

## 21S30e Christmas Story Out Takes - Man of Faith

Hello everyone. Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. I hope everyone is doing well.

I love the Christmas season with all the traditions and gatherings of family and friends. It is truly a beautiful time of year. I love to see all the lights and decorations. But often we forget there is a reason for the season. That reason is Jesus. The birth of Jesus to be exact. For Christians we have lots of traditions about Christmas; the Nativity, the Star, the Wisemen. But I'd like to have some fun and look at some parts of this story we don't normally talk about. I'm going to call these Christmas Story Out Takes.

Today I would like to talk with you about one of the main characters in this story we hardly ever really think about. Joseph. Joseph seems to be an after-thought for most of us when we think about this story. In fact, we don't know much about Joseph, because the Bible does not tell us much about Joseph. But what the Bible does tell us, paints a picture of an incredible man of faith.

Joseph only appears in the Bible story in Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2. That is not a lot, but these few short stories tell us a great deal about the character of this man, Joseph.

First, in Matthew 1:18-25 we often overlook the kindness and caring of Joseph. He discovers that the woman he is to marry is pregnant and it's not his child. Verse 19 *Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly (Matthew 1:19 NKJV).*

We are forgetting that to everyone, Mary was obviously guilty of adultery which gave Joseph the right to have her killed. Now of course, we know the full story, but think about it from Joseph's point of view and from the many prying, critical eyes in the community. In 1<sup>st</sup> century Israel this simply was not acceptable, and it was actually against the law. But the Bible says, Joseph did not want something bad to happen to Mary. He would secretly put her away. This could mean several things, but for certain it meant he wanted to protect her and take care of her. That is a good man, a kind man. He was not thinking of himself only but Mary. And this is before He knew the full story.

The next part of this story is extraordinary. In verse 20-23 Joseph has a dream and the angel tells him the full story. The angel says do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. Then the bible says, *"Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus."* ( Matthew 1:24-25 NKJV)

Did you see what Joseph did. Being aroused from sleep, did as the angel said. Joseph did not think about it for a while. He did not consult others. He just obeyed. He got up and took Mary as his wife. Now you need to understand Hebrew weddings a little bit to get this. They were betrothed or engaged. This means a lot more in their culture than it does today. They are already committed to each other or promised to each other but

it's more than that. They are really married, just they have not come together to live together. So, when Joseph gets up and goes and gets Mary, he is completing this long Hebrew courtship process and they are married fully immediately. Now this is obedience to God a way none of us understand. Joseph got a message from God in a dream then went and did it. No questions, no pause just instant obedience. That is a faithful Godly man.

I want to contrast this for a moment with when Mary is visited by the angel to announce she will conceive by the Holy Spirit in Luke 1:26-38. I'm not going to read it today but if you look at it for yourself, Mary doesn't instantly believe verse 34 she says, "*how can this be*"

So again, I think we make light of Joseph. He had to have great faith in God to be so obedient. I'm not sure I could be so decisive faced with the facts Joseph had to work with.

Later in the story, Jesus has been born and the family is living in a house when the Magi visit in Matthew chapter 2. Now please recognize how overwhelming it would be if you are poor and suddenly these rich foreign dignitaries come for a visit. Okay, you've been told Jesus is the son of God, but this would still freak you out. Then this, Matthew 2:13-15 (NKJV) *Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."*

Did you hear that, Joseph and Mary are probably still very freaked out by the visitors they just had and then Joseph has another dream. He just does it. Uproots his family and runs. And by the way this is not an easy trip. Many scholars believe this was a several hundred mile journey to Alexandria most likely several weeks or more of travel. Joseph gathered everyone quickly and went, probably as soon as he woke up from the dream. Now that is amazing faith and trust in God.

And of course, God had just funded the trip with the gifts from those special visitors. Amazing. Miraculous.

Joseph, what an amazing man of faith. We should pray to be more like this man. When God says go, just go. When God says do, just do. No hesitation just faith and trust in the one who truly knows what is best.

**Let's pray. Dear heavenly father, thank you for the story of this amazing man Joseph. May we be as obedient as Joseph was. Help us to trust you Lord the way Joseph did. I pray we can learn from his example how to better follow You Lord. I pray this in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.**

I hope you are enjoying the Christmas Story Out Takes. The Christmas story has so many amazing details, we too often forget to look at the full story. This is a truly amazing story. The greatest story ever told. The story of Jesus my Lord and Savior.

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