

## JANUARY Devotional:

# How Sweet the Sound of Protection!

**Text – Matt. 2:13-18 (NIV)**

### *The Escape to Egypt*

<sup>13</sup>When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." <sup>14</sup>So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, <sup>15</sup>where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup>When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. <sup>17</sup>Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

<sup>18</sup>"A voice is heard in Ramah,  
weeping and great mourning,  
Rachel weeping for her children  
and refusing to be comforted,  
because they are no more."<sup>19</sup>



Baby books are so much fun. Every major (and minor!) milestone recorded. Tons of cute photos. Locks of hair from the first haircut. If you're the second or third child in the family, the book is a little thinner (ask my little sister...she complains that all her baby photos show her facedown on the carpet. ☺)

If Jesus had a baby book, what would be in it? A bit of swaddling cloth? Straw from the manger? Some gold, frankincense or myrrh? We're so familiar with the Christmas story, we can easily imagine what Mary and Joseph would choose to remember about those first days. But there's more to the story, isn't there? I wonder if there would be a postcard of the pyramids in Jesus' baby book?

Matthew 2:13-18 tells the story of the escape to Egypt. An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and warned Joseph that Herod wanted to harm the infant Jesus. The angel told Joseph to take the child and his mother, and flee from the impending danger. Joseph did as he was told and the family stayed in Egypt until the death of Herod. God had a *protection plan* for His Son, even as the innocent children of Bethlehem were being slaughtered.

We know all about *protection plans*. We have health, auto, life and retirement plans. We have that rainy day savings account. We teach our children how to dial 911. Protection is an important theme in our lives.

The rest of Jesus' story leads us to our ultimate *protection plan*, however. When the young family returned to Nazareth, Jesus grew up, lived a perfect (and innocent) life, was slaughtered on our behalf, then rose again on the third day. By doing so, He gave His children the promise that their names are not just written in a baby book, but in the Lamb's book of life. How sweet the sound of protection!

—Mary Fink