

## **DIVING DEEPER** DISCUSSION GUIDE

normal human reproduction? How would the story of Jesus

be different if Joseph had been Jesus's father?

TEXT SUMMARY		
This week we continue our series on the Trinity with our Christmas Sunday sermon, "God the Savior," taken from <a href="Matthew 1:18-25">Matthew 1:18-25</a> , which tells the story of how God the Son took on human form in the miracle theologians call the Incarnation.		
Our text includes not only the miracle of the virgin conception of Jesus but also an angelic appearance, the fulfillment of ancient prophecy, and the birth of Jesus.		
INTRODUCTION (observation):		
1.	Notice the details we get about Joseph, the man who would go one to be Jesus's earthly father. What does Matthew tell us about Joseph's character? Why did Joseph "resolve to divorce her quietly"?	
2.	The angel revealed several things to Joseph in his dream.  Besides revealing how Mary had become pregnant, what else does the angel tell Joseph about Mary's unborn child?	
<u>DISCUSSION</u> (interpretation):		
1.	The naming of a child, especially a first-born son, carried great significance in first century Jewish culture. We see two names for Joseph's first-born son in this text. Is there a contradiction between what the prophecy said about the name of the virgin's son and the angel's instructions about naming him? "Jesus" was the Greek form of the Hebrew name "Joshua," which means "Savior." How was Mary's son both "Savior" and "Immanuel" ("God with us")?	
2.	Matthew is careful to point out that Joseph refrained from sexual relations with Mary ("knew her not") until after Jesus's birth. Why does it matter that Jesus was not the product of	

**SO WHAT?** (application): Here we move toward firstperson pronouns as we begin to consider how we must respond to what God has said in His Word. 1. The Incarnation (the doctrine that teaches that in Jesus, God took on human form) is admittedly mysterious. This is not the kind of thing we can hope to understand before we can believe it. • What are some other key Christian doctrines that must be accepted as ultimately mysterious, beyond human explanation? Does this mean that these doctrines are irrational and that we must commit intellectual suicide to accept them? How does the mystery of doctrines like the Incarnation force our Western minds to be quiet and humble? 2. There is something so very precious about the name "Immanuel" (God with us), especially these days, when we are all so worn down with anxiety, grief, and bewilderment. • How did the Incarnation mark a new era in God's presence among men? • How did the pouring out of the Spirit mark another new era in God's presence among men? • In the God-Man Jesus, God joined in our suffering, and in His Spirit He continues to be with us in our present distress. How can you create habits and routines in your daily and weekly schedule to remind yourself that God is

with you?