EXODUS

And after they 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.
Matthew 2:13

This passage is closely connected to the passage of the magi's departure that precedes it in Matthew's narrative. In that passage, the magi were warned in a dream not to return to Herod and so they departed going a different way then whence they came.

Here again, Matthew places the reoccurrence of dream revelations in his Gospel. The dream motif is especially important to Matthew when it concerns Joseph.

Matthew structures the latter portions of chapter 2 in his passages with intent to draw attention to particular aspects he desires the readers to understand.

1) He gives accounts of revelations to Joseph in dreams by an angel of the Lord.
2) In each account an imperative is given by the angel.
3) In each account, Matthew records the obedience of Joseph to the imperative.

Also, Matthew's narrative carries great theological significance as each section from 2:13-23 closes with a citation from the Old Testament and paints an historic theme from Israel's past that the newborn Messiah fulfills.

**One important reality to understand regarding the authors of the Gospels is that history is flowing like a current. As those currents move along, their events cannot be changed. The author, however, has the ability to present the events in those currents giving attention to the details he desires his readers to behold. His writing, therefore, is a matter of intention and style which need not contradict those of another Gospel writer.*

Since Matthew is setting up an Exodus theme in his Gospel, this is a good place to parallel his *attention* and *intention* to reveal this Exodus theme in his material.

Pharaoh and Herod kill Hebrews infants, of which Moses and Jesus are included.

Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, "Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live."
Exodus 1:22

The Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the magi, became furious,

and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all the region who were two years old or under.
Matthew 2:16

The Deliverer Moses fled when Pharaoh sought to kill him. The Deliverer Jesus fled when Herod desired to kill him.

When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian.
Exodus 2:15

An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to look for the child to kill him."
Matthew 2:13

The lives of both Moses and Jesus are delivered due to their parent's actions.

When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the river bank.
Exodus 2:3

Then he got up, took the child and his mother during the night, and went to Egypt.
Matthew 2:14

Both Moses and Jesus do not return until the king is dead.

And the LORD said to Moses in Midian, "Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are dead.
Exodus 4:19

"Get up, take the child and his mother, and go the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead."
Matthew 2:20

Matthew's Gospel is clearly following the parable of the Moses - Exodus story.
Herod is the antitype of Pharaoh. Jesus is the antitype of Moses.
The One who has come to save his people from their sins is the eschatological counterpart to the one who saved his people from their bondage in Egypt.

Matthew displays Jesus as the fulfillment of Israel: the One who resembles his people in their sojourn in Egypt in the time of Jospeh; and in their Exodus from Egypt in the time of Moses.

For Matthew, all Israel's history finds its recapitulation in the life of Jesus.
Hagner – Matthew, page 34

"Take the child and his mother" – take note that this phrase is common to Matthew's infancy narrative, apparently to show that the vulnerable child and his mother are under the care of God's providential protection as he guides Joseph to navigate danger.

Herod is about to search for the child to destroy him. – Matthew paints a picture for his readers that reflects the known character of Herod.

Once again, we see Matthew intentionally using language *at the beginning of his narrative* concerning Christ that he will use toward *the end of his narrative*.

> *An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to look for the child <u>to destroy him</u>."*
> *Matthew 2:13*

> *But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and <u>to have Jesus destroyed</u>.*
> *Matthew 27:20*

We might even ask – given that Matthew is relating a story of the reining king Herod's violence against a rival king who flees to Egypt – if he had the story of Solomon and Jeroboam in mind as well?

> *Solomon sought therefore to destroy Jeroboam. But Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, to Shishak the king of Egypt, and was there until the death of Solomon. 1 Kings 11:40*

> *And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt.*
> *Matthew 2:14*

Obedient Jospeh is directed to take mother and child and flee to Egypt. Not only is Egypt conveniently located by its geographic proximity, but the typology to the Exodus is unmistakable.

The Old Testament also tells the story of a prophet named Uriah who prophesied against Jerusalem and against the land in words like those of Jeremiah. He too, was sought after by King Jehoiakim and escaped to Egypt.

> *And when King Jehoiakim, with all his warriors and all the officials heard his words, the king sought to put him to death. But when Uriah heard of it, he was afraid and fled and escaped to Egypt.*
> *Jeremiah 26:21*

> *and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son."*
> *Matthew 2:15*

Matthew inserts the death of Herod here while he is still living (see the following verse), in order to lend cohesion to his narrative and to avoid detracting from the focus on Nazareth at the end of this chapter.

Though mentioning Herod's death is premature, its placement here lends importance to its theological significance by the presence of Jesus in Egypt paralleling the Exodus theme.

