

Advent 2022 -

God is With Us

What will be our response?



GOD IS WITH US, WHAT WILL BE OUR RESPONSE?

No matter how difficult a season we are walking through or how joyful a season we are experiencing, God is by our side. Jesus is with us always!

The prophet Isaiah revealed this to us in Isaiah 7:14, proclaiming, "She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel which means "God is with us." In Matthew 1:20-23, the angel of the Lord repeated these words to Joseph in a dream and Joseph's reaction was a response of faith. As Joseph anticipated the birth of Jesus, he fled from fear and cultural standards to follow the Lord's call. He laid apprehension aside to courageously take Mary as his wife. His faith response is an encouragement to us today as we face many situations that stir our fear.

God is with us. What is our response to this amazing promise?

Joseph, Mary, their family, the community, politicians, shepherds, and wisemen all responded in different ways to the news of God's son being born. Each response is recorded in the Scriptures for us to learn from today. Our 2022 Advent Study is designed to help you explore those Scriptures, being attentive to how others responded to the news of Jesus' birth. Our hope is that you will be able to use this same process as you read about anyone's story shared with us in God's Holy Word.

To get the most from this resource:

- Set aside purposeful time to read the scriptures about the birth of Jesus.
- Examine your hearts, prayerfully asking the Lord to help you respond to His call with deep-rooted faith.
- Praise the Lord for being Immanuel ~ an ever-present and loving God.

The Lord is with us in every season, friends! May we rejoice as we draw nearer to Him this beautiful Advent Season.

Blessings,

jodie b

Advent 2022 - Week 1

Joseph

Matthew 1:18-25



Often, we face circumstances that stir fear and require us to step out courageously as we trust the Lord to have the best outcome for us, even when it seems otherwise.

Joseph's response to the Lord's command to take Mary as his wife was driven by his deep faith in God. As we read the scriptures, we witness his courageous faith- **faith that helped him move forward in the face of doubt and fear.**

A deep faith relationship with the Lord moves us to follow Him boldly, even where fear and doubt exist.

Joseph's faith propelled him to lay aside his first impulses as he surrendered to God's plan in obedience. When the world would direct him to call off his engagement with Mary and publicly shame her, he chose to respond in faith and obey the Lord's call to take a pregnant Mary as his wife. His faith response is an encouragement to us today as we experience many situations that trigger our fear.

As you read today's passage (Matthew 1:18-25), invite the Lord to speak to you personally through Joseph's story of faith, obedience, and trust.



THIS IS HOW JESUS THE MESSIAH WAS BORN.
HIS MOTHER, MARY, WAS ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED TO
JOSEPH. BUT BEFORE THE MARRIAGE TOOK PLACE,
WHILE SHE WAS STILL A VIRGIN, SHE BECAME
PREGNANT THROUGH THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
JOSEPH, TO WHOM SHE WAS ENGAGED, WAS A
RIGHTEOUS MAN AND DID NOT WANT TO DISGRACE
HER PUBLICLY, SO HE DECIDED TO BREAK THE
ENGAGEMENT QUIETLY.

AS HE CONSIDERED THIS, AN ANGEL OF THE LORD
APPEARED TO HIM IN A DREAM. "JOSEPH, SON OF
DAVID," THE ANGEL SAID, "DO NOT BE AFRAID TO TAKE
MARY AS YOUR WIFE. FOR THE CHILD WITHIN HER WAS
CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. AND SHE WILL HAVE
A SON, AND YOU ARE TO NAME HIM JESUS, FOR HE
WILL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS."

ALL OF THIS OCCURRED TO FULFILL THE LORD'S
MESSAGE THROUGH HIS PROPHET:

"LOOK! THE VIRGIN WILL CONCEIVE A CHILD!
SHE WILL GIVE BIRTH TO A SON,
AND THEY WILL CALL HIM IMMANUEL,
WHICH MEANS 'GOD IS WITH US.'"

WHEN JOSEPH WOKE UP, HE DID AS THE ANGEL OF THE
LORD COMMANDED AND TOOK MARY AS HIS WIFE. BUT
HE DID NOT HAVE SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH HER UNTIL
HER SON WAS BORN. AND JOSEPH NAMED HIM JESUS.

Matthew 1:18-25 NLT

Emmanuel or Immanuel

Why two spellings for the same word? Which is correct?

