

Read Isaiah 7:10-17:

- 1) Is it okay to test God? (cf. Jesus' Temptation)
- 2) Ahaz choose not to test God and he got in trouble, why?
- 3) The Lord promises two things to Ahaz – verse 14 contains the first promise – to what does this promise refer? (cf. Matt. 1:21-23)
- 4) In verse 17, the Lord mentions the coming of the King of Assyria – the second promise – what does He mean by this? (cf. Is. 8:5-8)
- 5) When does this second promise get fulfilled?

Matthew 1:18-25:

- 1) What was the implication of being betrothed?
- 2) Mary wasn't unfaithful, but what was the punishment if she had been? (cf. Deut. 22:23-24)
- 3) Why was it important that Joseph stay and be a part of the family? From whose line was the promised Messiah to come? (cf. Is. 11:1, 10; Matt. 1:1-16, 20)
- 4) Maybe some of us still wish God came to us in visions and dreams like He did with the Old Testament prophets, but how does He come to us today? (cf. Heb. 1:1-2a; Matt. 1:23)
- 5) What two names were given to describe this child to Joseph?
- 6) How were the meaning of these name fulfilled? (cf. Matt. 28:18-20)
- 7) How did Joseph's reaction to the promised sign differ from King Ahaz many years earlier? (Matt. 1:24-25)

Devotional Thought:

Joseph serves as a model for believers. Before he knew the reason for Mary's pregnancy, he wanted to treat her justly but mercifully. However, when God's angel reveals the unique miracle of a virginal conception, Joseph believes, and he fulfills his responsibilities by marrying his betrothed and raising Jesus. Some people today struggle to believe the virgin birth, but it takes no more faith for us to believe that it did for Joseph. In fact, we have the evidence of Joseph's testimony to help us. He saw and believed that God can do what He promises. Likewise, the Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts to believe that God can do anything good and that Jesus truly is both God and man. (*TLSB, 1579*)

Prayer:

O Holy Spirit, strengthen my faith, and fill me with joy as I reflect on the miracle of Christ's birth. Amen. (*TLSB, 1579*)