



A Christ Centered Home Part 2: January 5, 2020



Merry Christmas! For some Eastern Christians, tomorrow, January 6 and others, January 7 is Christmas day! Whether it's December 25 for the west, January 6 for the Armenian Churches, January 7 for Coptic and Orthodox churches, *we want our homes to be a place where Jesus lives and people know He's there.* Joseph and Mary had the first Christ centered home and we can learn from them by looking at the singleness, engagement, and marriage of Joseph and Mary. God chose two people in transition from singleness to married life as the ones who would cooperate with Him in His plan to invade our planet with His physical presence.

Before Jesus, God showed up in supernatural "theophanies" like walks in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:8), the visitors to Abraham (Genesis 18:1), Moses' burning bush (Exodus 3:1-6), the pillar of fire and cloud in the desert (Exodus 13:21-22), the frightful earthquake and lightning upon Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:16-25), Samson's parents (Judges 13:1-32), or when He showed up in Solomon's temple the priests couldn't stand up to minister (1 Chronicles 5:14).

Christmas means that instead of a mystical, mighty, obviously other worldly supernatural theophany God would enter our existence as one of us, a baby. Galatians 4:4, ***"But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman..."*** At the right time, God the Holy Spirit entered a young girl's womb, and created a special, one and only, or as the theological term states, *"only begotten"* embryo to grow in her belly. Some call it the "immaculate conception" resulting in the "Virgin Birth." It's a necessary part of God's plan to save us from sin. He had to be a human like us so He could die. But a man can't save, so He had to be God. Only a supernatural conception in the womb could do that. I wonder what the DNA strand looked like.

Only those with faith and relationship with God could believe Mary's bizarre claim, "God's Spirit made me pregnant!" rather than what seemed more the obvious, a young girl got too passionate or maybe a Roman soldier had his way with her. Madeleine L'Engle, Newberry Award winning author of *A Wrinkle in Time* and its sequels said, "The virgin birth has never been a major stumbling block in my struggle with Christianity; it's far less mind boggling than the Power of all Creation stooping so low as to become one of us." From this beginning, God the Son became one of us. We must believe though humanly impossible, all things are possible with our God.

Matthew and Luke give us a glimpse of the relationship between Joseph and Mary as fiances and husband and wife to prepare the home where Jesus would be the center of the family. We still want that today. Every Christian home should be all about Jesus. That kind of activity attracts angels, Interesting that both Joseph and Mary had angels involved in setting up their home life. I don't understand it all, but referring to a husband and wife's relationship, the enigmatic verse, 1 Corinthians 11:10 says ***"because of the angels."*** A Christ centered home is a hub bub of angelic activity. We can safely assume there are angels at work in a godly home.

Let's look at the points to follow in preparing a home that's all about Jesus. Matthew is about Joseph, his call to be a step-dad, though he felt betrayed, wouldn't

shame Mary, was willing to be misunderstood, practice some self control, and make a safe place where God guides. Luke's Christmas story is more about Mary. **Like Joseph and Mary, make home a place where everyone knows the presence of Jesus is there.**

1 . Gabriel the angel's visit to Nazareth was to prepare a Christ entered home.

Luke 1:26 *In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And He came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!"*

Gabriel is one of only two angels whose name is in the Bible. The other, Michael, is a warrior and archangel. His name means, "Who is like God?" Gabriel is from Hebrew, *gibbor* which means "mighty man" *i* for "my" and *el* for, "God." It says "God is my strongman." The Logos blog lists 5 facts about Gabriel. 1. In the Old and New Testaments, he appeared to explain a vision to Daniel the prophet (Daniel 8:16) and for to bear news of Jesus' birth. 2 . He stands in the presence of God, he said of himself to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist (Luke 1:19). 3 .Gabriel looked like a man (Daniel 9:21). 4 . Gabriel's scary. When Daniel meets Gabriel, he was frightened and fell on his face. When Gabriel greeted Zacharias, his first words were, **"Do not be afraid."** There needs to be no fear in a Christ centered home. Gabriel still follows up on Mary, **"do not be afraid, for you have found favor with God** (Luke 1:30). 5 . Gabriel pointed to the Messiah. He relayed a prophecy concerning **"Messiah the Prince"** to Daniel. He told Zacharias that John the Baptist will introduce the Lord, and Mary that her son will be called **"the Son of the Most High."**

If Israel was Chicago, *Nazareth* would be South-side with a "homie" attitude. When Jesus spoke there they were proud of their boy till he praised someone from another "hood." Then they had no problem with murder and pushed Jesus to the outside of the city to throw Him off the cliff (Luke 4:16-30). It had a seedy reputation with Nathanael asking, **"Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"** (John 1:46). The city is attached to Jesus' name 24 times, once with prophecy, **"He shall be called a Nazarene,"** also by the Roman, Pilate with a sign on the cross **"Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews"** (John 19:19), by demons (Luke 4:34), and resurrected Jesus Himself when he appeared to Saul of Tarsus, **"I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are Persecuting"** (Acts 22:8).

