

# 'ORNAMENTS'

"The Ugliest Ornament"... Part 1

*Matt 1:17-24 (NIV)*

## Ice Breaker ?

What Christmas Ornament has meant the most to you over the years? Why?

Or, what is the ugliest ornament you have ever received!?

## Be Sure to:

- Pray before you begin. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance.
- Read the text slowly to **OBSERVE** what is truly being said.
- Mark any key words, questions, themes, etc. that you wish to explore further.
- Try and understand the author's perspective and time period as you **INTERPRET**.
- Find and share the timeless **APPLICATION** to your life.
- Close with personal prayer & prayer for the church/world.

<sup>17</sup> Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.

<sup>18</sup> This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

<sup>20</sup> But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

<sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: <sup>23</sup> "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"-which means, "God with us."

<sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. <sup>25</sup> But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

## Observation Questions:

1. take a look at Matthew 1:1-16 and briefly observe the names listed in the "Family Tree" of Jesus. Note any that you recognize.
2. Who are the major 'players'/characters in this familiar story? What do we know about them from this or other texts? What do we observe about their character or relationship to God?
3. What roles do the Messengers and the Message of God play in this story surrounding the birth of Christ?

## Interpretation/Application Questions:

### Pray Together:

Please take some time to pray as a group and...to pray personally throughout the week.

### Calvary Requests:

- Pray for many seekers and unsaved to be invited and to attend our Christmas services. Pray for them to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior!
- Pray for God's financial provision for our church as we finish out the 2007 year, plan the budget for a faithful 2008, and get underway with our buildinghomebase.com vision and project!
- Pray for God's provision for the poor, the oppressed, the hurting, the lonely, and the lost this Christmas!

### Personal/Group Requests

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1. We know that the Messiah (Jesus) was a Jew and from a certain family lineage (traced back to David, Abraham, and Adam). Why is noting Jesus' family history and connection important?
2. Joseph and Mary are not married, but 'betrothed' or 'engaged.' They are not sexually active (virginity was/is expected of unwed couples) yet as the marriage was not yet complete/consummated, but Mary is found pregnant. What are the social, cultural, spiritual implications of that reality? How would an unwed pregnancy affect her life (and the lives of unwed parents/kids with only one parent today)?
3. Joseph does an unusual thing. He could have rejected, punished, and even had Mary killed for her pregnancy out of wedlock (Dt. 22:23, 24), but doesn't! What does he do? Why? What does it tell us about his character and about God's care?
4. What does the Angel/Messenger of God reveal to Joseph about Mary's situation AND about Jesus? Why is that significant? How, in your life, has God used 'angelic' (literal or figurative) messengers or His Message (the Word of God) to reveal Jesus to you? How did your response reflect or differ from the response of Joseph?
5. Let's talk about Mary and the whole 'virgin birth' thing. Read Luke 1:26-38 also and discuss the following questions.
  - a) Why was it important that Mary be a virgin and not become pregnant in the usual way?
  - b) Did Mary remain a virgin (perpetually) for the rest of her life? What does the scripture say?
  - c) What role should Mary have in our lives today? Is she the Mother of God? Should we venerate her? Does she have any biblical authority/influence in Heaven?

**Memory Verse(s) for the Week:**

**Matthew 1:22-23 (NIV)**

*"All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"-which means, "God with us."*