

“Out of Egypt.”

I hadn't realized I was a **slave**. I had been living my life exactly how everyone said I should. I had a good **career** as a builder and I was **engaged** to be married to a wonderful girl from a great family. I had many hopes, dreams, desires, and plans for what the next stage of my life would look like—settle down, build ourselves a home, have children, and build up wealth so we could have a safe and secure existence into old age.

I can remember clearly the day all those dreams collapsed—the day I heard that Mary was pregnant and the child was **definitely** not mine. What a **disaster**—this was a catastrophe of embarrassment and shame that I would **never** outlive. Even though I had done nothing wrong, this kind of scandal would follow me and haunt me the **rest of my life**. I could have gone after Mary and pushed for having her publicly stoned to death for her failure and indiscretion, but that wouldn't have fixed anything—in fact it would have only made everything a bigger spectacle and drawn more embarrassing attention my way. So I decided I would, as quietly as possible, break off my engagement with Mary and hope that some other family from another village might once again see me as a viable suitor for their daughter.

And that is when the **dreams**—though some might call them **nightmares**—started. While I was sleeping an angel of the Lord spoke to me, telling me to not be afraid to take Mary as my wife. The angel insisted that the child within her was from the **Holy Spirit** and that we must name him Y'shua—Jesus—because he was being sent by the Creator to save us from our selfishness. I woke up in a cold sweat—spooked and rattled. Was that really the angel of the Lord that had spoken to me?! How could I know for certain, maybe I had eaten something funny, maybe I was just processing through my own fears?! But no matter what I told myself, I could not shake the deep feeling that I had encountered the Lord in my dream. So, as crazy as it was and as much as it would ruin my life, I decided to **listen** and do exactly what the angel in my dream told me.

A couple years later while we were living in Bethlehem, we had the strangest visit. Some magi from Babylon, respected men who studied the sky and the Scriptures, that possibly were our ancestors who had been taken away into exile in Babylon 600 years earlier, came to visit us. They were looking for a **new king** who had been born among our people. They brought us extravagant gifts, but most importantly they brought news that King Herod the Great was not thrilled that there was a new king challenging his throne. When the magi left, I had my second dream. An angel of the Lord appeared to me, telling me to take the child Jesus and head to Egypt because King Herod wanted to kill the child. When I woke up, I was a mess. Go to **Egypt**?! Going to Egypt was the very thing that had cursed our people with 400 years of slavery! We were supposed to come **out** of Egypt, not go **into** Egypt! We were in Israel, the land of the Creator's people, why would we leave here to go into the land of a pagan nation who did not worship the Lord?!

But we decided to go and I sure was glad we did. King Herod went on an angry rampage shortly after we left and slaughtered all the baby boys in the region who were around two years old. It was a tragic bloodbath. And it opened my eyes to see that Israel was **no safer, no better, and no more godly** than Egypt, both were fully in the grips of Civilization and its Satanic way.

After a few months, I had another dream. The angel of the Lord told me it was time to come **“out of Egypt”** and go back to Israel, for King Herod was dead. So we packed up **again** and headed back. But shortly after arriving in Israel, I had another dream warning us not to settle in the southern region of Judea for King Herod's son, Archelaus was now ruling there. So we packed up **again** and moved up into Galilee to the town of Nazareth.

We were **nomads** and **wanderers**, just like our ancestor Abraham, with no real place to call home in this world. I began to realize this was how the faithful had to live if we wanted to be **free**. If we got comfortable in any human family system or nation, then we would become slaves. We needed to live on our toes, ready to follow the Lord anywhere and everywhere he called. We needed to give up any claim to this life and its earthly treasures, and instead cling to the Lord's Word and his calling as the only treasure worth pursuing. It turns out, I had been a slave before when I had been following my **own dreams** and path—back when my life was good, easy, and socially acceptable I have been nothing but a slave. But now I was following the crazy **dreams of the Lord** and I was free. It wasn't easy, but it was good and I felt a deeper peace than I had ever experienced in my life, even though I never knew what tomorrow would hold.

Whose dreams and plans are you following? Whose voice are you listening to—your own, society's, Jesus's?

“Egypt” represents all human plans, dreams, ambitions, and desires—“Egypt” manifests itself in the civilizations and world that humans build. To come **“out of Egypt,”** out of Civilization, is to wander with the Lord—to listen to his calling and follow it—to no longer listen to your selfish ego and to the expectations of men, but to listen to the Creator and him alone.

This Christmas, we are again being called **“out of Egypt.”** We may think our lives are great and fine, just as they are. We may think that our plans and dreams are godly and good. We may think we are the Lord's people and live in the Lord's land. But anytime we settle down in the comfort of our own hopes and dreams, in the hopes and dreams of a family system or a nation, we become slaves. Slaves to something that is not the Lord. And so we need to come **“out of Egypt”** again this day—we need to come **“out of Egypt”** every single day, every single moment. Every decision we make needs to follow the Lord **“out of Egypt”**—out of the grip of our egos, out of the grip of our family systems, out of the grip of this nation we live in.

The Lord has sent his Son Jesus among us to lead us **“out of Egypt.”** The Lord has called his Son Jesus **“out of Egypt”** and Jesus is leading the way out for us. And now Jesus is calling you to follow him **“out of Egypt”** again this Christmas day. No matter how crazy it may seem, no matter how much it may ruin your life as you know it—listen to his calling, obey the angel's word urging you to get up and follow the Lord **“out of Egypt.” Amen.**