

Mary and Joseph

“A Dialogue”

Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” Luke 1:31-33.

The angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, 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. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. Matthew 1:20-21.

Mary: “Blessed are you among women.’ That was the angel’s message, and yet at times I had wondered. I know now that I was blessed, but can you imagine the feelings I was hiding when no one else knew what was happening. Oh, the angel was so gentle, so understanding, so assured that I was the right one. I angel said that I had found favor with God. I wish I could have felt that same self-assurance at the time.

“I questioned, ‘How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?’ The angel said the Holy Ghost would come over me and the Lord would overshadow men, and that the child would be called Jesus, the Son of God, and of his kingdom there would be no end. All I knew to say was ‘Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. I was told about Elisabeth, my cousin, who had conceived a son in her old age. I realized that with God, all things are possible. The angel departed. Yet it was real-and I had a feeling that I had never experienced before, and I certainly have never experienced it since that eventful day.

Joseph: “I often thought, ‘Why me, Lord?’ There are many other men out there who are much more qualified for this job. I don’t bother anyone. I’m just a simple man living a quiet life in Nazareth. I worked as a carpenter and loved doing a good job. I enjoyed the smells, the fresh scents, and the sounds of woodworking-the hammer and chisels, planes and saws.

Mary: “I had grown up in a home where the Scriptures were studied. We had been told that a Messiah would come, but we expected a King arriving in majesty, not through the womb of a peasant girl like me. I didn’t know what to do. I went to visit my cousin Elisabeth in the hill country.

“Elisabeth said the child she was carrying leaped in her womb when I told her my news and she was filled with the Holy Ghost. I realized that God had chosen me for a wonderful task. His name was indeed Holy.

“I wondered about Joseph. How was he to believe me? I was innocent of any wrongdoing. And this was a wonderful blessing for the Jews, my people.

“Our race had gone through generations of banishment, subjugation, homelessness, injustice, and prejudice. Now I had been chosen, but how were people to know, especially Joseph? But God would take care of that. I didn’t need to worry.

Joseph: “On that afternoon that I will never forget, I was building furniture for the home of Mary, my espoused wife, and myself. Suddenly, Mary appeared at the door. I stopped, stretched my arms back and reveled in the beauty of my future wife. I told her that I hoped she had not been standing there long. Many times, I didn’t hear people coming in the shop because I was concentrating on the job I was doing. Mary said she enjoyed watching me work, but I noticed there was a look in her eye that I had never seen before. She was still very beautiful, but she looked as though she was carrying a burden, and her thoughts seemed to be far off. I asked her if she thought the new furniture would be suitable for our home. I could tell that she was troubled.

“Then, she told me that she was with child. The words struck like a sharp knife into my heart. I dropped her hands as if they were filled with leprosy. I had pledged my love to her in front of witnesses, and I felt this made a travesty of our betrothal.

“I commanded her to tell me who the father was, because I knew that I was not. She said an angel had appeared to her and said ‘Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call him Jesus’ I wouldn’t believe it-an angel, the Spirit of God, a baby as our Messianic King.

“I turned my back on her and she ran out of the shop crying. What was I to do? Should I take her before the Sanhedrin and divulge her shame and condemn her to be stoned: I loved her so much. She was so kind and beautiful. Her laughter filled a room with warmth and my heart with love. I knew

our love and faith in God would see us through this difficult time in our lives. Mary said that the Holy Spirit had come upon her. I had to trust that she was telling me the truth no matter how difficult it was for me to believe. I thought that perhaps being out of town when the child was due to be born would cover any shame this birth might bring upon us. We had to prepare for our journey to Bethlehem to be counted by the Roman tax collectors; maybe this trip would be a blessing after all.

Mary: “Then, I wondered why this couldn’t have taken place in Nazareth. Why the long journey to the little town of Bethlehem, Joseph’s ancestral town? But the birth of the Messiah needed to be in the City of David.

“As the child began to grow, I knew a blessing that no one else would ever know, a blessing that would wipe out any fear, and leave me with an eternal joy.

“Why did the King have to be born in a stable with cows, and ox, and ass? Our journey would be rough on the back of a donkey. But, what made me think I should have everything my way if I truly wanted to serve Our Lord. I learned that he had come for all people, not just the rich.

Joseph: “As I stood and pondered these various choices about our future, a bright light shone and I heard a voice say, ‘Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary as thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins.’ Then just as quickly, the light faded. I was alone once again.

“Now I had another problem. Who would believe us, two common people in the little town of Nazareth? Nothing important ever happened there. I went to the temple to pray and seek some answers. I heard the Rabbi read: ‘Therefore, the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel.’

“I realized then that Mary was telling the truth. I should never have doubted her. I knew that she had been chosen to carry out this word on this earth.

“I ran to Mary’s home and told her my experiences. We prayed together in thanksgiving. Little did we know what lay ahead, but we knew that we would face it together with the grace of God. It wasn’t easy. Sure, people talked.

“Mary was afraid to be seen. I, too, felt the burning of eyes as we talked and were seen in the streets of that small town.

“Armed with God’s courage, we set out to do what we were told, and follow the path he had prepared for us. We had been blessed in a way that no other human being had ever been blessed. We had been given a wonderful privilege to fulfill the Word of God when he told how a babe would be born, and he would be called Wonderful Counselor, the Almighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace

Mary: “The streets were crowded with travelers, beggars, thieves, and soldiers. With the census, there was no place for us to stay. We were young and very poor. There wasn’t any sweet lullaby except the mellow tones of the animals. The streets were noisy with the shuffle of sandals as other people hurried to find some kind of shelter, and yet others hurried to see if they could make some money from the new tourist trade that was so desperate for lodging.

Joseph: “We were so young, but we had faith that we were doing the right things. We had just begun a journey that would bring us joy beyond measure, and that would eventually bring the love and grace of God to all nations.

Mary: “We knew that marvelous things were happening, and that we were safe, but we had so much to learn. We weren’t in the protection of earthly kings, but the protection and love was more than anyone can comprehend. And, we were chosen to be the blessed ones.

Joseph: “Now you know, that we should not have doubted. God would take his love and give it to us. So kneel with us, my friends, and worship this Babe, this Saviour, this King, and receive the love that we received so many years ago.”

* * * * *

Notes: This is fictional presentation of a possible report from Mary and Joseph. We don’t know if they were in touch with their families back in Nazareth. References regarding Mary and the birth of Christ are limited to Matt 1 and 2, and Luke 1 and 2. Joseph is rarely mentioned in the New Testament. Concerning the birth of Christ we have references to him in Matt 1 and 2, and Luke 1 and 2. Joseph is visited again by an angel after the birth of Christ telling him to flee to Egypt in Matt 2:13. Mary and Joseph are referenced again when Christ is about 12 years old and he strays from their side

to go into the temple. Mary is referred to during the ministry of Christ on a few occasions, along with siblings, but no mention is made of Joseph at this time.

© Ray and Gail Keffer