

Joseph the Just:
“Son of David”

Joseph the Just: Son of David

- Matt. 1:18-20 - “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. 20 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.’”

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- Matt. 1:21-25 - ““And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins. 22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 23 ‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, God with us.’” 24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, 25 and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.”

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- Matt. 2:13-15 - “Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him. 14 When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, 15 and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt I called My Son.”

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- Matt. 2:19-23 - “But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, 20 saying, ‘Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead.’ 21 Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. 23 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.’”

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- Luke 2:22-24 - “Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord 23 (as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD), 24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

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- Luke 2:39-45 - “So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. 40 And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. 41 His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. 42 And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. 43 When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it; 44 but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances. 45 So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him.”

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- Luke 2:46-52 - “Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. 47 And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. 48 So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, ‘Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously.’ 49 And He said to them, ‘Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?’ 50 But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them. 51 Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”

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- Born in Bethlehem between 50-40 BC; was an older man when he took Mary to be his wife.
- Died in Nazareth on July 20, 18 AD.
- Local itinerate carpenter by trade (“tekton” - where we get the word technology)
- Matthew follows the major royal line from Solomon for Joseph.
- Luke follows a minor royal line from Nathan, another son of David and Bathsheba for Mary.

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- Matthew and Luke are also the only Gospel accounts to include the infancy narratives.
- Joseph lived in Nazareth and traveled to Bethlehem in compliance with the requirements of a Roman census. Jesus was born there.
- Matthew is the only Gospel to include the accounts of the Massacre of the Innocents and the Flight into Egypt.

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- After this there is no further mention of Joseph by name.
- He was present at the account of Jesus at the Passover visit to the Temple in Jesus' 12th year.
 - This is the last time Joseph is noted in scripture as alive.
 - Tradition represents Mary as a widow during the adult ministry of Jesus.
- Joseph does not appear in any of Paul's epistles or Mark's Gospel account.
 - Very little other information on Joseph is given in the Gospels. He is never quoted.

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- Matthew records four occasions when Joseph is supernaturally instructed in the care of Jesus.
 - In the first dream, an angel confirms to Joseph that Mary is with child conceived by the Holy Spirit, that she will bear a son to be named Jesus. Joseph should marry her anyway. Their relationship was such that it was a covenant that it required divorce to break it.
 - In the second dream, Joseph is told to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt (from Bethlehem) because Herod is seeking to kill Jesus.

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- In Joseph's third dream, an angel instructs him to return his family to Israel, implying that Herod is dead. However, Joseph hears that Herod's son Archelaus reigns in Judea, and he is afraid to continue the journey.
- In the fourth dream, God Himself warns Joseph to avoid returning to Judea (Bethlehem). Joseph then settles Mary and Jesus in the region of Galilee in Nazareth.

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- Jesus states to Joseph that he is not His father, although Joseph would have already known this - Luke 2:41-51
- None of the Gospels mention Joseph as present at any event during Jesus' adult ministry.
- In Mark 6:3, they call Jesus "Mary's son" instead of naming his father.
- In Matthew, the townspeople call Jesus "the carpenter's son," again without naming his father
- His brothers are named without their father: James, Joses (Joseph), Simon, and Judas (Matt. 13:53-58).

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- Matt. 13:54-56 - “And when He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, ‘Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? 55 Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? 56 And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?’”

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- Luke 3:23 - “Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph.”
- Joseph is not mentioned as present at the Wedding at Cana at the beginning of Jesus' mission, nor at the Passion at the end.
- If he had been present at the crucifixion, he would under Jewish custom have been expected to take charge of Jesus' body, but this role is instead performed by Joseph of Arimathea.
- Nor would Jesus have entrusted His mother to John's care had her husband been alive.

Joseph Teaches Us

- Righteousness
 - The fact that God chose him says something about his character.
 - Joseph was not perfect; no one is. But his character would enable him to raise righteous children.

Joseph Teaches Us

- Mercy
- Jewish marriages took place in 3 stages: 1) contractual stage, 2) espousal stage, 3) actual consummation
 - Contractual - most marriages were arranged. A legal contract would be signed with details of the dowry put in writing
 - Espousal stage - An engagement period which normally lasted about a year. They were allowed to spend time together and start getting to know each other, but must keep themselves pure.
 - Marriage - typically a seven day wedding feast and consummation to follow

Joseph Teaches Us

- Merciful in his treatment of Mary
 - If Mary was unfaithful, the law required the death penalty - Deut. 22:13-21.
 - Joseph would have been publicly humiliated, yet he was merciful to Mary.
 - He planned to send her away quietly.
 - His merciful character would enable him to raise merciful children.

Joseph Teaches Us

- Faithfulness
 - He did as the Lord commanded him.
 - He accepted and raised Jesus as his own and protected Him according to the visions because God said so.
 - His faithful character would enable him to raise a faithful son.
- Joseph was the father chosen by the Heavenly Father to raise His only Begotten Son. That makes a profound statement about the kind of man Joseph was.

Joseph Teaches Us

- "Just as God told Joseph: 'Son of David, do not be afraid!' (Matt. 1:20), so he seems to tell us: 'Do not be afraid!' We need to set aside all anger and disappointment, and to embrace the way things are, even when they do not turn out as we wish. Not with mere resignation but with hope and courage. In this way, we become open to a deeper meaning. Our lives can be rebuilt if we find the courage to live them in accordance with the Gospel. It does not matter if everything seems to have gone wrong or some things can no longer be fixed. God can make flowers spring up from stony ground."
- "Each of us can discover in Joseph – the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence – an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble. Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation." (*Kate Fowler, "Ite Ad Joseph," 2/2/21*)