**Echoes of Christ**

Based on [Matthew 2:13-23](http://biblia.com/books/esv/Mt2.13-23)

Preached on December 29, 2013

Christmas 1

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This Sunday is sometimes called Feast of the Holy Innocents. The "Holy Innocents" are how we refer to the male children of Bethlehem, 2 years and under, that king Herod killed in the hopes of killing the messiah. Talk about overkill. Why does this lesson comes the week after Christmas? **Well, because the Christmas season has to do not only with the birth, but the childhood of Jesus.** And Herod was no doubt being a Scrooge, prescribing measures that would decrease the surplus population. But the real reason we hear this word at Christmas-- and the reason Matthew recorded this massacre of children in his gospel--is because it is the fulfillment of a prophecy, that further proves that this child IS the Christ.

As a matter of fact, there are three prophecies fulfilled in the gospel today. Joseph takes the family to Egypt, which fulfills the prophecy "**Out of Egypt I called my son."** Herod's massacre fulfilled the prophecy of Rachel's Lament..."**Rachel weeping for her children**." And the family returns to Nazareth to fulfill the prophecy, "that he would be called a Nazarene." These things were prophesied, hundreds, even thousands of years before Jesus, and you should know something. They are not about Jesus, per se...they are about Israel, the Jews, God's people. And yet Jesus, he comes and fulfills them all perfectly. Everything that was spoken about Israel is applied to Jesus here because Jesus is Israel reduced to one. Jesus came at the proper time and fits the mould of the whole Old Testament, because the purpose of the OT is to foreshadow Jesus. Israel is a ***type*** of Jesus.

The OT nation of Israel is a type of Jesus. **Maybe that sounds technical or foreign, but understanding *types* is crucial in understanding God's word.** And you think and act according to and predict, and shake your head at "types" all the time. **When I lived in Saskatchewan for a year people would ask, I called it "the South Dakota of Canada," and they knew what I meant.**  Both places are of the same *type*. And think and predict things and according to types all the time. We have expressions like. "You know the type" and "isn't it just typical." "**You know the type, he's a guy married to his job**." "You know the type, his parents never gave him any attention; so..." "**Oh you know the type, buys things because she's not happy with the way things are."** Typical man. Typical woman. He's the jealous type. She's the possessive type. **They're the quiet type**. The hippe type, the yuppie type, the politician type, the farmer type, the debator type...I don't mean to **stereotype**, but God's Word gives us **archetypes**, and there is a **prototype** who scholars call the ***anti-type***, and he is **Christ the Lord.**

Do you remember the nativity of Moses...the circumstances of His birth? The Israelites were slaves in Egypt. **And Pharaoh became afraid of Israel...because despite their humble circumstances they were growing in number.** And so this maniacal king, in a move to decrease the surplus population, **ordered that every newborn male Israelite was to be thrown into the Nile river.** Moses was a newborn, and when his mother could hide him no longer, she put him in a basket, an ark, and hid him in the bulrushes of the Nile. **Until he was found by Pharaoh's daughter and brought to the Egyptian palace safe from the slaughter.** Moses grew up and led Israel out of Egypt towards the Promised land. **"Out of Egypt, I called my son**"...Jesus...Israel reduced to one. It's typical...the way enemies treated God's people in the past is typical how they regard God's son. And as God delivered his people in the past, so too the providential hand of the Father calls his son out of Egypt.

The other two prophecies are the same way. **Israel loses their little children at the hands of worldly power and weeps while, Jesus, a child from Judah survives;** so too in the OT, Rachel's child Benjamin, his tribe was almost exterminated in the Babylonian exile by worldly power while the tribe of Judah survives. Jesus living in Podunk Nazareth is a situation of a type of Nazarite; certain people who took vows of forbearance order that, through their humility, they would better glorify God.

Some prophecies are God saying specifically what's going to happen. Others, like the ones today, are echoes emanating from the person and works of Jesus who is the Christ. **These things that happen to OT Israel, they are the shadows, Christ is the reality.** They are the echoes; Christ is the voice. They are the type; Christ is the super-type. Israel is the Prophecy; Christ is the fulfillment.

Ladies and gentlemen, it's tempting to think that Christ fulfilled all things on the cross two thousand years ago, and so the story is over; the prophecy fulfilled and so there is no prophecy for today. But these echoes of Christ are everywhere around us even today. The wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes, floods, typhoons...these are echoes of what happened to Christ. **Ripples in the water spanning out from the pebble of the cross.** Jesus is called a Nazarene, do you know what Christians were first called, "the sect of the Nazarenes." So too Christians today will never rule in glory, we rule from the humble chair and are ourselves Nazarenes, living in the places and spaces overlooked by the world and its agenda. And perhaps the most salient echo of the persecution of Christ is abortion, the modern day killing of the Holy Innocents.

Abortion is just another prophecy, a type. It's a recurring theme; something that happens again and again and springs out of and finds its way back to the person of Jesus. We cringe at the idea of Herod going around killing children to protect his rule, and yet what do we say about abortion? "**It looks like a baby, snuggles like a baby, opens its eyes like a baby, has a heartbeat like a baby and DNA like a baby and yet, I don't want to call it a baby."** Herods not around today, but we're all Herods worshipping within the "cult of the self"...and we are enraged when anything unexpected gets in the way of our kingly rule over our own lives.

And our society allows someone to decide that the child within them is not holy, so they can kill it and protect their career, or their single life or whatever. And Herod just wanted to protect his career as king, that's all, and these children were getting in the way. Of course the story of Herod is not about abortion, but you know the type. I'm not a prophet, but I do know an echo. And abortion is simply the modern present day echo of Rachel weeping for her innocent children whose only crime was that they got in the way of someone's personal agenda.

We think history is linear. Maybe, but only that it's begins and ends with Christ, who is the alpha and the omega. Everything has to do with Christ. All who suffer are of the type of Christ. All who are jealous of God's authority are a type of Pharisee. All who betray friends are a type of Judas, a prophecy of Judas. All abortionists are Herods. And all innocently murdered children are made after the image of God, and are made to take up their cross in this life before they breathe their first breath.

But rejoice, because even though the persecution, and the suffering, and the cross of Christ continues to echo through all creation, there is something else that echoes. ***His resurrection***. For Jesus Christ was the first to raise from the dead with an incorruptible body, and ascend to heaven to never suffer death again. So too we know what our crosses predict, that though the world hates us, it hated Christ first. Though it persecutes us, it persecuted Christ first. Though it has glory first, we will have glory at last in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting, the final prophecy to be fulfilled, the final battle won.