

Catherine
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The King

StudyNotes
FOR SMALL GROUPS & PERSONAL REFLECTION



INTRODUCTION to the series...

The King

During the preaching series that accompanies this guide, we will look at the nature of Kingship & the prophecies surrounding Jesus The King.

The Throne of his Father	Luke 1:26-38
King of Kings	1 Timothy 6:11-16
He Will Reign	Isaiah 9:2-7
The Return	Luke 2:1-7
Glory to the Newborn King	Luke 2:8-15
A New King Born Today!	Luke 2:15-20
The Royal Line	Matthew 1:1-17
The Kings Are Coming	Matthew 2:1-12

Kingship is a key factor throughout the Bible. Where there have been good and Godly Kings, there have been Godly and safe people who enjoy life in the kingdom. Where kingship has proved corrupt, the consequences of the rule are that the people have mirrored that corruption in their own lives and dissatisfaction. They do not enjoy life in the kingdom.

With the Coming of the True King, God's rule is established again on the throne that God instituted. This time, however, the rule will outlast the people because God himself will occupy it in the person of his only Son, Jesus Christ who is God Incarnate. During this study, we will look at the Supremacy of God's rule, the joy that living in God's kingdom will bring and the return of God to rule his people.

It will offer pause for thought as we consider our own place in God's Kingdom - are we truly surrendered to the Kingship of God in Christ over our lives?

Enjoy the series!

Love, *Catherine*

Session 1: King of Kings

As you Gather 5-10 minutes

Remember times you have been present to witness the ‘appearances’ of kings/queens, rulers, pop, sporting or social media idols/icons and what the atmosphere and event was like.

Pray & Worship 10 minutes

Sing a hymn or a song declaring the rule and reign of God.

Pray

1. That you might live as a child of the King.
2. That the integrity of God’s rule be evident in the lives of all God’s people.
3. That God be honoured as the only immortal ruler.
4. That false rulers and gods be exposed in the world.
5. For the life that comes from God the King to fill the church and our community.

Read the Word 50 minutes

1 Timothy 6:11-16

New International Version®

11 But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 13 In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you 14 to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honour and might forever. Amen. NIV®

These exhortations follow on from the catalogue of disastrous things that lead people away from faith and into ‘ruin’. Paul charges Timothy to faithful and Godly living under God’s rule - which is the only true rule and under the only true King.

Look at verses 9 & 10 in your own Bible.

What is Paul particularly warning Timothy against and why is it still relevant today?

What to these things have to do with ‘kings’?

God is King. Let us take this as the ruling part of Paul’s charge. Everything else falls under the Kingship of God. Timothy’s attitudes, faith, commitment and identity are all under God’s Kingship.

He is 'man of God' and as such, the traits that he is charged to exhibit are the Godly traits which are listed in verse 11.

Take a good look at these traits and consider how they apply to any man of God, woman of God, teen or child of God...

In a society which is keen to identify a person according to their sexual preferences, what could it mean for you to be identified as '_____ of God'?

John Stott reminds us that 'Man of God' in the Old Testament is 'a term reserved for the leaders of Israel'. He goes on to comment on its usage by Paul in 2 Timothy 3:17;

In the only other use of the expression in the New Testament 'the man of God' appears to be any mature Christian who becomes 'thoroughly equipped for every good work. P154

It is possible - and necessary- for Timothy specifically and other Christians who are mature, willing to serve God and lead others to;

"pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called..."

Talk about each of the pursuits in turn. How do they show that you are ruled by a different set of Laws than the ones belonging to the earthly kingdom?

What areas are most likely to differ from worldly norms?

Verse 12 is about fighting. As a soldier of the Kingdom of God, you are called up to serve in his army. A person will fight for their King and their Country. Talk about why the Christian life will never sit easily within the kingdoms ruled by earthly laws with their own priorities.

Paul is exhorting Timothy to faithful and Godly living in a world overrun by faithless people and idolatrous & false religions. The Roman Emperor was worshipped as a god and his son and heir would be referred to as 'son of god'. Paul, in his credal statement (verse 15) including the assertion that God is the "King of kings and Lord of lords" has already spoken of the 'divine appearing of his Son' in verse 14. Tom Wright puts the theory that;

*The idea of his 'appearing' combined the two notions: a major spectacular state visit, and a moment of divine revelation. The word which summed all this up was **epiphaneia**, the word from which Christians get 'Epiphany.' He is deliberately talking about the future 'appearing' of Jesus in language his*

hearers would recognise as normally belonging to Caesar, the Roman emperor... When you follow King Jesus, you are enlisting in the service of the One true God, the King of kings and Lord of Lords, the ultimate sovereign. All earthly monarchs must bow before him. The 'appearing' of his son is the only 'appearing' that will ultimately count. pp73-4

In the Christmas season there are often 'appearances' by celebrities and idols from the local culture. These are often expensive to attend - especially if it includes a meeting and a personal photo (selfie) with the celebrity.

These appearances are well-attended and well-publicised.

Talk about the first appearing of Jesus. Many more people know about it now than did at the time of his first appearing in Bethlehem.

