

## Book of Matthew

### Chapter 2:13-23

<sup>13</sup> **Now when they 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 stay there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to kill Him."** <sup>14</sup> **So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt.**

**Now when they had gone** > MacArthur > The coming of the magi no doubt was a time of great encouragement and assurance to Joseph and Mary, confirming the wondrous words of the **angels** to them (Matt. 1:20-23; Luke 1:26-38), to **Zacharias** (Luke 1:11-20), and to the **shepherds** (Luke 2:8-14). It also confirmed the testimonies of **Elizabeth** (Luke 1:39-45) and of **Simeon and Anna** (Luke 2:25-38) about the Child to whom Mary gave birth.

**An angel of the Lord** > Sproul > Because of the many references to angels in the New Testament, modern skeptics continue to discount the events as having any historical reality. They have sought to reconstruct a Christian faith and a New Testament content without any references to angels. That is dangerous business, because in the New Testament there are far more references to angels than to sin. Additionally, the word *angelos*, which means "angel" or "messenger," occurs in the New Testament with greater frequency than the word *agapē*, which means "love." It is striking to note that in terms of numerical frequency the New Testament says more about angels than it says about love. We cannot have a biblical portrait of Christ apart from the reality of the angelic beings that attended His life.

**Appeared to Joseph in a dream** > Precept Austin > A study conducted between 1991 and 2007 asked 750 former Muslims from 30 countries why they decided to follow Jesus. For many, the role of dreams and visions was significant; 27 percent reported dreams before they decided to follow Christ, 40 percent cited dreams at the time of their conversion, and 45 percent described dreams and visions after their conversion. Often the pre-conversion dreams featured a loved one urging them to follow Jesus, and post-conversion visions gave encouragement during trials like imprisonment.

**Take ... Flee ... Stay there** > Precept Austin > *Take* is *paralambano* in the aorist imperative, implying a note of urgency. Do this now! Do not delay! *Flee* and *remain* are also commands in present imperative. *Keep on fleeing*. *Keep remaining* in Egypt.

MacArthur > From *pheug* (to flee) we get our word *fugitive*, one who escapes from something or someone. The word is here in the present imperative, indicating the beginning of action that is to be continued.

Wuest translation > *Having arisen, take at once under your care the young child and His mother and be fleeing into Egypt, and be there until I tell you.*

**Flee to Egypt** > Carson > Egypt was a natural place to which to flee. It was nearby, a well-ordered Roman province outside Herod's jurisdiction, and, according to Philo (writing ca. AD 40), its population included about a million Jews.

Barnes > The jurisdiction of Herod extended only to the River Sihon, or "river of Egypt," and, of course, beyond that Joseph was safe from his designs.

Constable > Its border was just 75 miles from Bethlehem, though the nearest town was about 150 miles away, and it provided escape from Herod's hatred. Herod had no authority there.

Swindoll > The prospect of suddenly fleeing to Egypt in the middle of the night would have been utterly daunting to a young family with limited means . . . had the magi not just loaded the family down with gold, frankincense, and myrrh! As the adage goes, "Where the Lord guides, He provides!"

**While it was still night** > Carson > The command was also urgent. Joseph left at once, setting out by night to begin the seventy-five-mile journey to the border.

(Another commentator made an important comment > Jerusalem was only about 5 miles from Bethlehem ... once Herod realized he had been tricked [the Greek word means *mocked* and/or *ridiculed*] it would not take him long to get to Joseph, Mary, and Jesus.)

Swindoll > On the topic of "The leading of the Lord"

- God leads those who have chosen to follow Him. You need to be a Christian if you hope to be led by God. Romans 8:14 says, "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."
- God leads through His written Word.
- God leads through the inner promptings of the Holy Spirit.
- God leads through the counsel of wise, qualified, mature, trustworthy Christians who love and care for you
- God leads by replacing restlessness and fear with confidence and calmness.

