

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. **Enjoy discovering more about Him!**

## **"A LARGE GOD FOR A LITTLE PEOPLE" | LUKE 2: 1-21 | PASTOR BRIAN**

### **WARM-UP QUESTION:**

What is the strangest part of a classic Nativity scene at Christmas?

### ***"God Became Human to Have Fellowship and Moved An Empire to Accomplish His Will" (Luke 2: 1-5)***

God shows His love by giving up everything to be with people and His sovereignty in using Caesar's census to get Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem. Why is it important to remember God is both loving and sovereign? Why is that difficult sometimes?

### ***"God Knows Extreme Poverty Firsthand and God Is Inconvenient" (Luke 2: 6-7)***

God's plan isn't always convenient, and He doesn't spare His own son hardship as Jesus is born very poor. How do people in our society today handle being inconvenienced? What steps can believers take to remain joyful while experiencing inconvenience?

### ***"God Loves Going After the Insignificant and God Shows Up When Someone Makes Room" (Luke 2: 8-21)***

Joseph, Mary, and the Shepherds were all people who were often ignored or rejected. Yet God powerfully meets with each of them right where they are at. How can that impact your view of your job or home today?

### **REFLECTION QUESTION:**

In the story of Jesus' birth, we see that all kinds of people from all kinds of places can meet with God. He removes every obstacle and excuse; the question is if we are willing to make room for Him. Have you been making excuses or room for Jesus lately? Ask God to give you direction and openness to His presence.

## A LARGE GOD for little people

### I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2-6 Lar: CG. RR & REAL. GS&DC. Missions P. *Nepal needs.*
- B. Slide7 JM11 only 2 Sundays away. We have some great **workshops** to attend, **and different organizations** to *connect with*. Attend a service, grab some BBQ lunch with your family in between services. Children's ministry is available for your children multiple services to help you be able to stay & participate in different areas
- C. Slide8 *Last chance*: Biblical Counseling class starts this week. Pastor Dan is offering a class on Mon night's, or Tues morn's. Go the website for an *Informative Video* from Dan w/**more info** about the class **and why** it is worthwhile to attend.
- D. Slide9 *Did you know*: The bible doesn't talk about Mary riding a **donkey**, but she might have. The bible doesn't talk about an **Inn keeper** but there probably was one. It's assumed Jesus was born in a **stable**, but all it says is that he was laid in a manger, and that feeding trough could've been in any number of places.  
*Assumptions, some helpful, some not so much. scottthepainter on IG*

### II. Slide10a Intro: A LARGE GOD for little people

- A. **Prayer**: May we hear Your Word **clearly**, feel it **sensitively**, and ponder it **deeply**.
- B. There's only 2 ways all religions explain *how to connect with God*. The Bible's way & every other way.
1. The distance between us and God, *mostly because of sin*, is closed by (many think) **us ascending unto God** through: *morality, reincarnation, good works, paying off our karmic debt, trying harder, or doing better.*
    - a) It's **pride**. **Us** rising up to God, **us** becoming closer to God, or more like God, because of **our** effort?
  2. Christianity is about God **coming down** to be with us. It is not about **pride** **but** it's about **humility**. It's not about **what we do** it's about **what He's done**. It's not about the favor we merit, **but the grace** He gives!

C. Slide10b Let's start with the why - Gal.4:4,5 nlt *But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. 5 God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children.*

D. Slide11 *Read all* Luke 2:1-21.

### III. Slide12 **GOD IS WILLING TO MAKE ANY ACCOMMODATIONS TO HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH US, LIKE BECOMING HUMAN**

A. Scientist J. Robert Oppenheimer said, *"The best way to send an idea is to wrap it up in a person!"* In theology we call this **Incarnation**: Jesus became **God+ not God-**

1. **Illust**: A hospital patient was in an accident and was left with the sense of smell only. Her mother wanted to communicate her presence, so used a **perfume** the girl would remember as her mom's. Now the perfume is not the mother's essential nature, but is an extension of her real self to communicate on the girl's level.

a) God also is not essentially a body, but he became human. He extended Himself to communicate on our level so we could respond.

