

Notes on the Greek New Testament Day 2 – January 2nd – Matthew 2:13-3:6

Works frequently referenced in these notes on Matthew

Blomberg, Craig L	<i>Jesus and The Gospels</i> , Apollos, Leicester, 1997
Hagner, Donald A	<i>Word Biblical Commentary Vols.33a & 33b: Matthew 1-13 & Matthew 14-28</i> , Word Books, Dallas, 1993 & 1995
Morris, Leon	<i>The Gospel According to Matthew</i> , Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1992

Verses 13-23

"This pericope is unique to Matthew and is probably drawn from his special source. Two structural features of the pericope are striking. First, the passage divides readily into three separate frames, each ending with an OT quotation: (1) vv 13-15, the dream warning and flight from Egypt (Hos 11:1); (2) vv 16-18, the slaughter of the innocents (Jer 31:15); (3) vv 19-23, the return to Israel and settlement in Nazareth (Isa 11:1?).

"Second, there is a remarkable parallelism in the opening of the first and third frames. Apart from the genitive absolutes that begin both frames, we have nearly verbatim agreement in (1) the account of the revelation; (2) the initial imperatives of the angel; and (3) the obedient response of Joseph (which, in each instance, mirrors the angelic commands of the same frame)." Hagner.

Verse 13

Ἀναχωρησάντων δὲ αὐτῶν ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου φαίνεται κατ' ὄναρ τῷ Ἰωσήφ λέγων· Ἐγερθεὶς παράλαβε τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ φεῦγε εἰς Αἴγυπτον, καὶ ἴσθι ἐκεῖ ἕως ἂν εἶπω σοι· μέλλει γὰρ Ἡρώδης ζητεῖν τὸ παιδίον τοῦ ἀπολέσαι αὐτό.

ἀναχωρησάντων Verb, aor act ptc, gen pl

ἀναχωρεω see v.12

φαινω see v.7

The historical present tense adds vividness to the narrative.

ὄναρ n see v.12

ἐγειρω raise

παράλαβε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s

παραλαμβάνω take

φευγω flee, run away from

ἴσθι Verb, pres imperat, 2 s εἶμι

ἐκεῖ there, in that place, to that place

ἕως ἂν until

This use of ἕως followed by ἂν and the aorist subjunctive is a construction used "to denote that the commencement of an event is dependent upon circumstances." (Baur, Arndt & Gingrich).

εἶπω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s λεγω
μελλω be going, be about, intend
ζητεω seek, search for, look for
ἀπολλυμι destroy, kill

"This intent is in full accord with what is known of Herod's character and reflects his perception of his threatened status. The verb ἀπολεσαι, 'to destroy,' anticipates its recurrence in the passion narratives (27:20), where, in that instance, it is the chief priests and elders who are the acting subjects." Hagner

Verse 14

ὁ δὲ ἐγερθεὶς παρέλαβε τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ νυκτὸς καὶ ἀνεχώρησεν εἰς Αἴγυπτον,

Note how Joseph's exact obedience is reflected in the parallel between the words of this and the previous verse.

νυξ, νυκτος f night

ἀναχωρεω see v.12

Verse 15

καὶ ἦν ἐκεῖ ἕως τῆς τελευτῆς Ἡρώδου· ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος· Ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ἐκάλεσα τὸν υἱόν μου.

ἐκεῖ there, in that place

τελευτη, ης f death

πληρωθῇ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s πληρωω
fill, fulfill, bring about

ῥηθὲν Verb, aor pass ptc, n nom/acc s λεγω

The quotation is from Hos 11:1 with some variants from the LXX (being more in line with the MT). Carson points out that "The NT writers insist that the OT can be rightly interpreted only if the entire revelation is kept in perspective as it is historically unfolded." He goes on to argue for a kind of Israel-Jesus typology in which, "Jesus is the locus of true Israel." Hagner similarly says that πληρωθῆ is to be understood not as suggesting that Hosea wrote of this future event but in terms of typological correspondence. W.D.Davies says that Matthew "sees in the history of Jesus a recapitulation of that of Israel." Hagner comments, "Although Matthew does not capitalise on the Moses-Christ typology, it is certainly not far from his thinking. The one who has come to 'save his people from their sins' (1:21) is the eschatological counterpart to the one who saved his people from the bondage in Egypt... For Matthew, all Israel's history finds its recapitulation in the life of Jesus."

Verse 16

Τότε Ἡρώδης ἰδὼν ὅτι ἐνεπαίχθη ὑπὸ τῶν μάγων ἐθυμώθη λίαν, καὶ ἀποστείλας ἀνεῖλεν πάντας τοὺς παῖδας τοὺς ἐν Βηθλέεμ καὶ ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ὄριοις αὐτῆς ἀπὸ διετοῦς καὶ κατωτέρω, κατὰ τὸν χρόνον ὃν ἠκρίβωσεν παρὰ τῶν μάγων.