What does this tell us about God's rule as King of kings and the Kingdom of God?

Talk about the mystery around the 'second coming' or the second appearing of Jesus. What will it mean for this world?

Why will it have been important for mature Christians to pursue godliness and to have '*fought the good fight of the faith*'?

Reflection & Refreshment *25 minutes*

Over refreshments, consider the following words of Tom Wright:

The commands in verses 11 & 14 are not just about learning to behave in new ways for their own sake. They are the essential requirements for effective soldiers in the army of the true King.

This whole way of life forms a stunning contrast with the attitude described in the previous passage (those who want to be rich, who fall into traps and impale themselves on sharp objects). It encourages us to lift up our heads and see where we are called to go, rather than looking around at the rest of the world being consumed with jealousy for the material wealth that others have got. p75

What are the difficulties in staying true to God's rule?

How can your group help you?

Talk about Wright's final sentence. Where is your focus?

How can the church remain faithful when the world has such a strong pull?

Pray for your church's leadership and ministry. Pray for their vision of God as King of kings to outshine all other pulls on their attention.

Session 2: He Will Reign

As you Gather 5-10 minutes

Talk about Kings and Queens from history. Who stands out? What was the country like under their rule? Would you have enjoyed living at that time? Talk about your reasoning.

Pray & Worship 10 minutes

Sing a hymn or a song which looks forward to the rule of Jesus the King .
Pray

1. Prayers of longing for Christ's return.
2. Prayers of beseeching God to reign over our land.
3. For the nations to know the joy of living with Christ as King.
4. For greater trust in God's sovereignty.
5. For a church which obedient to the King.
6. For your minister and church leadership, locally and nationally.

Read the Word 50 minutes

Isaiah 9:2-7 NIV®

*The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.*

³
*You have enlarged the nation
and increased their joy;
they rejoice before you
as people rejoice at the harvest,
as warriors rejoice
when dividing the plunder.*

⁴
*For as in the day of Midian's defeat,
you have shattered
the yoke that burdens them,
the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor.*

⁵
*Every warrior's boot used in battle
and every garment rolled in blood
will be destined for burning,
will be fuel for the fire.*

⁶
*For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.*

*And he will be called
Wonderful Counsellor,
Mighty God,
Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.*

⁷
*Of the greatness of his government
and peace there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the Lord Almighty
will accomplish this.*

Israel and Judah had become 2 nations after Solomon had died around 922 BC during the time of Rehoboam. See 2 Chronicles Chapters 10-12.

The Promised Land had become divided - which was never God's intention. The Davidic reign of the Kings of Judah had come to an end with Ahaz completing the line before it was totally rejected. Have a look at Isaiah Chapter 7 for Ahaz's exchange with The Lord. These words are charged with prophetic weight and finality against Ahaz and his rule. It is best assumed that even though we know that Isaiah was prophet to the Southern Kingdom of Judah, the prophetic word is given in order that David's throne - a single throne- be established again over the whole of God's people and for the whole of the Land of God's Promise.

Have a think about the current world situation - and that of the Twentieth Century.

Talk about how divided nations struggle to co-exist next to each other.

In verse 2 it refers to "The people walking in darkness". This refers to the whole people rather than the divided nations. All but a few have rejected the ways of God, and those who rule without keeping God's Covenant have ruled the people into darkness. In Israel and Judah, there has been a wholesale turning away from God.

Talk about how the ruling culture has influence on all areas of life and faith.

We may look for light from the leaders in our society. Certainly, the way that leaders of nations rule has a direct effect on the people. In the UK, the majority of the Monarch's direct influence on politics is lessened by the power of Parliament.

Where do you see light in the leadership of the nations at present?

Pause and pray "For rulers and all in authority" 1 Timothy 2:1-6

The "great light" will be seen by all the people. It is not limited and its dawning will have consequences that are far-reaching and ever-lasting.

Look at the 3 mentions of 'rejoicing' in verse 3 and the leading into that joy with 'enlarging' the nation.

These are definite signs of growth and favour in God's sight.

Verses, 4, 5 (RSV) & 6 each begin "For".

Each verse goes on to describe the effects of the dawning of the great light.

What will the end to oppression in verse 4 mean?

What will the end to battle in verse 5 mean?

In verse 6, the prophetic weight is given to the establishment of a child who will become king forever and who will reign forever. It is under his reign and rule that oppression and fighting will be ended.

The reign and rule of God's King will have a good and positive effect on the people who have been divided, subject to oppressive regimes & fighting.

Talk about the priorities of the reign of the new king. Start by examining the names by which he will be known.

What kind of citizens should this king produce as the effects of his reign make their impact?