### IV. Slide13a **GOD MOVED AN EMPIRE, FOR HIS WILL TO BE DONE**

A. The registration/census was for 2 main reasons: registering men for **military service** and to make sure everyone was being **taxed**.

B. **Roman Roads**: 250,000 miles of road, 50,000 of which were paved (some you can still walk on today).

C. A couple of times a **title** was given to Cesar Augustus namely, *Savior of the World*. Interesting that Jesus enters into the world at that time.

D. Slide13b Always remember, whatever *Caesar is ruling, God is overruling*. Now apply that to any world ruler, even our president.

1. They were willing to **comply** because **God was sovereign** over any earthly ruler.

2. So this all happened, as Mary and Joseph obeyed the Pagan Roman governments **mandate**. (Oh I don't like government mandates) **but before we all lose our minds this we know believer's, God is still Sovereign!**

## V. Slide14a **GOD KNOWS EXTREME POVERTY FIRST HAND**

A. Baby God *helpless, homeless*.

B. HELPLESS [1st sign]. *Wrapped him in swaddling cloths*

C. To wrap in strips. Young mom's still use this concept in *swaddling blankets* (look like mini-burritos).

1. Our **1st sign** is the picture of a child no less **feeble & helpless** than any other baby born into this world. [Jesus' royal privilege stopped at conception]
2. His mother must nourish & care for him, **or He die from hunger**.
3. He must be wrapped in strips of cloth, **lest He freeze to death**.
  - a) **Both** at the beginning & end of His life on earth, it could be said of Him, ***He saved others; himself he could not save.***

D. Slide14b HOMELESS [2nd sign]. *Lying in a manger*.

E. Laid in a hewn stone feeding trough, for feeding cattle. *The Savior's Bassinet/crib*. You'd use whatever was handy to not lay him on the ground.

1. This seemed to be a sign for the rest of his life, ***The foxes have holes, & the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has no where to lay His head.*** [Interesting: Jesus' family didn't own either the place he was **born**, **nor** the place he was **buried**]

F. **What do these 2 signs teach us?** God, the eternally wealthy & mighty God, *enters into the most extreme poverty imaginable*.

1. **No man is so weak & helpless** that God does not come to him **in Jesus Christ, right in the midst of human need**. **And ...**

2. No man is **so forsaken & homeless** in this world that God does not seek him, *right in the midst of their human distress*.

## VI. Slide 15a **GOD IS INCONVENIENT**

A. Here we have a very pregnant teen, on a 80 mile trek (*or donkey-back ride*).

1. It seems that those **closest** to the Lord, are the most **inconvenienced**.  
Jesus is many things ... **but** He isn't **convenient**.
2. **Mary could have asked God: Wasn't dealing with a virgin birth enough to deal with? Does the baby really need to be born in Bethlehem? And if so couldn't Gabriel have reserved an AirBNB?**
3. **Slide 15b Our culture has conditioned us to expect convenience.**
  - a) We believe it is an entitlement that we all deserve.
  - b) We see *anything that poses an inconvenience to our lives* as a **nasty negative**.
  - c) **And** when God's agenda conflicts with ours **we have a choice to make:**  
    - [1] **Get mad** at being inconvenienced, **or** [2] **surrender** our expectations to God, and ask Him to give us His agenda for our lives.
    - (1) **When we do**, we find *the JOY of obedience* in the midst of being **inconvenienced**.
  - d) **Has the Lord inconvenienced you lately? How did you respond? How will you respond in the future? What steps can you take to remain joyful when you're inconvenienced?**

## VII. Slide 16a **GOD LOVES GOING AFTER THE INSIGNIFICANT**

A. Have you ever felt *insignificant* in our world that has 7.9 billion people in it?

1. **Yet** here is God, **wielding an empire** for a lowly carpenter, a little pregnant teenager.
2. **Here we have A LARGE GOD for little people.**

