

Prophecies of a King

Matthew 2:13-23

I. The Escape to Egypt (vs. 13-15).

A. The WARNING (v.13).

1. It is probable that all the events in the middle of chapter 2 took place on the same night.
2. The magi had visited at night, bestowing their costly gifts.
3. Like when assuring Joseph about Mary's child (1:20), "an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream."
4. Joseph was told to "flee" with Jesus and Mary. "Flee" comes from the Gk. word *pheugo* from which we get "fugitive." It means "one who escapes from something or someone."
5. The reason for this sudden warning was that "Herod will seek... to destroy Him."
6. How odd that Moses was hidden by the Jews from the Egyptians and Jesus was hidden from the Jews by the Egyptians.

B. The FLIGHT (vs. 14-15a).

1. The first word of the angelic warning was "Arise!" Joseph "arose."
2. Joseph took Jesus and Mary and left "by night."
3. They "departed to Egypt." It was some 75 miles to the Egyptian border and probably another 100 miles to a place of safety.
4. They stayed in Egypt "until the death of Herod."
 - a. We know little of their stay in Egypt.
 - b. It is likely that the expensive gifts of the magi provided their needs during this time.
 - c. History tells us that Herod died shortly after the massacre of the innocents.
 - d. EGYPT WAS A FAMILIAR PLACE TO JESUS!

C. The PROPHECY (v. 15b).

1. All these things happened "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet." The prophet was Hosea.
2. The Holy Spirit inspired a line for Hosea 11:1, "Out of Egypt I called My son."
3. 700 years after Hosea penned those words, God used them to prophetically speak of Christ.
4. Herod's threat was no surprise and no problem for God.

II. The Massacre in Ramah (vs. 14-18).

A. Herod's ANGER (v. 16a).

1. Herod "saw that he was deceived." "Deceived" has the idea of mocking.
2. V.10 says that Herod "sent" the magi to Bethlehem to find the child.
3. He became "exceedingly angry." His anger was legendary. In anger he had his brother-in-law, his mother-in-law, his wife and four of his sons killed. His aides knew someone was going to die.

B. Herod's SLAUGHTER (v. 16b).

1. He ordered the immediate death of "**all the male children who were in Bethlehem & more.**"

2. Imagine those soldiers going from house to house, snatching little boys from their mothers' arms and bashing in their skulls with the but of a sword.

C. Jeremiah's PROPHECY (vs. 17-18).

1. The terrible killing of these children was a fulfillment, a completing Jeremiah 31:15.
2. As with many prophecies, this one had an initial and a final fulfillment. The initial fulfillment was in the great sorrow of Israel when most of her people were carried away into Babylonian captivity. "Ramah" was a town outside Jerusalem that was the place where the captives were deported. "Rachel" refers to all Jewish mothers weeping for the tragedy.
3. The final fulfillment is here in Bethlehem. Imagine the cries of the mothers and grandmothers throughout the village. They were "refusing to be comforted because they are no more."
4. Let's turn to Jer.31:16-17 and read the rest of the prophecy.
5. We can also rejoice in the fact that they are with the Lord.

III. The New Home in Nazareth (vs. 19-23).

A. Another APPEARANCE from an Angel (vs. 19-20).

1. "When Herod was dead" again Joseph saw "an angel of the Lord in a dream."
2. The Jewish historian, Josephus, reported that Herod "died of this, ulcerated entrails, putrefied and maggot-filled organs, constant convulsions, foul breath, and neither physicians nor warm baths lead to recovery." A fitting end for such a man!
3. The angel spoke of "those" who had wanted to kill Jesus.

B. Another WARNING from God (vs. 21-22).

1. Joseph moved his family back toward Israel. He was not told where to go in Israel but it seems that he was headed back to Judea.
2. Because of "Archelaus" Joseph was "afraid to go there" [Judea]. While pondering where to go, he was "warned by God in a dream." Perhaps his angel came back!

C. Another PROPHECY fulfilled (v. 23).

1. He came to Nazareth "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets."
The meaning of the word "NAZARENE" must be understood in the light of contempt.
2. Nazarene or one from Nazareth comes from the word "*netser*" {nay'-tser} or sprout of branch. This was a very derogatory term used by the ancients. A new sprout or branch coming out from the stump of a freshly felled tree was a disgrace and wholly unwanted.
3. Note now the references to this point of view. Isa. 11:1; John 1:45-46; 7:41; 19:19.
Isaiah 11:1 Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. (NASB)
John 1:45-46, Philip came to Nathaniel and said, "Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and [also] the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." 46 And Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." (NASB)
4. The One Who was held in contempt, despised, condemned, rejected by "even His own" was to be the "Choice" of God, Himself.