

Earthly Father: Divine Task

Intro: There is a man whom we do not hear much about that I would like to center our minds upon in this lesson. We are introduced to this man in the first chapter of the New Testament. The man's name is Joseph.

I. JOSEPH: THE MAN

A. Not much is known.

B. Lineage:

1. He is the son of Jacob; Mat. 1:16 ^{“16} And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.”
2. In the line of David; Mat. 1:20 ^{“20} 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.”

C. Occupation: Carpenter or builder; Mat. 13:55 ^{“55} Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?”

D. Marriage:

1. Mat. 1:18 ^{“18} 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.”
2. Committed man betrothed to Mary.
3. Earthly father of the child Jesus.

E. Consider some character traits of this one who God selected to be the earthly father of child Jesus.

II. HE OBEYED GOD UNSWERVINGLY

A. Angel appears to him in dreams:

1. Each time the angel instructed him to do something difficult.
2. Stay with pregnant Mary and the child who was not his own; Mat. 1:22-25 ^{“22} Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, ²³ 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. ²⁴ Then Joseph being raised from sleep **did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him**, and took unto him his wife: ²⁵ And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.”
3. Take the child and flee to Egypt; Mat. 2:13-14 ^{“13} 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. ¹⁴ When **he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:**”
4. He then experiences two more dreams:
 - a. Letting him know it was safe to leave Egypt; Mat. 2:19-21 ^{“19} But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, ²⁰ 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. ²¹ And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.”
 - b. Instructing him where to settle—in Galilee; Mat. 2:22 ^{“22} 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:”
5. All four times he obeyed without question.

B. We need fathers today who will obey God unswervingly and without question.

III. HE WAS A RIGHTEOUS (JUST) MAN.

A. Righteous/Just

1. Mat. 1:19 ¹⁹“Then Joseph her husband, being a just [righteous] *man*, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.”
2. Righteous or just is one who does or obeys the Gospel.
 - a. Psa. 119:172 ¹⁷²“My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments *are* righteousness.”
 - b. Rom. 1:16-17 ¹⁶“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. ¹⁷For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”
 - c. 1 John 3:7 ⁷“Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.”
3. The law:
 - a. The law allowed the putting to death of one who was not a virgin; Deu. 22:20-21 ²⁰“But if this thing be true, *and the tokens of virginity* be not found for the damsel: ²¹Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father’s house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father’s house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you.”
 - b. World Bible Commentary states: “Joseph did not want to expose Mary as an adultress, yet neither would he marry one so obviously guilty of sin.”
 - c. He could legally divorce her; Deu. 24:1 ¹“When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give *it* in her hand, and send her out of his house.”
 - d. His righteousness would not allow him to fulfill the marriage bond (consummate the marriage).

B. He was also a compassionate man.

1. He did not wish to humiliate Mary.
2. Notice the various ways the later part of Mat. 1:19 is translated:
 - a. KJV—not willing to make her a **publick example**, was minded to put her away **privily**.
 - b. NKJV—not wanting to make her a **public example**, was minded to put her away **secretly**.
 - c. ESV—unwilling to put her **to shame**, resolved to divorce her **quietly**.
 - d. NASV—not wanting to **disgrace her**, planned to send her away **secretly**.
 - e. NIV—did not want to expose her to **public disgrace**, he had in mind to divorce her **quietly**.
 - f. Common English Bible—he didn’t want **to humiliate her**, he decided to call off their engagement **quietly**.
3. Joseph took the path of protecting her even though it meant the possibility of suffering humiliation himself.

C. How we need fathers today who will be diligent in doing what God says, and who will be compassionate with others including family.

IV. HE LOVED JESUS

A. The Bible does not expressly state this, but we do see it implied.

B. Jesus at the age of 12:

1. Had been to Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover.
2. They started their return home, but Jesus was still in Jerusalem.

3. Joseph and Mary return to Jerusalem and find Jesus in the temple.
4. Luke 2:46-50 ⁴⁶And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. ⁴⁸And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. ⁴⁹And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? ⁵⁰And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them."
 - a. Consider Mary's statement to Jesus: "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."
 - b. We must not miss the deep pain in Joseph's heart when he could not find his *adopted* son who had been entrusted to his care.

C. This is the last mention of Joseph.

Conclusion: Joseph probably died prior to Jesus' public ministry. Yet, God chose a man of integrity to be the earthly father of His Son, Jesus. It was a momentous task, yet one that Joseph willingly embraced. What a great honor God gave unto him. If God were selecting an earthly father today, are we of such a nature He would choose us?