

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, December 18, 2005

Passage: Micah 5:1-5

Memory Passage: John 10:11

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 Micah 5:1-2.** What is the condition of Israel described in verse 1? How is this contrasted with verse 2?

(b) What is the meaning of Ephratah, the other name given to Bethlehem? What is “Ephratah” associated with in the Old Testament (Genesis 35:19; 48:7)?

(c) Read Matthew 2:16-18. In what way did the town of Bethlehem (and the surrounding villages) fit this description again at the time of Messiah’s coming?

(d) What does the name Bethlehem mean in Hebrew? In what way does the name of this town parallel the claims that Jesus made about himself in John 6:30-35 and John 6:47-51?

(e) How did many react to these claims of Jesus (John 6:60-69)? What is His promise to all who believe (John 6:37, 39-40, 47, 58)?

(f) *Family:* Read Micah 5:2 and Matthew 2:16-18. What did the *names* of Bethlehem signify? What tragedy happened at the “first Christmas” that we usually don’t hear about at Christmas today? In John 6:30-40, how should who Jesus is affect the way we celebrate Christmas? Thank the Lord for bringing Jesus to be the “bread of life” for all who believe.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Micah 5:2.** What is Bethlehem in comparison to the other cities of Judah (look at a couple of different translations)?

(b) What is the idea behind the “among the thousands” (Numbers 1:16; 10:4; Joshua 22:21; 1 Samuel 10:19, etc.)? What else does this tell us about Bethlehem being “least among the thousands of Judah?”

(c) What gave Bethlehem its significance (Ruth 4:11-22)? How is the providence of God seen in preparing for the line of David to be from the city of Bethlehem?

(d) Read 1 Samuel 17:42-46 and Judges 6:14-16 and 7:1-7. Discuss these examples of God using insignificant persons to accomplish His purposes. Why does He do this?

(e) Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. Why has God chosen to use the weak and insignificant in His plan? How is this evident in salvation (1 Corinthians 1:18-25)?

(f) *Family:* Read Micah 5:2 and 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. What was significant about Bethlehem being chosen as the birthplace of the Messiah? Why do you think God wanted His son to be born in such an insignificant place? Why does God delight in using those persons and things that are insignificant? Sing “O Little Town of Bethlehem” together and pray that God would be honored in your lives this week.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Matthew 2:1-6.** Who were these “magi” that came to find Jesus when he was born? In Daniel 1:20; 2:2; 4:4; and 5:7, the word “magi” appears. What word might be interchangeable with this word?

(b) What caused them to begin their search for Jesus and 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) What do the magi ask? What response is *immediately* given by the chief priest and scribes? Why do you think they were so quick to give this answer?

(d) Read John 7:40-44. What were the people concerned about? Why did some of them (mistakenly) disqualify Jesus? How does this also testify to the fact that Jesus was the Messiah?

(e) According to Micah 5:3, what will happen to the remnant when this one arrives? What does Paul connect this remnant to in Romans 11:1-5? What is happening to the Jews now and what will happen to them one day (Romans 11:25-30)?

(f) *Family*: Read Micah 5:2 and Matthew 2:1-12. Talk about why prophecy is so important in confirming who the Messiah is. How does the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem show that Jesus is the Messiah? Was this known to the religious leaders before Jesus came? Why didn't they respond and seek him? Pray for someone today who knows the Christmas message but has not responded in faith.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Micah 5:2.** How are his “goings forth” described? What is this referring to? What did Jesus say about himself in John 8:52-59?

(b) Who else is described in these same terms (Psalm 90:2; 93:2)? What does this tell us about *who* this Messiah is?

(c) This passage seems to indicate more than just his eternity. What does the statement that this one had been “going forth” from ancient times mean? What are some indications of this (Daniel 3:23-25; Isaiah 43:2; 1 Corinthians 10:1-4, etc.)?

(d) What do we learn about Jesus' origins in John 1:1-2? What is he called in Revelation 1:8, 19:16, 21:6 and 22:13?

(e) *Family*: Read Micah 5:2 and John 8:52-59. What does this verse tell us about the eternality of Messiah? How does Jesus fulfill this part of the prophecy also? Was this a question during his life? How did the Jews respond to his claims? Pray that people would realize who Jesus is this Christmas. Talk about ways you can honor him as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Micah 5:3-5.** What does verse 4 tell us this one will do for his people?

(b) What kind of a shepherd will he be (Psalm 78:71-72; Isaiah 40:11; Jeremiah 23:4-6; Ezekiel 34:23-25)? What did Jesus say about himself in John 10:11-15? How is he different from all the other shepherds of Israel?

(c) What shall “this One” be called? What is the significance of this prophecy (Luke 2:14)?

(d) Why does it say, “they will *abide*?” What is the Messiah doing for them that no other ruler has ever done (John 10:27-30)?

(e) *Family*: Read Micah 5:3-5 and John 10:11-15, 27-30. What kind of a Messiah is Jesus? How does Micah describe him? What does Jesus say about the “Good Shepherd” that makes him different from other shepherds? What does this mean for all who have believed on Jesus (John 6:37-39 and 10:27-30)? Pray that all who have believed in Jesus would trust him as their shepherd and would have assurance because of this.

DAY 6 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

Think back through what you have learned each day this week. Read Micah 5:1-5 and Luke 2:1-7. Where did Joseph live? How did Mary and Joseph get to Bethlehem? Had this ever happened before in Israel? Why was it important that the Messiah be born in Bethlehem? What does this tell us about God's sovereignty over all things? Discuss how Christmas is a reminder of God's perfect plans being worked out, even in the face of great difficulties. Pray that Jesus will be honored by our worship tomorrow.