MARY AND JOSEPH

By Keith Greer

"And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women! But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God" {Luke 1:28,30;}

"But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit." {Matthew 1:20}

Early in the gospel accounts we are introduced to these two people, Mary and Joseph. Who were they? What roles did they play in the scriptures? Why were they chosen to be the earthly parents of the Christ? We shall try to answer these vital questions.

Many hundreds of years, prior to the birth of Christ, the prophet Isaiah wrote, "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." {Isaiah 7:14} Why a virgin birth? God was telling the world that this birth was special—once in a lifetime event. A woman with child without having a sexual relationship with a man, no seed of man planted into her womb, but a miracle. God was sending His Son as a redeemer for mankind!

Why was Mary the chosen one? What was Mary's reaction to the news that she would be a mother to a son? " ... How can this be, since I do not know a man?" {Luke 1:35} Isaiah clearly stated, the Son would be born of a virgin. Mary was the virgin that God, "found favor with". More information can only come from God and He did not reveal it! Sadly, men have elevated Mary to a position and role that God did not give her. Nowhere in the sacred scriptures is she called "the mother of God" or "the queen of heaven." No instruction to pray to Mary or worship her or even that she is a co-redeemer with her son. Such teaching is purely human theology and the teaching of men and not of God!

Why Joseph? "But you, Bethlehem, Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me, the One to be Ruler in Israel, ... " {Micah 5:2} According to this prophet, the One would come forth from Judah.

" .. To a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David ... " {Luke 1:27} " ... to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David." {Luke 2:5} "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; ... {Hebrews 7:14} Also read Matthew 1:2. According to John 7:42, Christ's birth fulfilled the Scripture!

When Joseph, being a just man, thought to put Mary away, not wanting her a public example, what did he do? After an angel told him the "child was conceived of the Holy Spirit", Joseph "took to him his wife". If your betrothed was found with child, would you believe such a story? He asked no questions, no lingering, Joseph did as he was instructed! Following Jesus death on the cross we hear no more about the life of Mary. We know since John was told to look after Mary, John 19:27, that Joseph had probably already died prior to His death on the cross. Further information about the life of Mary and her role following His death can only come from men because the scriptures are silent.

Yes, Mary and Joseph played significant roles. Yet, it was the Son which was born, that would play a far greater role in the lives of all mankind. God used these two people for His purposes. Did they seek any special favor? No, yet, they will be eternally remembered! Unfortunately, the world is seeking to place Mary in a role that is equal to that of her son. Mary sought no glory during the raising of Jesus and none after. Mary faded into the background and that is where she should remain! ***