

## Notes on the Greek New Testament Week 131 – Matthew 2:1-3:6

### Day 651: Matthew 2:1-6

#### Matthew 2:1-12

"In this narrative the Jews and their king are ranged against the infant Jesus, but the Gentiles do him homage." Morris

#### Verse 1

Τοῦ δὲ Ἰησοῦ γεννηθέντος ἐν Βηθλέεμ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐν ἡμέραις Ἡρώδου τοῦ βασιλέως, ἰδοὺ μάγοι ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν παρεγένοντο εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα

γεννηθέντος Verb, aor pass ptc, m gen s  
γενναω see 1:20

Ἰουδαία, ας f Judea

Sets the scene for the quotation from Mal 5:1 in v.6.

βασιλευς, εως m king

The reference here is to Herod the Great. "Since his death occurred in 4 BC, the birth of Jesus must be placed earlier. (The discrepancy with the numbering of years by the designation AD results from an error of the sixth-century scholar Dionysius Exiguus, who was responsible for the calculations which moved the Western world away from dating according to the year after the foundation of Rome.) The specification 'king,' here and in v.3, stands in deliberate marked contrast to the magi's reference to the 'king of the Jews' (v.2) whom they seek." Hagner.

μαγος, ου m wise man (one trained in astrology)

ἀνατολή, ης f rising sun, east

παραγίνομαι come, arrive, appear

"The magi, apparently unfamiliar with the Micah passage cited by the high priests and scribes, make the natural assumption that the new king was to be born in the capital city. Hence they go εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα, 'to Jerusalem.'" Hagner.

#### Verse 2

λέγοντες, Ποῦ ἐστὶν ὁ τεχθεὶς βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων; εἶδομεν γὰρ αὐτοῦ τὸν ἀστέρα ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ καὶ ἦλθομεν προσκυνῆσαι αὐτῷ.

ποῦ interrogative adverb where(?)

τεχθεὶς Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s τικτω see 1:21

"The only other occurrences of the title βασιλευς των Ἰουδαίων, 'king of the Jews,' in Matthew are in the passion narrative, where it is used in mockery of Jesus and always in the mouths of Gentiles (27:11, 29, 37). Here it has obvious messianic significance, as can be seen from Herod's rephrasing of the question 'Where is the Christ to be born?' (v.4) and in the scriptural answer (v.6)." Hagner.

εἶδομεν Verb, aor act indic, 1 pl ὄραω trans see, observe

ἀστηρ, ερος m star

Hagner suggests ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ here means "at its rising,' rather than 'in the east' (for which we might expect the plural, as in v.1)."

προσκυνεω worship

Here probably means, 'pay homage to him.'

#### Verse 3

ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἡρώδης ἐταράχθη καὶ πᾶσα Ἱεροσόλυμα μετ' αὐτοῦ,

ἐταράχθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s

ταρασσω trouble, disturb, frighten

King Herod, "was an Edomite, not a Jew, and he had been made king by the Romans. The news that the magi were bringing sounded suspiciously like the emergence of a genuine descendant of the royal line of David as claimant to the throne (Glover points out that Herod was more interested in saving his throne than saving his soul!). And if Herod was troubled, the whole city was troubled with him." Morris

#### Verse 4

καὶ συναγαγὼν πάντας τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ γραμματεῖς τοῦ λαοῦ ἐπυνθάνετο παρ' αὐτῶν ποῦ ὁ Χριστὸς γεννᾶται.

συναγαγὼν Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s

συναγω gather, gather together

ἀρχιερεὺς, εως m high priest, member of high priestly family

In *Jerusalem in the time of Jesus*, J Jeremias shows that this term was used to cover a number of officials such as the captain of the temple, the leader of the weekly course of priests, those who had charge of financial affairs, and so on. It thus covered a group of important people.

γραμματεὺς, εως m scribe, expert in Jewish law, scholar

Many of the 'scribes' were Pharisees, though not all of the Pharisees were scribes.

λαος, ου m people, a people  
 πυνθανομαι inquire, ask, question  
 παρα preposition with gen from, of, with  
 ποῦ see v.1  
 γεννᾶται Verb, pres pass indic, 3 s γεννωω

### Verse 5

οἱ δὲ εἶπαν αὐτῷ, Ἐν Βηθλέεμ τῆς Ἰουδαίας· οὕτως γὰρ γέγραπται διὰ τοῦ προφήτου·

οὕτως thus, in this way  
 γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω  
 write  
 προφητης, ου m prophet

"Where they say that it is written *through* the prophet they are reasoning that God is the author of Scripture; the prophet was no more than his instrument." Morris

### Verse 6

Καὶ σύ, Βηθλέεμ γῆ Ἰούδα, οὐδαμῶς ἐλαχίστη εἶ ἐν τοῖς ἡγεμόσιν Ἰούδα· ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ ἐξελεύσεται ἡγούμενος, ὅστις ποιμανεῖ τὸν λαόν μου τὸν Ἰσραήλ.

