

Christmas Sorrow

Matthew 2:13–23

1. Christmas Promise (Matthew 1:18–25)
2. Christmas Star (Matthew 2:1–12)
- 3. Christmas Sorrow (Matthew 2:13–23)**
4. Christmas Purpose (Galatians 4:4–7)

Main Point

The Lord providentially moves to accomplish His purposes—therefore, even in the midst of sorrow we can have hope.

I. Introduction

- A. Often in life we get to a moment when we come to grips with the sorrow and hardships which have entered humanity because of the fall in Genesis 3.
- B. It can be during the holiday seasons that we sense these sorrows the most.
 1. The loss of loved ones during a holiday meal stings anew.
 2. The challenge of living in a fallen world often meet during holiday seasons.
- C. The Christmas Story, albeit filled with wonderful “glad tidings of great joy” is not without its own challenges and sorrows. Matthew records one of the most heartbreaking parts of the Christmas story.
- D. In spite of the sorrows in our text, it is also infused with hope—hope in the Messiah Who would accomplish redemption for His people.

II. Exposition

- A. Christmas Protection (2:13–15)
 1. Joseph received a dream with a message from the Lord:
 - a) Herod the Great sought to kill the “king of the Jews” (2:2)
 - b) Flee to Egypt
 2. Joseph immediately obeyed the command of the Lord, remaining in Egypt until the death of Herod the Great in 4 B.C.
 3. The prophecy of Hosea 11:1
 - a) **Hosea 11:1** “When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son.
 - b) Here Hosea appears to be speaking of how God brought Israel out of Egypt into the land that He had prepared for them, except they in turn failed to be faithful to Him.

- c) The Messiah would go into Egypt, but would come out and *be faithful* to the Father.

B. Christmas Sorrow (2:16–18)

1. Herod the Great quickly determined that the wise men had deceived him which enraged him. He called for all the male children 2 years old and under to be slaughtered (since Bethlehem was small it is estimated that between 10 and 20 infants may have been murdered).
2. Matthew quotes Jeremiah:
 - a) **Jeremiah 31:15** Thus says the Lord: “A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted for her children, Because they are no more.”
 - b) While the verse seems to suggest great sorrow (and does not seem to be a prophecy concerning the Messiah and the infants slaughtered), Matthew quotes this verse as a tale of contrasts
 - (1) In Jeremiah’s day, the Jewish people would sorrow because it seemed like the Lord was ending them as a people but the rest of Jeremiah 31 is a message of *hope* for the people.
 - (2) In Matthew’s Christmas Story, even though the Jewish women of Bethlehem sorrowed because “their children were no more,” there was *hope*: the Messiah was *not* slaughtered—He was preserved by the Lord.

C. Christmas Hope (2:19–23)

1. Joseph again received a message from the Lord through a dream—this time telling him to bring the Child back to Israel. Herod the Great had died.
2. Nevertheless, Herod the Great’s son, Archelaus, ruled which gave Joseph concern (and another dream warning).
3. Joseph settled in a place called Nazareth, a city of ill repute.
 - a) The prophecy that Matthew records is not explicitly stated in the Old Testament but likely was prophesied by multiple prophets over the course of Israel’s history.
 - b) Jesus would grow up as a man “despised and rejected and acquainted with grief” (Isa. 53:3).

III. Truths

- A. Even in our sorrow, we have hope in the promises of God.
- B. Even in our sorrow, we have peace in the wisdom of God.
- C. Even in our sorrow, we have confidence in the plan of God.