



Who Will Reign on David's Throne?

Considering a Message from Matt. 2:13-23

For the Week of January 5th, 2020

This Sunday we are observing the 2nd Sunday of Christmas. Our lessons focus on how Christ our great King, came in lowliness. From the start, He was threatened and despised. His parents had to flee to preserve His life from the murderous hands of King Herod. And yet, though He has come in such lowliness, He is in fact the true King of Kings—come to serve US His people. He does not come as a wicked tyrant, but as a loving, concerned friend. How blessed we are to have such a king as this! This also gives us reason to persevere through the trials and struggles that we face in our own lives—as Peter explains in our Epistle Lesson (1 Peter 4:12-19): “Rejoice whenever you are sharing in the sufferings of Christ.” Our King also offers a great feast for us—He gives us His own body and blood—given to us in selfless love—in the Lord's Supper. Here we find encouragement to keep going in spite of the difficulties we face in our lives. We depart in peace knowing that our King has declared us “forgiven!”

Opening Prayer: We thank You Heavenly Father for bringing us together. Send Your Holy Spirit to help us grow in faith and love, especially as we gather together with our fellow Christians. We ask you to forgive us for the times when we set ourselves on the throne that rightly belongs to Jesus. Help us to instead place Him in our hearts as our King of Kings—the one who has come to save us. Help us to honor Him as our true king throughout our lives. We pray this in His name, Amen.

CONNECT to Each Other

For this first session, take a few moments to get to know each other better—especially anyone who might be new or unfamiliar to the people in your group. In @ a minute each, have every person introduce themselves with: first/last name, immediate family, where you work(ed) how long you've been a member of Mt. Olive, and one thing you like to help others remember you: “I'm the guy or gal who likes to...”

1. Those who hold high positions, power, and authority are often tempted to abuse these things for personal gain and selfish reasons! Looking back throughout history, can you think of examples of those who fell to such temptations? **FROM THE BIBLE: PHAROAH, NEBUCHADNEZZAR, HEROD, ALSO ISRAEL'S KINGS—SAUL, EVEN DAVID HIMSELF! MANY OTHERS THROUGH HISTORY—NERO, HENRYVIII, LOUIS XIV & XVI, IVAN THE TERRIBLE, LENIN, STALIN, HITLER, SADAM HUSSEIN. AND MANY OTHERS—(NO NEED TO GET INTO DEBATES ABOUT CURRENT POLITICAL FIGURES! LOTS OF STRONG OPINIONS.)**

TO DIG DEEPER: THIS IS A BIT CHALLENGING TO DO AT TIMES, BECAUSE THIS IS A MATTER OF THE HEART—WE DON'T WANT TO PRESUME TO LOOK INTO PEOPLE'S HEARTS... BUT WE CAN LOOK AT THE FRUITS THEY PRODUCE—ARE THESE FRUITS OF SELFISH AMBITION? IT CAN BE VERY CLEAR WHEN IT IS!

2. People go to great lengths to have a powerful position such as President of the United States. Think of all the perks and advantages that come with such power. What are some things that people are willing to do in order to become a ruler of a nation? **CONSIDER THE LONG CAMPAIGN SEASON, THE SCRUTINY OF THEIR PRIVATE AND FAMILY LIVES. ALL THE TRAVEL AND SPEECHES AND THE BEGGING FOR MONEY, ETC THAT GOES WITH THE**

EFFORT. IT'S AN ALL-OUT EFFORT! IF ONLY SUCH EFFORT WOULD BE MADE FOR THE GOSPEL—HOW MUCH MORE VALUABLE, POWERFUL, ADVANTAGEOUS IT IS FOR US!

CONNECT to the Word—Read the Bible text together (also consider its context): *Matthew 2:13-23*

3. What was King Herod willing to do in order to maintain his power and authority over Israel? **HE RESORTED TO DECEPTION IN HIS DEALINGS WITH THE MAGI IN ORDER TO LEARN THE LOCATION OF JESUS. EVEN MORE, HE WAS WILLING TO CARRY OUT THE BRUTAL EXECUTION OF ALL BABY BOYS UNDER THE AGE OF TWO IN THE VICINITY OF BETHLEHEM.**



