

The Four Gospels of the Bible, Escape to Egypt

Matthew 2:13-18

¹ When they had gone, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up”, he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him:” ¹⁸ “A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.

After the scholars were gone, God’s angel showed up again in Joseph’s dream and commanded, “Get up. Take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt. Stay until further notice. Herod is on the hunt for this child, and wants to kill him.”

Joseph obeyed. He got up, took the child and his mother under cover of darkness. They were out of town and well on their way by daylight. They lived in Egypt until Herod’s death. This Egyptian exile fulfilled what Hosea had preached: “I called my son out of Egypt.”

Herod, when he realized that the scholars had tricked him, flew into a rage. He commanded the murder of every little boy two years old and under who lived in Bethlehem and its surrounding hills. (He determined that age from information he’d gotten from the scholars.) That’s when Jeremiah’s sermon was fulfilled:

A sound was heard in Ramah, weeping and much lament. Rachel weeping for her children, Rachel refusing all solace, her children gone, dead and buried.

(The Message)

Child and His Mother

Interesting that the angel spoke to Joseph; and that he was *called-on* again to obey God – to lay aside his own desires and to do what was best for Mary and the child, Jesus. Apparently Joseph acted immediately; choosing to *leave* under cover of darkness so as to minimize the risk of being seen...and held by Herod’s authority. It’s possible that Joseph had never been so far away and – with the unknown ahead – may have had momentary reservations; yet he went...

Out of Egypt

The Hebrews *had a history* in Egypt. Remember that Joseph welcomed his estranged family with gifts and offerings – a sign of his forgiveness of his brothers’ schemes. What was first a haven for Hebrews became their master: Egypt had welcomed the Hebrews; but changes in the position of power (pharaoh) and concern over the population growth of the Hebrews (fear of power loss...) lead to changes in policy; once respected, the Hebrews were re-classified as slaves...unworthy to be citizens.

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Rage over Reason

Remember that the scholars (aka Wise Men) were also warned in a dream; and that they left Canaan by another route having learned of Herod's true intention. When Herod learned of their departure, he was enraged and, consequently, had the male children in the locality murdered...

What sorrow and despair must have overcome the parent of those children? Herod did not have to do what he did; but he chose to do it in anger (or fear) – of which was in keeping with a history of wickedness.

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