

The Four Gospels of the Bible, Back to Nazareth

Matthew 2:19-23

¹⁹ After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. (NIV)

Later, when Herod died, God's angel appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt: "Up, take the child and his mother and return to Israel. All those out to murder the child are dead." Joseph obeyed. He got up, took the child and his mother, and reentered Israel. When he heard, though, that Archelaus had succeeded his father, Herod, as king in Judea, he was afraid to go there. But then Joseph was directed in a dream to go to the hills of Galilee. On arrival, he settled in the village of Nazareth. This move was a fulfillment of the prophetic words, "He shall be called a Nazarene." (The Message)

Another dream...and obedience

As before (escape to Egypt), Joseph is directed through a dream; and as before, he obeys. On his arrival in-country however, the news reaches him of yet more generational wickedness in the land. What is important in this matter is that Joseph did obey – he did return to Israel; but what is also important is that he did not leave his mind back in Egypt...

Listening...and listening again

Was God wrong; did God purposely instruct Joseph (Mar, Jesus) into harms way? If we believe that God is providential, then the answer is "No, God was neither wrong nor misleading." In the acceptance of God's all-knowing is the acceptance that He was aware of the wicked king; but what is possible is if Joseph had known of the wicked king beforehand, he may not have left or obeyed God. At the least, he may have questioned God. His prospective reaction cannot be proven but we do know of his fear once learning of situation; we do know that his fear was *put to rest* with the arrival of another dream.

Dreams...and more dreams

Well, *half the fun is getting there* – even when a detour is delayed by a dream. For the family, the future included the return in accordance with prophecy. The time was right – so it seemed; yet the plans were subject to change. Rather than go back to where they were before (to the birthplace), they went to the place such that Jesus would indeed be a Nazarene. Many may have believed (at the time) that "nothing good comes out of Nazareth; but the fact is, everything that is good came from Nazareth.

H. Kirk Rainer