House Church Series, Lesson 11

JOSEPH AND MARY’S FAMILY: OBEDIENCE TO GOD’S SALVATION PLAN

Luke 1:26–56; Matthew 1:18–25; Luke 2:1–39; Matthew 2:13–15,19–23

Key Verse: Luke 1:38

After the Fall, God promised to send the Messiah to save us all from sin, death and Satan (Ge3:15). For this purpose, God made special promises to Abraham (Ge12:2–3; Gal3:8) and to David (2Sa7:13–14; Lk1:32). The Savior would be born in the line of Abraham and David (Mt1:1,17) and in a very special and unique way (Isa7:14). Conceived by the Holy Spirit, he would be fully God (Jn1:1; Php2:6; Col1:15). At the same time, born of a woman, he would be fully human (Php2:7). But to be born this way was no small task: it required a virgin birth in a society that was intolerant of unwed mothers. God in his wisdom chose a betrothed couple, Joseph and Mary (Mt1:16). Though their story is unique, it also contains timeless principles for all Christian families to emulate.

1. What kind of person was Mary? (Lk1:26–27) What was God calling her to do, and why was this his “favor”? (28,30–33) Why was she so troubled? (27,29,34) How did the angel help her? (35–37) How did she respond? (38) How costly was this decision? What can we learn from her about identity? Faith? Obedience?

1. After making this great decision, where did Mary go first, and why? (36,39–40) How did Elizabeth confirm what the angel said and help her see things from God’s point of view? (41–45) How did Mary praise God and see herself? (46–48) How do her words about God and his ways of working encourage us, especially in house churches? (49–55)
2. When he heard of Mary’s pregnancy, what was Joseph’s plan, and what does this show about him? (Mt1:18–19) What does it mean that he is called “son of David”? (20) What mission did the angel give him? (20–21) How would it be hard to accept? What inspired him to do so? (21b) What did he do? (24–25) What can husbands learn from him?
3. What can house churches learn by contrasting Joseph and Mary’s circumstances with the angel’s message? (Lk2:1–20) How did they obey in detail God’s laws regarding the child, and what can parents learn from this? (Lk2:21–24,39) How did their divine encounters with Simeon, Anna and the Magi encourage them? (27–38; Mt2:1–12)
4. What dangers and difficulties did Joseph face in protecting the baby Jesus? (Mt2:13) How did God use his obedience? (14–15,19–23) What can we learn from him about a husband’s role in a house church ministry?
5. Review the great difficulties but also the great blessings in Mary and Joseph’s lives. How was their obedience to God crucial to God’s work? How did it change them, and also change world history? What can Christian couples learn from their example?