

## Christmas Stories: Joseph's Story

Discussion Notes- December 21, 2025

1. What's one season in life that felt especially inconvenient or unexpected?

Christmas is celebrated because Jesus is alive, not because He was merely born, and Joseph's story shows us what obedience looks like when God's plan doesn't make sense. Caught between reason and revelation, Joseph chose to trust God and obey, even when it disrupted his plans and reputation. Jesus did not come to create a holiday atmosphere but to save people from their sins, revealing God's love through the miracle of God becoming man. The danger of celebrating Christmas culture without surrendering to Christ is that the gospel becomes diluted and Jesus becomes optional. Like Joseph, believers are called to obey without knowing everything, allowing Jesus to interrupt their lives and rule with full authority.

### **Read Matthew 1:18-25**

*"Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus."*

2. Joseph was caught between what God said and what made sense. What stands out to you about how Joseph handled that tension?

### **Read Luke 9:23-24**

*"And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it."*

Joseph's story reminds us that obedience to God often comes before understanding. He was interrupted, confused, and asked to surrender control, yet he trusted God's word and acted on what he knew. Following Jesus is not about seasonal celebration but daily submission to His authority. When Christ enters our lives, He does not come as a suggestion but as Lord.

3. Has confusion, fear, or inconvenience ever delayed your obedience to God? What did that season reveal?

**Read Philippians 2:9-13**

*"Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."*

Jesus' authority is difficult to accept because it confronts our desire for control and independence. Like Joseph, we are often comfortable honoring God until obedience costs us something. The Christmas story reminds us that Jesus did not come merely to be admired but to reign as Lord. When we truly acknowledge who Jesus is, surrender becomes unavoidable. The question is not whether Jesus has authority, but whether we are willing to live under it.

4. Why do you think the idea of Jesus having full authority over our lives is so challenging for people today?

**Read Matthew 2:13-14, 19-20**

*"Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt... But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead."*

At the end of the Christmas story, Joseph is still being led one step at a time, responding to God's direction without knowing the full plan. In Matthew 2, Joseph rises, moves, waits, and returns all in obedience to God's voice. He never argues, negotiates, or demands clarity; he simply obeys what God reveals next. This reminds us that following Jesus means surrendering control and trusting His authority, even when life feels uncertain or disruptive. Christmas ultimately asks us the same question Joseph answered with his life: will we trust Jesus enough to obey Him, even when we don't know what comes next?

5. What would it practically mean for you to give Jesus more than tradition or words?

Prayer/Closing:

- Pray for a heart that trusts and obeys God even without full understanding.
- Pray for a willingness to surrender every area of life to Jesus' authority.
- Pray for sensitivity and courage to respond faithfully when God interrupts personal plans.

## Deeper Dive: Joseph's Lineage and Role

Joseph, though often quiet in Scripture, was chosen by God for a critical role in salvation history. His lineage connected Jesus to David, fulfilling Old Testament prophecy, and his obedience protected the Messiah during the most vulnerable time of His life. Understanding Joseph's background helps us see how God works through ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary purposes.

### Read Matthew 1:16-17

*“...and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.”*

This genealogy establishes Jesus' legal claim to David's throne through Joseph, showing God's careful fulfillment of prophecy.

### Read Luke 3:23-31

***“Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David...”***

This genealogy traces Jesus' lineage back to Adam, emphasizing His humanity and Joseph's role in connecting Jesus to both God's promises and human history. Joseph's presence grounds Jesus in a real family, giving Him a legal and social identity in the world He came to save.

### Read Isaiah 7:14

*“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”*

Joseph's obedience ensures the fulfillment of this prophecy, protecting Mary and Jesus during times of danger, such as their flight to Egypt (Matthew 2:13–15), and demonstrates how God's plan often works through human obedience.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Why do you think God chose Joseph—a seemingly ordinary man of David's line—to play such a pivotal role in salvation history?
2. How does Joseph's obedience and lineage highlight the connection between God's promises and His plan of redemption?
3. What can we learn from Joseph about the way God uses ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary purposes?