth. Some are tender and serene.

Perhaps your favorite song is in these kind of lyrics. Some of these we just sang. Silent night, holy night. All is calm, all is bright.

Round yon virgin, mother and child, holy infant, so tender and mild. Sleep in heavenly peace. Sleep in heavenly peace.

Or this one, away in a manger, no crib for a bed. The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head. The stars in the sky look down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

[2 : 24] Or this one, O little town of Bethlehem, how sweet we see thee lie. Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by.

But other songs are cheerful and triumphant. O come all ye faithful, we just sang this, joyful and triumphant. O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.

Come and behold him, born the king of angels. O come, let us adore him. O come, let us adore him.

Or joy to the world, the Lord is come. Let earth receive her king. Let every heart prepare him room.

And heaven and nature sing. What centers each of these Christmas classics are themes like joy and love and peace, like light and life for the world.

[3 : 30] Our souls are calmed and they're lifted up because of the incarnation of Jesus. He is God with us. He has entered into our story.

But that is only half of the story. They conclude Matthew's account where we left off last week with wise men bowing down and worshiping the blessed baby.

But what about the other half of the story? Our passage has a completely different feel to it. Instead of peaceful safety, we see murderous threats.

Instead of sweet sleep, there is urgent escape. Instead of joyful song, there are sorrowful lamentations. Instead of Bethlehem, we get Egypt.

What kind of Christmas is this? Perhaps we have virtually no songs that tell about this because even among the biblical authors, the gospel writers, Matthew is actually the only one who gives us this account.

[4 : 45] But this too is part of Jesus' story. It is part of our story. And while our stories, perhaps even this Christmas experience for you, is mingled with sorrow and joy, pain and peace, loneliness and comfort.

We will see that this half of the story is not just necessary. This half of the story is glorious for those who are in Christ Jesus. So if you have not already, I would encourage you to open a physical copy of God's word to Matthew chapter 2, verse 13 to 23.

You can find our passage on page 808 of the Pew Bible in front of you. Page 808 of the Pew Bible in front of you. You can follow along as I read this passage.

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 rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod.

[6 : 12] This was to fulfill 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 the 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.

And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over at Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there.

And being warned of him in dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.

[7 : 46] You may have noticed that there are three scenes in this narrative. Three scenes. Each indicated by the word when.

You can see these in verse 13. Now when they had departed, that's the wise men. Verse 16. Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men.

And verse 19 and 22, kind of combined there. Now when Herod died, and in verse 22, but when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea.

These scenes or situations carry along the narrative and they each close with a prophetic fulfillment. So Matthew here is merging situation and scripture.

He's merging the providence and the sovereignty of God together. Something that we'll look back at toward the end. So the important thing is that when something happens, it happens to fulfill what God has said.

[8 : 53] When something happens, it happens to fulfill what God has said. So let's start with point one. God's people live in exile.

God's people live in exile. verse 13 gives us this first situation. Now when they had departed.

The they here is referring to the wise men. These wise men who God had previously told not to return to Herod. So the question is, what happens when the wise men leave without telling Herod?

Well, Matthew shows us verse 13b, Behold, or look, 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. Notice that there are four commands given here.

[10 : 06] Rise, take, flee, and remain. And there's one reason. Herod is looking for Jesus. Herod is looking for Jesus.

Do you sense the urgency and the danger here? He's saying, get out, Joseph. Herod is coming to kill your son.

And God does not give Joseph a return date. He just says, remain here until I tell you. This is not unlike when God called Abraham in Genesis chapter 12 verses 1.

He said, go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to where? To the land that I will show you. Leave everything, Abraham, your country, your family, your community and go.

I will show you where I will take you. I will take care of you. You can hear here echoes of the story. Leave everything, Joseph.

[11 : 16] Leave your family, leave your country, leave your community, leave your culture and go. I will take care of you. You might imagine Joseph's fear.

I mean, who would not fear their child in danger? Always looking over your shoulder, wondering what's going to happen. Even though Joseph is later obedient, he is not absolved of emotion.

And we know from previous stories that Joseph has had cause for fear, right? Mary has gotten pregnant. He doesn't know who got her pregnant, but he knows it's not him. There's going to be a divorce, potentially.