Both! It's all about transliteration. If I leave you there, you may respond like me and think, "that's clear as mud." Word study is not my expertise, but let me try. The Old Testament Scriptures were written in Hebrew, and the New Testament in Greek. Throw in the process of transliteration and we have two spellings. Depending on the Bible translation you use, you may see this word one or both ways.

In the opening of her book, *Emmanuel, An Invitation to Prepare Him Room at Christmas and Always*, Ruth Chou Simons explains further saying, "Immanuel is the transliteration of the Old Testament Hebrew term *Immanu* ("with us") and *El* ("God"). Emmanuel is the transliteration of the New Testament Greek name Emmanuel, which means, "God with us."



Joseph

Read Matthew 1:18-25

What do we learn from verse 18? Write any details you observe in this verse:

- 1- Mary and Joseph are _____.
- 2- Mary is the mother of Jesus.
- 3-
- 4-

What do learn specifically about Joseph from verse 19? Document all of your observations.

What occurred in verse 20 to cause Joseph to reconsider breaking their engagement? What does the angel tell Joseph and what facts are confirmed by the angel's words in Joseph's dream?

What instruction does the angel give to Joseph that we can apply to our lives today when faced with uncertainty, fear, and confusion?

Advent 2022 - Week 1- Day 1

Joseph

Read Matthew 1:18-25

In verse 20 we read these words, “As he considered this.” Joseph had taken everything into consideration and decided to quietly break His engagement to Mary. However, he didn’t leap forward in haste. What can we learn from this?

By these words, we can conclude that there was a period of time where Joseph paused before acting. This time allowed God to speak and guide Joseph in his next steps. Steps that would look far different if he forged forward without direction from the Lord. What can we learn from this as we strive to live counterculturally for Jesus?

Are you facing a difficult decision? Pen a prayer and invite God into your response:

Joseph

Reread Matthew 1:18-25

What three things do we learn in verse 21?

- Mary will have a _____.
- _____ is to name him _____.
- Jesus will save his people from _____.

**Verse 22 explains that "all this will occur to
_____ through his prophet.**

Read Isaiah 7:14 and record the verse here:

What three actions by Joseph, in response to the dream, are recorded in verses 24-25?

- Joseph took _____.
- He refrained from sexual relations with Mary until _____.
- Joseph named the baby _____ as commanded.

What words would you use to characterize Joseph based on his responses?

Joseph

Countercultural as defined by Merriam-webster.com is a culture with values and mores that run counter to those of established society

In Joseph's day, society would say to respond in anger, punishing the the offender publicly, and in haste. The countercultural response of Joseph teaches us differently. Joseph's example shows that as we live a righteous life, loving the Lord, we are to respond in faith, with mercy, grace, and self-control, desiring what is best for another.

On the next page use the following example to write out what you are learning from God's Word; include any scriptures that come to mind.



The response of Joseph teaches me to pause and listen for God's direction. (Be quick to listen, slow to anger, slow to speak. James 1:19; Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding. Proverbs 3:5)



The response of Joseph teaches me to align my character with God's; to have a heart desire to be gracious, forgiving, self-controlled, humble, and obedient. (Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Colossians 3:12)

Advent 2022 - Week 1- Day 3

Joseph



The response of Joseph teaches me to

Scripture to remember:




