

2 January 2022

God's Plans Fulfilled – Matthew 2:16-23

Hearing from God

Mt 2 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.

Question 1: Have you ever had an angelic encounter or a direct message you know was from God? Do you know (of) anyone who has had one? If so, what was the message and was the outcome for the individual?

Question 2: How did Joseph respond to the angelic message? What should we learn from the way he complies?

Question 3: What was it about Joseph which made him attentive to what the Lord said? (eg. Mt 1:19) What might we learn from Joseph for our ourselves today?

1Thes 5 ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies, ²¹ but test everything; hold fast what is good.

Question 4: In Paul's final instructions to the Thessalonians, Paul suggests that prophecies should be tested. What does that mean for us when we think we hear from God? What might give us reassurance that what we hear is from God?

Mt 2 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...

Question 6: What drove the 2 year timing of this act? What do we learn about Joseph from this delay? What does this mean for us?

Evil in the World

Question 7: Who was responsible for this heinous act? Can there ever be mitigation for such acts? How are people held accountable for such acts?

Question 8: How did God use this heinous act? What do we learn from this?

Question 9: What parallels might exist with the Al Qaida atrocities we of 11 Sep 2001? How should we then respond to acts of evil we see in the world today?

From the Sermon:

Matthew's reference to Jesus being a Nazarene is arguably a wordplay which demonstrates that Christ is:

- The holy one, set apart; he's "God with us" or "Emmanuel"
- The rightful heir of David; the new King of the new Kingdom under a new covenant
- The humble servant, from an insignificant village who understands and comforts the poor and the downcast

Question 10: How should we respond this new year to this Jesus whose status as Messiah and nature Matthew exposes?

A Prayer:

Lord Jesus, we thank you that you are the Messiah and Emmanuel; that that you save us from ourselves and our sins. Guide us to know you more fully and follow in your footsteps. Help us this new year in finding new relationship with you and with other Christians. To the glory of your name, Amen.