

b. He took her to Bethlehem with him, Lu 2:1-7

- 1) We do not know if Mary was required to go to Bethlehem for the census, but Joseph took her though she was near delivery. He was protecting her from local gossip.
- 2) They knew Mary's child was the Messiah, so they may have known (Micah 5:2). "*But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*"
- 3) He cared for her along the journey and in the stable where they lodged.
- 4) He helped her through her delivery.
- 5) He welcomed the visit of the shepherds. (Luke 2:19) "*But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.*" Joseph likely did too.

c. Joseph found a house in Bethlehem, Mt 2:11

- 1) God helped Joseph find a house there in Bethlehem.
- 2) Perhaps to give Mary and baby Jesus time to settle or to avoid the shame in Nazareth, they remained in Bethlehem for an extended time. It was during that time the wise men visited and gave Jesus valuable gifts.

d. He fled with Mary and Jesus to Egypt, Mt 2:13-18

- 1) Again, Joseph obeyed the angel's message from God.

e. Joseph cautiously returned to Israel, Mt 2:19-23

- 1) Having been visited a third time by an angel telling Joseph to return to Israel, he obeyed.

Conclusion: Joseph was a man of character. He lived a righteous life. He obeyed the word of the Lord each time he received it. In this, he was a great example for us to follow. If you know that God wants you to do something that you are resisting, be as Joseph and do it.

Remember that the name Jesus means **Jehovah is salvation**. He came to save people from their sins. He is Emmanuel – **God with us**. His death would bring **peace to sinful hearts**. That is the true reason for the season. Have you received His gift of peace and salvation? Have you humbly admitted your guilt and opened your heart to His cleansing? If not, He is waiting for you today. Come to the Saviour.

Song: Come to the Saviour - 254

Joseph the Carpenter

19 December 2021 AM – Matthew 1:18-25 – Christmas – Scott Childs

Introduction: Joseph of Nazareth was a carpenter, the son of a carpenter. Nazareth was a small hillside village in northern Israel, west of the Sea of Galilee. Though he was poor, the carpenter Joseph probably crafted doors, windows, cabinets, furniture and gates for homesteads and yokes for the farm animals.

God chose a special young woman named Miriam, whom we know as Mary to be Joseph's wife. They were engaged to be married in a few months. Engagements in those days often lasted one year, giving time for the groom to prepare a home for his bride.

Some time before their wedding day, Mary let Joseph know that an angel had told her that she would conceive of the Holy Spirit and bear the Christ child. This was shocking news to Joseph. He had a difficult time believing it. The last recorded visit of an angel to a human was in the days of Zechariah, more than 500 years earlier.

Transition: Now I want us to put ourselves in Joseph's shoes as we walk through the Biblical events of the birth of Christ that followed.

1. Joseph was crushed by Mary's news, Mt 1:18-19

a. Her news seemed to ruin everything for him.

- 1) Engagement was a very binding covenant. An engaged couple were legally married, though not actually married. When Joseph heard that Mary was expecting a baby, he was crushed. He knew he that baby was NOT his. In those days, purity was required of an engaged woman. Though it was not always obeyed, the OT law prescribed the death penalty for women who did not remain pure until marriage (Deu 22:20-21).
- 2) It is obvious that Joseph loved Mary. She was an exceptional woman. What made her exceptional was not her virginity, but that she was very godly. Joseph had found a rare gem, a virtuous woman, a prudent wife. She was *highly favoured* by God (Lu 1:28). They had been preparing for their marriage ceremony.
- 3) Mary's news shattered Joseph's dreams. Because of his

love for Mary, he did not want to shame her publicly.

b. Joseph faced a devastating decision

- 1) He thought on these things, pondering them repeatedly in his mind. Because he was righteous, I believe Joseph was also praying for wisdom and direction. He could shame Mary openly for her sin, or he could divorce her quietly.
- 2) Because he loved Mary, he did not want to shame her publicly. However, her news crushed his heart. How could this be happening? How could she do such a thing?
- 3) This is a reminder that none of us is exempt from crushing heartaches. When they come, the right thing to do is to lay them out before the Lord to seek His wisdom and peace.

2. Joseph was convinced by the angel, Mt 1:20-24

a. Before Joseph reacted wrongly, God sent an angel to him.

- 1) God heard Joseph's pondering and prayers. He had picked Joseph and Mary for the task of rearing Jesus, the Messiah. The Lord sent an angel to Joseph in a dream to clarify God's plan.
- 2) Carefully note the facts detailed by the angel (v.20).
 - a) Joseph must *not fear* to complete their marriage.
 - b) Mary's conception **was** of the *Holy Spirit*.
 - c) Mary would have a *son* and Joseph must name him **Jesus** (i.e., Jehovah is salvation). His mission would be *to save his people from their sins*.
 - d) The angel said that Mary's pregnancy was to fulfil Isaiah's 700-year-old prophecy. (Matthew 1:23) "*Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.*" ~ (Isaiah 7:14) "... *Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*"
 - e) The angel assured Joseph that Mary **was** still a virgin.
- 3) The angel's words to Joseph are still important for us today.
 - a) The virgin birth of Jesus assures us that He was not

just a human. He had no human father.

- b) Jesus was Emmanuel or God with us. Jesus is God. If **Jesus were not the eternal God, he could not fix our eternal sin problem.**
- c) Being God, Jesus was able to die on the cross to pay for our sins and rescue all who place their trust in Him from hell.
- d) Later, after Jesus was born, angels announced His birth to the shepherds, (Luke 2:10-11) "*And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*"

b. Joseph believed the angel's words (v.24)

- 1) He did as the angel instructed.
- 2) He took unto him Mary his wife. They had their marriage ceremony, and he took Mary as his wife. Though people would accuse them of fornication, he obeyed God. Knowing that people would not believe Mary's story or his, he still did as God told him.
- 3) *The next time you take a stand for God, for the Bible, for purity or for holiness and people do not understand, remember Joseph and Mary. Follow the words of the apostles, who said, (Acts 5:29) "... We ought to obey God rather than men."*

3. Joseph was committed to his duty, Mt 1:25;

a. He kept Mary pure until she gave birth to Jesus

- 1) God assures us of this (v.25). God gave him grace to do this to remove all possibilities of Christ having a human father.
- 2) After Mary gave birth, she and Joseph had a normal marital relationship. She did not remain a virgin. She gave birth to at least six other children after Jesus' birth. (Mark 6:3) "*Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.*"
- 3) Joseph called Mary's son, **Jesus** as the angel said.