- B. The most prominent event of all human history was observed by, not one **but** a handful of outcasts. And who were they ... but the 1st hearers, believers, and preachers of the Christmas/swaddling gospel ... the shepherds.
1. We know that they were *distrusted, a wild bunch, rural nomads, a despised class, were considered unreliable, weren't allowed to give testimony in the law courts, an abomination to the Egyptians, and get this were considered unholy because they worked on the Sabbath.* And God says, *I choose you guys.*
  2. Did you know that they were the 1st profession mentioned in the Bible? *Abel was a keeper of sheep* Gen.4:2 [the 1st shepherd was the 1st blood sac]
  3. **But** would there be *any other profession* more excited about a Lamb being born?
    - a) Here we have these shepherds leaving “*their 99*” to locate this 1 lamb.
  4. Seeing the angels, *they were filled with great fear.*
    - a) They were gravely aware of the great gulf between *God and man*, **but** especially between *God and shepherds.*
- C. Slide16b (15b) *Let us go* - such simple faith. They **don't sing** a song like Mary. They **don't need a star**. They **don't go & try to find Herod**. They **don't go shopping** for gifts. They just say to each other, *let us go!*
1. **And** they do **go** **and** they do **find** ... *Finding Jesus is that easy!*
- D. (16) *They went with haste & found them* – Isn't it funny that *the wise men* were directed by God, **but** then got lost **&** had to stop and ask for directions in Jerusalem. **But**, the Shepherds *never lost their way!*
1. Spurgeon said, *It often happens while shepherds find Christ, wise men often miss him. :)*
  2. **So, faith** led their steps to *Bethlehem*, to the *caravansary*, to the *manger/stone feeding trough.*
- E. (17,18) *They saw it and made known the saying* - the shepherds weren't only the first to **hear**, but the first to **tell**.

1. Slide16c And when *they returned glorifying & praising God* remember they *weren't* schooled in this.
2. *They returned* - *What was it like going to work after that? I wonder if any shepherds quit the week before because they were bored with their career? Did they learn that heaven is always near the **dutiful**? Where did God meet them? ... at work *keeping watch over their flocks by night*.*

a) *Oh the glory of the common place!*

F. Last thought here, maybe the Angels show up to the lowest in society to show God cares for them. **But**, maybe he was giving them *insider information* that they would be without jobs soon, as *the Lamb of God* takes away the sins of the world has arrived and soon there would be no more need for sacrificial lambs.

### VIII. Slide17a **GOD SHOWS UP WHEN SOMEONE MAKES ROOM**

A. **The Inn** - a *Caravansary*. *Show pic* [many found in the Middle East. *Acre*]

1. Inside a walled area, the whole middle area was open air. This is where the animals were kept. And along the inner walls, a little covered area and a platform just above the ground, was where people stayed.

a) So Mary and Joseph were either inside the walls of the caravansary but with the animals, **or** outside the caravansary, most likely in a small cave.

B. Slide17b **No place/room** - seems to be a *touching prediction* of the reception of Jesus

1. **There was no room for Jesus:** **in** the Inn, in Bethlehem. **And** later in Nazareth in the homes of those with whom he served (end of Jn.7, beg of 8:1. *And everyone went to his own house. But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives*). **Jesus** often slept under the stars (Mnt. Of Olives). **And** ultimately there was *no room for Him in the world!* (so they raised him above earth, on a crude cross).

C. **Today**, Do you have a place for Jesus? Room for Him in your life?

1. *"But, I'm not worthy that he should come **stay with me**".* That's not the question! Have you room?

2. “*But, the room I have in my heart is so **unclean & dirty***”. Wasn’t the stable? Have you room?
  3. “*But, my heart is **stone cold***”. So was His 1st resting place in the manger. Have you room?
  4. “*But, I feel my heart has been a **den of beasts***”. Wasn’t the manger where animals fed? Have you room?
    - a) *If you have room for Christ*, He will come & be your guest.
    - b) *If you have room for Him*, then let Him be born in your soul today.
  5. He waits longingly to take up residence in *your hearts-manger* this morning. [In your Heart’s *sp. feeding trough*]
- D. *Jesus cradled in a manger* is **God’s object-lesson to every sinner** that Christ will come to him **if** he will *make room for Him!*
1. May our hearts sign read, **More Room** instead of **No Room**. [invitation]
- E. Keywords: angels, birth, faith, freedom, glory, God, gospels, grace, Jesus, love.