

January 11, 2026

“A Shared Journey”

Matthew 2:13-14, 19-23

Introduction:

In the traditional church calendar, this past Tuesday marked the observance of Epiphany – which is the presentation of Jesus to the Magi (the wise men who traveled from the east and brought gifts of frankincense, gold, and myrrh). As we follow along with the lectionary readings, today is the Sunday where Christians observe the Baptism of Jesus.

It seems to me that there is a lot of ground and a lot of years covered in these five days. We have gone from Jesus as a very young child, no more than two years old, to an adult of thirty.

What has happened in those 28 years? The gospels are relatively quiet on the subject. Mark and John skip right to the adult life of Jesus. Luke gives a nod to Jesus growing up as a good kid with exceptional maturity in spiritual matters and his understanding of the scriptures. Matthew records what almost sounds like an aside, a footnote whose only purpose is to connect Jesus to Messianic prophecy. There are several moments where the gospel writers include an action or word of Jesus that references Old Testament prophecy about the Messiah.

I thought it would be interesting for us to pause in this aside of Matthew’s to see just what was going on.

Egypt:

It has been a year or so since Jesus was born. He is of an age where travel is a bit more convenient than when he was a newborn. More importantly, he has just been visited by Magi from the far east and presented with gifts that acknowledge his heritage as part of King David’s line and his greater position as the Messiah that has been waited for. God’s messengers, the angels, are busy during those few days because they are at once warning the Magi not to return to Herod on

their way home, and also warning Joseph that it isn't safe for them to stay in Bethlehem and that they must immediately flee to Egypt.

Why Egypt? Matthew seems to think that this is a question his readers might ask, because he gives the reason as a fulfillment of Messianic prophecy given by Hosea some 700 years earlier. Specifically, that God has called his son out of Egypt.

It is important that the Gospel writers connect Jesus with earlier prophecies. They are, after all, trying to tell the story of Jesus and prove that he is the Messiah, the Son of God, and indeed God. Jesus is the answer to all the questions that the Jews have been asking for generations and generations. They just didn't know it, so care had to be given to communicating these connections.

But what about this particular prophecy? Why is it important for the Messiah, the Son of God, to come out of Egypt when he was clearly to be born in the land of the Jews?

Egypt represents a beginning of sorts for the Jewish people. While the relationship between the Jews and God was really begun back with Abraham, it was when God got Moses to lead the people out of slavery in Egypt that He made a new covenant with them. It was during their time at the foot of Mount Sinai that God confirmed their place as His chosen people. It was there that the Hebrew people became a nation and not just a people group. And so, it is through the instruction to Joseph to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt that God connects Jesus to the Israelite past. Jesus is on earth to bring hope and salvation to those in the present and future, but he is also there to fulfil the promise of hope that was given in the past. So, he goes back to where it essentially began. Egypt.

After king Herod passes away, God again sends word to Joseph that it is safe for the family to return to Israel, even if they can't return to their exact hometown.

The Shared Journey:

Jesus is now a connecting point between the past and the present. Jesus is now stepping into the role of representing who and what the Israelites were supposed to be, and He is the proof of God's faithfulness and proof of the promises that God had made.

When God rescued the Hebrews from Egypt and brought them to the foot of Mount Sinai, He set before them an invitation and a challenge. He invited them to be His people, to identify themselves with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He invited them into a covenant relationship of worship and obedience, of being set to a higher standard of relating with one another and the people of other nations, with the end goal of making God known to all the people of the world. The people cheered this and agreed to uphold their end of the deal. God also promised to keep His end of the deal. We know how the story went from there. It didn't take long for the Israelites to prove unable and unwilling to keep their end of the deal. Quickly, even while still at the mountain!, they turned to selfish desires and efforts to fit in more with those other nations than to stay faithful to God. From the moment that they left Sinai, the Israelites failed to live up to the ideal and the hope that God had for them. God, however, continued to be faithful and hold up his end of the deal.

Jesus, as the Messiah, represents what the Israelites were supposed to be. He is the perfect example of what it means to be God's people and to be faithful to Him. In order to make that connection, He had to go to Egypt – like the Israelites. He had to be called out of Egypt – like the Israelites. And he had to essentially share in the journey of Israelite history in order to be able to be the Messiah, the Saviour that they and we need. Where the Israelites failed in their covenant, Jesus succeeds and makes it right. It is through Jesus, now the perfect representative of what the Israelites were supposed to be, that God is made known to all the people of the world.

Their Journey, Our Journey:

Just as Jesus walked back into the shared Israelite history and shared in their collective journey, he also walks back into our journeys and shares in those. The forgiveness that is given on the cross assumes a connection with the story, and more importantly, the sin of each person that Jesus died for (which is everyone). This is not just a detached, clinical, connection, but it is a lived and known connection to who we once were, who we are currently, and who we are yet to become. Jesus shares in all of that. He walks with us through all of that. He laughs, cries, and rejoices with us through all the successes and failures of our faith journey. It is through his blood that the new covenant is written. This new covenant doesn't change what God promises; it renews the promise that His people make. Jesus walks with us through all of that story.

Conclusion:

As followers of Jesus, we have a job to do. We don't just sit back and say "isn't it nice that we have this new agreement with God." No, the agreement is that we are now to pick up the mantle of making God known to the nations. How we live, how we treat others, how we worship, are all part of how we fulfil the agreement that we have made. Part of this is to recognize that just as Jesus shares in our journey, we are also called to share in the journey of those around us. I'm not saying that we need to pick up all the hobbies and likes that our neighbours and co-workers have. I am saying that we need to walk alongside them. To see them for who they are – that they are loved by God, and not to cast judgement on aspects of their lives that we might not agree with. That is not our job. But it is the difficult part of the task. It is hard to see people we care about making decisions that we know are disappointing to God. But we need to love them anyway. God does.

So, as you go about your day and week and months to come, look for ways that you can share in the life journey of those people in your circle of contact and engagement. They are on a road to discovering Jesus (even if they don't know it and you see little evidence of it), and you are there as a kind of guide to help

them to see what until now has been hidden. But to do that, you also need to be seeking Jesus and allowing Him to share in your life journey.

May you find new ways to grow deeper in relationship with Jesus this year to come.

Let's pray.