

**BIBLE CHARACTERS:  
JOSEPH AND  
MARY TO JAMES,  
THE LORD'S BROTHER**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649186839

Bible characters: Joseph and Mary to James, the Lord's brother by Alexander Whyte

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**ALEXANDER WHYTE**

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# BIBLE CHARACTERS

JOSEPH AND MARY TO JAMES,

THE LORD'S BROTHER

BY

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'LANCELOT ANDREWES' 'JACOB BEHMEN'

'SANTA TERESA' 'SIR THOMAS BROWNE'

'RUTHERFORD'S CORRESPONDENTS'

'FATHER JOHN' ETC.



PUBLISHED BY  
FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY  
NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO  
Publishers of Evangelical Literature

*Fourth Edition*  
*Completing 9000 Copies*

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
LXX. JOSEPH AND MARY . . . . .	1
LXXI. SIMON . . . . .	10
LXXII. ZACHARIAS AND ELISABETH . . . . .	16
LXXIII. JOHN THE BAPTIST . . . . .	26
LXXIV. NICODEMUS . . . . .	36
LXXV. PETER . . . . .	46
LXXVI. JOHN . . . . .	57
LXXVII. MATTHEW . . . . .	63
LXXVIII. ZACCHÆUS . . . . .	72
LXXIX. LAZARUS . . . . .	78
LXXX. THE WOMAN WITH THE ISSUE OF BLOOD . . . . .	87
LXXXI. MARY MAGDALENE . . . . .	95
LXXXII. THE MOTHER OF ZEBEDEE'S CHILDREN . . . . .	104
LXXXIII. THE WIDOW WITH THE TWO MITES . . . . .	112

	PAGE
LXXXIV. PONTIUS PILATE. . . . .	121
LXXXV. PILATE'S WIFE . . . . .	134
LXXXVI. HEROD THAT FOX . . . . .	142
LXXXVII. THE PENITENT THIEF . . . . .	151
LXXXVIII. THOMAS . . . . .	159
LXXXIX. CLEOPAS AND HIS COMPANION . . . . .	168
XC. MATTHIAS THE SUCCESSOR TO JUDAS ISCARIOT	177
XCI. ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA . . . . .	187
XCII. SIMON MAGUS . . . . .	197
✓ XCIII. THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH . . . . .	208-
XCIV. GALLALIEL . . . . .	218
XCV. BARNABAS . . . . .	227
XCVI. JAMES, THE LORD'S BROTHER . . . . .	237



## BIBLE CHARACTERS

LXX

### JOSEPH AND MARY

**S**AINTE MATTHEW and Saint Luke, the first and the third Evangelists, tell us all that we are told of Mary. They tell us that she was the espoused wife of Joseph a carpenter of Nazareth, and that the Divine Call came to her after her espousal to Joseph and before her marriage. What a call it was, and what a prospect it opened up! No sooner was Mary left alone of the angel than she began to realise something of what had been appointed her, and what she must now prepare herself to pass through. The sharp sword that the aged Simeon afterwards spoke of with such passion was already whetted, and was fast approaching her devoted and exposed heart. On a thousand sacred canvases throughout Christendom we are shown the angel of the annunciation presenting Mary with a branch of lily as an emblem of her beauty and as a seal of her purity. But why has no spiritual artist stained the whiteness of the lily with the red blood of a broken heart? For no sooner had the transfiguring light of the angel's presence faded

from her sight than a deep and awful darkness began to fall upon Joseph's espoused wife. Surely if ever a suffering soul had to seek all its righteousness and all its strength in God alone, it was the soul of the Virgin Mary in those terrible days that followed the annunciation. Blessed among women as all the time she was; unblemished in soul and in body like the paschal lamb as she was; like the paschal lamb also she was set apart to be a divine sacrifice, and to have a sword thrust through her heart. Mary must have passed through many dark and dreadful days when all she had given her to lean upon would seem like a broken reed. Hail, thou that art highly favoured of the Lord, the angel had said to her. But all that would seem but so many mocking words to her as she saw nothing before her but an open shame, and, it might well be, an outcast's death. And, so fearfully and wonderfully are we made, and so fearful and wonderful was the way in which the Word was made flesh, that who can tell how all this may have borne on Him who was bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh; to whom Mary was in all things a mother, as He was in all things to her a son. For,

Hers was the face that unto Christ had most resemblance.

Great is the mystery of godliness: God manifest in the flesh. A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. These are the beginnings of sorrows. //

Joseph's part in all this is told us by Saint Matthew alone. And as we read that Evangelist's particular account of that time, we see how sharp

that sword was which pierced Joseph's soul also. His heart was broken with this terrible trial, but there was only one course left open to him. Conclude the marriage he could not, but neither could he consent to make Mary a public example, and there was only left to him the sad step of revoking the contract and putting her away privately. Joseph's heart must have been torn in two. For Mary had been the woman of all women to him. She had been in his eyes the lily among thorns. And now to have to treat her like a poisonous weed—the thought of it drove him mad. Oh, why is it that whosoever comes at all near Jesus Christ has always to drink such a cup of sorrow? Truly they who are brother or sister or mother to Him must take up their cross daily. These are they who go up through great tribulation. //

What a journey that must have been of Mary from Nazareth to Hebron, and occupied with what thoughts. Mary's way would lead her through Jerusalem. She may have crossed Olivet as the sun was setting. She may have knelt at even in Gethsemane. She may have turned aside to look on the city from Calvary. What a heavy heart she must have carried through all these scenes as she went into the hill country with haste. Only two, out of God, knew the truth about Mary; an angel in heaven, and her own heart on earth. And thus it was that she fled to the mountains of Judah, hoping to find there an aged kinswoman of hers who would receive her word and would somewhat understand her case. As she stumbled on drunk with sorrow