

One truth shared: A better King!

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Zechariah 9:9

King

When it comes to your life, who is your “king”? I’m not talking about some royal ruler or political entity, but rather who or what do you turn to for comfort, for security, for peace, for hope? Most who are Christians would probably answer “God” or “Jesus” and rightly so. After all, the blessing of living life under the guidance and blessing of God is among the most basic of Christian teachings.

But, for as easy as it is to say that Jesus is the “king” in our lives, it’s interesting to note how hard it can be to live according to that confession. There might be times when we live as though the king is someone or something other than God.

- Maybe it’s the quiet attitude that our own hard work and careful planning are what guarantee a smooth and successful life!
- Maybe it’s secular authorities: if we could just elect the better people and enact the perfect policies and advocate for the right causes—then life would be good!
- Maybe it’s human innovation and technology. Science and medicine seem to have the answers to everything!

And yet, for as many times as God brings amazing blessings into our lives through all of these things, we are served well by making sure they don’t become the ultimate “king” so to speak, because they aren’t always reliable! Problems arise that we didn’t anticipate, the new group of political leaders struggles just as much as the previous one only in different ways, and there are plenty of challenges that science and medicine don’t have the answers to.

Who is your king? Jesus is—and that makes all the difference.

Zechariah described King Jesus in prophecy using these words: “Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” Appearances can be deceiving. Earthly kings usually aren’t gentle, and they definitely don’t ride donkeys. But for Jesus that’s exactly the point. What does King Jesus bring? Exactly what you need. Righteousness. Salvation. Righteousness not found by human power but by the Savior’s selfless sacrifice. Righteousness earned by a perfect payment for sin. Righteousness that brings salvation—first as Jesus rules the world already now through the lives and testimony of his people and later the fully realized salvation that God’s people have in heaven!

What better king could there be? Live in that knowledge! Live knowing that no matter what kind of chaos or uncertainty life might bring your way, Jesus already defeated your greatest enemies, and satisfied your deepest spiritual need, guaranteeing that you share in his victory and are a citizen of his eternal kingdom!

Prayer: Dear Jesus our King, you rule the world in truth and grace, nations and kingdoms bow to your will and move at your command. Teach me to submit myself to your reign over my life. Protect me from my sinful desires that lead me to depend on myself and so many other things instead of you. Point me to your sacrifice for me and the many blessings you promise. Amen.

Foundation Teen Facilitators Guide

Year A – Lent 6

Our Greatest Needs

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King

Starting the Discussion: *This first section is intended to be light and easy, to engage and get the conversation going. Have a little fun with these questions.*

The idea of living under the rule of a king is distasteful to 21st century Americans. Compare and contrast a monarchy (government by a king) with a Constitutional Republic (like the United States). Describe two positives and two negatives for each form of government.

Point: Make the point that being ruled by a king would be a great thing... if the king were a good king who always had your best interests in mind! Since people are sinful, it doesn't usually work out that well!

Connecting: *This section serves as a bridge between the opening conversation and the body of the study/discussion. It should get the group thinking about the topic/text even before they've looked at it.*

- List some characteristics that someone should have if they are going to be a “good” monarch.
- Read Deuteronomy 17:14-20. What additional characteristics does God add in his description of a good king?
- Watch the video clip (<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/kings/>) or read selected sections from 1-2 Kings (or just think of your Bible knowledge!) and compare the Old Testament kings with God's description found in Deuteronomy. In what ways did the Old Testament kings fall short of their mission?

Digging In: *Here we want to dig into some texts or the text for the day and see what Scripture says. The questions are meant to be open ended to give a beginning of a scriptural conversation. These are a guide for a spiritual and scriptural conversation.*

- Read each of the three scripture readings chosen for this week describing Jesus as king (Zechariah 9:9-10, Philippians 2:5-11, Matthew 2:1-11). In what ways did Jesus look different from an earthly king? In what ways did he behave differently from an earthly king?
- If Jesus is actually the kind of King the Bible says he is, why doesn't he do more to specifically protect his people from the effects of sin? (*Jesus came not to block sin on isolated occasions, but to cure the disease of sin for once and for all. He came not to make life a little better here, but to bring people out of a sin-damaged world to live in true perfection.*)
- Agree or Disagree: As Christians, our goal is to get the world to live and act in keeping with the commands of King Jesus. (*Agree in the sense that we do want God's will to be displayed in the world. Disagree in the sense that this is not even possible by coercion, political processes, or changed laws. The only thing that inspires God-pleasing changes of behavior is the gospel. People shouldn't be expected to live as Christians until they ARE Christians!*)

- Agree or Disagree: Christians shouldn't be politically active because our real king is Jesus, and he will take care of us. *(Agree in the sense that we shouldn't use the earthly means of politics to accomplish the spiritual goals that can only be accomplished by the gospel. Disagree in the sense that we do have a duty to be good citizens, which means taking part in civic life and trying to benefit society as we are able.)*

Conclusion: *Here we want to wrap up the discussion, perhaps circling back to the "connecting question" above.*

Describe specific situations Christians might face where it would be comforting to remember that Jesus is your king. *(Answers will vary, but might include political turmoil, pandemic, blatant sinfulness in society, persecution, illness, or other hardship. Lead students to describe how remembering Jesus as king changes one's perspective on things like these.)*