

# OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON

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Old Testament Lesson; Genesis 46:1-7  
Epistle Lesson; 1 Peter 4:12-19  
Sermon Text; Matthew 2:13-23

In previous years, as we have looked at this section of scripture, we have looked at a shorter section. But, as we are looking at the historic readings this year, we get a little longer version of this section of scripture.

Really, it can be broken down into three sections. I could really make this into three mini sermons. But there is one theme that runs throughout all three of the parts. Here are the three basic paragraphs that we are going to be talking about.

Number one, we are going to see Jesus fleeing from Israel and going to Egypt.

Number two, we are going to be talking about something known as the “Slaughter of the Innocents”, or Herod putting those baby boys, two years old and under, to death in and around the Bethlehem area.

Number three, we are going to be talking about Joseph, Mary, and Jesus leaving Egypt and coming back to Israel and living in Nazareth.

Even though there are three parts the one theme that runs throughout all three of those parts is this. **Prophecy is fulfilled.** In each of the three paragraphs, you will find that word '*fulfilled*' – prophecy was fulfilled.

So, today, let's do this. Let's look at each of the three parts. Let's see how prophecy is fulfilled. But then, let's apply each of these three paragraphs to ourselves.

### **I. Jesus Fled to Egypt**

Why was it that Joseph, Mary, and Jesus fled to Egypt in the first place? Well, it was because of Herod. We know the story well. The Wise Men came. They came to Jerusalem, the largest city in that part of the world, where the star had led them. They went to Herod and said, *“Where is the King of the Jews? We have seen His star in the East and we have come to worship Him.”*

Well, Herod did not know that a baby king had been born. So he asked the religious leaders of the day and they told him to go to Bethlehem. *“Go to Bethlehem and you will find Him.”* And so, that is where the Wise Men went.

Herod said, *“Come back to me and tell me too, so I may go and worship Him.”* He was not serious, when he said that. He wanted to kill the baby.

And so, the Wise Men, or the Magi, went. They found Jesus there. But, they returned by another route to their homeland, because the Lord had warned them to do so.

Well, God knew what Herod was going to do, so He came to Joseph and said, *“Get out of here. It is not safe for you. You need to go down to Egypt and flee for your safety.”*

Now, it was not uncommon for God's people to go to Egypt for safety. Abraham had gone there when there was a famine in his day. Jacob, in his day, when there was a famine, he took his whole family of seventy people and went down to Egypt for safety. They lived there for over four hundred years, before God led them out again. And so, just as God had brought Israel out of Egypt, so also He brought His Son out of Egypt. And, **scripture is fulfilled.**

Specifically, Hosea, chapter 11, verse 1 says, “Out of Egypt, I called My Son.” In order to come out of Egypt, you need to go to Egypt in

the first place. So, Joseph and Mary and Jesus, flee to Egypt for their safety. **Scripture is fulfilled.**

For those of you who have been members here at Holy Cross for a very long time, let's say from 1985 and longer, you might remember the black hymnbook that we used here at Holy Cross. This is the hymnbook I grew up with, when I was a kid. (I am going to be talking about the liturgy from that hymnbook in just a moment.) If you have been a member here at Holy Cross since the mid eighties, mid to late nineties (up until about four or five years ago) you remember the blue hymnbook we had, The Lutheran Worship. In the back of this hymnbook we pasted in a liturgy, which was from the black hymnbook. And, if you have been a member here at Holy Cross since the late nineties up until recently you might remember the worship service folder we used to follow. I want to share with you words from that black hymnbook, or that blue hymnbook, or this worship guide. In the confession of sin, listen to what the pastor said,

“Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against You by thought, word, and deed. Therefore, we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Just as Jesus fled for refuge to Egypt, so also God wants us to flee for refuge to His grace and to His mercy. God's grace is His undeserved love for us, who are sinners. God's mercy is His compassion for us, who are sinners. We flee for refuge to God and we seek His grace and His mercy together, as a body, as we join together on Sunday mornings confessing our sin. We also can flee for refuge to Jesus, individually, as we read God's Word. And, after reading God's Word, we come before God in prayer.