The response of Joseph reminds me to be

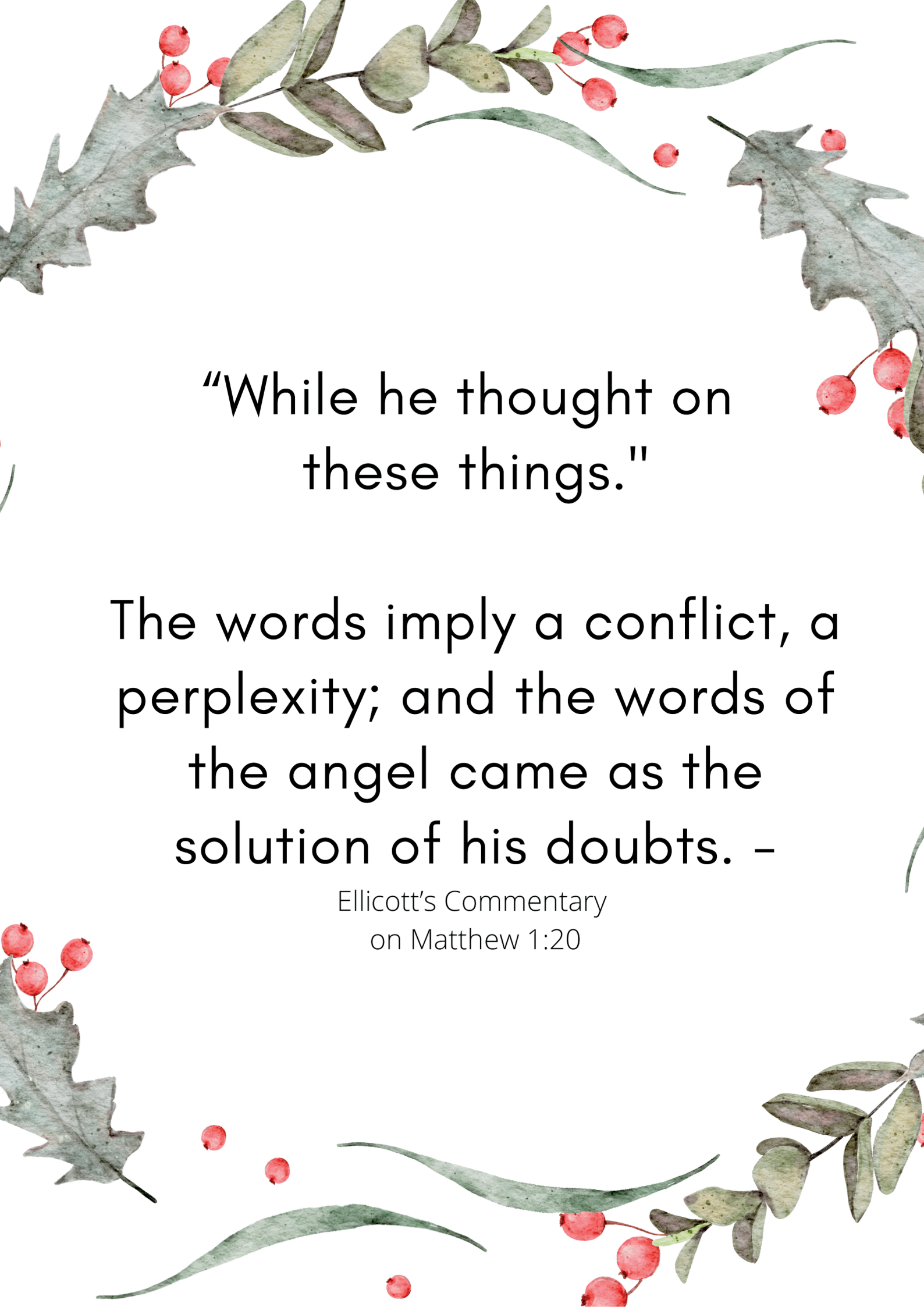
Scripture to remember:



The response of Joseph encourages me to

Scripture to remember:

 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." John 13:34-35



"While he thought on
these things."

The words imply a conflict, a
perplexity; and the words of
the angel came as the
solution of his doubts. –

Ellicott's Commentary
on Matthew 1:20

Joseph

Read Luke 2:1-7

As you read what may be familiar words, ask God to give you "fresh eyes" to see new things in today's passage.

What decree do we learn about in verse 1?

What excuses might Joseph have given rather than journeying to Bethlehem?

What excuses have you given God when you are apprehensive to step out for Jesus in a bold way?

Given that he followed the decree, what does this say about Joseph character?

Write out verse 5. Reflect on what we know from studying Joseph in the book of Matthew. Remembering that Joseph is called righteous, how do you feel he is demonstrating Godly love toward Mary?


