

**Joke:** Three men died on Christmas Eve and were met by Saint Peter at the pearly gates. "In honor of this holy season," Saint Peter said, "You must each possess something that symbolizes Christmas to get into heaven."

The first man fumbled through his pockets and pulled out a lighter. He flicked it on. "It represents a candle," he said. "You may pass through the pearly gates," Saint Peter said.

The second man reached into his pocket and pulled out a set of keys. He shook them and said, "They're bells." Saint Peter said, "You may pass through the pearly gates."

The third man started searching desperately through his pockets and finally pulled out a pair of women's glasses. St. Peter looked at the man with a raised eyebrow a little confused and asked, "And just what do those symbolize?"

The man replied, "They're Carol's."

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Here we are in are third week of the Witness His Majesty series today we are going to look at Joseph. Next Sunday we will look at the Shepherds wife and then finish up our series with the Wise man on Christmas Eve. That's next Friday at 7 pm.

Now unto Joseph. Something incredible happened to Joseph when he opened the door of his life and walked into the dream God had in store for him.

And something incredible happens to us when we do the same thing.

I mean think about it, for Joseph it was the opportunity to step into the role of being the earthly father of Jesus. The Messiah, the Savior of the world.

And while I'm sure his marriage to Mary got off to a different start than he ever imagined, Father God helped him have the courage to trust and move into a new day in a way he never saw coming from his original vantage point.

God will go to whatever lengths necessary to help us see things through His viewpoint as He opens us to new opportunities He always had in mind for us.

And it's in Matthew's gospel that we read the record of the moment when God came knocking on the door of Joseph's life by way of a life-changing dream that not only would alter his future but also the future of his soon-to-be-growing family.

Before we look into Matthew's account let's watch as Joseph tells his story. **Show video [www.skitguys.com](http://www.skitguys.com)**

### **WHM - Joseph**

Matthew 1:18–25 (NIV): 18 This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. 19 Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. 20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a

dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”). 24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. 25 But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Honestly, we are not privy to much of the details of Joseph's life in the pages of the Bible.

And while he plays an important role, he is not mentioned too much in the Gospel accounts.

However, I can be fairly certain that like most Jewish men, Joseph probably had dreamed of one day becoming a dad of a healthy family and hopefully being able to raise a son

that would carry on the family name.

Most dads worth their salt have some dream for the life of their kids.

I mean honestly, what dad would not want their kids to have the best in life?

What dad wouldn't dream of their kids having great experiences, getting a good education, becoming solid citizens, meeting that special person one day as they fall in love and have a family of their own? What dad would not want his kids not only to pursue their dreams but also to fulfill their dreams and, in turn, live an extraordinary life that leaves a great legacy behind?

Paul Harvey had a classic line concerning the dreams dads have for their daughters. He said, "Fathers are what give daughters away to other men who aren't nearly good enough. . .so they can have grandchildren that are smarter than anybody else's "

And for the men who have sons, they dream that their little boy will grow up to be a great man who lives well, serves well, loves well, and leaves a mark on this world that makes it a better place.

Dads dream of their sons and daughters having lived worthy lives of honor, integrity, dignity, honesty, and be one that matters in the end.

Yes, all dads worth anything have dreams for their kids.

These dream desires are true about our earthly dads, whether we have a great relationship with our dad or a not-so-great relationship.

Either way, I still believe that in their hearts most dads, if given a choice for their kids to experience a life of great dreams or a life of unfulfilled and broken dreams, would choose for their kids to experience the great dreams.

Even if our earthly dad did not do so well in helping to make those dreams come into reality, most dads probably

would rather their kids have their dreams come true rather than be left with broken and shattered dreams.

Now rather that was true for you with your earthly dad one thing I know for certain is that your Heavenly Dad certainly has dreams for all His kids.

Jeremiah says it like this. . .

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV): For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

And then there’s the Apostle Paul who goes on to say. . .

1 Corinthians 2:9 (NIV): However, as it is written: “What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived”— the things God has prepared for those who love him—

And here’s some more real good news. . .

Psalm 33:11 (NIV): But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.

And even though there is no earthly dad who is perfect by any stretch of the imagination, your Heavenly Father is perfect in every way.

He has big dreams for you and only wants the best for you no matter where you are today or what kind of nightmare you might be living through in your life.

Some of you hearing this today are dealing with some circumstances in your life that feel like a nightmare:

- Maybe you are living a nightmare at work. . .
- Or at home. . .
- Maybe its in a relationship with your in-laws who feel like more like outlaws. . .
- Or with your kids. . .
- Or it could be that there is an illness you are having to deal with in your life or your family. . .
- Maybe it's a legal nightmare. . .



