

The Great Escape Matthew 2:13-18

Matthew. 2:13-18 “13 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” 14 And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt 15 and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.” 16 Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. 17 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:18 “A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.”

1. V13 “13 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.”
 - a. After the wise men leave an angel appears to Joseph in a dream and tells him to flee to Egypt to remain until further instruction.
 - b. He is also told the reason, that Herod is going to try and kill the child.
 - c. I can't help but ask, what would we do in this situation? Ever have a dream like that, that you knew was from God? Probably not, but what if you did?
 - d. It's not exactly the same as getting a dream out of the blue here though, because there are a lot of angels appearing in dreams to people here.
 - i. We just saw that the wise men had a dream (Matt 2:12)
 - ii. This is dream number two for Joseph. He had a dream to let him know to take Mary as his wife. (Matt 1:20)
 - iii. Not to mention angelic visitations to Mary and the priest Zachariah.
 - e. Dreams feature centrally in end time prophecy in both the old and new Testaments. We have the prophecy of Joel (Joel 2:28, quoted by Peter in Acts 2:17) states that in the last days your young men will see visions and your old men will dream dreams, meaning Spiritual revelation will become more common.

- i. **Joel 2:28** “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.”
 - ii. **Acts 2:17** ““And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;”
2. V 14-15 “14 And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt 15 and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.””
- a. He likely lost a significant amount of property, as they had to take only what they could carry and left behind their house.
 - b. What if you had a dream asking you to do such things. Would you have the faith to obey God, even if it cost you?
 - c. Look at how God had PREPARED Joseph for this. He grew his faith. Notice how much confirmation there was of the dream that Joseph had:
 - i. He had already his own dream. This is the second time that he is obedient to the angel, where first he had remained with a pregnant woman who was pregnant out of wedlock, and now he was getting up in the middle of the night to flee down to a foreign country with his young family.
 - ii. The Shepherds, come bringing a testimony, isn't that confirmation? They come telling of not just one angel, but a MULTITUDE of angels.
 - iii. This would have been the first time Joseph really had firsthand outward confirmation of the truth of his dream.
 - iv. Simeon and Anna: When He and Mary had come to the temple to offer the sacrifice commanded by the OT scriptures for the first born, They are approached by these complete strangers, and Simeon declares in the Spirit who Christ is just as the angel had done.
 - v. **Luke 2:28-32** “28 he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, 29 “Lord, now you are letting your servant[e] depart in peace, according to your word; 30 for my eyes have seen your salvation 31 that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.” Anna then starts sharing the good news!

- vi. Wise men: LEARNED men with WEALTH from a FOREIGN country.
- vii. They came explaining the star sign that they had seen...worshiping the baby as the KING.
- viii. All this strengthened his FAITH so that he, when he got that dream, he left right away instead of rolling over and going back to sleep.

3. V 16-18 “16 Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. 17 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:18 “A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.”

- a. Herod’s response to being tricked is violent and cruel to an extreme and fulfils ancient prophecy. His unspeakable cruelty drives him to an infanticide for which there is almost no parallel in world history to be inflicted on a town. Not since Pharaoh in Egypt had a ruler done something this wicked.
- b. But doesn’t it speak to the **importance** to the one who is escaping that the world would save its darkest and most heinous destruction for attempting to destroy the Lamb of God? This is the king of kings who has come down from Heaven, and knowing this world makes me not surprised that this world would deal like this with its creator.

Application

1. How do we know a dream is from God and not just another random dream? In some circles dreams, visions, and prophecies are ignored, and in other circles enthusiasm and interest in the sensational over-ride their sense of discretion.
 - a. **Test #1** Does the dream give a clear message? Or is it you having tea with the queen of England in a giant pumpkin? Joseph’s dream was clear. Joseph’s dream told him to do something to do and even gave the reason. Dreams, visions, words of prophecy all encourage us when times of trouble come on the People of God, including the Visions of Daniel and Revelation. Why? Look at what Jesus said
 - b. **Test #2** Other Christians who are filled with the Spirit, are confirming and living in the very same conviction that you have. Notice again the pattern of Scripture with the confirmation of Simeon, Anna, and others. Look at how

Elizabeth gets confirmation from Mary and Mary is getting confirmation from Elizabeth. All along Joseph was getting confirmation from others like wise men and shepherds that confirmed the original Angel Dream to the point that this dream didn't need confirmation directly because this Angel dream that he kept having was legit.

