

## HomeGroup LEADER'S Discussion Questions Advent Week 2: Dec 12-18

STARTING NEXT WEEK THE QUESTIONS WILL BE MORE GENERIC AS WE BREAK FOR A FEW WEEKS. PICK 2-3 QUESTIONS BELOW THAT YOU THINK WILL BE MOST HELPFUL FOR YOUR DISCUSSION

MAIN TEXT: Matthew 2:1-12 and Micah 5:1-6 and 7:18-20

## CONNECT

1. Have you ever had to stop to ask for directions? How did you get into the situation and what happened?

This is the opening question from the sermon and it comes back into focus at the end when Thomas relates it to finding Christ.

2. What kind of "directions" do people take to attempt to find hope in our world? Thomas talks about finding directions to hope. People look for hope in all kinds of places, so what are some of those in our world today?

## **LEARN**

3. The magi, or "wise men from the east," traveled a great distance to see "he who has been born king of the Jews" (Matt. 2:2). How would you describe the contrast between how these Gentile outsiders responded to Jesus' birth and how Jesus' own people responded?

This doesn't come up in the sermon but is a fascinating (at least to the author of these questions!) contrast. The long-awaited Messiah is born with little recognition or fanfare among His own people; however, Gentiles from a far-off land travel a great distance with costly gifts to worship this new King. There's even an attempt to murder the child within His own land. It's a picture of how God's mission is for ALL the world, not just a single nation (see the beginning of Gen 12). Note how this same theme plays out in Acts as Gentiles come to faith in Christ.

4. What was it about Bethlehem that made it a "small," unlikely source of hope? Take a minute to discuss whether you see this as a consistent theme for how God moves in our world.

Thomas points out how we would expect a future King to be born in a palace in Jerusalem, not a relatively obscure and small town. Thomas will then mention examples of how this kind of theme is familiar in the Bible (e.g., David being anointed by Samuel even though he's the youngest—and likely least impressive at the time—of Jesse's sons).

5. Read the description in Micah 5:2-4. Where do you see words or phrases that point to the greatness and strength of the "one who is to be ruler in Israel"? Thomas draws attention to the greatness and strength of the promised one in these verses of Micah. There are a number of options to choose from.

## **APPLY**

6. What does it mean for Jesus to be the ruler of our lives rather than just someone we have fond affections for? If He is your ruler, how is your life different now from what it was like before He became your ruler?

Micah describes the Messiah as "one who is to be ruler in Israel" (v. 5:2). Thomas points out how a ruler is someone with authority over others. What does it mean for Jesus to be the ruler of our lives?

7. Jesus is the standing Shepherd. How could that image of an alert and aware Shepherd help provide hope in your life right now?

The description of a "standing" Shepherd describes care, attentiveness, and readiness to act. Jesus isn't a passive, complacent, or disinterested Shepherd.

- 8. Pastor Thomas stated that the purpose of Christmas is to worship Christ. What does that look like for you and those you are spending this Christmas season with? This question seems basic, but it might help people evaluate their own mindset about this season. Perhaps some are thinking of a lot of other things that this season can bring but haven't given as much attention as they ought to its essence—worshiping Christ.
- 9. What would it mean for you to give people "directions" to Jesus this Christmas? Who around you needs them? Take time to pray as a group that there would be opportunities to direct people to our Hope, Jesus Christ.

This is a question near the end of the sermon and is a chance for us all to think about how we might be able to offer true hope to the people we'll be around in the next few days and weeks. How can we help people find Hope in what may seem like a year of hopelessness?