

**Episode:** Christmas Series No. 6

**Narrator:** Joseph

**Primary Scriptures:** Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:26-28

**Story Summary:** Joseph tells of the events surrounding his marriage to Mary

**Location:** Nazareth

**Time:** Circa 4 BC

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Matthew 1:22-23

The Bible gives little information about Mary's husband, Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus. Matthew 1:16-25 contains virtually all that is known about Joseph prior to his trip to Bethlehem for Jesus's birth.

Try to imagine the feelings of Joseph as the angel of the Lord told him that his fiancé was impregnated by the Holy Spirit. How could anyone, especially a righteous Jewish man, process such an event? This is how Joseph reacted: he did what the angel of the Lord commanded him to do and took Mary home as his wife.

The Bible doesn't say when Joseph took Mary home, but in the hours, days, or months between her being found to be pregnant and her arrival at his house, there must have been a myriad of emotions of the people involved: Joseph and his family members, Mary and her family members, neighbors, rabbis, and others in the community. Few people in Nazareth would have been exempt from being involved emotionally.

Under the customs of that time, betrothal was equivalent to being married, except that the betrothed did not have sexual relations. That is why Matthew 1:16 says Joseph was her husband. That same verse says that Joseph was faithful to the law. According to the Leviticus 20:10, both parties to adultery by neighbors were to be put to death. There was no alternative, such as divorce. Joseph was in a complete dilemma. He did not want to publicly disgrace Mary, but he was trapped as to what to do.

That trap did not necessarily go away after he took Mary home as his wife. His conscience would have been clear because of the information he received from the angel, but the community of Nazareth would likely have been accusatory, and those accusations would follow Jesus throughout his life. In John 8:41, the Jewish leaders seem to accuse Jesus of being illegitimate.

The first mention of Joseph shows him as being obedient to God under the most unusual and unique circumstances, and most of the remaining mentions of Joseph demonstrate that obedience. Perhaps their obedience is why Joseph and Mary were chosen to be the parents of Jesus. Maybe this is why one of the first descriptions of their son, Jesus, was: "he was completely obedient to them."<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Luke 2:51