Is this ruler going to be Jesus or one of the earthly kings? Barry Webb reasons; *Some have suggested that it is the crown prince, Hezekiah, who is in view, and that the titles of verse 6b are grandiose throne-names expressing the high expectations that people like Isaiah had of him. But this can hardly be so. At the very most, Davidic kings were regarded as the adopted 'sons' of God. Furthermore, Hezekiah was born in 737 BC, three years before the events of chapter 7, whereas the birth of the ideal ruler in this chapter is regarded as a future event... In the final analysis the language of verse 6 can only apply to one who is God incarnate. There can be little doubt then, that this oracle points directly to the coming of the Messiah, the great Son of David and the true light.* Pp 68-69

Reflection & Refreshment *25 minutes*

Over refreshments, talk about the vulnerability of God's plan for his king resting on a woman and a child in obscurity.

Talk about how God's plans are not always obvious - give examples from your own experience or other biblical people.

What does it mean for you to be a person who belongs to a life under the rule of Christ the King?

How does this affect your behaviour; decision-making/choices; cultural identity?

Pray for your community and for your nation.

Pray that God's rule may be evident in you.

Short Study: “*The Return*”

Opening Thoughts:

Where is your place of origin? This could be your spiritual home or the place you consider that you belong to.

List the reasons why these places are important.

Opening Prayer:

God Eternal, We pray your blessing upon us as we meet in your holy presence. May we know that you are King and God forever.
May we find our place in your plan. May we return again to you and surrender to the Lord of Heaven and Earth. Amen

Luke 2:1-7

The Passion Translation (TPT)

1-2 During those days, the Roman emperor, Caesar Augustus, ordered that the first census be taken throughout his empire. (Quirinius was the governor of Syria at that time.) 3 Everyone had to travel to his or her hometown to complete the mandatory census. 4-5 So Joseph and his fiancé, Mary, left Nazareth, a village in Galilee, and journeyed to their hometown in Judea, to the village of Bethlehem, King David's ancient home. They were required to register there, since they were both direct descendants of David. Mary was pregnant and nearly ready to give birth. 6-7 When they arrived in Bethlehem, Mary went into labour, and there she gave birth to her firstborn son. After wrapping the newborn baby in strips of cloth, they laid him in a feeding trough since there was no available space in any upper room in the village.

For your consideration:

It looks like Caesar Augustus is setting the timescale in Luke 2.

How are rulers and decisions of the world used to bring about God's good purposes?

Why was God reluctant to give Israel a King?

What effect would the Kings of Israel and Judah have on the Covenant faithfulness of the Hebrew people?

There is an earthly connection to God's Kingship in this passage. It takes us to the place from which God's line of chosen Kings would come. Bethlehem is King David's hometown. After Samuel's false start in anointing Saul as King, he anoints God's choice: David who was the last and least of Jesse's sons. Bethlehem is described in Micah as “*Small among the clans of Judah*” (5:2 NIV®). It is here that God will re-establish his chosen King among the least and the humble - without even an upstairs room for them to stay in - and on the family line God himself chose and established for Kingship.

This is a redemptive act. The King will be returned to Israel.

Discuss why it was necessary for Mary & Joseph to be in Bethlehem for the Birth of the Messiah.

The Kings of the Old Testament had not been a huge success. Prone to falling prey to the lure of wealth and idolatry, they had led generation upon generation away from worshipping God. Even King David was fallible and flawed. Succumbing to his desire for Bathsheba, he had sex with her and then, on discovering that she was pregnant, sent her husband Uriah to the front line of battle so that he was killed in action. See 2 Samuel 11. Psalm 51 sees David's prayer of repentance for his actions. He was flawed but he still looked to God for redemption and salvation.

**As a shepherd, David was fearless and courageous.
Talk about how Jesus the King would be fearless and courageous.**

**As a leader, David would worship and be obedient to God.
Talk about how Jesus is the one whose rule will bring glory to God through his obedience.**

At Jesus' birth, there will be worship in heaven and on earth by angels, shepherds and kings. God's rule on earth is being brought in a new way. He is sought for by kings in the city of Jerusalem, and yet his reign will begin in obscurity and poverty. God's preference has always been for the last and the least.

**Earthly kings distracted people from honouring God.
How will this King encourage people to honour God?**

A King commands the allegiance of his people. They will love their King, serve and honour him, fight for him and defend the honour of both his Name and his Kingdom.

How does this challenge you -how can you love and serve- Jesus your King and bring honour to his Name?

How can you work to expand his Kingdom. How can your church be more effective in the mission of the Kingdom?

What is the purpose of Jesus the King here on earth?

Pray:

For the King to establish his rule and reign in your heart. If you have rejected his rule, pray that you too might return.

Pray through Psalm 51 yourself.

Dedicate your life again to the decrees of King Jesus and submit yourself to be obedient to follow them.

Give thanks for the obedience of Mary, Joseph and the shepherds who gave themselves to discover the purposes of God. Amen

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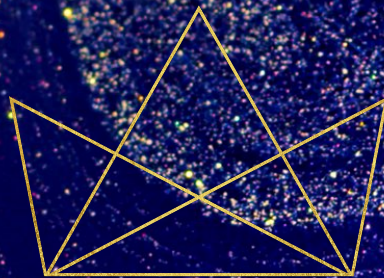
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Encourage One Another & Build Each Other Up 1 Thessalonians 5: 11



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