

MYSTERY AND MAJESTY: GOD WITH US

JOSEPH . . . DID YOU KNOW?

MATTHEW 1:18–25



The Heart of the Matter

Young Mary, the mother of Jesus, knew so little about that little bundle of joy she conceived by the Holy Spirit. She didn't know those tiny feet would one day walk on water. As she put clean clothes on Him, she didn't know the extent to which He'd offer redemption and cleansing to humanity. And she may not have known that her lips kissed the tiny face of God Himself.

But if Mary knew so little, how much less did Joseph know?

Sometimes cast aside as a minor player in the retelling of the Christmas story, Joseph had a role that mirrored Mary's in many ways. He sat with her, marveling about the coming baby. He wondered about the baby's origin. And yet, Joseph was forced to make a choice that not even Mary had to make. While Mary carried the baby within her, Joseph had to choose to stay and involve himself in the baby's life. Let's examine Joseph's risky choice and what it tells us about this significant figure in the Christmas story.



Discovering the Way

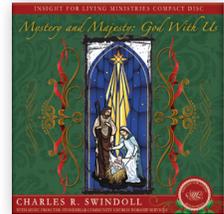
1. Joseph's Challenging Circumstance (Matthew 1:18–23)

Joseph and Mary already had been through an official process of engagement when Mary conceived. Most men in his day would have had Mary stoned or would have quietly divorced her. Joseph preferred the latter option—a sign of his care for both the Mosaic Law and Mary.

However, as Joseph considered his options, an angel appeared to him in a dream and assured Joseph that he should take Mary as his wife and should name the child Jesus, in accordance with Old Testament prophecy. Joseph's culture told him one thing; his God told him another. What would Joseph do?

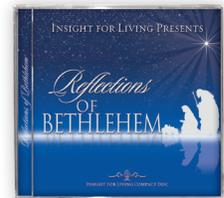


Tools for Digging Deeper



Mystery and Majesty: God With Us

by Charles R. Swindoll
CD



Reflections of Bethlehem

by Charles R. Swindoll
CD



Messiah: Arias and Choruses

by Chicago Symphony
Orchestra and Chorus
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2. Joseph's Character on Display (Matthew 1:24–25)

When Joseph awoke from his dream, he did what the Lord told him. What an example of pure faith! Furthermore, he waited to consummate his marriage until after she gave birth. What do Joseph's actions tell us about his character? They reveal a man of loyalty and faith, of humility and inner strength.



Starting Your Journey

Joseph took a profound risk when he followed God's direction to remain with Mary. We can learn from Joseph's risk by asking four key questions:

- *Are you facing a life-altering decision?* Some decisions that God calls you to make will inevitably require sacrifice and risk on your part.
- *Will you be the brunt of wagging tongues from those who simply will not understand?* When you take risks, you open yourself to gossipmongers.
- *Are you being forced to stand alone?* At times, your willingness to risk will mean that you have to leave behind the naysayers.
- *Has the Lord revealed His will to you, but you've been resisting that call?* When you have clarity from God about your next step, He wants you to take that step despite the risk.

What situation in your own life has mirrored the risk Joseph took? What in Joseph's life encourages you to see risk as an opportunity to serve God?