- Or a nightmare that is hemorrhaging money out of your bank account. . .

We all live in nightmare moments at times when life is not filled with sweet dreams.

Those nightmares can cause you to experience a lot of fear, anxiety and make you wonder about how this dream is going to turn out.

And whether you feel like you are living in a nightmare, or are in a pretty good dream right now, or perhaps feel like you're somewhere in the middle, hold onto this truth throughout this Christmas season and into the next year:

Your Father in Heaven has big dreams for you!

He does. He knows you. He knows the plans he has for you.

Our Heavenly Father knows us and knows what we need.

Psalm 139:13–16 (NIV): For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. 15 My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

And yes, sometimes the dreams He has for us cause us to go down some crazy paths to fully experience the bigness of those dreams. It was certainly that way for Mary and Joseph.

And truth is, we forget that about God sometimes.

It is as if we have spiritual Alzheimer's that affect our memories.

If you have ever had a family member or if you know someone who has struggled with Alzheimer's disease, it is

a terrible health condition that causes individuals to forget significant parts of their lives.

Their memories just get lost in the recesses of their mind, and they often cannot remember significant people, places, or events due to this frustrating disease that effects the person's mind.

And when Spiritual Alzheimer's sets in, we tend to forget how much God loves us. We forget that just on the other side of the door He is knocking on, He has some incredible dreams for us to fulfill.

Sometimes I think we walk around with spiritual Alzheimer's, and we forget that we have a Father in Heaven who wants the best for us, who knows what we need, and that we can trust with all of who we are in life.

That includes the dreams we have for our lives; but sometimes, we forget that: Our Father in Heaven has big dreams for us!

Sometimes our lives not only are affected by spiritual Alzheimer's, but also can be subject to different kinds of spiritual immune deficiencies.

Maybe you know this, but if a person receives too many antibiotics throughout their lives, their body can build up an immunity to the very thing that is intended to help heal it to the point that the antibodies have no effect on the person any longer.

And I think, at times, we can walk through life with an immunity to the truth that is found in some of the great stories in the Scriptures.

And if we are not careful, the truth of God's Word may have been fed into our lives to the degree that it no longer affects us like it should.

This certainly can be the case when it comes to the dreams we have for our lives.

What we can fail to remember and realize at times is that

God's dreams for our lives are bigger than anything we could dream up on our own.

God's dreams go back farther than we can remember and include truths we may have built up a kind of spiritual immunity against over time.

Perhaps God wants to pull you out of a kind of spiritual Alzheimer's this Christmas and invite you to be affected by the truth of who He is as your Heavenly Father through some of the great Father-Son stories in the Bible.

There's no doubt that Joseph had a dream for his life, for his wife, and his future family.

However, God had a much bigger dream than anything even Joseph could have ever conjured up in his mind.

The dream God had for Joseph would include a family lineage that went back to the start of an ancient family tree name mentioned at the very start of Matthew's gospel.

While we may not know a whole lot about the details of Joseph's life, we do know quite a bit about Joseph's family lineage and their stories.

The way Joseph responded to the invitation God gave him is similar to how one of Joseph's ancestors responded so many years earlier.

We see the name of this ancient ancestor of Joseph in Matthew 1 verses 1 and 2.

Matthew 1:1–2 (NIV): This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham: 2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,

Just as God had big dreams for Joseph, God also had big dreams for one of Joseph and Jesus' ancestors named Abraham and his son Isaac.

Just like Joseph, God came knocking on the door of Abraham's life. As we will see, Abraham chose to open

the door to the dreams God had for his life as well.

We first meet this ancestor of Jesus by the abbreviated name of Abram in Genesis 12.

This was when God first started knocking on the door of his life. And Abram walked right through it into God's big dream that He had for him.

Genesis 12:1-3 tells of the moment.

Genesis 12:1–3 (NIV): The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. 2 “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

In this brief part of our introduction to Abram's life, we see that God invited Abram to follow Him into fulfilling a dream that at this time still was filled with many unknowns.

Just like Joseph, God gave a call to obey, and God would take care of the rest.

Joseph would follow that call; so did Abram.

Neither knew all the details that would unfold in the process as God would make those dreams come true.

In Abram's case, God just gave a promise and a plan accompanied in time by a new name: Abraham.

The promise was that if Abram followed God, God would show him a new place to live. God would make Abram the father of a great nation that not only would be blessed by God, but also would be a blessing to others throughout the earth.

And if we continued reading through Genesis, we would see that about a quarter of a century later, God would see this promise of Abraham becoming a father through to fruition.



His son would be named Isaac and the beginning of a remarkable father-son story in the eventual lineage of Joseph and Jesus would unfold.

