



The King Is Preserved

Matthew 2:13–23



LESSON GOAL

Students will see God's sovereign protection of Jesus.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- List examples of obedience on the part of the characters.
- Explain the significance of Jesus coming out of Egypt.
- Describe prophecy and how Jesus fulfilled it.
- Recount how God kept Jesus safe from wicked men.

KEY VERSE

"But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, 'Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel'" (Matthew 2:19–20a).

APPLICATION

- Give your worries to God because He is sovereign.
- Confess pride and selfishness in your heart.
- Praise God that He sent His Son to undeserving sinners (Rom. 5:8).
- Obey God's Word and your authorities as Joseph did, without delay or debate.

Symbol Key



Craft



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Activity



Q & A



Work Sheet



2 Grade Level

Teacher Planning Sheet

PREPARE

Objectives/Truths to cover this week

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Personal Application

As a result of my study in this passage, God wants me to

- _____
- _____
- _____

Three ways students need to apply this passage are

- _____
- _____
- _____

Materials Needed

POINT

Choose from various ideas to point students to the coming Bible lesson.

- _____
- _____

PROCLAIM

Choose from various ideas to proclaim the Bible lesson.

Presentation Ideas

- _____
- _____

Praise/Music Ideas

- _____
- _____
- _____

PRACTICE

Choose ideas to help review and apply today's lesson.

- _____
- _____

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul.... You shall teach them to your children” (Deuteronomy 11:18–19).

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here to aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

Dreams and Angels (Matt. 1:20; 2:12–13, 19, 22)

For hundreds of years there had been no new revelation from God. But with the birth of Christ came a sudden flurry of revelation and supernatural events. Messages from angels through dreams were uncommon in both the Old and New testaments, but Matthew records five supernatural visits in the brief time surrounding Christ’s birth. Luke records additional angelic visitations in these days: Gabriel to Zacharias (Luke 1:11–19), Gabriel to Mary (1:26–38), and the host to the shepherds (2:9–15). The spiritual darkness and silence was broken, and the light and revelation going forth shows that this was a birth of unprecedented significance. God in human flesh was here, being heralded and announced as King!

Another pattern emerging from Matthew’s account is the unhesitating obedience and submission of everyone who received divine guidance (with the exception of Zacharias, who doubted). When God revealed a message to them, they obeyed immediately, whether they fully understood or not. To disobey, delay, or question would have been disastrous. This is an important lesson for both children and adults. God requires that believers submissively follow His Word and the earthly authorities He has ordained.

Why Egypt? (Matt. 2:13–15)

During the intertestamental period, Alexander the Great had established a sanctuary for Jews in Alexandria, an Egyptian city he had named after himself. Jews in the area had translated the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, and this translation was known as the Septuagint (or LXX). It was used by the Greek-speaking early church and was the translation used for many Old Testament quotes by New Testament writers.

Egypt was at least 75–100 miles from Bethlehem—far enough from Herod’s wicked reach. Of course, God could have sent Joseph, Mary, and Jesus elsewhere, or He could have protected Jesus in some other way. But the journey is in keeping with Matthew’s purpose to show that Jesus is the fulfillment of Jewish Scriptures. From the genealogy to the Sermon on the Mount (chapter 5), Matthew builds almost every paragraph around a text from the Old Testament and shows how it applies to Christ, and 2:15 is yet another example.

Hosea 11:1, in its original context, was a reference to the nation of Israel. Hosea tells of the prophet’s relationship to his unfaithful wife, Gomer, and is a picture of God’s love to unfaithful and undeserving Israel, particularly in bringing them out of Egypt. Moses used this imagery of Israel as God’s son when he told Pharaoh: “Thus says the LORD: ‘Israel is My son, My firstborn. So I say to you, let My son go, that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed, I will kill your son, your firstborn’” (Ex. 4:22–23). Like Moses, Jesus escaped the fate of other male

Additional Reference Materials

God in a Manger by
John MacArthur

*Matthew: MacArthur
New Testament
Commentary*

babies who were to be killed (Ex. 1:22–2:10). Jesus' return from Egypt might have evoked Jewish readers' memories of the original Exodus under Moses. Some Jews were expecting the coming of a prophet "like Moses" (Deut. 18:15, 18). The subsequent command by the angel to travel from Egypt to the Promised Land, Israel (Matt. 2:19–20), may similarly have been reminiscent of the Pentateuch days.

