



## Escape to Egypt

December 17, 2011

Before Jesus was old enough to eat solid food, something tragic happened to every toddler boy in Bethlehem. Yet God worked to spare Jesus' life. Preserving that one life has given *eternal life* to billions of people since then. The last portion of Matthew 2 shows how God sovereignly kept Jesus alive, so that He could fulfill His mission.

### Where Am I Today?

- 1) Have you ever had God throw obstacles into your path or lead you in a direction that you didn't understand, only to find out later that He was protecting you?

### Into the Bible

- 2) Matthew is very intentional in this passage about showing how sovereign, all-knowing and in complete control God is, and how the events around the birth of Jesus fulfill Old Testament scripture. **Read Matthew 2:13-23** to see his descriptions. In this passage alone, where do you see God's sovereignty? Where do you see the Old Testament being fulfilled?



- 3) Christians have a real enemy: Satan. He has been trying to violently thwart God's redemptive plans for thousands of years, and will continue to do so until he's destroyed. **Read** to see other places where he has made similar attempts, only to be trumped by God. How does God show His control over all of these situations?
- a. Genesis 50:15-21
  - b. Luke 4:1-13
  - c. Luke 22:2-6
  - d. Revelation 12:1-6

#### **How Does This Apply?**

- 4) God's control over the situation in Matthew 2:13-23 shows that He is sovereign. The fact that He kept Jesus alive shows that He's good. How does the fact that God is both sovereign and good provide comfort when you don't understand what's going on in your life, perhaps even right now?
- 5) How does knowing that the first Christmas was surrounded by difficulty and suffering change the simple sentimentalism we often associate with the holiday? How does it enrich it?



### **Digging Deeper: Going Further on Your Own**

6) Some people would argue that God is either not sovereign or not good since so many boys below two years of age died during Herod's tirade. This argument is rooted in the belief that a good and all-powerful God would not have allowed such suffering. However, there are several weaknesses with this argument. (1) It forgets that life on this earth is temporary, and is no one's final destination. Therefore, from God's perspective, even grievous suffering is temporary. (2) It forgets that God entered our suffering with us. He's not standing aloof watching us suffer. In Christ, He entered into and experienced our suffering with us. Jesus suffered in every way we do, or more; and eventually, He gave His own life as a sacrifice by dying a brutal death. (3) We place our own understanding of history above God's. We are able to see but slivers of time, while He sees everything. He's somehow able to turn or use suffering to work for His glory and our good. Vanilla extract is extremely bitter, but just the right amount makes an incredible cake.

Romans 8:22-28

1 Peter 3:14-17

2 Corinthians 1:3-11