

GABRIEL'S MESSAGE TO JOSEPH

This is Gabriel's third Christmas message announcing the historical coming of Christ into the world.

It occurred during the third month of Mary's pregnancy and the birth of John (Luke 1:36, 39, 56).

Following the birth of John, Mary returned to Nazareth (Luke 1:56). Joseph discovered that Mary was three months pregnant – "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit." (Matt.1:18)

The timing and reason for Gabriel's third message was a **911 emergency** visit as a result of Joseph's discovery and decision regarding it – "And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly." (Matt.1:19) [noble but wrong]

This lesson will study five aspects of Gabriel's 911 emergency visit and message that turned a miserable night into a mistletoe morning for Mary and Joseph.

1. Gabriel's 911 emergency visit and message was the result of this principle:

Joseph's false assumption led to a false interpretation, which led to false expectations, which led to an application of a false belief (Matt.1:18-25).

Joseph did this after discovering Mary's pregnancy and her explanation of it – "Before they came together she was found (heurisko / a.p.ind) to be with child (en gaster echo / p.a.ptc.nsf) (Luke 1:31) by a Holy Spirit (creative work) (Luke 1:35) (Matt.1:19b)

Mary apparently told Joseph that she was pregnant by the creative work of the Holy Spirit.

Joseph apparently chose not to believe her. Mary probably never thought that she would be abandon by her loved ones for doing God's will when she declared – "Behold, the bonds slave of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word." (Luke 1:38)

Note: Their romantic love was not strong enough to survive this type of relationship challenge even as spiritual mature believers. **What's missing?** (read 1 John 4:16-19)

2. As a spiritual mature believer, Joseph has the spiritual capacity to think and do the will of God under maximum pressure (Phil.4:13; 1 Pet.1:6-8; Rom.5:3-5).

- Why did he choose to believe the worst rather than the best of Mary?
- Why didn't he seek spiritual counsel before making such a big decision, when even Herod sought spiritual counsel regarding Christ (Matt.2:4-6; James 1:2-8)?

This is what we refer to as **old man conformity to the world thinking** – "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (Rom.12:2; Eph.4:22-24)

Joseph had two choices. He could believe Mary and marry her. Or he could not believe Mary and divorce her.

3. Unfortunately, Joseph took a different doctrinal approach based on a faulty assumption. He chose divorce.

However, he did follow the doctrine of divorce correctly. He had two options of divorce: public (Deut.22) or private (Deut.24). He chose to temper mercy with justice and to divorce Mary in private (Matt.1:19).

He chose to believe that Mary's pregnancy was based on infidelity toward him, marriage, and God. Thus he was afraid to marry her.

He chose to make Mary the cause of his personal unhappiness and misery. But the truth is that he is actually the cause of it. In fact, it is self-induced misery based on old man conformity of worldly thinking.

Yet because he had positive volition to the word of God, God was faithful to straighten him out – “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and **God is faithful**, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation **will provide the way of escape** also, that you may be able to endure it.” (1 Cor.10:13)

4. It was at this time that Gabriel was sent on a 911 emergency visit to Joseph while in a nightmare dream (Matt.1:20a).

Joseph had taken a different doctrinal path regarding Mary. But would he be teachable to take the path Mary had suggested regarding this same subject with Gabriel?

- This is an example of the over-ruling will of God working on behalf of the directive will of God in the plan of God.

Old man worldly conformity thinking resulted in misguided thinking resulting in fear, doubt, distrust, and SIM.

This was one reason God sent Gabriel to teach Joseph during deep sleep dreaming. God wanted to engage him outside consciousness of old man worldly thinking. “Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.” (Matt.1:20b)

New man divine viewpoint thinking would be “This child in Mary was not Joseph's but was not any other man's. It was God's Only Begotten Son (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9).”

5. Joseph did two very smart things:

First, he slept on it. Secondly, when he got up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife (Matt.1:24).

God changed their Christmas song from Blue Christmas to Joy to the World. One message of this Christmas sermon is that God can change your misery into mistletoe.

“Joy to the world! The Lord is come; Let earth receive her King; let every heart prepare Him room.”
(1 Cor.15:3-4; Rom.1:16; Eph.2:8-9; John 10:28)

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which translated means, **‘God with us.’**” (Matt.1:23)

Merry Christmas