

¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ 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.

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. ²¹ And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

²² All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet:

²³ "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.'"

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife.

— *Matthew 1:18-24*

Discussion/Journal Questions

Share your favorite Christmas song whether religious or secular.

Have two or three people read Matthew 1:18-24 out loud slowly. After some time of reflection, ask each other what words, phrases, or ideas stand out to everyone. What questions come to mind as you meditate on this scripture?

Imagine yourself in Joseph's place. As you find out about Mary's pregnancy, what thoughts and emotions would you experience?

What does it say about Joseph's character that he did not want to disgrace Mary publicly?

Where are you feeling lost lately? Finances? Relationships? Career?

Why do you think God does not just give us all the answers we want? What would happen if He did?

In the sermon, John encourages us to practice the presence of Jesus in our daily routines. How does it change things to imagine Jesus with us in the wandering?

How can your group pray for you this season?