



Bible Drama Scripts
presents

YOU EVER MET A MAN LIKE JOSEPH?

Monologue by ELIAS, a neighbor of JOSEPH, the earthly father of Jesus

By Patricia Souder

SYNOPSIS: Joseph's next door neighbor, Elias, talks about Joseph's character and the dilemma Joseph faces when he learns that Mary is pregnant. Although Elias is a fictional character, his folksy insights, drawn from Scripture, reveal Joseph as a man who dares to do what's right, even in difficult circumstances.

In the process, Elias not only asks "You ever met a man like Joseph?" but also "And, more important, you ever met a God like Joseph's God?" His parting words, "Might just be worth your time to do that, you know!" offer a warm invitation to get to know God more intimately this Christmas season.

SETTING: Simple Nazareth neighborhood prior to Jesus' birth.

CHARACTER: ELIAS, an older man with a working-man's vocabulary. Walks with a cane.

PERFORMANCE TIME: 8-9 minutes.

PERFORMANCE NOTES: Project the respect and concern Elias feels for Joseph.

Develop gestures to help the audience stay on track with who is speaking when Elias quotes Joseph.

TOPICS: Advent. Christmas. Redemption. Grace.

PERFORMANCE POSSIBILITIES: Worship services. Advent or Christmas programs.

Small groups. Men's groups. Bible study groups.

BIBLE REFERENCES: Matthew 1:18-24; Luke 1:26-56; Isaiah 35:1-3.

PROPS: Sturdy handmade wooden cane.

ELIAS hobbles onto stage with handmade wooden cane.

You ever met a man like Joseph? He's my neighbor, you know, and he's a real good one.
(Smiles and nods head.)

Fixed my gate over there without ever sayin' a word about it. *(Picks up cane and shows it to audience.)* Made me this cane for my bum leg, too.

But I was real worried about Joseph last week. Something was botherin' him real bad.
(Shakes head with concern.) I could see it in his eyes. And in the droop of his shoulders. He'd lost his spirit and his gusto.

And that's not good when a man's fixin' to get married.

I don't know his Mary very well. But I remember how excited Joseph was when he first met her: "She's so beautiful . . . inside and out! She has a sweet smile and a wonderful, warm heart . . . for people and for Yahweh."

Joseph talked about Mary every day. Why, I couldn't shut him up! And that was pretty amazin' because Joseph's not much of a talker. Made me feel young again, it did!
(Chuckles.)

Then, not long after they got engaged, Mary took off. Went to the hill country near Jerusalem to visit her cousin Elizabeth. Somethin' about Elizabeth havin' a baby even though she was way too old. *(Raises eyebrows and shrugs as if perplexed.)*

Joseph was concerned because it was a long trip, but Mary said Yahweh wanted her to go. Now how could a man argue with that? *(Shrugs and gestures with surprise.)*

Soon as Mary left, Joseph started makin' a fancy chest for her. I could always tell when he was workin' on that chest because he whistled. I often went over to watch him fit the pieces together. He even carved and polished a dozen olive wood roses for decoratin' the corners. It almost brought tears to my eyes to see him caress those roses so gentle with his work-worn hands!

I made up my mind I'd find some excuse to be there when Joseph gave the chest to Mary.

But that never happened.

Truth is, Mary came back to Nazareth before Joseph finished the chest. And Joseph was so eager to see her that he ran right over to her house.

I kept my ears cocked to hear him sing happy Hebrew love songs when he come back.

(Shakes head sadly.) Instead, he shuffled up the path between our houses, head down and hurt hangin' out all over. It didn't take no special skill to see somethin' was wrong . . . real wrong.

I wasn't sure what to do, but it was clear he needed a friend. So I called out, "Hey, Joseph, what's goin' on?"

"Don't . . . really . . . know," he said, voice dull and dead.

"Mary?" I asked hesitantly.

He nodded right slow.

