



**Educate  
+ Engage**



WHAT CHILD  
IS THIS?



Joseph - The Obedience  
of Hope

### OVERVIEW

The birth of Jesus changed everything. His birth brought hope, transformed lives, and revealed God's presence with us. For those present, their view of this Emmanuel, God with us, shaped their faith and their future.

For Joseph, this wasn't just another baby being born. His wife Mary would give birth to a son named Jesus. While Jesus wasn't Joseph's natural born son, Joseph would be the one to raise him. His example shows us the power of obedience.

#### **Scripture Passage**

Matthew 1:18–24 (NLT)

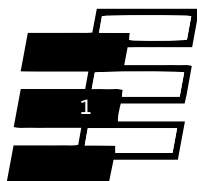
This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.

As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet:

"Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'" When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife.

### EDUCATE

Hope calls us to trust beyond what we can see. At some point, hope will always require obedience. For Joseph, he made the choice to obey God despite the uncertainty. Joseph shows us that hope requires action on our part.



### **Point 1: Wrestle with difficult choices.**

In Matthew 1:18, Joseph found out about Mary's pregnancy. This certainly would have been a scandal in their day and age. Joseph was faced with a choice. No doubt he loved Mary; she was his fiancé. But to remain with Mary would cost him greatly. He would be raising a son that wasn't technically his.

What difficult choices have you wrestled with when it comes to following God's plan for your life?

Is following God always easy?

### **Point 2: God confirms His plan.**

While Joseph was in the middle of wrestling with a difficult choice, God showed up. Joseph was considering the words of Mary and trying to figure out the best way forward. This was the moment that God sent an angel to Joseph in a dream. The angel confirmed everything that Mary said.

God has a way of showing up for His people. He doesn't just give us a word; He confirms it! The prophet Isaiah gave us a word from the Lord in Isaiah 41:10: "Fear not, for I am with you!"

Have you ever experienced God confirming His Word to you? How did that make you feel?

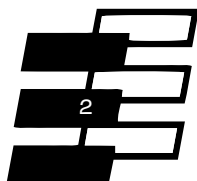
### **Point 3: Immediately obey God's call.**

God gave Joseph a dream. In the dream, God sent an angel with a special message for Joseph. In Matthew 1:24 we learn that as soon as Joseph woke up, he obeyed the angel and did what the Lord asked him to do.

When we get direction from God, it's important that we act on it in obedience. James 2:17 tells us that faith without works is dead. In other words, faith takes obedience. Joseph demonstrated His faith in God by his obedience to the Word of God.

### **Closing**

For Joseph, the birth of Jesus changed everything. God didn't just choose Mary. God also chose Joseph. Joseph had to wrestle with a difficult choice. Would he choose what seemed to be the easy way out and keep pursuing his plans? Or would Joseph choose the path that God was placing in front of him? In the moments of decision, God reassured Joseph. He confirmed His word. Now the choice was up to Joseph. For Joseph, hope would require obedience. In the end, Joseph made the right choice.



In our own journey of faith, we will find ourselves in a similar position as Joseph. So often in living for God, our hope in God is demonstrated or proven by our obedience to His Word.

### ENGAGE

What can we learn from the story of Joseph? What is God calling us to do?

One of the greatest things we can do for our faith is to simply practice obedience. What's one thing we can do this week to demonstrate our hope and faith in God through our obedience?

We know that obedience isn't always easy. Joseph made the difficult decision to obey. However, I believe that Joseph would encourage us that making the choice to obey God is always better than choosing to trust in ourselves. Joseph would've missed being part of the greatest story ever told had he not lived in obedience.

Let's close our lesson today with prayer. I want us to pray prayers of commitment where we tell the Lord we will obey the leading of His voice.

