

Every Christmas, holiday stories fill our hearts as we celebrate one of the greatest events of all time. We embrace stories about the baby Jesus, the virgin Mary, the three wise men, Santa Clause, that cute little red-nosed reindeer, the frosty snowman... hey, wait a minute.

WHAT ABOUT JOE?!?!

In the history of man, there has never been a more important figure than Joseph, the quiet carpenter. No other man has carried a greater responsibility to mankind than Joseph. Yet he continues to be a token side note, an asterisk in the who's-who of biblical history.

No man deserves more recognition for his contributions to our history than does Joe. None of the Apostles... the prophets... no one.

This guy obviously had a lousy press agent. I mean, this guy did a whole lot more than just stand there holding a donkey while his virgin wife gave birth to a savior.

When God sent an Angel down to tell Mary that he had found favor in her, let's understand that a lot of that favor was in who she was engaged to be married to.

Mary was a young woman within her community. A teenager, we are told. But God saw in her the ingredients necessary to handle an historic event of this magnitude.

But with the importance of this event, God had to also know that Mary's partner through all of this would be someone of great strength and character. Someone he could count on to see it through no matter how bazaar it may get ... and we all know how bazaar it got for poor Joe.

God didn't just find favor in Mary, he found favor in Joe as well.

Let's face it, if an Angel came to you in the middle of the night and told you that your fiancé was pregnant, but not to worry, she was still a virgin... and that when she has this kid, you are to name him Jesus because he is the one that everybody's been waiting for... do you think for one moment that you would simply take the whole thing in stride and wake up refreshed the next morning? Not me. I'd blow it off as some bad salsa the night before and keep a close eye on that sneaky little lady of mine, that's for sure.

But that's why God chose Joe and not me. Joe was a decent man who understood the significance of this event. He quietly took whatever measures he needed to ensure that this piece

of history would run its proper course. No small feat in an era when women were stoned to death if they were caught pregnant out of wedlock.

Yes, Joseph quietly made sure the world got its savor.

When you study the Bible, you are always impressed with the cast of characters that God chose to bring the world His message. Bold, outspoken, rough and often abrasive, these characters are rightfully recognized for being the very foundation of our Christian faith.

What a contrast to the one man He chose to bring the messiah.

We often look for role models in our lives. Unfortunately Joe is not on any list for men.

A quiet, patient, decent man, Joseph wasn't very flashy and certainly doesn't get a whole lot of recognition for his contributions to our faith.

He must have been a special man. He was the only one that God would allow Jesus to call Dad.