

TREASURE IN JARS OF CLAY



Joseph the Just

Great tribute is given to Mary as the chosen mother of the Savior of the World... as should be. But what of the father that God had in mind to be responsible for the upbringing of His Son? In our culture where there is a very serious absence of strong male leaders in our homes, and with detrimental consequences, we cannot afford to neglect the importance of Joseph.

What is the word used to describe Joseph in Matt. 1:18-19? _____

The Greek word for this is *dik'-ah-yos* and in its strictest sense means someone who prides themselves as being righteous or rendering to each his due. Someone who is just can be said to adhere to the rules no matter what and no matter who.

What assumption had Joseph probably made about his pregnant betrothed at this point in time? _____

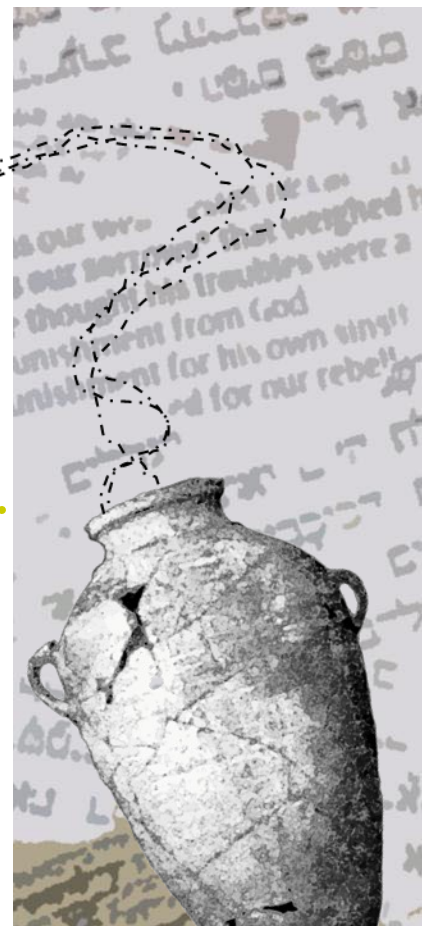
According to Deut. 22:13-30, what was Mary's "due" (along with her unknown, but assumed accomplice)? _____

Despite all appearances that he had been grievously wronged, what did Joseph intend to do instead? _____

For Joseph, justice was clearly something larger than a fair and equal application of the law. In the wider sense, *dikahyos* refers to one who keeps the commands of God. Joseph went "beyond the ethical expectations of the law in his obedience to a higher definition of justice." (43, Bailey)
A justice that meant compassion and mercy, and not a delivering of what the law expected.

In what way is Joseph a living illustration of Christ's later words in Matt. 5:20? _____

What do you learn from Joseph's treatment of Mary? _____



"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."
2 Corinthians 4:7

READ:

- Matt. 1-2

CHRONOLOGY:

-

Turning anger into grace...

How do you think he felt about it? _____

I find it almost amusing that in Matt. 1:20 we are told that he “considered” all of this. That is not the word I would have chosen for someone who has experienced that degree of perceived betrayal! In fact, the word in Greek (*enthumeomai*) can also mean to become angry or upset. I don’t think he was “considering”, I think he was stewing, or maybe even fuming! If he cared at all about Mary, surely some intense emotion had to have been stirred up.

The root of *enthumeomai* is *thymos*, which is used in Luke 4:28 and translated as the “wrath” of the people in the synagogue. What did they want to do? _____

It is also used in Matt. 2:16 to describe Herod’s reaction to the discovery that the wise men had not reported back to him. How would you describe what Herod felt? _____

An Arabic translation of Matt. 1:20 from the eighth century or earlier, uses the phrase “while he was *disturbed* over this matter...”

In other words, Joseph did not respond so graciously to Mary by quietly, or privately, divorcing her because he was so mild mannered, or even because he was so understanding. He was upset. Very upset. Maybe even angry, or dare we say... furious. But in spite of his feelings, WHILE he was upset and disturbed, he behaved justly in the most godly sense of the word. When push comes to shove, true character is revealed. Joseph’s anger was turned to grace.

Even though we are told very little about Joseph, we see enough to understand why God chose him to raise the Christ child.

To teach, train, nurture, and prepare this holy child to be about His Father’s business.

