

**A View From Above, Bill Warrick  
December 11, 2011**

1. Share your concert experience. Did you bring friends and if so, did you have a chance to follow up with them to get their response to the music and message?
2. Why do we believe that Joseph passed away sometime between the time when Jesus was 12 and 30? **He was with Jesus at the visitation to the temple in Luke 2:41-52, but is never mentioned during Jesus' ministry and is absent at his death. Jewish tradition would have required a son to remain with a widowed mother until she was 30, which would explain why he began his ministry at that time as well.**
3. Read Matthew 1:17-25 and Matthew 2. What circumstances would have caused Joseph to doubt that God was orchestrating the events surrounding Jesus' birth and early years? **The lack of room in the Inn, the need to run to Egypt, the massacre of young children, etc.** What do you think kept Joseph's faith strong? **Note how many times God speaks to him in dreams in these two chapters. (2:13, 2:20, 2:22) The angels assurance to Joseph was that "this has been conceived of the Holy Spirit." God was in the midst of this chaos and confusion.** In the midst of these chaotic events, how do the Magi provide for Joseph's needs? **The gold, and other gifts, could have been sold immediately to pay for his family's trip.**
4. What emotions do you think Joseph would have gone through from the initial pregnancy news to when they finally settle in Nazareth? **Skepticism, disappointment, disrespect, jealousy, then doubt, wonder, fear and relief.** What impact do you think these early years had on the marriage of Mary and Joseph? **Open Answer.**
4. Bill said, when it comes to genealogies, "God cooks his books." What did he mean by that? **Sometimes the genealogies in the Bible are given through the lens of providence rather than literally lineages. When they are summarized and symmetrical, as they are in Matthew 1:17, they are meant to represent God's plan amidst the chaotic events of day to day life.** Where else in the Bible do we see this type of "Two book accounting?" **Chronicles and Samuel.** Why is this biblical observation so significant for us personally? **It represents the grace that will allow us to enter into Heaven. God has an earthly/fleshy view of us, and a redeemed/spiritual view of us.**
5. How do you compare Joseph's response to the angels' messages to the responses of Mary and Zechariahs in the previous weeks? **Open Answer. Joseph's words are never recorded in the Christmas story, and yet his actions and obedience to God are well detailed.**
6. How are you experiencing Immanuel, God with you, this Christmas?

**Pray** for those who are dealing with chaotic or confusing circumstances this Christmas and struggling to understand how God might be working in their life. Ask God to reveal how the Holy Spirit is moving them and leading them to increased faith.