Others looked at Mary as just another unwed pregnant girl from the ghetto but Gabriel said her status in heaven was **"favored"** and that where she was, God was, **"the Lord is with you!"** (Luke 1:28). Mary's status didn't come from where she came from but from heaven and that the presence of God in her life. *That is an ideal quality of a woman. Mary had God value.* Women are often valued for sexuality, power in politics, achievement, making herself famous, like Zsa Zsa, Kardashians, and Paris Hilton who married rich men or who stay in the tabloids by their scandals. Interesting, Gabriel called both Daniel (Daniel 10:11) and Mary, **"favored."** If Gabriel shows up, it's a sign of great affection and esteem by God. A great quality of a woman which God chooses to have Christ in her home is that she is esteemed not because of breeding, fashion, fame or trying to get attention. Saying to her, **"the Lord is with you!"** meant it wasn't about where she is from, but that God is where she is at.

2 . A Christ Centered home puts more value on the experience of the Holy Spirit and the word of God than what people think.

34 And how will this be since I am a virgin? 35 And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the most high will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy- the Son of God...38 And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.”

God chose Mary and Joseph’s home, to be a place where Jesus dwells. She was willing to be misunderstood by people as impure because she was confident in how God saw her. Instead of impressing the world, she had a personal experience with the Spirit of God that brought Jesus inside her and then would take Him to a needy world. That’s still what God wants to do. Have you asked Christ in your heart, been filled with the Holy Spirit, and take the presence of Jesus inside of you to the world we live in? The physical miracle was “one of a kind” or “only begotten.” But God offers every Christian the same spiritual experience. When Mary understood she’d have an experience with God that the world would misunderstand, she chose the word of God over the world with an experience of the Spirit. That’s what everyone must do to have a home where Jesus lives. Spirit and the word! Word without the Spirit is dry religion. Spirit without the word means one can mistake emotion for the Holy Spirit. But the combination of experience with the Holy Spirit and the word of God is a God given message with power. That’s what everyone must do to have a home where Jesus lives.

3 . To have a home where Christ is the center is even for the homeless and lowest.

2:7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. 22 And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord.

The greatest birth in the history of earth was to a temporarily homeless couple in a place for animals. Angels sang, “***Glory to God in the Highest***” (Luke 2:14) yet God the Son entered this world to identify with the lowest. He was born among the lowest of humanity and He died among the lowest of humanity, dying the death of a thief and a thug. To take us high, up to heaven, the Son of God went low, even to hell (Ephesians 4:9, 1 Peter 3:18-19). When He ascended into heaven it was after he descended into a homeless birth, and to fulfill Genesis 3:15, the serpent bruised His heel with the death of the lowest criminal with the guilt of all humanity upon Him, and descended to the depths of the dead to bring the faithful from Sheol to heaven and preach justice to those who rejected God. But He rose from the dead and bruised the serpent’s head. If you’ve had a homeless earthly existence or the worst sin and ugliest past, it’s nothing Jesus doesn’t know about.



Regardless of anyone’s place of birth, where they were raised, they can build a home where Jesus is the center of it all. What is important in a Christ centered home isn’t the location, because when God is with someone, that is a location where God is. It is a home where people have a personal, transforming experience of the Holy Spirit and where the word of God takes priority. It is not as important how low one has gone in life, but that Jesus is present in a person’s life. That

comes from the cross. It is for that purpose Jesus was born on Christmas morning. It also comes from the power of His resurrection He makes available to everyone who believes.

A Poem called, “The Christ Centered Home” (by E.V.)

A humble virgin of the Jews
Got some very favored news
From the angel
mighty man Gabriel
Told her not to fear it
That the Holy Spirit
Would miraculously conceive
In her womb and weave
A DNA sign and wonder
What science can't under-
Stand this Holy incarnation
He'll be God and a man
Messiah King of the nation
The homeless infant,
Fulfilled prophecy in an instant
in a trough where animals feed
Genesis 3:15, the woman's seed
The serpent had Him die as a thug and thief
Those who loved Him were assaulted by grief
Then He crushed the serpent's head
When He rose up from the dead
Now let's make it known
Every heart can be His home
If in your house Jesus has entered
Make it a place that's Christ centered.