

who, as the husband of Mary, is the natural protector and guardian of Jesus. (2.) *The message.* FLEE INTO EGYPT—and thus be beyond Herod's jurisdiction. BE . . . THERE UNTIL. God keeps accurate record of every event in all the earth. A king cannot make a decree nor a child sob without his notice. (3.) *The reason.* HEROD WILL SEEK. This vile king was bent on murder before the Magi left Jerusalem to find Jesus. Thus again shall Egypt save the Lord's chosen. Gen. xlv. 9, 11. (See *Illustrations 1, 2.*)

2. THE FLIGHT FOR LIFE, vers. 14, 15. BY NIGHT. One of the "night scenes" of the Bible. In silence, in secrecy; angel-guarded, angel-guided. Herod and all Jerusalem shall be ignorant of their path. DEPARTED. By these obedient ones the journey from Canaan to Egypt was made in a few days; but for the disobedient multitude that long before fled from Egypt to Canaan the journey was one of forty years. The distance from Bethlehem to Egypt is about two hundred and fifty miles. INTO EGYPT. God sends Magi with gold for this journey, (Matt. ii. 11); and by a strange providence Jews had already long resided in Egypt, (Jer. xlviii.) and were settled in great numbers in that part nearest to Palestine. They also enjoyed great privileges. It was among these Jews, doubtless, that the Holy Family found a welcome and a safe retreat. Here they remained UNTIL THE DEATH OF HEROD. These Jews of Egypt detested the cruel Herod as thoroughly as did those whom he governed. Gladly would they render protection or employment to any fugitive from his wrath. How long Jesus was kept in Egypt is not determined; perhaps not more than a year. He went not to dwell, but to tarry a little season only, thus fulfilling Hosea xi. 1; a prophecy referring, however, primarily to Israel. (See *Illus. 3, 4.*)

3. THE WORD FULFILLED, vers. 16-18. HEROD . . . WAS EXCEEDING WROTH, feeling that he was MOCKED, trifled with, by the WISE MEN. But this was neither trifling, nor did the Magi have ought to do with the cause of Herod's disappointment. The mighty hand of God traced the path from Persia to Judea by a star; the same Power traces it back again by "a dream," (ver. 12.) The enraged tyrant SENT FORTH a horde of cut-throats, such as are ever ready to do the bidding of despots. SLEW ALL THE CHILDREN. Herod was guilty of many other acts equally Satanic. [See Josephus.] IN BETHLEHEM. Herod believed the prophecy in Micah v. 2. IN ALL THE COASTS. Suburbs, vicinity;

so as to make sure of his victim. FROM TWO YEARS OLD AND UNDER. The number of male children of this age could not have been large in so small a town as Bethlehem must have been. The best authorities limit the number to less than fifty; some placing it as low as twenty. The Greek Church canonized them as "fourteen thousand innocents." THE TIME. The wise men probably indicated to Herod that they had first seen the star about two years before. FULFILLED. The prophecy of Jer. xxxi. 15, 16, relates primarily to the Babylonish captivity. RAMA. A small village north of Jerusalem in Benjamin. When Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judea, the chief inhabitants of Jerusalem who had escaped the sword were placed under guard at Ramah. Jer. xxxix. 8-12; xl. 1. THE LAMENTATION was made over those slain at Jerusalem, and those who, by reason of age or disease, being not worth taking to Babylon, were slaughtered at Ramah. This mourning was typical of the massacre by Herod at Bethlehem, near to which was the tomb of RACHEL. Gen. xxxv. 16-20. Thus Rachel is represented as rising from the tomb and WEEPING FOR HER CHILDREN—both those of the "captivity" and the "massacre." (See *Illustrations 5, 6.*)

4. THE RETURN FROM EXILE, verses 19-22. (1.) *The Guide* of the exiles: ANGEL OF THE LORD. Possibly Gabriel was the angel who warned JOSEPH to flee into Egypt, (ver. 13,) and called him now to return. See Luke i. 19, 26, 27. (2.) *The assurances* of the Guide: THEY ARE DEAD. The singular for the plural—a common mode of expression in such cases, in most languages. See Exod. iv. 19. Herod died in the thirty-seventh year of his reign. "His disease was of that excruciating and loathsome kind with which God, in his righteous judgments, has often afflicted and dishonored the endings of great and blasphemous tyrants."—*Killo*. (3.) *The route* of return: The Holy Family come INTO THE LAND OF ISRAEL—as they were ordered—not into Judea. ARCHELAUS was like his father, crafty, cruel, tyrannical. Joseph fears to enter Judea under such a king. Again God turns ASIDE the steps of Joseph. GALILEE was in northern Palestine, ruled over by Herod Antipas, brother of Archelaus. Antipas, though crafty and licentious, (compare Josephus with Mark vi. 14-30; Luke xiii. 31-33,) is said to have been of a mild disposition. In Galilee there is hope of safety; and God will watch over his Beloved no matter what Herod Antipas may plan.