

Sermon Discussion Guide

Matthew 2:13–23 – “Herod Rages, God Reigns”

Preaching Date: March 8, 2026

Opening Prayer

Ask God to give us humble hearts under His Word. Thank Him that He sovereignly preserves His Son and that no rage of man can overturn His purpose. Ask Him to help us see Christ clearly, trust His providence, bow to His kingship, and respond with prompt obedience.

Recap

In Matthew 2:13–23, Matthew shows that the Lord sovereignly preserves His Son through the rage of Herod so that Christ fulfills Scripture and accomplishes redemption at the appointed time. Jesus is driven into Egypt and called out again, revealing Him as the true Son and the One who brings the greater exodus. Herod’s slaughter of the children in Bethlehem places the coming of Christ in a world of tears, yet Matthew frames that sorrow within the larger covenant story that moves toward hope, restoration, and the new covenant. The passage ends in Nazareth, where the Messiah is marked by humility and reproach. Throughout the chapter, earthly rulers rage, but God directs every step.

Understanding the Text

1. In verses 13–14, why does Matthew stress that Herod sought “to destroy” the Child? What does this teach us about the true humanity of Christ and the reality of the incarnation?
2. Why does Matthew see Hosea 11:1 fulfilled in Jesus? How does the flight to Egypt and return from Egypt present Christ as the true Son and true Israel?
3. What does the passage teach about the relationship between God’s sovereignty and Herod’s guilt? Why must both truths be kept together?
4. Why does Matthew cite Jeremiah 31:15 in connection with Bethlehem’s sorrow? How does the wider context of Jeremiah 31 deepen our understanding of grief, exile, and hope?
5. In verses 19–21, Matthew echoes the story of Moses. How does that Exodus pattern help us understand Jesus’ mission as a greater deliverer?
6. Verse 23 says, “He shall be called a Nazarene.” What does Nazareth communicate about the Messiah’s humiliation, lowliness, and rejection by the world?

Personal Reflection & Application

1. Herod heard of Christ and saw Him as a threat. Where are you most tempted to resist Christ's rule over your life: control, comfort, reputation, money, relationships, or some cherished plan?
2. Joseph obeyed God promptly, even when obedience was costly and disruptive. Where are you tempted to delay obedience while still trying to appear willing?
3. Bethlehem reminds us that Christ entered a world of tears. How has grief, confusion, or painful providence tested your trust in God's goodness and wisdom?
4. Jesus was preserved by God, yet His path was marked by humility and reproach. Where are you tempted to be ashamed of Christ or to avoid the cost of openly identifying with Him?
5. The church is called to be both a witness and a refuge. How can our church more faithfully comfort sufferers, strengthen the fearful, and call sinners to bow before Christ?

God Has More to Say

God's sovereign providence and unstoppable purpose

Job 42:2
Psalm 115:3
Proverbs 21:30
Acts 4:27-28
Ephesians 1:11

Christ the true Son, true Israel, and the greater exodus

Exodus 4:22-23
Hosea 11:1
Matthew 3:15
Matthew 4:1-11
1 Corinthians 10:1-11

Sorrow, exile, and new covenant hope

Jeremiah 31:15-17
Jeremiah 31:31-34
Ezekiel 36:25-27
Galatians 3:13-14
Hebrews 8:6-13

The despised Messiah and His path of humiliation

Psalms 22:6-8
Isaiah 53:2-3
John 1:46
Philippians 2:5-11
Hebrews 12:2-3

Obedience, courage, and life under God's providence

Psalms 56:3-4
Matthew 10:28-31
Romans 8:28-32
Hebrews 11:8
James 1:22-25

The church as a faithful witness and refuge

Matthew 28:18-20
Romans 12:1-2
Galatians 6:2
1 Peter 3:14-17
Revelation 11:15