

MARY, THE HIGHLY FAVORED ONE

Mary learned from Gabriel that God considered her as a highly favored believer (Luke 1:28).

Mary also learned from the angel Gabriel that her Aunt Elizabeth was six months pregnant (Luke 1:36-37). Mary knows how much her aged aunt has prayed and longed for a child and she immediately prepared to go to help her (Luke 1:39).

As spiritual mature believers, Mary and Joseph understood the dispensation ministry of teaching angels (JA). They also understood that the archangel Gabriel is assigned to the messianic redemptive plan of God (Luke 1:11-20) [Zechariah]; (Luke 1:30-37) [Mary]; (Luke 2:8-15) [temple shepherds]; (Matt.1:20-21) [Joseph]; (Matt.2:13) [Joseph]; (Matt.2:19-20) [Joseph].

- In the OC, angels taught believers.
- In NC, believers teach angels (1 Cor.4:9; 6:3; 13:1; 1 Pet.1:12).

Joseph probably would have like to have spent more time with Mary prior to her emergency leaving but would certainly understand the reason – “At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea.” (Luke 1:39)

Mary stayed with Elizabeth the final three months of her pregnancy before returning home (Luke 1:56).

In her excitement about visiting Elizabeth, Mary must have failed to tell Joseph about Gabriel’s visit to her and her pregnancy (Luke 1:30-37).

When Mary returned home, she was three months pregnant. This is how Joseph discovered about it –“Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before (prin e is antecedent of time plus a.a.infin of fact) they came together (sunerchomai / a.a.infin), she was found (heurisko / a.p.ind) to be with child through the Holy Spirit.” (Matt.1:18)

“Through the Holy Spirit” will also be discovered later through the teaching ministry of the angel of the Lord (Matt.1:20).

Joseph’s initial discovery and reaction to Mary’s pregnancy after returning home is the subject of this lesson. Joseph went from wooing to woe-ing over Mary with this discovery. **If your heart is weighed down today, this special Christmas message is for you.**

This lesson will study SIX aspects of Mary, the Highly Favored One.
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1 Joseph’s internal conflict over this discovery is identified by the Greek grammar of Matt.1:19

“And Joseph her husband, being (eimi / p.a.ptc / ASQ) a righteous man (experiential +R), and not wanting (me thelo / p.a.ptc) [emotional] to disgrace her, desired (boulomai / a.p.ind) [mental] to put her away secretly.”

The conflict is identified by the two (p.a.ptc) working at the same time with main verb (boulomai / a.p.ind) [mental].

The first p.ptc is (eimi) an absolute status quo verb. Joseph was a spiritual mature believer who desired to live according to God’s will in every matter of his life.

The second p.ptc show Joseph struggling with being righteous and at the same time not wanting (me thelo/ emotional) to do anything that would humiliate Mary publicly for her infidelity.

“Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, ‘the righteous man shall live by faith.’” (Gal.3:11)

2. Boulomai is a Greek word that emphasizes the rational and doctrinal thinking with the desire to do the right thing according to the word of God.

Joseph has placed himself between two doctrinal issues: marriage and his love for Mary and divorce and his love for God.

Boulomai means that that he is searching diligently the Scriptures to reach a conclusion that is compatible with the will of God regarding this situation.

He has searched everything pertaining to divorce based on adultery (Deut.24:1-4). He has studied all of his options very carefully (James 1:2-8). Joseph feels that he is left with two options about divorce: private and public.

Every circumstance of life is intended to focus your attention upon categorical bible doctrine and a grace solution (1 Pet.1:6-9).

3. The decision Joseph reached was to not marry but also not to humiliate either. He decided to divorce Mary privately (apoluo / a.a.infin / lathra) (Matt.1:19).