There's going to be complications and Joseph is afraid. So an angel has to come to him and the first thing that the angel says is do not be afraid.

Do not be afraid, Joseph. But later as well when Herod's son Archelaus assumes the throne, Matthew tells us that Joseph was afraid.

[12 : 23] He knows what Herod is like. He knows what kind of father Herod is like and what he's passing on to his sons. And so God redirects the story.

God directs Joseph to relocate outside of Bethlehem. Joseph's concern here reminds me of something that happened my freshman year at Cedarville University.

Some of you may have heard of it. It's called COVID-19 pandemic. The students had just returned from campus from their spring break trips and classes had resumed as normal.

Second day we attended chapel at 10 a.m. But to our surprise our president Dr. White walks up on stage and he says to leave campus that day.

He says don't pack up your stuff. Don't say bye to your friends. just get out of campus today. This is real. Like literally we left that day from campus two days after coming back.

[13 : 29] And you can imagine some of the questions that ran through our heads. Right? When am I going to return? For me I was eight hours away so what about all my stuff? I didn't even have a car.

I had to figure that out. What about my community? Right? My friends. But within a day everyone had emptied the campus and was awaiting further instructions for what would happen next.

For this Jewish family within the night Joseph, Mary, and Jesus are literally refugees in a foreign nation.

Exiled from Israel. But notice here the focus on Jesus. Look again at verse 13. The angel says, rise, take the child and his mother.

He doesn't say, take Mary and her kid. See, this is still Jesus' story. And while the situation is alarming, you can already begin to see the sovereignty of God at play, accomplishing his purposes.

[14 : 40] This intervention by the angel is not just the second to Joseph, but the third of four in two chapters for Matthew. So don't miss the fact that God is all over the details of the story.

Perhaps the most surprising detail of the entire instruction here is where God tells Joseph to take his family. Did you notice that?

He says, flee to Egypt. Now, geographically, Egypt was near the southern border of Israel. So it makes sense that if they're in Bethlehem, kind of at the south part of Israel, that they would flee to Egypt.

But if you know your Old Testament, Egypt is not just a geographic place to Israel. Egypt represented this world and all that it had to offer, the luxury, the power, the food, everything you could want was in Egypt.

You may remember Israel's complaint in Exodus 16 after God miraculously takes them out of Egypt and begins their journey. Here's what they say.

[15 : 58] Would we had died at the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full. for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

Exodus 16 3 Or later in Numbers as they're still journeying through the wilderness, the people are weeping. So why are they weeping? And here's what it says.

We remember the fish we ate in Egypt that cost nothing. The cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlics. Not garlics pure, but garlic.

Also, I don't know what leeks are, but I assume that they were good because they wanted that. But now our strength is dried up and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at.

We don't want manna, Moses. We want Egypt. Take us back. But Egypt was exile for God's people.

[17 : 03] Egypt was a place of slavery and bondage. From God's perspective, Egypt represented a curse, God's judgment on those who were hard-hearted, a place full of devastation and plagues.

That's why God's covenant curses in Deuteronomy 28 actually close with a promise that he's going to take them back to Egypt if they're disobedient. He says, And the Lord will bring you back in ships to Egypt.

Notice this, A journey that I promised you should never make again. And there you shall offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but there will be no buyer.

Israel was never supposed to go back to Egypt. God had redeemed them. He had brought them out of slavery. He had brought them to Sinai, where they were given his law, where they were meant to worship him alone.

Forget the other gods, forget the world, forget the luxury, forget the pleasure. You were made to worship me alone. They were never supposed to go back to that.

[18 : 24] So why is the Messiah in Egypt? Egypt? Why take the promised son out of the promised land? Egypt seems like the last place Jesus should be.

But verse 14 shows us that Joseph obeys immediately, without question or hesitation. Notice it says, Joseph remained in Egypt until Herod's death, which God later communicates in verse 19, which roughly was about a year later.

Stories like these remind us that faith is exercised the most when we know the least. Faith is exercised the most when we know the least.

When all we have to trust is God's word and his character, is he enough? For Joseph, he was enough.

