



# REFUGEE

A CHRISTMAS SERIES

THE SOCIAL REFUGEE RESPONSE  
BRAD GRAY



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I don't know how I feel about  
[@WalkingTheText](#) not being a "real" Gray.....  
[#disturbingrevelation](#)





# Matthew 1

pg. 966



# Betrothal / Engagement

Arranged by parents with couple's consent

(Girl 12-14; Guy; 16-18)

Initiated with a marriage contract - *ketubah*

(Bride Price and Dowry)

Legally binding as marriage

(Dissolved only by Death or Divorce)

No intercourse or unchaperoned alone time

Length was approximately 1 year

# Wedding Celebration

Procession from groom's family to bride's family

Procession would return to groom's family's house

7-day wedding celebration

1st night: couple would consummate the marriage

“Officially” married at this point

Cloth would be shown to prove bride's virginity



Jewish and Roman law required divorce  
for adultery.



## **If Joseph Divorced her Publicly ...**

Conducted by a Judge/Elder at the village gate

He'd get to keep her dowry

Bride's family would return the bride price

Publicly absolve himself of any wrongdoing

Avenge his shame (the loss of his honor)

She and her family would incur significant shame



“The penalty for adultery under Old Testament law was death by stoning, and this penalty applied to infidelity during betrothal as well (Deut. 22:23-24). In New Testament times, Joseph would have merely been required to divorce Mary and expose her to shame; the death penalty was rarely if ever executed for this offense.”

Craig S. Keener, *IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, 48.



“Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law (lit. “righteous”), and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.”

**Matthew 1:19**



## **If Joseph Divorced her Privately ...**

Required the presence of only 2-3 witnesses

Give her a certificate of divorce

He'd lose the dowry

He'd potentially not recoup the bride price

He'd lose any opportunity to regain his honor

But he'd mitigate her and her family's shame

## **If Joseph Chooses to Marry Her ...**

Be acknowledging that he impregnated her

Or he'd be condoning her act of adultery

Be taking on her shame

Create suspicion for not waiting for the 1 year

Wouldn't be able to prove Mary's virginity, and exonerate themselves from community's shame



Joseph and Mary's obedience to God led them  
to becoming social outcasts/refugees.



Obedience to God can often lead to a  
social refugee reality.



The image features a vast, dark night sky filled with numerous stars of varying brightness and colors, including some blue and red stars. The sky is the dominant background. In the foreground, a desert landscape is visible, with rolling sand dunes illuminated by a warm, golden light, likely from a low sun or moon. On the left side, the silhouette of a town or village with several buildings is visible. On the right side, two small human figures and a donkey are silhouetted against the dunes, suggesting a journey or a moment of rest in a remote, arid environment.

What is our response when we find ourselves in a social refugee reality?

“Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law (lit. “righteous”), and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.”

**Matthew 1:19**



Joseph was righteous because he was both faithful to God and compassionate to Mary, despite his feelings of shame and betrayal.



HOLIDAYS CAN BE  
STRESSFUL. DON'T BE TOO  
HARD ON EACH OTHER,  
OKAY?

BG

@bobgoff, Instagram, 11/25/15