

ELEVATE: The Return of the King

Session #1: Rumours of the King

Session Objective: This session is to begin to explore the history of the Messiah. For thousands of years Jewish people had waited for a Messiah, and their scriptures made promise of his impending arrival. He would be the rightful King. God had promised a Messiah from the Line of King David. Through studying the background to the arrival of the Messiah, this session will set the stage for the following two sessions that more clearly focus on Jesus, the Messiah.

Minimum Prep:

- Read through the entire session outline, and read the scripture references in context to more thoroughly understand the stories surrounding the passages.
- You will need to consider some background scriptures to provide “proof” of the idea of the promise of a Messiah in the Old Testament. We give some suggestions, but there are far more than we suggest.
- VIDEO CLIP: You will have to make considerable adaptations to the lesson plan if you are not able to use the Video clip suggested.
-**Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring.**

Extended Prep: This preparation is really required to make this session work properly.

- **Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring.**

In this first video of the LOTR trilogy, we discover the beginnings of a community of people. Frodo, a Hobbit will ultimately carry the “one ring” on a journey towards its destruction. But, a sub theme will be the discovery that Aragorn, known only as “Strider” early in the movie, is the rightful king of Gondor. The video clip you want to use comes from The Council at Rivendale. Here Boromir, son of the steward of Gondor (the person responsible to act in the place of a King), says to Aragorn, “Gondor has no King, and Gondor needs no king”

Session Outline

Leader Preamble:

Have you ever made a promise you couldn't keep? Or maybe an easier question to ask is this, “Has someone ever made a promise to you they haven't kept?” It's an easier question because we seem to do a better job of remembering promises that others have broken, than those we have broken, don't we? How did you feel when that promise was broken?

For children, one of the hardest things can be dealing with broken promises by our parents. Often it turns out that they haven't broken a promise, so much as just forgot about what they had promised, but regardless, it hurts just the same. A missed ball game or recital, the chance to go on a special outing cancelled because of dad's work schedule, a present that never arrived, or an action that was never supposed to happen.

I don't know about you, but I am a pretty impatient person. I am not good at surprises, keeping them, or having to wait for them. I pretty much like to have things figured out in advance.

The Bible is divided into two sections, the Old Testament, which is really the Jewish scripture, and the New Testament, which is the Christian scripture. You may have noticed that the Old Testament (or some people prefer to call it the first testament), is actually longer than the second or New Testament. Often people begin to tune out whenever they hear someone refer to the Old Testament – they expect some long and boring speech, maybe an impossibly long list of ancestors.

But if you dive into it, you discover a few things. First of all, the Old Testament should really be given an “R” rating. Time and time again, there are stories told in it that your parents wouldn't want you to see in the movie theatre. In fact, if you have one, take a look at your children's Bible and compare it to the real Bible – I promise you the parts that are left out, are often because they are too graphic or of too mature a nature to be put in a child's story book!

The Old Testament has many stories in it that tell of people connecting or disconnecting from God. In some ways it is the most practical part of the Bible, because it is all real life stories of real life people in conversation and struggle with God. But there is also one theme that runs through the entire Old Testament – it is the theme of a rumour – in fact a promise.

God promises to build a community of people, and to make that community a blessing to all peoples on earth. Way back in Genesis 12, God told Abram that he would be the father of a special people. In Genesis 22 the angel of the Lord says to Abraham, “through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.” God makes a promise that will take thousands of years to fulfill! Wow, that requires some kind of patience! But then He gave reminders to people all through the Old Testament through prophets and through Kings – reminders that told them – it might feel like a long time, but the wait is worth it.

However, when the time came, not everyone was glad to greet the arrival of the awaited King.

PLAY - Video Clip: The Fellowship of The Ring (Movie One). The scene at Rivendell, Boromir says, “Gondor has no king and Gondor needs no king” (Scene 23 – 1:26:28 – 1:28:45)

Small Group Questions:

Have you ever had to wait a really long time for something – a special event, a ride at Wonderland or a special present? Was the wait worth it? Why or why not?

The idea here is to provide a safe question that is pretty “non-Christmas” related, but relates to the theme of waiting.

Has someone ever made you a promise that they didn’t keep? Why didn’t they keep the promise? How did it make you feel?

This question was already raised earlier in the session rhetorically. Now the students have a chance to begin to share their feelings about broken promises. Allow them to share their stories – it will help them gain a sense of what it must have felt like to be an Israelite waiting for what seemed like God’s broken promise.

After everyone has shared say something like:

“The people of Israel had waited a very long time for God to keep his promise. Sometimes they thought he had fulfilled his promise through other people beside Jesus. In the gospel stories we read that some people thought John the Baptist was the Messiah, and we also read that others were more convinced that Barabbas – a sword wielding revolutionary was the kind of Messiah that Israel needed – not Jesus. Many people probably had simply given up waiting.

Read Acts 3:24-26, Acts 13:22-23, and Acts 26:4-7

- **Why do you think Peter and Paul made reference so many times to the promises of God in bringing about “hope” through Jesus Christ?**

It would be helpful for you as the leader to read over the passages in context. In each situation, Peter and Paul are speaking to people who knew about the promise of a Messiah, but did not yet realize or accept that the promise was fulfilled through Jesus. Help to explain to the students that the Jewish scriptures point to the arrival of a Messiah, and that the New Testament writers spend a lot of time showing how Jesus was this Messiah – the anointed one of God, who had come to be their King.

**Note: Some passages to consider are: Isaiah 52:13-15; or Isaiah 9:6,7*

- **In the video clip we watched earlier, Boromir speaks against Aragorn. He refuses to acknowledge that he is the rightful heir to the throne of Gondor. Why do you think it was so hard for Boromir to acknowledge that Aragorn was king?**

Read Matthew 2:13-20

- **How is Herod's response to the news from the Magi that the Messiah had been born predictable?**
- **How does this story change the perspective of our culture, which always shows baby Jesus in a pretty manger scene?**
- **In Gondor, since there was no apparent King, a steward had been given charge of the kingdom, Boromir's father. Sometimes in our life, we act as if there is no king. What are some things in your life that have been put on the throne that shouldn't be there?**

This is of course the essence of this session – Who is in charge of your life?

Answers may include:

- *Other people, or a desire for a relationship (I.e. My girlfriend, my friends, or a desire for a girl/boyfriend)*
- *education/career/money – the idea of security, or taking care of myself.*
- *good works/being a good person.*
- *fun (this includes partying, sexuality, even more positive things like thrill seeking or the need to always be having a good time)*

The Christmas story is often about a little helpless baby. The truth of the story is that Jesus was a baby, but he had come as King.

End by saying something like:

"Over the next couple of weeks we will develop this theme more fully, but with this final question, we begin to probe a little more deeply into why the story of Christmas is not all about lights and laughter...yes it is a celebration, but it is a celebration with teeth! Jesus came to earth as the fulfillment of thousands of years of prophecy, as the Son of God, the anointed one of Israel. We are going to learn that he wasn't what people were expecting in a King, but He was still the King!"

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.