

Lesson 8 | July 21, 2024

The Messiah's Universal Reign

Study Text: Psalms 45:1–8; 47:1–9

Central Truth: The Lord Jesus Christ will rule in truth and justice over all the earth.

Key Verse: Psalm 47:2–3

For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth. He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet (KJV).

For the Lord Most High is awesome. He is the great King of all the earth. He subdues the nations before us, putting our enemies beneath our feet (NLT).

Learning Objectives

- Students will understand the love of Jesus through His lordship.
- Students will evaluate the areas of their lives that they have not allowed Jesus to rule.
- Students will choose to submit and worship Jesus out of love and appreciation.

Introducing the Study

Say: Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords. He has conquered death, hell, and the grave and has been given all power and authority. However, what does it truly mean when Christians say that Jesus is Lord? Sometimes it's easier for us to quote Scripture and repeat church concepts than to identify the practical ways Jesus is Lord in our everyday lives.

Opening Activity—Jesus Is Lord

Ask. In what specific areas should Jesus be Lord of your life? Through what behaviors should His lordship be demonstrated?

Say: It's important for Christians not to simply say that Jesus is Lord but to show His lordship in their thoughts and actions. Jesus doesn't have a merely religious lordship. Instead, He is Lord over all creation and every part of a Christian's life. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

The promise of a Messiah, or Savior, was something the Jewish people had been waiting on since God's promise to Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:15). God's promise was that He would bring hope and a Kingdom unlike any other. His rule would be full of justice and mercy and would bring the sinful world back into alignment with God. Although the Messiah's first arrival may not have happened the way the Jews expected, Jesus is coming again to establish a physical kingdom on earth, and those who worship Him now will live with Him forever.

Part 1—Majesty of the Messiah-King

Glory to the King

Psalm 45:1–5

Say: Psalm 45 is considered a royal psalm, since it was intended to be used during a royal wedding. During the exile, this psalm was read with hope for the restoration of the Davidic dynasty as promised. Through the lens of this hope, the writer of Hebrews applied this psalm to Jesus directly, quoting Psalm 45:6–7. (See Hebrews 1:8–9.) As we talk about this psalm, think about how it applies to the readers before and after Jesus came to earth. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

The author of Psalm 45 was a member of the musical guild called the sons (or descendants) of Korah. He began by recognizing the king's good looks and gracious words, noting how God had blessed the king. This complimentary introduction quickly highlighted the responsibilities bestowed upon a king by God. The author called for the king to take up his weapons and "ride out to victory, defending truth, humility, and justice" (verse 4, NLT). A primary function of the king was to bring about the justice of God upon His enemies and rule the people in righteousness.

The king's ability to fight for God's people enabled him to bring peace and prosperity to the nation. His battles were intended to defend truth, humility, and justice. He is then described as bringing the nations beneath his feet (verse 5). This victory is not for the king's glory but the glory of the God he serves. Just as the king's victory would bring prosperity to the people, his victories over other nations would align them with the will of God. The overall purpose of the king was to bless God's people and do His will among the nations.

The blessings given to the king mentioned by the author of this psalm could be connected to kings of the line of David. The kings of this lineage received a special anointing through David, who asked that his house continue forever before God (2 Samuel 7:29). The Psalmist may have been addressing this anointed line of kings and charging the reigning king to rule with the same qualities David possessed.

Discuss

- ? In what ways have you been blessed by following godly leaders?
- ? What are ways that you can bless others through your leadership?

Jesus Is King

Psalm 45:6–8

Say: In Hebrews 1:8–9, the author quoted from this psalm and identified its subject as Jesus. As a King from the line of David, Jesus fulfilled the promises made to David that his throne would be established forever (2 Samuel 7:16). The Psalmist used poetic

expressions to describe this great Son of David. His vivid imagery brings to mind the glory of the Messiah. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

The Psalmist first recognized that the throne ultimately belongs to God. However, Jesus, being the Son of God and redeeming sacrifice, has earned the right to sit on the throne. The representation of His authority and righteousness is depicted by mentioning his “scepter of justice” (Psalm 45:6, NLT; see Hebrews 1:8). Jesus rules as an eternal King who truly upholds all of the laws of God. The Psalmist furthered this description by saying that the king loves justice and hates evil. Due to His desire for righteousness, God has anointed Him more than anyone else. Jesus establishes and maintains His eternal rule through His righteousness and justice, bringing all nations under himself and aligning with God’s laws forever and ever.