"She don't wanna marry you?" I asked.

"No. She still wants to marry me," he said, gloom shadowin' every word.

"Then, what's the problem?"

"I don't want to talk about it," Joseph said, pushin' open the door to his house.

"Hey," I said, surprisin' myself. "Won't do you no good broodin' over this by yourself. So how 'bout you tell me what's goin' on."

Joseph shook his head and walked into his house.

Now I ain't usu'ly so bold, but I hoisted myself over the threshold with my cane and said, "Look, you need a friend tonight, so I'm gonna be your friend even if you don't want me to."

Then I put my old, bony hand 'neath his chin and lifted his head so we was lookin' eye to eye.

He started weepin' like as if he couldn't go on livin'.

Well now, I really didn't know what to do, so I just let him cry.

After a long time, his cries turned to sobs and he muttered, "Ma--ry's going to have a baby."

"And you're not the father?" I murmured.

Joseph nodded in misery.

"But I thought your Mary was a trust-worthy, God-fearin' woman . . ."

"So did I," he said and started weepin' again.

Then, almost as if he'd run out of tears, he sat up and looked me straight in the eyes and said, "I still do."

"But a woman can't get pregnant by herself," I said slowly.

"I know," he said. "So the Law says she and the other man should be stoned."

"Because she promised herself to you and adultery is wrong," I reminded him.

"Yes . . ." he said, starting to weep again. "But I can't bear to have Mary stoned."

"I never met a man like you," I said. "You got every right to be angry. But you're worried about Mary. (*Grimaces and throws up his hands in bewilderment.*) So what're you gonna do?"

"I don't know," he said and started sobbin' again. "The only thing I can think of is to end the engagement quietly so she's not embarrassed."

He shook his head in misery, then gave me a heart-broken hug. "Elias, you'll keep this quiet, too, won't you?"

I nodded. For the first time that evening, I heard a hint of the Joseph I knew so well seepin' back into this more-than-decent man.

Joseph thanked me for comin' and ushered me to the door, sayin', "Elias, it's past your bedtime. I'm safe to leave alone now . . . so you can go home and go to bed."

And that would have been the end of the story because I can keep a secret, you know. But the next mornin', Joseph came knockin' on my door long before anyone should.

"Elias! Wake up! I've got to tell you about last night!"

"Last night? It's still last night so far as I can see," I grumbled, stumblin' to the door.

By then, Joseph was pushin' through the door. And I was rubbin' my eyes and stretchin' my brain tryin' to figure out what could've changed this man so much so fast.

"Guess what happened, Elias! Gabriel visited me!"

"Gabriel?" I muttered. "As in the Angel Gabriel?"

"Yes, as in the Angel Gabriel."

I shook my head. Joseph had always been a practical, get-it-done, no nonsense sort of neighbor. And now he was seein' angels?

"Oh Elias! It was sort of like a dream. But it was . . . it was so real. One minute I was asleep and the next, Gabriel was telling me . . ."

“Whoa! Whoa! Slow down, Joseph,” I said. “Did you say Gabriel came to your house right next door and talked right to you?”

“Yes, Elias, that’s exactly what I’m saying! Gabriel said I should marry Mary. Her baby was conceived by the Holy Spirit.”

“That would make him God’s Son . . .” I muttered, just startin’ to wake up.

“Yes! And we’re to name him Jesus. He’s to save us from our sins.”

“Save us from our sins?” I asked. “So he’s the promised Messiah? The One Isaiah wrote about? The One my mother said would set us free?”

“That very One,” Joseph said, his smile broader than I’d ever seen it. Then he held up one of the roses he’d so lovingly made. “It’s time for the desert to blossom like a rose . . .”

So I ask you: You ever met a man like Joseph? And, more important, you ever met a God like Joseph’s God? Might just be worth your time to do that, you know! (*Raps cane on floor for emphasis, then hobbles offstage joyously.*)

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