

Disinterest & Ignorance of Truth, Isaiah's Warnings of Holocaust, Isa 29:11-14; Reasons Herod & the Theologians Did Not Respond to the Virgin Birth; Jesus' Many Visits to Jerusalem; Joseph Takes Responsibility to Protect Jesus; Leaves Bethlehem & Evacuates to Egypt, Matt 2:14; Foreigners Rescue Jesus from His Own People

Paul takes the negative volition addressed by the Jews of Isaiah's day and explains it in the context of Christian reversionism in the New Testament.

Isaiah 29:11 - To you this entire prophetic revelation ["vision," KJV] is like words in a sealed scroll. When they hand it to one who can read and say, "Read this," he responds, "I can't because it is sealed."

v. 12 - Or when they hand the scroll to one who can't read and say, "Read this," he says, "I can't read." (NET)

F. C. Jennings provides an excellent illustration of the "sealed scroll":

There is surely a very striking correspondence with just that condition of things today. We have a book answering to that "vision," for it is divinely called "Revelation," but, alas, many who claim to be teachers and leaders insist that it is utterly incomprehensible; or are not afraid to term it "dream-literature." Learned as they are, it is a sealed book to them. On the other hand, the great mass of professing Christians care nothing about it, carefully admit their incapacity, pay their pastor to read it for them, and if he cannot, who can?¹

Isaiah 29:13 - The sovereign master says, "These people say they are loyal to me; they say wonderful things about me, but they are not really loyal to me. Their worship consists of nothing but man-made ritual."

The Jews responsible for the spiritual life of Judea in 3 B.C., are blind to the fulfillment of the rituals they supervise at Herod's temple. This blindness has continued over the centuries and is the root cause of the multiple Holocausts suffered by the Jews.

Isaiah 29:14 - Therefore I will again do an amazing thing for these people—an absolutely extraordinary deed. Wise men will have nothing to say, the sages will have no explanations. (NET)

The "amazing thing" and the "extraordinary deed" refer to the provision of the Messiah. This prophecy is amended to include the prediction that those who are considered wise and those who are called sages will have no explanation. All they will be able to do from their inventory of darkness is to reject the reality of what the sacrifices in the temple portray.

Whereas the Jews in Jerusalem and their Arab king consider themselves wise, their ignorance caused them to be callous to the idea of the Messiah's arrival in Bethlehem.

A member of our congregation expressed to me wonderment over the fact that "what the shepherds saw, what they heard, and what they experienced would eventually have gotten back to the temple priests and leaders of Israel." He went on to propose four possible explanations for their ignorance or disinterest:

1. God did not open their eyes to this prophesy because of their hardness of heart.

¹ F. C. Jennings, *Studies in Isaiah* (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1966), 351.

2. The religious leaders heard the stories but did not have the interest to even investigate the reports.
3. The religious leaders heard but did not believe these reports.
4. They heard the reports but did not share them with Herod because of their hatred for him.

The first suggestion is the exact contention of Isaiah (29:9–14) and the doctrinal analysis provided by Paul (Ephesians 4:17–19).

The second and third follow logically in that there was a consistent appearance of charlatans claiming to be the Messiah. Herod and the theologians could very well have written off the news of Jesus' birth as yet another hoax. Herod's ignorance was more likely not from being sheltered from the news but more likely a combination of the first three.

With regard to public knowledge of the virgin birth a few points need to be considered that indicate how impossible it would be for Herod and the theologians to be unaware of the Lord's existence in Palestine.

1. Luke 2:17–18 reveals that when the shepherds had visited the manger they made known the presence of the Messiah and all who heard it wondered at these things.
2. Eight days after the Lord's birth, Joseph and Mary named the Child Jesus as had been instructed them by Gabriel, followed by a *bris*. The One reported on by the shepherds now had a name. (Matthew 1:21 cf. Luke 2:21)
3. The Mosaic Law required Mary to become purified, a process that lasts for 40 days following the birth of a male child. Following her purification, Joseph and Mary took Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem where they presented Jesus to the Lord and to offer the required sacrifice of two turtledoves or young pigeons. (Leviticus 12:2–6 cf. Luke 2:22–24)
4. Joseph had a custom of going to Jerusalem each year to celebrate the Passover and on each of these occasions he was accompanied by Mary and Jesus. (Luke 2:41)
5. On this occasion when Jesus was age 12, He remained behind in Jerusalem and went to the temple to listen and ask questions of the teachers. (Luke 2:46–47)
6. It is not presumptuous to assume that over the next eighteen years the Lord made other visits to Jerusalem prior to His public ministry.

In verse 14, however, it is imperative that Jesus be completely out of Herod's jurisdiction. The urgency of the departure to Egypt is brought out by the nominative masculine article **ὁ (ho)** translated "The one," referring to Joseph who is the subject of two verbs: (1) the aorist active indicative of **παραλαμβάνω (paralambanō)**, "to take," and (2) the aorist active indicative of **ἀναχωρέω (anachōreō)**, "to leave."

When the verse states that Joseph “took the Child and His mother,” the verb takes on an intensive connotation. The literal meaning of *paralambanō* is emphasized: “To take near, with, or to oneself. To seize or take into one’s possession ... as an associate or companion.”²

Gabriel’s warning alerts Joseph of immediate danger to his Child. He is entrusted by God with responsibility for the Messiah and His mother. The angel’s mandate transforms him from caretaker and provider over to the divinely appointed agent to take the Boy and His mother into protective custody.

Once all was organized for their departure, the verse states that “he left for Egypt,” the third person singular of *anachōreō* which usually means “to depart,” or “to retire.” But the context indicates urgency in the face of danger, a concept addressed in this excerpt:

The Christian ἀναχωρηταί were those who “fled” from the world—“retire” is too weak for ἀναχωρέω. The connotation of “taking refuge” from some peril will suit most of the New Testament passages remarkably well.³

In light of the fact that the clear and present danger to the Messiah is from the highest ranking angel on the dark side of the angelic conflict, the best and most appropriate verb to use is “to evacuate,” defined as follows by *Webster’s*:

Evacuate: to remove especially from a military zone or dangerous area; to withdraw from a place in an organized way especially for protection.⁴

With these things in mind here is the corrected translation for:

Matthew 2:14 - So Joseph got up and took to himself in protective custody the Child and His mother and while it was still night evacuated to Egypt. (CTL)

The divine provision of the Magi to come to the Lord’s assistance is a condemnation of the Jewish people who failed to recognize their Messiah because of blindness in their souls.

It required God to inspire foreigners – Gentile Parthians and expatriate Jews – to ride a thousand miles to worship the Lord and endow Him with the finances necessary to evacuate him out of Palestine and protect him from the Luciferian plot designed to “devour” Him at the hands of Herod’s assassins.

The Magi’s involvement would not have occurred had they not been divinely led to travel to the home of Jesus, a circumstance initiated by a mysterious star that appeared to them first in Hecatompylos, Parthia, and later on the road to Bethlehem.

² Spiros Zodhiates, “παραλαμβάνω *paralambanō*,” in *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1992), 1108.

³ J. H. Moulton and G. Mulligan, “ἀναχωρέω,” in *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1930; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 40.

⁴ *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed., s.v.: “evacuate.”