

COMMUNITY GROUP QUESTIONS CHRISTMAS—OUT OF EGYPT

Hosea 11:1
Pastor Miles McPherson – December 22, 2013



MEMORY VERSE

“When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.” (Hosea 11:1 NIV)

DISCUSSION STARTERS

God loves all who call upon his name, but the Old Testament reveals the special place Israel has in God’s heart, specifically his plan for redemption. Discuss some of your favorite Old Testament passages that reveal God’s end-time salvation through Jesus.

(Ex. The Exodus, David vs. Goliath, The Valley of Dry Bones In Ezekiel, etc.)

COMMUNITY GROUP QUESTIONS — OUT OF EGYPT

As Pastor Miles mentioned on Sunday, the prophet is the mouthpiece of God. His role was to pronounce judgment and steer Israel toward repentance. The life of a prophet usually ended badly (cf. Heb. 11:32-38). They were one against hundreds and sometimes thousands. They would have to say and do things that although are shown clearly in the law, would be counter to their culture that has been influenced by the paganism of their day.

Often, the prophet would have to tell the people something that would also have long-term, or even eternal, significance, or dual meaning. These specific prophecies seek to: 1. Deal with Israel in their current idolatrous state, and 2. Give encouragement and hope in the longing of an end-time Messiah that will free Israel from all outside oppression. Number one is obvious, but number two not so much. Israel throughout their history has read and misread the details of the Messianic arrival.

Hosea 11:1 is one of these prophecies. In its original context this verse self-evidently refers to the exodus event, and in particular to Exodus 4:22, where Yahweh declares to Pharaoh, “Israel is my firstborn son.”¹ In other words, it is pointing backward to remind Israel of God’s love for them. For the follower of Christ it strikes us as the prophecy about our Messiah’s birth in Matt. 2:15.

¹ Duane A. Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, vol. 19A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 219.



As we slowly approach Christmas, it is easy to get caught up in the various nuances of the details concerning Jesus' birth. And though these nuances are necessary to tell the story well, we must be reminded to focus on the nature and purpose of Jesus' birth, that he came to free Israel, then the Gentiles, and thus redeeming all of mankind through by his death on the cross.

1. What is your typical view of Christmas? Is it to celebrate the birth of Jesus, be with family, take vacations, etc.? How has your family typically approached these holiday seasons?
 - Read Luke 1:46-56 together as a group. This is the Magnificat, or the Song of Mary when she heard the news of Elizabeth being pregnant with John the forerunner to Jesus, the Messiah.
 - How does Mary view the birth of her son? How does this vary from the traditional Western view of Jesus' birth?

2. If Jesus' birth was to bring salvation, what does that salvation look like and mean to various people groups across the world? Is it strictly a spiritual salvation, or does it extent to physical salvation?
 - Read Luke 2:22-35 together as a group. As part of the purification process, Jesus was brought to the temple, and awaiting him was the priest Simeon. His testimony is powerful and prophetic.
 - What does he say about the future of Jesus? If you were Jesus' parents how would you respond? How radical is this depiction of the life of Jesus?
 - How would you communicate the answer to the last question to someone who doesn't know Jesus and what he was born to accomplish?

3. What did Jesus do as a young man? We know about his birth, we know even more about his adult ministry, but what about his adolescence?
 - Read Luke 2:49-52 together as a group. After a festival in Jerusalem, Jesus' parents were heading back home, but Jesus stayed back for what appears to be a few days.
 - What was he doing in Jerusalem? How does this explain a little more about Jesus during his youth? Was Jesus fully aware of his Messianic mission?
 - How does this challenge and perhaps change the way you view Jesus' birth narrative and the holiday we celebrate to remember it?

GROUP ACTIVITY

Have a very Merry Christmas from the Community Group Team! We pray you have a blessed Christmas season and are encouraged to worship Jesus in a fresh way with your Community Group family.



