

Flight into Egypt

John Martin

Sold



Description

John Martin (1789-1854)
The Flight into Egypt

Signed lower left: J. Martin 1835
Grey and brown washes
9 by 13.5cm ., 3 ½ by 5 ¼ inches

This illustrates the escape of the Holy Family from Bethlehem after King Herod's edict. Martin's earlier treatments of the subject show the moment of the Holy Family's arrival in Jerusalem but here he shows them leaving Bethlehem at night with the first streaks of dawn visible in the sky and Bethlehem on a hillside beyond (depicted in Matthew, II, 14). The distance between the figures in the foreground and the city in the distance emphasizes the isolation of the Holy Family.

This image was engraved as a mezzotint in 1838 and was used as the basis for a large oil exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1842 and sold at Christie's on 17th November 1989, lot 36a for £260,000 (see William Feaver, *The Art of John Martin*, 1975, p. 172, no.129). Martin also produced another mezzotint of the subject with some variations in composition (see Michael Campbell, *John Martin - Visionary Print Maker*, 1992, p.152, no. C.W. 113)

Provenance:
With Agnew's;
Anonymous sale, Sotheby's, 16th July 1987, lot 143;
Private collection until 2007

Engraved:
By the artist as a mezzotint, 1838