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Joseph & Mary Walking with the Lord



Part 12 (031207AM)

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The greatest truth of Christianity is that the instant of our salvation – we got all of God!

But the greatest need of Christianity is – does God have all of me?

This morning, meet two teenagers – Joseph and Mary, that God had all of their lives! How does one who God has a complete hold upon all their life respond to some very stressful times? Watch and see!

In every story of the birth of Jesus there is mention of a couple we know just enough about to be amazed. God has captured with His Holy Word a picture that inspires and challenges us. This season of remembering Christ's Birth, join me in looking again at that familiar story of Joseph and Mary and Baby Jesus. But pause with me in God's Word and extract some powerful truths by observing what the Scriptures reveal and imply about this amazing couple who were walking with the Lord.

This is the next look at the Characters of Christmas. Remember the others:

1. Last week we learned about a couple **WORKING for the Lord: Zachariah & Elisabeth** in [Luke 1:5-25](#); 39-45; 67-80.
2. Then we saw someone **WANTING not the Lord: King Herod the Great** in [Matthew 2:1-18](#)
3. Now we will see this fantastic couple **WALKING with the Lord: Joseph & Mary** in [Matthew 1:18-25](#); Luke 1.26-38; 46-56
4. Coming in the days ahead:
 - **WORSHIPING before the Lord: The Magi** [Matthew 2:1-12](#)
 - **WATCHING for the Lord: The Shepherds** [Luke 2:1-20](#)
 - **WAITING for the Lord: Simeon & Anna** [Luke 2:22-38](#)

Open with me to Matthew 1.

It was nearly 2,000 years ago that God spoke to a young, teenaged couple. They had been engaged for marriage by their parents. Mary was probably between 14 and 16, and Joseph was between 18 and 20.

Their lives up to this historic moment had been exemplary, in fact they were chosen by God because He knew He could count on them.

Joseph was described by God as "just". He was righteous as a young man of conviction. He had chosen the path of holding to his Biblical convictions and practicing self-denial. God knew he was pure, had chosen pure habits, and fled sexual sins. Those choices made him just the man God could use at this historic moment. And Mary was the same. She was a woman of the Word. She lived her faith, and considered herself a bond slave for the Lord.

Please stand with me as we read in Matthew 1, these verses about Joseph and Mary.

Matthew 1:16 And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

- Joseph was a great man in the sight of the Lord, with few details given in God's Word. His father's name was Jacob ([Matt. 1:16](#)) and he is described as a craftsman or construction worker (*tektōn*), which may have meant a stone worker or a carpenter ([Matt. 13:55](#)). The most important truth recorded by God is that he was a "righteous man" (1:19). Joseph is a clear portrait of an Old Testament saint.
- Mary is also portrayed as a godly woman who was sensitive and submissive to the Lord's will. Her response to Gabriel's announcement says it all -- Mary said, "Behold,

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Part: 1	The Fullness of Time: The Day Jesus Was Born

the bondsman of the Lord: be it done to me according to your word." (Luke 1:26-38)

Matthew 1:18a Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph...

In the World of the Bible, betrothal signified more than our modern engagement. *The marriage was almost always arranged by the families of the bride and groom, often without consulting them. A contract was made and was sealed by payment of the mohar, the dowry or bride price, which was paid by the groom or his family to the bride's father. The mohar served to compensate the father for wedding expenses and to provide a type of insurance for the bride in the event the groom became dissatisfied and divorced her.*

- Look at the wording of Matthew's account. To us who live in a western culture it all sounds quite confusing. Matthew 1 records that Joseph is *betrothed* to Mary; then he is planning to *divorce* her; and then in a few more words she is called his *wife*. But the relationships represent normal Jewish marriage procedure, in which there were three steps.
- There was the *engagement*. The engagement was often made when the couple were only children. It was usually made through the parents, or through a professional match-maker. And it was often made without the couple involved ever having seen each other. Marriage was held to be far too serious a step to be left to the dictates of the human heart.
- There was the *betrothal*. The betrothal was what we might call the ratification of the engagement into which the couple had previously entered. At this point the engagement, entered into by the parents or the match-maker, could be broken if the girl was unwilling to go on with it. But once the betrothal was entered into, it was absolutely binding. It lasted for one year. During that year the couple were known as man and wife, although they had not the rights of man and wife. It could not be terminated in any other way than by divorce. In the Jewish law we frequently find what is to us a curious phrase. A girl whose fiancée had died during the year of betrothal is called "a virgin who is a widow." It was at this stage that Joseph and Mary were. They were betrothed, and if Joseph wished to end the betrothal, he could do so in no other way than by divorce; and in that year of betrothal Mary was legally known as his wife.
- The third stage was *the marriage proper*, which took place at the end of the year of betrothal. If we remember the normal Jewish wedding customs, then the relationships in this passage are perfectly usual and perfectly clear.