Also, by placing the verse here, Matthew sets the Exodus theme ahead of the Exile theme a few verses later. This fits well with the chronological history of Israel.

Matthew 2:15 is ripe with Exodus imagery. We can look at several translations to help us better understand Matthew's intent.

> *"Out of Egypt I called my son."*
> *Matthew 2:15*

> *When Israel was a young man, I loved him like a son, and I summoned my son out of Egypt.*
> *Hosea 11:1 NET*

> *I fell in love with Israel when he was still a child; and I have called [him] My son ever since Egypt.*
> *Hosea 11:1 JPS*

> *Israel is a child, and I loved him, and out of Egypt have I called his children.*
> *Hosea 11:1 LXX*

This is the third of five Old Testament citations that Matthew employs within 1:18-2:23. In relation to Jesus, they are used specifically to show the fulfillment of them in Matthew's narrative of the *eschatological Exodus* inaugurated by Jesus.

Though Hosea, looking into the past, was speaking of Israel's Exodus from Egypt, clearly Matthew takes a New Testament view and deposits the meaning onto *the child* Jesus as the beloved Son whom Yahweh has called out of Egypt. *Jesus is God's final word* of restoration.

**Teacher's note: to better understand prophecy and how the "inspired authors" of Scripture used passages to support their views, I offer the following help from Craig Blomberg.*

> *It is better, though, to understand Matthew's actual use of Hosea 11:1 as a classic example of pure typology: "the recognition of a correspondence between New and Old Testament events, based on a conviction of the unchanging character of the principles of God's working." The original event need not have been intentionally viewed as forward-looking by the Old Testament author; for believing Jews, merely to discern striking parallels between God's actions in*

history, especially in decisive moments of revelation and redemption, could convince them of divinely intended "coincidence."

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What we have here is a matter of typological correspondence – that is, a substantial similarity is seen to exist between two moments of redemptive history, and therefore the two are regarded as interconnected, forming one larger continuity; the earlier is thus seen to foreshadow or anticipate the latter, which then becomes a kind of realization or fulfillment of the former.
Hagner – Matthew, page 36

What can be understood of Matthew at this early point is how fulfillment colors the whole perspective of his narrative since Jesus is presented in this Gospel as just that – *the eschatological fulfillment of Israel – the complete Moses.*

Whether in Egypt, the Exodus, or in the wilderness, Jesus is the embodiment of Israel. He anticipates their victories but also participates in their suffering.

For he said, "Surely they are my people, children who will deal falsely." And he became their Savior. In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.
Isaiah 63:8-9

To round out Matthew's perspective, we must add that since Israel's history has now reached its goal, which gathers together all previous threads, the earlier exodus now finds its counterpart and its climax in the eschatological deliverance of God's people from their sins.
Hagner – Matthew, page 37

Other Old Testament verses revealing this conception of final salvation in exodus terminology:

Therefore, behold, I will allure her, <u>and bring her into the wilderness</u>, and speak tenderly to her. And there I will give her vineyards and make the Valley of Achor [Valley of Trouble] a door of hope. And there she shall answer as in the days of her youth, as at the time <u>when she came out of the land of Egypt</u>.
Hosea 2:14-15

I am the LORD your God <u>from the land of Egypt</u>. I will again make you dwell in tents, as in the days of the appointed feasts.
Hosea 12:9

As in the days when you <u>came out of the land of Egypt</u>, I will show them marvelous things.
Micah 7:15

<u>God brings them out of Egypt</u> and is for them like the horns of the wild ox.
Numbers 23:22

Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the magi, 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 magi.
Matthew 2:16

Herod's anger is not so much directed toward the trickery of the magi. His intention for evil sprang from his paranoia regarding the child being a threat to his rule.

Unable to ascertain the whereabouts of the child, or if the child existed at all, he determined to take no chances and ordered the killing of the male children in that region. Here again, Matthew reveals that Herod's character is precisely what history has already validated.

Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentations, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.
Matthew 2:17-18

Then was fulfilled – Matthew's narrative once again speaks of another Old Testament citation that finds its ultimate fulfillment in the nativity of Christ.

This is the fourth citation from the Old Testament in Matthew's birth narrative and the first to mention a prophet by name.

The child is most likely a toddler by this time given Herod's reckoning of the magi's two years.

This prophecy comes from Jeremiah 31. The whole context of the passage is a future time when God will restore his people to their land, blessing them with peace and prosperity. The language announces a New Covenant that Yahweh will make with his people.