“But when he had considered (enthumeomai / a.p.ptc) [conclusion after much inner reasoning of the Scriptures] this (tauta / accpln) [all of the things discussed previously].” (Matt.1:20a)

Joseph did a smart thing. He slept on it. He did not act rashly (Matt.1:20). To the best of his spiritual reasoning, he has resolved the problem doctrinally as tough as it was. He didn’t get vindictive or self-righteous (MAS). He wasn’t going where God didn’t want him but he wasn’t going where God wanted him either.

Joseph is to hurt by Mary for her to be his teacher of truth. It will take an outsider that he respects.

4. Divorce was permitted but not command in Mosaic Law since the 15th century BC (Deut.24:1-4; Mark 10:5)

Jesus declared that divorce was permitted due to hardness of hearts towards the divine institution of marriage because of institutional reversionism.

The rise of divorce in a client nation is a sign of NV towards the laws of divine establishment of marriage.

During the time of Jesus, there were three views regarding divorce:

- **Strict orthodox** No cause at all based on Mal.2:14-16.
- **Hillel** Any and every cause based on the phrase, “she finds no favor” in Deut.24:1-4.
- **Shammi** Only “erwah dabar.” A phrase found in Deut.24:1-4. Jesus interpreted it in Greek as porneia (fornication or all illicit sexual acts apart from marital couples) (Matt.5:32; Heb.13:4; Lev.18)

NOTE: Only biblical grounds for divorce gives rights for remarriage.

5. Suppose Joseph is wrong about Mary?

But how could he be wrong about her pregnancy? Why is he willing to believe the worst rather than the best of Mary? Why isn’t he willing to give the benefit of the doubt? Has he become subjectivity about this problem?

Here is the importance of a principle we learned from our study of Job. **False assumptions lead to false interpretations that lead to false expectations that lead to false application.** Joseph’s inner struggle and

agony of soul is unnecessary. Why is he putting himself through an emotional wringer? He has created a living nightmare!

Why did it never occur to Joseph to consider Isa.7:14 and the virgin birth? It was a prominent messianic teaching (Isa.7:14; 8:8, 10). Circumstances of life are also part of the CWL. Actually Mary is not really his problem. Joseph is focused on what he is not willing to do.

This would mean that his Mary would be the mother of the Messiah! Joseph was apparently too far removed from this possibility. He hadn't heard the words that Mary heard – "For nothing will be impossible with God." (Luke 1:37)

What did Mary say? "Oh, she found a Scriptural way out of the problem. How could Mary do this to me?" It is important to be open to spiritual instruction no matter what the source. We need ears to hear (PV with open heart).

Principle: It is never God's intentions for any believer with PV to fail in executing His perfect plan (1 Cor.1:9; 2 Tim.2:13; 1 Cor.10:13; 2 Cor.12:9).

6. This lesson reminds us that God is very much aware of our struggles in our lives and He will teach PV the truth (Matt.1:20-25) [the directive will of God].

Notice that God dealt with Joseph's greatest fear first (2 Tim.1:7) – "Do not be afraid (me phobeo / a.p.subj) [prohibitive / warning against relapse of doubt and fear] to take Mary as your wife."

Notice that the next thing God did was to correct his doctrine – "For that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit."

Notice that God related it all to messianic redemptive history. God gave him the big picture of the plan of God.

Finally, notice Joseph's response to the word of God (Matt.1:24-25) – "**And Joseph arose** (egeiro / a.p.ptc) **from** (apo+abl of separation) **his sleep** (tou hupnos / deep sleep), **and did** (poieo / a.a.ind) **as** (hos describes the drama in the action) **the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took** (paralambano / a.a.ind) **her as his wife.**"

- Imagine Mary's relief and joy with Joseph's spiritual leadership. Notice that she didn't make him pay for not believing her.

What a different Christmas Joseph and Mary experienced because of PV applying the truth of God's word to their problem. This story has a happy ending. It started out in MISERY and ended under the MISTLETOE.

There is hope for you in Christ this Christmas. But you will need this mind-set of Mary,

"Be it done to me according to your word." (Luke 1:38)