The reference to His robes, spices, and music (Psalm 45:8) affirmed that He is being celebrated for His greatness. It may seem harsh to view Jesus as a ruling king that brings nations beneath Him, but looking at His character and this poetic description, it is clear that His people love Him. Jesus is a King full of mercy and grace and righteousness and justice. Submitting to His leadership brings blessing and hope for an eternal future. Jesus is the perfect King for all eternity.

Discuss

? Do you see this psalm applying only to Jesus or to all God-ordained kings from the line of David? Why or why not?

What are the benefits you experience daily by following Jesus as the King of your life?

Resource Packet Item 1: Identify the Prophecy

Distribute the worksheet and assign each row to a different individual or small group. After a few minutes, discuss the answers together.

Part 2—Messiah’s Reign over the Nations

A Call to Praise

Psalm 47:1–2

Say: Psalm 47 was also written by a member of the sons of Korah. It’s a prophetic psalm with now-and-later significance, calling the people to worship God the Father but also pointing forward to a celebration of Jesus as the King of kings. The command to worship Him is given to all nations of the earth, not just a select few. As the idea of Jesus’ kingship is explored throughout the psalm, it’s clear that the reason for rejoicing is God’s faithfulness. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

In Psalm 47:1–2, “everyone” (NLT) is commanded to praise God, showing that Jesus’ victory and kingship are universal. The apostle Paul wrote that at the mention of Jesus’ name, every knee would bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord (Philippians 2:10–11). Regardless of race, nationality, ethnicity, or any other construct that may divide people, Jesus is sovereign over all. Those who have chosen Him as their Lord

should “shout to God with joyful praise” (Psalm 47:1, NLT) because they are allowed to participate in His victory. Praising God reminds His people that every victory belongs to Him and every blessing comes from Him.

Psalm 47:2 explains the reason for the rejoicing. God is described as the Most High. The Psalmist’s words are translated into two English words with similar meanings: “Most High” and “great”—meaning “awesome” and “feared.” It is awe-inspiring to know that God loved humanity enough to give His Son as a sacrifice; it is humbling to know that He has power to bring righteous justice to all creation.

Discuss

- ? What attributes of God cause you to want to praise Him?
- ? How does praising God readjust your focus on Him?

What Has He Done for You?

Psalm 45:3–4

Say: The apostle Peter charged believers to be ready at any time to explain the reason for their hope in Jesus (1 Peter 3:15). It’s often a personal testimony, not a well-crafted sermon, that initially draws people to Jesus. The people of this world are looking for something to believe in that’s powerful, impactful, and authentic. And testimonies are powerful. In fact, they’re one of the tools believers use in the Book of Revelation to defeat the accuser (12:11). The author of Psalm 47 next reviewed some of the awesome things God had done for His people, so that they would be reminded of their reason to praise. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

In Psalm 47:3, the Psalmist reminded all of Israel that God “subdues the nations before us, putting our enemies beneath our feet” (NLT). Israel was very small compared to the countries they had defeated. But by obeying God, they defeated the many inhabitants of Canaan, who had been initially described as giants (Numbers 13:33). The Psalmist then reminded Israel that the land of Canaan was given to them as an inheritance because of the promises God made to Jacob (Psalm 47:4). These reminders showed Israel that God was mighty enough to conquer their enemies and mindful enough to fulfill His promises.

Christians have the same promises in Jesus. Our enemies—death, hell, and the grave—were brought under subjection to Christ, making a pathway for a new life for those who believe in Him. His defeat of sin and gift of the Holy Spirit empowers Christians to take new territory in His name. Just as Israel was reminded of their reasons to praise God, Christians should also remember the testimonies of countless people who have been given new life through Christ.

Discuss

- ? Why did you decide to accept Jesus into your life as Lord and Savior?
- ? What victories has God won in your life?

Resource Packet Item 2: King Jesus

Distribute the worksheet, and encourage students to read it at home for personal reflection or as a family devotion.