He didn't ask questions, he simply followed. But Matthew tells us in verse 15 that despite the difficulty, this was God's plan.

[19 : 51] This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet out of Egypt. I called my son. Now, students, you know from inductive Bible study lessons you've had that there's one overarching rule in Bible study.

See if you can finish this phrase. Context is king. Yes, context is king. So when later authors like Matthew cite earlier authors like Hosea, we have to go back to Hosea to figure out what is Matthew communicating.

So let's flip back to Hosea chapter 11. This is where Matthew is citing. I'm going to give you a little context here. He cites verse 1, but I want to read through verse 5.

Hosea 11, 1 to 5. When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.

The more they were called, the more they went away. They kept sacrificing to the Baals and burnt offerings to idols. Yet I who taught Ephraim, it was I who taught Ephraim to walk.

[21 : 09] I took them up by their arms, but they did not know that I healed them. I led them with cords of kindness, with the bands of love.

I became to them as one who eases the yoke of their jaws. I bent down to feed them. So they shall not return to the land of Egypt, but Assyria shall be their king, because they have refused to return to me.

Hosea, as a prophet during the time of exile, is looking back to Egypt, looking back to Israel in this toddler, adolescent kind of stage.

God had called Israel out of Egypt through his servant Moses. You can remember the repeated phrase that Moses says to Pharaoh. But just as quickly as they were liberated from Egypt, they enslaved themselves to other gods.

So God redeemed them, but Israel still rebelled. This eventually led to another exodus cycle, where even though they wouldn't go back to Egypt, they would be put in bondage through a different foreign nation.

[22 : 21] They would go back into slavery, and then eventually be brought back out of the promised land. But when we read Hosea's account, there's one really striking question.

How can Matthew say that Jesus was taken out of Egypt if Hosea is clearly referring to Israel? In other words, how is Matthew not pulling these words out of context to fit his own purposes, something that we as Bible readers are always mindful of avoiding?

Well, some have tried to answer this, and there's a few things that are not very helpful. First, some try to resolve this tension by claiming that Hosea is a prediction about Messiah and not Israel.

But aside from the problem that if it's about Messiah and not Israel, that that implicates Jesus as this wayward son who went away from God, who we know Jesus is not, the other problem is that it reads the New Testament back into the Old Testament, instead of starting with the Old Testament and working your way forward toward the New Testament.

Hosea really is talking about Israel, not Jesus. God called Israel his firstborn son in Exodus 4.11.

[23 : 42] So when Hosea looks back to Exodus, he's talking about Israel, God's firstborn son, this nation that he called to himself. And the other thing is that Hosea, verse 1, is not a prediction at all.

He's looking backwards so that he may look forward to the exile. Back to Exodus, forward to exile. Now others knowing the context say, okay, that's not a very good argument.

But there is this loose connection between Egypt, right? Jesus goes into Egypt, Israel goes into Egypt. Okay, Jesus, this is a fulfillment. But again, this is kind of like playing word association.

It's very loosey-goosey in terms of how the Bible operates. And we know from Matthew's other fulfillments that he is very specific. He is very direct when he wants to say, this was to fulfill this.

So what are we supposed to think? Okay, those are not the best ways to read it. How do we think about this? Well, pastor and theologian Kevin DeYoung helps us out.

[24 : 49] He says that Matthew wasn't trying to give Hosea a new meaning. But he did see something messianic in Hosea's words. Jesus would be the faithful son called out of Egypt, filling up what was lacking in this faithless first son, Israel.

So in the same way that Hosea looks back at Exodus and sees a pattern for exile, Matthew is looking back to Israel and seeing a pattern in Jesus' life.

Another commentator puts it like this, Jesus was reenacting the Exodus story with one major difference. Whereas Israel proved itself to be an unfaithful and idolatrous son, Jesus would prove himself to be a faithful son through whom God would bring about that long promised restoration of God's people that Hosea later anticipates.

This is what Hosea anticipates. So what Matthew is saying is that Jesus is the true Israel. He is the faithful son. Jesus must go into Egypt in order to be brought out of it.

He must enter into humanity in order to redeem it. He must go to the cross to be raised again to life. This is the pattern of Jesus.

