

## **Christmas Lesson...The Other Folks in the Story**

### **"Joseph and Mary"**

#### **I. Joseph – His name means "may God add"**

- A. He was of Davidic descent (Matt. 1:20, Luke 2:4)
- B. He was a carpenter (Matt. 13:44), living in Nazareth (Luke 2:4)
- C. He was "engaged" to Mary when he found out she was pregnant...married her anyway (Matt. 1:18-25). Look at the illustrated story in Matthew 25.
- D. He got two key communications in a dream. (See Matt. 1:18-25 and Matt. 2:13-19).
- E. He taught Jesus completely (Mark 6:3) and was likely alive at the start of His public ministry (Matt. 13:55), but we do not hear from him again.

#### **II. The Biblical Record on Mary**

- A. Mary – The wife of Joseph and the mother of Jesus
  - 1. Her name means "bitterness" leading to trouble and sorrow
  - 2. Her home was Nazareth
  - 3. Her lifestyle – she was quite poor
  - 4. She was a virgin when she conceived Jesus. She was not immaculately conceived!
  - 5. Her husband died early in Jesus' life, never mentioned again.
  - 6. Her children: Jesus, called the "first born." She had other sons: James, Joseph, Judas and Simon, and daughters, unnamed (Matt. 13:55-56, Mark 6:3)
  - 7. Her relationship to Luke: An eyewitness source for the Gospel
  - 8. John took her into his home – John 19:27 (but only mentions her twice – Cana/Cross)
- B. Spiritually...She was the mother of the Christ Child
  - 1. Why her? Gal. 4:4, Luke 1:30
    - a. Prophesied centuries before: Isa. 7:14-16, Micah 5:2-3
  - 2. She was submissive and had a willing spirit – Luke 1:38
  - 3. She was a woman of faith – Luke 1:45-47

4. She had great insight into the word – Luke 1:46-55
5. She had a quiet spirit – Luke 2:19-51
6. She knew great sorrow – Luke 2:35, Luke 2:41-52, John 2:3-5
7. She was human, and her faith failed her at times, too. Mark 3:31-35, John 7:5
8. She had great maternal love – John 19:25

C. What can we learn from her life?

1. Even though Mary and her other children lived with Jesus for 30 years (observing His godly character), she still had a lapse of faith.

Look at the children of Israel – one day God would do a miraculous thing for them and the next day they had a lapse of faith.

Ex. 13: God delivered them from Pharaoh – Ex. 14: 11. They are afraid at the Red Sea and want to go back to Egypt.

Ex. 15: Great rejoicing and singing – Ex. 15:24. They found no water so they grumbled.

2. We aren't very consistent in our relationship with the Lord. Why? It takes time. It takes energy. It has to be a priority. And we fall every now and then.

1 John 1:8-9 – What can we learn from Christ's last words on the cross regarding His mother...her value...our value in His eyes?

### III. The child's birth was phenomenal

- A. There are some 360 Old Testament prophecies that pinpoint the birth and life of Christ. Some examples:

Topic/Description of Christ	Approximate Date of Prophecy	Prophecy	Fulfillment
1. Messiah would be seed of woman.	1889 B.C.	Gen. 3:15	Gal. 4:4
2. Promised seed of Abraham	1889 B.C.	Gen. 18:18	Acts 3:25
3. Promised seed of Jacob	1452 B.C.	Num. 24:17	Luke 3:34
4. Heir to throne of David	750 B.C.	Isaiah 9:7	Matt. 1:1
5. Place of birth	710 B.C.	Micah 5:2	Matt. 2:1
6. Time of birth	604 B.C.	Dan. 9:25	Luke 2:1-2
7. Born of a Virgin	750 B.C.	Isa. 7:14	Matt. 1:18
8. Massacre of the infants	629 B.C.	Jer. 31:15	Matt. 2:16
9. Flight into Egypt	725 B.C.	Hos. 11:1	Matt. 2:14

With analysis, one can calculate roughly the probability that any prediction could have been made without supernatural inspiration.

Genesis 49:10 – Messiah would come from Judah (12 to 1 odds)

Micah 5:2 – Bethlehem (1 out of 200)

Daniel 9:24-26 – Timing of His birth (1 out of 25)

"The 3 prophecies have a combined probability fulfillment equal to 1 out of  $12 \times 200 \times 25$ , or 1 out of 60,000. The odds against some of the other 300 + prophecies (virgin birth and resurrection) are astronomical! It seems reasonable to conclude that the phenomenon of fulfilled prophecy constitutes a unique and powerful evidence of the divine inspiration of the Bible." ("Many Infallible Proofs" by Henry Morris)

#### **IV. The child's visitors were unique – the Magi**

See Daniel 1:20 and 5:11-12

- A. The term "magi" is synonymous with magicians, Chaldeans and diviners. They could foresee events, explain dreams, were learned in astrology, medicine and natural sciences. They were powerful politically and in the public's eyes. They actually chose kings.
- B. Daniel came to be chief of the magi/magicians some 600 years before Christ. Daniel probably had some scripture manuscripts with him. Could it be that in their discussion with Daniel, that the magi learned of Daniel's God and some took Him as their God? Some of the Jews who remained may have also become magi themselves.
- C. Their arrival in Jerusalem...
  - 1. Clothes: Wore conical hats. Transportation: Fast horses, not camels. Number: Could have been as many as 1,000!
  - 2. The background: Caesar is very old and losing power. Herod is "old" and "mad." His army is away in battle. Into town rides a horde of men following a star (Numbers 24:17).
- D. Their gifts...gold, frankincense and myrrh. Joseph and Mary probably used the "money" to finance their trip to Egypt.

#### **V. Christ's birth is remarkably personal**

1 Tim. 1:15 *"Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst."*

Heb. 7:25 "Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them."

2 Cor. 5:15 "And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again."