

Flight to Egypt (And Death of Herod the Great)

March 4, B.C.

Matthew 2:13-20

Flight to Egypt

Death of Herod the Great

Text:

Matthew 2:13-20

13. Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you: for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy him.”

14. So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt.

15. He remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON.”

16. Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi.

17. Then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

18. “A VOICE WAS HEARD IN RAMAH, WEEPING AND GREAT MOURNING, RACHEL WEEPING FOR HER CHILDREN; AND SHE REFUSED TO BE COMFORTED, BECAUSE THEY WERE NO MORE.”

19. But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and said,

20. “Get up, take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child’s life are dead.”

Commentary:

Matthew 2:13-15, Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you: for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy him.” So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt. He remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON.”

I. An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him to take his family to Egypt immediately and to stay there until God told him to return home.

A. The reason for this order was that Herod would make an attempt on the life of Jesus.

B. Joseph fled that night without hesitation, without delay, without making any excuse for avoiding the trip.

II. Joseph, Mary and Jesus remained in Egypt until Herod was dead.

A. Prophecy predicted that God would call his son out of Egypt.

B. Hosea 11:1, When Israel was a youth I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.

C. Matthew 2:18, “A VOICE WAS HEARD IN RAMAH, WEEPING AND GREAT MOURNING, RACHEL WEEPING FOR HER CHILDREN; AND SHE REFUSED TO BE COMFORTED, BECAUSE THEY WERE NO MORE.”

D. Double applications of prophecy are common in scripture.

E. God spoke through the prophets. God was the speaker.

Matthew 2:16-18, Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi. Then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: “A VOICE WAS HEARD IN RAMAH, WEEPING AND GREAT MOURNING, RACHEL WEEPING FOR HER CHILDREN; AND SHE REFUSED TO BE COMFORTED, BECAUSE THEY WERE NO MORE.”

I. When Herod realized that the wise men had not obeyed his order, he was really mad and commanded that all male children in and around Bethlehem be killed.

A. This would cover the time of the birth of Jesus based on the information provided by the wise men.

B. This slaughter of the children fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:5.

II. Macrobius, a fourth century historian, spoke of the slaughter of these children and reported that one of Herod’s own sons was slain in the bloody onslaught.

III. Those killed were “two years old and under.”

A. Considering the small size of Bethlehem in those days, approximately 20 children were probably killed.

- B. Isaiah 11:1, Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit.**
- C. Jeremiah 23:5, “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord, “When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; and He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land.”**
- D. Zechariah 3:8, ‘Now listen, Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who are sitting in front of you – indeed they are men who are a symbol, for behold, I am going to bring in My servant the Branch.’**

IV. The tomb of Rachel was located in Ramah and many Israelites were led by her grave on the way to captivity in Babylon.

- A. Jeremiah represented Rachel as weeping for her children; that is, these Israelites who were being carried into Babylonian captivity. Those too old or weak to travel were slaughtered here.
- B. This passage is also said to apply to the slaughter of the Bethlehem children.
- C. This Ramah was located in the territory of Benjamin about 6 miles north of Jerusalem.

V. Uncontrolled anger is destructive!

- A. Ephesians 4:26, BE ANGRY, AND YET DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger.**

B. Matthew 5:22, “But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever

C. says to his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.

VI. We must obey God rather than man.

A. Herod’s executioners obeyed the wrong orders.

B. Acts 5:29, But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men.”

Matthew 2:19-20, But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and said, “Get up, take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child’s life are dead.”

I. When Herod was dead, an angel appeared to Joseph and told him to take Jesus back home to Israel.

A. God’s will was done! Evil Herod threw a fit, but did not change God’s plan at all. Herod was dead and gone!

B. Another Herod suffered a similar fate. Acts 12:23-24, And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died. But the word of the Lord continued to grow and to be multiplied.

II. “They are dead that sought the young child’s life” may refer to others of Herod’s establishment who were executed at his death.

A. Josephus reports that these people had been imprisoned in Jericho and executed with darts.

B. God’s providence protected his Son!

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Questions

1. When the _____ had gone, an _____ appeared to _____ in a _____.
2. The _____ told _____, "Take the Child and his mother and flee to _____. Stay there until I tell you otherwise. _____ is going to search for the child to _____ him."
3. _____ got up and took the child and his mother while it was _____, and left for _____.
4. They remained in Egypt until _____ died in order to fulfill the Scriptures as written by the prophet _____.
5. When _____ saw that he had been tricked by the _____, he became _____ and slew all the _____ children in and around _____ from _____ years old and under.
6. This fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet _____, "A _____ was heard in _____, _____ and great _____, _____ weeping for her _____; and she refused to be _____, because they were no more."

7. When God commanded Joseph immediately obeyed without question!
What does this teach us? _____

8. The tomb of _____ was located in _____ and
many _____ were led by her _____ on the way
to captivity in _____.

9. We must obey _____ rather than _____.
_____ obeyed the _____
_____ and the _____
answered, "We must _____ rather than
_____."

10. _____ will was done! Evil _____ threw a
fit, but did not change God's _____ at all. _____
was _____ and gone. They are _____ that
sought the _____ !