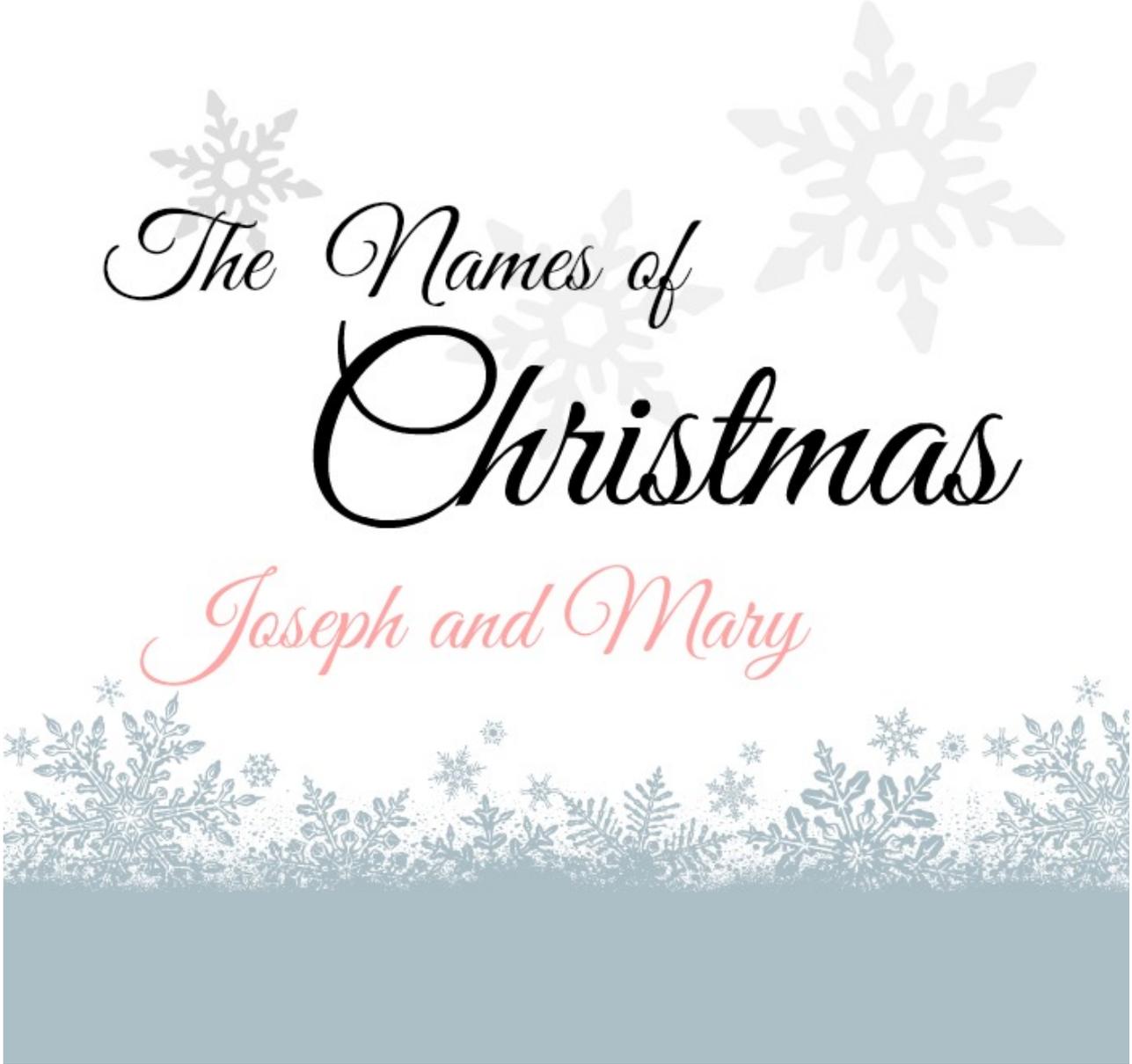


The Names of Christmas: Joseph and Mary



The Names of Christmas

Joseph and Mary

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. 20 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. 21 And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." Luke 2: 18-21

Joseph, a just man

In verse 19, we learn why Joseph was chosen to be Jesus' earthly father. He was a *just man*. He was just the man God had in mind to raise his Son. So God tells Joseph, "Do not be afraid to take Mary to be your wife." What does Joseph fear? For his reputation? For his business? For his personal relationships?

How did Joseph find out? Was it a friend? Was it an enemy who came to him with the the news? Whether friend of foe,

Someone delivers the bad news.

Mary is with child.

How could this happen? Everyone knew Mary's reputation. She's a woman of integrity and great character. But she is with child.

God delivers the good news.

The child is not his, but His. The baby is conceived of the Holy Spirit. God tells Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary to be his wife. They have a quick wedding and head to Bethlehem for the honeymoon.