What additional information was Joseph given in Matt. 1:20-23? _____

The most immediate need was for a protector. I think the seriousness of the situation is evident in the fact that Joseph took the very pregnant Mary along with him to Bethlehem for the census. It was not necessary for the women to go, just a male representative. The risk to Mary and the Christ child must have been greater at home than the risks of travel, and of giving birth on the road. Joseph took Mary and the unborn child along to protect them. He was not the quiet, passive, stay in the background guy we have pictured. He had to be fierce in the face of opposition.



Financial status

According to Matt. 13:55, what was Joseph's trade? _____

The Greek word *tekton* could also be translated craftsman. Some scholars feel that in this culture where stone was a more common building material than wood, and in a small community like Nazareth, Joseph was likely adept at working in both stone and wood.

Either way, what would Jesus have learned as the son and apprentice of a craftsman?

What can we surmise about the financial position of Joseph and his young family from taking a look at Luke 2:24 and Lev. 12:8? _____

How might the scandal have affected his business and standing in the community?

The custom in first century Galilee was for a man to bring his wife into the home of his parents. He would likely have continued in the business of his father. The young family would live in close quarters with parents, grandparents, and siblings. Living apart as Mary and Joseph did in Bethlehem, then later in Egypt would have been some lean times....

How relieved do you think Joseph felt by the gifts from the Magi as recorded in Matt.2:1-12? _____

How relieved do you think Joseph's family was at the delay in bringing the "scandal" home to Nazareth? _____

What's in a name?

The name Joseph means "let him add" Count the number of Josephs in the genealogy of Jesus in Luke 3! _____ I was struck by some of the similarities between Joseph of Genesis and Joseph of the Gospels... here are a few

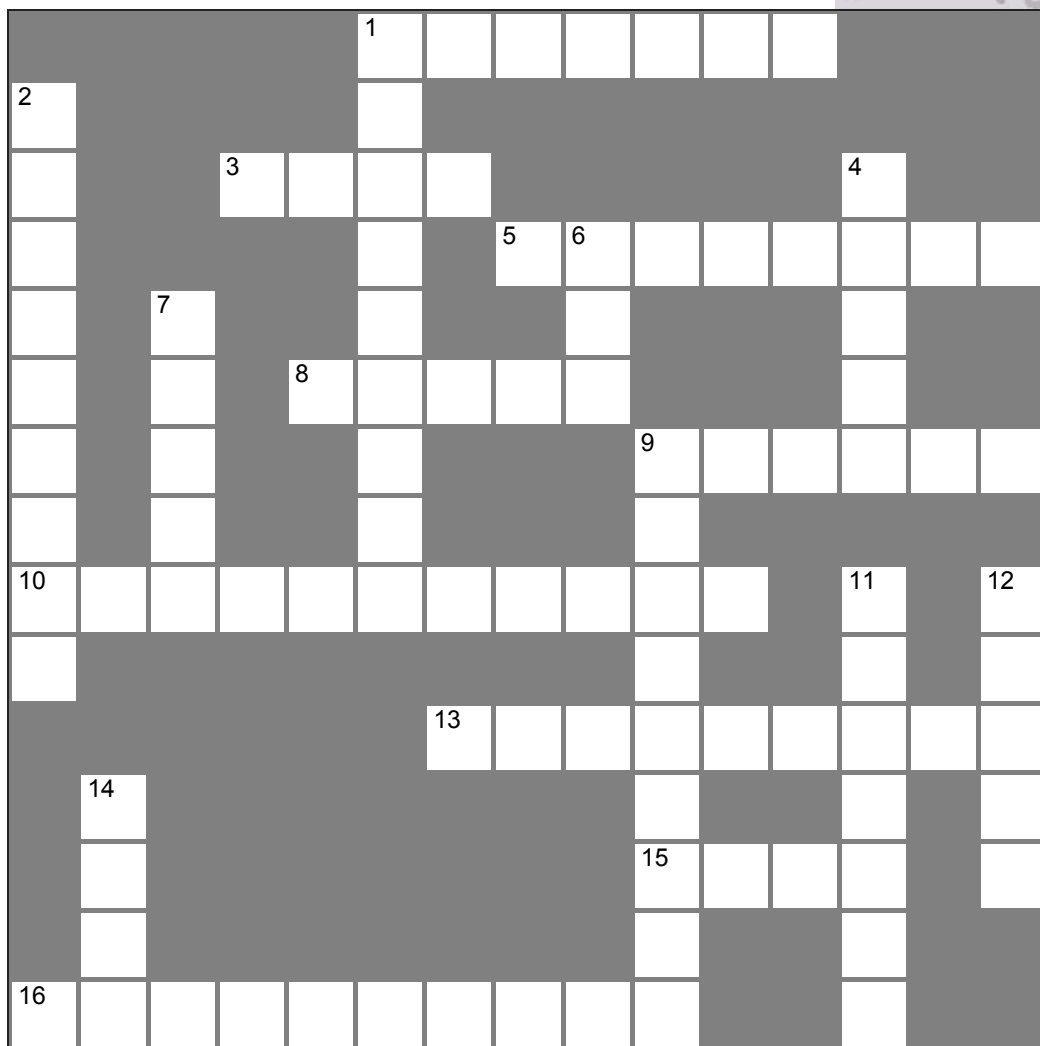
	OT Joseph	Scripture	NT Joseph	Scripture
Father's name				
Where they went to avoid death				
Provision for	Infant nation of Israel		Infant savior of all	
Known for integrity				
??				

