

# JOSEPH THE CARPENTER



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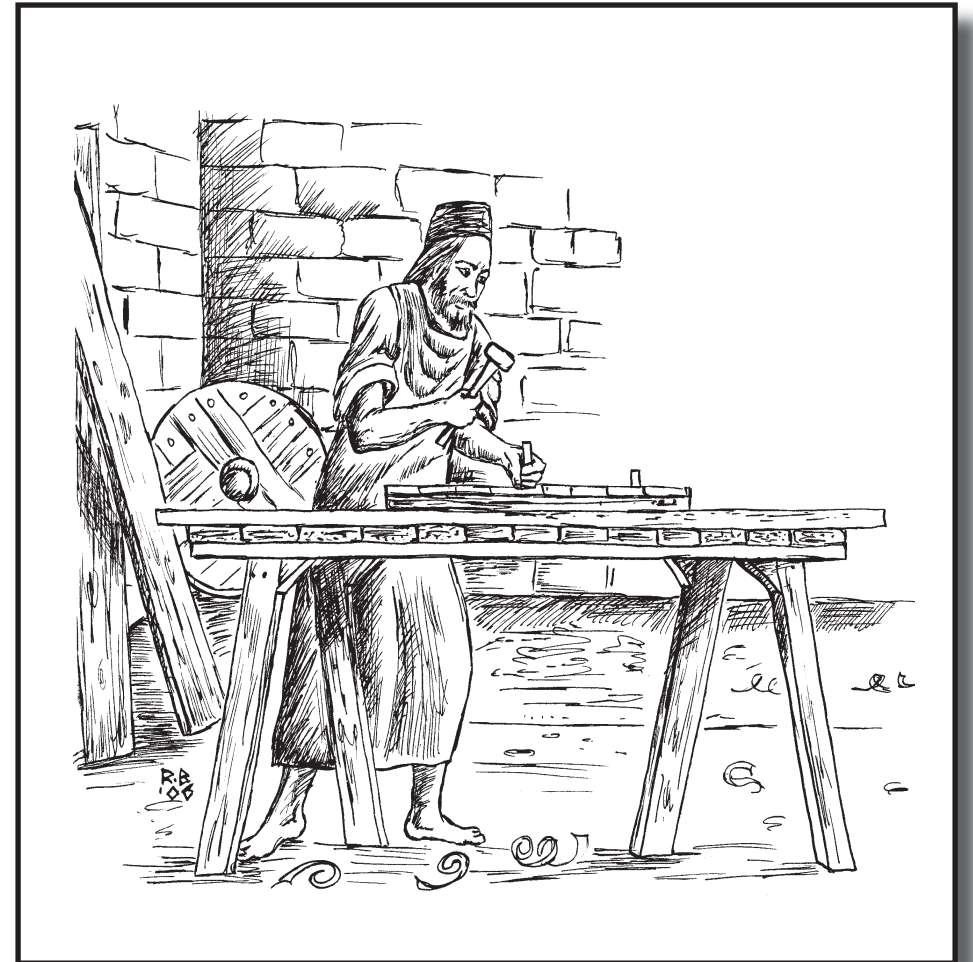
Writer: Mary Lee Gossett

Artist: Ruth Bochte

Editorial Advisor: Dr. LeRoy Ford

Bible Editor: Dr. Lorin Cranford

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**CHRIST TO THE WORLD MINISTRIES**

# Joseph the Carpenter

**Read Matthew 1:18-25 in your Bible.**

Joseph and Mary were betrothed (engaged). Within a year Mary would leave her father's house and the couple would become husband and wife. Betrothal was as binding as marriage; only divorce could dissolve the legal contract made by the couple's parents.

But something happened that would change forever the way people viewed this special couple. Awe, amazement, dismay, even ridicule must have followed.

You see, God chose Mary to bear his Son. The Holy Spirit came upon her and left her "with child." A virgin "with child?" Unheard of, yet true. The angel, Gabriel, appeared to Mary and explained that she would bear a son who should be named Jesus. But what about Joseph? Poor Joseph!

## Joseph's Problem

Joseph was in agony. Jewish law said he should divorce her, even put her to death (Deut. 22:13-30). Joseph was a righteous man who obeyed the law. But, he loved Mary. Should he "*divorce her quietly?*" (Matt. 1:19). That seemed to be the right thing to do.

## Joseph's Dream

God, through an angel, spoke to Joseph in a dream. He told Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary home with him as his wife, that the child was from the Holy Spirit.

Joseph must have felt reassured when the angel told him, "*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*" (Matt. 1:21).

## Joseph's Faithfulness

Joseph listened to God's message and followed his guidance. James 1:22 says, "*Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.*"

Joseph was always there for Mary. He was there for Jesus' birth. He was there for his "presentation" at the great temple in Jerusalem when the baby was forty days old. (Luke 2:22-38).

God spoke to Joseph through other dreams to protect Jesus. He was warned in a dream to flee to Egypt when King Herod sent soldiers to Bethlehem to kill every baby boy under the age of two years (Matt. 2:12-13). Later, he was told to return to the land of Israel (Matt. 2:19). When they returned to Israel, Joseph was "*warned in a dream*" to move to Galilee and not Judea, his home (Matt. 2:22).

What an honor to be chosen by God to nurture and protect the Son of God during his childhood. What an honor to be so trusted by God to be his earthly "stand-in."

Joseph's example reminds us that it is better to "*obey God rather than men*" (Acts 5:29). We can see that faith to follow God's guidance leads to fulfillment of his purpose for our lives.

## Conclusion

God used Joseph, and God can use you. He can change your life. Jesus can forgive your sins. He is the compassionate Savior who loves you with an everlasting love.

The Bible teaches that you are a sinner. But God loves you and sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for your sins. You receive Christ as your Savior by turning from your sin and placing your faith and trust in him.

**Pray this prayer:** "*Dear God, I know that I'm a sinner. I believe that Jesus died for my sins and rose from the dead and is alive today. I now turn from my sins. I am placing my faith and trust in Jesus alone to be my Savior and to forgive me. I receive Jesus into my life as my Savior and Lord. From this day forward, I will follow Jesus. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for loving me and for coming into my life. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*"

**Welcome into God's family!** Share with others that you have received Christ as your Savior and Lord. Ask for baptism in a local church as a public expression of your faith. If there is no church near you, start a church by gathering a group of persons in your home and worship together on a regular basis. Read your Bible and pray each day. Tell others what Christ has done for you and what he can do for them.