

## Matthew 2.13-15 'A New Exodus' Transcript

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Imagine watching the final episode of a TV show where the producers decide to leave the plot on a cliff-hanger right at the end of a long, maybe whole series of shows—12 episodes—and on the last episode, still with unresolved conflict, they decide, "We're just going to leave the whole thing on a cliff-hanger and not tell everyone how the story finishes."

The main characters are in a dire situation. The major mystery remains unsolved. The fate of the story is uncertain. The show ends with a dramatic scene, and then nothing. The show leaves you in a state of complete suspense, and you're utterly clueless about how it will all come together in the end.

If you knew nothing about the Bible and you began reading in Genesis and kept reading and reading, you would soon become engrossed in a story. And if you stopped at the conclusion of the Old Testament and went no further, it would be like a suspenseful film missing its rightful ending.

It's hard to overstate just the level of suspense and tension that remains at the end of the Old Testament—so many questions left unanswered—before that Bible reader finds their way to the first pages of Matthew's gospel and the New Testament.

But once we arrive in Matthew's gospel, all of our questions and the mystery begins to resolve itself. We discover that despite appearances, God never halted His redemptive program. The journey of redemption never came to an end; it never shifted. He never neglected His plans. The mission remained intact. God sent His son Jesus to fulfill all the promises and usher in the kingdom of God.

Matthew introduced this climactic fulfillment in his introductory heading. We have considered already in Matthew 1, verse 1, the record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham. So here is the greater Davidic King. Here is the greater son of Abraham, the father of the nation of the Jews. Here is the Messiah, Saviour, Christ for the nations.

And so the tension begins to unwind, and we see now what God is doing. So I want to bring you a message this morning I have entitled "A New Exodus."

My choice of title for this message comes from Matthew's interpretation of the events that he narrates for us in verses 13 to 15 of Matthew 2, and specifically how he traces the journey of the Holy Family—Jesus, Mary, and Joseph—down into Egypt in flight to Egypt to escape Herod.

Matthew, the divinely inspired interpreter of the Old Testament, states that these events, as they head down into Egypt and so would come out of Egypt, occurred as a recapitulation of the story of the nation of Israel in the first Exodus. And so strong a connection, as Matthew says, it was to fulfill the first Exodus of Israel from Egypt.

Matthew, you see, friends, sees the story of Israel repeating itself in the life of the Messiah, even in His infancy. And this is not without deep significance or purpose. You see, in God's design, as another author has said, Israel is reduced to one.

Now we see that this story of the Bible up to the first page of Matthew is not void or incomplete. The mold and mission held out to the nation of Israel, whom God brought out of Egypt in the first Exodus, is finding its completion. That story is finding completion and fulfillment in a single man—the true Davidic King, the true son of Abraham, the faithful son who brings God's rule and salvation to the nations and to us.

And so they say history repeats itself. You've heard that saying. Well, for Jesus, it really does. In fact, Matthew observes that this repetition of escape to Egypt and calling out from Egypt is to be understood beyond mere analogy, beyond simply a comparison, but very fulfillment is Matthew's choice of words—a completion, a perfecting in a single man.

What was the calling of an entire people? God's ordering of history would see that the Messiah's life would be a retelling of Israel's history and communicate that the fulfillment of God's purposes given to the nation was always meant ultimately for the true servant son.

And so I have this heading: "A New Exodus," because it is Christ who shall lead for God's people the second Exodus—redemption from the captivity of slavery to our sin, which is against God.

So how does this passage apply to our hearts as we continue forward? Well, this passage applies through our recognition of the Lord Jesus as our Messiah, our Savior King. Jesus is the one in whom the prophetic promises of God find their glorious climactic conclusion and soon to be consummation. He leads His people in Exodus out of their sins, out of a dying world, and into His new creation.

God promised Abraham, "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 22), and the seed is none other than Christ, of course (Galatians 3:16). Matthew puts an end to our wondering of how this blessing would come. And so Matthew says to us, "Watch the Son. Fix your eyes on Him, the one of God's appointment, the one who fulfills the law and its perfect demands. Watch the one who relives the pilgrimage of my covenant nations is the Lord. See how He fulfills what they could never."

He says, "Here is the true servant of Yahweh, the one to whom the prophetic voice cried out in anticipation in Isaiah 42:6: 'I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness; I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, and I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations.'"

Matthew is telling us, "Watch the Son and see God's work." Before we get into the biblical text, by way of brief reminder, we saw in the context of Matthew 2 that prior to the Holy Family's flight to Egypt, narrated for us here, worshipers—wise

men, Magi from the east—have come seeking the one who was born King of the Jews.

