

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church-WELS
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz
Christmas 1 December 26, 2010 Matthew 2:13f



Matthew 2:13-23 (English Standard Version)

The Flight to Egypt

¹³Now 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." ¹⁴And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt ¹⁵and 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." ...

The Return to Nazareth

¹⁹But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, ²⁰saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." ²¹And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. ²³And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled: "He shall be called a Nazarene."

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

Did you see Donald – on TV Friday morning? Donald was in a SUV on I-94 where he and his girlfriend broke down. When I first saw Donald – he was squished between two armored police vehicles. There was a whole string of SWAT guys taking turns – aiming from behind at the occupants of the Jeep! There were 3 police dogs – straining at their leashes – wanting to go by Donald! There was this robot – on treads – with a really long arms. Donald wasn't in a hurry – so he sat there hour after hour. Finally – after some 6 hours – the robot went rolling up to the back side window – and cracked a hole. Then there was this 6 foot pole – with this smoke grenade on it. Pluke – into the Jeep goes the grenade. In a moment – the Jeep filled with smoke and out came Donald. The police yelled, "Roll! Roll! Roll! Roll!" Donald rolled across a lane of traffic and more. The dogs went nuts. The girl-friend came out of the truck and when they put the handcuffs on her – she kicked and jerked and thrashed! Out of the shrubs came police officers in camo – with sniper rifles. And you said, "Wow!" – literally out loud! There was no escape – absolutely no escape! Then you wondered why it took 6 hours! I'm sure it's because the police were being merciful – hoping Donald would see the utter futility of resisting and simply gave up. Donald didn't – so they made him! Then I thought to myself – what about all those people who think they can defy Jesus? God is patient and God is merciful. He is also Holy! And the day is coming when every knee will bow and every tongue confess:

Long Live The King!

- 1. Usurpers will not stop him**
- 2. He follows his Father's plan**

We who by the grace of God – live in the United States of America – *the land of the free and the home of the brave* – don't have lots of experience with kings. We had King George III from across the pond – and people threw his tea into the Boston Harbor! We made flags that said, "Don't tread on me!" – with a coiled up snake. We wrote a paper that began with the words, *When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another... "We the people..."* – declared our independence from England. John Hancock signed his name real big – so the King would be sure to see it! Ever since then – we haven't had a king in this country. We don't like it – if anybody in a position of great public trust starts to act like they are going to tax us or tell us what we can or can't do. We have freedom of religion! Sometimes people try to say we have freedom of worship – as if we can gather in this building and sing and pray – but we can't put our faith into practice out in the real world. We need to be very careful – that we have freedom of religion – the right to be Christians – not just in a building of creamy brick on the corner of Clark and Third Street. We have the right to put our faith into practice working on our farm – buying hardware – selling groceries – making string cheese and playing football! When we make a touchdown we ought to be able to point Heavenward – if we want to!

Friday night and Saturday morning we celebrated Christmas. It was wonderful! Very little people in velvet dresses and little burgundy sweaters – with beautiful ribbons in their hair and shiny shoes sang *Away in the Manger* and *Silent Night!* Church was packed! Everybody said, "Merry Christmas!" And, "Blessed Christmas!" And people hugged people everywhere! There were the traditional little brown bags with peanuts and an apple and candy. People opened presents and watched new flat screen HD TV's and it was wonderful. And now it's Sunday morning – Christmas 1 – and here comes painful reality – even that first Christmas. It wasn't just Hark the Herald Angels Sing and Joy to the World! An earthly king – King Herod – sitting on his puny earthly throne was very concerned when wise men from the east – however many there were – asked – "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? We have seen his star in the east and have come to worship him!" A new king? Really? Herod lied! He said, "Go and make a careful search. And when you have found the King come and tell me where – so that I too may come and *murder* – I mean *worship* him!"

God's Word says, ¹³**Now when they (namely the wise men) 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 ¹⁵and 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."** The angel warned Joseph of the danger. And Joseph took the little Christ child and his mother Mary and fled to Egypt! Egypt is a strange place – with pyramids and mummies and camels and more. The LORD – the Great I AM – the Holy One of Israel had kept his people safe in Egypt. And at just the right time he sent Moses to say to the self-important Pharaoh – this is what the LORD says, "Let my people go!" And even as Israel passed through the Red Sea on dry ground – so the LORD would bring his Son Jesus safely out of Egypt – back to Nazareth! Earthly Kings, Prime Ministers and Presidents like to think they have lots of power but they don't! They raise taxes. They fight endless wars. They build bridges that collapse and invent roundabouts! When we see the rulers of the earth make their plans and it seems like evil is triumphing at every turn – remember who the King of kings and Lord of lords is. Remember who remains in charge. Remember who the Prince of Peace is! Jesus and Jesus alone remains in charge of this whole

wide world. And his plans are not to harm us but **to prosper us – to give us hope and an eternal future! The LORD reigns – let the earth be glad. Let the distant shores rejoice!**

