

When do you put away the nativity set?

When do you pack up your christmas tree?

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These are symbols of putting Christmas behind us. Is that the idea, stop thinking about Jesus coming, stop thinking of the incarnation and it's implications after all we need to move on to New Year's Eve.

Let's look at this bit of the text. Sometimes this is left out of the story.

Matt 2:13f

When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

1. God communicates to his people. How he wants to. Still does. These days we have the bible as our guide. Yet sometimes God communicates to us His truth through other means. Sermons, talks, music, situations and yes as we have seen in this case – dreams. Some people are uncomfortable with this but God can communicate however He chooses to AND us whatever media He chooses.

Back to the text.

So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod.

2. We are called to obedience

This is interesting. Would you respond to a dream so completely. Must have been one convincing dream. Joseph showed complete obedience not only in this part of the story but all through. It must have been a bit weird for him. I admire the man greatly.

What's next.

And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."

3. God's picture is bigger, deeper, longer than ours.

We often make judgement calls and make decisions based on what we can see. Our view is limited. Although I am a person who makes decisions on the information I have, sometimes I have made a good decision on that information but I didn't have ALL the info and it turned pear shaped. God has all the info. Literally, He knows the whole scene and scenario. We need to be tapping into His view of things. Again – it comes back to being in touch with Him. Bible readings, prayer, spiritual discussions, bible study, investigating God's theology and stuff like that.

BUT, there is always a but

When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

*"A voice is heard in Ramah,
weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children
and refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more."*

4. Opposition happens. (Sometimes persecution happens)

I think we recognize this. Opposition, tough times, criticism. Yep it all happens. We need to see God's big picture, actually let me change that We need to trust God seeing the big picture. Sometimes He doesn't show us.

Why is this significant to us on Christmas Eve?

Well if we pack up our nativity set, and along with it our concepts of God working miracles, or God working in our lives we are going to have a lousy 2018 in relationship with God.

I'm not saying don't pack up the nativity set, or don't pack up the Christmas tree, what I am saying is keep the Christmas story in our lives with awe and wonder.