Other Josephs of the Bible include:

Matt. 27:57 _____ Acts 4:36 _____

And, there is great significance in the fact that Joseph named Jesus as the angel Gabriel instructed. To name the child was, in that culture, to essentially legally adopt Jesus as his own son.

PUZZLE PAGE



Clues

Across

- 1 "fair and equal application of the law" (7)
- 3 his betrothed (4)
- 5 his hometown (8)
- 8 was of the house of _____ (5)
- 9 went to Bethlehem for this (6)
- 10 Greek word for considered (11)
- 13 an alternate translation to "considered" (9)
- 15 provided financial support (4)
- 16 important role he played (10)

Down

- 1 took his Son here for feast days (9)
- 2 where Mary gave birth (9)
- 4 his adopted son (5)
- 6 his name means let him _____ (3)
- 7 escape destination (5)
- 9 his trade (9)
- 11 messenger to him (7)
- 12 was of the tribe of _____ (5)
- 14 Joseph was _____ (4)

Map

From Nazareth to Bethlehem was just over 63 miles of rough terrain. I'm not sure if it would have been harder for the pregnant Mary to walk, or ride a donkey over the rough terrain! How long do you imagine it took for them to arrive in Bethlehem?

What was Joseph warned of in a dream? (Matt. 2:13-15) _____

Tradition has it that Joseph fled with his family to a small settlement in Egypt called Babylon. Estimate how far that was from Bethlehem: _____

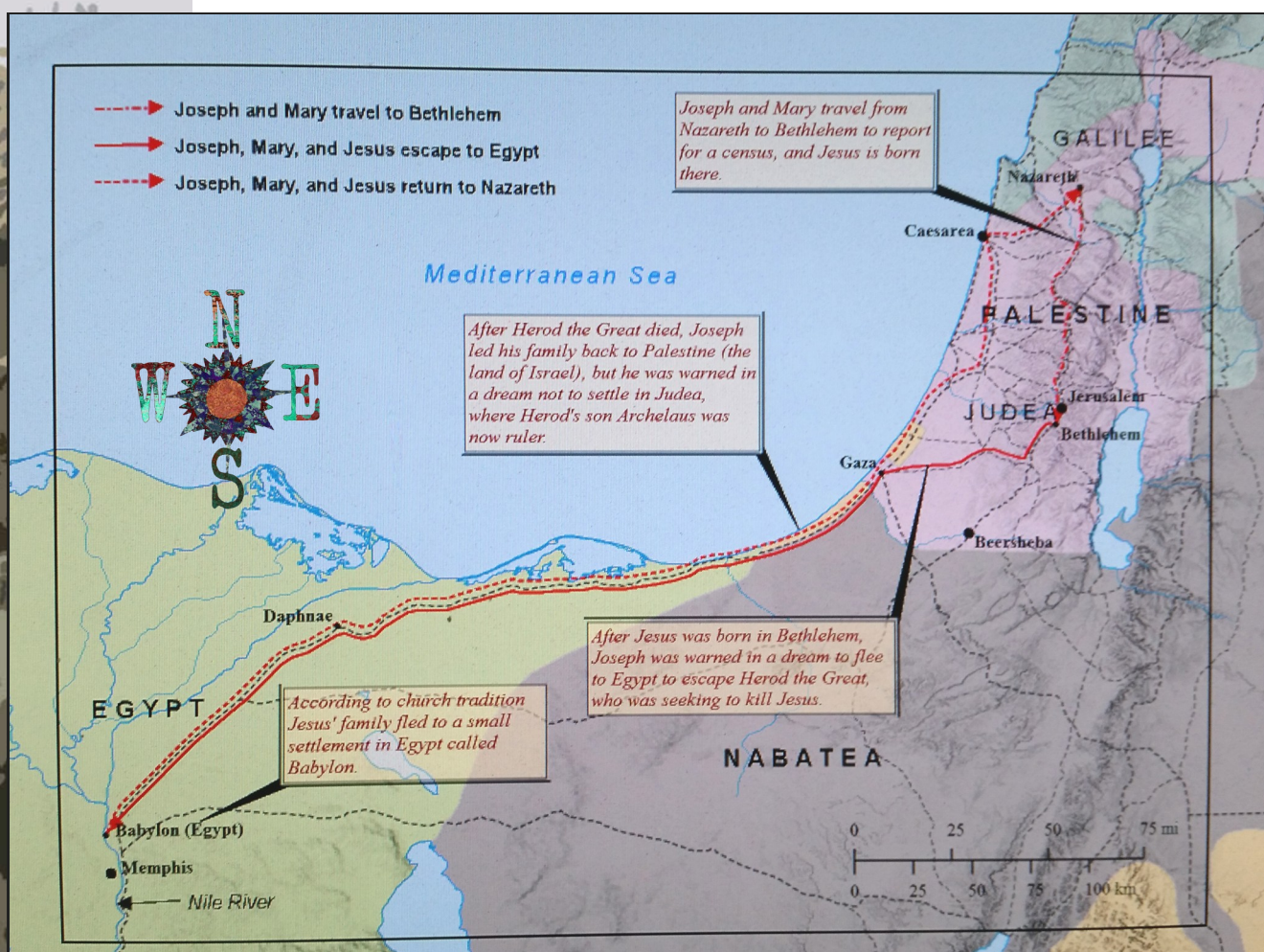
How long did they stay there? (Matt. 2:19-23) _____

