

Bundle of Promise

Matthew 1:1- 2:15

Luke 2:1-20

John 1:1-14

Questions for Discussion

In Matthew, Joseph is instructed to name Mary's child ". . . *Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.*" We sometimes use the expression "you (or he/she) saved me," about someone who has helped us in a significant way. Think of a time when someone has saved you in some way. What happened? Was it unexpected? What was the difference that was made in your life? Did it change you in some way?

Matthew is citing the Hebrew name Joshua (Greek: Jesus), meaning "Yahweh helps/saves," and explains it, "for he will save his people *from their sins.*" What does being saved from sins mean to you individually? What does it mean to us as a people to be saved from our sins? Do we participate in corporate sin and corporate salvation?

Who do you see as "disciples" in Matthew's story of Jesus' birth? In Luke's? How do they model discipleship for us?

Has God ever called you to do something unexpected (as we might say he called Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and the wise men)? How did you hear the call, how did you respond, and what did you experience and learn as a result?

Think of a hard time in your life. Who or what helped you through it? Did you feel God with you, or that God was missing in action somehow?

What are ways we sometimes obscure, sentimentalize, or pretty up the "earthiness" of the Christmas story? Do we lose anything by doing that?

What brings you joy? What brings you peace? In what ways can you share these gifts during this trying time?

What hopes do you have for God at work in our world? What may God be doing that we can be part of?

Merry Christmas this July!

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