

The King Of Heaven In Exile.

Text: Matt 2:13-23

1) The cause of His hasty flight

Suggested Hymns:

2) The significance of His exile to us

36, 161, 408, 330, 416

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Matthew 2:13–23, ¹³ *Now when [the wise men] 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.”*

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

¹⁶ *Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. ¹⁷ Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: ¹⁸ “A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more.”*

¹⁹ *Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, ²⁰ saying, “Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child’s life are dead.”*

²¹ *Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. ²³ And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, “He shall be called a Nazarene.” (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

There is a special significance attached to the fact that so soon after the wonders surrounding the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem, He was made to feel the bitter sting of human depravity and malice.

We believe that Jesus is the King of kings, God made manifest in the flesh. This message is written across the pages of Holy Scripture. He is called “the Mighty God,”¹ “the Prince of princes,”² “Messiah the Prince,”³ “the King of Glory,”⁴ “the King of Zion,”⁵ “Lord of lords and King of kings,”⁶ and crowned with many crowns.⁷

Recall that David had once fled from Absalom in time of conspiracy and rebellion, crossing the brook Kidron with bare feet, covered head, and tearful eyes. His kingdom was in the balance.⁸

When Charlemagne was a corpse, his friends still clung to him, setting up his lifeless body in the tomb, placing a crown upon his pulseless temples and a sceptre in his stiff, cold hands.

But the “new-born King” whom the Wise Men came to Worship is “*Christ the Lord*,” as the angel told the shepherds, and sits as the “King forever.”⁹

But in our text for today we see *The King of Heaven in Exile*. Let us consider what this means for us. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. The Cause Of His Hasty Flight.

Our text begins with the command of God. ¹³ *Now when [the Wise Men] 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 was a timely warning: *Arise ... flee to Egypt, and stay there*. This came after the forty days of cleansing and purification.¹⁰ It came after Jesus was presented in the temple. It came after the Wise men had come and gone, leaving treasures and sweetest memories. By this time Jesus was a young Child.

Therefore this command was a sudden awakening. We see a frightened mother; flight by night, and the hardships of the journey.

Why? Was not this Child equal to God? The King of heaven? The Lord of all? Why this instant and implicit obedience? ***When [Joseph] arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, ¹⁵ and was there until the death of Herod.***

Jesus is now under the Law,¹¹ in the state of humiliation,¹² His glory was hidden, His rank was laid aside; He was subject to His Father's command. Remember that it was the disregard of God's timely warning that caused the loss of Paradise. It caused the fate of Lot's wife. It is the reason why death comes upon all people.¹³ Yes, Jesus, King of heaven is obedient from infancy.

We see the wickedness of men. ***Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.*** These are the unknown depths of sin and depravity. This man Herod had plotted against the life of the new-born King from the beginning. We read in Matthew 2:8, ⁸ ***And [Herod] sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."***

Since his plans were foiled, because the Wise Men did not return to Herod, he planned greater wickedness. ¹⁶ ***Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.***

Hands reeking with the blood of his wife, sons, and friends. The murder of innocent children was not shocking to his depraved mind. Lives are cheap. He enjoyed the blood carnivals in Rome. He was no different to the Gangsters and racketeers of today.

Herod was old, but he was insanely jealous. Any possible rival to his kingship must be destroyed. He planned to have the elite of Jerusalem slain in his last hour, so that at least some one might weep at his death.

Should the King of heaven go into exile for such a one as this? Should the Creator fear the impotent rage of His creature? Legions of angels are at His

service. Jesus is the almighty Son of the almighty Father. Nevertheless, He condescended to be saved by Joseph. Jesus is altogether our Brother. He had not yet come to judge. He was tempted like we are.

We have the prophecy of Scripture in our text. *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."*

These are the important causes of the flight into Egypt and of exile there, *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."*¹⁴

Recall that Israel was taken to Egypt by another Joseph and redeemed by God through Moses. So the Messiah also was to be in exile there for a time.

"In Ramah there was a voice heard." ¹⁷ *Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying:* ¹⁸ *"A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more."*¹⁵ Rachel is represented as the mother of Bethlehem, having given her life there for the life of Benjamin.¹⁶

"He shall be called a Nazarene." ²³ *And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."*

When Philip found Nathanael and told him that they had found the Messiah in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, Nathanael's response was, *"Nazareth! Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"*¹⁷ Nathanael was familiar with Nazareth. He was from Cana, a few miles south of there. The fact that Jesus was called a Nazarene is an indication of His lowliness and humiliation.

The work of redemption. The King of heaven came to save His people from their sins. Peter the Great spent nine months in foreign lands as a common labourer, sailor, and shipbuilder, to bring first-hand knowledge about the teachers, nurses, doctors, and engineers back home with him for the benefit of his own people.

Jesus became Man to redeem men. He was in exile to redeem exiles. The cause of separation is sin. Adam hid. Jonah fled. Sinners seek the cover of night. They are at enmity with God. There was no room for Jesus in the inn.

The world, made by Him, knew Him not. His own people received Him not.¹⁸ He was exiled from His own kingdom, home, country, Temple, and Church, to regain Paradise lost.

