

Matthew's Christmas Narrative

Tyndale's Cologne Fragment 1525 in Modernised Spelling

Verse numbers have been added for convenience in the text and cross-references.

The Gospell of St. Matthew.

The first Chapter.

18 The birth of Christ was on this wise. When his mother Mary was married unto Joseph, before they came to dwell together, she was found with child by the Holy *Ghost. 19 Then her husband Joseph being a perfect man, and loathe to *defame her, was minded to put her away secretly. 20 While he thus thought, behold the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in sleep, saying, Joseph, the son of David, fear not to take unto thee, Mary [as] thy wife. For that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21 She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name *Jesus. For he shall save his people from their sins.

22 All this was done to fulfil that which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet saying, 23 Behold a maid shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which is as much to say, by interpretation, as God with us.*

24 Joseph as soon as he awoke out of sleep, did as the angel of the Lord bade him, and took his wife unto him, 25 and knew her not*, till she had brought forth her first son, and called his name Jesus.

Right-hand margin side notes

* 1:18 That is to say by the working & power of the Holy Ghost.

* 1:19 *Defame*

That is he would not put her to open shame as he well might have done by the law. Also Matthew rejoiceth of the goodness of Joseph which for love's sake did remit of his right.

* 1:21 *Jesus*.

Jesus is as much to say as a saviour, for he only saveth all men from their sins by his mercies without their deserving.

1:23 Christ bringeth God, where Christ is there is God and where Christ is not there is not God.


* 1:25 *Till she*. Ye shall not suppose that he knew her afterwards but it is the manner of the Scripture to speak, as Gen 8:7. The raven came not again till the water was drunk up and the earth dry, the Scripture meaneth not he came again afterwards: even so here, it followeth not that Joseph knew Our Lady afterwards.

The Second Chapter.

1 When Jesus was born in Bethlehem a town of Judea, in the time of king Herod, behold, there came *wise men from the east to Jerusalem, 2 saying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews? We have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

3 Herod the king, after he had heard this, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him, 4 and he sent for all the chief priests and scribes of the people, and demanded of them where Christ should be born. 5 They said unto him, In Bethlehem a town of Judea. For thus it is written by the prophet, 6 *And thou Bethlehem in the land of Judea, shalt not be the least as pertaining to the princes of *Judah. For out of thee shall come a captain, which shall govern my people Israel.

7 Then Herod privily called the wise men, and diligently enquired of them, the time of the star that appeared. \v 8 And sent them to Bethlehem, saying, When ye be come thither search diligently for the child. And when ye have found him bring me word, that I may come and worship him also. 9 And when they had heard the king, they departed, and lo the star which they saw in the east went before them, until it came and stood over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were marvellously glad, 11 and entered into the house, and found the child with Mary his mother, and kneeled down and worshipped him, and opened their treasures, and offered unto him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. 12 And after they were warned in their sleep, that they should not go again to Herod, they returned into their own country another way.

13 After that they were departed, lo the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in his sleep, saying, Arise and take the child and his mother, and fly into Egypt, and abide there till I bring the word. For Herod will seek the child to destroy him. 14 Then he arose, and took the child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt, 15 and was there unto the death of Herod, to fulfil that which was spoken of the Lord, by the prophet, which saith,  Out of Egypt have I called my son.

16 Then Herod perceiving that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wrath, and sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, as many as were two year old and under, according to the time which he had diligently searched out of the wise men.

17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, 18 ¶ On the hills was a voice heard, mourning, weeping, and great lamentation. *Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted because they were not.

19 When Herod was dead, lo an angel of the Lord appeared unto Joseph in Egypt, 20 saying, Arise and take the child and his mother, and go in to the land of Israel. For they are dead which sought the child's death. 21 Then he arose up, and took the child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea, in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither, notwithstanding after he was warned in his sleep, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee, 23 and went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, to fulfil that which was spoken be the prophets, ¶ He shall be called of Nazareth.

Left-hand margin cross-references called by ¶

¶ 2:6 Micah 5:2.

¶ 2:15 Hosea 11:1. Numbers 24:8

¶ 2:18 Jeremiah 31:15

¶ 2:23 Isaiah 11:1. Judges 13:5-7.

Right-hand margin side notes called by *

* 2:1 *wise men*.

Of Matthew they are called Magi, & in certain countries in the East, philosophers coming in natural causes & effects, and also the priests, were so called.

* 2:6 *Judea* is the land, Judah is that tribe or kindred that dwelt therein.

* 2:18 Rachel was buried not far from Bethlehem, and the prophet signifieth that as she mourned her son Benjamin, in whose birth she died so should the mothers of these children mourn. And here may we show it goeth all way with the right Christian men before the world for the faith's sake which they have in Christ notwithstanding they are wonderfully maintained & defended alway of God against all power of hell