- c. **Test #3** The dream is intersecting with things that are happening in the real world. That is, it really is true. Here Harrod DID come and having had the wise men trick him tried to kill Jesus by killing all the baby boys of a certain age.

2. Do NOT let the enemy get you to ignore your dreams.

- a. His strategy is very simple. Get people to believe that they had a dream from God, when they didn't, to discredit dreams and visions. On the other side, when someone DID get a dream from God, use the fact that there are those that think they had a dream and didn't to discredit the real dream.
- b. That leaves us all sure that dreams are not a way in which God communicates with His children.
- c. You do not have to worry if you have had a dream from God because it will be obvious with many other confirmations, just as we have seen with Joseph. There is no need to worry, feel guilty, or stay up late at night puzzling over a dream that may or may not have come from God. You will know from the obvious signs we just covered.

3. Prophecy Hurts! Prophetic dreams and vision often go hand in hand with very hard times. Glorious times, but hard times.

- a. If you have a dream from God and it really is from Him, it is likely preparing you for some challenging situation and that his not to scare you or make you worry, it is to make you trust Him that He has great purposes in it.
- b. Hard times are ahead, but the exciting thing is that it is time for God to show how powerful He is and to show how faithful He is to His Children.
- c. They Fled to Egypt, which was a huge hardship.
- d. Those mothers in Bethlehem lost there baby boys! Isn't that sad? Why did that have to happen?
- e. Note that many times God is going to use a generation to do great things, there seems to be infanticide. The Enemy wants to wipe out the deliverer before he gets beyond infancy. Moses narrowly escapes. Jesus narrowly

escapes. What about our generation? Will the fact that since 1973, we have been systematically killing the unborn legally, stop God's plan? No.

4. Faith Implies Action.

- a. It's all very nice to believe while you are in your room, reading your Bible or listening to praise music, or here on Sunday, but what about when faith requires action?
 - i. What about when faith requires you to get outside your comfort zone? To do something you don't have the strength for, or to do something that will make you unpopular?
 - ii. Do we then decide that it is easier to make excuses and take no action? A prophetic dream is often a call to faith in ACTION.
- b. But Joseph became like his wife, didn't he? Mary was known by Elizabeth as "she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to Her from the Lord" **Luke 1:45**. His identity was now HE "who believed."
 - i. But belief was not without action. He took the mantle of leadership and fled when he was told to.
 - ii. Excuses could have come to say that the dream was not really from God. Isn't it safer to stay in our comfort zones and not

5. I called this Sermon "The Great Escape."

- a. And on the surface the sermon is rightly called that because Joseph, Mary, and the Baby Jesus narrowly escape the clutches of King Herod and the madness of this tyrant.
- b. But there is another great escape that this is really about and that is the escape from the power and the penalty of sin, and the destruction that is coming on this world.
- c. Joseph received supernatural communication, but what do you think the Bible is?
 - i. This story is a picture of what we are to do when WE receive THE revelation of God's Word: We flee our own sin, our own way, unbelief, and the WORLD as it rushes toward its own destruction.
 - ii. He wants us to flee to what? To faith, to the Gospel, and really, to HIM Himself.

- d. If you are saved, he is calling you to greater and greater faith. To the point that if God called you to get up in the middle of the night and flee, you would trust Him.
 - i. Are you hearing from God in your dreams and in your heart? Are you being called to a ministry that requires sacrifice? Something that takes you out of your comfort zone?