Where did Joseph intend to return to? _____

Where did God have him go? _____

Why do you think Joseph may have been reluctant to return there? _____

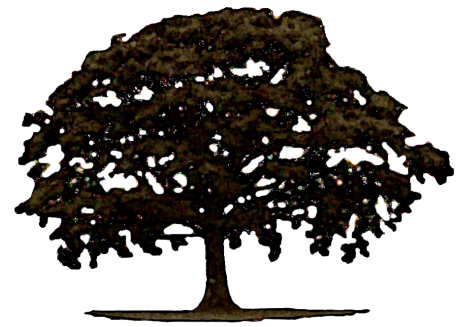
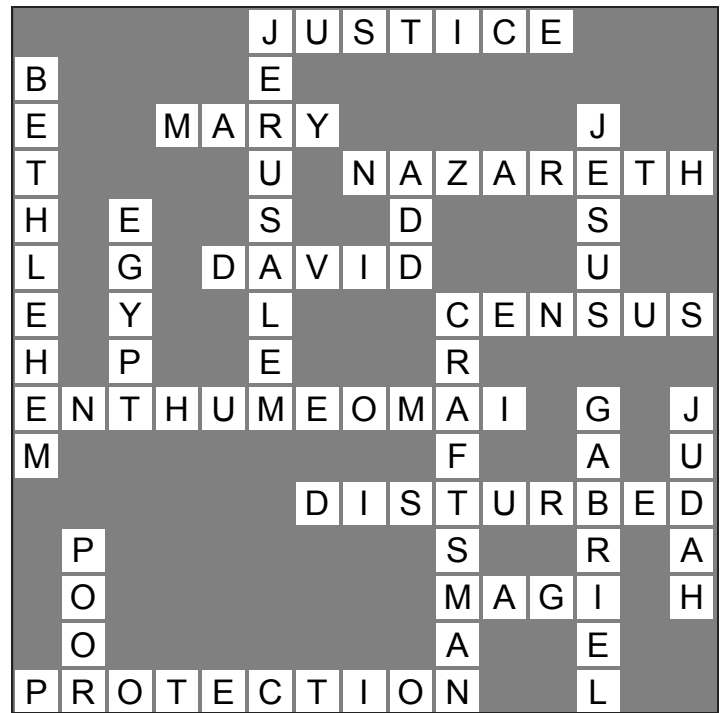
What obedience Joseph shows throughout this story! God can trust him to do as He directs in the care of the Christ child.



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Puzzle answers:



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www.downvictoryrd.com

Sources:

WANT TO READ WHAT I READ?

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