



Matthew 1:18–25 (NLT)

This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.

As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. “Joseph, son of David,” the angel said, “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord’s message through his prophet:

“Look! The virgin will conceive a child!

She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means ‘God is with us.’”

When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus.

What do we know about Joseph the Carpenter?

From Scripture: The Gospels of Matthew and Luke are the only gospels that tell us anything about Joseph prior to the birth of Jesus. The last mention of Joseph is found in Luke 2:41–52. Jesus is twelve years old. Joseph and Mary are returning home from the Passover celebration in Jerusalem when they discover Jesus is missing. They retrace their steps back to Jerusalem and three days later find Jesus in the temple talking to the rabbis.

What do we know about Joseph the Carpenter? (cont.)

FROM OTHER SOURCES:

***The Protoevangelium of James* (2nd Century)**

- Written in roughly 150 AD and claims to be written in Jerusalem by James, the brother of Jesus. For numerous reasons, scholars reject that claim.
- Although the book is primarily about Mary, Joseph is mentioned to be an old man who had been previously married and had children.

***The History of Joseph the Carpenter* (5th Century)**

- Likely written in Egypt, the author claims to be Jesus, though scholars reject that claim.
- Joseph was a widower with 6 children from his first wife. He has 4 sons (Judas, Justus, James and Simon) and 2 daughters (Assia and Lydia). Mary, when she was 3 years old, was taken to the temple to live. At age 12 the priests decided that they should find Mary a husband. They wrote down the names of 12 honorable and elderly men, and Joseph was chosen. He was 89 years old when he was engaged to Mary. During the required two-year engagement process Joseph left home for six months for an out-of-town job. When he returned he discovered that Mary was in her second trimester of pregnancy. Heartbroken and embarrassed, he decided to break the engagement. Thanks to

a visit from an angel and the encouragement of the priests, Joseph decides to continue the relationship, so they marry when Joseph was 91 and Mary was 14 years old. The story makes it clear that Joseph was a great carpenter and a wonderful man who loved his family. Joseph dies at the age of 111.

NOTE: During the Protestant Reformation of 1517, one of the foundational pillars was *Sola Scriptura* which means “scripture alone.” Because these stories are not contained in the body of scripture, Protestant Christians do not consider them to be “doctrinal truth” while our Roman Catholic friends consider these writings to be part of the witness of the faith.

Here is what we really know about Joseph

- **We first meet Joseph when he is engaged to Mary**

This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph.

Matthew 1:18a (NLT)

- **Mary tells Joseph she is pregnant by the Holy Spirit**

But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 1:18b (NLT)

- **Joseph decides to quietly break the engagement**

Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.

Matthew 1:19 (NLT)

NOTE: THE LAW CONCERNING SUCH MATTERS

This is what you must do when a man has sexual intercourse with a virgin who is engaged to another man. If this happens in a city, take them to the gate of the city and stone them to death. The girl must die because she was in a city and didn't scream for help. The man must die because he had sex with another man's wife. You must get rid of this evil.

Deuteronomy 22:23–24 (GWT)

- **Joseph is obedient to God's call**

An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. “Joseph, son of David,” the angel said, “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife.

Matthew 1:20–21, 24 (NLT)

- **Joseph was with Mary when Jesus was born**

At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire . . .

And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem . . . And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her firstborn son.

Luke 2:1, 4, 6–7 (NLT)

- **Joseph takes his family to Egypt to escape King Herod**

After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother,” the angel said. “Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.” That night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and Mary, his mother, and they stayed there until Herod's death.

Matthew 2:13–15 (NLT)

- **In Nazareth Joseph continues to “train up” his son**

When Jesus was twelve years old, he accompanied his parents to Jerusalem for the annual Passover Festival, which they attended each year.

Luke 2:41–42 (TLB)

The BIG Question:
What can we learn from Joseph as we seek to follow Jesus?

1. **It is okay to have** _____.
 - Joseph didn't believe Mary at first, yet God still used him.
 - Thomas (the disciple) didn't believe the news of the resurrection until he saw Jesus.
2. **Joseph was** _____ **when it was neither easy nor convenient.**
3. **Joseph came to believe** _____.

Think About It

- Are you willing to walk in faith like Joseph the Carpenter?
- Are you willing to follow the Lord when it is neither easy nor convenient?
- Are you willing to walk in faith when God calls you out of your comfort zone?