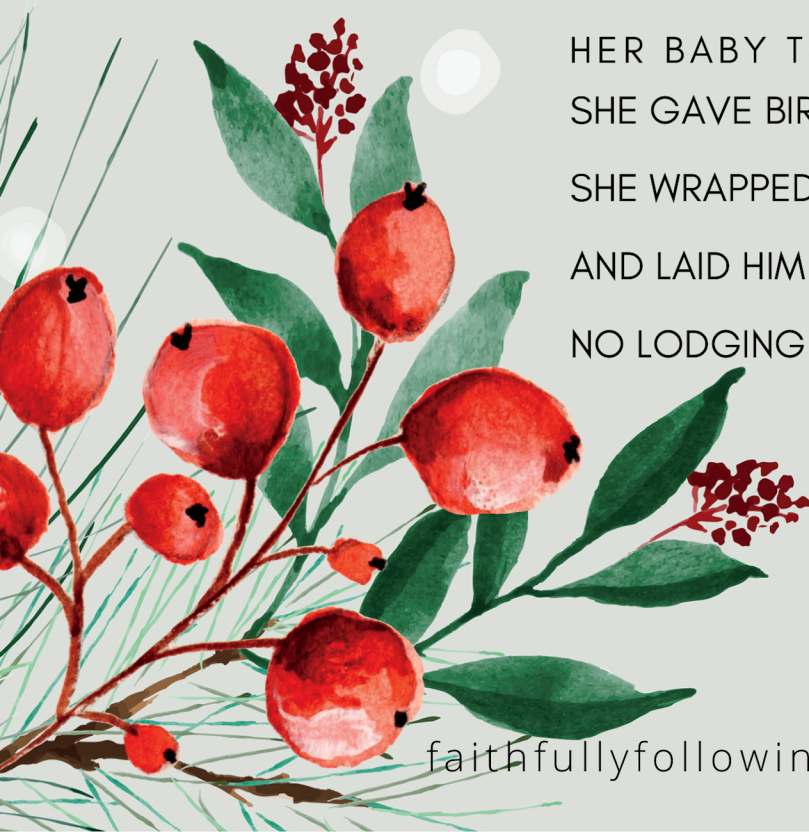


Joseph

Reread verses 6 and 7 to complete the blanks:

- And while _____ were there, the _____ came for her baby to be born.
- She gave _____ to her firstborn son....and laid him in a manger, because there was ____ lodging available for _____.

These verses may help you with the previous question. Joseph never left Mary's side. While we don't get more detail about the birth, can you picture him at her side with each painful contraction? Can you see him lovingly supporting and encouraging her? Perhaps even reminding her through his own actions that, "God is with us."

Recall a time in your life when you felt alone, but trusted God to be with you. Write a prayer of praise to Immanuel, thanking Him for His constant presence and love.



AT THAT TIME THE ROMAN EMPEROR, AUGUSTUS,
DECREED THAT A CENSUS SHOULD BE TAKEN
THROUGHOUT THE ROMAN EMPIRE. (THIS WAS THE
FIRST CENSUS TAKEN WHEN QUIRINIUS WAS
GOVERNOR OF SYRIA.) ALL RETURNED TO THEIR OWN
ANCESTRAL TOWNS TO REGISTER FOR THIS CENSUS. AT
THAT TIME THE ROMAN EMPEROR, AUGUSTUS,
DECREED THAT A CENSUS SHOULD BE TAKEN
THROUGHOUT THE ROMAN EMPIRE...ALL RETURNED TO
THEIR OWN ANCESTRAL TOWNS TO REGISTER FOR THIS
CENSUS. AND BECAUSE JOSEPH WAS A DESCENDANT
OF KING DAVID, HE HAD TO GO TO BETHLEHEM IN
JUDEA, DAVID'S ANCIENT HOME. HE TRAVELED THERE
FROM THE VILLAGE OF NAZARETH IN GALILEE. HE TOOK
WITH HIM MARY, TO WHOM HE WAS ENGAGED, WHO
WAS NOW EXPECTING A CHILD.
AND WHILE THEY WERE THERE, THE TIME CAME FOR
HER BABY TO BE BORN.
SHE GAVE BIRTH TO HER FIRSTBORN SON.
SHE WRAPPED HIM SNUGLY IN STRIPS OF CLOTH
AND LAID HIM IN A MANGER, BECAUSE THERE WAS
NO LODGING AVAILABLE FOR THEM.

Luke 2:4-7 NLT

Advent 2022 - Week 1- Day 5

Joseph

LOOKING BEYOND THE STABLE

Read the following verses paying attention to the obedient faith of Joseph and Mary on display for us to learn from today. Use the remaining space to pen a prayer asking the Lord to guide you in all of your steps as you seek to faithfully follow His lead.

Eight days later, when the baby was circumcised, **he was named Jesus**, the name given him by the angel even before he was conceived. Then it was time for their purification offering, as required by the law of Moses after the birth of a child; **so his parents took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord**. The law of the Lord says, "If a woman's first child is a boy, he must be dedicated to the Lord." **So they offered the sacrifice required in the law of the Lord**—"either a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." Luke 2:21- 24 NLT

That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when **Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required...** Luke 2:27 NLT

When Jesus' parents had fulfilled all the requirements of the law of the Lord, they returned home to Nazareth in Galilee. Luke 2:39NLT

Notes



Advent 2022 - Week 1

Bonus Section



for further study &enJOYment

Do you see what I see?