## **II. The Slaughter of the Innocents**

The second part of our text for today is what has commonly been

referred to as the Slaughter of the Innocents. It has received that name because those baby boys, (not innocent because they were without sin, but innocent because they did not deserve to die), were put to death. Herod felt he had been duped. He felt he had been outwitted by the Wise Men, who did not come back to him and tell him they had found the baby King. And so, he put out an order, that baby boys, two years old and under, should be put to death.

Bethlehem was not a big metropolis, and so in keeping with the population of the city, maybe 15, 20, maybe even 30 baby boys were put to death.

Here, the prophesy that we have before us today, is the one from Jeremiah where Rachel is weeping and mourning. Rachel was the favorite wife of Jacob. She was the mother of Joseph and Benjamin. Rachel died, when she was giving birth to Benjamin. She died right in and around the Bethlehem area, where she was buried. Certainly, she was weeping and mourning, as she died while a son was born to her. But, she also came to be known as the one who was weeping and mourning for all the mothers, as the nation of Israel was carried off into captivity, in the Old Testament.

I want you to think about this, maybe in a way that you have not thought about this, before. Certainly, they would have been mourning, as they were carried off into captivity, because they were leaving their homeland. But, consider it from this vantage point, this morning. God had promised a Messiah would come through Israel. And, if the nation is carried off into captivity, how can the Messiah come and save them? And so, the truly deep grieving and mourning the people would have had, as they thought, *“Does God love us anymore? Can He keep His promise, because the nation is not here, anymore?”*

Rachel now becomes known as the one who is grieving and mourning for those mothers in Bethlehem, as those babies are put to death.

Did it make you mad and sad, this morning, when you heard that Herod put those baby boys to death – 15, 20, maybe 30? Did it make you mad/sad? Does it make you mad/sad when thousands of children today are aborted? Our government permits it. Herod was selfish. He did not want anybody to take over his throne. And so he tried to eliminate the problem. Today, through abortion, people are selfish. They say, “*This child is not the right thing for me, at this time.*” So, they chose to eliminate the child, because they are selfish and thinking only of their own needs.

Well, scripture was fulfilled, as that prophecy from Jeremiah came true – Rachel mourning along with the mothers in the area of Bethlehem, because their children were put to death.

### **III. Jesus Returns to Israel**

The third and last part that we look at is Jesus' return to Israel. Herod had died. Josephus, a Jewish historian, tells us of the death of Herod. He writes in his Antiquities. “Herod died of ulcerated entrails, petrified and maggot- filled organs, constant convulsions, foul breath and neither physician nor warm baths led to recovery.” God came to Joseph and said it was now safe for them to come back to Israel. They come back to Israel, but God warns them that now Archaleus was reigning and they should go north. So, Joseph took Mary and Jesus and went to Galilee, to Nazareth. It was not a compliment to be from Nazareth. It was like “livin' in the sticks”, as we might say today. Do you remember when Jesus had talked to Phillip, and Phillip went and got his brother, Nathaniel? Do you remember what Nathaniel said about Nazareth? He said, “Nazareth? Can anything good come from Nazareth?”

Or, do you remember the sarcasm Pontius Pilate had with the sign that was above Jesus' cross? Pilate meant it as sarcasm, but on Jesus' cross, it said, “Jesus of Nazareth. King of the Jews.”

Jesus fulfilled scripture, as He came from Nazareth.

It is interesting to note that the Hebrew root word for '*Nazareth*' and

the Hebrew root word for the word '*branch*' is the same. In Jeremiah he wrote, "In those days and at that time, I will make a righteous branch sprout from David's line." Jesus is the branch. He is from the stump of Jesse. He came from Nazareth and He fulfilled scripture.

Jesus fled to Egypt and He returned to Nazareth where He was despised, even to the point of death, even death on a cross. We flee for refuge to Jesus. We flee for refuge to God's grace and His mercy. We are restored unto the joy of our salvation of eternal life, with Him in Heaven.

If Jesus was despised, dear fellow redeemed, it should not surprise us when we are despised for our faith in Jesus, as our Savior. And so, let this be our honor, to be like Jesus. Let this be our comfort that Jesus has walked the way before us. And, let this be our strength that the scriptures be fulfilled.

Amen