

Jerusalem

Matthew 2:1-12, Isaiah 9:6-7

Dec. 15, 2019

#### WARM-UP QUESTIONS:

1. What words come to mind when you hear the word, “government”? What about “politics” and “power”?
2. It is a known wisdom to avoid politics and religion at the dinner table (so good luck with these questions!). Why are these topics so controversial in normal conversation?
3. What do you think is the role of the church in politics?

#### REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Matthew uses a lot of political language and parallels in his gospel. Think about his original audience and context. Why might he have done so? What relevance does this have for us as we live in a completely different political system?
2. Read through the post-birth account of Matthew 2:1-12. Some scholars speculate that the Magi might have come with a military entourage. Why is their appearance a detail that Matthew would include in his historical narrative of Jesus’ birth?
3. The city of Jerusalem embodied an essential place in the history of Israel. How would its mention in the Nativity story make a deep impression of the hearers of Matthew’s Gospel? What hope would it engender in them?
4. Reflect on the dominion of the Messiah as prophesied by Isaiah 9. How did it compare and contrast with what the people at that time expected? What is most meaningful by the title, “Emmanuel”?

#### APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1. Pastor Jason mentions that God/Jesus doesn’t seem to be interested in political systems - but rather an invisible, different kingdom. Why do you think that is? What is this kingdom like?
2. Politics around the world is contentious and divisive. How can we as Christians engage in meaningful ways without putting our hope and ultimate allegiance in government?
3. Have you ever gotten involved in the politics of your city, our state or nation? What led you to participate? How has your faith influenced your involvement?
4. What “power” dominating your life that needs to be laid down at the feet of Jesus in submission and worship?