

Christmas 2007

# Joseph: Working through Skepticism and Doubt

Matthew 1:18-25

**Introduction:** Intellectual questions – even skepticism – often flow from emotional hurt inflicted by others. But there is a way of responding to pain that invites deeper faith and a new experience with God.

**1. HOW IT BEGINS – Intellectual skepticism generally starts with some form of hurt. Matt. 1:18**

- A. Joseph encountered tremendous emotional pain.
- B. What happens when we encounter emotional pain?
- C. *Question* – Is there a response to pain that defeats skepticism and invites faith?

**2. 1<sup>ST</sup> RESPONSE – Joseph makes a good decision in his pain. Matt. 1:19**

- A. First, he allowed himself to live in the midst of his confusion and pain.
- B. Then, he acted in accordance with his preexisting moral compass.
- C. *Insight* – The decisions we make in pain determine whether we grow bitter or heal.

**3. 2<sup>ND</sup> RESPONSE – Joseph is open to revelation from God. Matt. 1:20-23**

- A. God's sovereignty – Joseph receives a dream.
- B. *Insight* – What we fill our minds with in pain will determine how our questions get answered.

**4. 3<sup>RD</sup> RESPONSE – Joseph acts in faith even though some questions remain. Matt. 1:24-25**

- A. Joseph could not get all his questions answered.
- B. Nevertheless, Joseph does two huge things in faith.
- C. *Insight* – When we act in faith, God progressively answers our questions.