A Biographical Study of Joseph the Husband of Mary

Harold Willmington
Liberty University, hwillmington@liberty.edu

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Joseph

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

I. The distress of Joseph—“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost” (Matt. 1:18).

II. The decision of Joseph—“Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily” (Matt. 1:19).

III. The dreams of Joseph

A. First dream

1. The contents of the dream
   a. Concerning the purity of Mary—“But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost” (Matt. 1:20).
   b. Concerning the person within Mary—“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21).
   c. Concerning the prophecy about Mary—“Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matt. 1:22-23).

2. The consequences of the dream
   a. The marriage in Nazareth—“Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife” (Matt. 1:24).
   b. The manger in Bethlehem—“And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David) . . . And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn” (Luke 2:4, 7)
   c. The message in Jerusalem (Luke 2:21-35)—An old man named Simeon delivered a message for Joseph and Mary as they dedicated the infant Jesus in the temple.

B. Second dream—Upon the departure of the wise man, Joseph received his second dream. “And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt” (Matt. 2:13-14).

C. Third dream—“But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, Saying, Arise, and take the young child
and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child’s life. And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel” (Matt. 2:19-21).

D. Fourth dream—“But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene” (Matt. 2:22-23).

STATISTICS
Father: Jacob (Matt. 1:16)
Spouse: Mary
Sons: James, Joseph, Simon, Judas (Matt. 13:55)
Daughters: Several unnamed (Matt. 13:56)
Famous ancestors: Abraham, David, Solomon
First mention: Matthew 1:16
Final mention: John 6:42
Meaning of his name: “Increaser, may God add”
Frequency of his name: Referred to 16 times
Biblical books mentioning him: Three books (Matthew, Luke, John)
Occupation: Carpenter
Place of birth: Bethlehem
Important fact about his life: He was the godly legal (but not physical) father of Jesus.