

ELEVATE: The Return of the King

Session #3: The Birth of the King

Session Objective: For students to understand that Jesus came to earth as the Messiah – the Anointed One of God, and that God was intentional in this decision. Jesus did not become a great prophet, nor was He just a special Rabbi. Jesus WAS God, and came to earth as a human to live a human existence. He came to earth for the purpose of building a new kingdom – a spiritual kingdom with earthly realities.

Minimum Prep:

- Read through the entire session outline.

Extended Prep: If you have some extended prep time, show the following video scene:

- In Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring, Boromir comes to accept that Aragorn is the rightful King of Gondor, as he is about to die. The scene comes right at the end of the movie, after Boromir is shot full of arrows in the forest. Aragorn comes to his side and Boromir says, “I would have followed you...my brother, my captain, my king” (Chapter 38; 2:41:41 – 2:44:08) Show the scene. If you cannot, it would be helpful for you to know the scene and to share the script – the exchange between Boromir and Aragorn.

Session Outline

Leader Preamble:

In the past couple of weeks we have taken a pretty different approach to the Christmas story. We have researched the background to the coming of Jesus. The background to the Christmas story is vital for us to fully understand the reality of Jesus as Messiah – as King! We have also discovered that our earth was in desperate need for a different kind of leader. The Kings of Israel – even King David were not able to provide the kind of godly authority and spiritual leadership that we need. Certainly the Kings, Caesars and political leaders of other nations also failed the leadership test.

A rightful King leads not out of some kind of power hungry authority. Nor does a rightful King lead out of anger or control. God gave us an example of leadership in the person of Jesus. Jesus is God in the flesh. Jesus is part of the Godhead – a Trinity composed of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

Today we are going to again look at the Christmas story from a slightly different perspective.

Small Group Questions

Show the Video clip (LOTR – Fellowship)

1. Two weeks ago we heard Boromir say, “Gondor has no king”. In this scene, in Boromir’s final moments, he says something very different. He says to Aragorn, “I would have followed you, my brother, my captain, my king”. What made the difference in Boromir’s attitude, what changed his mind?

Leader’s note: *While there are a number of plausible and “correct” answers, what we are hoping the astute viewer will have noticed, is that Boromir’s mind was changed by the character of Aragorn. Aragorn just prior to Boromir’s statement says, “I do not know what strength is in my blood but I swear to you I will not let the white city fall, nor our people fail.” Aragorn exhibited strength with humility. Despite Boromir’s weakness and failings, Aragorn shows great humility in calling the people of Gondor “our people” rather than saying as he could have rightfully done, “my people”. It is the character of Aragorn that begins in the first movie and continues through each of the three movies to reveal that he ultimately is not just the heir to the throne but also the rightful king, but virtue of his character.*

Read Matthew 2:16-18

2. In this passage what do we learn about the kind of leadership that the people of Israel were experiencing? Do you think Herod was a more brutal leader than the others in leadership around him, or typical of leadership in that day?

Leader’s Note: *You may need to give some context to this story. In these two verses we learn much about Herod’s character as well as being reminded that God’s hand has been at work weaving His will into the story of salvation, for in Herod’s evil action, another prophecy from Jeremiah is fulfilled. The leadership of the time was arrogant, severe and brutal. Herod was a wicked and evil leader, but as is demonstrated later in the beating and death of Jesus, his brutality was typical of the leadership of the age.*

3. Considering the kind of violence the people of Israel were exposed to, what kind of leader do you think they were looking forward to? How do you think they saw the Anointed One of God bringing about a new kingdom?

Leader’s Note: *This is a question to have the student’s provide a “human answer”. When we are brutalized and pushed down, our natural human response is to fight back, is to meet violence with violence and to “pay back” our aggressors with violence.*

Read Philippians 2:5-11

- 4. What does this passage tell us about the kind of leader Jesus was? What are some of the character words that we discover in this passage?**

Leader's note: *The words or phrases that are of great interest are: "made himself nothing", "a servant", "humbled himself", "obedient". You may want to explain to the students that this passage is considered by commentators to be an early hymn. It was sung by the early church about Jesus. It was their understanding of who Jesus was.*

A follow up question could be: Can you think of any other times in the life of Jesus when He demonstrated unbelievable servant-hood...particularly from the view of his disciples? (Answer: John 13:1-17 – when Jesus washed their feet) Why do you think that was such a big deal?

Read John 1:1-5

- 5. This passage speaks of Jesus, "The Word". It says, "The light shines in the darkness but the darkness has not understood it". Considering the concept of character in leadership, and the things we learn about Jesus as sang in the Philippian hymn, why do you think the darkness has such difficulty in understanding Jesus as king?**

Leader's Note: *Many people rejected the kingship of Jesus because He was not what they expected. While they knew scriptures, they had fallen to an earthly understanding of leadership. Many were waiting for a Military King. Even Jesus' disciples continued to wait through His life for Him to pick up a sword and fight. When Jesus willingly gave Himself over to the authorities, it was the opposite of what everyone expected. But it was not in opposition to what the Old Testament told us to expect!*

Read Colossians 1:13-20

- 6. Consider the reality of what we read in Colossians 1 and compare it with Philippians 2. Jesus at any time could have said, "I am the boss, shut up, start listening, and do it my way" but He didn't. Instead, He embodied throughout His life servant leadership. As we conclude this Christmas series, what are some of the new things you have learned about the Christmas season and the celebration of Jesus?**

Leader's Note: *You may want to share with the students that the Christmas story is incomplete without foreshadowing to the Easter story. The prophecies about the Messiah do exactly that. Consider Isaiah 53. Isaiah's prophecy very clearly indicates that the Messiah would not be a mighty warrior in the human sense of sword and spear, but in a spiritual reality – that the Messiah would be crushed, so that all of humanity could experience salvation through His sacrifice. The battle we fight against is not flesh and blood, but spiritual forces of darkness.*

7. As we study the leadership style of Jesus, what does it teach you about the kind of person and leader you are called to be? How does the example of Jesus lead you?

Leader's Note: *An interesting study is the root of the word "meek". Many people will describe Jesus as meek. In our culture, that is an icky word: a word of weakness. But the word meek, properly understood means, "strength under control". The word in fact was used to describe the Roman war horse. Consider the strength of the war horse, but that strength is useless to the Roman soldier, unless the strength can be bridled and controlled. And so the word meek truly brings to life the truth of Jesus – He is ultimate strength, under control. This concept can help the students to understand that true strength is not found in the sword or the fist, but as scripture says, "not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit says the Lord Almighty." (Zechariah 4:6)*

Leader Note: Contact Rob McAlpine at compass@baptist.ca or author Darren DeGraaf – Darren@baptist.ca with any thoughts, questions or suggestions.

Comments and Feedback:

Leader Note: This is your place each week to record significant sharing or growth in the lives of your students for subsequent follow up. You can also use this space to provide feedback on the material. All suggestions are welcome.

Please see the following handout. You have permission to reproduce these handouts for your group.