

The Call of Christmas

Joseph: A Call to Protect

Into: Video clip of Joseph

Main Text: [Matthew 1:18-25](#)

This short video portrays the fearful- confused – uncertain side of Joseph
This is who we are before we surrender control of our lives to God’s plan for us

This is the same Joseph who will shelter and protect Mary as they travel to Bethlehem under the orders of Rome edict as they frantically search for a place for the baby to be born as Mary goes into labor and who will assist Mary in delivering the child with no experience and no other outside help

This Joseph who will go from just a man to a legend – Joseph the carpenter will become more than he ever dreamed

We always think of Mary as the special one - selected by God for the amazing task bearing and raising God’s only Son – and she absolutely was

But what about Joseph?

Joseph was selected by God every bit as much as Mary was

Joseph’s story isn’t found in Matthew

Matthew begins his book with a genealogy tracing Joseph’s family tree back to Abraham
Two thousand years earlier in [Genesis 22:8](#) God makes a promise to Abraham when he was about to sacrifice his son Issach that he was about to fulfill using Joseph

To better understand Joseph’s predicament we need to look back at Mary’s visitation

[Luke 1: 26 - 41](#)

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy,(2nd trimester) God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David.

³⁸ Mary responded, “I am the Lord’s servant. May everything you have said about me come true.”
And then the angel left her. ³⁹ A few days later Mary hurried to the hill country of Judea, to the

town ⁴⁰ where Zechariah lived. She entered the house and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ At the sound of Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's child leaped within her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Mary left Nazareth to make the trip to Judea to visit Elizabeth – excited but fearful maybe seeking wisdom and encouragement of her older cousin – God gave her much more!

Joseph didn't become aware of Mary's situation until she returned home – three months later – three months pregnant.

Mary presents him with an unbelievable story that the baby is God's own son and that she is carrying the Messiah

Try to imagine Joseph's reaction.

☆ Most of you know my family well – you supported us in prayer when Heather was diagnosed with breast cancer

Last week she rushed to the hospital when a blood clot in a major vein showed up on a sonogram and was seen again on a CAT scan.

One day later the Surgeon examining the third of three tests the MRI pronounced that she would not require surgery because there was no blood colt

He was so convinced that he stated that there must have never was one readings were just a mistake ... and yet the contrast testing from the CAT showed a blockage (Dr Seodat – massive blood clot)

We know that God did something amazing - but when we share – that kind of first hand direct intervention by God in a miraculous way for most people it's too much too believe!

Matthew 1: 18 - 24 God calls Joseph

¹⁸ This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.

²⁰ As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet:

²³ "Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'"

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife.

²⁵ But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus.

God knew that Mary's account of her encounter with Gabriel would not be enough for Joseph –

- No one else to corroborate
- Joseph was dealing with his own emotions issues - including betrayal ... he knew the baby wasn't his!

God always has a follow up plan – Gabriel would visit Joseph too but through a dream.

Sleep study Experts say:

- Most people average between four and six dreams each night.
- Each dream typically lasts in the range of five to twenty minutes.
- Over a lifespan, that equates to six years of their life.
- **Research claims that 99% of a person's dreams are forgotten after they awake but some dreams both are unforgettable and life changing.**

There are dreams and there are dreams ... If you've ever had a spiritual dream – you know the difference.

My dream I had as a teenager ... *Be careful, evil is everywhere ...* Asked: *Who is this* – Answer: *You know who this is ...* echoing evil laughter ... *The Lord is my Shepherd* [Psalm 23](#)

Dr. Jim Denison, Ph.D. author and cultural apologist

Has written extensively about a global phenomenon that is happening especially among Muslim people that includes the presence of dreams. He notes how statistics and stories suggest more Muslims have come to Christ in the last fifteen years than in the previous fifteen centuries. Many Muslims are responding to visions and dreams.

When Joseph woke from that dream - he dropped his plans and to obeyed God's plan He ended the engagement and married Mary immediately and when the child was born he named him Jesus just as he had been instructed.

God's plan always involves people – it involves you and me

The plan is perfect but it will always be frightening – because it will require you to step away from the comfortable – the safe – the routine and do whatever he calls you to – His way

God is consistent in the way He works with us as individuals

- With Mary he used a face to face visitation: very frightening
- With Joseph a dream – and not just once but at least four times

Joseph would have at least three more dreams

[Matthew 2: 13 – 15, 19 - 23](#)

¹³ After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a **dream**. “Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother,” the angel said. “Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.” ¹⁴ That night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and Mary, his mother, ¹⁵ and they stayed there until Herod’s death.

¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a **dream** to Joseph in Egypt. ²⁰ “Get up!” the angel said. “Take the child and his mother back to the land of Israel, because those who were trying to kill the child are dead.”

²¹ So Joseph got up and returned to the land of Israel with Jesus and his mother. ²² But when he learned that the new ruler of Judea was Herod’s son Archelaus, he was afraid to go there. Then, after being warned in a **dream**, he left for the region of Galilee. ²³ So the family went and lived in a town called Nazareth. This fulfilled what the prophets had said: “He will be called a Nazarene.”

Archelaus, the successor to Herod, began his reign by slaughtering 3,000 influential people he would be banished nine years later

Do you think God know what He’s doing?

Joseph not only listened to God’s initial call he continued to listen ...

Robert J. Morgan in his book, *The Strength You Need*, records the account of Bramwell Booth:

Bramwell Booth – The Son of William Booth founder of the Salvation Army
His father visiting him in London discovered that many men were sleeping on the bridges of the city overnight – He confronted his son about it ... “Go and do something!”

Morgan writes: “Go and do something” is what Christians have always done in the strength of the Lord. That’s what we’re called to do in a world of broken down walls. ... Christianity has changed the planet more than any other philosophy or faith system ever conceived on our globe. Christians have been at the vanguard of:

- the abolition of slavery, the promotion of human rights, the advance of prison reform the establishing of child labor laws, the creation of hospitals and educational systems. ... championing the rights of preborn children and the care of orphans and widows.

Somewhere near you there’s a child to raise, a heart to heal, a parent to care for a grandchild to love, a church to revitalize, a family to feed, a mission to support, a soul to save, a rift to mend, a note to send, a wall to build.

God calls us to do it in His strength.

Joseph responded to the call on his life that first Christmas –

I want you take a moment in prayer with me to listen for God's call to you – something He may have already been laying on your heart or something that He has spoken to you during this time today or maybe right at this very moment.

Use your bulletin insert take a moment – to listen than write down what your hearing.

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