The reference is to Micah 5:2 except for the last line which reflects 2 Sam 5:2; 1 Chron 11:2. The quotation is not particularly close to either the LXX or the Hebrew.

γη, γης f earth

"Matthew uses *land* (γη) more often than anyone else in the New Testament except for the author of Revelation, a total of 43 times." Morris.

Ἰούδα Noun, gen s Ἰουδας

"Matthew omits the reference to Ephathah and substitutes γη Ἰουδα. The reason for this difficult reading, which stands in apposition to Βηθλεεμ, is unclear. It is possibly a theological alteration to remind the reader of Jesus' descent from Judah (with the messianic implication) as in 1:1,2. On the other hand, it may simply have been caused by the use of Ἰουδα at the end of line 2 in the citation." Hagner.

οὐδαμῶς adv by no means, not at all  
 ἐλαχιστος, η, ον (superl of μικρος) least, smallest, insignificant  
 ἡγεμων, ονος m governor, ruler, prince  
 ἐξελεύσεται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 s  
 ἐξερχομαι  
 ἡγεομαι lead, rule (ὁ ἡ. leader, ruler)  
 ὅστις, ἥτις, ὅ τι who, which  
 ποιμανεῖ Verb, fut act indic, 3 s ποιμαινω  
 tend as a shepherd, rule

The shepherd is a model for leadership or rule among the people of God.

λαος, ου m see v.4

## Day 652: Matthew 2:7-12

### Verse 7

Τότε Ἡρώδης λάθρα καλέσας τοὺς μάγους ἠκρίβωσεν παρ' αὐτῶν τὸν χρόνον τοῦ φαινομένου ἀστέρος,

τοτε then, at that time

A favourite word of Matthew: 90 of its 160 NT occurrences are in this book.

λαθρα adv secretly, quietly  
 ἀκριβωω ascertain exactly, find out  
 χρονος, ου m time, period of time  
 φαινω shine; midd. and pass. appear  
 ἀστηρ, ερος m see v.2

### Verse 8

καὶ πέμψας αὐτοὺς εἰς Βηθλέεμ εἶπεν, Πορευθέντες ἐξετάσατε ἀκριβῶς περὶ τοῦ παιδίου· ἐπὶ δὲ εὔρητε ἀπαγγεῖλατέ μοι, ὅπως κἀγὼ ἐλθὼν προσκυνήσω αὐτῷ.

πεμπω send

πορευομαι go, proceed, travel  
 ἐξεταζω look for, search for carefully  
 ἀκριβως accurately, with care  
 παιδιον, ου n child  
 ἐπὶ when, as soon as  
 εὔρητε Verb, aor act subj, 2 pl εὕρισκω  
 ἀπαγγεῖλατέ Verb, aor act imperat, 2 pl  
 ἀπαγγελλω announce, tell  
 ὅπως (or ὅπως ἄν) that, in order that  
 κἀγὼ a compound word = και ἐγὼ  
 προσκυνεω see v.2

### Verse 9

οἱ δὲ ἀκούσαντες τοῦ βασιλέως ἐπορεύθησαν, καὶ ἰδοὺ ὁ ἀστήρ ὃν εἶδον ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ προῆγεν αὐτοὺς ἕως ἐλθὼν ἐστάθη ἐπάνω οὗ ἦν τὸ παιδίον.

εἶδον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3pl ὁραω  
 see, observe

ἀνατολη, ης f rising sun, dawn, east  
 προῆγεν Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s  
 προαγω go before or ahead of, lead  
 ἐλθων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s ἐρξομαι  
 ἐστάθη Verb, 2 aor act indic, 3 s ἵστημι  
 stand, stop  
 ἐπάνω on, upon, over, above  
 οὗ adv where

It was no ordinary star that went before them and then stood over the place where Jesus was to be found.

**Verse 10**

ἰδόντες δὲ τὸν ἄστῆρα ἐχάρησαν χαρὰν  
μεγάλην σφοδρά.

ἰδόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl ὄρω  
see v.9

χαίρω rejoice, be glad

χαρά, ἀσ f joy, gladness

μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great

σφοδρα very much, very, greatly

"'Deliriously happy' may be overstatement, but it was something like that." Morris.

"This statement of an extremely heightened joy is typical in a context of messianic fulfilment (cf. Luke, who uses much more of this kind of language in the nativity narrative; cf. Luke 1:14, 44, 46; 2:10 [χαρὰν μεγάλην, 'great joy'], 14, 20)." Hagner.

**Verses 11-12**

"Matthew concisely presents the climax of the story through three aorist verbs (προσεκύνησαν, 'they worshiped'; προσήνεγκαν, 'they offered' [gifts]; ἀνεχώρησαν, 'they departed'), each with an accompanying adverbial participle (πεσόντες, 'having fallen to the ground'; ἀνοιξαντες, 'having opened' [their treasure chests]; χρηματισθέντες, 'having been warned'). Thus with a concise forcefulness, the evangelist recounts the fulfilment of the mission of the magi." Hagner.

