

Word One Bible Study

What God Does - Advent 1 Old Testament

by Greg Arnett

Text: Isaiah 64:1-9 for the First Sunday in Advent, Lectionary Series B

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

1. Reflect on the actions of God.
2. Wrestle with why God doesn't always do things the way we would like.
3. Be reassured of forgiveness when we sin against God's ways.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Bibles
Paper
Pencils

GROUP GUIDELINES

Discussion will be best in groups of approximately six people. If your group is larger than this, divide into smaller groups. Choose as a leader the person who has a birthday closest to today. The leader's purpose is to keep the group moving through the Bible study, encourage the participation of all members and function as a timekeeper so that each individual is given the opportunity to share. Participants should always have the freedom to pass.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Play a couple rounds of the game "Behavior Modification." Each group will choose one person from their group who will be told that they will try to do a simple action which will be determined after they leave the room. When they have left the room a simple action is determined, such as doing a push-up or sitting on the floor. When the people are brought back into the room the only way their group can communicate with their person is through clapping and cheering or through boos. They may not tell the person, through gestures or in any other way, what they are supposed to do. The group that gets their person to do the action first wins that round.

GETTING INTO SCRIPTURE

Sometimes we act toward God in this same manner. We pray, go to church, try to do good things or whatever else to somehow manipulate God into doing what we want Him to do for us.

1. What is your favorite miracle from Scripture?
2. How did God act in that story?
3. What does it show us about God? How about ourselves for choosing this miracle?
4. Read Isaiah 64:1-9.

Isaiah says "Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before you!"

1. What do you think Isaiah wants God to do?
2. Why do you think Isaiah wants God to act in such a mighty way?
3. What would you like to see God do today?
4. If He is doing this, how do you see Him doing it?
5. If He is not doing this, why do you think He's not doing it?

REINFORCING WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED

Sometimes there are reasons why God doesn't do what we want Him to do. Reread this passage (hint: especially the last three verses) and see why God sometimes "holds off."

1. Why else would God "hold off?"
2. How should we respond when God "holds off?"

Finally, we should rest in the knowledge that when God does choose to act He will do so with all power (look at the book of Revelation!), that the "mountains will tremble" and the "nations will quake."

CLOSING

Close with a prayer thanking God for the blessing of forgiveness when we stray from His will, ask Him to increase in us a knowledge of His plan for our lives, and for the Holy Spirit's strength as we strive to walk in that plan.

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