

Matthew 1:18-25

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[0 : 00] Alright, again, if you were to turn back into the Old Testament, which is Hosea chapter 11, verse 1, if you were to turn back there and read what that prophecy is about, what is God saying out of Egypt, I called my son?

He's talking about the Exodus. He's saying, when they were slaves in Egypt, I called my son, Israel, out of Egypt. And we saw that if you read back in Exodus.

He takes them out of slavery. He frees them. However, if you read the rest of Hosea 11, verse 1, that's only the first phrase. If you actually read the rest of it, listen to what it says.

Out of Egypt I called my son, but the more they were called, the more they went away. Here, Matthew says that that prophecy about the Exodus from Egypt, that that's actually being fulfilled here when the boy Jesus is brought out of Egypt.

That's when it's fulfilled. And I think what Matthew is getting at by saying this is, if you read Hosea, yes, out of Egypt I called my son. I delivered him from slavery.

[1 : 16] However, the more I called them, the more they went away. In other words, the Exodus didn't work. I mean, sure, it worked. He brought them out of Egypt. And that's what God intended to do.

Because God always accomplishes what he wants. However, that was not the total deliverance from slavery. That was not accomplished then.

In other words, they're still slaves. Because the more they were called, the more they went away.

It's not until Jesus comes onto the scene, that's when the true Exodus happens.

Which means that before he's born, when the angel comes, they're still in slavery. The Exodus hasn't really happened yet. Not the real Exodus. I know this is a bit confusing, but I think it's going to start to make sense as we get into what Matthew is saying.

So it seems like Matthew is presenting the idea that the situation in Israel is the people are still in exile. They're not home. And they're still in slavery.

[2 : 18] They're not free. And it's at that moment that an angel comes to Joseph. So let's read in Matthew 1.21. Because this is the actual verse that we're going to be looking at tonight.

Matthew 1.21. It says, the angel says to Joseph, Mary will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.

Okay, stop right there. So that's the situation. Now let's look for just a moment at the name Jesus. Why does the angel say to call him Jesus?

What does Jesus mean? I mean, really, is Jesus that attractive of a name? I mean, why not name him something like Elimelech? That's a strong name. Mordecai, something like that.

Why not Joseph Jr.? Why Jesus? Well, the name Jesus is simply the Greek name for the Hebrew name Joshua. Did you know that Jesus' name is actually Joshua?

[3 : 22] It's the same name. And all it means is Joshua. In Hebrew, it means the Lord, Yahweh, Jehovah. That's the ja part.

Shua, he saves. The name Joshua means the Lord saves. So call his name Jesus because that means the Lord saves.

So, what is the next thing it says? It says, call his name Jesus for he will save his people. Who are his people that are going to be saved?

Well, I think that's partly built into the name Jesus because the name Jesus, the Lord saves. it's not just any Lord that's saving.

It specifically is Yahweh, Jehovah, the Lord that's in all capital letters in our Bibles. That Lord is the one that saves. And that Lord is the Lord of the covenant.

[4 : 23] It's the Lord who has a specific people. God, as we all know, God is the God over the universe. There's nothing in this universe, nothing that exists, that he is not God over.

However, as we read the Old Testament, we see that that God decided to make some promises and come into a special relationship with a group of people, with Abraham and then with his descendants.

He made a covenant and that's the idea of the Lord in all capital letters. It's the God who is in a relationship with people. And it's the children of Abraham who are his people.

God said, I will be your God and the God of your people. Or the God of your descendants. I will be your God and you will be my people. That's who the Lord is going to save.

The descendants of Abraham. So what does that mean? Who are the descendants of Abraham? Does that mean he's only going to save people who are ethnically Jewish? Well, no, it doesn't because also Ishmaelites who are mostly Muslims these days are also descendants of Abraham as are other people.

[5 : 40] The Old Testament and the New Testament never meant that God will only save people who are ethnically Jewish. What it meant is I'm going to be the God of those who are your true descendants, Abraham.

Those who follow in your faith. The Old Testament makes this clear as does the New. Those who follow in the footsteps of Abraham of his faith. Abraham believed in the Lord and the Lord credited it to him as righteousness.

Therefore, it's those who trust in the Lord who makes promises. It's those who trust in the Lord who is the only one who can give you righteousness when you're a sinner.

It's those who trust that the Lord is the only one who can save you. those are the children of Abraham. Those are the ones who are his people.

