



A Worship Discussion Guide for Individuals, Groups & Families for the week of December 22, 2024

Read the Bible passage aloud in your group meeting. This is a worship discussion guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for your meeting, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

Warm Up

- What are you most looking forward to this Christmas?

Isaiah 9:7 The Zeal of the LORD of Hosts Will Do This

Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

In the New Testament, the Gospel writers understood that Isaiah's prophecy about the Messiah is ultimately fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ. In Sunday's worship service, we read [Luke 1:26-35](#) to explore this connection:

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God."

- What various things are going on in Mary's heart as she receives Gabriel's message?

Sunday's Preparation for Worship quoted the poem "That Holy Thing", by George MacDonald. "That holy thing" is a translation of the Greek word *hagios* from the angel Gabriel's speech to Mary in Luke 1:35: "that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

*"They all were looking for a king,
To slay their foes, and lift them high:
Thou cam'st a little baby thing
That made a woman cry.
O Son of Man, to right my lot
Naught but Thy presence can avail;
Yet on the road Thy wheels are not,
Nor on the sea Thy sail.
My how or when Thou wilt not heed,
But come down Thine own secret stair,
That Thou mayst answer all my need,
Yea, every bygone prayer."*

- What does MacDonald see about the "baby thing" that makes Jesus so surprising and disarming?
- In Isaiah's prophecy, what marks the Kingdom of the LORD?
- We believe that Jesus Christ is now Lord, and He will soon and personally return. How would you describe the differences between His present and future Kingdom and reign?
- Do you eagerly anticipate the second coming of Jesus Christ? Why or why not?
- What does Isaiah mean by "the zeal of the LORD of hosts"? What is the LORD so passionate about?
- Pray together in response to God's Word.

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Questions? Contact Pastor Kevin Greene, kevin@wepc.org

