

Joseph (Day 3)

Question: Who was Jesus' adoptive father?

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Question: How did Joseph learn that he was going to be a father to Jesus?

Joseph learned that he was going to be Jesus' earthly father when an angel appeared to him and told him to make Mary his wife. The angel also told him that Mary was pregnant with a baby conceived from the Holy Spirit.

Question: How do we know that God wanted Joseph to lead the holy family?

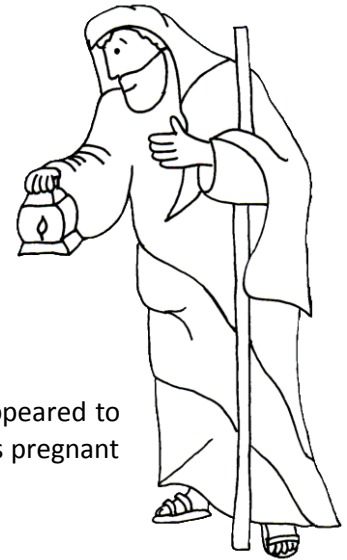
Though Mary has taken a much more prominent role than Joseph in history, it is fascinating to consider the monumental task assigned to Joseph. He was to lead and protect Mary as a husband and to care for Jesus as an earthly father. God confirms this leadership role by communicating solely with Joseph on four different occasions. The gospel of Matthew records that an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in dreams: telling him to take Mary as his wife (Matthew 1:20), telling him to escape with Mary and Jesus to Egypt (Matthew 2:13), telling him later to return to Israel (Matthew 2:19-20) and finally warning him not to settle his family in Judea (Matthew 2:22-23).

Question: Even before the angelic announcements, what evidence do we have from the Bible that Joseph was a good and kind man (particularly in respect to Mary)?

Even before the angelic appearances, Joseph showed that he was a good and kind man and that he cared for Mary. When he learned of her pregnancy during their betrothal, he had in mind to divorce her quietly so as not to "expose her to public disgrace" (Matthew 1:19) – keep in mind that legal betrothals in biblical times were far more binding than modern engagements; only divorce could break them. Joseph's intention of divorcing Mary quietly was meant to protect not only her reputation but also her life (women could be killed for getting pregnant outside of marriage). However, before Joseph could implement his plan, an angel instructed him to take Mary as his wife.

Question: What else do we know about Joseph from the Bible?

The Bible tells us little more of Joseph than that he was a carpenter (Matthew 13:55) and a "righteous man" (Matthew 1:19). We can infer that he taught Jesus his profession of carpentry (Mark 6:3) and that he was a faithful Jew who raised Jesus in the customs and laws of his people. Sadly, Joseph probably passed away when Jesus was young, because the last time he is mentioned in the Bible is in the account of the 12-year-old Jesus at the Feast of Passover in Jerusalem (Luke 2:41-52).



Question: What does the Bible tell us about Joseph's lineage? Why is this important?

The Bible tells us that Joseph “belonged to the house and line of David” (Luke 2:4). This is important, because God had promised David that his house and kingdom would endure forever (2 Samuel 7:16). Matthew 1:1-17 lists the genealogy of Joseph and shows that, as Joseph’s adopted son, Jesus had a legal right to the throne of David (the right to the throne was passed from father to son). Interestingly, Luke 3:23-38 gives the genealogy of Mary and reveals that she too came from the line of David. This fulfilled the promise that the Messiah would come from David’s own body. However, Luke is careful to conform to custom and not mention a woman’s name in the genealogy; he says that Jesus “was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph” (Luke 3:23).

Bible Reading Suggestion: Matthew 1:18-25

Color and/or arrange the image of Joseph for your Nativity scene.