**Verse 11**

καὶ ἐλθόντες εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν εἶδον τὸ  
παιδίον μετὰ Μαρίας τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ,  
καὶ πεσόντες προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ, καὶ  
ἀνοιξαντες τοὺς θησαυροὺς αὐτῶν  
προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ δῶρα, χρυσὸν καὶ  
λίβανον καὶ σμύρναν.

ἐλθοντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl  
έρχομαι

οἰκία, ἀσ f house, home

εἶδον see v.9

πεσόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl

πιπτω fall down, fall to one's knees

προσκυνεω worship

ἀνοιγω open

θησαυρος, ου m treasure store, treasure  
box

προσήνεγκαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl

προσφερω offer, present

δωρον, ου n gift, offering

"Matthew speaks of three gifts, from which some deduce that there were three Magi; legend has made them kings (an idea which Bruce calls 'beautiful but baseless'), and has even given them names." Morris.

"The presentation of the gifts to the King of Israel by representatives of the nations is mentioned in the OT in several places.

Although Matthew does not capitalise on this by means of a fulfilment quotation, his language may show influence from these passages. Ps 72:10-11 refers to all kings falling down before *the* king, all nations serving him, and the offering of 'gifts' (δωρα), with 'gold' (χρυσον) mentioned specifically in v.15. Isa 60:1-6 (in a more obviously eschatological context) refers to all nations and kings coming to the light (of fulfilment), with the wealth of the nations offered as well as 'gold' and 'frankincense' (χρυσον, λιβανον). Apart from the specific language, theologically these passages are saying in part the same thing that Matthew says: the newborn king is king of all the world, and the appropriate homage shall be paid to him by all nations (yet in Matthew Israel, who rejects her king, stands in conspicuous contrast to the gentile nations)." Hagner.

χρυσος, ου m gold, gold coin

λιβανος, ου m frankincense; incense

σμύρνα, ης f myrrh (a resinous gum used for aromatic purposes)

**Verse 12**

καὶ χρηματισθέντες κατ' ὄναρ μὴ  
ἀνακάμψαι πρὸς Ἡρώδη, δι' ἄλλης ὁδοῦ  
ἀνεχώρησαν εἰς τὴν χώραν αὐτῶν.

χρηματισθέντες Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom  
pl χρηματιζω warn, direct, instruct

Commonly used of divine revelations or warnings.

ὄναρ n dream

ἀνακάμψαι Verb, aor act infin ἀνακαμπω  
return, turn back

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other

ὁδος, ου f way, path, road

ἀναχωρεω withdraw, go away

χώρα, ἀσ f country, territory, land

**Day 653: Matthew 2:13-18****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 παρέλαβεν 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 πληρωθῇ 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 ἀνείλεν πάντας τοὺς παῖδας τοὺς ἐν Βηθλέεμ καὶ ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ὄροις 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 ὄρω

see, observe, recognise

ἐνεπαίχθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s

ἐμπαιζω trick, deceive

The primary meaning of the word is to mock.

ἐθυμώθη Verb, aor pass dep indic, 3 s

θυμομαι be furious

λίαν adv exceedingly, greatly

ἀποστελλω send, send out

ἀνείλεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἀναιρω

do away with, kill

παῖς, παιδός m & f servant, child

ὄριον, οὐ n neighbourhood, vicinity

διετής, ἐς two years old

κατωτέρω adv. under, less (of age)

χρονός, οὐ 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 εἰσὶν.

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.

κλαυθμός, οὐ m bitter crying, wailing

ὄδυρμος, οὐ m mourning, grieving

TR C D L W f<sup>13</sup> and syr<sup>sc</sup>, among others, include a third word, θρηνος (a synonym of the other two), this apparently by way of harmonisation with the text of LXX.

πολύς, πολλή, πολυ gen πολλοῦ, ἡς, οὐ much

κλαίω weep, cry; trans weep for

τεκνόν, οὐ n child

ἠθέλεν 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."

**Day 654: Matthew 2:19-23****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

γῆ, γῆς 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

ψυχῆ, ἡς f inmost being, life, 'soul'

Cf. Exod 4:19.

**Verse 21**

ὁ δὲ ἐγερωθεὶς παρέλαβεν τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰσηλθεν εἰς γῆν Ἰσραὴλ.

εἰσηλθεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s  
εἰσερχομαι 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 ἔλθων κατῴκησεν εἰς πόλιν λεγομένην Ναζαρέτ, ὅπως πληρωθῆ 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 ἄν) that, in order that  
πληρωθῆ 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 *neser* cf. Is 11:1) – Black, Stendahl, Hagner.

**Day 655: Matthew 3:1-6****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 ἐγγιζω 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.

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

#### Verse 4

Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ Ἰωάννης εἶχεν τὸ ἔνδυμα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τριχῶν καμήλου καὶ ζωνὴν δερματίνην περὶ τὴν ὀσφὺν αὐτοῦ, ἣ 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  
ζωνή, ης f belt  
δερματινος, η, ου of leather  
ὀσφυς, υς 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  
ἀκρίς, ιδος f locust, grasshopper  
μέλι, ιτος n honey  
ἄγριος, α, ου 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 περίχωρος 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 ὑπὸ 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.