What in the world would Joseph do? Such a kind and gentle man, engaged to be married, and then, he discovers that his bride-to-be is with child.

No one would fault him for calling off the engagement. In fact, during that time, it was common practice to publicly stone a woman caught in the act of adultery and this is exactly what the case appeared to be. How else could Mary be with child? Joseph and Mary had not laid together, not even once. But rather than disgrace Mary publicly, he decided to quietly call off the engagement and we begin to see the character of Joseph unfold.

I see grace.

He is called “a righteous man” in Matthew 1:19 and his actions certainly confirm this. One source states that the word righteous is used in the scriptures to “describe true believers in God.” Joseph’s grace-filled response to Mary is certainly evidence of a true believer. His desire to protect and shelter Mary from harm reminds me of Jesus who graciously saved us by taking the punishment for our sins.

I see love.

While Joseph considers his next steps, He experiences a divine intervention. A dream, a message from an angel of the Lord brings clarity to his situation. The angel tells Joseph to put aside his fear and take Mary as his wife. “She will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins,” the angel proclaims. “Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means ‘God with us.’” (Matthew 1:23) Can you picture Joseph, wide eyes, disheveled hair, but perhaps, breathing easier when he woke up with these cherished words in his heart?



Do you see what I see?

I see trust.

Trust that carries Joseph and his bride all the way to Bethlehem in the last weeks of pregnancy, where no room would be found.

I see obedience.

As he helps his wife wrap their newborn child in swaddling cloths, I see the tender heart of a father, taking God's son into his arms, surveying every little detail as he looks at his son...God's son. Immanuel, God with us.

I see deep faith.



*Today in the town of David a
Savior has been born to you; he
is the Messiah, the Lord. This
will be a sign to you: You will
find a baby wrapped in cloths and
lying in a manger.*

LUKE 2:11-12

Joseph was committed to Mary. It's hard not to see his love for her. Even before their marriage, when He learned Mary was pregnant, Joseph was loving and kind. ~ Jodie Barrett, Jingle & Joy, Praying Beneath the Tree, Day

The scriptures tell us he didn't disgrace her or leave her. But it did take God's intervention. In the margins of my Bible I have the word "pause" by Matthew 1:20:

"As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit." Matthew 1:20 NLT

Often our first responses will come from emotions that stir inside of us. We call these "knee-jerk" reactions because they are like a reflex. They happen without thought. Rather than reacting recklessly, *a purposed and holy pause allows God's Spirit to guide us* as we invite the Lord to help us navigate our steps during emotionally trying times.

*Our marriages are stronger with
God's intervention and guidance.
Even the most challenging times can lead to great
blessings when we allow God to take control.*

**Read Matthew 1:18-25
again. Reflect & spend time
in prayer as you learn from
Joseph.**

- **Pray for your own marriage and/or the marriages that touch your life every week.**
- **If you have young children, pray for their future marriage. Give thanks for those that have encouraged you in your marriage.**
- **Consider any relationships that are broken in your sphere of influence and pray for healing and restoration.**



My Prayer for Marriages

Lord,

We rejoice in you today! You are worthy of praise! Much praise!

Today we come and lift marriages. We admit, they can be beautiful and difficult at the same time. Help us open our hearts to you and invite you into our marriages. Appear to us and guide us through each day. Help us be loving, patient, kind, and forgiving. Give us times of great joy and laughter.

For any marriage that is struggling, Lord, intervene. We know you are a God of relationship and you can restore even the most broken. Do a work of restoration for those who come, for those we lift.

Amen

jingle & Joy, Praying Beneath the Tree, Day 6

WEEK 1

PLAY LIST

listen using your favorite music source and
prayerfully reflect, praising God in response

GOD WITH US – JEREMY CAMP

"EMMANUEL, A HUMBLE KING
WE GIVE YOU OUR HEARTS AS AN OFFERING"



O COME, O COME EMMANUEL – CARMEN JUSTICE

"REJOICE! REJOICE! EMMANUEL
SHALL COME TO THEE, O ISRAEL"



