



QUEST 52

Quest52.org



Parallels between Matthew's Birth Narratives and Israel's National Epic

From Arland J. Hultgren, "Matthew's Infancy Narrative and the Nativity of the Emerging Community," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 19/2 (1997) 91-108.

OT and Midrashic Legends	Matthew 1 and 2
The Father of Joseph is Jacob (Gen 35:24).	The father of Joseph is Jacob (1:16)
Joseph is righteous (Wis 10:13) and a man of virtue (Philo, Josephus, and rabbinic legends).	Joseph is righteous (1:19)
Joseph dreams (Gen 37:5-11).	Joseph dreams (1:20; 2:13, 19, 22).
Balaam (<i>magos</i> from the East) speaks of a king of Israel and the rising of a star of Jacob (Num 23-24 and Philo).	<i>Magoi</i> from the East speak of a king portended by the star of Bethlehem (2:1-12).
Joseph gets Israel to Egypt (Gen 45-47).	Joseph gets Jesus to Egypt (2:14).
Sojourn of Israel in Egypt (Exo 1:1-7).	Sojourn of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus in Egypt (2:15, 19).
Amram is told in a dream that the son will be a savior of Israel (Josephus and rabbinic legends).	Joseph is told in a dream that the son will be savior of his people (1:21).
Pharaoh is informed by scribes or astrologers of the birth of Moses (Josephus and rabbinic legends).	Herod is informed by wise men of the birth of Jesus (2:1-2).
Pharaoh seeks to destroy Moses (Exo 2:15).	Herod seeks to destroy Jesus (2:13-14).
Pharaoh orders the extermination of male children (Exo 1:22).	Herod orders the extermination of male children (2:16).
Pharaoh is tricked by Moses' mother and Miriam (Exo 2:7-10).	Herod is tricked by the wise men (2:16).
In spite of the threat on the child Moses' life, he is given divine protection (Philo and Josephus).	In spite of the threat on the child Jesus' life, he is given divine protection (1:20; 2:13, 19, 22).
Moses escapes death (Exo 2).	Jesus escapes death (2:14-15).
Pharaoh dies (Exo 2:23).	Herod dies (2:19).
Moses is directed to return to his homeland with his wife and children (Exo 4:19).	Joseph is directed to return to his homeland with his wife and child (2:19-20).
Israel comes out of Egypt in the Exodus (Hos 11:1).	Jesus comes out of Egypt with Joseph and Mary (2:15/Hos 11:1).