

JOSEPH, THE FATHER OF JESUS

Introduction

- 1) Famous fathers in the Bible: *Adam, Noah, Job, Abraham, Jacob*
- 2) **Joseph, the father of Jesus**, has been somewhat overshadowed by Mary, the mother of Jesus (cf. Matt. 1:16)
- 3) Yet, he should be honored for his role as Mary's husband and Jesus' father
 - a) Not Jesus' biological father (Lk. 3:23) but raised Jesus as his legal father (Lk. 4:22; Jn. 6:42)
- 4) A careful reading of Scripture reveals lessons about the character and example of Joseph

I) A JUST MAN (Matthew 1:19)

- A) "Just" [Gk. *dikaios*] – righteous, upright
 - 1) Excellent characteristic (Psa. 7:9; 64:10)
 - 2) Other "just" persons: *Noah* - Gen. 6:9; *Job* – Job 1:1; *John the Baptist* – Mk. 6:20; *Cornelius* – Acts 10:22; *Jesus* – Matt. 27:19; Acts 3:14
- B) Here is a righteous man faced with a big problem – his wife-to-be is suddenly pregnant
 - 1) She will be facing serious public reproach and condemnation

II) DEALING WITH A DIFFICULT PROBLEM (Matthew 1:18-25)

- A) Mary was found with child while "betrothed" to Joseph before they married (v. 18)
 - 1) Jewish weddings = *three steps*: engagement, betrothal, marriage (divorce required to break the betrothal or marriage)
 - 2) "Betrothed" = Though not yet married, a man and woman were contractually bound for a period of time and had no sexual relations
 - 3) Yet others would believe that Mary was sexually active before marriage
- B) Joseph made plans to put her away secretly [privately before witnesses] (v. 19)
 - 1) Being just, he did not believe he should marry a pregnant woman (cf. Deut. 22:20-21)
 - 2) Being compassionate, he did not want to make her a "public example" (public exposure)
- C) Angel appeared to Joseph in a dream – "Do not be afraid to take to you Mary" (v. 20)
 - 1) Joseph was faithful to the Lord's command – not fearful, selfish, arrogant (v. 24)
 - a) Also faithful to government laws – traveled to Bethlehem for the census (Lk. 2:1-5)
 - 2) Practiced sexual restraint that there be no question about the virgin birth of Jesus (v. 25)
 - 3) Joseph named the child "Jesus" as the Lord told him to do (v. 25)

III) A FAITHFUL HUSBAND AND FATHER

- A) With Mary when Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Lk. 2:6-7, 16)
- B) Involved with completion of purification, presentation, and sacrifice rituals (Lk. 2:22-24, 39)
- C) At God's command, he moved his family temporarily to Egypt to escape Herod's wrath (Matt. 2:13-15, 19-23)
- D) Joseph and Mary raised Jesus faithfully throughout His childhood years (Lk. 2:40-52)
 - 1) They fulfill the role of parents responsible for spiritual and physical well-being of child
 - 2) Faithful to God in going to the Feast of the Passover every year
- E) Joseph provided for his family as a carpenter (Matt. 13:55) and passed on the trade to Jesus (Mk. 6:3)
 - 1) Joseph and Mary had four sons and at least two daughters (Matt. 13:55-56); James and Jude would go on to prominent work in the kingdom of Christ (Gal. 1:19; Jude 1)
- F) Absent at Cana wedding (Jn. 2:1) and at the cross (Jn. 19:25-27)
 - 1) Most likely had died before Jesus' ministry began – Jesus experienced death of a parent

Conclusion

Be like **Joseph** – a just, compassionate man who obeyed God and was a faithful husband and father