JOSEPH'S LULLABY – MERCYME

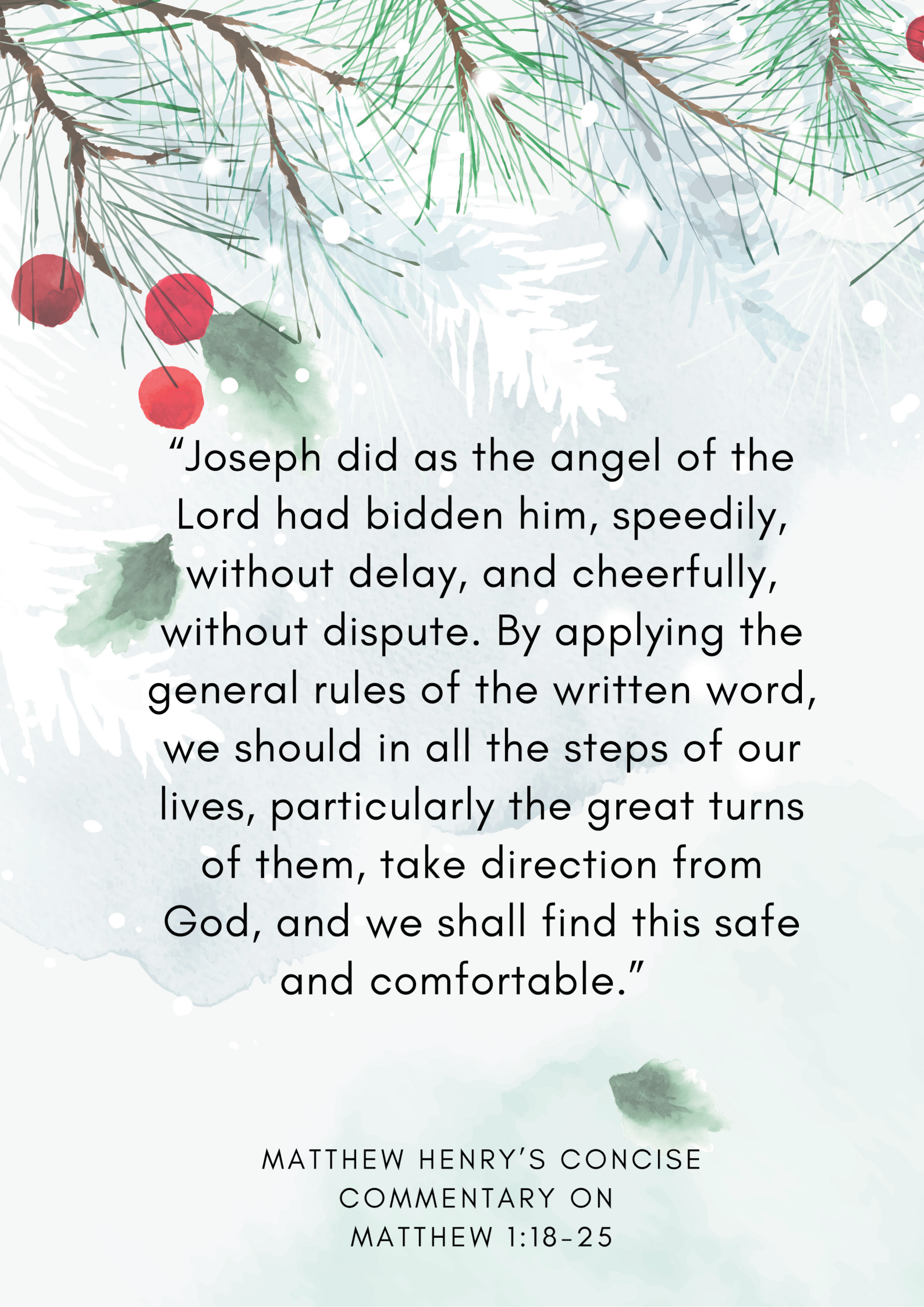
"I BELIEVE THE GLORY OF HEAVEN
IS LYING IN MY ARMS TONIGHT"



O, COME ALL YE FAITHFUL – CHRIS TOMLIN

"WE'LL PRAISE YOUR NAME FOREVER
CHRIST THE LORD"





“Joseph did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, speedily, without delay, and cheerfully, without dispute. By applying the general rules of the written word, we should in all the steps of our lives, particularly the great turns of them, take direction from God, and we shall find this safe and comfortable.”

MATTHEW HENRY'S CONCISE
COMMENTARY ON
MATTHEW 1:18-25

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