And here the angel says, call him Jesus because he, the Lord, will save his people. Now we still have to ask the question, what is he going to save his people from?

[6 : 48] And this is why I brought up what I think Matthew was getting at. That the people were in exile, they were in slavery. Because the people, the Jews of Matthew's time, they also sort of agreed that they were still in bondage of some sort.

The Romans have us, we don't own our own land. they were expecting a savior to come who would save them from the Romans. Who would save them from this exile, from this slavery.

But here, Matthew is saying, yeah, you are in slavery. And yes, you're even in exile, you're not really home. But here is the promise to you.

Mary will give birth to a son. Call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. What I'm hoping to do today, because what I think Matthew is doing, I hope that we'll get a different image in our mind of what our sins actually are like.

What our sins actually do. Because it's only on that background that we can understand what Jesus actually came to do during this Christmas time that we celebrate. what are our sins actually like?

[8 : 12] Well, first of all, it's exile. I won't say that first, I'll say that second. First of all, it's like slavery. That's what our sins are like. It's almost as if God in the Old Testament gave pictures demonstrating physically what is true spiritually.

so that when he says, do you want to understand what slavery is really like and what deliverance from slavery is like? Look at this. And he takes a group of people who are physically in chains.

We get the idea. They're in physical chains. They're whips on their back. They're being forced to do what they don't want to do. They can't get away. He says, that's slavery.

And this is what I do. And he takes them from that slavery, rips them out of it, and delivers them into freedom. Now, in the Old Testament, that freedom didn't do a whole lot.

Because let me ask you a question. What good is that kind of freedom? Physical freedom. What good is that if, when you're finally free from that, you're just as much a slave to sin in your heart as those Egyptians were who put you in slavery?

[9 : 31] What good is that kind of freedom? Not only that, but exile. Being taken away from your true home. In the Old Testament, the Lord demonstrated this right in front of our face.

He said, you want to see what it's like to be taken away from your home. And because of Israelites' sin, He took them away from their home. He sent the Babylonians and they actually dragged the Israelites away from their home.

Can you imagine looking at your home and watching it disappear because you are being forced to leave and go to a foreign country? Oh, that's devastating. All of your comforts that you know and love, you're being taken away from this.

And you're being held in this hostile place. And God says in the Old Testament, that is exile. That's what it looks like. But guess what I do?

I bring you home. And He takes the Israelites out of Babylon and He brings them home so they can see their houses again. They can see their land again. But let me ask you another question.

[10:35] What good is that kind of return from exile if when you actually are standing in front of your door, your own door that you haven't seen for so long, you're standing there, but you're no closer to actually being home than when you were in Babylon?

What good is that kind of return from exile? And that seems to be what keeps recurring in the Old Testament. God is building to something. He's saying, look at the reality that I'm showing you.

There's a more fundamental reality here. Look at this slavery and freedom. You can picture it, can't you? Actual chains being broken off. Look at this exile in return.

You can actually picture it, can't you? What it feels like to get home. And he says, that's what I do. But there's a more fundamental slavery and there's a more fundamental exile that you need to understand.

That's your slavery to sin. It puts you in its bondage. It holds you. You can't get away from it. It forces you to do things.

[11:46] That's what sin is like. It's worse than what the Israelites experienced. It's worse than what Corrie Ten Boom experienced. Because, whether you're in that type of slavery or free from it, if you're not free in your heart, really nothing matters.

It's the exile that sin causes, taking us away from our proper home, which is in the bosom of our Father in heaven, it takes us away from that.

That's the more fundamental exile than even what the Israelites experienced being taken away from their homes, than what Corrie Ten Boom experienced being ripped away from her home.

The more fundamental exile is what sin does to us. And it's at that moment, into that world, of our slavery to sin and our exile from our true home, at that moment, the angel of the Lord steps onto the scene and says, a son is going to be born to you.

Do you know what I want you to call his name? Call his name Jesus. Because he's going to save his people from their sins. I want us to contemplate these things.

[13:13] And as we contemplate what true slavery and what true exile is like, I want us to, all of us, to wrestle with this question.

Why do we now, those of us who are Christians, those of us who are his people, why do we still dabble in think about, do, those things that by their very nature bind us in slavery and rip us from our true home in heaven?

Why do we still do that? But at this Christmas time, I also want us to contemplate, as we're wrestling with that, I want us to remember that to us, at that moment, a son was born.

And his name is Jesus, for he saves his people from their sins. Please pray with me.