

Today:
December 22, 2013

Scripture Focus: Isaiah 7; Matthew 1

God spoke again to Ahaz. This time he said, "Ask for a sign from your God. Ask anything. Be extravagant. Ask for the moon!" But Ahaz said, "I'd never do that. I'd never make demands like that on God!" So Isaiah told him, "Then listen to this, government of David! It's bad enough that you make people tired with your pious, timid hypocrisies, but now you're making God tired. So the Master is going to give you a sign anyway. Watch for this: A girl who is presently a virgin will get pregnant. She'll bear a son and name him Immanuel (God-With-Us). By the time the child is twelve years old, able to make moral decisions, the threat of war will be over.

(Isaiah 7:10-15, Message)

The birth of Jesus took place like this. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. Before they came to the marriage bed, Joseph discovered she was pregnant. (It was by the Holy Spirit, but he didn't know that.) Joseph, chagrined but noble, determined to take care of things quietly so Mary would not be disgraced.

While he was trying to figure a way out, he had a dream. God's angel spoke in the dream: "Joseph, son of David, don't hesitate to get married. Mary's pregnancy is Spirit-conceived. God's Holy Spirit has made her pregnant. She will bring a son to birth, and when she does, you, Joseph, will name him Jesus—'God saves'—because he will save his people from their sins." This would bring the prophet's embryonic sermon to full term: Watch for this—a virgin will get pregnant and bear a son; They will name him Immanuel (Hebrew for "God is with us").

Then Joseph woke up. He did exactly what God's angel commanded in the dream: He married Mary. But he did not consummate the marriage until she had the baby. He named the baby Jesus.

(Matthew 1:18-25, Message)

Notes from Worship:

(What caught your attention? What do you want to reflect on more this week?)

Notes from Formation Station:

(Discussion, Bible Study, Drama, Biblical People)

Family Discussion Questions:

- How would you describe the mystery of Christmas?
- What does it mean to you that God took on flesh in the person of Jesus?
- How will you celebrate Christ's coming this Christmas season?

This Week: **December 23-28**

Scripture Readings:

Monday 12/23	Tuesday 12/24	Wednesday 12/25	Thursday 12/26	Friday 12/27	Saturday 12/28
Psalms 81, 88, 92-93	1 Chronicles 7-9	2 Samuel 5:1-10; 1 Chronicles 11-12; Psalm 133	2 Samuel 5:11-6:23; 1 Chronicles 13-16	Psalms 15, 23-25, 47	Psalms 89, 96, 100-101, 107

Questions for Reflection:

These questions are meant to help get you thinking about the readings for each day. Feel free to also use this space to jot down other questions and insights gleaned from your reading.

Monday

- What does it mean for God to reign today? (see Psalm 93)

Tuesday

- What stands out to you in these chapters?

Wednesday

- Why did people devote themselves to David?

Thursday

- What is the significance of the ark in these chapters?

Friday

- These are some powerful Psalms about us putting our trust in God. Which words and phrases jump out to you? Why?

Saturday

- Several of these Psalms talk about singing. What is the significance of singing our praises to God? How is singing our praises different than speaking our praises?

Scripture Memory:

As we continue our study of Israel's Kings, our second key memory passage is ***Micah 6:6-8***. In only a few verses, this passage summarizes the heart of what many of the prophets teach to God's people during the time of the kings. Let us not only put these verses to memory, but let us also take them to heart so that we can live them out.

Next Sunday: December 29

Theme: Psalms for Worship

Scripture Focus: *The Book of Psalms*