

# Honor the Father At Christmas

Joseph was struggling with the woman he had hoped to marry. He had thought she was a devout and godly woman; but yesterday he discovered she was pregnant. The news was very disappointing and discouraging. Now what should he do? Under these circumstances he could not marry her. Divorce was the only acceptable option. Yes, she was pregnant and heartache would follow, but his momentary heartache was necessary to fulfill the ancient prophecies of a coming Messiah.

Our loving God graciously intervened and gave Joseph a dream in which he discovered that Mary was pregnant because of a divine miracle. The angel said, "... the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit." That was unexpected. She was pregnant by the Holy Spirit! Joseph would discover later that the baby was God in human flesh. Isaiah 7:14 said that a virgin would conceive a baby who was Immanuel or "God with us." The angel added that Joseph would have a son and His name was to be Jesus (Matthew 1:23, 25).

We know that Mary and Joseph were poor since they gave "two turtledoves or two young pigeons" (Luke 2:24) at the time Jesus was dedicated at the temple. The Mosaic Law allowed couples to offer only birds for this dedication if they were poor. The unexpected trip to Bethlehem was probably

difficult because their poverty and Mary's pregnancy. The reason for the trip might have been irritating since it was required to satisfy Caesar Augustus' decree for a census. The trip would have been long, cold and painful for both, but especially for Mary.

When they arrived in Bethlehem, Joseph found they could not stay in the inn, proper. They would not have privacy and would have to spend the evening on the lower floor of the inn and in the area set aside for the animals. Because Mary was pregnant and due to deliver, life was more difficult for

her and Joseph and now things seemed worse. At times God allows joyful events to be mixed with difficult moments. Life seemed very difficult as they made their way to the lower floor. There is a song that says it is always darkest before the dawn of a new day. For this couple the dawn had not come yet.

Then Mary gave birth. Christ was

born and the dawn came! Shepherds arrived with reports of angels speaking and singing on the ground and in the sky. The angel's message "for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" was thrilling news. We can imagine that immediately Mary instantly remembered Gabriel announcing that her baby was the Messiah, the Son of God, and Joseph remembered his dream telling him of a savior. The dawn had come and joy filled their



hearts as the shepherds excitedly gave their report.

If we read the pages of Scripture, we cannot find any praise for Mary and Joseph because of the complications and difficulties that they conquered. One may think this is wrong. Instead, the One who was praised in Scripture for all that happened was God the Father. Why? Luke 2:13-14 tells us that God the Father was praised when the angels sang. No one else was included. Why? It reminds us that God the Father planned the virgin birth and planned for the adoption of every Christian as one of His own children. Galatians 4:4-5 tells us that God the Father planned it all.

But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth  
His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that  
He might redeem those who were under the Law, that  
we might receive the adoption as sons. Galatians 4:4-5  
(NASB)

God the Father made sure that all of this happened at the correct time (Romans 5:6). God the Father sent Christ, planned the virgin birth, sent the angels, gave the dreams, caused the census to be required, and overloaded the inn! God the Father sent the Son. God the Father planned it all.

Therefore, we should not be surprised that Mary and Joseph were not thanked on that Christmas day by the angels. Instead, the angels praised God the Father.

And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude  
of the heavenly host praising God and saying,  
“Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace among men with whom He is  
pleased.” Luke 2:13-14 (NASB)

Let's join the angels and give our Father the praise and the glory He deserves. It is He who forgives those who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior as sons and daughters. It is He who sent Christ. It is He who planned it all and made it happen. He is the reason we have eternal hope and life.