

=JOSEPH – THE FATHER=

Matthew 1:16, 18-25

Introduction: Jesus was the greatest man Who has ever lived. Yes, it is true that Jesus is God, so it stands to reason that He would be the greatest man who ever lived, but if you stop to think about it Jesus most likely did not always know that He was God. Most Bible scholars believe that Jesus found out that He was God when He was twelve years old. In Luke 2:41-52, the Bible tells us of the time when Jesus went with His parents to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. When the Feast was over everyone returned home including Joseph and Mary, Jesus' earthly parents; but Jesus stayed in Jerusalem. Joseph and Mary discovered after traveling for a day that Jesus was not with them so they returned to find Jesus with the doctors in the Temple. The Bible says that all that heard Him were astonished at His answers and understanding. In Luke 2:49, after Mary and Joseph had jumped on Jesus for not leaving Jerusalem with them, Jesus told them that He "must be about His Father's business." In Luke 2:50, Mary and Joseph, the Bible says, did not understand what Jesus was talking about. This, quite probably, was the first time Jesus had spoken to them like this. It is true that they already knew that He was God's Son, but they had never as yet mentioned it to Him. Therefore, it is believed that Jesus found out His occupation in life just like all Jewish boys found out. When a boy reached twelve years of age, his father would take him somewhere alone and explain to him the occupation that the boy would be in when he grew up. After explaining the boy's occupation the father would then train that boy in that occupation. Jesus probably did not know until he was twelve that He was the Son of God. He was all man, and men as children do not generally know or remember what happens to them as young children until they are older, so Jesus may not have known Who He was until God told Him at the Temple when He was twelve. It stands to reason then that Jesus, up until that time, only knew what His earthly father and mother had taught Him. We often study and hear about Mary and how great a woman she was, but very few times do we hear about Joseph, the man most responsible for the qualities of Jesus in His earthly life.

I. Joseph was a man. In Matthew 1:19, the Bible tells us that Joseph found out his betrothed wife Mary was pregnant, so he was going to put her away privily. Privily means hiding secretly. Joseph was worried about Mary, so in order to hide her pregnancy he considered sending her away to protect her from the ridicule of others. He then went on to face the ridicule with her after God told him that Mary was pregnant because of God. Protecting your loved ones is a true character trait of a real man.

II. Joseph was a just man. In Matthew 1:19, the Bible calls Joseph a just man. The word just means righteous. God records in His Word for all mankind to see that He felt that Joseph was a just man. Joseph must truly have been a great man for God to say this about him.

III. Joseph was a thinking man. Matthew 1:20, says that Joseph thought on these things. This tells us that he took the time to think. It would be good here to tell the pupils that they need to take some time away from their playtime and their television time and think about God.

It was after Joseph taught about God that God sent His angel to talk to Joseph. If we want God to talk to us we must take time to think about Him.

IV. Joseph was an obedient man. The Bible says in Matthew 1:20, that the angel of the Lord told Joseph to "take unto thee Mary thy wife." Then in Matthew 1:24 he, the Bible says, "took unto him Mary his wife." Joseph chose to obey God. His obedience to God also saved the life of the young child, Jesus. Herod found out that Jesus was born and began seeking to kill Him. Matthew 2:12 tells us that the angel of the Lord told Joseph to "flee into Egypt." Joseph immediately obeyed and in the very next verse departed to Egypt.

V. Joseph was a law-abiding man. In Luke 2:3, there was a decree that all the world should be taxed and each person needed to return to his own city to pay his taxes. Joseph, in Luke 2:4, obeyed what the government ordered him to do. It is a good thing that Joseph obeyed the law because had he refused to obey the government he would have ruined God's plan. God promised through the prophets that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. God used Joseph's honesty to see to it that Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

VI. Joseph was in awe of God. In Luke 2:33, the Bible says that Joseph marveled at the things prophesied about the Baby Jesus. When Mary's time of purification had passed, Joseph and Mary took Him as the Jewish law stated to the Temple to present Him to God. While at the Temple a prophet named Simeon took up the baby Jesus and prophesied of the impending crucifixion. Joseph was in awe of God when God's man Simeon told Joseph the same things that God's angel had told him.

VII. Joseph was a caring Father. He proved this by his concern for his Son when Jesus did not return with them when they left Jerusalem. In Luke 2:48, Mary tells the twelve-year-old Jesus that Joseph and she had been looking for Jesus and sorrowing for their lost Son.

VIII. Joseph was an understanding Father. In Luke 3:23 the Bible begins the genealogy of Jesus by making the statement that Joseph was only "supposed" or thought to be Jesus' father yet he lovingly cared for Him and treated Him as if He were his own flesh and blood.

IX. Joseph had a good reputation with his fellow man. In both Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3 the people of His own country referred to Jesus as the carpenter's son. This implies that the town's people knew of Joseph's work was the work and of such a quality that they referred to Joseph as the carpenter.

Conclusion: Mary was a great lady and she truly must have been a wonderful woman, but Joseph too was a great man. Maybe Joseph ought to be looked at as the greatest earthly father because his step-Son, Jesus, was the greatest man who ever lived.