And so if Matthew chapter 1 introduced us to the Messiah, the promised one of God, then the opening of Matthew 2 brings worshipers to the Messiah. And Matthew has already indicated to us, albeit subtly, that this is no happily ever after story, though not yet. For these were the days—remember how we noted there in chapter 2, verse 1—these were the days of Herod the king.

And anyone who knows anything about Herod, your ears are tickling as you read those words. Something is going to happen here. Here was a wicked and cruel envious man—a man who will soon, in the subsequent verses in Matthew, seek to crush the Lord's Christ.

And so to the biblical text, and we'll just move through these briefly, then consider the doctrine. In verse 15, God's provision is the first heading—God's provision. Chapter 2, verse 13a: God's provision.

We've already seen God's hand of provision over the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, ordering His steps. And often we forget who's really in control in the world, don't we? The mystery of God's providence is that the free actions of men and women are not outside of God's sovereignty.

How's that for a statement? The author Arthur Pink speaks of the sovereignty of God this way: "What is sovereignty? We mean the supremacy of God, the kingship of God, the godhood of God. To say that God is sovereign is to declare that God is God. To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is the Most High, doing according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, so that none can say, 'Stay His hand' or say unto Him, 'What doest thou?'" (Daniel 4:35).

And does the psalmist not agree when he writes, "But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases" (Psalm 115). But God's sovereignty can be a mystery to us. God's provision for us can be a mystery to us because, you see, simultaneously alongside God's sovereign providence and authority over all the affairs of men, simultaneously is mankind's will and his morally culpable free will—free actions.

Yet the Scripture presents man's will and God's sovereignty as mutually compatible. Together they do not disagree. Man has will; God has sovereignty. These go together. So we have to remind ourselves who's really in control as we consider God's provision for Joseph and the royal family.

God has nurtured the messianic line right through Abraham, David, and so on. He has chosen Mary and her husband Joseph to be the parents of the Messiah, conceived by immaculate conception. He has led wise men from the eastern lands by a supernatural light. You doubt God's sovereignty when He uses a supernatural star to lead people from eastern lands to find a child born in Bethlehem?

He has brought provision through the wise men to Joseph to care for his family—frankincense, gold, myrrh presented before Christ but used undoubtedly for Joseph and Mary's sustenance. See, God is watching over them. He is providing for His people.

And as we see in verse 13 of chapter 2, God will hear and even warn Joseph of Herod's wicked scheming and so-called Joseph to flee. It's as if one father is saying to another father to warn him that he needs to protect this family, especially infant Christ. And so He calls him, "Get up, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt." This is the Lord's provision in the life of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus.

The second heading is this: Herod's plot. And we continue in verse 13, and we learn that Herod is going to seek the child to destroy him. Some say even as a million Jews were living in Alexandria of Egypt, and that's where the Lord commands Joseph to flee to. There was a large amount of Jews living in Egypt already. This is why He sends him here.

And it's no surprise to anyone who knows the history of Herod that we find that he is wanting to destroy the child Christ. Herod was the type of man that we find him to be in the Gospels, and soon we will see him enter into a rage after learning he has been tricked by the Magi.

In verse 16 of Matthew 2, he will seem to have all male children in Bethlehem under two years old killed in order to wipe out any threats to his own power. And the acts of the wicked King Herod, we will find an even more sinister spirit, of course, working as if through him—it is of Satan himself.

In fact, we find in Herod, as he seeks to destroy Christ and plot to blot out from existence the Messiah, we find actually parallels in Revelation chapter 12. You don't have to turn there, but in Revelation 12, we find John speaking symbolically of Satan, or as he refers to him as the dragon's attempt to destroy the Christ as a child.

Revelation 12, verses 1 to 4: "A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of 12 stars. And she was with child, and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth. Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems. And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth, and the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth, he might devour her child."

It is Satan's work that Herod would seek to destroy the child Christ. And that is Herod's plot. Joseph receives this call from the Lord to take Jesus and Mary and flee to Egypt. And we ask the question, why Egypt?

I said earlier there's a good number of Jews living in Egypt already at this time, and Egypt is not too far away, further along the Mediterranean Sea coastline. Egypt was outside of Herod's rule. It had become almost a traditional country for Jews to flee to when there was trouble in the land of Palestine.

There was the ultimate reason, of course, however, that their entry into the land of Egypt was by God's purpose for the life of Jesus, was to overlay the life of the nation and to transcend the story of the nation of Israel.

And so we have Herod's plot. The third and final heading is Joseph's obedience in verse 14—Joseph's obedience. By this point, perhaps Joseph is beginning to trust the Lord. You see, it sometimes takes in our lives difficult situations that we can't answer or explain ourselves to really learn how to trust the Lord.

We can go our whole lives with ease and comfort and not learn how to trust the Lord and rely on Him to provide. Joseph is quickly learning how to trust in God. We already know that the Lord has spoken to him and told him that he doesn't have to fear being betrothed to Mary.