[26 : 23] And notice the way that Matthew traces this across the first five chapters of his book. We're in chapter 2 where Jesus is called out of Egypt. But then in chapter 3 Jesus goes through the waters of baptism.

Does that remind you of the Red Sea? In chapter 4 he wanders for 40 days in a wilderness. Does that recall 40 years in a wilderness? But the difference is Jesus resists temptation every single time.

He does not live by bread alone. But every word that comes from the mouth of the Father. And then in chapter 5 he will go up to a mountain and he will bring down God's law.

Jesus is this true Israel. He is the faithful son. Now that's a lot of whole Bible theology, right? But why does this matter for you and me?

Okay, here's why it matters. Jesus does not just have to die and be raised for our sanctification and our justification.

[27 : 30] Jesus has to live the life that we were supposed to live. If he doesn't live a perfect life, then the death means nothing.

The resurrection means nothing. So Jesus has to be the faithful son, the faithful daughter that you and I were meant to be. He has to be this true Israel who goes through the wilderness and comes out as a faithful son, who goes up the mountain and comes down and brings God's law to us.

He has to go to the cross. He has to go to the grave. Someone has to die. And it's either Jesus or it's you and I.

Do you see this? Do you see the pattern? Do you see why this matters? I wonder if you feel today like you don't measure up.

Well, that's good because Jesus measured up for you. So turn to him for help today. It is because Jesus is truly God's son that we through faith inherit his rights, eternal life, sonship, God's presence, communion with the Holy Spirit.

[28 : 52] All of our Christian hope is bound up in the life, death, resurrection, and return of Jesus. That's why it matters.

Okay, that brings us to our second point. God's people weep at loss. God's people weep at loss. God's people weep at us.

We've already read this, so I'm not going to read it again, but verse 16 gives us the second scene of this story, where Herod goes to Bethlehem and he starts murdering baby boys.

And it says that this was to fulfill what the prophet Jeremiah had said. Now, who in the Bible does this remind you of? If you guys were here during our Daniel series in the summer, maybe this has overtones of Nebuchadnezzar and three Hebrew boys who he wanted to kill.

Herod, like Nebuchadnezzar, demands absolute worship, but not just from his own people, from every people and nation and language, from Jews and from wise men.

[30 : 04] Both kings reject God's rule and seek to destroy whoever opposes them. inherit's fear of losing the kingdom. He ensures the loss of all these mothers baby boys in Bethlehem.

You can picture the scene, mothers being stripped of their babies and watching them crushed in front of their eyes. This is not unlike Pharaoh's interest in eliminating the Hebrew baby boys back in Exodus.

another ruthless tyrant bent on destroying Hebrew sons. And if we trace the story far back enough, we'll see that Herod and Nebuchadnezzar and Pharaoh are not new.

There was someone at the very beginning who opposed God's rule. That was Satan. And now Herod, like the serpent, is bent on crushing the promised son.

If there is no son, then there's no seed of Abraham. There's no son of David. There's no hope for God's people. But while Jesus escapes, many sons die.

[31 : 25] And you can hear the scene in Matthew's words. A loud voice, weeping, lamentation, Rachel refusing the comfort of others.

The night which was once silent by the promised birth is now filled with screaming and crying at the loss of Hebrew sons. I wonder what loss you have experienced at the hands of evil.

Abuse from a family member, someone who should have protected you, and the loss of your dignity and your worth. At least that's what it feels like.

Neglect and disinterest from others because of your age or your stage of life, and the loss of friendship, of companionship. Exclusion from others because of your gender or your age or your ethnicity, and the loss of opportunities.

Slander from coworkers, and the loss of your reputation in the workplace, or a bad dismissal from a boss, and now the loss of provision for your family.

- [32 : 43] A friend shares personal privileged information with others, and you feel like you've lost trust and relational security. Or someone you're disciplining walks away from Jesus, and you've lost that intimate ministry.

loss is a part of this world in both small and significant degrees. And Matthew cites Jeremiah to picture another time of loss, the time of exile for Israel.

It was from Ramah that the Babylonians sent out the Hebrew sons. And as a mother of the nation, Rachel here is symbolizing the mourning of mothers watching their sons be taken off into exile.

