

Bible Study for January 6, 20201
[Adapted from The Serendipity Bible]

By Major Brian Coles

Read Matthew 2.13-18

After they had gone, an^[a] angel of the Lord^[b] appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you, for Herod^[c] is going to look for the child to kill him.”¹⁴ Then he got up, took the child and his mother during^[d] the night, and went to Egypt.¹⁵ He stayed there until Herod^[e] died. In this way what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet was fulfilled: ***“I called my Son out of Egypt.”***^[f]

¹⁶ When Herod^[g] saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he became enraged. He sent men^[h] to kill all the children in Bethlehem and throughout the surrounding region from the age of two and under, according to the time he had learned from the wise men.¹⁷ Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

¹⁸ ***“A voice was heard in Ramah,
weeping and loud wailing,^[i]
Rachel weeping for her children,
and she did not want to be comforted, because they were^[j] gone.”***^[k]

¹⁹ After Herod^[l] had died, an^[m] angel of the Lord^[n] appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt²⁰ saying, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.”²¹ So^[o] he got up and took the child and his mother and returned to the land of Israel.²² But when he heard that Archelaus^[p] was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod,^[q] he was afraid to go there. After being warned in a dream, he went to the regions of Galilee.²³ He came to a town called Nazareth^[r] and lived there. Then what had been spoken by the prophets was fulfilled, that Jesus^[s] would be called a Nazarene.^[t]

Footnotes

- a. [Matthew 2:13](#) **tn** *Grk* “behold, an angel.” The Greek word ἰδοῦ (*idou*) has not been translated because it has no exact English equivalent here, but adds interest and emphasis (BDAG 468 s.v. 1).
- b. [Matthew 2:13](#) **tn** Or “the angel of the Lord.” See the note on the word “Lord” in [1:20](#).
- c. [Matthew 2:13](#) **sn** See the note on *King Herod* in [2:1](#). Herod the Great was particularly ruthless regarding the succession to his throne.
- d. [Matthew 2:14](#) **tn** The feminine singular genitive noun νυκτός (*nuktos*, “night”) indicates the time during which the action of the main verb takes place (*ExSyn* 124).
- e. [Matthew 2:15](#) **sn** See the note on *King Herod* in [2:1](#).
- f. [Matthew 2:15](#) **sn** A quotation from [Hos 11:1](#).
- g. [Matthew 2:16](#) **sn** See the note on *King Herod* in [2:1](#). Note the fulfillment of the prophecy given by the angel in [2:13](#).
- h. [Matthew 2:16](#) **tn** Or “soldiers.”
- i. [Matthew 2:18](#) **tc** The LXX of Jer 38:15 ([31:15](#) ET) has “lamentation, weeping, and loud wailing”; most later mss (C D L W Γ Δ 0233 f¹³ 33 565 579 700 1241 1424 M) have a quotation in Matthew which conforms to that of the LXX (θρῆνος καὶ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὀδυρμός; *thrēnos kai klauthmos kai odurmos*). But such assimilations were routine among the scribes; as such, they typically should be discounted because they are both predictable and motivated. The shorter reading, without “lamentation and,” is thus to be preferred, especially since it cannot easily be accounted for unless it is the reading that gave rise to the other reading. Further, it is found in the better mss along with a good cross-section of other witnesses (κ B Z 0250 f¹ lat co).
- j. [Matthew 2:18](#) **tn** *Grk* “are”; the Greek text uses a present tense verb.
- k. [Matthew 2:18](#) **sn** A quotation from [Jer 31:15](#).
- l. [Matthew 2:19](#) **sn** See the note on *King Herod* in [2:1](#). When Herod the Great died in 4 B.C., his kingdom was divided up among his three sons: Archelaus, who ruled over Judea (where Bethlehem was located, [y. 22](#)); Philip, who became tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis (cf. [Luke 3:1](#)); and Antipas, who became tetrarch of Galilee.
- m. [Matthew 2:19](#) **tn** *Grk* “behold, an angel.” The Greek word ἰδοῦ (*idou*) has not been translated because it has no exact English equivalent here, but adds interest and emphasis (BDAG 468 s.v. 1).

- n. [Matthew 2:19](#) **tn** Or “the angel of the Lord.” See the note on the word “Lord” in [1:20](#).
- o. [Matthew 2:21](#) **tn** Here *δέ* (*de*) has been translated as “so” to indicate the implied result of the angel’s instructions.
- p. [Matthew 2:22](#) **sn** *Archelaus* took after his father Herod the Great in terms of cruelty and ruthlessness, so Joseph *was afraid to go there*. After further direction *in a dream*, he went instead to *Galilee*.
- q. [Matthew 2:22](#) **sn** See the note on *King Herod* in [2:1](#).
- r. [Matthew 2:23](#) **sn** *Nazareth* was a very small village in the region of *Galilee* (Galilee lay north of Samaria and Judea). The town was located about 15 mi (25 km) west of the southern edge of the Sea of Galilee. According to [Luke 1:26](#), Mary was living in Nazareth when the birth of Jesus was announced to her.
- s. [Matthew 2:23](#) **tn** There is no expressed subject of the third person singular verb here; the pronoun “he” is implied. Instead of this pronoun the referent “Jesus” has been supplied in the text to clarify to whom this statement refers.
- t. [Matthew 2:23](#) **tn** The Greek could be indirect discourse (as in the text), or direct discourse (“he will be called a Nazarene”). Judging by the difficulty of finding OT quotations (as implied in the plural “prophets”) to match the wording here, it appears that the author was using a current expression of scorn that conceptually (but not verbally) found its roots in the OT.

Questions to Consider:

1. Would you ever go back to your birthplace to live now or to retire? Why or why not?
2. What type of king do you think Herod was? What does his response of fear and anger show about his view of the Messiah, Jesus?
3. What is Matthew’s point in emphasizing God’s watchful care over Jesus in fulfillment of Hosea’s and Jeremiah’s prophecies in vv.17-18, 23?
4. What relocation options face Joseph? How did God use prophecy, dreams, faith and circumstances to guide him?

Points to Ponder:

1. When, like Herod, have you felt threatened by Jesus’ kingship? How do you react at those times?

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2. From Joseph's responsiveness, what do you learn about faith and obedience? How long would it take you to say "yes" if God asked you to move on with him? Why the delay?