Part 3—The Lord Is Exalted

Give Him the Highest Praise

Psalm 47:5–7

Say: Days before His crucifixion, Jesus said, “When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself” (John 12:32, NLT). These words that indicated “how he was going to die” (verse 13, NLT) also bring to mind Old Testament imagery of God ascending in His glory and drawing every eye to Himself. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

After an interlude, Psalm 47 resumes with, “God has ascended with a mighty shout. The Lord has ascended with trumpets blaring” (verse 5, NLT). The ark of the covenant represented God’s presence, and it was carried before the Israelites when they marched into battle, signifying that God went with them. In an act of worship after the temple was completed, the ark was carried up Mount Zion and placed in the Most Holy Place of the temple. Whether they were entering into battle or worship, the one true God was to be lifted above all others. The same is true of Jesus. He was raised on the cross and then ascended into the heavens after His resurrection. Jesus was lifted up, bringing eternal victory for all who believe in Him. There’s no greater reason to praise God.

The Psalmist called again for his audience to shout and sing praises to the King (Psalm 47:6). However, this exclamation carried greater intensity, using A-B-A-B poetic form, alternating back and forth between the parallel ideas of lordship and praise. We are to “sing praises to God” and “sing praises to our King” (NLT)—which aligns with the descriptions of Jesus given in the New Testament.

In Revelation 19:16, Jesus is given the titles, “King Of Kings, And Lord Of Lords” (KJV). He has ascended and will be crowned above all other rulers. Jesus is also part of the Godhead. Beyond Jesus’ references to being one with the Father, the apostle Thomas outright calls Jesus, “my Lord and my God” (John 20:28, NLT). When a person comes to the knowledge of Jesus as both Lord and God of their life, the natural response should be praise.

Christians must understand all aspects of who Jesus is in their lives. He is not only the Messiah, the Great Teacher, or the Friend of sinners. He is also our God, our Master, and the just and righteous Lord. Jesus deserves the highest praise anyone can give because He is all these things and more. Because “God is the King over all the earth,” we should “praise him with a psalm” (Psalm 47:7, NLT).

Discuss

? Do you sometimes only recognize a few aspects of who Jesus is based on your current need? Explain why.

? What can Christians do to remind themselves that Jesus is more than our Savior, but also our God?

For He Is Worthy to Be Lifted Up

Psalm 47:8–9

Say: When Jesus was physically lifted on the cross, He became victorious over sin. Jesus' victory fulfilled many prophecies and paved the way for all people to be drawn to Him—both then and now. God has truly put all things under the authority of King Jesus—the only One who is worthy to be praised (1 Corinthians 15:27). (Share your highlights from the following text.)

The Psalmist finishes his call to worship by declaring that God is the ruler of all, reigning over all nations and their kings from His holy throne (Psalm 47:8). “All the kings of the earth belong to God. He is highly honored everywhere” (verse 9, NLT).

The victory that Jesus accomplished was not just for the descendants of Abraham, but for all people. He exercises His authority to reign over all the nations of the earth not with the cruel authority of a dictator, but with perfect love and justice. His leadership and ultimate rule are for the benefit of everyone who follows and loves Him. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus provided salvation while also conquering every power on earth and making a way for anyone to be reconciled to God. Because of all Jesus has done in obedience to God,

God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9–11, NLT)

When we consider the full measure of who Jesus is and all He has done, our response should be to praise Him with everything we have.

Discuss

? When you first understood how Jesus suffered for your sake, how did that knowledge impact your thoughts and behaviors?

? Explain a few ways that Jesus can be “lifted up” in your life.

Resource Packet Item 3: Ways to Praise

Distribute the worksheet, and encourage students to take it home and work on it through the week.

What Is God Saying to Us?

Say: Jesus was not simply a sacrifice offered in our place. He is the Son of God, Savior of the world, and soon-coming King. We must remember that His lordship doesn't only relate to the areas of our lives we see as religious, but He should be Lord over every part of who we are. One day, when every knee bows and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord, how blessed we will be to have chosen Him now. We truly owe Jesus everything. What better response than to worship and serve Him as our Lord?

Living It Out

Ministry in Action

- Evaluate whether Jesus is Lord over every area of your life.
- Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and the victory He has provided.
- Seek opportunities every day to share Jesus' love with others.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday:

Christ's Victory over Satan Foretold.

Genesis 3:13–15

Tuesday:

Futility of the Nations' Opposition.

Psalm 2:1–12

Wednesday:

The Father Gives the Son Dominion.

Daniel 7:13–14

Thursday:

Jesus Identifies Himself as Messiah.

Matthew 26:62–65

Friday:

Jesus' Warning to Be Ready.

Luke 21:34–36

Saturday:

Jesus' Glorious Return.

Revelation 19:11–16