

### **3 Following the Messiah: Jesus' Childhood In Nazareth**

#### **Opening:**

1. Already you have viewed the video "Following the Messiah Episode 2" (at least the first half) at [www.appianmedia.org](http://www.appianmedia.org) and have worked through the study guide (Lesson Three) available at [www.appianmedia.org/free-download](http://www.appianmedia.org/free-download).
2. In this study we will give consideration to Jesus' removal to Egypt and to the return to Nazareth.
3. In the next study we will follow them from Nazareth to Jerusalem when Jesus was 12 years old.

#### **Into the Text:** Reading of Matt. 2:13-15

1. After the visit of the magi an angel instructed Joseph to take the child to Egypt to protect his life. They left while it was still night. While many associate the visit of the magi with the birth of Jesus the timing is not entirely clear in the text. Herod slaughtered Bethlehem's males 2 years old and under. The visit of the magi was in the house, not in the stable cave of his birth. How long after the birth until the visit of the magi is uncertain. However, it was after their visit that Joseph was instructed to leave for Egypt. He did not delay.

Reading of Matt. 2:19-23.

Luke skips over the move to Egypt and takes the family from Jerusalem to Galilee after Jesus' presentation in the temple at 8 days old. See Lk. 2:39-40.

2. Joseph moved his family to Nazareth after Herod's death, not to Judea because Archelaus was ruling there. In a dream he was warned by God and left Egypt for Galilee and lived in the city of Nazareth.
  - a. How many of you have moved to a particular area because you saw it as a place beneficial to your children? Joseph is not moving to Egypt and Galilee because these provide him with particularly good business prospects. He is moving because it is a benefit to his child, but not just his child.
  - b. He is moving because it is what is good in the accomplishment of the purpose of God. Maybe we need to give greater consideration to moving or not moving based on how it serves the accomplishment of God's purpose in the world. It is obvious that Joseph is less concerned about business prospects and more concerned about something greater.

3. There is a great chart by Barry Britnell in the study guide about the Herodian Dynasty. See it on page 17. After the death of King Herod the Great his kingdom was divided amongst his descendants. Archelaus ruled over Judea, but Antipas ruled over Galilee. Joseph was afraid to go to Judea and so went to Galilee. Joseph seems to be moving into a less conspicuous area, probably the significance of His being called a Nazarene. Cf. John 1:46.
4. There is no specific information given on how long they stayed in Egypt. Some estimate 2 months to 2 years.
5. What do you imagine a regular day might have been like for Jesus in Egypt? In Nazareth?
6. Luke summarizes: "The child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him" (2:42). What do you suppose his schooling was like in the synagogue? At home? Learning to read? Learning the Scriptures?
7. Some see Jesus as having miraculous knowledge or the same knowledge as before He became human. What are your thoughts on this?

### **Application:**

1. It is pretty obvious that the gospel accounts present Jesus as having a humble beginning and that this humble beginning is fulfilling prophecy. Isa. 53:2 says, "He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him." How is Jesus different than what we might expect in a King? How does this affect your perception? Are you willing to accept a humble King? Are you willing to accept a God who humbles Himself to become human and humiliates Himself to the point of death on a cross (cf. Phil. 2:6-8)?
2. As you reflect on your own humble beginning do you diminish yourself because of where you came from? How poor your parents were? Have you found others diminishing you? What does it say to you that Jesus identified with you?
3. Do you find yourself diminishing others because of their origin ("Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?")? Their race? Their sex? Their accent? Their work? Their culture? Since Jesus was from Galilee do you think he talked like other Galileans?
4. What problems confront you when you try to follow the humility of the King?