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“OUT OF EGYPT I HAVE CALLED MY SON”

The early years of our Saviour’s earthly life were perilous ones, for not everyone rejoiced at the birth of the new-born king. The Gospel of St. Matthew chronicles the adverse reaction that Herod had to the news of the coming of the Messiah that the Wise Men brought to him. The Magi disobeyed his devious request to “. . . bring back word of Him to me so that I may go and worship Him also.” Joseph, warned in a dream that Herod sought to destroy the young Child, fled with his family to Egypt in the dead of night.

The Gospel narratives, tell us nothing else about the period that Joseph, Mary and the Christ-Child spent in Egypt. Even the exact location where they settled remains a mystery to us. We can surmise, however, that the journey there must have been a long, arduous one, for even the extreme border of this vast country was nearly 100 miles from Bethlehem. It is, indeed, ironic that this frightened Hebrew family found safety and solace in the land where their ancestors had been forced into slavery centuries before!

It is probable that Joseph, Mary and Jesus did not remain in Egypt for long. After the death of Herod, Joseph again was instructed by an angel of the Lord to “Arise, and take the young Child and His Mother and go into the land of Israel, for those who sought His life are now dead.” Afraid to return to Judea, Joseph took his family to the northern province of Galilee, settling in the small town of Nazareth. It was in this obscure village that Jesus, according to the Gospel of St. Luke, “grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom.”