

Last week we commenced to read the Gospel of Matthew together.

### **Chapter 1 - summary**

The reason Matthew wrote his book is the big claim that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah of Israel. In the Old Testament the purpose of the universe was revealed, its problems diagnosed and promises were made. Now Matthews tells us that God has kept His promise by sending the Messiah, the promised Davidic king, the promised son of Abraham. He came to save his people from their sins and to reconcile them with God so that the big purpose of the universe will be achieved: there will be a reunion of heaven and earth; there will be a paradise like kingdom, with Jesus as the great King. Now I have asked you to read the chapters 2 – 4; these are a bit too much to treat this morning, so let me now summarise chapter 2 before we listen to chapter 3.

### **Chapter 2 - summary**

The beginning of chapter 2 is well known. It is about wise men coming from far to worship the born King. What is the function of this story in Matthews book? Well, again Matthew treats credibility questions. Shouldn't the Messiah be born in Bethlehem? - people asked. Why then do you say that you believe that Jesus from Nazareth is the Messiah? That is the question chapter 2 deals with. And then Matthew answers: actually, He was born in Bethlehem, let me tell you the whole story; there were even men from far away who came to worship Him; and this fulfils what Israel had always expected and sung in her Psalms about the Messiah. The second half of the chapter is less known and certainly less favourite; it is about Jesus' family becoming refugees in Egypt and about king Herod raging against the children of Bethlehem, a tragic story. However, when you listen careful and try to listen with Jewish ears you might observe a lot of similarities between what happened in Jesus time and in Moses time. A raging king against children, Egypt, a narrow escape; and we ask then: will Jesus be a new Moses? And will there be a new Exodus? Good questions! And when you do not consider yourself as a person who belongs to Gods people, this chapter shows you that in your situation you can react in two ways on the message that there is a Messianic King of the universe. You can go and search, like the wise men and then begin to worship and adore him. Or you can react as Herod did: the message worries you and you think: away with him. So yes, Matthew tells us, the place of birth of the Messiah is Bethlehem, according to the Scriptures and if you feel to be an outsider of this all, consider how you will react, you are welcome to adore him like the wise men and please don't become a new Pharaoh thinking: I don't want a king besides of me; away with him. Now let us listen to chapter 3.

### **Chapter 2 – outline**

Credibility question: shouldn't the Messiah be born in Bethlehem?

Answer: actually, he was born in Bethlehem, let me tell you the story:

Even wise men came to worship him (compare Psalm 72: 8 – 11)

God went on to guide Joseph by dreams; they escaped to Egypt

because Herod did not want another King. He raged against Bethlehem's children.

Observe the similarities between Jesus and Moses

(clash of kings, narrow escape, killing of children, crying, coming back):

We begin to expect that Jesus will be a new Moses and that there will be a new Exodus (a new story of redemption).

When you, as a reader, are not an insider to the people of God, you can react in two ways:

Search, find, worship and adore Him.

Worry, away with Him.