

PERSONAL APPLICATION

- Considering the different ways that God speaks to us, what steps can you take this week to improve your communication with God?
- Mercy triumphs over justice. Is there anything you can do, perhaps need to do this week to grow in mercy?
- What can you do to open up your life to experience more of 'Immanuel', God with you?

PRAYER

- Ask God to help you hear him more clearly. Commit yourself to responding when he speaks.
- Thank God for the great mercy he has shown to you by sending Jesus to die on the Cross for you. For forgiving you of any and all of your sins. Ask him to help you be more merciful and to show you places where you need to ask for or give forgiveness and mercy.
- Ask God to be 'Immanuel - God in the flesh' to you and to make you more aware of him in your life. If you haven't already, you might consider asking him to save you from your sins as well.

NOTES



The Advent: Joseph & The Angel

CONNECT

- Have you ever been falsely accused of lying or been caught in a big lie? Are you willing to tell us the story?
- What do you know about your parents' courtship?
- Do you know what your name means or how your parents picked it?

THOUGHT

God becoming man is one of the greatest miracles of all time. It's interesting that he didn't come as a powerful ruler or invincible warrior as the Jews expected, but rather as a little baby, born in a stable. Jesus fulfilled over 300 prophecies in his lifetime. Here are 5 from his birth. 1) Jesus will come from the line of Abraham. *Prophecy:* [Genesis 12:3](#). *Fulfilled:* [Matthew 1:1](#). 2) Jesus' mother will be a virgin. *Prophecy:* [Isaiah 7:14](#). *Fulfilled:* [Matthew 1:18-23](#). 3) Jesus will be born in the town Bethlehem. *Prophecy:* [Micah 5:2](#). *Fulfilled:* [Luke 2:1-7](#). 4) Jesus will be a member of the tribe of Judah. *Prophecy:* [Genesis 49:10](#). *Fulfilled:* [Luke 3:33](#). 5) Jesus' birth will be accompanied with great suffering and sorrow. *Prophecy:* [Jeremiah 31:15](#). *Fulfilled:* [Matthew 2:16](#). Some of these, like his birthplace, would have been impossible for him to choose to fulfill, even if he wanted to. Today we'll be studying Jesus' birth foretold and what it means to us, personally.

WORD

¹⁸This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. ²⁰But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us"). ²⁴When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus." **Matthew 1:18–25 (NIV)**

1. JOSEPH'S PREDICAMENT

¹⁸This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit."

Matthew 1:18 (NIV)

If you had been Joseph, Mary's fiancé, when she was found to be with child, what would be the first thing that would have come to mind when Mary told you she was pregnant: There must be another guy? That's it, we're finished? She's never lied to me before so she must be telling the truth? Then God spoke to him through an angel in a dream. If God spoke to you through a dream and told you something humanly impossible was about to take place, would you believe the dream or your common sense? Does God speak to you in more mystical or more practical ways?

2. JOSEPH'S RESPONSE

¹⁹Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly."

Matthew 1:19 (NIV)

Joseph was a law-abiding citizen and according to Jewish law, Joseph could have pressed charges against Mary and had her publicly humiliated or worse. But Joseph was also a merciful man. How do you think you would have responded if you were in Joseph's place? Do you tend toward mercy or toward justice? *James 2:13* tells us that mercy triumphs over justice, why do you think this is true?

3. INTRODUCING JESUS

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Matthew 1:20–23 (NIV)

So God came to Joseph in a dream to tell him that his fiancée was miraculously pregnant by the Holy Spirit and revealed that their son would be both Savior and God in the flesh. That is a lot to process! 'Savior.' 'God in the flesh.' Suddenly these became much more than just words, more than just names or roles. The Messiah was going to be his son. Do you see Jesus as more than just an icon, more than just a historic figure? What does it mean to you that God lived a completely human life? What does it mean to you that God in the Flesh, Immanuel, died for your sins?