4. Have someone in your group look up and share 2 Samuel 7:13. In this verse it says that King David's reign would last "forever." It was clearly a reference to a spiritual kingdom. In what ways does David and his reign over Israel point us ahead to Jesus and His spiritual reign? **DAVID OVERCAME MANY DIFFERENT FOES, INCLUDING THE GIANT GOLIATH, A LION, THE PHILISTINES, KING SAUL, ABSALOM, AND OTHER NEIGHBORING KINGDOMS. GOD IS THE ONE WHO CALLED DAVID TO HIS POSITION OF LEADERSHIP. SO JESUS WAS CALLED AND ANOINTED TO BE OUR SAVIOR/KING, AND HE HAS DEFEATED OUR MOST TERRIBLE FOES: SIN, SATAN AND DEATH. ALSO CONSIDER THE LOWLINESS AND HUMILITY THAT DAVID CAME IN... SHEPHERD, RUNT OF THE FAMILY, ETC.—SIMILIAR TO CHRIST—THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS.**

5. In what ways do we resemble King Herod when we attempt to be the ruler over our own lives? What is the evidence for that? **EVERY SIN AGAINST ONE OF GOD'S 10 COMMANDMENTS MAY BE RIGHTLY SEEN AS AN ATTEMPT FOR US TO OVERTHROW HIS RULE OVER OUR LIVES. WHEN WE ARE TEMPTED TO SIN AND WE KNOWINGLY OPT TO STEP AWAY FROM GOD'S WILL FOR OUR OWN PERCEIVED GAINS AND PLEASURES WE ARE FALLING TO THIS TEMPTATION!**

6. How did God carry out the protection of His Son Jesus when Herod threatened Him? **HE CARRIED OUT THE SAFETY OF THE MAGI THROUGH A DREAM, SO THEY COULD RETURN HOME A DIFFERENT WAY. HE ALSO SAW TO THE EXILE OF JESUS INTO EGYPT IN ORDER TO PRESERVE HIM AND FAMILY.**

TO DIG DEEPER: GOD WAS WORKING THROUGH SPECIAL WAYS TO PROTECT THE MAGI AND TO PROTECT JESUS AS A SMALL CHILD. STILL, GOD PROMISES TO PROTECT US. CAN YOU THINK OF BIBLE VERSES THAT PROMISE THIS PROTECTION? (2 THESS 3:3; IS 41:10 & 46:1; 2 COR 4:8-10) CAN YOU THINK OF A TIME WHEN GOD PROVIDED YOU WITH PROTECTION?

7. Read through Psalm 2. How does Psalm 2 connect to and even foretell the events in our text? **GOD MOCKS ALL ATTEMPTS TO OVERTHROW JESUS CHRIST AS THE KING OF KINGS, AND HIS RULE OVER OUR LIVES. HE REMINDS US THAT THOSE WHO REMAIN FIRM IN HIS KINGDOM ARE "BLESSED."**



CONNECT to Life

8. How does God protect us from the efforts of the world and the devil and our own sinful flesh to remove us from the Kingdom of Jesus and His grace? **HE SOMETIMES ALLOWS US TO SUFFER AND SEE THE FUTILITY OF REJECTING HIS RULE OVER OUR LIVES. THE THINGS THAT SEEM HURTFUL CAN ACTUALLY BE USED BY GOD TO KEEP US CLOSE TO HIM. HE USES CROSSES THAT WE BEAR TO DRAW US CLOSER TO HIM. WE ALSO BUILDS US UP AND PRESERVES US AS HE PROVIDES US WITH A REGULAR DIET OF WORD AND SACRAMENT!**
9. How did the hymns, other lessons, parts of the service, etc. fit together with the Sermon message and overall theme for the day? **VARIOUS ANSWERS—OBVIOUSLY THE WHOLE SERVICE IS DESIGNED TO BE A COHESIVE UNIT/SINGLE THEME.**

CONNECT in Prayer—*In closing & throughout the week!*

- PLEASE OFFER PRAYERS that God would help us always keep Christ king in our own hearts! AND that we might rejoice in knowing that we are part of His eternal kingdom!
- PRAY for our various Connect Groups as they begin meeting for the Winter session. That they may continue to be a blessing to our church and strengthen our Mt. Olive members in their faith.
- PRAY for Owen Saidler, 5th Grader in our school, who was recently hospitalized and will need further treatment on his heart at the Children's Hospital in coming weeks. Pray for Owen's family also!
- PRAY for God's protection and that He might grant wisdom to our government and those in authority as tensions increase especially in the Middle East.
- PRAY for our congregational budget—as we face a deficit. That God might open hearts towards generous giving and increased stewardship. That He might provide for His church and continue to bless the work that we are doing!
- PRAY! Take requests and remember them in your daily prayers from your fellow Connect Group members!

THANK YOU FACILITATORS!

