

MATTHEW 2

GRACE APPEARING

THE GLORY AND HORROR OF GRACE APPEARING

- ▶ Matthew's emphasis on the fulfillment of Scripture teaches us that God's Word is prevailing and enduring—it will be fulfilled!

The word of the LORD came to me: "What do you see, Jeremiah?"

"I see the branch of an almond tree," I replied.

The LORD said to me, "You have seen correctly, for I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled."

JEREMIAH 1.11-12

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."

MATTHEW 24.35

In his documentation, Matthew wants his readers (us) to understand that Jesus is the fulfillment of *all* Scripture, and that it is imperative for us to see and understand this truth.

*Jesus Christ, as he is attested for us in Holy Scripture, is the **one** Word of God which we have to hear and which we have to trust and obey in life and death. We reject the false doctrine [which suggests that] the church could and would have to acknowledge as a source of its [preaching], apart from and besides this **one** Word of God, still other events and powers, figures and truths, as God's revelation.*

THE THEOLOGICAL DECLARATION OF BARMEN, 1934

“For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Christ and him crucified.”

1 CORINTHIANS 2.2

- ▶ With the advent of Jesus, not only was prophecy fulfilled, but “the grace of God that brings salvation [had] appeared to all men.”

Matthew, the evangelist, obviously delights in presenting Jesus as the dawning of a grace that is so expansive that it embraces adulterers and adulteresses, prostitutes and murderers, child abusers and those born out of incest, and every marginalized nobody. Those far away and without the promises of God’s favor are invited to come near and be accepted (Ephesians 2.13).

- ▶ Matthew intends us not only to see the expansiveness of grace, but to understand that only grace through Jesus Christ addresses the depth of our sinful nature and our desperate need.

The scribes and Herod provide, in Matthew’s account, a sobering and horrifying picture of spiritual blindness and the power of sin over human nature. “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? The message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not combine it with faith” (Hebrews 2.3; 4.2). One must not fail to respond in faith to the sovereign “appearing of grace” to him at that moment.