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Only God Can Save

Readings for the Week

Matthew 1-14

No king, judge, or priest was ever good enough to ultimately save the people. No one could save God's people but God. So God comes to us in Jesus—Immanuel.

How has God been among the people before Jesus?

In what ways is God coming to us in Jesus different than anything that had happened before?

God had gone to great pains to dwell among his people. But at just the right moment he did what was unthinkable. God entered into our world just as we all have, being born of a woman and living a truly human life.

John 1:1-5, 14-18

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

Who is "the Word" and what does it mean that the Word was "in the beginning," "with God", and "was God"?

In coming into this world what has Jesus Christ done? What has he revealed?

Even though many might think that God's coming to earth would happen under distinguished and respectable circumstances, it happens in a humble way. **Read Matthew 1:18-25.**

What message does Joseph receive from the angels? How do you think you would have responded?

Read Luke 1:26-33. What message does Mary receive? Based on these two messages, what is Jesus coming to do?

Jesus comes to save the people and to be king, reigning over the Kingdom of God. His power was not immediately seen by all the people, but those whose power he threatened reacted. King Herod tries to have him killed by ordering the deaths of all children under the age of two and Satan seeks to tempt Jesus before his ministry begins. Read about this in Matthew 4:1-17.

In what ways did Satan tempt Jesus? What did he offer?

How does Jesus respond to temptation?

In the desert Jesus was in distress and Satan tried to offer him comfort and power. But Jesus knew the reason he came and the path that he would walk. Rather than give in to temptation, Jesus chose to suffer for us. Read Matthew 5:38-48 for teaching that relate to suffering.

How might Jesus' teachings lead to suffering for his followers? Have there been times that you have tried to live out these teachings?

How has Jesus exemplified these teachings in his own life? How has he shown us how to give sacrificially and love enemies?

Next week we will finish reading Matthew and see the way that Jesus chose to suffer for his enemies, saving us from our sins.