But if we read Jeremiah 31, 15 in context, we'll soon learn that Jeremiah, like Hosea, isn't making any kind of prediction. In fact, the event itself again refers to Israel and not Jesus.

So what is Matthew doing here again? Why is he quoting Jeremiah? Well, similar to the Exodus, Matthew sees a pattern of this in exile.

- [34 : 01] He's equating the reign of Herod. Notice this. He's equating the reign of Herod to the Babylonian exile. And Pastor Mark Deber puts it this way.

Bethlehem in Herod's day has become a kind of Ramah in Jeremiah's day. But this is not all that Matthew is doing. If you keep reading Jeremiah, you learn that God turns Rachel's weeping into hope.

Listen to verses 16 to 17. This is in the same chapter. Thus says the Lord, keep your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears.

For there is reward in your work, declares the Lord. Lord, they shall come back from the land of the enemy. There is hope for your future, declares the Lord, and your children shall come back to their own country.

So God promises this return from exile because Israel is his son. Because of his sonship, God cannot abandon him.

- [35 : 12] And so even though he sends them out to exile to discipline, he must bring them back as his son. But here's the problem. Israel brings back with them their sin.

So even though they're out of physical exile, they're still in the spiritual exile. They still are in bondage to something worse than Babylon.

And the question is, what is God going to do? He's taken his son out of Egypt. He's taken his son out of exile. What is he going to do about sin?

And this is what he says just a few verses later. Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, future days, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

Not like the covenants that I made with their fathers. Notice this, on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. My covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord.

- [36 : 23] For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord. I will put my law within them. I will write it on their hearts.

I will be their God and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me.

From the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquities and I will remember their sins no more.

Isn't that an amazing promise? Matthew emphasizes Jesus as God's son, who not only returns from exile, but also brings with him the mercies of God for his people, who remain in spiritual exile, bound in their sin.

And because, notice this, because he's brought us out of spiritual exile, or yes, spiritual exile, he will come back again to bring us out of physical exile.

[37 : 35] He has removed our iniquities, but we're not like Israel, who are brought out of exile. We still live in a fallen world. So what is our hope?

Our hope is still Jesus. If he can bring us out of spiritual exile, how much more in his return will he wipe away every tear, all of the weeping of mothers who've lost their sons, all of those who've been abused and abandoned, Jesus will do away with it all.

And he will make a whole new world where we will worship God forever. I want to say a word, though, to those who do not know Jesus as Savior and Lord.

Lord. This text shows us that mourning is all you have.

You are not just in the world. You are of the world. Because you reject Jesus, he will reject you.

[38 : 50] If you listen closely, you'll hear in Rachel's weeping an echo of the sorrow that accompanied Adam and Eve when God brought them out of the garden, out of the promised land. And it also anticipates a final sorrow, weeping and gnashing of teeth that Jesus says will accompany all of those who God will send out of his presence, all evildoers, all who are given to lawlessness.

Unbelieving friend, flee from the wrath of God. Flee from God's wrath. There are worse things than evil tyrants.

There are worse things than abuse. There are worse things than losing friends. For those who do not know Jesus, you will spend eternity in judgment, eternity in torment, apart from him.

But that's why you need him. That's why you need a true Israel, a better son, someone who's lived the life that you should have lived, who died the death that you should have died, who was raised to life for your sake, so that if you would confess your sins, turn from them, admit them to God, and believe on him, you will be saved.

No more wrath. And one day, no more weeping. Isn't that amazing? Don't you want that? We don't deserve it.

[40 : 34] But God is kind. I know I'm out of time, but I'm going to keep going because this is important. Okay, point number three, God's people return to the promised land.

Verse 19 introduces the final scene. 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. And he rose, and he took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. Now, perhaps you notice the parallels between how our story started and how it ends.

In both places, an angel appears to Joseph. But the difference is instead of fleeing from Egypt, now he returns to Israel. Fear is replaced with hope.

Mourning is replaced with gladness. The child who was exiled is now brought into the promised land. Herod is dead. The king has returned.

