

Herod

Introduction:

The Advent season calls us to prepare our hearts for the coming of King Jesus. The story of Herod in Matthew 2:13-18 provides a stark contrast to this theme. Herod, fearing the loss of his throne, ordered the massacre of all baby boys in Bethlehem, echoing the brutal decree of Pharaoh in Exodus 1:15-22. This act of desperation highlights a heart unprepared to receive the true King.

The prophecy in Hosea 11:1, "Out of Egypt I called my son," finds its fulfillment in Jesus' escape to Egypt. This event, narrated in Matthew 2:13-15, shows God's protective care over His Son and God's fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. This journey to and from Egypt mirrors Israel's own journey, symbolizing a new exodus led by Jesus. This new exodus invites believers to leave behind their old ways and enter into a new covenant relationship with God.

As we consider the story of Herod during Advent, we are called to examine our own hearts. Are we preparing room for Christ, or are we, like Herod, resistant to His presence in our lives? Advent is a time to let go of our fear and control, opening our hearts to the transformative power of Jesus. In doing so, we move from a place of self-preservation to one of faith and surrender, truly welcoming the Prince of Peace into our lives.

Read Your Bible

- Hosea 11:1
- Matthew 2:13-18

Apply God's Word to Your Life:

1. How does Hosea 11:1, "Out of Egypt I called my son," relate to the story of Jesus' early life in Matthew 2:13-18?
2. What motivated Herod's actions in Matthew 2:13-18, and how does God intervene?
3. How did Joseph respond to the angel's warning in Matthew 2:13-14, and what does this teach us about obedience and faith in difficult times?
4. What might the escape to Egypt symbolize in the context of Jesus' mission and the fulfillment of prophecy?
5. How does the slaughter of the innocents in Matthew 2:16-18 reflect the spiritual conflict surrounding the birth of Christ?
6. In what ways does the story of Herod challenge us to examine our own hearts during Advent?
7. How can we ensure that our actions are aligned with God's will, unlike Herod's, during the Advent season?
8. What does the return from Egypt signify for Jesus' mission and the fulfillment of God's promises?
9. How does reflecting on Herod's story help us prepare our hearts to welcome Christ anew during Advent?

Reflecting on the text:

1. What have you learned about God?
2. What have you learned about the world?
3. What have you learned about yourself?

Pray

Gracious God, prepare our hearts for the coming of King Jesus. Help us to recognize the areas in our lives where we hold on to fear and control. Give us the strength to release these fears and to trust fully in Your plan for us. Open our hearts to receive the joy and peace that Jesus brings and guide us to live in a way that welcomes Him into every part of our lives. In His name, we pray. Amen.