<sup>15</sup> *He stayed there **until the death of Herod**; this happened so that what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet would be fulfilled: "**Out of Egypt I called My Son.**"*

**Until the death of Herod** > Barnes > Herod died of a most painful and loathsome disease in Jericho.

**Out of Egypt I called My Son** > Barnes > this language is recorded in **Hosea 11:1**. It there evidently speaks of God's calling His people out of Egypt, under Moses. It might be said to be fulfilled in his calling Jesus from Egypt, because the words in Hosea aptly expressed this also. The same love which led him to deliver His people Israel from the land of Egypt, now led him also to deliver His Son from that place. The words used by Hosea would express both events.

**Hosea 11:1** > <sup>1</sup> *When Israel was a youth I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.*

Constable > This one is difficult to understand, however, because in Hosea 11:1 the prophet did not predict anything. He simply described the Israelites' Exodus from Egypt as the departure of God's "son"

Barbieri > There were similarities between the nation and the Son. Israel was God's chosen 'son' by adoption (Ex. 4:22), and Jesus is the Messiah, God's Son. In both cases the descent into Egypt was to escape danger, and the return was important to the nation's providential history.

<sup>16</sup> *Then when Herod saw that he had been **tricked** by the magi, he became **very enraged**, and sent men and killed all the boys who were in Bethlehem and **all its vicinity** who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi.*

**Tricked** > Strong's > to mock at

HELPS > *empaízō* (from *en*, "in" and *paízō*, "play") – properly, to sport someone, mock (scoff).

**Very enraged** > Precept Austin > *thumuoo* is used only here but we get a vivid picture of the meaning from the root word *thumos* which in turn is from *thúo* which means to move impetuously, particularly as the air or wind, a violent motion or passion of the mind; move violently, rush along. And so *thumos* describes *passion* (as if breathing hard) and speaks of an agitated, "heated" anger that rushes along (impulse toward a thing). It is a tumultuous welling up of the whole spirit produced by a mighty emotion which seizes and moves the whole inner

MacArthur > Thumo (to be enraged) is a strong word, made still stronger by lian (very, or better, exceedingly). The Greek is in the passive voice, indicating that Herod had lost control of his passion and now was completely controlled by it. His senses, and what little judgment he may have had, were blinded.

**And all its vicinity** > Verse 18 (below) indicates the murders were conducted in a wider area than simply Bethlehem.

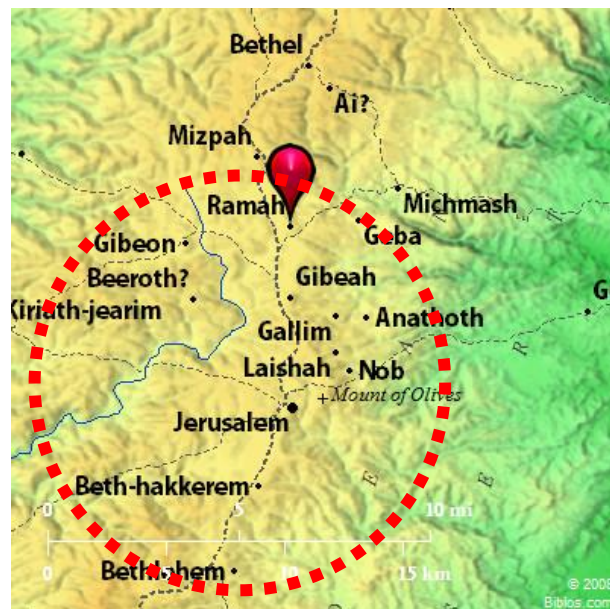
<sup>17</sup> Then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: <sup>18</sup> **“A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; and she refused to be comforted, because they were no more.”**

**A voice was heard in Ramah > Jeremiah 31:15 >** <sup>15</sup> This is what the LORD says: “A voice is heard in Ramah, lamenting and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.”

