

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, December 28, 2008

Passage: Matthew 2:13-23

Memory Verse: Galatians 5:25

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

Day 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Matthew 2:1-12.** What happens when Herod and all of Jerusalem hear the words of the Magi? What problem would arise for Herod if the Messiah had come? What problem does the birth of Jesus create for the nation of Israel?

(b) In what way does Herod interrogate the Magi? What does this say about his motives? What are some reasons that he might not be willing to publicly talk to the Magi?

(c) Compare verse 8 to Herod's initial reaction in verse 3. Do these two statements match up?

(d) In verse 12, the magi receive what warning? What does this say about Herod's intentions?

(e) *Think about it:* You might not have much power or authority, but do you try to keep whatever little you have no matter what the cost? What do you find yourself lying about? What do you keep secrets about? How was Herod's reaction totally unnecessary? Had Jesus come to over take him? Jesus wants every area of our life but not to lord it over us but to redeem it and bless it. Take some time today and think over how you might be acting like Herod and give that part of your life to the Lord.

(f) *Family:* Read 2:1-12. Talk about who Herod was. Look up who Herod (full name Herod the Great) was on Wikipedia or Google or look it up in your study bible. What kind of person was Herod? Do you think Herod would have been happy to hear about the Messiah? Talk about the danger in loving power. What kind of person does it make you? Pray that the Lord would keep you from the longing for power and teach you to serve others faithfully.

Day 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Matthew 2:13-15.** What problem arises once the Magi leave? What does God tell Joseph to do? How quickly does he do it?

(b) What would it be like to have to move your entire family to another country? Especially with no job waiting for you and for an indefinite period of time? What does this say about the faith of Joseph?

(c) Did Mary see this dream? What do you think she was thinking when Joseph woke her up in the middle of the night? What does this say about Mary's willingness to trust and follow Joseph's leading?

(d) How does this whole incident fulfill prophecy? Read Hosea 11:1. Who does Jesus represent in fulfilling this prophecy? How does Jesus come to represent a better and truer Israel?

(e) *Think about it:* Could you do what Joseph or Mary were asked to do? What keeps you from having this kind of faith in God?

(f) *Family:* Read Matthew 2:13-15. Talk about the faith of Joseph and Mary. Tell a story of how you have had to step out in faith even though it did not make sense at the time. Talk about what it is like to trust in God. Pray that the Lord would increase your faith.

Day 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Matthew 2:16-18.** What does Herod's reaction say about his true motives for knowing where the Child lived? What did he do to insure that there would be no Messiah?

(b) Read Jeremiah 31:10-15. Who is the Rachel that is mentioned in verse 15? What is happening to the nation of Israel at the time of this passage? Who are Rachel's children? Which tribes represent them?

(c) What promises does God make in Jeremiah 31:10-15? How is verse 15 brought to fulfillment in the life of Jesus? How are verses 10-14 fulfilled by Jesus?

(d) *Family:* Read Matthew 2:16-18. Talk again about what was talked about in Day 1. Readdress the love for power and what it can drive people to do. Who is the only Person who really is in control and has true power? Why is this comforting? Is Jesus anything like Herod? What makes Him different? Thank God for His mercy and kindness to us.

Day 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Matthew 2:19-23.** How does Jesus come to settle in Nazareth? What are the supernatural elements in this decision and the natural (rational) elements?

(b) Does God often lead and fulfill His will through both ways? Why is this important? What excesses will we avoid if we understand this?

(c) Read Galatians 5:16-18. What does Paul tell us to do? What does it mean to walk according to the Spirit (Galatians 3:2-9)?

(d) *Think about it:* Are you open to hearing God direct you? Are you only looking for the rational to guide you? Are you only looking for the supernatural to guide you? How are we to be led according to Galatians? Pray that you will be sensitive to God's leading in your life this week and that you would walk by faith.

(e) *Family:* Read Matthew 2:19-23 and Galatians 5:16-18. How did Joseph and Mary walk by faith? Talk about what it means to walk by the Spirit? Tell a story of how the Lord has called you to walk by faith in an unexpected area. Pray that the Lord would show you how to walk by the Spirit this week.

Day 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) There have been many suggestions for the meaning behind Matthew 2:23. Read Numbers 6:1-21. Why might this be what was spoken by the prophets? Why might it not be? Also consider Matthew 11:18-19—why else could this not be the meaning?

(c) Read Isaiah 11:1. What is the Messiah called here? Could this be what the prophets referred to? Does Jesus fulfill this?

(d) Read John 1:43-46. Why might Phillip be saying this? What did John tell us about His coming in John 1:11-13? How does this fulfill Isaiah 53:1-3?

(d) Taking what Phillip said about Nazareth to be a local saying and what Matthew says about a prophecy being fulfilled in Jesus being a Nazarene, could this possibly be a general statement of how Jesus fulfills Isaiah 53 and other similar prophecies?

(e) *Family:* Read Matthew 2:23 and John 1:43-46 and Isaiah 53:1-3. Put them all together. Was Jesus ever meant to be from a highly respectable background? What was the public opinion of Nazareth? Did Jesus try to hide where he was from? Can Jesus identify with being an outcast? Think of someone you know who might be an outcast and pray for them and for an opportunity to be friends with them.

Day 6 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

Think back through what you have learned each day this week. Read Matthew 2:13-23. What have you learned about faith this week? What does it mean to be led by the Spirit and to walk by faith? What have you learned about the importance of the name “the Nazarene” given to Jesus?

DATE: December 28, 2008

Text: Matthew 2:13-23

The Forgotten Massacre of Christmas