Hosea 11:1 was referring to the past rather than the future. The passage was "fulfilled" by Christ in the sense that the historical exodus of the Jews pictured the Messiah coming out of Egypt as their representative and deliverer. Technically, this might be best called a pictorial prophecy or a type (nonverbal prediction), in which the inspired New Testament writers interpret an Old Testament person or event as illustrating a truth about Christ not explicitly described in the original text. Of course, the rich symbolism of the original Passover escape (Ex. 12) also looks forward to Christ, our Passover lamb, who lived among the people and whose blood covering was the only way believers can escape judgment.

Herod Tries to Kill Jesus

In Herod's mind, there could be only one "king of the Jews"—himself—and any competitor must be killed. Infuriated by the perceived deception by the wise men (who were simply obeying the angel), he unleashed his fury through infanticide. Satan himself wanted to kill Christ (Matt. 4:5–6; Rev. 12:1–5), and Herod's rage was devilish. Population estimates indicate there were perhaps 15 or 20 children less than two years old in Bethlehem at that time. This devastating mass murder was not recorded by contemporary historians (including Josephus), probably because murder to protect the throne was such a common practice. History records that Herod had killed a young high priest, relatives, and friends. He had a favorite wife strangled and even killed some of his own children! Emperor Augustus reportedly joked it would be better to be Herod's pig (Greek huos) than his son (Greek huos), for a pig had a better chance of surviving in a Jewish community.

Herod's massacre was even more heinous because he knew that the child he sought to destroy was the Messiah. Herod questioned the chief priests and scribes specifically about "where the Christ was to be born" (Matt. 2:4) and arrogantly set himself up against God's Anointed. The chief priests and the scribes, along with the many other Jews in Jerusalem who must have heard or known about the magi's message, were not innocent simply because their hands did not cause the bloodshed. They showed no interest in finding this child, much less in worshipping Him, and these leaders eventually would want to kill Jesus themselves.

Matthew 2:17–18 shows that even Herod's evil atrocity was used by God to fulfill (literally "fill up" or complete) Jeremiah 31:15. Like Hosea, Jeremiah's original passage was historical rather than an explicit Messianic prediction, but the New Testament interprets it as a type of Christ. Rachel was the wife of Israel (also known as Jacob; Gen. 30–37) and the mother of sons whose tribes would form the Northern and Southern kingdoms of Israel. "Rachel weeping for her children" in Jeremiah's day represented the lamentation of all Jewish mothers who wept over Israel's great tragedy in the days of its captivity. More than this, they typified and prefigured the mothers of Bethlehem weeping bitterly over the massacre of their children. Men's desire to kill rather than worship Christ would later cause even the King of the Jews Himself to weep over Jerusalem because of His people's rejection of Him, which would bring judgment (Luke 19:41–44).

It should not be overlooked that Jeremiah 31, quoted here by Matthew, is not all negative. For many Jews who knew their Scriptures, it would bring to mind the familiar promises of hope after mourning (Jer. 31:16–17), mercy (31:20), repen-

tance (31:21–22), the new covenant (31:31–34), and God’s promised future for Israel (31:35–37).

