

Group Notes 27 November 2011

Coming, ready or not!

Welcome - Ice Breaker

What would you change about your house if you knew the Queen was coming to visit you next week?

Word – Mark 13:24-37

People are often confused about Advent. Never mind what your advent calendar says, it isn't just about getting ready for Christmas. It is actually about preparing for the return of Jesus – the second coming. At Christmas, Jesus came for the first time in humility to save. But then He promised He'd be back...

Question 1: Secularism has taken over Christmas – even Advent calendars. What are the worst ones you have seen? How do they make you feel?

Christians are often confused about what will happen at the Second Coming. There are two major problems arising when it is handled incorrectly. Firstly, it is used by unscrupulous cults and even some church leaders to gain a fanatical following and manipulate credulous people. It is also used to part them from their money – "What do you need money for when Jesus is about to come back – give it to me instead!"

Question 2: What is the worst example of Advent abuse you have heard of?

- **Talk about some of the predictions of the end of the world you have come across. Do you see any patterns in them?**
- **How well do you think "the end is nigh" brigade serve the cause of the Gospel?**

The second cause of confusion is that there are so many conflicting theories out there about how and when Jesus will return. Some Christians get very passionate about all these different theories and then fall out over them. Don't forget that Jesus said He would come as a thief in the night and no one knows when He is coming. So if someone in your group knows the exact sequence of events, I can assure you there are equally committed Christians with biblical knowledge who fundamentally disagree with them. If anyone claims they know exactly when Jesus will return, they are claiming to know more than Jesus – see v.32! And He tells us we don't know either, v.35. Because of these problems some Christians ignore or discount the Second Coming completely.

Question 3: Do the theories baffle you and terms like pre-millennial, post-millennial, a-millennial?

- **Why do you think Christians fall out about things like this?**
- **What do you think are the most important things to focus on about Jesus' return?**

Jesus said He WILL return. The biblical message is clear. It will not be in secret but everyone will know, v.26. We are meant to live in hope and faith, v.36, not to predict what will happen. We are to live in readiness – but how?

- a. Live in the light, serving Christ.
- b. Tell others of Christ so they too have the chance to get ready.

We are not all called to leave our jobs: John Wesley thought that he was already doing what God had called him to, so the best way to be ready was to keep doing it to the best of his ability.

Question 4: What does it mean for you to live in readiness for Christ's return?

- **If He came today, would you be ready? Coming, ready or not!!**

Worship ideas for groups with no musicians.

It's Advent, so light a candle.

- Give thanks that Jesus is the light of the world
- Give thanks that He will return to banish the darkness
- Pray that His light will shine afresh in all our hearts

Works/witness.

Who would you love to commit their lives to Jesus before He returns? What can you do to help them? Pray for each other and for those who need to know Jesus before His return.

Our Christmas flyers and posters are now available. Could you take on some streets in the area and distribute them, individually or as a group? Can you take some spares and give them to your friends?