Joseph was a God-fearing man, a righteous man who himself would have been looking for how the Lord would break into history, how the Messiah would come and what He would perform on behalf of His people. And ever since the angel of the Lord reassured him that he can take Mary as his wife, we have seen a man who has walked diligently in obedience before the Lord.

Remember in Matthew 1, verse 24, that says, "When he awoke, he did exactly as the Lord commanded him." And then in Matthew 2, verse 14, here we find that after hearing a warning from God in a dream, he immediately rises, even in the middle of the night.

Look at what the Lord asks him to walk through—to leave in a rush and flee, to get out of Bethlehem, to head to Egypt, even in the darkness in the middle of the night. Joseph obeys. This is something of learning how to trust God even in the darkness.

So we've considered those headings: God's provision, Herod's plot, Joseph's obedience. Now I really want to drill down into what is the key here in this section—why it is that we're slowing down for just a few verses.

So the doctrinal focus is what we want to consider now. Let's press into Matthew 2, verse 15 together, where Matthew explicitly uses this common turn of phrase that he does throughout his gospel: "This was to fulfill," and then quotes from an Old Testament passage. Matthew does this frequently; he is known for it.

And here we find it again. So when Joseph leads Jesus and Mary down into Egypt to await such a time as Herod would die—which, as we understand, was not for long; some say that they would only be in Egypt for a couple of weeks—here it is almost already on his deathbed.

Matthew tells us that as they go into Egypt and come back out, it was a prophetic fulfillment: "This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Out of Egypt I called my son.'"

So the story of entering and leaving Egypt is a fulfillment of what happened to the nation, as Matthew is demonstrating that God is repeating Israel's story in the Messiah. These events that happened to Israel are repeating themselves in the life of Jesus. That's what's going on here.

And so strong a connection, he uses "fulfill," and we don't want to miss that. The Messiah will retrace not only Adam's steps but Israel's steps and succeed where they failed. That's the point.

And this won't be the only time we see this theme of repeating or recapitulating the story of Israel and Jesus. We find many parallels in Jesus' life to the life of the nation. It's all there to tell us something, to show us something.

Remember how God referred to the nation of Israel as His son, His firstborn (Exodus 4:22). Israel is my son, my firstborn. But here it's Christ, the son, being called out of Egypt. But as the nation was an unfaithful son, of course.

In fact, this is what we see in the context of the reference that Matthew makes. He is quoting here in verse 15 from Hosea chapter 11, verse 1. I encourage you to even go actually read right through Hosea in one sitting; it'll help you immensely.

There in Hosea 11:1, it says, "When Israel was a youth, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son." The more they called them, the more they went from them. They kept sacrificing to the Baals and burning incense to idols.

You see, the prophet Hosea is reminding the wayward nation of Israel that when she was a youth, God had mercy on her. When she was nothing, I think there's this language in Hosea of them being like a grape in the wilderness—nothing. There's no hope for them. But God swoops in and He saves them.

They would have been wiped out, but God, in His mercy, saves them for His own purposes and draws them out. And so Hosea is reminding Israel in her depravity and in her rebellion, "When Israel was a youth, the Lord loved you. Out of Egypt I called my son."

This beautiful language of closeness and communion—sonship. But then we see that Israel was, in fact, an unfaithful son. And so in verse 2, Hosea says there in chapter 11, "They kept sacrificing to the Baals and burning incense to idols." They were unfaithful; they did not keep the Lord's Covenant.

And this is their story right the way through the Old Testament. That's how the tension builds. How is this going to resolve? And you get into a book like Judges,



and it's just cycles of depravity. How is this going to end? We need a faithful son.

The nation was in apostasy as a whole, and eventually we find both the kingdom of Israel, the north, and the kingdom of Judah in the south in exile and Babylon. But God's promises are not void. He would raise up His faithful son, the Messiah—the man who would embody all that Israel was called to be.

And so down to Egypt, when Israel went down to Egypt, Jesus, the true faithful son, out of Egypt came. Israel out of Egypt came Christ. There's the patterning there—the repeating of history.

Think of other ways that Jesus repeats the life of the nation. We think of Pharaoh persecuting the nation of Jews down in Egypt. He persecuted them. Or do we not find the same thing with Herod persecuting Christ?

We think of the nation of Israel passing through the waters following Moses for their deliverance. Likewise, Christ will find Him too soon passing through the waters of baptism—a corresponding type. Just as Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, when Matthew chapter 4, we're going to find Jesus wandering in the wilderness for 40 days.

See, there's repeating history here. He is being tempted, but He has proven the faithful son in the wilderness. Just as the nation of Israel consisted of 12 tribes representing the 12 sons of Jacob or Israel, Jesus also, in Matthew chapter 4, will call for Himself 12 disciples.