There is of course *DANGER* all around! I read the other day about a couple of doctors who used to play golf together – all the time! They played on a little 9 hole course by New York. Pretty exclusive – I'll bet. They were playing – and one of the doctors hit a bad shot. He was in the rough – looking for his golf ball – when the other doctor took a shot. And this is where their stories differ. The doctor who hit his golf ball – whack! – realized it was heading toward his friend. And so – he says – he called out, "Fore!" Perhaps – but nobody seems to know – from the archaic *forecaddie* – that is – I need a caddie – to help me find my missing golf-ball! *Whatever* – everybody knows – "Fore!" – means duck – cover your head – incoming! The doctor that got hit in the eye – with that bad shot – lost that eye! He can't do doctor stuff – brain work like he used to – because of that golf ball – so he sued! And so far he lost – because the earthly judge said – when you go out on a golf course – you assume risk. *Danger – Will Robinson – danger!* There is danger all around us! It's not just danger from physical harm. It's spiritual danger – danger to heart and mind and eternal danger to immortal soul! That's the danger we are in. And we need to remind one another – warn one another – look out – watch out! Come and hear God's Word – again and again! Read your Bible through and through! Study the Scriptures! Think about them and talk about them! Come to Lord's Supper again and again – to receive Jesus' true body and blood!

God's Word says, "**Herod died...**" Kings and Princes – beggars and paupers – people of great intellect and people who are very simple – all die! The historian Josephus wrote that King Herod's final days were spent in excruciating pain – physical and mental and emotional distress! He also wrote it was part of Herod's plan – as he knew his end was near – to have gathered in the city of Jericho – many famous and important people. That Herod gave the order – when he died – that these people should all be put to death too – so that there would be weeping in the land – even though no one would weep for him! It's thought Herod's son was not so cruel – as to murder these innocent people, too! ¹⁹**But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,** ²⁰**saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead."** ²¹**And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.** At just the right time – it was safer. At just the right time – the Heavenly Father brought his Son – out of Egypt and back to Israel – to the town of Nazareth. Not a famous or important place. The day would come when people would say, "Can anything good – anything important out of Nazareth? It's like can anything really important come out of Clyman or Ixonia or Watertown? Again and again – God doesn't do things the way people would.

²³**And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled: "He shall be called a Nazarene."** I grew up in a little town called Roanoke, Illinois. 508 North Main Street was the first address I memorized. If I was lost – suddenly separated from my parents – Heaven forbid snatched or kidnapped – and people said, "Where do you live, I was supposed to say 508 North Main Street, Roanoke, Illinois. It was a really little town. I walked to the grocery store – back in the day – before they had those signs that said, "No shirt. No shoes. No service!" I remember walking down to the corner grocery store barefoot – in my little shorts – not even a t-shirt – with a quarter in my little fist to buy something we needed for supper. I walked to Kindergarten all by myself. It was a straight shot – out my front door – 3 blocks – to school. We drove down to Roanoke one summer – to retrace my steps. My school was gone! They tore it down! It was a city park and a subdivision. The restaurant we used to go to was only a bar. We moved to Roanoke from LaCrosse – because

the factory where my dad worked moved there. Jesus moved to Nazareth—because hundreds of years before the fact—God’s Word promised that’s where Jesus would grow up! Jesus learned how to do wood working from his earthly father—his foster father Joseph. Jesus went to the synagogue again and again to hear sinful fatally flawed human rabbis reading and explaining and discussing the Scriptures. Jesus grew up hearing people who trusted in the Gospel promises of His Heavenly Father—talk about all Jesus would do to save us. For some 30 years—Jesus showed perfect respect and obedience to Mary, to Joseph, to his Rabbi, to his grandparents—his aunts and uncles and all his older neighbors. Jesus was in fact the perfect child— young person and young man. Jesus never ever sinned. Jesus never ever failed to do what needed to be done! Jesus came to fulfill his father’s will. Jesus came to save us. Long live the King! Amen!

God bless us everyone!



Rsv. Anthony E. Schuttz