Matthew 1:18b " Before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit."

- Just as the Great Creator God reached down and formed a perfect man named Adam from the Earth, so in similar Omnipotence God reaches down to make a perfect man from Heaven – our Virgin born Lord of Glory, Jesus Christ. "We could no more fathom such a thing than we can fathom God's creating the universe from nothing, His being one God in three Persons, or His giving an entirely new spiritual nature to those who trust in His Son. Understanding of such things will have to await heaven, when we see our Lord "face to face" and "know fully just as [we] have been fully known" (1 Cor. 13:12). We accept it by faith.

Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

- There are very few New Testament verses about Mary. It is likely that she was a native of Nazareth and that she came from a relatively poor family.
 - Her actual name was Miryam. In English this Hebrew name is usually rendered by the spelling "Miriam" in the *Old Testament* and "Mary" in the *New Testament*.
 - From **Matthew 27:56**, **Mark 15:40**, and **John 19:25** we learn she had a sister named Salome, the mother of James and John (who therefore were Jesus' cousins).
- From Luke 3 we receive her Davidic lineage. If, as many believe, the Eli (or Heli) of **Luke 3:23** was Joseph's father-in-law (Matthew gives Joseph's father as Jacob, 1:16), then Eli was Mary's father.
- We know that Elizabeth, the wife of Zacharias, was Mary's "relative" (**Luke 1:36**), probably her cousin. Those are the only relatives, besides her husband and children, of whom the New Testament speaks.

Matthew 1:19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.

- The penalty for adultery under Old Testament law was death by stoning, and this penalty applied to infidelity during betrothal as well (**Deut 22:23-24**). In New Testament times, Joseph would have merely been required to divorce Mary and expose her to shame; the death penalty was rarely if ever executed for this offense. (Betrothals were so binding that if a woman's fiancé died, she was considered a widow; betrothals could otherwise be terminated only by divorce.) But a woman with a child, divorced for such infidelity, would be hard pressed ever to find another husband, leaving her without means of support if her parents died".

Matthew 2:13-14 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt.

- Jesus went from Bethlehem, to Egypt just as Hosea had written hundreds of years before.

Matthew 2:15 and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."

- Herod the Great died in 4 BC, as soon as he did all three of his boys sped off by boat to Rome to get the Land. The people sent a delegation and contested the sons. Returning Archelaus wiped out all the families who protested. Herod's son Antipas built Tiberius, Archelaus was in the south, and Philip in the North.

[Matthew 2:23](#) And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

- As Joseph followed God's leading and returned, when they heard Archelaus was in Judea they went on to their roots in Nazareth (Branch) Heb. nezher, the people there thought that was where Messiah would come from, but no one else thought that!

The Yeshiva in Zippori - There is an old Christian tradition, dating at least to Byzantine times, that Mary was born in Zippori. Israeli guide, Yossi Ashkenazi, stated that evidence from Talmudic sources confirms this, and that Mary's father was the headmaster of Zippori's Jewish school (Yeshiva). The Gospel accounts indicate that the Lord Jesus was often called "Rabbi" by His disciples and other people. The term Rabbi was not used loosely in Israel; it was only attributed to someone who had received the rigorous training in the Law of Moses provided by a Yeshiva. The small town of Nazareth was large enough to have its own synagogue, but it was certainly not large enough to have a rabbinic Yeshiva. So it is reasonable to speculate that Jesus studied at the Yeshiva in Zippori where His own maternal grandfather was the headmaster. This conclusion helps us to fill in some of the gaps in the silent years of our Lord's life.

How can we apply the story of Joseph and Mary to our lives this morning?