Jesus was exiled to make the disobedient righteous. We read in Romans 5:19, ¹⁹ *For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.*

Jesus was exiled to reconcile the world to God,¹⁹ so that sinners might flee to Him, not from Him.

2. The Significance Of His Exile To Us.

However dark the night, Jesus has led the way. He is the Man ahead in the tangled maze of our existence. He never asks us to tread a path which has not been trodden by His own feet. He left the throne of heaven to be an exile on earth. He fled from the Holy Land into idolatrous Egypt. Yet He returned safely.

Our text says, ¹⁹ *Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, ²⁰ saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." ²¹ Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.*

Herod is dead. *Those who sought the young Child's life are dead.* Herod's first-born son Antipater, the heir apparent, was slain five days before the agonising death of Herod in the same year.

Then [Joseph] arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. Joseph obeyed the Word of the Lord. Likewise many years earlier Abraham went to a far country, trusting the word of the Lord. Ruth is a fine example. We read in Ruth 1:16, ¹⁶ *But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God.*

God's Word is always right. Heed His commands. Trust His leadership. Do not sit in seat of scornful.²⁰ You are a "special people" as we learn in 1 Peter 2:9, ⁹ *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy*

nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. If they persecute you in one city, flee into another.²¹

We should all understand and agree with the following statement: *“I have tried always to realise that, quite apart from any plan or thought of my own, I am but an instrument in God’s hands to accomplish God’s purposes.”*

The most powerful figures of history are men who gave up thrones, rather than men who grasped them. To accomplish God’s purposes, Jesus discarded the royal robes of heaven to make us kings and priests unto God. Let us learn from Him. No matter how pleasant appearances may be, we dare not trust the world.

Herod was a popular king. He made public improvements and rebuilt the Temple. Would he kill the Lord of the Temple? His was a pretended friendship and a lying worship. He did not want to worship the Christ Child at all, but rather kill Him. That is why God warned the Wise Men to go home another way.

Worldly-minded and unbelieving people may offer you praise, honour, and advancement; but beware lest you cast your anchor of hope within the hold of the ship. Friendship of the world, is enmity against God. It is opposed to the cross. The world hates you and gives you false promises.

Remember the Third temptation with which the devil tempted Jesus. We read in Matthew 4:8–10, ⁸ *Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.* ⁹ *And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.”* ¹⁰ *Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’”*

Were the bribing priests friends of Judas? Certainly not! The supreme tragedy is: Gain the world — lose your soul. Trust in God, do not put your confidence in money or men.

Whatever may befall us in life, God’s promises stand sure. He is able to turn evil into good. Man proposes, God disposes. The Children of Bethlehem were saved under the Old Covenant. Members of the Church by consecration and

circumcision. Little souls carried swiftly, as on angels' wings, to their eternal home.

It was better so, than that some of them should later stand mocking beneath the cross. It was better to be martyrs for the exiled King than to join in the chorus: "*Away with Him, crucify Him!*"

Joseph's slavery saved many lives. The early Christians were scattered to spread the Gospel. Paul's chains were bracelets of gold. The blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church. Luther fled Rome. The result was world-wide reformation. His seclusion at the Wartburg produced one of the finest Bible translations. Truly, *all things work together for good to those who love God.*²²

No matter how far we have strayed, the King of heaven has redeemed us. He was in exile for us. The way was weary, without modern means of transport. There were rocky canyons, and burning desert sands. The only protection was faith and prayer.

Are you offended at His lowliness? Is He a stranger to you? Have you neglected His Word? Do you think you are too far gone? Only believe.

The King of heaven went this weary way for you. He retraced His steps for you. Whatever has been your past, He has fulfilled the Law for you. Yes, He walked that far more difficult blood-stained way from Gethsemane to Calvary, wearing the crown of thorns and bearing the cross of guilt for you, — all this, that you might have the assurance of forgiveness and the sure hope of eternal life.

There is the story of a dove pursued by a hawk. He flew low, the hawk swooped as low. He soared aloft, the hawk as high. He sought the woods, the hawk was at home there. Then he found a cleft in the rock. It saved him from the mortal foe.

There is no salvation in poverty or riches, humility or pride, nature or companionship, but solely in the Rock of Ages cleft for you and me.²³ Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Isa 9:6

² Dan. 8:25

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- ³ Dan. 9:25
 - ⁴ Psa. 24:10
 - ⁵ Zech. 9:9
 - ⁶ Rev. 17:14
 - ⁷ Rev. 19:12
 - ⁸ 2 Sam. 15
 - ⁹ Psa. 29:10
 - ¹⁰ Lev. 12; Luke 2
 - ¹¹ Gal. 4:4
 - ¹² Phil. 2:5-8
 - ¹³ Rom. 5:12
 - ¹⁴ Hos. 11:1
 - ¹⁵ Jer. 31:15
 - ¹⁶ Gen. 35:19
 - ¹⁷ John 1:46
 - ¹⁸ John 1:10-11
 - ¹⁹ 2 Cor. 5:19
 - ²⁰ Psa. 1:1
 - ²¹ Matt. 10:23
 - ²² Rom. 8:28
 - ²³ Hymn 330, see also Hymn 158 v 2 “Other refuge have I none.”