τοτε then, at that time

ἰδων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s ὄραω see, observe, recognise

ἐνεπαίχθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s ἐμπαίζω trick, deceive

The primary meaning of the word is to mock.

ἐθυμώθη Verb, aor pass dep indic, 3 s θυμοομαι be furious

λιαν adv exceedingly, greatly

ἀποστελλω send, send out

ἀνεῖλεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἀναιρω do away with, kill

παις, παιδος m & f servant, child

ὄριον, ου n neighbourhood, vicinity

διετης, ες two years old

κατωτερω adv. under, less (of age)

χρονος, ου m time, period of time

ἀκριβωω see v.7

Herod "gives himself an extra measure both of temporal and geographical assurance." Hagner. This would probably have amounted to about 20 children.

Verse 17

τότε ἐπληρώθη τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Ἱερεμίου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος·

τοτε see v.16

πληρωω see v.15

ῥηθὲν see v.15

Verse 18

Φωνὴ ἐν Ῥαμὰ ἠκούσθη, κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὄδυρμος πολὺς· Ῥαχὴλ κλαίουσα τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς, καὶ οὐκ ἤθελεν παρακληθῆναι ὅτι οὐκ εἰσίν.

The words are from Jer. 31:15 (LXX 38:15), with significant differences from the LXX. Rachel is viewed figuratively as the mother of the nation.

κλαυθμος, ου m bitter crying, wailing

ὄδυρμος, ου m mourning, grieving

TR C D L W f¹³ and syr^{s,c}, among others, include a third word, θρηνος (a synonym of the other two), this apparently by way of harmonisation with the text of LXX.

πολυς, πολλη, πολυ gen πολλου, ης, ου much

κλαιω weep, cry; trans weep for

τεκνον, ου n child

ἤθελεν Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s θελω

wish, will

παρακληθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin

παρακαλεω encourage, comfort

"Nothing can alter the fact of the Exile and nothing can alter the fact of the killings at Bethlehem. Thus the grief remains. Yet we should add that Jeremiah's prophecy goes on to the note of hope (Jer 31:17) and to the making of a new covenant (Jer 31:31-34)." Morris. Hagner, recalling his earlier statement, "For Matthew, all Israel's history finds its recapitulation in the life of Jesus", says that this is "further substantiated by Matthew's introduction of an exilic motif in Jeremiah's reference to Rachel's weeping for her children... The story of Jesus, even at its beginning, sums up and presents the ultimate significance of all that has preceded, both good and evil. This is especially true of the major events such as the slavery/exodus and the exile/return – which are already related in later writings of the OT as being theologically of one fabric... In Matthew's perspective, Jesus is understood as summarising the whole experience of Israel as well as bringing it to fulfilment. Every strand of hope and trial in the OT is woven together in the eschatological appearance of the Promised One."

Verse 19

Τελευτήσαντος δὲ τοῦ Ἡρώδου ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου φαίνεται κατ' ὄναρ τῷ Ἰωσήφ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ

τελευταω die

φαινω see v.7

ὄναρ n see v.12

Verse 20

λέγων· Ἐγερθεὶς παράλαβε τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ πορεύου εἰς γῆν Ἰσραὴλ, τεθνήκασιν γὰρ οἱ ζητοῦντες τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ παιδίου.

Compare the words of command in v.13

πορευομαι go, travel
γη, γης f earth, land

An obvious echo of the Exodus narrative.

τεθνήκασιν Verb, perf act indic, 3 pl θνησκω
die; perf be dead

ζητοῦντες Verb, pres act ptc, m nom s ζητεω
see v.13

ψυχη, ης f inmost being, life, 'soul'

Cf. Exod 4:19.

Verse 21

ὁ δὲ ἐγερθεὶς παρέλαβε τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς γῆν Ἰσραὴλ.

εἰσῆλθεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s εισερχομαι
enter, go in, come in

The echo of the words of command in v.20 underlines Joseph's careful obedience.

