

Post-Christmas Blues - Matthew 2:13-23
Pastor Burt Garwood - December 31, 2017

Many people suffer from the post-Christmas blues...a kind of depression after all the joy and happiness of Christmas. Mary and Joseph suffered a very terrible reality of the post-Christmas blues...

1. JOSEPH'S OBEDIENCE [Matthew 2:13-15]

- The Bible doesn't record anything that Joseph ever said. His parts are always narrated. Yet Joseph plays a pivotal role in protecting the Christ child.
- Joseph's quick getaway from Herod and escape to Egypt is a picture of biblical manhood and obedience to God.
- In the middle of the night, God said "Move"! Joseph didn't argue with God. He just obeyed. That's why God chose Joseph to be the step-father of Jesus.
- God knew his heart, that Joseph was fiercely dedicated to God's will.

2. GOD'S PROVISION [Matthew 2:11]

- The Magi bring Jesus gold and expensive perfume.... Just the things Mary and Joseph can use to pay for their trip to Egypt and their life there for the next year or two.
- When God calls, he provides.
- Are you recognizing God's provision in your life?

3. GOD'S PLAN [Matthew 2:15]

- Israel was constantly reminded by Old Testament authors to look back to the time that God rescued them from Pharaoh in Egypt. It had been God's plan all along for Jesus to come out of Egypt...just like His children did 1500 years earlier with Moses. [Exodus 20:2]
- Jesus is described as the Lamb of God. Out of Egypt, God calls his Son...the Lamb...on his journey that retraces the steps of Israel to the Promised Land...and ultimately to the cross as the Sacrificial Lamb. [Exodus 12:1-30; Isaiah 53:7; John 1:29; Revelation 5]
- By the way, Mary and Joseph wouldn't be alone in Egypt. The Jewish philosopher Philo, who also lived there, said that one million Jews lived in Alexandria Egypt at that time. The land that had once enslaved the people of Israel, God used to now protect them.

4. HEROD'S ANGER [Matthew 2:16-18]

- Herod orders the killing of all boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity that are two years old and younger. This fulfills the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:15.
- What do "Rachel" and "Ramah" have to do with this?
- Rachel was the wife of Jacob, a patriarch of Israel. Her name is used here to represent the mothers of Israel.
- Ramah was about 5 miles north of Jerusalem. Bethlehem was about 5 miles south of Jerusalem. Herod took a pencil and drew a circle around Jerusalem, probably 10 miles north/south of Jerusalem, and said "Kill every boy under 2 years of age inside this circle."
- Centuries earlier, Nebuchadnezzar's army had gathered captives from Israel in the town of Ramah before they were taken into exile in Babylon.

5. The Journey Home [Matthew 5:19-23]

- Herod dies, and once again the angel comes to Joseph in two dreams telling him to return to Israel, but to stay away from Bethlehem because Herod's son Archelaus is more evil than his father.
- They return home to Nazareth and fulfill the prophecy that Jesus would be called the Nazarene.

What can we learn from all this?

1. Follow God's directions. God is speaking to you through people and events and His Word. Are you listening like Joseph?

2. A Christian isn't immune from suffering. Suffering is real. Satan is waging a spiritual battle against God for you soul. Suffering makes us relevant to a pain-filled world. Suffering teaches us to fully rely on God.

3. God is in charge. Now that Christmas is over, you're back in reality and stuff is coming at you fast. God will take care of you just like he did with Joseph. No matter what is going on, look to Jesus to bring you joy even if you have to sing the blues for a while.