

Matthew 1:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

Analysis

Joseph's righteousness is seen in his desire to protect Mary from public shame rather than making a spectacle of her perceived adultery. The phrase 'not willing to make her a public example' reveals covenant love (hesed) and mercy. His righteousness was not cold legalism but grace-filled obedience, foreshadowing the gospel principle that true righteousness flows from a transformed heart.

Historical Context

In first-century Judaism, betrothal was legally binding and could only be dissolved through divorce. Adultery during betrothal was punishable by stoning under Mosaic law, though Roman occupation may have limited this practice.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Joseph's response demonstrate that true righteousness includes both justice and mercy?

2. What does this teach about protecting the reputation and dignity of others, even when they appear guilty?

Interlinear Text

Ἰωσήφ	δὲ	ὁ	ἀνὴρ	αὐτὴν	δίκαιος	ὢν	καὶ	μὴ
Joseph	Then	G3588	husband	her	a just	being	man and	not
G2501	G1161		G435	G846	G1342	G5607	G2532	G3361
θέλων	αὐτὴν	παραδειγματίσαι,	ἐβουλήθη	λάθρα	ἀπολῦσαι			
willing	her	a publick example	was minded	privily	away			
G2309	G846	G3856	G1014	G2977	G630			
αὐτὴν								
her								
G846								

Additional Cross-References

Mark 6:20 (Righteousness): For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

Genesis 38:24 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot; and also, behold, she is with child by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.

Luke 2:25 (Righteousness): And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

Leviticus 20:10 (Parallel theme): And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.