



Stepping Stones

Matthew 1:18-25 New Revised Standard Version

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

Notes: _____



He never says a word in Scripture, but, then again, actions speak louder than words. At some point, Mary had broken the news to Joseph, news which more than likely had a breaking effect upon him. They were married as far as the law was concerned, but now Mary was with child and it wasn't Joseph's child. How might we have responded? Would we have "flown off the handle" and demanded justice? Would we have "hunted down" the other party? It's difficult to say, because, in all honesty, we don't know what we would have done because it isn't our family.

But, for Joseph, there was a decision which he *had* to make. He could have had her stoned to death or made her name "mud" in the community. While those may have been common options, Joseph decided to take a much higher road and let the betrothal be terminated quietly. Without a lot of fuss, Joseph and Mary could go their separate ways and begin life anew with other partners. No one would need to know any details and no additional harm would be done to anyone's feelings. Yes, that is what Joseph had decided upon, but God had other ideas.

- 1. Righteous actions are a product of Godly wisdom.**
- 2. Godly wisdom leaves one open to divine interruptions.**
- 3. Divine interruptions can keep us from acting in haste.**

Prayer Pebble: Lord, grant me the wisdom to act according to your ways and the courage to execute your will. Amen.