



### **Dwelling in the Word**

Prayerfully read Matthew 2:1-23 and ask:

1. What words, phrases, or images stood out to you?
2. What does this say about what God desires to accomplish in you?
3. How could you respond to what God says in this passage?

### **Beginning the Conversation**

1. What are some of your family's Christmas traditions that you appreciate? Why?
2. Many base the practice of gift giving on the Magi's gifts to (toddler) Jesus. How could this inform the meaning and significance of the gifts we give to one another?

### **Digging Deeper** *(pick some of the following questions to discuss as a group)*

1. The first section describes the visit of the Magi (2:1-12). As outsiders to the people of God, it is somewhat surprising that the Magi are the first to recognize Jesus as the "King of the Jews" and worship him (see Matt 8:11). What does this say about God's love for all people, what God was accomplishing through Jesus his Messiah, and what God is accomplishing through the church?
2. The next section narrates the young family's flight to Egypt to escape Herod's fury (2:13-15). Knowing that Jesus and his family were refugees in another country, how should this impact our attitude toward refugees and those displaced from their home lands? What do you think of the following from Pope Pius XII shared in the sermon? How can the church live out this concern?
3. King Herod is known to have been a violent and unstable monarch. In response to his actions on the male population of Bethlehem, Matthew quotes a lament from Jeremiah (2:17-18 quoting Jer 31:15). What is the role of lament in response to such tragedies and unconscionable acts, and how does lament implicitly express hope?
4. In the last part of this chapter, Jesus' family avoids Bethlehem and settles in Nazareth in the northern region of Galilee (2:19-23). Throughout this passage, Matthew quotes the Scriptures to show God's workings in preserving the holy family (2:6 quoting Mic 5:2-4 and 2Sam 5:2; 2:15 quoting Hos 11:1; 2:17-18 quoting Jer 31:15; 2:23 quoting perhaps Isa 11:1 or 49:6). What does this say about God's character?
5. In this passage we see a contrast between the way of emperors like Herod who rules with violence and power and the way of King Jesus who serves with humility and grace (read 20:25-28). As followers of this humble king, in what ways would this impact the way we live and lead?

### **Living it Out**

1. How can this passage shape (and others like it) shape our attitudes towards outsiders and the marginalized? (especially knowing that we too were outsiders to God's grace!)



# BIRTH OF THE KING

ADVENT 2025

According to the Gospel of Matthew



## Flight & Fury: A Tale of Two Kingdoms (Matthew 2:13-23)

December 28, 2025  
Pastor Tyler Williams  
Greenfield Community Church

## Jesus' Early Childhood



- ♦ Astrologer's Arrival (2:1-12)
- ♦ The Family's Flight (2:13-15)
- ♦ Herod's Fury (2:16-18)
- ♦ North to Nazareth (2:19-23)

Each section includes a reference to fulfilled Scripture, illustrating God's providential working throughout.

## The Family's Flight



- God's Warning (2:13)
- Egyptian Escape (2:14)
  - ♦ While Egypt was still part of the Roman Empire, it was out of Herod's reach.



## The Family's Flight



"The émigré Holy Family of Nazareth, fleeing into Egypt, is the archetype of every refugee family. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, living in exile in Egypt to escape the fury of an evil king, are, for all times and all places, the models and protectors of every migrant, alien and refugee of whatever kind who, whether compelled by fear of persecution or by want, is forced to leave his native land, his beloved parents and relatives, his close friends, and to seek a foreign soil." – Pope Pius XII, *Exsul Familia Nazarethana*

## The Family's Flight



The Scripture (2:15 quoting Hosea 11:1)

- ✦ In the context of Hosea, this verse is *looking back* to the exodus from Egypt.
- ✦ "Fulfilled" by analogy: In the same way that God brought the sons of Israel out of Egypt, so God brought his Son out of Egypt.

"Fulfill" (*plēroō* πληρωω) – to "make full"; to bring to its fullest meaning.

## Herod's Fury



Herod "the Great" (c. 72–4 BC)

- ✦ "Great" from the perspective of Rome, *not* from the perspective of the people of Judea.

Herod's Response (2:16)

- ✦ "He gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under" (2:16).

## Rachel's Lament



The Scripture (2:17-18 quoting Jer 31:15)

- ✦ The prophet Jeremiah pictures Rachel (mother of Benjamin) lamenting over the destruction of Ramah during the exile.
- ✦ Expresses profound sorrow over the massacre as well as the implicit hope that in the same way God broke the power of the tyrants in the past, so will he frustrate the power of this tyrant!



## North to Nazareth



A Second Warning (2:19-22)

- ♦ Settled in Nazareth to be out of the reach of the political powers.

The Scripture (2:23 quote unknown)

- ♦ Perhaps Isaiah 11:1 – “A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a *branch* [NeZeR] will bear fruit” (Isa 11:1).  
NZR > NaZeReth?

## Invitation



A Tale of Two Kingdoms & A Contrast between Two Kings

“Jesus called them together and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. <sup>26</sup>Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, <sup>27</sup>and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—<sup>28</sup>just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many’” (20:25-28).

*As we head into a new year, let's follow our humble King together.*