Behold, a day is coming – declares the LORD – when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers, when I took them by the hand <u>and brought them out of the land of Egypt</u>, a covenant which they broke. Though I espoused them – declares the LORD.
Jeremiah 31:31-32

for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Matthew 26:28

Note the reference to God bringing his people *out of Egypt* in the underscored above, reiterating the Exodus theme in the context of Matthew's use of Jeremiah 31:15.

Matthew uses the *Exile* theme here, grasping the significance of the Jeremiah passage. The prophet does not tell us which exile is in mind, Assyrian or Babylonian, but the point is made.

Thus said the LORD: A cry is heard in Ramah – wailing, and bitter weeping – Rachel weeping for her children. She refuses to be comforted for her children, who are gone.
Jeremaih 31:15 JPS

A voice was heard in Rama, of lamentation, and of weeping, and wailing; Rachel would not cease weeping for her children, because they are not.
Jeremiah 31:15 LXX

Thus says the Lord: 'The voice has been heard in the height of the world, the house of Israel who weep and lament after Jeremiah the prophet, when Nebuzaradan, the chief of the killers, sent him from Ramah, with a dirge: and those who weep for the bitterness of Jerusalem, as she weeps for her children, refusing to be comforted for her children, because they have gone into exile.
Targum Jeremiah 31:15

For Israel, to be exiled from the land was death, hence the language *they are not.*

Matthew has declared that Jesus is the greater than Moses in the fulfilled Exodus, and now is declaring him as the fulfilled New Covenant restoration from Exile.

Ramah was six miles north of Jerusalem: departing captives from Judah's capital had to go through it on the road to the land of the northern invaders.

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD after Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he took him bound in chains along with all the captives of Jerusalem and Judah who were being exiled to Babylon.
Jeremiah 40:1

Ramah was equal the distance north of Jerusalem as Bethlehem was south of it and on the same road. Rachel is said to have been buried on the way to Bethlehem and near the border of Benjamin. This is why it would have been natural for Jeremiah to use her lament for her children.

Can a woman forget here nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forger, yet I will not forget you.
Isaiah 49:15

We see this type of Rachel's grieving in other instances in the Old Testament which help us frame Matthew's use of lamentation. Both are enveloped in the story of Joseph.

> *All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, "No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning." Thus his father wept for him.*
> *Genesis 37:35*

> *We are twelve brothers, sons of our father. One is no more, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan.*
> *Genesis 42:32*

Matthew stylishly incorporates the use of the Jeremiah passage. The exile of the children of Israel is a story of heavy grief, but the passages in Jeremiah 31 surrounding Rachel's weeping are nothing if not filled with hope and a promise of greater restoration coming.

> *Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he my darling child? For as often as I speak against him, I do remember him still. Therefore my heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him, declares the LORD.*
> *Jeremiah 31:20*

> *The whole valley of the dead bodies and the ashes, and all the fields as far as the brook Kidron, to the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east, shall be sacred to the LORD. It shall not be uprooted or overthrown anymore forever.*
> *Jeremiah 31:40*

Matthew is embedding in his use of Rachel's weeping and the exile of her children that caused it, the Messianic joy that the birth of Jesus brings and the New Covenant that comes with him.

Rachel's death is associated with both Bethlehem and Israel's exile just as surely as Bethlehem is associated with the birth of Benjamin – *the son of my right hand (Psalm 110:1).* Therefore, the birth of the previously *foreshadowed son of my right hand* in the person of Benjamin typified *Jesus Christ and the restoration from exile* that can only found in him.

> *Matthew is employing a very similar kind of typology to what we saw in 2:15 to Hosea 11:1. The text in Jeremiah is not a prediction, nor does it even use the future tense. But the parallel of mothers near Ramah bemoaning the loss of their children is too striking for the believing Jew to see it as a coincidence; it must be divinely intended. That Ramah evokes memories of Rachel's tomb and of the departure of her children centuries earlier makes the choice of Old Testament quotations for Matthew that much more appropriate.*
> *Craig Blomberg – Commentary on the New Testament use of the Old Testament, page 11*

> *Just as there was deliverance from the exile, patterned on the deliverance from Egypt in the exodus, so God now brings definitive messianic deliverance. The*

typological correspondence between Rachel's weeping for the exiles and the weeping of the mothers of Bethlehem, both in larger contexts of deliverance, is more than coincidental for Matthew. Again, in Matthew's perspective, Jesus is understood as summarizing the whole experience of Israel as well as bringing it to fulfillment. Every strand of hope and trial in the Old Testament is woven together in the eschatological appearance of the Promised One.

Hagner – Matthew, page 38