[41 : 53] And Matthew seems to close the bookends. But there's another verse. Verse 22. But when Joseph heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in the 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, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.

The return to Israel was only partial for Jesus. Jesus didn't return and assume David's throne.

He was relegated to a backwater district, to Galilee, where nobodies and fishermen lived. And notice Matthew doesn't say he lived in Nazareth.

Nazareth. It says he lived in a city called Nazareth. When people have asked me about where I grew up as I've gotten to know some of you, I always have to say I live in a city called Sellersville.

[43 : 03] Because if you're not from Sellersville, you have no idea what it is. It's the same thing here. If you're not from Nazareth, you have no idea. It's this backwater. Really, nobody has heard of it.

And when you look at this situation, you wonder what in the world is God doing. Jesus shouldn't be hidden. He's the hope of the world, right? He's the true son.

He's the faithful Israel. But this, too, is part of God's plan. God accomplishes his purposes in ways that seem foolish to the world.

Wasn't it Nathanael who said, can anything good come out of Nazareth? And the crowds in Jerusalem who asked, is the Christ to come from Galilee?

When we consider God's sovereignty, which means his righteous rule as king, and his providence, which means his good guidance in every situation toward his purpose, we, too, can have questions of our own.

[44 : 11] I mean, I have so many questions in this story alone. Okay, why send Joseph to Egypt? Why not just strike down Herod like God does in Acts 12 to Herod's descendant?

Why allow the death of innocent sons when you could have preserved them? Why relegate Jesus to Nazareth, where he would grow up in obscurity?

But ultimately, all these questions boil down to one important question. why allow evil at all? Why not save everyone from everything?

It's easy to praise God for his sovereignty when he providentially fulfills his promises to bring wise men to worship him. But what about when it brings suffering?

For Joseph, for Mary, for mothers, for sons, for Jesus, and for us.

[45 : 19] Among the kinds of loss that I've already mentioned in this sermon, some of you know what it is like to lose a child, perhaps even before you're able to hold them for the first time.

God can sympathize uniquely with those who've lost sons. It was God's idea to put his son on the cross.

Jesus says, no one takes my life from me. I lay it down on my own accord. It was God who Paul says, did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all.

And then he says, will he not graciously give us all things? If he's given us his son, what more do we have to ask? If he's made us sons because of Jesus, we have all of the promises, all of the blessings, all of the rights as his children.

He entered into our exile, into our loss, so that he could destroy sin and death and weeping and all those who oppose him.

[46 : 45] And he will bring us to a new promised land. This new creation that we long for. A place where there's no more weeping.

There's no more loss. There's no more enemies. enemies. What Herod meant for evil, killing babies for his own self preservation, God meant for good.

To send his son to exile so that he could accomplish his work and lead God's people to victory over evil. And the amazing fact of this entire story is that the only son that Herod wanted to kill is the son that he could not.

The son that would assume the throne, not just of Israel, but of the whole world. Matthew uses all these different situations in Jesus' story to communicate one central point.

Jesus fulfills the first exile, the first exodus, to ensure a final exodus for God's people. A final exodus out of the world into the new creation.

[48 : 05] And while we still live in exile and weep at loss, we anticipate Jesus' return. And our reunion with God into the promised land where Jesus will reign forever and we will worship him forever.

forever. That hope produces joy and peace amidst sorrow and weeping. At times we feel more like the Israelites in the exodus and the exile than we do like the wise men at Bethlehem.

But take heart, Christian brothers and sisters. Jesus has overcome the world and he is returning again to bring us to the promised land.

That is our hope. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Father, your plan is amazing.

Who could have dreamt up this kind of work? To send your own son to be born in our likeness. To send that son to the cross.

[49 : 21] And then to raise that son from the grave. So that all of your sons in him could also experience forgiveness and newness of life. Father, thank you for your many mercies in Jesus.

And I pray, Lord, for those who don't know you in this room. Especially, Lord, these. That they would see that all they have is weeping and mourning to look forward to.

This world is temporary. It's temporary. It's pleasures are fleeting. But Jesus is eternal. So, Father, would you save some?

Would you bring peace into the turmoil of those who don't know you? Thank you, Father, for Jesus. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.