

Joseph

I am Joseph of Nazareth. Even though I am named for one of our national heroes, it did not seem to be my lot to reach such a high station or noble character. Yet, I always wanted to fulfill, in at least some small way, the hopes of my devout parents.

Although I am only a carpenter, still I strive to be an honest and industrious workman, using my skills to improve the lives of at least a few of God's people by making utensils for their homes and tools and carts for their gardens.

This is a terrible time for Israel. No prophet has spoken for centuries and we are crushed under the heel of the Gentiles and their puppet rulers. Many of our leaders no longer seem to believe that God will ever rescue His people.

Perhaps that is why so many of the common people speak of the coming of the Messiah, to create hope in the midst of despair.

At least, so I thought until... well let me tell you the whole story.

After many years of hard work, I had saved enough to support a wife. I was introduced to a beautiful and righteous young woman named Mary. When all the agreements had been made and only the time of the wedding awaited, it was discovered that Mary was with child.

My heart was deeply troubled. And although my own hopes were destroyed, my greatest distress was for my betrothed.

Then, in the midst of my despair, a mighty angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to me. I was at first filled with fear but then with wonder as he told me of things beyond comprehension.

The God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob and of Joseph, had again moved His mighty hand to save His people. For the child Mary carried was the long-awaited Messiah, placed there by the Spirit of the Living God.

And I, the poor and ignorant worker, was to adopt, nurture and train the one of whom the prophets spoke. It was too wonderful and terrible all together.

Because of the command of the angel, I gladly took Mary as my wife. But also, because the angel had spoken to me, I knew that wisdom from on high would guide me in my awesome task.

Out of the darkest despair come the brightest hope, hope for Mary and for me when there seemed only shame and pain.

Yet, it was much more, for as a sinful man, I understand the terrible bondage under which we live. But to this the angel said, "You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

And I remember that my own mother, may God rest her soul, always hoped that her son would have something to do with saving the nation!

Matthew 1:18 - 25