Carson > It is uncertain whether Jeremiah 31:15 refers to the deportation of the northern tribes by Assyria in 722–721 BC or to the deportation of Judah and Benjamin in 587–586 BC. The latter is more likely. Nebuzaradan, commander of Nebuchadnezzar’s imperial guard, gathered the captives at Ramah before taking them into exile in Babylon (Jer 40:1–2\*).

(\* **Jeremiah 40:1 >** <sup>1</sup> The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord after Nebuzaradan captain of the bodyguard had released him from Ramah, when he had taken him bound in chains among all the exiles of Jerusalem and Judah who were being exiled to Babylon.)

Ramah lay north of Jerusalem on the way to Bethel;



Rachel’s tomb was at Zelzah in the same vicinity (1Sa 10:2\*).

(\* **1 Samuel 10:2 >** <sup>2</sup> When you leave me today, then you will find two men close to Rachel’s tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah;)

Jeremiah 31:15 depicts mourning at the prospect of exile; Rachel is seen as crying out from her tomb because her “children,” her descendants “are no more”—i.e., they are being removed from the land and are no longer a nation. But elsewhere we are told that Rachel was buried on the way to Ephrathah, identified as Bethlehem (Ge 35:19\*)

**Genesis 35:19** > <sup>19</sup> *So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).*

**Genesis 48:7** > <sup>7</sup> *Now as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died, to my sorrow, in the land of Canaan on the journey, **when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath. I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).***”

(Here is where the “circle” idea originated) McGee > This is an unusual prophecy also. Jeremiah didn’t say that the weeping would be heard in Bethlehem. I’m sure there was great mourning in Bethlehem too.

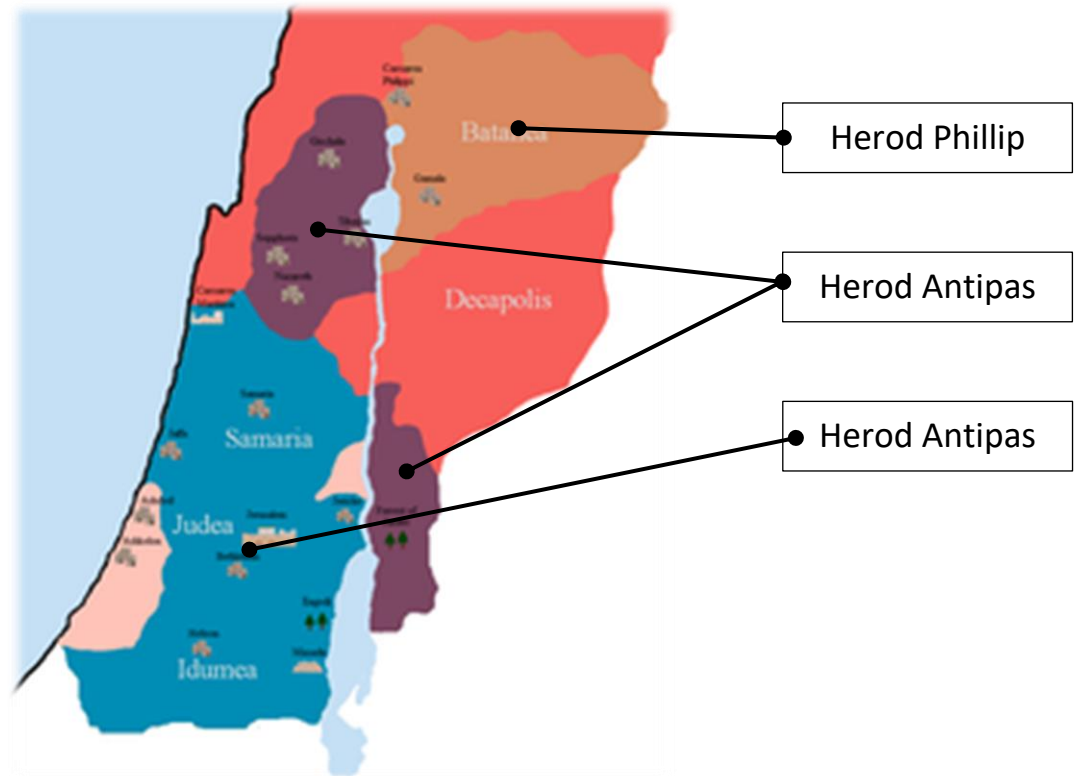
But Jeremiah mentions Rama (spelled Ramah in the Old Testament), and Rama was about as far north of Jerusalem as Bethlehem was south of Jerusalem. And Rama was Jeremiah’s country, by the way. I imagine that when the soldiers had been given their orders to slay the children, the captain said to Herod, “Where do you want me to begin?” And I think that old Herod said, “Well, just draw a circle around Jerusalem with the radius as far south as Bethlehem and as far north as Rama”

