

**Refuge City Church — January 7, 2024**  
**Gospel of Matthew: “Sorrow to Salvation” (Matthew 2:13-23)**

**Introduction**

- *Last time:* The varied response to His presence indicates the reality of who He is by His name; as indicated by this story alone.
- *Today:* All the joy and miraculous wonder surrounding the birth of Jesus takes a sudden turn.

**{verses 13-15}**

“Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, ‘Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.’ And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, ‘Out of Egypt I called my son.’”

- **Reminder [vs. 7, 8]:** “[Herod] Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.”
  - **Verse 12:** “And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.”
- So the angel warns Joseph to take his family to Egypt.
  - Here we see other prophecy unfold.
    1. Prophetic foreshadowing of the hostility Jesus would encounter from those in power [politically and religiously] throughout his life and ministry.
    2. This journey mirrors what Moses went through in Egypt.
      - Pharaoh feared the Israelites would be too powerful so he decided to kill all the male children.
        - **Exodus 1:16-17**, “When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live.” But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live.”
        - Herod resolves to do the same when his power is threatened.
    3. Matthew declares a prophecy fulfilled.
      - **Hosea 11:1**, “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.”
        - **Exodus 4:22-23**, “Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord, *Israel is my firstborn son*, and I say to you, “Let my son go that he may serve me.”
      - Let us not forget that Jesus is the greater Moses!
        - **Hebrews 3:5-6**, “Now Moses was faithful in all God’s house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, but Christ is faithful over God’s house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.”

**{verses 16-18}**

“Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken

by the prophet Jeremiah: 'A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.'

- We learn a lot about the character of man in a few short verses.
  - **QUOTE:** "...Herod shows himself to be spiritually blind, fearful, conspiring, cunning and a liar, murderous, wrathful, and apprehensive of the future." [Jack Kingsbury]
  - That's a pretty strong visual of what life without Christ is like.
    - **Galatians 5:19, 20**, "Now the works of the flesh are evident...enmity [hostility], strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions..." [so don't point your finger at Herod 😊]
  - Also a strong correlation to how many react to Jesus today.
    - "If I see He is going to disrupt my life, position, etc., than I will do whatever I can to destroy Him and His credibility."
- **[vs. 18]** Here Matthew offers another fulfillment of prophecy; "A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more."
  - Quoting the prophet Jeremiah [Jeremiah 31:15], who was referring to Jacob's wife Rachel, who died giving birth; she was buried in Bethlehem.
    - **Genesis 35:18-19**, "And as her soul was departing (for she was dying), she called his name Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin. So Rachel died, and she was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)."
      - The importance of names & their meanings...
      - Ben-oni = *son of my sorrow*
        - Jesus: "He was despised and rejected by men, a *man of sorrows* and acquainted with grief..." [Isaiah 53:3]
      - Benjamin = *son of the right hand*
        - Jesus: "...After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." [Hebrews 1:3]
    - What Jeremiah was referencing were some of the Israelites being taken into Babylonian captivity some 600 years prior to the birth of Jesus, and Rachel was weeping on behalf of those mothers who were losing their sons.
      - Bethlehem was acquainted with death and sorrow, yet the One born there would bring joy, redemption, and life!
  - From captivity to freedom. From slavery to the promised land. From sorrow to salvation!
  - This is what Jesus does for us.
    - Freedom from bondage to sin. Offering us an eternal home [promised land] to which we look forward to.
    - All our sorrow will eventually be wiped away!
      - **Revelation 21:4**, "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

**[verses 19-23]**

“But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, ‘Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child’s life are dead.’ And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.”

- Another dream. Another vision and word from the Lord to head back to Israel.
- The waiting, listening, and obedience showed by Joseph and Mary is encouraging.
  - How long would they be in Egypt? Would this be their new home? When would God speak again?
- The wisdom used to go around Herod’s son, Archelaus was proper.
  - Joseph was given further knowledge that this king was a ‘chip off the old block’. He was another evil ruler.
  - So guided by the Lord, they end up settling in Nazareth, where they lived prior to the birth of Jesus.
- Yet another prophecy fulfilled, that Jesus would come out of Nazareth.
  - **John 1:45-46**, “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.’ Nathanael said to him, ‘Can anything good come out of Nazareth?’ Philip said to him, “Come and see.”
  - **Psalm 22:6**, “But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people.” [Isaiah 53:3]
  - Multiple time throughout the scripture, it would be prophesied that Jesus would be mocked, despised, and hated.
    - Having been raised in a town associated with humility and lowliness, this prophecy had been fulfilled.

### ***Conclusion/Encouragement for the new year***

- Thoughts and feelings towards the New Year holiday?
  - Do you make your resolutions & goals? Maybe cast a little vision for yourself or career for the upcoming year?
- This is what the Lord had me reflect on this past week.
  - **Jeremiah 29:11-13**, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.”
  - It’d be nice to know the future. What’s gonna happen. How much money I’m gonna make.
    - But might it also be convenient to avoid any tragedy that may come our way?
  - *Verse 11* is encouraging! God knows, therefore I don’t have to do anything.
    - Jesus has taken the wheel. I’m good to sit back, relax, and watch it all unfold...  
NO!

- We forget verses 12 & 13: Call on Him. Come to Him. Pray to Him. Seek Him, with all your heart!
  - **Proverbs 29:18**, “Where there is no vision, the people perish.”
  - This is why God chose Joseph & Mary to care for Jesus. They were in tune with their Lord!
  - We’ve seen their faithful willing obedience in the midst of uncertainty, confusion, fear, and hostility.
    - **Ezekiel 8:4**, “And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the vision that I saw in the valley.”
- God is sovereign. We are not. Our aim is to trust in Him with all of our heart and lean not on our own understanding.
  - Our “future and hope” rest in Jesus and the promised land of eternity.
  - While here, be faithful. Remain in contact with God at all times. Seek Him in all you do!