

Mary and Joseph...Changed Plans

Luke 1:26-38; Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-7

1. They had wonderful, ordinary plans for their lives.

- a. Mary and Joseph were engaged. During biblical times, grooms were typically older than the brides by several years. Men needed to be established and able to financially care for a wife as well as provide the “bride price” to give to the her family. Women were typically mid to late teens. The groom or his father would meet with the brides family to negotiate the “bride price” and then the groom and bride would have a ceremony that would be the betrothal, sealed with a glass of wine. From then on it would take a divorce to end the betrothal. The groom would then return to his family’s home and begin to build a home or bridal chamber which could take up to a year and then when finished he and his friends would come unannounced to the brides home and snatch her away. The bride had to be ready at a moments notice because she would not know the exact time the groom would be coming.
- b. Mary and Joseph were godly people. Mary was described by Gabriel as being favored and someone who walked with the Lord and the Lord was with her. Luke 1:28. Joseph is described by Scripture as being a righteous man Matt. 1:19. He was kind, he wanted to divorce Mary privately and not publicly embarrass her when he found that she was pregnant.

So here were two ordinary but godly people living regular lives and looking forward to being together and building a life for themselves and their family.

2. God totally changed their plans.

- a. Mary was visited by Gabriel. She was surprised and fearful but the angel calmed her. The angel explained that she had found favor with the Lord and was going to bear the Christ child. She responded with confusion because she was a virgin. The angel explained that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and the child would be the Son of God. Mary responded with obedience and submission. She later traveled to see her cousin Elizabeth were was also miraculously pregnant with John the Baptist. She obviously didn’t tell anyone else until it was necessary.
- b. Joseph was visited by Gabriel. Joseph, when he learned of Mary’s condition, would have been devastated, all his plans and work went up in flames. Obviously cared about Mary and was going to put her away privately so as to cause her the least amount of pain. The law held that the woman who committed adultery was to be stoned to death. Being righteous and knowing the character of Mary he didn’t demand what the Law allowed.

3. God's plan was very costly to Mary and Joseph.

- a. Their reputation would have been damaged. How could Mary and Joseph explain about the angel since there were no other witnesses? Mary would have been ridiculed by many and so would have Joseph. His carpenter business would have been damaged, Mary would have lost many of her friends, the normal marriage tradition could not have been followed.
- b. Their future plans were completely destroyed. They had to make a trip at a terrible time for Mary all the ways to Bethlehem. There the baby was born with no help, the news about them might have been common knowledge among their clansmen. They had to flee to Egypt, and then return and try to live a normal life.

CS Lewis - I didn't go to religion to make me happy. I always knew a bottle of Port would do that. If you want a religion to make you feel really comfortable, I certainly don't recommend Christianity. "God in the Dock"

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