

LISTENING TO GOD FOR SAFETY SAKE

Joseph Takes His Family to Safety in Egypt

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Matthew 2:13-23 (last page of devotion)

Directions...Are they important in knowing where you are going?

Give some reasons directions as to where you are going are important.

How often do you listen for God's direction in life?

How often do you rely on God for your and your family's safety?

Do you feel that God directs you without your input...or that He directs you only when you ask for guidance?

Husbands: How important is it to you that your family listens to you and follows your leadership?

Wives: How important is it to you that your husband listens to God for proper counsel on all aspects of life?

What difference does it make? Why?

Herod had a plan...an evil plan. He plotted to find out where the newborn king was located in order to annihilate/extinguish his opposition. When his first plan failed (Magi did not return to tell him where the newborn king was), he thought of a more evil plan. He panicked and his anger brought about the order to kill all the boys in Bethlehem who fell within the age span suggested by the star's first appearance.

Evil plan...evil deed...evil outcome...and evil and hellish acts always bring about weeping, fear, and tragic scenes.

Tragedy can sometimes bring about victory. God's plan of salvation and restoration is always productive, protective and promising for those trusting in His faithful care.

Jesus' life always shows us that God is always faithful to guide us according to His plans and promises. Praise God for His unfailing love and guiding hand.



Jesus' safety was of utmost importance to Joseph. His faith in God made him realize this child's significance, and he did not hesitate to obey God's command to flee to Egypt. He listened to God and reacted to God's leadership and authority.

Some thoughts on the passage:

Some suggest that the Magi and Joseph received the warning from God and departed the same night. It would have taken the Magi a little longer to get ready to leave than Joseph and Mary because of their entourage (personnel, animals, equipment and food) that would be leaving with them.

We do know that Joseph was warned to leave in a dream...and he responded to the warning by God's messenger. When God speaks....people should listen...but many don't and are susceptible to the enemy because of not listening, not obeying, and not yielding to authority.

When have you seen people not yielding to God's direction? What happens?

In verse 15, Matthew once again refers to Old Testament prophecy, suggesting that God would call the Messiah out of Egypt (Hosea 11:1). This passage from Hosea refers to God's deliverance of His people, Israel, from Egypt. But Matthew wanted to prove to the Jews that Jesus was indeed the one they'd been waiting for. Matthew viewed the salvation that God brought to the people of Israel in freeing them from Egypt as a foreshadowing of the supreme salvation that would come through Jesus. As Moses went to Egypt to bring his people out of bondage, so Jesus went to Egypt before freeing people from the bondage of sin.

We can't imagine the terror in the village of Bethlehem as infants were torn from their mothers' arms and murdered....all at the evil command of a jealous king. No number is given, but in a town the size of Bethlehem, some estimate that there would have been as many as 30 male infants just in Bethlehem alone under the age of two at any given time.

Matthew once again in verses 17 and 18 refers to Old Testament prophecy. In Jeremiah 31:15, Jeremiah prophesied that sorrow would overwhelm Israel as God punished Israel for its sins by allowing the Assyrians to take the kingdom of Israel into captivity. In referring to that passage, Matthew may be suggesting that the tragedy in Bethlehem was

ultimately brought on by the unfaithfulness of the people of Israel.

It appears that Herod died not long after his brutal command and act in Bethlehem. **Herod was dead, but the child he had tried to kill would live forever.**

Jesus Made it Possible for Us to Live Forever!

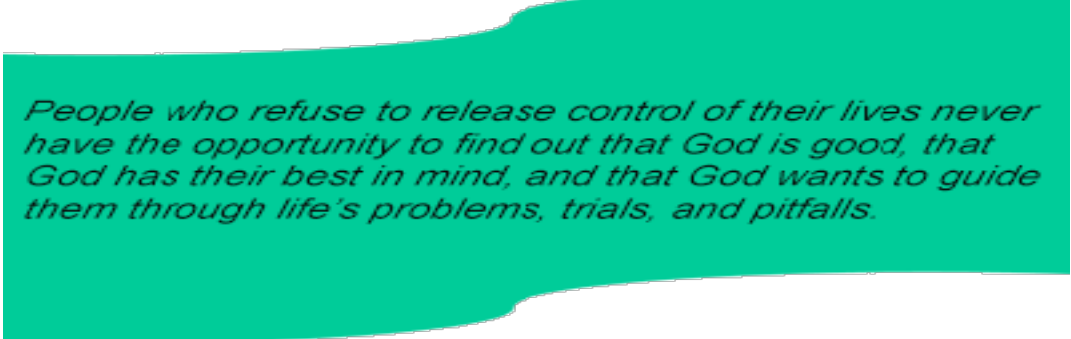
As Joseph and Mary returned to Israel in response to God's direction, they heard that Herod's son, Archelaus, had taken Herod's place. Joseph was apprehensive at the prospect of settling in Judea. God again spoke to Joseph in a dream and directed the little family to go to Nazareth. Thus...Jesus survived the evil intentions of wicked kings and grew up in obscurity in a small town in Galilee.

Summary:

In the good old USA, our American culture, we...in the most part have learned the importance of freedom and independence. We chart our own course in life and are encouraged to take charge of our lives and to reach for our dreams.

However, maybe that is why it's hard for us to give up our independence and choose to be guided by God. God asks us to give up control of our lives. This kind of walking with God requires trust and an underlying belief that God cares about us and knows what's best for us.

People who refuse to release control of their lives never have the opportunity to find out that God is good, that God has their best in mind, and that God wants to guide them through life's problems, trials, and pitfalls.



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Let's Weave Faith into Our Lives!

Faith is giving control of our lives to a God who cares! As you live life, do you feel that you are giving more control of what happens to you and your family to God?

It is true, we must make good choices in life. However, when we turn our lives over to a God who knows us better than we know ourselves, our confidence in His care and understanding helps us to make right decisions that will affect our family forever! It is not a life thing...it is an eternal thing!

HE WANTS TO MAKE US FISHERS OF MEN!

Matthew 2:13-23

¹³When they had gone, an angel of the Lord 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."

¹⁴ So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, ¹⁵ where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son." [a] ¹⁶ When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. ¹⁷ Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

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."

¹⁹ After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt ²⁰ and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead."

²¹ So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in

place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, ²³ and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.”

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