

Joseph: A Just Man

Introduction

The supporting role in the Christmas story went to a man whose character justified his selection as guardian of the Son of God. Joseph serves as a prime example for the Christian husband and father to follow.

Message

1. He was compassionate (Matthew 1:18,19).

- a. When Mary was found with child, he did not want to cause her public humiliation. He did not put his rights first nor seek revenge to the full extent of the Law.
- b. He sought an alternative: to break their engagement quietly and privately. His love for Mary was evident in his desire to shield her from scandal.

2. He made thoughtful decisions (Matthew 1:20–25).

- a. Joseph did not act in haste or anger. He spent time and gave consideration to his decisions.
- b. His decisions were subject to divine counseling. When an angel appeared to him in a dream, giving new understanding to his situation, he responded in an act of faith: he married Mary.

3. He was faithful to the Law of God (Luke 2:21–39,41,42).

- a. He went with Mary to present the baby to the Lord in the temple, according to the Law.
- b. He took his family to Jerusalem each year to observe Passover, showing himself to be a spiritual leader in his home.

4. He was responsible (Matthew 2:13–15).

- a. He heeded the warning concerning Herod's desire to kill the baby Jesus. He accepted the responsibility of providing safety for the Child.
- b. He took steps to protect his family by moving them to Egypt. He became a fugitive for Christ's sake, yet he offered no complaint in the face of danger and inconvenience.

5. He was sensitive to God's leading (Matthew 2:19–23).

- a. He left Egypt to return to Israel at God's instruction.
- b. He turned aside to Galilee when he learned that one of Herod's sons was king of Judea. Joseph was flexible, willing to change direction and plans as God led Him.

Conclusion

While Mary fulfilled the special task of bearing and giving birth to the Christ-child, Joseph functioned as protector and decision maker for mother and Child. Together Mary and Joseph obeyed the voice of God and provided a family setting in which Jesus could grow to maturity.

God still needs "just men" who will be to their families what Joseph was to his.

Roberta L. Bonnici