



Group Guide

The Exiled King

December 21, 2025

Main Passage: Matthew 2:13-23

Theological Theme

Even when we must unexpectedly pivot in our lives, God is in control—providing, guiding, and working things out for good.

Introduction

- ❓ When was a time something in your life didn't work out like you expected? What happened?
- ❓ Think back ten years. Does your life today look like you thought it would? How has God worked in ways you didn't expect?

1. Into Egypt (Matthew 2:13-15)

Last week, we read about the account of the Magi visiting the child Jesus. In those events, the paranoid Herod the Great was already seeking a way to identify and kill the child the Magi had identified as the king of the Jews. He directed the Magi to come and update him when they'd located Jesus, but they returned home by a different route, avoiding Herod. It was only a matter of time before Herod would have taken matters into his own hands.

- ❓ What stands out to you about the warning Joseph received? How is this similar or different from other dreams we've seen in our study of Matthew so far?
- ❓ How did Joseph display faith in God in this passage? Why might that have been challenging?
- ❓ Application: How do these events give encouragement for God's sovereign plan in our own lives?

2. Massacre of the Innocents (Matthew 2:16-18)

When Herod realized that the Magi had eluded him, he “flew into a rage,” and “gave orders to massacre all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under” (v. 16)—Jesus's apparent age at that time. “Massacre” is an apt word to describe the devastation of this order.

- ❓ How did Herod seek to subvert what God was doing according to his human power?
- ❓ How does the prophecy quoted here remind us that God is in control, even in the darkest moments?
- ❓ Application: When was a time something painful happened and you questioned why God allowed it? How did you see God work through that situation?

3. Return to Nazareth (Matthew 2:19-23)

Once again, we see dreams play an important role in our story. Joseph was first warned in a dream to flee to Egypt, so it's fitting that he got the news he could return to Israel in a dream too. The Lord's warning in this dream is strikingly similar to the words spoken to Moses in Exodus 4: "Return to Egypt, for all the men who wanted to kill you are dead" (Exodus 4:19).

- ❓ God again spoke to Joseph in dreams. What are some ways you've learned to listen for and trust God's voice in your life?
- ❓ God may speak in miraculous ways, but He has spoken clearly through His Word. Why is it vital that we spend time in His Word so we can learn His voice and receive His guidance?
- ❓ Application: How has God guided decisions in your life? How have you found it better to trust Him than go your own way, even when the future is unclear?

Conclusion

- ❓ What are some things we can do to better tune into God's direction in our own lives?
- ❓ How can we encourage one another toward obedience to God's guidance daily?
- ❓ How does living in obedience before God lead us to share Jesus with others?