Jesus Returns to Nazareth

History tells us Herod died in the spring of 4 B.C., which is why scholars place Christ’s birth at least a year or two earlier. Herod’s son Archelaus ruled over Judea and was known for his cruelty. He executed two popular rabbis whom he saw as troublemakers and once sent his army into a rowdy Passover crowd, where about 3,000 Jewish pilgrims were killed when things got out of hand. He was so bad that Augustus himself feared a revolution from the people and eventually deposed Archelaus and banished him from the area in A.D. 6. This explains Joseph’s fear and redirection to Nazareth in Galilee (55 miles north), but, again, the ultimate reason Matthew gives has to do with fulfillment of a divine plan.

No Old Testament text directly matches Matthew’s quote “He shall be called a Nazarene” (Matt. 2:23). But ancient authors sometimes blended texts, and since both Jews and Greeks played on words to make a point, some suggest this text could be a play on the Hebrew word *netser*, “branch,” a title for the Messiah (Jer. 23:5; Zech. 3:8; 6:12; cf. Isa. 11:1; 53:2). Others suggest that by changing the letters slightly, it could refer to the Nazirites, a class of people dedicated to God (cf. Num. 6:1–21). These views have problems, however, and it may be best to understand this simply as a known saying of the prophets not recorded in the Old Testament. Jude 14–15 similarly quotes a prophecy from Enoch not in the Old Testament, and the New Testament gives sayings of Jesus that were not recorded in the Gospels (Acts 20:35, for example). However one understands the reference, one fact is clear: Nazareth was a lowly, reproachful place in which to grow up (John 1:46), and the insulting name “Nazarene” and other reproaches on Christ fulfilled many prophecies that the Messiah would be “despised and forsaken of men” (Isa. 53:3; 49:7; Psalm 22:6–8; 69:20–21). It was in this lowly and despised place that the royal Son of God would live humbly for most of His earthly life.

POINT TO THE TRUTH

“Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth” (Psalm 78:1).

This section includes questions to review last week’s lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week’s lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Review Questions

Use these questions to review and reinforce key truths.

Where did the wise men come from?

We are told in Matthew 2:1 that they arrived in Jerusalem from the East.

How did the wise men know to come to Jerusalem to look for Jesus?

They followed the star.

What verse is quoted in Matthew 2:6?

Micah 5:2.

What were the gifts that the magi presented to Jesus?

They presented Him with gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Who warned the magi not to return to Jerusalem to tell Herod where Jesus was?

God did in a dream.



Adversaries

Ask the students what an adversary is. Explain that an adversary is a person who tries to keep you from doing something that you intend or even are commanded to do. Tell the students that if they claim Christ as their Savior, they will have adversaries who try to keep them from following Him. In today's story, they will learn about one of Jesus' many adversaries, King Herod. Talk about Herod being afraid of Jesus and wanting Him dead because Jesus was coming as King of the Jews.



Evidence

Ask the students what evidence is and how it is used. In today's lesson, Herod consults his high priests and scribes to find out about the coming King of the Jews. Herod was presented with evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. Discuss how he took that evidence in a selfish, prideful way, choosing to kill all the newborn babies in Bethlehem. Ask the students what they do with the evidence that is presented to them every Sunday at church.



Obedience

Ask the students what it means to obey without understanding why you are being told to do something. Tell them that Mary and Joseph obeyed the angel God sent when he told them to flee with Jesus into Egypt. Ask the students what they think would have happened if Mary and Joseph had delayed in their obedience. (Jesus would have been killed with all the other babies in the Bethlehem area.) Explain that Mary and Joseph did obey, and God protected them because of their obedience.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

“Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done” (Psalm 78:4).

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students’ understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use during the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done directly from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

Reading of the Text

Read Matthew 2:13–2:23.

Introduction

Have you ever had a dream that you thought really happened? Wouldn’t it be exciting and scary if an angel came to you in a dream in the middle of the night and told you to take your family to another city? Today, God does not speak to us through dreams (He reveals His will through His Word), but that is how God chose to give Joseph a very important message. Today we will learn about what God told Joseph.



Leadoff Questions (LOQs)

LOQ: What supernatural events accompanied Christ’s birth?

