

Growth Group Questions

Epiphany Celebrated ~ January 5, 2024

Introduction

Each of the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) choose to begin their record of Jesus' life in a different way. Scan over the topics of the first 2-3 chapters of each gospel and discuss the different focuses at the start of each book.

Into the Word – 1 Kings 10:1-9

1. This is a new reading added to the three-year lectionary, meaning its possibly not that familiar. What does the queen of Sheba find when she visits Solomon and what does it lead to?
2. Why did Solomon have these great blessings?
3. This account shows us that Christians using their gifts and blessings faithfully can lead nonbelievers to praise the true God, in part of not in full. Can you think of a time when your faith or actions of faith led someone to ask about God?
4. As we prepare for a new government in our country, what do you see in these verses about the role of government and God's intended blessing from it? Take a moment and pray for this kind of blessing in our own land.

Into the Word – Acts 13:46-49

5. Why did Paul always go first to the Jews on his journeys?
6. If you have a hymnal, look up where in our service we use the words of verse 47 (Isaiah 49:6 really) in worship?

7. Verse 48 hints at the comforting doctrine of *election*, that believers are chosen by God from before time to be saved. Why is that teaching a comfort to believers? (You might note the election truths in Romans 8:28-30, one of the most comforting chapters of Scripture.)
8. In limited human logic, if God chose some then he must not have chosen others. Who does Scripture teach as responsible when a person is lost to damnation? (See 1 Timothy 2:4, Matthew 23:37)

Into the Word – Matthew 2:1-12

9. Matthew begins his Gospel account of Jesus' life with a genealogy of Jesus and then Gabriel's appearance to Jesus' *legal* father, Joseph. A very expected focus from the Jewish Matthew to his Jewish audience. Why do you suppose he then went straight to the visit of the Wise Men in chapter 2? Why did both Jews AND Gentiles need to hear about this visit?
10. List some of the ways our "traditional" memory of the Wise Men's visit differs from what Scripture says (or doesn't say).
11. Describe some of the ways God guided the events in this account.
12. What gifts did the Wise Men give to God? (More than just three!) How might we follow their example?

Closing Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you once again for opening my eyes to your truth through the Word and the Spirit. Bless me to see you in joy and respond to you with a life of thanks. Amen.