

“Down To Earth”

“A Miraculous Story with an All-Star Cast!”

“Joseph, Mary, and Jesus:  
The Main Characters”

“They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger.”  
Luke 2:16

A. God created the greatest story...

1. God specifically picked each of the characters for this story!
2. Each character had special significance...there are no accidents in God's plan!
3. If God's original creation was spectacular, imagine His plan for the redemption of all mankind!
4. Every detail was part of the plan with prophetic fulfillment; every detail held deeper meaning!
5. This is His-Story of love for all mankind!

B. God picked the time and the setting...

1. **The time:** There was no king of David's line that had ruled Jerusalem for over 500 years. The Israelites were still awaiting the coming Messiah that had been promised through the ages. There were 400 years of silence between the Old Testament and the New Testament that ended with the coming of John the Baptist.

“Look, I am sending you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the LORD arrives. His preaching will turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise I will come and strike the land with a curse.”  
Malachi 4:5-6

2. **The setting:** Nazareth was a small, poor town with white stone houses, a synagogue, and a marketplace.
3. The population was a little more than 100 with mostly farmers and a few craftsmen.
4. The craftsmen would have been a potter, a weaver, a blacksmith, and a carpenter.
5. Nazareth was about 4 miles from a center of Roman soldiers and about 90 miles from Bethlehem.

Bethlehem was about a 7-day, grueling journey over mountains and deserts.

6. The two gospels telling the birth of Christ were written to two different audiences. Matthew was written to a Jewish audience and Luke was written to a Gentile audience.

C. God picked Mary; God picked Joseph...

“This foolish plan of God is wiser than the wisest of human plans, and God's weakness is stronger than the greatest of human strength. Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And He chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God.” 1 Corinthians 1:25-29

1. Mary was a young, humble, godly girl with a simple Jewish upbringing.
2. Mary was only about 13 or 14 years of age when the angel came to her.
3. Mary believed the angel and trusted God in spite of all opposing thoughts.
4. Joseph was a righteous man from a pious, hard-working class. Nazareth was a poor town and everyone in Nazareth was poor.
5. Men at that time, within the working class, did not consider marriage before the age of 25, so it is believed that Joseph was somewhat older than Mary.
6. Marriages were often arranged by the fathers. So, when Joseph wanted Mary as his wife, their fathers would have met and determined their futures.
7. In Joseph's dream, an angel spoke to Joseph about their future, and Joseph trusted God.

“As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream.” Matthew 1:20a

D. Joseph had three choices when he heard the news...

1. Joseph could marry Mary quickly even though the baby was not his.
2. Joseph could publicly divorce her, an adulteress, in which case Mary would be stoned to death.

3. Joseph could have the marriage contract set aside quietly, while Mary went off to have her baby elsewhere.
4. Although Mary spoke and shares her praise, not one word of Joseph is ever recorded.

“When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife.” Matthew 1:24

E. Although this is the greatest story ever told, it is a story of trust...

1. Mary had to trust God's promises, in spite of all the potential obstacles that she faced. Not once did she run ahead and ask God to answer all the questions that must have been running through her mind...she simply trusted!
2. Joseph had to trust Mary. Although this story seemed completely impossible to believe, Joseph had to trust. He had to trust that Mary was telling him the truth, in spite of all the obstacles he would face in their future.
3. Mary had to trust Joseph. Mary could certainly face the rejection of her husband. Mary could face death. Mary simply had to trust Joseph's love for her and belief in her.
4. Joseph had to trust God. Joseph had to trust that the angel in the dream really was God speaking to him. He had to trust that God had all the details in place for the days ahead. He had to trust that God would carry them through possible rejection of their families, their community, and whatever might be ahead for their future! Joseph simply had to trust God.

F. This story of trust is God's call for each of us...  
“Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in Me.” John 14:1

1. Is God calling you to trust Him for something that seems impossible?
2. Is God calling you to trust in spite of the opposition?
3. Is God calling you to trust even though it may cost you?
4. Is God calling you to trust when circumstances seem to be against you?
5. Is God calling you to trust when you don't understand why?

God never calls any one of us to anything that will not take trust!

“For no word from God will ever fail.” Luke 1:37