Like Moses, after the first Exodus at Mount Sinai, he receives the law upon the mountain. And in Matthew chapter 5, what do we find but Christ ascending a mountain and giving the law—the Sermon on the Mount. He proclaims, "You have heard it was said, but I say to you."

Just as the Lord commanded the nation of Israel at Sinai in Exodus 19 to be His own possession among all the peoples—a kingdom of priests and a holy nation—so too does Jesus call His people, Jew, in the Great Commission (Matthew 28) to be witnesses to all nations of Him through the authority granted to Him.

You see, it's repeating history. And who could forget Israel's three offices of prophet, priest, and king—all which come together in perfect harmony, completely and finally? You see, this is the man of God's choosing—Israel reduced to one.

It's a controversial point for many. If you know your theology, you'll know that not all agree with this type of teaching. There are deeper levels to this again that we can't touch for now, I'm aware. But I have little difficulty with this language of Israel reduced to one because it's all coming here straight out of the text—the unfaithful son and the faithful son.

The faithful Israelite man—God met the life of Christ onto the life of the nation. He is the faithful son. His life fulfilled Israel's calling. The mold given to Israel was of perfect righteousness—to live before the Lord, to keep His covenant and His laws—and they failed.

And so comes Christ, as Paul says in Galatians, born under the law. And He is the faithful son. He keeps the covenant that Israel failed. Isaiah further makes this point. Isaiah, more than any other of the Old Testament books, anticipates Israel's restoration from exile in Babylon as a second Exodus, and that it would occur through a singular figure, and it would trigger Israel's redemption.

If you read in the servant songs, Isaiah 42:1 to 4: "Behold My servant whom I uphold, My chosen one in whom My soul delights." And at this point in your reading in Isaiah, like, "Is this talking about the nation of Israel, or is this talking about the Messiah to come?"

And there's a deliberate ambiguity there in Isaiah because he's making us consider, "Was this about Israel, or is this actually about the Messiah?" Because both are considered the Lord's chosen. And you keep reading, "I have put My Spirit upon Him." Is this the nation, or is this the Messiah?

He will bring forth justice to the nations. Well, that was Israel's calling to the world, but they failed in that. And then it keeps saying, "He will not cry out or raise His voice, nor will His voice be heard in the street. A bruised reed He will not break, and a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish. He will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not be disheartened or crushed until He has established justice in the earth, and the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law."

But you start putting together the picture in Isaiah of the servant, and you realize that it's actually talking about the Messiah and what He would do in His ministry. You come to Isaiah chapter 53, and it says that this servant was to be crushed for the sins of His people, and the Lord would put Him to death. He would carry in His body our iniquities.

He would be the faithful son and die for the sins of His people. So let's apply this doctrinal consideration before we close. In our Lord Jesus, we witnessed the true image of God. The Bible often depicts sonship as a metaphor, and Luke 3:38 describes Adam as God's son. He was created in God's image, and Israel is called as a corporate Adam to bear likeness to their Creator, to walk before Him and be holy.

But you see, mankind is in sin, and we are darkened images of God. But not Christ. He is Emmanuel. He is God with us—greater than Adam, greater than Abraham, greater than Isaac, greater than Jacob, greater than the nation itself, greater than Moses, greater than David.

And Jesus, as Isaiah foretold, He comes (Isaiah 42:7) to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon and those who dwell in darkness from the prison. There's your second Exodus. We have a new Exodus here in Matthew 2:15 because the second Exodus is coming.

Christ comes out of Egypt, and so we're going to learn He is going to lead the captives free. He's going to die for our sins upon a cross and lead us out of bondage to sin and into His glorious light. There's your Exodus.

Jesus Christ is man's salvation because He leads us out of captivity to sin, and He takes those who are slaves to darkness—those who shrink from the light, those who blaspheme His name, those who rebel against Him in their hearts, those who want no part of Him—and He redeems them and He restores them.

He lives for them. He earns their righteousness. He dies for them. He suffers under a curse of judgment and sheds His blood on a cross so that we could become God's righteousness in Him. Ephesians 2, verses 4 to 5 says, "But God, being rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead

in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ. For by grace you have been saved."

Jesus says to all who receive Him, "In Me, you are the children of God. In Me, you can know eternal life and everlasting peace." And so says Matthew, "Out of Egypt I called My son." And as the son comes forth from Egypt, we will learn of His story that He is the one who leads the captives free.

He is the faithful son who brings God's law, who brings God's justice, who brings God's light into the world. And if you are in Him this morning, I wish you could know the great inheritance that you have in Him. Rejoice and find your comfort in Christ. He is our deliverer.

Let's pray.