

Home Group Discussion Questions Sunday 19th December

Ice breaker: What's the best Christmas present you ever received and can you remember how you responded?

Or

God met the wise men in their own medium: he guided the astronomers by a star. Can you think of a time when God got your attention through unexpected means?

Passages for this week's study:

- How the shepherds respond: *Luke 2:8-20*
- How the wise-men respond: *Matthew 2:1-2 & 9-11*
- How Herod responds: *Matthew 2:3-4 & 16*
- How the chief priests and scribes respond: *Matthew 2:4-6*

1. Consider the shepherds. **Firstly, how do they respond to the announcement of Jesus' birth?**

They recognised the angelic message as being from God and Luke says (v16): 'they went with haste'.

What are some of the things that hinder us from responding to God in glad obedience when he speaks to us?

Secondly, how do they respond to having seen Jesus for themselves?

V17+20 – they tell others and they praise God.

How can they serve as examples to us? How does understanding the fulfilment of God's promises in Jesus inspire your worship? How about telling others about Jesus?

2. Consider the wise-men. **How do they respond to Christ's coming?**

They brought an offering of worship to Jesus: they made a long journey, involving sacrifice; even risking their lives before Herod, and they brought gifts.

Read Romans 12:1-2.

What is the connection between worship, our lives, and sacrifice? What is a living sacrifice?

Imagine somebody told you today that they were following a star because that was how God was leading them. **How might you respond? How do we remain discerning as Christians while not becoming dismissive of the 'supernatural'?**

3. Consider the chief priests and scribes: **How do they respond to Jesus' coming? Why do you think it was possible for people steeped in Old Testament prophecy to miss Jesus' coming?**

For whatever reason, they appear indifferent to his coming and don't appear to investigate it any further.

Why is indifference so detrimental to our Christian life? How can we guard against it?

4. The shepherds got excited, the wise men travelled a great distance, Herod was irate, and the chief Priests and scribes chose not to accept Jesus. **Why was Jesus so controversial from his birth to the present day?**