

Christmas Story (pt 10) Nazareth

28 December 2016 Wed – Matthew 2:19-23 – Christmas16 – Scott Childs

b) He did not say Jesus was a Nazarite (one who had taken a special vow). Nothing in the Scripture implies that Jesus was a Nazarite.

3) Luke continues, (Luke 2:40) "*And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.*" In Nazareth, Jesus grew, waxed strong in spirit and was filled with wisdom. He grew spiritually and gained was filled with divine wisdom. Yes, He was God, but He was also human. He had to grow, develop spiritually and gain wisdom just like we do. Spiritual growth and gaining wisdom come from daily exposure to the Bible and its principles. Joseph and Mary were godly parents who truly feared God.

📖 *When we follow God's will for our lives, we benefit, and so will our family. If we are obeying the Lord and walking in God's will, we will lead our families to do the same. Child training is like flowing water, it will never rise above its source. We cannot expect our children to be something we are not. Saying "do what I say but not what I do" will never work.*

Conclusion: In this section, we have found principles about finding and following God's will in our own lives and for our children. (Review the principles). Now our job is to put this into daily practice.

Introduction: Before the New Testament was completed, God's people lacked direction for their daily lives. For that reason, God sometimes gave them direction through dreams and angels. Now that we have the complete Bible, God uses it to direct our lives. As we study the Bible and pray, the Holy Spirit will use His word to convict and direct us. He also directs us through His inner peace. He will NEVER direct us contrary to the clear teachings of the Bible.

Years ago I put together a list of seven steps for **Finding the Will of God**. We should follow these steps in order. 1) Communion with God daily, 2) Crucifixion of self, 3) Continual desire or conviction, 4) Congruity with the Bible, 5) Counsel from godly men, 6) Confident inner peace, 7) Circumstances.

Transition: In this last section of the Christmas Story, we are going to see once again God's divine hand at every turn. We too need to learn to follow God's directions in our own lives.

1. The Divine Instruction (c.19-21)

a. The timing of the instruction

- 1) Before they went to Egypt, God told Joseph to stay in Egypt "*until I bring thee word*" (v.13). Joseph had obeyed God. We do not know if Joseph heard that Herod was now dead or not, but he remained right where God told him to stay.
- 2) When Herod was dead, then God spoke to Joseph again. God's timing is always perfect if we will wait for His leading.

📖 *We must be careful not to act before we think and pray and have peace about God's direction. (Proverbs 18:13) "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him." (Proverbs 29:20) "Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him."*

b. The instruction from God

- 1) This is the third time that God again spoke to Joseph through an angel in a dream (Mt 1:20; 2:13).

- 2) Notice God's detailed instructions answer four questions in Joseph's mind (v.20).
 - a) Arise [**When?**]
 - b) Take the young child and his mother [**What?**]
 - c) Go (lit. transfer) into the land of Israel [**Where?**]
 - d) They are dead which sought the young child's life [**Why?**]

c. Joseph's obedience

- 1) Joseph arose. He wasted no time in obeying God.
- 2) He did exactly what God told him to do.

📖 *Joseph's example is a very good one for us to follow. When we learn what God wants us to do, we should obey without delay. We should do exactly what God told us to do without making any excuses.*

2. The Divine Warning (v.22)

a. Joseph's concern

- 1) When Joseph arrived back in southern Israel, he received a news update. He learned that Herod's son now ruled the nation in the place of his father.
- 2) This news brought concern to the heart of Joseph. Herod had been a very wicked, cruel, ruthless ruler. Would his son follow his example? Would he too try to harm Jesus?
- 3) Did Joseph's faith begin to waver? God had told him that those who sought the young child's life were dead. Being human, he could sense a danger and was concerned. Perhaps he paused in southern Israel to seek God's further direction as to exactly where they were to settle. Though we are not told, I can imagine Joseph and Mary praying earnestly about this and seeking God's direction.

b. God's counsel

- 1) For a fourth time God spoke to Joseph in a dream (v.22). This time no angel is mentioned.
- 2) God revealed to the young couple the next step in His direction for their lives. They were not to return to Bethlehem but to settle in the parts of Galilee.

📖 *Here we find another important principle about God's will. God often does not reveal more than one step at a time. If we*

obey the first step, He will reveal the next step. In our curious nature, we would like to see where the steps will end up, but God in His mercy does not show us that. If He did, we may not want to follow when the steps lead through the valley of the shadow of death. God will give grace one step at a time.

3. The Divine Fulfilment (v.23)

a. They settled in Nazareth

- 1) God gave them peace about returning to Nazareth. As far as we know, the last they had been in Nazareth was just before their trip to Bethlehem for the tax registration. They had been away from Nazareth for quite some time – perhaps as much as two years.
 - a) Evidently, Nazareth was Mary's home town.
 - b) Though Joseph married Mary in Nazareth, we do not know if he had been there for work or whether his family lived there.
- 2) If you remember, Nazareth was situated on the side of a hill overlooking a rich and beautiful valley, surrounded by hills, with a narrow outlet towards the south. Dictionary of the Holy Bible, American Tract Society
- 3) Though Luke says nothing about the wise men or the trip to Egypt, he does tell us that Joseph and his family settled in Nazareth. (Luke 2:39) "*And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.*" Notice that Luke calls Nazareth "*their own city.*"

b. This fulfilled words of the prophets

- 1) Nazareth would be a natural place for them to settle since they likely had family living there. By this time, some of the gossip may have calmed down.
- 2) Matthew points out that the move to Nazareth was not just to be near family. It was to fulfil words of the prophets. He did not say prophet (singular) but prophets (plural). This is because it was a general prophecy not a specific one.
 - a) Jesus would be called a Nazarene (one who lived in Nazareth).