

## Christmas Bible Study December 2018

Luke 1:18-2:18

Jesus' real father was not Joseph but the Holy Spirit. Even so, most guys would have been pretty upset to find out that their fiancé is pregnant to someone else. The claim that Mary was have a child conceived by the Holy Spirit must have taken a bit of believing. It is rather an original excuse for an unplanned teenage pregnancy. Joseph is either a chump or a spiritual hero to have swallowed that. But Joseph really was a decent bloke. He wanted to break up quietly with Mary and not dump her in it.

And he didn't ask for any more confirmation than what he got from God in a dream. But that was enough for him. He accepted Jesus as his own son. We may not get much more than a dream telling us Jesus is lord either. But that is enough. Of course, there were no doubt people were bright enough to do the maths and work out that Jesus was conceived before J and M got married, but not bright to get what happened.

The 3 wise men in this story were also, well, typical men. They turn up with impossibly impractical gifts. They could have come with booties, toy rattles and snappy gro-suits. But no, they go all theological and show up with gold (a symbol of Kingship) frankincense (which is used in temples to express deity) and myrrh (which is used for embalming, and symbolises Jesus death) And so actually they sum up rather nicely who Jesus was, is and will be. That is great, but they could have brought some (blue, guys, not pink) booties as well.

Herod is also a bit of an ancient and modern male of the nasty sort. He says he wants to worship Jesus, but actually, Herod just can't take any rivals. He is totally threatened and tries to get rid of Jesus. This is pretty OTT. Jesus has only just landed on earth. It will be years before he grows up and can challenge Herod. But Herod is obsessed and fearful. Get rid of the kid now and be done with it, he thinks. But of course, Joseph had another dream and the rest is history.

### Questions

1. What do you think of Joseph? What would a lot of guys have done in his situation?
2. How much confirmation do you need from God before you do something decisive (not just which colour shirt to wear today, but the big stuff?)
3. What is required do you think to accept an "usual" child in to the family? (downs syndrome, physically handicapped) What if the child was like Nick Vujicic (google if you don't know him)
4. What do you make of Herod? What was his problem?
5. Are you in to dreams? Does God (ever) use them for you?
6. Look at verses 2: 18. Insert Syria or Yemen instead of Ramah Who are the Rachel and Herods here? What has God got to say about this?