

Joseph's Story

What a day, another extra-ordinary day. They just don't seem to stop coming this year. My wife and I have had more than our share of extra-ordinary days since our engagement. OOH, I guess I should introduce myself, my name is Joseph and my wife, who is still inside with the baby, is Mary. We just returned from seeing the priest to have, and I put this in quotations, our baby blessed and circumcised. You see the baby we have really isn't mine, at least not in the physical sense of me having helped create the child, but I am the one who is fathering the child.

Let me start from the beginning and explain what I mean and why I sort of feel lost in all of this commotion. Just over a year ago Mary and I got engaged, it was one of the happiest days of my life, I love Mary deeply and always have. Then one day Mary took me aside and said she had something important to tell me. I knew this was big news because she was very nervous and scared even to tell me. And what even made it worse for me was she started by saying 'Joseph please let me finish before you respond and don't be mad about what I tell you.' I told her I wouldn't, but knew this was not going to be news I was going to enjoy hearing from my soon to be bride.

She said Joseph I am pregnant, but don't be mad because I have not been with any men. Yahweh sent his holy spirit and the child I am carrying is the Son of God.

I was shocked, how could she lie to me like that. Of course she had been with another man, how else does a woman get pregnant? And then to top it off she is blaming Yahweh for her situation, I just couldn't believe it. But I was true to my word and did not get mad at

her; I just backed away and told her I needed time to think about this. What was I going to do? The woman I was supposed to marry was pregnant and I knew I wasn't the father; this was a disgrace both to me, my family and her family as well. To have conceived a child out of wedlock was just unacceptable. My first instinct was to break off the engagement right then and there; I mean I didn't want the stigma of being known as the man married to a "loose" woman. But I also knew if I did end the engagement it would also hurt Mary and I didn't want that either, I still loved her. So I went home and prayed about it, I mean if this child was Yahweh's, then he would instruct me on what to do for sure. That night during my sleep I was visited by an angel. Now I don't know about you but when an angel of the Lord Yahweh speaks to me I listen. And He explained to me that Mary's pregnancy was part of his plan to bring his son into our world and that I was there to fulfill a role to; as I was from the line of David which was the family line the Saviour of Israel was to come from. Mary was also from the line of David as well, but because I am the male heir, it was my family lineage that held more importance.

So I did as the angel told me and I married Mary, but we had no relations as a couple until after the child was born. You know, you would have thought that would have been the end of it, but that was just the start. When both our families found out she was with child and heard our incredible story as to how she became pregnant there was only one person who believed us and that was a relative of Mary's named Elizabeth, because she also had been visited by an angel who told her all that was going to happen, even with the child she was carrying at the same time. I am glad Mary had her to relate to because it was very tough on her, with both families looking on her as a loose

woman who had brought scorn to both families. I could take the ridicule, but it was very tough on Mary, but she got through.

Then came the birth, and just like everything else this could not be normal and be done in our home. No, just before she was to give birth the Romans decided they needed to count us all up and send us to wherever our families came from, which meant for us going from Nazareth to Bethlehem, which was not a short journey. The next issue we had was finding a place to stay, we had no way of calling ahead and booking a room, it was first come, first served. Luckily one of the innkeepers was willing to do a little extra for us and set up a room for us in his stable, just in time.

Then came the visitors and it was not just family as is expected at the birth of a child, especially a son in our culture. No we got some interesting visitors, shepherds who said to us that they had been visited by not just one angel that night but a whole choir of angels praising our son's birth. It was like they knew exactly when and where to look, this was truly bizarre and I still don't know what to make of it. I knew from what the angel told me that Jesus, that is our son's name, was going to be special and a king, but why would a group of simple shepherds know before other kings or statesmen. But I just kept my mouth shut and listened to all they had to say.

Neither of our families could understand all this fuss, we only told them Mary was pregnant and not how she became pregnant. I mean it was hard enough for us to understand and we were told by angels, for our families we felt it was best not to tell them of our dreams or they may have tried to stop the marriage altogether. So to them this was a normal child born as he should be with a mother and father. The whole

idea of angels visiting shepherds to tell of his birth was just beyond comprehension.

Now we come to today, and I was thinking this was just going to be a normal purification and we would go on our way. But no, as with everything else this ended up being a show as well.

We enter the Temple in Jerusalem and give our offering, a pair of turtledoves as he is our firstborn son. Then we took Jesus to see the priest Simeon to have performed the blessing and the circumcision. The moment he sees our son his eyes begin to well up with tears and he proclaims as loud as he possibly can:

Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for
revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.

Now everyone's eyes were on us, they were staring at us and pointing at us wondering what we had paid to have had such a special blessing put on our child. I wanted to crawl in hole and hide; I didn't want all this attention. But Simeon wasn't done there, he then quietly this time told Mary that our son would be responsible for the falling and rising of many in Israel, and a sign that many would oppose because he would reveal the inner thoughts of many and a sword would pierce Mary's own soul too.

That was it I had it, we were going to get out of there now, I had heard enough and disliked this being the center of attention. But it didn't end there, a prophet named Anna approached us praising our

child not only to us, but to anyone within earshot of her. She was saying our child was going to bring about the redemption of Israel.

I decided right then and there we were going straight home to Nazareth, because the attention we were getting was way too much and I wanted to be home and safe. So we just got home and now I finally can relax, I think..... What is that entire ruckus out front, what are visitors, who now? Who are these three men? I'll go find out; I guess the strangeness never ends.