

**Possible Routes to Exit Parthia: Coastal, Central Ridge, & Jordan River Routes Prove Impractical; They Move South Through Idumea to the King's Highway in Transjordan, Link Up with Silk Road at Damascus, Matt 2:12b; Gabriel Warns Joseph in a Dream with 3 Imperatives; "Get up, take," "Flee to Egypt," & "Stay!" Herod's Operation Search & Destroy, 2:13**

There are three ways to get back to Damascus and access to the Silk Road: **(1) the Coastal Route** which runs along the Mediterranean Sea up to Tyre where they could linkup, **(2) the Central Ridge Route** which would take them through Jerusalem and then northward into Samaria, and finally to the Jordan River at Beth-shan, the capital city of Decapolis, and **(3) the Jordan River Route** which also required a return to Jerusalem then eastward to the Jordan at Jericho.

None of these routes were acceptable. The only "other" route available to the Magi was the King's Highway in Transjordan and the only way to get to it was to head southeast through Idumea loop eastward around the Dead Sea and linkup with it near present-day Al-Karak \al-ka'-rak\, Jordan.

**NOTE: See visuals: "Magi's Options for Routes of Departure" and the seven-slide series, "Magi's 'Other' Route to Damascus" (1-7).**

Once at King's Highway they headed north all the way to Damascus where they turned east and headed home along the Silk Road.

**Matthew 2:12** - And having been divinely warned in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for Parthia by the King's Highway. (CTL)

**v. 13** - Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him." (NASB)

This is another warning, most likely by Gabriel, who used this method to inform those directly involved in the insertion of Messiah into human history. The several annunciations and warnings include: **(1) Zacharias**, the husband of Elizabeth who, formally barren, became pregnant with John the Baptist (Luke 1:13-17), **(2) Mary**, whom He informed of her miraculous pregnancy (Luke 1:28-37), **(3) Joseph**, Mary's fiancé, while he was considering a quiet divorce (Matthew 1:20b-23), **(4) the shepherds** outside Bethlehem following the virgin birth (Luke 2:10-14), **(5) the Magi** who were bivouacked at Bethlehem are warned in (Matthew 2:12), and **(6) Joseph** is warned following the Magi's departure (Matthew 2:13).

The Magi were awakened in the night and told to leave Palestine. As soon as their caravan departed Bethlehem, Gabriel gives Joseph his second warning by means of a dream consisting of a series of commands.



Commandment number 1, the verb ἐγείρω (*egeirō*) prefixed to the verb of going, the aorist active imperative of παραλαμβάνω (*paralambanō*). This is an oriental pleonasm which is “the addition of unnecessary words in an effort to express an idea completely”<sup>1</sup> and translated “Get up! Take!”

What Joseph is to take is mentioned next and the word order indicates who is top priority and therefore the reason for the command. The phrase in the Greek is: τὸ παιδίον καὶ μητέρα αὐτοῦ (*to paidion kai mētera autou*): “the Child and His mother.”

God the Father intervenes into human history to protect the Anointed One against the Luciferian conspiracy to assassinate the King of the Jews and the Savior of the world.

The preservation of the life of Jesus is imperative if mankind’s sin problem is to be resolved. Therefore, the Child is mentioned first in the mandate to move out followed by Mary.

Command number 2 from Gabriel is “flee to Egypt”: the present active imperative of the verb φεύγω (*pheugō*): “to escape from danger.” Gabriel functions under divine guidance. He receives orders from God Who with omniscience perceives the future as perspicuously as He does the past or present.

God knows Herod. He is completely aware of his lust for power and the actions he has taken to eliminate anyone who might threaten his throne. God is aware that Herod, through demon influence, will become Lucifer’s agent to assassinate the messianic threat to his kingdom.

Therefore, God instructs Joseph to remove himself and his family from Palestine without delay. He is to seek refuge in Egypt and to stay there until further notice. Egypt is out of Herod’s jurisdiction and according to Plato is the home of about a million Jews.<sup>2</sup>

Commandment number 3 is found in the present active imperative of the verb εἰμί (*eimi*); “stay!” The royal family is to remain in exile until further notice.

The temporal conjunction ἕως (*heōs*), translated “until,” is important to the translation. It is used with the subjunctive mood which follows: “until I tell you.” Gabriel does not give a definite departure date from Egypt. Joseph and his family are to stand fast until he gives further information.

*Heōs* is not expressed in English translations but its presence in the context gives a sense of uncertainty. When Gabriel will go to Egypt and instruct Joseph to return to Palestine is simply a possibility that depends on future circumstances. Thus, when *heōs* is followed by the subjunctive mood it makes the time of this future action indefinite.

The verb is the aorist active subjunctive of εἶπον (*eipon*), “tell.” This is a potential subjunctive which means the action is qualified by an element of contingency.

<sup>1</sup> “Pleonasm,” in *Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Toronto: Coles Publishing Co., 1980), 148.

<sup>2</sup> D. A. Carson, “Matthew,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Regency Reference Library, 1984), 8:90.



So what is the element of contingency? Herod! Gabriel now gives Joseph the reason for the mandates to “Get up! Take the Child and His mother and hurry to Egypt and stay there until I inform you otherwise.”

**Ἡρώδης (Hērōdēs)**, the Idumean Arab from the line of Esau, is currently the king of the Jews. Although in ill health, he is driven by power lust to eliminate any threat to his progeny’s claim of the throne. The ends to which he protected his crown knew no bounds, even the murder of his Jewish wife, Mariamne, and her two sons Alexander and Aristobulus. The Child in Bethlehem was not immune to his rancor and God through his seraph herald Gabriel ordered Joseph to take the Child and His mother to safety in Egypt.

The reason for the emergency evacuation? Herod is “on the verge” of putting into action his plan to assassinate the Christ. The verb **μέλλω (mellō)** is a futuristic present which denotes an event which has not yet occurred, but which is regarded as so certain that in thought it may be contemplated as already coming to pass.

In other words, there was no time to lose. As soon as Herod learns the Child’s location he will unleash Operation Search and Destroy.

The verb to search is the present active infinitive of **ζητέω (zēteō)** and means “to obtain without knowing where it is to be found.” Once Herod learns he has been betrayed by the Magi he will send out a raiding party to murder all male children in Bethlehem under the age of two.

This action is brought out by the aorist active infinitive of the verb **ἀπόλλυμι (apollumi)**: to cause to perish; to put to death. This is a purpose infinitive used to express the aim of the action. Herod is intent to destroy this surprise threat from the Davidic line and secure his dynasty; both ideas are satanically motivated.

