

# GraceCity Advent Study

## Prepare Him Room



Week #2

December 3-December 9, 2018

“Prepare for the Call” (Matthew 1:18-25)

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Joseph was not Jesus' biological father; yet, his lineage and character are vital to the story of Jesus. In the opening of his Gospel, Matthew details the ancestry of Jesus through Joseph to King David to show that Jesus fulfilled the Davidic covenant (2 Samuel 7:11b-16). As for his integrity, Joseph was noted to be faithful to the law. Week 2 brings us inside the miracle of the incarnation, the human and divine Jesus, and the power of His name to call us to be the children of God. We see how Joseph obeyed God and made room for the coming King, even though that was likely not an easy or convenient course.

### Preparation:

How do you prepare for Christmas?

**Read:** Matthew 1:18-25

### Notes/Definitions:

- Names in the Bible often bore some significance, reflecting a significant occasion/event, transformation, or prediction about the person. The names of God are often descriptive, revealing aspects of His character.
- Names/titles of Jesus in this passage:
  - Jesus: A common Jewish name “Yeshua,” which is derived from the word meaning “to rescue/deliver”
  - Messiah: Hebrew equivalent of the Greek word *Christos*, meaning “anointed”
  - Immanuel: “God with us;” Also found in the Old Testament (Isaiah 7:14, 8:8) relating to a sign from God to His people, Israel, and fulfilled in the incarnation
- Betrothal – “The first stage of marriage in Jewish culture, usually lasting for a year before the wedding night, more legal than an engagement” (footnote to v. 18, New American Standard Bible)

### Questions:

1. Summarize the passage. What happened? What was surprising? What was unlikely? Who was involved? Etc. What title would you give this passage?
2. What happens in Verses 18-19? What are Joseph's initial intentions before the angel appears in his dream?
3. What do we learn about Jesus from the multiple names used for him in this passage? What expectations might this information form in the people around him?
4. How did Joseph respond to the visit from the angel? What may have made that response difficult?
5. Joseph exposed himself to criticism by standing by Mary. What are the ways in our lives that we are willing to face ridicule, sacrifice, and go against what is culturally accepted?
6. What is the significance of the incarnation, the physical presence of God on earth?

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This study has been developed for personal reflection and group discussion. To participate in the conversation, join a GraceCity small group. For more information on times and locations, email [smallgroups@gracecitybaltimore.org](mailto:smallgroups@gracecitybaltimore.org).

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7. How does Jesus' coming change/affect/influence our call/life/priorities?
8. There are several calls to "do not be afraid" in Scripture, including some in the birth narratives of Jesus. In addition to this passage, Mary is told not to be afraid in Luke 1:26-30, and the shepherds are told not to be afraid in Luke 2:8-10. Why might Joseph, Mary, and the shepherds be afraid? What do we learn about God from the command to not be afraid?
9. Verses 24-25 quickly fast forward from Joseph's dream to Jesus' birth. In this interim time, Joseph and Mary most likely prepared for the birth of a child as any young couple would. How do we open our hearts to Jesus' birth, and since we know the rest of the story, his death and resurrection as well?

### **Closing Prayer:**

*Praise God for coming down to us. Reflect on what this means to you. Ask God to reveal where you can be more intentional and obedient this season. Pray that you would be willing to follow His call, even when it runs counter to cultural norms and our own expectations. Pray for the grace not to be swallowed up by the non-essentials.*