As Isaac grew from a baby into a young adolescent boy, Abraham would be called by God to do something beyond all of his wildest dreams.

The story is recorded in Genesis 22.

Genesis 22:1–18 (NIV): Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied. 2 Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.” 3 Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. 4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. 5 He said to his servants, “Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will

worship and then we will come back to you.” 6 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, 7 Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, “Father?” “Yes, my son?” Abraham replied. “The fire and wood are here,” Isaac said, “but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” 8 Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them went on together. 9 When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied. 12 “Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.” 13 Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to

this day it is said, “On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.” 15 The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time 16 and said, “I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, 18 and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

In this story from Joseph and Jesus' family tree, God asks Abraham to trust Him with the promise.

God invites Abraham to walk through the door of faith and trust God with the dream of his only son, Isaac.

God invites Abraham to take Isaac and be willing to lay him on the altar and sacrifice him, along with all the dreams for his son that went with it, and trust God that He knew what He was doing.

And Abraham did it! Could you have? And God provided!

And if we are not careful, we will simply come to the end of reading this story and wrap it up by saying, "Isn't God good? Yeah God!

And then we say at least to ourself, I'll try to remember that you want me to lay down my dreams because you have bigger dreams for me. I've got it!"

But perhaps God may want to invite us to think about something in a different way as if to say, "Don't let your spiritual Alzheimer's cause you to forget and rob you of the magnitude of what really just happened in Genesis 22.

What we sometimes forget is that these were real people with real emotions and real feelings who had to infuse a real trust in a real difficult situation.

These are not just names on a page; these are people in the family tree of Joseph and Jesus who lived and

breathed in a real point in history."

Listen again to those first three words of Genesis 22.

"Some time later. . ." Genesis 22:1

Other translations say. . ."after these things"

And that phrase, "after these things" begs the question:  
"After what things?"

So, let me give you a bullet-pointed backstory that can be found in Genesis 11-21 that helps to sum up this very full phrase of history.

- After the Tower of Babel story in Genesis 11 where God confused the languages of all the peoples of the earth due to their arrogance and idolatry, we see in Genesis 12 that God brought Abraham out of an idol-infested land called Ur and into the land of Canaan.
- God promised a 75-year-old Abraham who was childless that he was going to lead him to a new land and make him

the father of many nations.

- And just as God had said, God fulfilled his promise to Abraham and his wife Sarah, and they became pregnant 25 years later. Abraham became a dad at age 100 after living a laughable life for the past 25 years.

- Their peers would have laughed at the idea of Abraham's name and this dream and promise that God had given to them.

- And now the dream comes true; Abraham is a dad! His one and only son, Isaac is now getting ready to go into the youth group.

And then we find ourselves in Genesis 22 where vs. 1-3 says:

"After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac." Genesis 22:1-3

We just forget that sometimes God may want us to trust him like Abraham.

God wants us to trust our most precious dreams to Him, our Heavenly Father.

Let me ask you a question, what if instead of taking the reins of our life and the dreams of our life, we responded instead like Abraham?

What if we instead would choose to lay them down on the altar and be willing to let God have His way with our life and with the dreams of our life?

God has some big dreams for our lives if we will trust him with the dreams.

They are bigger dreams than the dreams that our earthly dads might dream up for us.

And whatever your dream might be for your life? . .

- The dream of who you will become
- The dream of where you will live
- The dream of who you will end up with
- The dream of a perfect relationship
- The dream of a great job
- The dream of an incredible legacy and family and friends. . .

The dreams that our Heavenly Father has for His kids are way bigger and way more consequential than anything we could dream up on our own.

That was true for Abraham. That would become true for Isaac. That eventually would be true for Joseph. And it would lead to Jesus being born in a manger, that one day would lead to a cross.

What Jesus would do on the cross would enable Him to become the door that could be opened that would lead us all back to a relationship with our Heavenly Father.

God did all this because He wants you to believe that. . .



- Your Heavenly Father really does know you.
- Your Heavenly Father really did create you with a plan and a purpose.
- Your Heavenly Father really does know what you need before you ever ask him.
- Your Heavenly Father really does have your best interest at heart.
- Your Heavenly Father really can be trusted with all your hopes and dreams.

If you believe these statements to be true, then the question I believe God has for us this Christmas is: "Are you willing to lay down your dreams for your life and trust God with the big dreams that He has for your life?"

This is basically the question God asked Abraham about his firstborn son, Isaac.

Likewise, this is the question God was asking Joseph about concerning his soon-to-be firstborn son, Jesus. The circumstances were different for sure; however, the dreams God had in mind were bigger than either could

ever imagine.

Both Abraham and Joseph walked through the door when God came knocking. They laid their dreams down on the altar and followed as God led them.

Are we willing to do the same?