Verse 22

ἀκούσας δὲ ὅτι Ἀρχέλαος βασιλεύει τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἀντὶ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ Ἡρώδου ἐφοβήθη ἐκεῖ ἀπελθεῖν· χρηματισθεὶς δὲ κατ' ὄναρ ἀνεχώρησεν εἰς τὰ μέρη τῆς Γαλιλαίας,

βασιλευω rule, reign

ἀντι prep with gen in place of

πατηρ, πατρος m father

ἐφοβήθη Verb, aor pass dep indic, 3 s
φοβεομαι fear, be afraid (of)

ἐκεῖ there, in that place

χρηματισθεὶς Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s
χρηματιζω warn, direct, instruct

ὄναρ n see v.12

ἀναχωρεω see v.12

μερος, ους n part, piece, region

"Luke tells us that they had lived in Nazareth before going to Bethlehem (Luke 1:26; 2:4). Perhaps they would have liked to make their home in the city of David, especially in view of the circumstances attending Jesus' birth. But there was a difficulty arising from the fact that the area was now ruled by Archelaus ... He was noted for his cruelty even in an age when cruel men were not scarce, so it is not surprising that Joseph feared to settle in this man's dominions." Morris. Hagner comments, "To be sure, another son of Herod, Herod Antipas, ruled as ethnarch over Galilee and Perea. But he was a more tolerant ruler, and Galilee in his day became known for revolutionary sentiments that would never have been tolerated by his father."

"The mention of Galilee is theologically important for Matthew as we shall see in 4:12-16. There he again writes, now of Jesus, ἀνεχώρησεν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν, 'he departed into Galilee' (4:12). It is in Galilee that he inaugurates his ministry in fulfilment of Isa 9:1 (which Matthew then cites). Galilee's large population of Gentiles symbolises the universal significance Matthew sees in Jesus." Hagner.

Verse 23

καὶ ἐλθὼν κατόκησεν εἰς πόλιν λεγομένην Ναζαρέτ, ὅπως πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ τῶν προφητῶν ὅτι Ναζωραῖος κληθήσεται.

κατοικεω live, settle

πολις, εως f city, town

The alternative spelling Ναζαρεθ is found in a number of MSS.

ὅπως (or ὅπως ἂν) that, in order that
πληρωθῇ see v.15 for this and the following words

Ναζωραῖος, ου m inhabitant of Nazareth, Nazarene

Note the untypically general nature of the reference, 'what was spoken through the prophets...' Morris writes, "It appears that Matthew is drawing attention to the thrust of Old Testament prophecy about Christ rather than to one passage. Jesus went to Galilee so that what was written about him in the prophets could be fulfilled, and we see this in his being called a Nazarene, a citizen of an obscure and unimportant town. Had he been known as 'Jesus of Bethlehem' he would have had the aura of one who came from a royal city; there would have been overtones of messianic majesty. But 'Jesus the Nazarene' carries with it overtones of contempt. We are to understand the prophets as pointing to one who would be despised and rejected and Jesus as fulfilling this by being connected with obscure Nazareth." Others have suggested that Matthew alludes to:

- i) Jesus as a Nazirite (cf. Num 6:1-6) – Sanders, Schweizer;
- ii) The messianic prophecy concerning the Branch (Hebrew *naser* cf. Is 11:1) – Black, Stendahl, Hagner.

Matthew 3:1-12

"The background to this passage is to be found in the expectation of Jewish apocalyptic (cf. Dan 2:44; 7:14-27). John, the appointed forerunner, announces that the promised kingdom is on the verge of dawning. The promises of a new, golden age are about to be realised. This means not only the experience of blessing for the righteous but the overthrow and judgment of the wicked, the enemies of Israel. To a larger extent, therefore, John's announcement is readily intelligible to his listeners, who eagerly await their God to act. Extrabiblical evidence (e.g., *Pss Sol.* 17-18) indicates that such expectations were at a high level in first century Palestine. At the same time, John's message contains some surprises." Hagner.

Verse 1

Ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις παραγίνεται Ἰωάννης ὁ βαπτιστὴς κηρύσσων ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ τῆς Ἰουδαίας

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that, those

It is not intended to imply that these events closely followed those surrounding Jesus birth. This phrase should probably be understood to mean "'in those crucial days' or 'in that critical time.'" Hill.

παραγίνομαι come, arrive, appear
βαπτιστής, ου m Baptist, baptiser
κηρύσσω preach, proclaim

"The word properly means something like "make known by a herald" and indicates a message given by authority to the proclaimer, not a free composition of his own." Morris.

ἐρημος, ου f deserted place, uninhabited region

"This particular wilderness is that of *Judea*, the country from the watershed in the Judean hills eastward to the river Jordan. Its rainfall is light and its slopes steep; thus it offers little scope for agriculture. John will have been located toward the south of the area, where there were fords and people could come out to meet him." Morris.

Verse 2

καὶ λέγων· Μετανοεῖτε, ἤγγικεν γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

μετανοεω repent, have a change of heart, turn from one's sins

"In preaching repentance, John takes up the message of the prophets. In anticipation of God's activity which involves judgment as well as redemption, there can only be one clarion call: to turn, to return to the God of Israel." Hagner. This distinctive of John's preaching is also the note with which Jesus began his own ministry (Matt 4:17). Hagner comments, "John and Jesus therefore stand in continuity, and the message of John to the Jews is equally a message to Matthew's church."

ἤγγικεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s ἐγγίζω approach, draw near
οὐρανός, ου m heaven

Matthew's 'kingdom of heaven' is equivalent to 'kingdom of God' in the other Gospels. Matthew favours this phrase (33 occurrences) and it is used only by him in the NT. Morris concurs that it is "a Jewish expression with the word 'God' avoided out of motives of reverence" but then goes on to indicate something of the distinctive character of the kingdom signified by this term: it is the reign of God which is already exercised in heaven but which is being extended to earth. The kingdom is closely connected with the person of Jesus – hence its being near.

Verse 3

οὗτος γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ ῥηθεὶς διὰ Ἡσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος· Φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ· Ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ.

ῥηθεὶς Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s λεγω

The quotation is from Is 40:3. Matthew follows the LXX verbatim except for the last word αὐτοῦ which in LXX is του θεου ἡμων.

φωνη, ης f voice, noise

It is the message rather than the messenger which is important.

βοαω call, cry out, shout

ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ Hagner comments, "In the parallelism of the Hebrew text, [this] is part of the message of the voice; that is, the preparation is to be made in the wilderness... But by either understanding, John fulfills the passage. His was a voice crying in the wilderness, and it was in the wilderness that he offered the baptism of preparation (cf. v 1). John's message of repentance and his call to righteousness correspond to preparing the way of the Promised One or, using Isaiah's metaphor, 'making his paths straight.'"

ἐτοιμαζω prepare, make ready
ὁδος, ου f way, path, road

"The Lord' refers in Isaiah to Yahweh, but the Baptist is applying the passage to Jesus. When Matthew records this use of Scripture he is revealing something of his Christology." Morris.

εὐθους, εια, υ straight, level
τριβος, ου f path, pathway

Verse 4

αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ Ἰωάννης εἶχεν τὸ ἔνδυμα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τριχῶν καμήλου καὶ ζώνην δερματίνην περὶ τὴν ὀσφρὸν αὐτοῦ, ἡ δὲ τροφή ἦν αὐτοῦ ἀκρίδες καὶ μέλι ἄγριον.

εἶχεν Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s ἔχω
ἐνδύμα, τος n clothing, garment
τριχῶν Noun, gen pl θριξ, τριχος f hair
καμήλος, ου m & f camel
ζωνη, ης f belt
δερματινος, η, ον of leather
ὀσφρως, υος f waist

Cf. 2 Kings 1:8 for similar clothing worn by Elijah. "John symbolises the breaking of the centuries of prophetic silence recognised by the Jews themselves (cf. 1 Macc 4:46; 9:27; 14:41). Here then is a new thing: a voice from God out of the silence, self authenticating by its power and message, as well as by its unusual mediator. Prophecy appears again in the midst of Israel, the people of God." Hagner.

τροφή, ης f food, nourishment
ἀκρις, ιδος f locust, grasshopper
μέλι, ιτος n honey
ἄγριος, α, ον wild

"The picture we get is of a man who lived simply. His clothing was far from splendid or elaborate, and his food such as could be obtained from the wild." Morris.

Verse 5

τότε ἐξεπορεύετο πρὸς αὐτὸν Ἱεροσόλυμα καὶ πᾶσα ἡ Ἰουδαία καὶ πᾶσα ἡ περιχώρος τοῦ Ἰορδάνου,

τοτε then, at that time
ἐκπορευομαι go or come out
περιχωρος, ου f surrounding region,
neighbourhood
Ἰορδανης, ου m Jordan River

"The forerunner ... appears to enjoy as much or even more success than will the one whom he precedes." Hagner.

Verse 6

καὶ ἐβαπτίζοντο ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ ποταμῷ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἐξομολογούμενοι τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν.

βαπτίζω baptise, wash
ποταμος, ου m river, stream

"Since Christians are familiar with baptism only as a religious ceremony, we are apt to miss some of the meaning. But the verb means 'dip, plunge' and in the passive, 'be drowned'; it is used of ships in the sense 'sink' ... We should not miss the significance of this violent imagery. Baptism signifies death to a whole way of life (cf. Rom 6:3). The Jews employed baptism in admitting Gentiles as proselytes, but the sting in John's practice was that he applied it to Jews!" Morris.

"Remarkably, Jews came to submit themselves to a rite that for them had the association of the initiation of gentile proselytes into Judaism. But the announcement of the imminent end of the age no doubt seemed to justify confession of sins and the cleansing symbolism of the baptism." Hagner.

ἐξομολογεω agree; midd confess,
acknowledge
ἁμαρτια, ας f sin

"When people really repent they say so." Morris.