



**God's Plan
for Your
Salvation**

SYRIA
Mediterranean Sea
JORDAN
ISRAEL
EGYPT
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**First Sunday
after Christmas
2023
Sunday, 1/1
at 10:00**

**Text:
Matthew 2:13-23
NAS 1995**

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: God was, *and continues to be*, at work for our eternal salvation: **Mt. 1** – Jesus’ genealogy from Joseph **and** His birth. **Mt. 2:1-12** – Jesus in Bethlehem and visited by the wise men (after He was 40 days old). Today, **the second half of Mt. 2:** ♣ God protecting His Son, ♣ Rage and sadness, ♣ Hearing and heeding, and ♣ Fine tuning and fulfillment.

1. **God Protecting His Son:**

- a. **Warning:** ¹³ **Now when [the wise men] had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him.”** // Jesus was born to die, that was part of God’s plan – *BUT NOT YET*. So, God dispatched an angel – a messenger – to Joseph *to inform him of the threat and tell him to flee*.
- b. **Fleeing:** ¹⁴ **So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night [NO DELAY], and left for Egypt.** // Joseph could have said: “It doesn’t make sense to me that Herod would kill a baby, so I will stay

in Bethlehem.” **BUT Joseph heard and heeded the warning immediately!** Today everyone is being warned: Repent and believe in Jesus – *before it is too late!*

- c. **Timing:** ¹⁵ **He remained there until the death of Herod.** // When did Herod die? This is a possible timeline:
- i. John the Baptizer was conceived in July of 6 BC and born in March of 5 BC.¹
 - ii. Jesus, *six months younger*, was born in September of 5 BC.
 - iii. Joseph and his family fled, then Herod sent his soldiers in November of 5 BC.
 - iv. Herod died about 4-5 months later in March or April of 4 BC. Jesus in Egypt – *maybe 4-5 months.*
- d. **Prophecy:** ***This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON”*** [Hosea 11:1]. // Prophecy from the LORD will always be fulfilled. Circumstances took Jesus into Egypt; *then He was called out when Herod died.*

2. **Rage and Sadness:**

- a. **Making Sure:** ¹⁶ **Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi.** // Why two years and under? It probably includes ♦when the wise men first saw the star and ♦Herod increasing the age to two-years-old to ensure he murdered the Newborn King.

¹ “Starting with the month of Nisan (first month of the Hebrew calendar), we can figure that Zacharias was serving the tenth week of the [Hebrew] year... That would mean that John the Baptist probably was conceived about the third week of Sivan [thus in June or July].” Michael Norten, Unlocking the Secrets of the Feasts (WestBow Press, 2012), 90.

- b. **Great Sadness:** ¹⁷ Then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: ¹⁸ “A VOICE WAS HEARD IN RAMAH, WEEPING AND GREAT MOURNING, RACHEL WEEPING FOR HER CHILDREN; AND SHE REFUSED TO BE COMFORTED, BECAUSE THEY WERE NO MORE” [Jer. 31:15]. // What does that mean? “Rachel [Jacob’s favorite wife] ... died in childbirth and was buried in Ramah... (Gen. 35:16–20). Years later, Jeremiah pictured Rachel weeping for the Israelites who were exiled to Babylon. Those OT stories of suffering anticipated the suffering caused by Herod... when [he] slaughtered the infant boys of Bethlehem” (TLSB).
3. **Hearing and Heeding:** ¹⁹ But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and said, ²⁰ “Get up, take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child’s life are dead.” ²¹ So Joseph got up, took the Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.
- a. “land of Israel” – The reference seems to recall Israel coming out of Egypt, *about 1,500 years earlier*, to enter and occupy the Promised Land.
- b. Again, Joseph Obeyed – He heeded God’s word, *delivered through an angel*. Since the Bible is more concrete than a dream, let us hear and heed God’s word – *to show Him respect and for our benefit*.
4. **Fine Tuning and Fulfillment:**
- a. Bethlehem: ²² But when [Joseph] heard that Archelaus [a brutal tyrant] was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. // Prior to Egypt, Joseph and his family lived in Bethlehem for months, so Bethlehem was the place of choice when

they returned. Why? To avoid criticism from the people of Nazareth – since Mary had become pregnant while she was engaged.

- b. Nazareth: **Then after being warned by God in a dream, he left for the regions of Galilee,²³ and came and lived in a city called Nazareth. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: “He shall be called a Nazarene.”**
- i. Dividing the kingdom of Herod the Great – “Herod Archelaus inherited a double-share and ruled Judea and Samaria while Herod Antipas and Philip split the remainder of the kingdom, including Galilee.”² Since Herod Archelaus was the most powerful, *they settled outside of his territory.*
- ii. Nazarene – The OT tells us that the Messiah would be despised (Is. 53:3) and those in Jesus’ day looked down on Nazarenes (John 1:46), so Nazareth was a good fit for Jesus. People looked upon Jesus as the lowest, **yet He was the very highest as the Son of God in human flesh:** ♦ fully tempted – *yet no sin*;
♦ teaching with authority – *unlike all others*;
♦ horrible treatment – *yet no complaints*; and
♦ bearing our punishment – *in perfect obedience.*

Let Us Pray: Dear Father, *TYSM for Your great plan to save us!* Help us to ♦rejoice in Your salvation, ♦trust in Jesus, and ♦go through 2023 with *much peace and the obedience of Joseph!*

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² <https://study.com/academy/lesson/king-herod-history-reign-death.html>