

The beginning of the flight of Joseph and Mary into Egypt

ANGEL:	Awake, Joseph, and take good heed! Now rise, and sleep no more! If not, from wounds ye soon may bleed; Go ye now fast, therefore! I am an angel, sent with speed To save thee, at thy time of need From sorrow, sad and sore. If thou stay here, indeed, Thou shall repent that deed, And rue it evermore.	5 10
JOSEPH:	Ah, mighty God, What is decreed, So sweet of tone?	
ANGEL:	Lo, Joseph, it is I: An angel sent to thee.	15
JOSEPH:	Ah! I pray thee, why? What is thy will with me?	
ANGEL:	Hence from here now fly, With Mary too, fast by; Her child also with thee. For Herod, in hatred high, Says each boy-child shall die That under two years be: This know!	20
JOSEPH:	Alas! Now woe is me! Where may we go?	25
ANGEL:	To Egypt shall thou fare, With all the might thou may; And Joseph, stay thou there Till I call thee away.	30

JOSEPH: This is a fine affair --
 A sick man, full of care
 To be told this today!
 My bones are bruised and bare:
 Too old for this, I swear; 35
 I wish my last day
 Was done!
 I know not which is the way:
 Where does it run?

ANGEL: Of this, dread not indeed. 40
 Go forth, and cease thy din.
 Thy way he shall thee lead --
 That King of all man's kin.

JOSEPH: To us he must take heed,
 For I had little need 45
 Such bargains to begin.
 No wonder if I plead --
 I, that may do no deed!
 How may I come there, then,
 So old? -- 50
 I, that am bare and thin,
 And far from bold?

 Strength fails me now, I fear,
 And sight, whereby I see;
 Mary, my darling dear, 55
 Sorry I am for thee.

MARY: Ah, Joseph, love, what cheer?
 Each sad and sorry tear
 It grieves my heart to see.

JOSEPH: Our sorrows now are near 60
 If we dwell longer here;
 And therefore we must flee
 Unseen.

MARY: Alas, how may this be?
What may it mean? 65

JOSEPH: Our sorrow it must mean.

MARY: Ah, Joseph dear, how so?

JOSEPH: As I lay in a dream,
Sleeping soundly so,
An angel, it did seem, 70
Came like the sun's bright beam
And warned me of our woe:
That Herod raged amain,
And all young boys were slain
As he went to and fro -- 75
That fiend!
And he thy son would maim,
And cause his end.

MARY: My son? Alas, for care!
Who may my sorrows still? 80
Woe on false Herod's heir!
Why should he my son spill?
Where may I hide me? Where?
To slay this child I bear --
Who had such wicked will? 85
His heart in two should tear
That such a deed would dare!
No work did he of ill,
Nor thought!

JOSEPH: Now, Mary love, be still: 90
This helps us not.

It is no help to cry,
Truly -- now dry each tear.
Comfort they cannot buy,
But may increase our care. 95

MARY: Alas, but how may I?
 My son, that here doth lie,
 They seek to slay, I fear.
 My shrieks shall rend the sky
 If those men come me nigh. 100
 Your bidding, husband dear,
 Tell me.

JOSEPH: Quickly swaddle him here,
 And his death flee.

MARY: His death would I not see 105
 For all this world to win.
 Now woeful would I be
 If I should part from him .
 My dear child so comely,
 To slay him were pity, 110
 And a most hideous sin!
 Joseph, how advise ye?

JOSEPH: To Egypt wend shall we;
 Therefore let be thy din
 Say I. 115

MARY: How shall we journey, then?

JOSEPH: I'll tell thee, by and by.

 By the best path we may,
 Let us now haste from here;
 There is nought else to say, 120
 But quickly pack our gear.
 For fear of this affray,
 Let us wend hence, away,
 Before these men appear.

MARY: Great God, as he well may, 125
 That made both night and day,
 Shield us from sorrow's snare,

As we roam.
My child how should I bear
So far from home? 130

Alas, I am in woe!
Never was one like me!

JOSEPH: God knows I too am so --
And have good reason to be!
For I may scarcely go 135
To lead these two, I know:
No wonder woe is me!
Since each man is my foe,
Will death not slay me now?
I live so wretchedly, 140
In pain.
He that all fears may free,
Heal me again!

One bewildered like me
Was never on this earth; 145
Household and husbandry
Are surely nothing worth!
I bought it too dearly,
That bargain -- young men, see!
Marriage makes not for mirth. 150
Give me the bridle, Mary,
And to the babe tend ye,
As ye have from his birth.
And may
He that made all on earth 155
Show us the way!

MARY: Alas, now woe is me!
None is as wretched as I!
My heart would break in three
To see my dear son die! 160

JOSEPH: Come, Mary love, let be!
 And nothing now dread ye,
 But hence with thy son fly
 To save him speedily:
 Fast forth now let us flee 165
 Dear love.
 To meet his enemy
 Would fatal prove.

 We may avoid that foe
 If now we slip away; 170
 My tears would overflow
 If thy son they should slay.
 To Egypt let us go:
 This pack shall I bear -- lo! --
 Till we have made our way. 175
 Whether I puff or blow,
 If I may help thee so,
 Thou'lt find no lack in me,
 I say!
 God bless all that here be, 180
 And have now all good day!

The end of the flight of Joseph and Mary into Egypt