

Wednesday, December 8, 2021
SCANDAL OF GRACE
PART TWO

Last Wednesday, we began a look at the events leading up to Jesus' birth. We looked at Gabriel's visitation to Mary. This evening, we move to Joseph's reaction.

Matthew 1:18-25 (NKJV)

We do not know if Mary told Joseph about the word from Gabriel but if she did, Joseph didn't believe it. Maybe she just trusted God to tell Joseph the truth. Whatever occurred, Joseph decided to divorce Mary. The word delivered by Gabriel seemed too fantastic to believe. Can you imagine what was going through his mind? His wife betrayed him. Unless what she told him was true. How could it be. The story she told just makes things worse. Why doesn't she just be honest instead of coming up with some crazy story that implicates God Himself in this. The betrayal isn't just at a physical and relational level but a spiritual one too. If this story gets out in town, no telling what will happen.

In spite of his frustration, Joseph is a godly man. The word "just" means godly in behavior but also attitude. Joseph doesn't want to take this to the religious authorities. If he does, Mary will not simply be liable for the adultery which carries the death penalty but liable as a blasphemer as well. The kind thing would be to divorce her privately. As Joseph thinks on this, he has a dream. In the dream, an angel tells him that what Mary has said is true. He reminds Joseph that the Word says a virgin will bear the Son of God. Translation: Mary told you the truth and she was not unfaithful to you. Would you believe this? Would your parents believe you or would they press you to divorce? Could you believe that God chose you and your wife to bear the Son of God? Why not a king or rich man or a priest? Can you believe the incredible nature of this choice?

Joseph chose to believe in spite of all these questions. What type of faith does it take to believe something like this? Since Mary is pregnant, Joseph takes her into his home. He could have thought of preserving his reputation and Mary's by going ahead and having sex with her to have proof of her virginity (Duet. 22:13-22). Instead, Joseph thought of the holiness of God and placed it before anything else. He wasn't intimate with his wife until after she bore the Son of God.

Every fulfillment of God's plan includes an element of scandal.

Romans 9:33 (NKJV)

Today's Scriptures:

- Matthew 1:18-25 (NKJV)
- Romans 9:33 (NKJV)