Answer: For hundreds of years there had been no supernatural activity, but with Jesus’ birth, there was a flurry of revelation and supernatural events. God used dreams to give Mary and Joseph messages, and angels declared Jesus’ birth to shepherds.

LOQ: What did people who were instructed by angels do?

Answer: People such as Joseph received the messages and were obedient and submissive to the instructions.

LOQ: Why did Mary and Joseph flee to Egypt?

Answer: Mary and Joseph were being obedient to God’s instructions. Egypt was also an area where Jews could find refuge.

LOQ: How far was it from Bethlehem to Egypt?

Answer: 75–100 miles.

LOQ: Why was it important that the Messiah come out of Egypt?

Answer: Hosea 11:1 was written about the past but was also a prophecy of the future, when the Messiah of the Jews would come out of Egypt. When Mary and Joseph returned with Jesus from Egypt, they were fulfilling prophecy.

LOQ: Why was Herod trying to kill Jesus?

Answer: Herod was jealous, and in his mind, there could be only one “king of the Jews” —him. Any competition infuriated him, and he tried to use the wise men to find where Jesus was so he could eliminate Him.

LOQ: What did Herod do about Jesus being a threat to his kingship?

Answer: Herod had all male children less than two years old killed in Bethlehem and the surrounding area.

Summary

After being warned in a dream, Joseph took Mary and Jesus and fled to Egypt, which was far from the threat of Herod. Herod felt threatened because of the news from the wise men. They told Herod that the King of the Jews would be born in Bethlehem. Herod had all male children in Bethlehem, less than two years old killed to keep his kingdom from rivals. After the death of Herod, Joseph was told that it was safe to return, so they moved to the city of Nazareth.

Application

In every step of Jesus' life, God's sovereign hand can be seen. He protected and guided Mary and Joseph and even their relatives before them so that His sovereign plan would be completed. We can also trust that God has every detail of our lives planned out. When times are hard or we do not understand why God is allowing something tough to happen, we can trust that He is in complete control and is doing it for our good and His glory.

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards

Use appropriate A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards with the lesson.



Betty Lukens Flannelgraph

Use appropriate flannelgraph pieces with the lesson.



The Angel's Message and Man's Response

Several messages to men from angels were given around the time of Jesus' birth. Most people, including Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and the wise men, responded correctly by obeying God's instructions right away. But one man, Zacharias, doubted, and so he was left speechless until his son was born. Discuss obedience and disobedience with the students. Ask them how they obey or disobey. Ask them what happens when you delay or question obedience.



Dreams and Angels

Discuss the angel's visits to Joseph and all the revelation and supernatural events surrounding Jesus' birth. Explain that for 400 years before Jesus was born, men heard nothing from God. Also discuss angels in today's world. Explain the importance of checking all things against the Bible, the Word of God, to know whether they are true.

Praise and Worship

Cares Chorus

God Is So Good

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

Joy to the World!

O Come, Let Us Adore Him

O-B-E-D-I-E-N-C-E

Trust and Obey

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

“That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments” (Psalm 78:7).

Choose ideas from this section to review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



“Trip to Egypt”

Materials: copies of the “Trip to Egypt” craft page, glue, crayons, other decorations

Directions: To help the students understand the geography of where Joseph, Mary, and Jesus traveled when fleeing Herod, have them decorate this map of Israel and Egypt. Younger students can trace the path that Joseph, Mary, and Jesus took. The students could glue small paper pyramids, a manger, and a house on the spots where they were located in the story.



Egypt Craft

Materials: copies of the pyramid patterns (at back of lesson), scissors, blank sheets of paper, strips of paper with Matthew 2:13b printed on them, crayons

Directions: Give the students each a blank page and a page of pyramid patterns. Instruct them to cut the pyramids out along the solid lines and then fold along the dotted lines. Then they can color their pyramids. On their blank sheets of paper, they should place the pyramids and color other things Mary, Joseph, and Jesus may have encountered on their trip. Tape the verse strip at the bottom of the page.



