

The Authority Orientation of Joseph: He Responds to the Mandate; The Route to Egypt; the Magi's Gifts Make Jesus Wealthy & Underwrites the Time in Egypt; Judea's Blindness Solicits Holocaust, Isa 29:9-10; Eph 4:17b-19

Verse 13 issues a command and that is where Gabriel leaves it. It's now up to Joseph to respond. This tells us that Joseph is a man of integrity. When God chose him to be the legal father of Jesus there was more to the selection than just being a blood descendent of David. He had to have the mental attitude – the rectitude, probity, and integrity to supervise the Messiah from birth to adulthood. Joseph had to be smart, oriented to authority, and resourceful from the source of wisdom.

Consequently, verse 14 begins with the same vocabulary words that were used by Gabriel, the difference is that the verb *paralambanō* is a constative aorist which contemplates the action in its entirety and, regardless of its extent or duration, gathers it into a single whole.

The actions of getting up and leaving did not take Joseph long. The verse goes on to tell us that he left for Egypt while it was still night. The holy family left Bethlehem under the cover of darkness.

The closest road west is out of Jerusalem but at present it is not an option for Joseph. To get to the Coastal Route, he must first go south to Hebron, then turn west on a road that goes through Lachish and links up with the Coastal Route at Gaza. He would then turn southwest to move into Egypt and safety. According to church tradition Jesus' family settled in a small village in Egypt called Babylon. It was on the Nile River, just north of Memphis.

The ability of Joseph to pull up stakes and move out of Palestine immediately was made possible by the generous benevolence of the Magi. We noted earlier from the *Archaeological Study Bible* that "The Magi's gifts (gold, incense and myrrh) were the most valuable, transportable and marketable items of the day, ideal for sustaining Mary and Joseph in another country."

These three gifts did not only underwrite the two years in Egypt but provided Jesus with the funding He needed to finance His family's economic stability and His public ministry.

Steven M. Collins amplifies this idea in his book *Parthia*. Some of the reasons for his conclusion are questionable, at least to me at this point, but there is no question that the Magi's gifts were substantial and did supply the Lord with a significant portfolio.

Jesus was wealthy! Remember that the Parthian Magi had given Jesus costly gifts of "gold, myrrh, and frankincense." We are not told how much gold and costly spices were given to Jesus, but it was no doubt a substantial amount. The Parthians regarded Jesus as royalty, and it was the ancient custom to give a royal person a truly worthy gift when coming into his presence. When Jesus reached adulthood, He would have controlled His own wealth.

Jesus' financial resources were confirmed by the fact that He and His large band of disciples traveled for years without any visible means of support! In spite of their itinerant lifestyles Jesus' band had monetary resources, and John 13:29 shows that Judas Iscariot was their treasurer in charge of disbursements. John 12:3-6 reveals that people around Jesus could afford expensive purchases and that Judas, the treasurer, was an embezzler. Judas was, therefore, handling sums of money so large that he thought his embezzling would not be noticed. Judas' comment in John 12:5 also indicates that Jesus' group was in the habit of making donations to the poor.
(p. 210)

The fact that Jesus never asked for “tithes, offerings, and donations” from people, but rather gave money to the poor confirms that Jesus traveled with plenty of financial resources to take care of his followers.¹ (p. 210–11)

The significance of the part played by the Magi during the Incarnation of our Lord cannot be overstated. Judea was in reversionism, ruled by an Idumean Arab politically and by legalistic theologians spiritually. Their ignorance of Jesus’ birth and his whereabouts for over a year speaks of their blindness to the reality of the clear presentation of Scripture to which the Magi responded.

It is because of this blindness that the Jews have suffered periodic Holocausts over the millennia, a circumstance prophesied by Isaiah:

Isaiah 29:9 - Shock yourselves and be shocked! Blind yourselves and be blind!² They are drunk, but not because of wine; they stagger, but not because of beer. (NET)

Because the Jews have volitionally rejected truth then when truth is presented they are unable to comprehend it. This is the spiritual blindness that occurs in the souls of reversionists. Their inability to comprehend becomes an excuse to live a lifestyle with no restraint on their decisions and no responsibility for their actions. This is ignorance of truth is illustrated by the drunkard whose mental faculties are diminished by alcohol.

Isaiah 29:10 - For the Lord has poured out on you a strong urge to sleep deeply. He has shut your eyes (the prophets), and covered your heads (the seers). (NET)

The “strong urge to sleep deeply” is the result of negative volition to truth followed by a lifestyle inside the interlocking system of arrogance, i.e., cosmic one, and blackout of the soul.

This process is a logical progression that is observed by Paul in:

Ephesians 4:17b - ... walk no longer just as the Gentiles walk [περιπατέω, *peripateō*: behavior patterns, character traits, & lifestyle], in the futility [ματαιότης, *mataiotēs*: emptiness] of their mind,

Ephesians 4:18 - being darkened [σκοτώω, *skotoō*] in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance [ἄγνοια, *agnoia*: ignorance which leads to error] that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

v. 19 - and they, having become callous, [ἀναλγέω, *analgēō*: void of shame] have given themselves over [παραδίδωμι, *paradidōmi*: to deliver themselves over to their passions] to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

This passage describes the majority of Jewish people throughout the Incarnation and beyond down to this hour. Having rejected truth they have created a vacuum in their souls into which has been sucked the cosmic lie. This is an inventory of darkness which excludes them from the life desired for them by God.

¹ Steven M. Collins, *Parthia: The Forgotten Ancient Superpower and Its Role in Biblical History* (Royal Oak, MI: Bible Blessings, 2003), 210–11.

² *The NET Bible* (Dallas: Biblical Studies Press, 2001), 1276nn8–9.

Paul writes that those who reject biblical revelation live in darkness, a way of describing the inability to make good decisions from a position of strength. The word “darkened” is the perfect passive participle of σκοτώ (*skotoō*). The perfect tense is intensive and indicates that the existing state is the result of negative volition to truth.

The passive voice points out that the reversionist receives darkness of soul because he has refused to inculcate truth through positive volition.

The participle is causal which means that darkness of soul was caused by something the individual chose to do, i.e., reject truth. This is said to exclude them from the life of God because of this ignorance of truth.

The resultant ignorance has led to a lifestyle of error leading to a calloused soul. Their souls’ *kardias* are hardened to the message that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

As a result they have given themselves over to a lifestyle in which they can follow their passions whether legalistic or lascivious each of which can be exhibited by impurity and greed.