First seven quick lessons from Matthew:

- Joseph **sought the Lord with his problems** ([Matthew 1:18-20a](#))
- Joseph **listened to the Lord for His guidance** ([Matthew 1:20b-23](#))
- Joseph **obeyed the Lord with his actions** ([Matthew 1:24-25a](#))
- Joseph **honored the Lord by his obedience** ([Matthew 1:25b](#))
- Joseph **waited on the Lord for His leading** ([Matthew 2:13-18](#))
- Joseph **followed the Lord's directions for his family** ([Matthew 2:19-21](#))
- Joseph **led his family in the ways of the Lord** ([Matthew 2:22-23](#))

Second, more deepening truths to live out as we also walk with the Lord:

- **JOSEPH WAS COMPASSIONATE.** [Matthew 1:19](#) Then Joseph her husband, being a just [man,] and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. (NKJV) he planned to put away Mary privately
- **JOSEPH WAS SENSITIVE.** [Matthew 1:20-24](#) But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." 22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." 24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, (NKJV)
- **JOSEPH WAS OBEDIENT.** [Matthew 2:13-19](#) Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." 14 When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, 15 and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son." 16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. 17 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: 18 "A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping [for] her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more." 19 But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. (NKJV) Joseph was a leader in Caring. He was a protector of his family; he made decisions for the future of his family going to Egypt.
- **JOSEPH WAS A HARD WORKER.** [Matthew 2:19](#) After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt 20 and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead." 21 So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, 23 and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: "He will be called a Nazarene." (NIV) Joseph was a leader in God's order for the home. He was a provider: he went to Nazareth and worked. [Proverbs 19:14](#) Houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the LORD. (NIV); [Proverbs 13:22](#) A good man leaves an inheritance for his children's children, but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous. (NIV)
- **JOSEPH PASSED ON HIS TRADE TO JESUS.** [Mark 6:3](#) "Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" And they were offended at Him. (NKJV). He was a modeler: Taught Jesus his trade and that took time side by side Mowing, driving, care for the car, finances, etc. Men just put some time in them each week.
- **JOSEPH FOLLOWED GOD'S WORD FOR RAISING CHILDREN.** [Luke 2:27-33](#) So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, 28 he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: 29 "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; 30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation 31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, 32 A light to [bring] revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel." 33 And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. (NKJV)
- **JOSEPH LED HIS FAMILY IN WORSHIP.** [Luke 2:41](#) His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. (NKJV) He was a worshiper, he took them to the feast Joseph was a leader in godliness. He was a Maintainer: Pr. 22.28 keep family boundaries

Mary we can't cover this morning, but we spent a whole month examining and applying her life a few months ago. If you want to stir up those truths in your hearts get the tape album out of the library or get the Family CD in the resource center and study Mary's incredible life and prayer.

This morning may I introduce you (or reintroduce you) to Mary, the mother of James and Jesus!

Who is presented as the most honored woman in the Bible? Say it with me - Mary

Who was chosen out of all the women in the whole world to raise God's Son? Mary

Who is the greatest living, breathing example of Proverbs 31 in ordinary everyday life? Mary

Without exception who is probably the most beloved and best known woman in the world? Mary

(And that is probably the most times her name has ever been said aloud in most protestant churches!)

Let's meet this incredible woman. Of all the writers of Scripture it is Luke who highlights Mary. Twelve of the 20 verses that name her are in Luke and one is in Acts so 65% of all that we have comes to us through Luke. So we need to turn to Luke 1. We will find out the qualities God admires in a woman. He picked her out of all the world for this special assignment!

Mary immersed herself in the Scriptures . (Luke 1:46-55) She Sought God. Look at Have you paused to ask yourself how she did it? For starters, chew on this - In a world where Mary lived every drop of water was carried home by women from springs or wells in clay pots. Every ounce of flour was ground with a stone mill. Every bread loaf was baked in an oven with a wood fire burning to heat it. All dishes were washed (remember that well, the pot, the walk . . .) So time was at a premium, what's new right? But also, women were not at a premium. Jesus was the first to elevate women to their proper place. In Mary's time they were close to being furniture. So her knowledge of the Scriptures must have come from either her dad who Luke tells us was named Heli (Luke 3:23 traces Mary back to Adam to show Jesus was Savior of the world. Matthew 1 traces Joseph back to Abraham to show Jesus was the Messiah of the Jews.) Maybe Heli encouraged his daughter by exposing her deeply to the Scriptures. What a wonderful pursuit for any dad. Whatever the means Mary SOUGHT GOD!

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