Follow the Leader

Play “Follow the Leader” with the students, and then discuss what it means to be a good leader and guide. God was Joseph’s leader and guide.



“Clues Point to Jesus”

Give each student a copy of the “Clues Point to Jesus” page (at the back of the lesson). Have one student read the text from the first box in the “Clues/Prophecies” column. Then read the Bible verse out loud. Find the corresponding box in the “Jesus’ Fulfillment” column, and read the text and Bible verse. Direct the students to draw a line connecting the two boxes. Repeat with each set, allowing various students to read. Briefly discuss how the clues of each prophecy point to and are fulfilled by Jesus.



“The King Is Preserved”

Use this work sheet to reinforce the key truths of today’s lesson. The work sheet is located at the back of the lesson.



Journal Page: “Immediate Obedience”

Give each student a copy of the journal page at the back of this lesson. The students can complete the page individually, in small groups, or at home.

Coloring Pages

Give each student copies of the coloring sheets at the back of the lesson. Students can color the pages in class or at home.

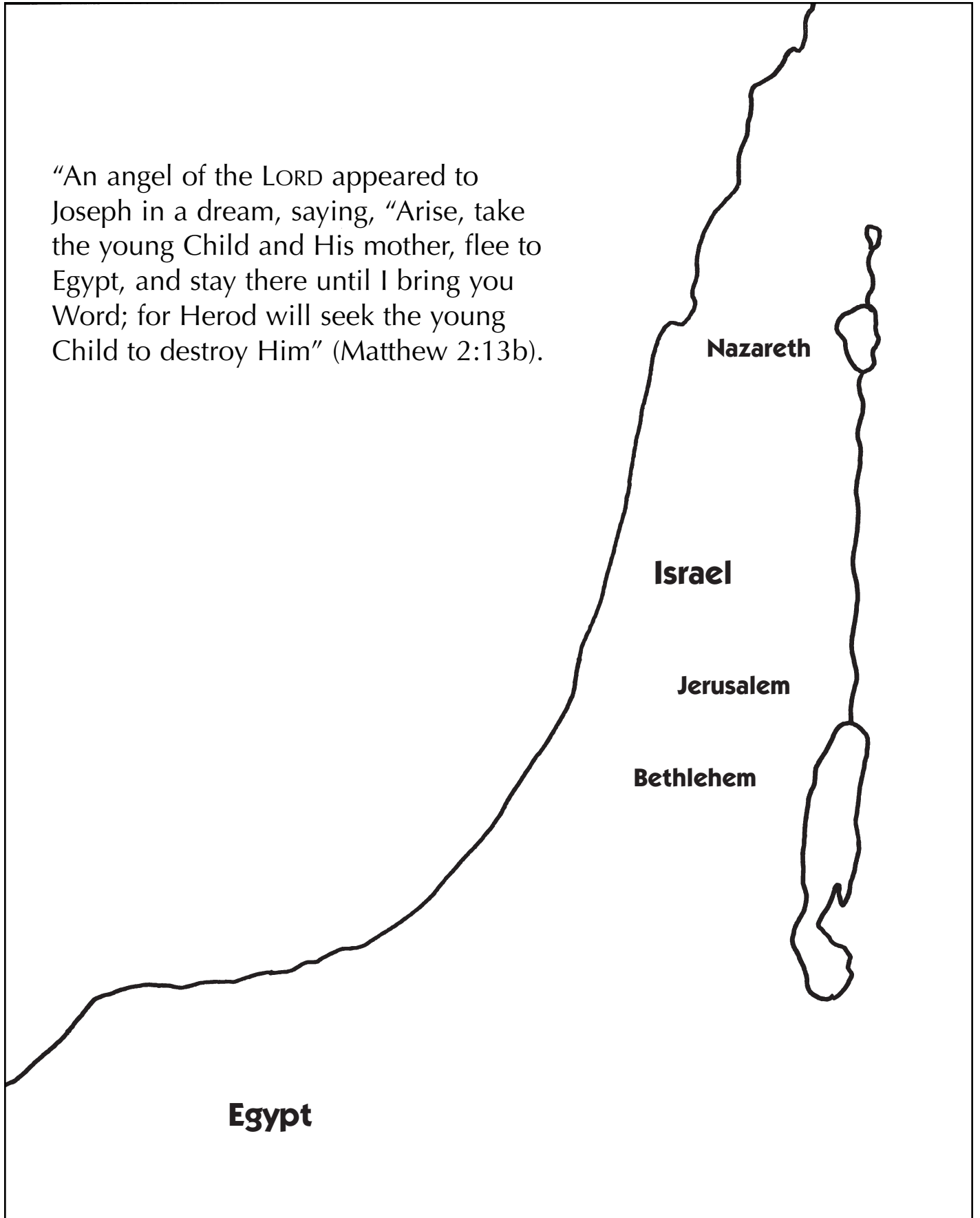


MEMORY VERSE

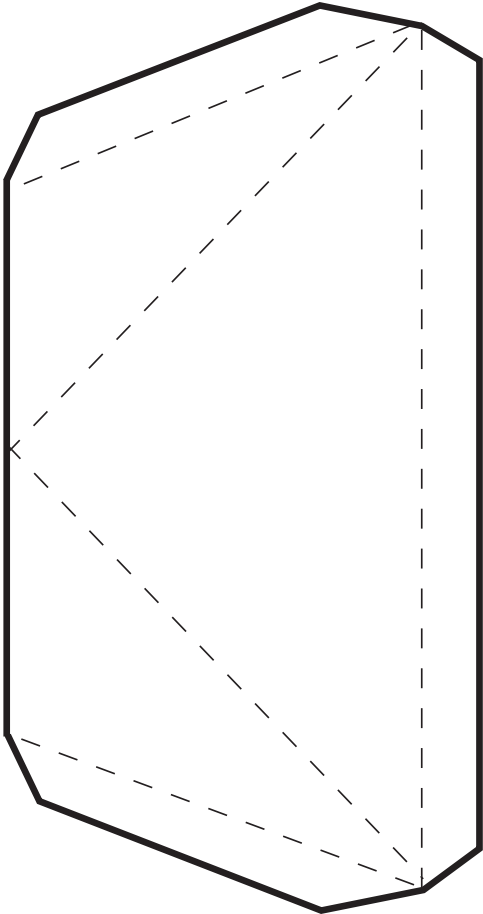
