

# A Long Journey

“When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. ‘Get up,’ he said, ‘take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.’ So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod.

And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet:

‘Out of Egypt I called my son.’”

Matthew 2:13-15 (NIV)

**M**ary, Joseph, and young Jesus had a long journey—by their standards—within 2 years of Jesus’ birth. Apparently they stayed in Bethlehem for some time after our Lord’s birth—perhaps 2 years. They had moved from a stable to a house (Matthew 2:11) in Bethlehem.

Joseph’s trade as a carpenter served him well and he could support his young family faithfully, although humbly, as they only had money for the poorest sacrifice in the temple when Jesus was born (Luke 2:22-24).

When the Magi showed up looking for a new king of the Jews they created a stir in Jerusalem, and especially in the diseased mind of King Herod the Great.

Herod’s days were numbered—as his bloated body clearly told him. But as far as he was concerned there was no king but himself. Already he had murdered members of his own family because he thought they had designs on his throne.

Herod cunningly asked the wise men to find the child and return to him so he could also go worship the child. In his heart he planned

to slaughter the child once he found him.

Warned by an angel—that they should not report to Herod the child’s location—the Magi returned home another way (Matthew 2:12). An angel then told Joseph and Mary to flee to Egypt until Herod was dead (Matthew 2:13-18).

As for Herod, when he realized the Magi had slipped away without disclosing the child’s location, he had all boys 2 years of age and under in Bethlehem slaughtered to be sure he had the one who would seek to take his throne from him.

Joseph and Mary undoubtedly were glad the Magi had come so they could use the gifts given Jesus to finance them in Egypt. In spite of the financial aid of the Magi, Joseph and Mary were alone in a strange country as they fulfilled the will of God for them and the young child. Perhaps they were comforted by the knowledge that Jehovah had prophesied that He would call the Messiah out of Egypt. All they knew for sure was that the Lord was leading them and protecting their child.

Perhaps this season of the year your family is in poverty like Joseph

and Mary. You may even be in a foreign land through the mysterious ways of the Lord.

However you suffer this Christmas season, call to mind the “mess” that Joseph and Mary found themselves in. And, just as they were guided along a different road than their friends and family, you too must endure some hardships right now.

How much good has come to the world just because Jesus’ parents went along with the dislocations of place and the very uncomfortable weeks-long walks to obey the Lord.

Take heart from this Christmas story and humble yourself under the hand of the Lord Who provided for them and shall certainly provide for you though your provision may be as modest as theirs.

Always remember this world is not your final destination. You shall feast in glory and have rule over the estate of our Lord (Matthew 5:14-30).