And Mary delivers the Good News, Jesus!

The Names of Christmas.

The name *Joseph* descends from the Hebrew root *yacaph*, means *to add, to increase. To add more and more.* God is always in the business of adding more and more to His people. More righteousness, more grace, more love, and more blessing.

The name *Mary* also descends from the Hebrew root *marah*, and it means *bitterness, rebellion, a rebellious house.* I am not proposing a new doctrine, but perhaps *Mary* is a symbol of the rebellious nature of the people of Israel. And amid their rebellion and bitterness, God appears one silent night to *add more and more* to the lives of His people by sending His only begotten Son. More grace, more love, more blessing. If you have bitterness in your heart, you need more and more Jesus.

**God *yacaph* life to our *marah* by
sending the King of Kings.**

God is redeeming us from our rebellion and bitterness.

Reflect: How is God adding more and more to your life this Christmas season? Please leave a comment down below. I'd love to chat with you!

Merry Christmas!

by Mary Kane

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The Names of Christmas: Zacharias and Elisabeth

5 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a

The Names of Christmas

Zacharias and Elisabeth



certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. 7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years ... 11 Then an

angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense... "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. 14 And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.

[Zacharias was a man with a plan.](#)



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He was a priest of the Most High God. He had been praying for years, we might even say decades, for a baby. Now He and his wife were advanced in years...beyond hope...beyond help.

Yet Zacharias prayed.

The name Zacharias transliterates from the Hebrew as *Zakaryah* which means *Jehovah remembers*. And what does God remember? He remembers His word, His will, His promises. He remembers your prayers.

God remembers.

It's not that God ever forgets your prayers. When the Bible says *He remembers* it means He is going to act, according to His word, His will, and His promises, In His perfect timing. God is always on time.

The name *Elisabeth* is derived from Hebrew and it means *God has sworn*. What has God promised us at Christmas time? To send His only beloved Son, to be born of a virgin, in the dark of night, in the darkness of our sin, to be the Light of the World.

Let's put those two names together and receive a Christmas message from God:

Zacharias Elizabeth: GOD REMEMBERS HIS PROMISES.

He will never leave you.

He will never forsake you.

He forgives you.

He loves you.

He promises.

What has God promised you? Please leave a reply in the comment section below. I'd love to chat with you! Merry Christmas!

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The Sower

They skitter across the ground.

The
Sower



Smooth, hard, precious drops of life, scattered to the wind. The sower puts his hand in, draws it out and releases another handful of hope. He watches as they arc through the air and rains down on the barren ground. Step, release, scatter. Planting for the future. He raises dust with each step but it goes unnoticed as the sower sees only the fields of green.

So the sower tends his seeds, watering, weeding, and watching for signs of new life.

They scatter across the ground.

A cloud of ebony, on the wing, descending upon the seed. A ravenous, raven-ous shroud of black.

[The torrent of seed-eaters poured down from the sky.](#)



[Tweet This](#)

Hundreds, thousands, masses of birds snatching at the seeds of hope.

The sower hears the carnage. One against thousands. He takes a step of faith into the cloud and speaks. Words of command. Words of authority.

Be gone.

An explosion of black leaps from the seed and takes to the sky. Feathers, shadows, claws, caws. Black of night takes wing at the light.

Sower becomes victor by speaking the word.

The Word. His Word. The sower tends his seeds.

“A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. ⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. ⁹ Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

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Give Thanks

“16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 in everything

give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”



In everything give thanks. God has given us a tall order in 1 Thessalonians 5:18. Give thanks in everything? What about hard things, hurtful things, impossible things? How do we give thanks for losing a job, losing friends, losing a home, or a dream?

I have learned to give thanks by faith, not because what has happened is good, but because God is good. He has promised to use all things for our good. Regardless of how bad, hard, painful or scary, He is the great I AM.

I AM able to use that pain.

I AM able to heal that hurt.

I AM able to bring you through this season of loss with gain.

With God, there is always more, always another, always healing. There is life after death, joy after sorrow, and light after dark. One day all things will be made right and we shall see Him as He is. So we give thanks in the now, in the pain and hurt, in the joy and in the peace.

Give thanks in everything.

By Mary Kane

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Take 5: When in Rome



Quick devos for busy people!

Take a minute to pray and ask God to open your heart to His Holy Word.

“9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.” Romans 12:9-13

1. What three things are we to do (verse 9)?
2. How does verse 10 take the Golden Rule to a new level?
3. What should we never be, always be, and always do (verse

11)?

4. Of the three commands in verse 11, which is the most difficult for you and why?
5. What two social commands are we given in verse 13?

take another minute to pray and ask God to change your heart and help you act on what you learned today. Leave me a comment below in the comment section! I'd love to hear from you!

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By Mary Kay Kane