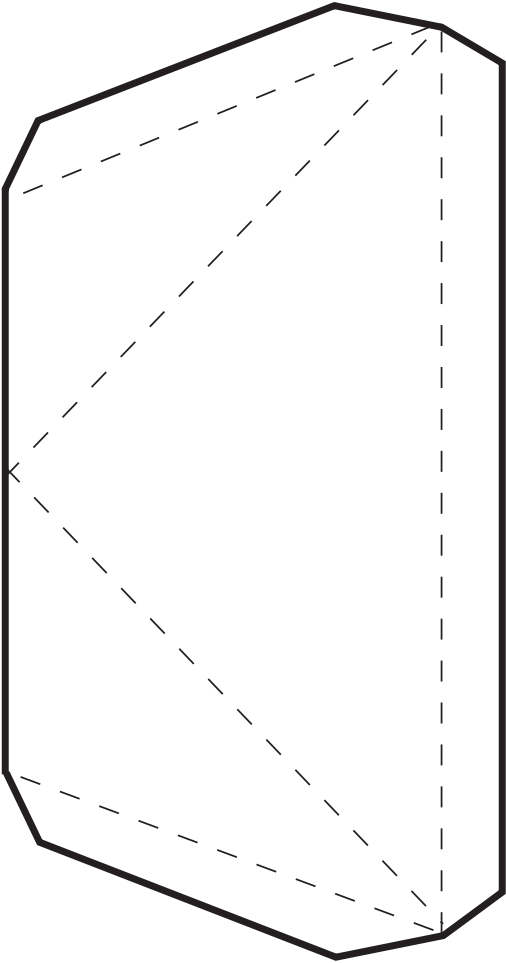
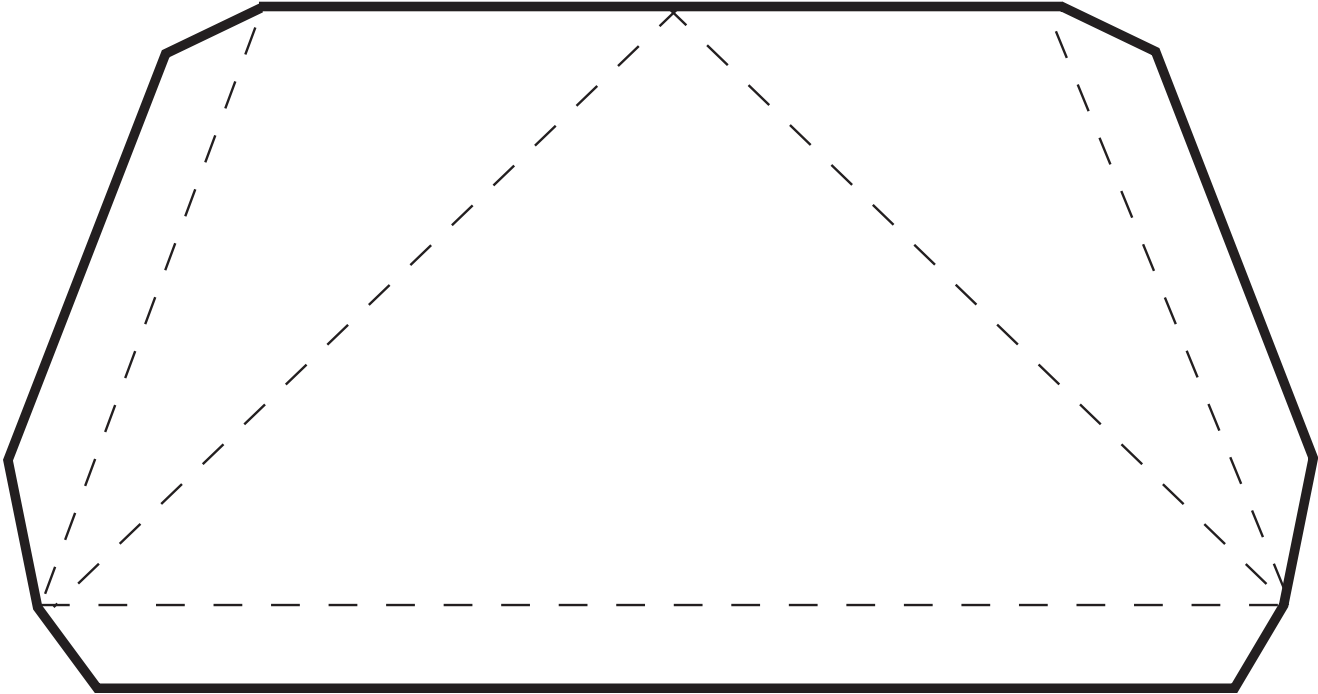
“Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, ‘Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel’” (Matthew 2:19–20a).

Flight to Egypt

“An angel of the LORD appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you Word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him” (Matthew 2:13b).



Pyramid Patterns



Clues Point to Jesus

Do the clues given before Jesus Christ was born point to Him as the King?

Read the Scriptures and then the summaries in the left-hand column.

Do the same for the Scriptures and summaries in the right-hand column.

