**BETTER TOGETHER** in 2022

December 18, 2022

Dr. Jerry Edmonson, Founding and LeadPastor

**Hope is Born**

**A Cry for Hope -** Matthew 2:13-23



**Slide** **Hope** is the belief in a **future**, certain, reality.

*Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.* Desmond Tutu

*To live without hope is to cease to live.*

Fyodor Dostoevsky

**Slide** Matthew presents the story of Jesus coming from an Old Testament connection between **promise** and **fulfillment**.

* God fulfilled His promise generation by generation.
* God gives us hope in the coming of a savior who will save us from our sin; He is Emmanuel God with us.
* Wise men and women seek and worship the one who is our hope.

**Slide** What is our earthly **response** to God’s heavenly plan?

**Slide**

* Belief or **disbelief**
* **Obedience** or disobedience
* Receptivity or rejection

It is difficult to keep hope alive when evil is everywhere we turn. We are faced with the inevitable reality …

**Slide** **Evil** may abound in the face of good, but it will never take away our **hope** in Christ.

**Slide** God **preserved** and **protected** Jesus so that Jesus might preserve and protect us.

**Slide** *Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph* ***in a dream*** *and said, “****Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him****.” And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and* ***departed to Egypt*** *and remained there until the death of Herod. This was* ***to fulfill what******the Lord had spoken by the prophet****, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”*  Matthew 2:13–14

**Who is this Herod …**

Herod the Great, Latin **Herodes Magnus**, (born 73 BC, died March/April, 4 BC, Jericho, Judaea), Roman-appointed king of Judaea (37–4 BC), who built many fortresses, aqueducts, theatres, and other public buildings and generally raised the prosperity of his land but who was the center of political and family intrigues in his later years. The New Testament portrays him as a tyrant into whose kingdom Jesus of Nazareth was born. **Herod was of Arab origin, although he was a practicing Jew.**

**There was a dark and cruel streak in Herod’s character** that showed itself increasingly as he grew older. He was mentally unstable, was prone to violent attacks of jealousy; he murdered his wife, her two sons, her brother, her grandfather, and her mother. Herod had ten wives and had children by six of them. He had 14 children.

**In his last years Herod suffered from arteriosclerosis**. He was in great pain, mentally and physically. The slaying, shortly before his death, of the infants of Bethlehem was wholly consistent with the disarray into which he had fallen. After an unsuccessful attempt at suicide, Herod died. His final testament provided that his realm would be divided among his sons: Archelaus should be king of Judaea and Samaria, with Philip and Antipas sharing the remainder as tetrarchs.

The journey to Egypt and back was approximately **1242.80 miles**. Their means of transport was a weak beast of burden and the occasional sailboat on the Nile.

**Slide** *When Israel was a child, I loved him, and* ***out of Egypt I called my son****.* Hosea 11:1

**Slide** God **delivered** Jesus from the sins of others, so that we could one day be delivered from our own **sin**.

**Slide** *Then Herod, when* ***he saw that he had been tricked*** *by the wise men,* ***became furious****, and* ***he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under****, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: “****A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more*.**” Matthew 2:15-18

**Slide** Sorrow sits in the **midst** of our **jubilation**.

**Slide** *Thus says the Lord: “A voice is heard in* ***Ramah****, lamentation and* ***bitter weeping****. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.”* Jeremiah 31:15

**Ramah** – Ramah (from Hebrew: "height") was, according to the Hebrew Bible, **a city in ancient Israel in the land allocated to the tribe of Benjamin**.

**Slide** A cry for help is our **response**; hope is our **anchor**.

**Slide** God called Jesus to a **countercultural** life, so that we too might live **counter** to our culture.

**Slide** *But when* ***Herod died****, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared* ***in a dream*** *to Joseph in Egypt, saying, “Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child’s life are dead.” And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.* Matthew 2:19-22

**Slide** *But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned* ***in a dream*** *he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and lived in a city called* ***Nazareth****,* ***so that what was spoken******by the prophets*** *might be fulfilled, that* ***he would be called a Nazarene****.* Matthew 2:12–23

*Nazoraios* might be a play on words. **Holy Warrior** (numbers 6, Nazarite) **Righteous Branch**, (Isaiah 4:3, there will grow a branch, from the dead stump of Jesse)

It sounds much like two Old Testament words, *Nazarite* and *neser*.

* A ***Nazarite*** is a person set apart as holy, and is required not to cut his hair, touch a dead body, or consume wine (Numbers 6; Judges 13:3-7). Jesus is set apart as holy, but He will touch a dead body (9:18-25) and drink wine (26:26-29; Luke 7:34), so he cannot be a faithful Nazarite.
* ***Neser*** appears in Isaiah 11:1, a messianic text: “A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch (*neser*) shall grow out his roots.” Jesus is clearly the branch to grow out of those roots.

**Slide** The **Nazareth** Principle

**Slide** *Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”* John 1:46

**Slide** *But God chose what is* ***foolish*** *in the world* ***to shame the wise****; God chose what is* ***weak*** *in the world* ***to shame the strong****; God chose what is* ***low*** *and* ***despised*** *in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that* ***no human being might boast*** *in the presence of God.* 1 Corinthians 1:27–29

**Slide** The **evil** of one king was ultimately overpowered by the **love** of the true King.

**Slide** Let your cry for hope be heard, cry out to God in faith and believe, receive and obey.