

## BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, December 21, 2008

Passage: Matthew 2:1-23

Scripture Memory: Micah 5:2

**TODAY:** *From your study this past week, what is one thing that impressed you that can be of help in your life?*

### DAY 1 – PRAY FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Matthew 2:1-23.** There are many traditions and myths in church history about the Magi. List as many of them as you can remember.
- (b) In light of this passage, what can we really know about the Magi? List the details we know.
- (c) Who might the Magi be? Are they kings? In Daniel 1:20; 2:2; 4:4; and 5:7, the word “magi” appears. What word might be interchangeable with this word?
- (d) *Family:* Talk about who the Magi were. How far did they travel? What did they come to do? Your family will be gathering with extended family this holiday. You have the opportunity to bring the gift of the gospel to your family? Pray for relatives that might not know the Gospel and for an opportunity to share it with them.

### DAY 2 – PRAY FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Matthew 2:1-2.** What caused them to begin their search for Jesus? What might this tell us about the background of the Magi?
- (b) How would the appearance of a “star” cause them to look for “the King of the Jews?” Consider Numbers 24:17. What does this verse prophesy?
- (c) How might these magi have heard about this verse? Where might they have come from? How does the connection with the book of Daniel help us understand the coming of the Magi?
- (d) *Think about it:* Even the religious leaders from the east were drawn by God to come and pay reverence to Jesus. They might have learned from traditions passed down from Daniel that a Messiah was to come. Who do you know that might be far away from God? What kind of seeds are you planting in their lives with the gospel in hopes of one day seeing them bear fruit? Pray for some opportunities to share the gospel with them so they might come and worship the King of Kings.
- (e) *Family:* Read Matthew 2:1-2. Talk about your own background before you became a Christian. What was the “star” in your life that led you to Jesus? Pray for a heart that continues to seek after God.

### DAY 3 – PRAY FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Matthew 2:3-6.** What were some of the difficulties the Magi might have faced?
- (b) What was the response of Herod when the Magi arrived in Jerusalem? What was the response of the chief priests and scribes? How does their response differ from the Magi’s?
- (c) Herod, the religious leaders, and the Magi might depict three responses to Jesus today. How would you characterize each of the responses? How are they similar and different?
- (d) What does this passage tell us about Herod and his character? Why do you think “all of Jerusalem” was troubled because he was troubled?
- (e) *Family:* Read Matthew 2:3-6. Talk about the responses to the Magi’s news. What kind of difficulties might they face in talking about wanting to see the “king of the Jews”? What kind of response do you often get when you share the gospel with others? Has much changed in 2,000 years? Pray that you might meet tender hearts that are ready to receive the Good News of Jesus.

### DAY 4 – PRAY FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read 2:4-6.** What do the religious leaders teach us about the problem with having only “head knowledge?” Consider John 1:11 also.
- (b) In verses 5 & 6, these leaders quote a verse about the coming Messiah. Look up Micah 5:2. What have they left out? Why would they leave it out? What does it tell us about Jesus?

(c) Look up 2 Samuel 5:2. What have they combined with the passage from Micah? Is this also significant regarding what they were looking for the Messiah to do? Does Jesus fulfill this prophecy also?

(d) *Think about it:* What does James tell us about being people with just “head knowledge”(James 1:22)? Do you really act in faith on what you know? What are some things that you struggle with really acting on in faith?

(e) *Family:* Read Matthew 2:4-6 and Micah 5:2. Talk about what and why the religious leaders would leave part of the quote out. What does this say about their faith in God? Do you think that they really believe that God was capable of all that Micah 5:2 said? Do you believe all that Micah said? Pray that the Lord would strengthen your faith in the Word.

#### **DAY 5 – PRAY FOR INSIGHT**

#### **READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Matthew 2:7-12.** What does this chapter tell us about Jesus and the visit of the Magi that is not normally told at Christmas? How is this visit different from that of the shepherds? How old was Jesus at the time of the visit? How can you tell?

(b) Read Isaiah 60:5-6 and Psalm 72:10-11. How might these verses provide some insight to the gifts given by the Magi?

(c) How is God directly involved in the events mentioned in chapter 2? (Consider especially verses 6, 15, 18, and 23).

(d) How do the Magi respond when they finally find the child? What do the following verses tell us about their view of who Jesus was: Ezekiel 1:28; Revelation 1:17; and John 20:27-28?

(e) *Family:* Read Matthew 2:7-12. Talk about the significance of the gifts given to the Jesus. What is their response when they see Jesus? What does this say about their faith? Why did they bring gifts to Jesus? Why do we give gifts to each other? What is your attitude this Christmas in giving gifts? Pray that your gift giving this year would be like that of the Magi.

#### **DAY 6 – PRAY FOR INSIGHT**

#### **READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE**

*Think back through what you have learned each day this week.* Read Matthew 2:1-12. Summarize what you have learned about the Magi of Christmas. What lessons can their response and the responses of Herod and the leaders teach us? What does the passage teach us about the nature of “true worship?”

**DATE:** December 21, 2008

**TEXT:** Matthew 2:1-12

*The Forgotten Magi of Christmas*