



JOSEPH THE EARTHLY FATHER OF JESUS - A MAN OF CHARACTER

GOLDEN TEXT

“When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.” (Matthew 1:24)

USEFUL PRACTICE

Joseph the father of Jesus left us a striking example of a humble, submissive and loving character.

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 1:18-25

18 - This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.

19 - Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

20 - But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

21 - She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

22 - All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

23 - “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

24 - When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.

25 - But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.



GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To introduce Joseph as an example of a humble, submissive and loving character.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- I. **To show** some aspects of the profile of Joseph the father of Jesus;
- II. **To point** out the exemplary character of Joseph;
- III. **To explain** the noble mission of Joseph.

INTRODUCTION

In this lesson, we will study what the Bible reveals about the life of Joseph of Nazareth, the husband of Mary, the mother of Jesus. A man endowed with a fair, temperate and loving character. In choosing the woman in whose womb Jesus would be conceived, God also chose the one who would support and protect her and her firstborn son. In this way, Joseph became a partaker of God's saving plan.

I - JOSEPH THE FATHER OF JESUS

1. Who was Joseph? Little is known about his life. Like his wife, Joseph was simple, humble, perhaps better known than her because of his profession as a carpenter. He entered into the genealogy of Jesus, contributing to the fulfillment of the prophecies, which indicated that the Messiah would come from the seed of David (2 Sam 7:12,16).

2. The adoptive Father of Jesus. Joseph was not the biological father of Jesus, but His adoptive father, since Jesus was begotten by the action of the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary (Luke 1:35). He is also called the "father guardian" of Jesus. This fact is of great importance, because he was "of the household and family of David" (Luke 2:4). Before the Law, Joseph was the father of Jesus, including him in his family, and also in the family of Mary, according to the record of Luke 3:23-38. This way, he ensured the confirmation of Jesus in the royal offspring of David and the tribe of Judah. Luke records the genealogy of Jesus from the seed of David (Luke 1:27).



3. Joseph, an obedient dreamer. Upon learning of Mary's pregnancy, he minded to put her away secretly in order not to expose her to public disgrace. But God came into action, and gave him a reassuring dream that he should not leave his place (Mt 1:20, 21). God did not let him fulfill his desire to sneak out, in order to avoid the consequences of his bride's unexpected pregnancy.

II - THE EXEMPLARY CHARACTER OF JOSEPH

1. An obedient man. In having the revelation about the nature of Mary's conception and receiving God's order not to leave Mary, Joseph submitted to the divine will: "When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife." (Mt 1:24). He could have woken up and taken time to see if he had not only had a dream caused by many cares (Ec. 5:3). But he had the spiritual discernment that it was a dream from God. And he obeyed promptly as soon as he woke up from his well-deserved sleep. With love, he embraced Mary and told her about the experience God had given him.

2. A temperate man. During the time when Mary was pledged to be married to him, he had no sexual intercourse with her. Firstly, because it was a grave sin (Deut. 22:23,24). Secondly, because he was a good man, obedient to God, "just." (Mt 1:19). Joseph "did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus." (Mt 1:25). They both were strong enough to be faithful to God about this, when many cannot resist even the first onslaught of the Evil One.

III - THE NOBLE MISSION OF JOSEPH

1. To ensure the royal line of Jesus. As seen in the first topic, before the law Joseph was the father of Jesus, including him in his family, and also in the family of Mary, as recorded by Luke (3:23-38). This way, he assured the confirmation of Jesus in the royal offspring of David through the tribe of Judah: "Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem Judah, whose name was Jesse" (1 Sam 7:12). Jesus is described in Revelation as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," the only one able to open the scroll with its seven seals (Rev. 5:5). Matthew records the genealogy of Jesus, from the seed of David. Jesus was legally adopted by Joseph, who was of the tribe of Judah.

2. To protect Jesus in his early years. Some relevant facts about the



life of Jesus prove the love and zeal of Joseph for the boy who was not his biological son, but the son of Mary by divine intervention.

a) At the birth of Jesus. "So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them." (Luke 2:4-7). In that situation, Joseph undoubtedly participated in the procedures for the delivery of Jesus, helping Mary in every detail, supporting the baby, cutting the umbilical cord, and postpartum cleaning, wrapping and placing the child in the manger.

b) In the ceremonies required by the Law. In the circumcision of Jesus, on the eighth day after his birth and in the presentation in the Temple, Joseph stood by Mary: "On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise the child, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he was conceived. When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord." (Lk 2:21, 22).

c) In the flight to Egypt. In the face of Herod's threat to kill the boy Jesus, God commanded Joseph to take Mary and the child and to flee to Egypt until the murderous king had died. During almost 500 kilometers of journey, in the middle of deserted roads, at the risk of robberies and bad weather, Joseph led his wife and son to a safe place. And he returned from there only by the revelation of God, when the murderer had died, and he went to live in Nazareth (Mt 2:13-23).

3. The zeal for the spiritual teaching of Jesus. His parents fulfilled what had been determined about the upbringing of their children through the systematic and daily teaching of the Word of God (see Deut. 11:18-21). It was part of his education to know and participate in the annual feasts of Israel, among which the Passover was the most important one. Joseph and Mary used to take the child to Jerusalem for this national holiday. "His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast." (Luke 2:41, 42). An eloquent example of a true father who is present in the life of his child, not just a parent who begets and neglects the life of his child.



CONCLUSION

Joseph was chosen by God for a very high mission in the plan of redemption. He was the man who supported Mary in her mission to conceive the Son of God as the Son of Man. Not only her, but Jesus himself, in his biological birth, in his childhood, in the threats he suffered. He cared for his upbringing together with his mother. He was a holy man. But, like Mary, he never claimed for herself honors and praises, which belong to God alone.