

Mary and Joseph

“They Were Told”



“Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.” Luke 1:30-31

“Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.” Matthew 1:20

When we look at the Nativity our attention is immediately drawn to Mary and the baby. Joseph is always there standing beside Mary. We never see him holding the baby or doing anything. He is just standing there.

Mary seems to be the one with all the responsibility, but a closer look at the life of Christ tells us that Joseph also had a lot of responsibility. As a young girl, Mary is visited by an angel that tells her she is favored and is going to have a child. Did she really feel favored? Mary was confused. She asked *“How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?”* Luke 1:34

We are told that Joseph was upset and perhaps we would have been also. He knew he was not the father and he thought she had been unfaithful to him. At this point, one has to wonder how “favored” they thought they really were. As we look back on it, we just accept it and realize that nothing is impossible with God, but sometimes in our own lives, we wonder “why?” Mary and Joseph were human just as we are today. They were picked by God for an awesome responsibility.

The angel had told Mary how things were going to happen, but how did her family react to this? What did the neighbors think?

Mary and Joseph had the responsibility of raising this who would someday be a Savior to the world! He had brothers and sisters. We don’t know how they reacted and if Christ was any different as a child than any normal child. Mary gets much attention and she deserves it as one chosen by God to be the earthly mother of Christ.

Joseph had a lot of responsibility with the birth and life of Christ. We need to take a second look at Joseph. He was visited by angels three times in the early life of Christ. Joseph is visited by an angel and told that Mary, the young woman he was planning to marry was with child, and it wasn’t his child. According to the law of the time, Joseph should have made a public notice of this and had her stoned because she had been unfaithful to him. But he didn’t. He loved her and was troubled. Then while Joseph was sleeping an angel appeared to him and told him that the child Mary was carrying was *“conceived of the Holy Ghost”* Matthew 1:20. So Joseph decided not to

have her stoned and he took her as his wife and stayed with her. He was also told that the name of the child would be Jesus.

Since it was demanded by the government that they register, Joseph took Mary and journeyed to Bethlehem. This wouldn’t have been a very pleasant ride for either one of them. Mary was late in her pregnancy and Joseph was protecting the woman he loved who was carrying a child that was not his.

After Christ was born, the angel appeared to Joseph again. This time he had to take Christ and Mary and escape to Egypt. We are told they left Bethlehem at night so they would not be caught. According to Matthew 2:13 the Magi had already been to visit the new family and had gone home another way because they knew Herod was angry. Joseph did as he was told and stayed there because Herod was trying to find the child so he could kill him. We don’t know how long that was or if he had a job or family there. But he obeyed the angel and stayed in Egypt until Herod died. This fulfills another one of the prophecies about Christ. *“And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: ‘Out of Egypt I called my son.’”* Matthew 2:15 and Hosea 11:1. When Herod realized that he had been deceived he ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and younger.

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6



After Herod died an angel appeared to Joseph again. This time he was told *“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.”* Matthew 2:20 Joseph again did as he was told and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Herod’s son was not ruling, he was afraid to go back directly so he did as he was told in the dream and went back to the small town of Nazareth. Again the prophecy of the Old Testament tells us that Christ would be called a Nazarene.

Joseph was a very important man when we see how he was chosen to protect the Christ Child. Three times he listened to the angel’s demand and followed them. The Bible doesn’t tell us if an angel appeared to Mary other times. I wonder if an angel comforted her when she saw her first born son being criticized and eventually crucified? An angel appeared to her cousin, but did one appear to the brothers and sisters of Christ to help them understand what was happening when he started preaching and talking about his Heavenly Father? Mary and Joseph had a responsibility of rearing a child that technically was not theirs.

Many times people adopt a child or have foster children. Because they were willing to take on this responsibility the child has had a wonderful life that was not probably on the mind of the people birthing the child. The parents who raise the child are blessed and the child is blessed. They didn’t say “No.” They figured out “How.”

I know of children who were born with a physical handicap who were abandoned by the birthing parents and adopted by a couple who not only gave the child a home, but paid to have the handicap taken care of.

I know of others who adopted a child that had other problems that could not be healed by surgery but they helped that child overcome that handicap and lead a normal life. Both have received many wonderful blessings.

Have you ever been asked to do something that didn’t seem necessary at the time? But when you had done as asked, you found out that it was for the best. We may not seem important, but there are little things done by many people that we don’t even know that have a great influence on the outcome of a certain project or life decision. That was Mary and Joseph, two seemingly unimportant individuals who helped so Christ could grow up and become the great Savior we know today. After that we hear very little about them. We know the family went to the temple when Christ was about twelve years old. We don’t hear Joseph mentioned when Christ was preaching, and we don’t know that he was there when Christ was crucified. But the three times, when he is mentioned are very important.

When we look at some of the people involved in the Nativity we don’t think that they are very important. Over the years, they are just there. But each one of them had an important place. Each of us has an important place today in the life of others.

We all need to know Christ, and then we need to make sure that others know Him too. Our name won’t be in the headlines here on earth, but God knows our every move and speaks to us every day if we listen. We may not have angels appear to us in a dream, but His love is there for us every day, just as it was for Mary and Joseph.

Prayer: Dear Lord, Thank You for caring about me. You have made each one of us in Your image, and You have blessed each one of us in many ways. Help us to realize not only that we are important in Your sight, but that everyone is important and in Your care today and every day. Help us to follow Your will as Joseph did so many years ago and help us to spread Your love. Amen

1. Compare your place in life to the place of Mary and Joseph in the life of Christ.
2. Are we willing to do God’s will and not be noticed by others?
3. Do you every wonder why He had to die for us? Wasn’t there an easier way?
4. Do we have a responsibility for all children?

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info@rgscripts.com

