

A King is Born • Life Group Curriculum

Introduction:

Every year, Christmas cards and nativity decorations announce: “A King is Born.” But do we really need another king? Kings have come and gone, but they never fulfill people’s expectations. So, what is different about King Jesus? What makes him the king we have been longing for.

This series explores the first three kings of Israel. Each of these kings came to power with great excitement and anticipation. For Saul, the first king, people expected to find joy in his reign. But because of his divided and immoral heart, he could not deliver true joy. For David, the warrior king, they hoped his military might would bring peace. But violence gripped David’s personal life, so victory on the battlefield never brought peace to the community. For Solomon, the celebrity king with wisdom and riches, people dreamed that he would govern in a way that would fulfill their hopes. But hopes were destroyed when his kingdom dissolved into civil war. No king has delivered true joy, peace, or hope. King Jesus is the king we have been waiting for and it is only in his kingdom that we find joy, peace, hope, and most importantly love.

Joy: The Reluctant King vs King with Us

1 Samuel 8:6-9 vs Isaiah 7:14

The people of Israel were adamant in their demands for an earthly king. This week let's explore the Scriptures to contrast the first flawed earthly King Saul, against God's perfect plan of a true heavenly King. In delving through these Scriptures, let us also discover how knowing and experiencing "Emmanuel: God with us" brings luminescent joy in our lives today.

1. Share how Jesus fulfills the title "Emmanuel: God with Us."
2. Read 1 Samuel 8:6-9. When the people of Israel asked Samuel for a king, why was Samuel displeased? What did the Lord say this request from the people meant?
3. Read 1 Samuel 8:9, 15:17-23. How and why was the first earthly king flawed? Saul was chosen by God and anointed by Samuel. Why did God choose such a flawed individual?
4. Read Isaiah 7:14, 1 Revelation 5-6. Drawing on these verses as well as the Christmas story and the life of Jesus, contrast the reluctant King Saul, from our Heavenly King Jesus.
5. Read Psalms 139:7, Hebrews 13:5, Revelation 3:20, Matthew 28:20. How do these verses encourage and bring you joy in knowing that Jesus is the true King?
6. This Christmas season, how can we focus on the real reason for joy? How do we focus on "Emmanuel: God with us" and not on peripheral earthly things (gifts, celebrations, etc.)?

Peace: The Warrior King vs King who will Shepherd Us

1 Samuel 16:1-13 vs Matthew 2:6 & John 7:42

Aristotle once said, “We make war that we might live at peace.” King David came to power through violence and war. People lined the streets to welcome him into their cities as they celebrated his military success. But violence wasn’t just part of David’s battlefield strategy, it plagued his personal life. While the country experienced limited peace, David’s home faced death, conflict, and even civil war. Through David’s shortfalls we are left longing for a better king, one who can bring true and lasting peace.

1. If you were the ruler of a nation, what’s one thing you would do?
2. Read 1 Samuel 16: 1-13. How was David identified as ruler over Israel? How was Jesus related to him (John 7:42)?
3. How does 1 Samuel 16:18 describe David? How does this description fit with what you know about David’s rise to king?
4. David is described as a man of valor (1 Samuel 17) and a man of war (1 Samuel 18:5, 7, 13). How did being a “man of war” characterize David’s reign (2 Samuel 8:1-14)? Why was there war with so many other nations?
5. Aside from war, how can nations unify?
6. In contrast to David’s rule, how does Jesus rule (Matthew 2:6; Isaiah 53:5)? How did he bring peace and unity?
7. Matthew 5:9 says, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God.” How can we reflect the peace that characterizes Jesus’ reign?

Hope: The Celebrity King vs King of Eternity

2 Chronicles 7:11-22 & 1 Kings 11:26-41 vs Luke 4:16-21

After years of conflict and infighting, the nation was united. The monarchy was clearly established, and the future looked bright for their new king, Solomon. However, Solomon couldn't live up to the hope that people had placed in him. At the end of his life, the kingdom was thrust into civil war and conflict. He failed to bring true and lasting hope because his heart was divided by selfish desires. As we celebrate the birth of King Jesus, we honor the only king who can bring lasting and eternal hope.

- 1.** Reflect on a time in your life when you looked forward to something with hope and anticipation. Did the circumstances work out to fulfill all of your hopes and dreams?
- 2.** Read the covenant God made with King Solomon in 2 Chronicles 7:11-22. What were the terms of the deal that God established with Solomon?
- 3.** Imagine you were present at the beginning of Solomon's reign. What hopes and dreams might you have held for the kingdom of Israel?
- 4.** The hope of Israel was based on Solomon's ability to walk faithfully with God. How stable was this hope? Being that all humans are flawed, can any human offer true hope?
- 5.** Read the narrative describing the end of Solomon's life and kingdom in 1 Kings 11:26-41. Imagine you were living during this time; how might you have been affected by Solomon's downfall?
- 6.** In Luke 4:16-21, Jesus announces his kingdom by quoting Isaiah. How is the hope we express in King Jesus different from the hope people had for King Solomon?
- 7.** How can you focus your hope on Jesus this Christmas season?