

THE STORY OF GOD

The Importance of the Incarnation

December 20, 2015

OBSERVE & REFLECT

(This section is designed to encourage us to reflect on and observe the scripture and weekend sermon.)

READ John 3

- ☀ Read the text at least twice. Try reading the text from two different translations.
- ☀ What do you observe in the text? What jumps out at you and grabs your attention? What questions do you have from the text? Pay attention to any action words or phrases and observe what the implications are.
- ☀ Reflect on the sermon. What aspects or truths from the sermon left an impression on you and why?

INVESTIGATE & APPLY

(This section focuses on what the scripture has to say as we dig deeper into the Word. It is oriented to create discussion on the scripture.)

- ☀ Read John 3:1-15 and describe in your own words Jesus' interaction with Nicodemus. Why is new birth necessary for entering the Kingdom of God? How is new birth different from right mental belief and a godly lifestyle?
- ☀ John 3:16 is arguably the most famous verse in the Bible. John uses the Greek word *agape* to describe God's deliberate, free act of love for the world. What difference does it make to know that God's love for us is an act of his will?
- ☀ Verses 17-18 tell us that God's purpose for sending his Son was to save us and not to condemn. Verse 18 is difficult. How can those who do not believe in Jesus be condemned, if God's purpose was to save them? The story of John 8 illustrates the relationship between Jesus' first coming and the judgment He will execute at His second coming. Read also John 9:35-41 and Romans 3:9-18, 23.
- ☀ Referring to verses 19-20, if Jesus, the Light of the world, came into the world because of God's love, then why do people hate him? Why do people prefer the darkness rather than the light?

“Nothing was so necessary for raising our hope as to show us how deeply God loved us. And what could afford us a stronger proof of this than that the Son of God should become a partner with us of human nature?” — St. Augustine

NEXT STEPS

(This section is how to 'put the rubber to the road' so to speak, and is created for us to grow deeper with each other as we process the implications of the text.)

- ☀ Meditate this week on what John 3:16-17 tells you about the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. What difference does it make to your attitudes and priorities?
- ☀ As you study these verses, do you feel any deep-rooted anger or fear that makes it difficult for you to fully believe the truths about the Father found in verses 16-17? If so, confess this to God. Verse 21 tells us that those who live by the truth comes into the light.