

CALLED OUT OF EGYPT

The wise men were led supernaturally by Christ's star to the house where Jesus and His family were staying and they worshipped Him. Then God warned the wise men in a dream not to return to Herod and tell him the whereabouts of the newborn King, so they departed to their homeland another way. Matthew then builds on the theme of the fulfillment of prophecy.

Matthew 2:13 (NKJV)

13 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."

It seems that God's revelation to the wise men by way of a dream and His revelation to Joseph happened in very close proximity, time-wise. The wise men were told not to return to Herod, and Joseph was told to flee with the family to Egypt because Herod was going to try and destroy the Christ-child.

Egypt at the time was also under Roman rule, but it was outside the jurisdiction of Herod. There was a large settlement of about one million Jews living there, so Joseph and his family would have blended right in. Egypt was about 40 miles south of Bethlehem. It is estimated they could have traveled about 20 miles per day.

Note that God knew everything that was going on in Herod's heart. Herod had "secretly" meet with the wise men not wanting anyone to know his secret plotting, but God knew. He always knows. No one can hide their innermost thoughts from God. And God knowing his intentions let Joseph in on it so he could flee to safety (cf. Heb. 4:13).

People try and play games with God and they always lose. Herod sought information from the religious leaders on where the Christ-child would be born and evidently believed it because he acted upon it. And yet, even though he in effect believed in the supernatural revelation of prophecy, at the same time he thought he could foil the plan of God. That is the height of folly.

There are lots of "Herods" in this brutal and mean old world, but never forget that God sovereignly controls all things and in the end God is always shown to be God.

In theology, we often say that while God sovereignly controls all things, under that umbrella, He prevents some things, He promotes some things, and He permits some things. Here in verse 13, God actively promotes Joseph and his family to go to Egypt. But in doing so, He also was preventing the Child from being destroyed.

Matthew 2:14 (NKJV)

14 When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt,

There is a sense of urgency here. Joseph was immediately obedient. The word “departed” (Gk. *anachoreo*) means to withdraw because of danger.

Matthew 2:15 (NKJV)

15 and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, “Out of Egypt I called My Son.”

They remained in Egypt until the death of Herod. History records that Herod died in 4 B.C. This means that Christ was probably actually born in about 6 or 5 B.C. which means that our calendars are off by about 5 or 6 years. Now that calls for all kinds of explanation, but I will leave it there. Our dating of Christ’s birth is tied to the fact it happened prior to the death of Herod probably by a year or two.

Now why did God work this way – I mean putting Joseph and Mary with the small Child through all this? Couldn’t God have just protected them in place without them having to flee for the sake of the Child. Well, of course God could have done that, but He often chooses to work through ordinary means and He has a purpose in doing so.

Here the stated purpose is, “***that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, ‘Out of Egypt I called My Son.’***”

The quote here is from Hosea 11:1.

Hosea 11:1 (NKJV)

1 “When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son.

In Matt. 2:5-6 we have what is called a DIRECT fulfillment of the prophecy of Micah 5:2 with the Messiah being born in Bethlehem. But here in Matt. 2:15 we have what is called a TYPOLOGICAL fulfillment. In other words,

there is a type or symbol of prophetic truth in the OT that is now fulfilled in the Person of Christ.

When it comes to that which is typological we must let Scripture interpret Scripture otherwise it is easy for people to get carried away with allegorical thinking that is not really grounded in Scripture.

The Bible is GOD'S STORY and He can tell it however He wants to do so. He tells us the story's central character is the MESSIAH (Jesus).

Luke 24:27 (NKJV)

27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

- “[Here] the Lord Jesus gave them the great key to the understanding of Scripture – that He Himself is its subject and that in Him the entire Book finds its unity.” – **C.I. Scofield**

Revelation 19:10 (NKJV)

10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For **the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.**”

Prophecy always has Jesus as its theme. It all points to Jesus in one form or another. Jesus is the center and theme of all prophecy. Jesus is the grand subject of the entire Bible story which climaxes in the book of Revelation which begins with the words, “**The Revelation of Jesus Christ**” (Rev. 1:1). It is both FROM Him and ultimately ABOUT Him! “It’s all about HIM!”

With this in mind God is telling us in Matt. 2:15 that the history of Israel as God’s son in their Exodus from Egypt typifies the experience of His ultimate Son – the Messiah Christ. In Exodus 4:22 Moses was to tell Pharaoh, “**Thus says the LORD: Israel is My son, My firstborn.**” Just as God’s son Israel was brought out of Egypt as an infant son/nation so in like manner was God’s Son/Messiah was brought out of Egypt as an infant.

Israel as God’s son was brought out of Egypt in the Exodus and as such was a prophetic type of what God would do with His greater Son – Jesus the Messiah. In order for this typology to be fulfilled the Christ Child had to come out of Egypt. For this reason, God allowed this to happen the way it did.

Sometimes there are BIG PICTURE themes related to prophecy and this is one of those cases.

The BIG PICTURE emphasis is that God brings His son/Son out of Egypt. This prophetic emphasis on God bringing His son/Son out of Egypt was fulfilled in part in Israel's Exodus from Egypt, but also in a deeper, more complete sense in bringing His Messiah Son out of Egypt in infancy.

It is likely that Christ's stay in Egypt as a Child was quite short – possibly only a few weeks or months.

When you see God's plan, how He prophesied it, and how He intricately brings to pass with exquisite precision the details, it leads you to worship. Only God could do this!