

Christmas Costs

One individual life may be of priceless value to God's purposes, and yours may be that life.

(Oswald Chambers)

Two Jewish families came together and arranged the marriage of their children—a custom in those days. After the terms of the union were agreed upon, Joseph and Mary entered into a covenant relationship where they were legally bound to one another. In due time the marriage would be consummated; only then would they be allowed to live together as husband and wife.

During the course of their engagement Mary's relative, Elizabeth, became pregnant so the young new bride traveled to southern Israel to assist in the delivery her relatives baby—John the Baptist. Shortly before Mary departed from Nazareth the angel Gabriel appeared to her. He said (Luke 1:30-31), "You have found favor with God ... and will give birth to a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus ... the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God." And it happened as the angel said.

Upon arriving home from Judea Mary told Joseph about the angel, claiming that she had become miraculously pregnant by the Holy Spirit. Joseph did not believe her. He felt betrayed and decided to file for divorce. He did not seek revenge—he simply wanted out of the relationship so he could get on with his life. He decided to send her away secretly. Mary did not realize the cost of Christmas when she said to Gabriel (Luke 1:38), "Let it be to me to me according to your word."

The first Christmas was not celebrated with lights, tinsel and mistletoe. It was plagued with anger, shame and fear. Joseph eventually believed Mary, and took her to be his wife after the Lord appeared to him in a dream. He and Mary demonstrated their love for God through obedience. They did not intend to change history but they did—they changed the world through faith. It was the obedience and openness of one young woman that forever changed the course of human history (Encyclopedia Britannica). Mary's humility and obedience to the message of God have made her an example for all believers."

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