**Rachel** > MacArthur > Rachel, the wife of Jacob-Israel, was the mother of Joseph, whose two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, became progenitors of the two half-tribes that bore their names. Ephraim is often used in the Old Testament as a synonym for the northern kingdom. Rachel was also the mother of Benjamin, whose tribe became part of the southern kingdom.

(Ryrie > Since Matthew was writing to those with a Jewish background, he used more quotations from the OT than the other gospel writers. There are 93 such quotations in Matthew, 49 in Mark, 80 in Luke, and 33 in John)

<sup>19</sup> *But when **Herod died**, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and said,* <sup>20</sup> *“Get up, take the Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel; for **those who sought the Child’s life are dead.**”* <sup>21</sup> *So Joseph got up, took the Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.*

**Herod died** > Barnes > Herod left three sons, and the kingdom was at his death divided between them. To Archelaus was given > Judea, Idumea, and Samaria; to Philip > Batanea and Trachonitis; to Antipas > Galilee and Perea.



**Those** > Precept Austin > Note *those* is plural, so while Herod was the primary perpetrator of the assassination, it implies that there were others who were at least sympathetic accomplices! Think of the Jewish religious leadership whose power base would be totally disrupted if this one really were *King of the Jews*.

**Sought** > HELPS > properly, to seek by *inquiring*; to investigate to reach a *binding (terminal)* resolution; to search, "getting to the bottom of a matter."

<sup>22</sup> *But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Then after being warned by God in a dream, he left for the regions of Galilee,*

**Archelaus** > Carson > Probably Joseph had expected Herod Antipas to reign over the entire kingdom, but Herod the Great made a late change in his will, dividing his kingdom into three parts. Archelaus, known for his ruthlessness, was given Judea, Samaria, and Idumea. Augustus Caesar agreed and gave him the title "ethnarch" (more honorable than "tetrarch") and promised the title "king" if it was earned. But Archelaus proved to be a poor ruler and was banished for misgovernment in AD 6.

**The regions of Galilee** > Barnes > At this time the land of Palestine was divided into three parts: Galilee, on the north; Samaria, in the middle; and Judea, on the south. Galilee was under the government of Herod Antipas, who was comparatively a mild prince, and in his dominions Joseph might find safety.

<sup>23</sup> *and came and settled in a city called Nazareth. This happened so that what was spoken through the prophets would be fulfilled: "He will be called a Nazarene."*

**Settled** > HELPS > *katoikéō* (from *katá*, "down, according to," intensifying *oikéō*, "dwell, reside") – properly, settle *down* as a permanent resident,

**Nazareth** > Carson > The town Joseph chose was Nazareth, which, according to Luke 1:26–27; 2:39, was his former home and that of Mary (cf. 13:53–58).

**Through the prophets would be fulfilled** > Barnes > The words here are not found in any of the books of the Old Testament, and there has been much difficulty in ascertaining the meaning of this passage.