Next, draw a line from the prophecy (clue) to Jesus' fulfillment.

Clues/Prophecies

Read: Genesis 12:1a, 2a, 3b
God tells Abraham that through his descendants will come the One who will be a blessing to all the people of the earth.

Read: Genesis 49:10
The King who is Ruler of all will be from the line of Judah.

Read: 2 Samuel 7:8, 12–13
God tells David that one of his descendants will come in God's name and God will establish His kingdom.

Read: Isaiah 7:14
A son born of a virgin and called Immanuel (Jesus) would be a sign to the people of God's chosen King.

Read: Psalm 72:10; Isaiah 60:3, 6, 9
The Ruler would be worshiped by wise men and presented with gifts.

Read: Jeremiah 31:15
Babies would be killed around the place of His birth.

Read: Hosea 11:1
God's Son would live in Egypt for a time.

Read: Micah 5:2
The Ruler would be born in the city of Bethlehem.

Jesus' Fulfillment

Read: Matthew 1:1–17
Christ was a descendant of Abraham...Judah...and David.

Read: Matthew 1:18–20, 25
Jesus mother, Mary, was a virgin when she gave birth to Him.

Read: Matthew 1:23
Jesus was given the name Immanuel, which means "God with us."

Read: Matthew 2:1a
Jesus was born in the city of Bethlehem.

Read: Matthew 2:1–2, 11
The wise men from the East came from afar to worship Jesus and present Him with gifts.

Read: Matthew 2:13–15
Joseph took Mary and Jesus to live in Egypt for a time.

Read: Matthew 2:16–18
Evil King Herod ordered his men to kill all the baby boys around Bethlehem.

The King Is preserved



Matthew 2:13–23

Name _____

1. Who appeared to Joseph in a dream? _____
2. The angel of the Lord told Joseph to flee to _____ (Matt. 2:13).
3. Who was seeking to destroy Jesus? _____
4. Write out Matthew 2:14–15.

5. Herod ordered that all male children under two years of age _____.
6. Where did Joseph, Mary, and Jesus live after Herod's death? _____
7. The prophecies in Matthew 2:13–23 point to the fact that _____.

Joseph was smart

Herod was bad

Jesus is the Messiah

Immediate Obedience

Imagine that it is the middle of the night and you are woken up by a police officer telling your parents that they must leave the house right away because there is a huge fire coming right toward it. That would be a scary thing to wake up to! What if instead of leaving the house, your parents were to say, “No, I think we’ll just go back to sleep.” Your safety would require their immediate obedience to the police officer’s instruction. In today’s lesson something similar happened to Joseph. But it wasn’t a police officer who gave him the instruction to leave; it was an angel sent by God. The angel told Joseph to take Mary and Jesus and flee to the land of Egypt, where they would be safe. Joseph didn’t hesitate. He did just as the angel had instructed him.

How would you react if an angel instructed you to do something?

God used an angel to instruct Joseph and Mary to flee, but what does He use to instruct us today?

How do you react to hearing God’s instructions to you in His Word?

What are some instructions that God has given you in His Word that you must obey today?

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How do you react to hearing God’s instructions to you in His Word?

What are some instructions that God has given you in His Word that you must obey today?

God protected Jesus' life to keep promises that He had made. What were some of those promises about Jesus? Look up the passage to see what was promised about Him.

Genesis 3:15 _____

Genesis 12:1-3 _____

Genesis 49:10 _____

Micah 5:2 _____

God kept His Word and protected Jesus from being hurt so that He could fulfill the promises that were made about Him.

How do the promises about Jesus affect you?

PRAYER

Thank you, Lord, for keeping Your promises and for keeping Jesus safe so that He could save men from their sins. Please help me to obey You immediately, as Joseph did. Thank You for Your Word, which gives us instructions for life.

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"Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt..." (Matthew 2:13b).



**“Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, ‘Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child’s life are dead’”
(Matthew 2:19–20).**

