

Growth Group Questions

Second Sunday of Advent, December 10, 2023

Introduction

In the “olden days” men used to wear suits to church, women wore dresses and bonnets, and young people suffered with the same. As we think about preparing to meet our Savior on the last day, think about how we prepare to meet Jesus in worship. What do you do to meet this special person?

Into the Word – Isaiah 40:1-11

1. If you have the ability, Google and play “Comfort Ye My People” and “Ev’ry Valley Shall Be Exalted” from Handel’s Messiah. I have no real question about it other than to note its basis in this text, and to encourage your enjoyment of a piece that the author ended by writing “Soli Deo Gloria” to at the end. (“Glory be to God.”)
2. The voice would call out in the wilderness to “raise up valleys and make hills low” before all people would see the glory of the LORD. How did John the Baptist raise up and lower people in preparation for Jesus?
3. Did all people see the glory of the LORD at Jesus’ first coming? When will all people see the glory of the Lord? This is a great example of how the prophets didn’t always distinguish between the two comings of the Messiah.
4. In what ways does the Word of the Lord endure forever? As culture and society change around us, what is the church’s responsibility?
5. Read verses 10 and 11 again. If you were a Jew awaiting the Messiah, what kind of Savior would you have been expecting – a man of power or gentleness? Perhaps this leads to sympathy rather than judgment for the Jews and disciples who didn’t recognize Jesus.

Into the Word – 2 Peter 3:8-14

6. Why is it important that “a day is like a thousand years” AND “a thousand years are like a day”? What is the relationship between God and time?
7. What does verse 9 tell us about why God hasn’t brought this world of evil to an end yet?
8. Since the last day is coming unexpectedly and will bring a complete destruction and renewal, what does Peter say we should pursue?
9. How can we “speed the coming” of the Day of the Lord? (Think of why God is waiting and our call to be witnesses of Christ.)

Into the Word – Mark 1:1-8

10. Describe John the Baptist’s message and how it fulfills Isaiah’s prophecy to “raise up” some and “lower” others.
11. Why do you suppose John wore such basic clothing (the belt was normal; the coat was not) and ate such a basic diet?
12. John the Baptist’s baptism was different than Jesus’. It didn’t have the power of the Holy Spirit directly behind it. Since John’s baptism was for repentance though, what same result came from it?

Closing Prayer

Lord in heaven, lead me to repent of my sin always and turn to you for faith and forgiveness. Make me a faithful witness to all you have done, that others might come to know your blessing and that I might “speed the coming” of your glorious return. In Jesus’ name, amen.