



Kingdom 2020

WestWay Christian Church

“My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom...my Kingdom is not of this world”-
John 18:36.

Series Study Guide

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The Kingdom of God. Over 30 times Jesus refers to it. He says that it's near. He says that it's already arrived. He compares it to many things: farmers, mustard seeds and yeast. He tells parables to describe it. At the end of his life, he told Pilate that his kingdom was not of this earth. During an election year, it can be easy to get caught up in the fear, the worry, and the anxiety.

In his 2005 song "A New Law", Derek Webb sarcastically writes "Don't teach me about politics and government, just tell me who to vote for....I don't want to know if the answers aren't easy."

If you're like me, you're concerned about the future of our nation. You're upset about what you see online and on television. Injustice seems to reign, and we wonder what we, the church, are to do about it. The answer's aren't easy.

So, let's talk about it. Let's have a conversation.

We'll learn a little about America and our form of government.

We'll listen as the Bible tells us about wisdom.

We'll see that the Church and the State have different roles and responsibilities.

We'll hear about the importance of submitting to our governmental authorities.

We'll understand that God's Kingdom is multi-ethnic, multi-national, and multi-lingual.

We'll recognize that our enemies are not flesh and blood, even and especially, when they vote differently that we do.

And, on November 8th, we will live in the reality that no matter who is elected President of the United States, God's throne in heaven is completely secure.

This security changes everything for us.

Jesus's presence as King removes our need to be right, angry, or offended, and it paves the way for us to be kind, gracious, and willing to love others.

Jesus's presence as King allows us to rest and trust in him. It helps us rise beyond the worry, fear, and anxiety.

Jesus's presence as King means that our hope is not dependent on the party in power, on legislative action or judicial response.

When we place our trust in Christ alone, we're not living for empire, but for a King and a Kingdom.

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Jesus spoke a lot about the Kingdom. Spend time during this series reading and reflection on Jesus's descriptions of the Kingdom. Do you have a favorite metaphor?

- Matthew 3:2 & 4:17- the Kingdom of Heaven is near
- Matthew 5:3- the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are poor and realize their need for God
- Matthew 5:10- the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are persecuted for doing right
- Matthew 5:19- the Kingdom of Heaven has "least" and "great" people, and this is determined by our level of obedience to God's laws
- Matthew 7:21- not all who call "Lord, Lord!" will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, only those who do the will of the Father
- Matthew 8:11-12- there is a feast prepared in the Kingdom of Heaven
- Matthew 10:7- God's Kingdom is near
- Matthew 11:12-God's Kingdom has been engaged in a violent conflict
- Matthew 12:28- God's Kingdom has arrived
- Matthew 13:11- the Kingdom of Heaven has secrets
- Matthew 13:24-30 the Kingdom of Heaven is like a farmer who planted good seed in his field...
- Matthew 13:31-32 the Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed planted in a field...
- Matthew 13:33- the Kingdom of Heaven is like the yeast a woman used in making bread...
- Matthew 13:41- the Kingdom of Heaven has no one in it that causes sin or does evil
- Matthew 13:44- the Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field...
- Matthew 13:45-46- the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant on the lookout for choice pearls...
- Matthew 13:47-50- the Kingdom of Heaven is like a fishing net thrown into the water and caught fish of every kind...
- Matthew 13:52- the Kingdom of Heaven is like a homeowner who brings from his storeroom new gems of truth as well as old
- Matthew 16:19- the Kingdom of Heaven has keys

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- Matthew 18:3-4- the Kingdom of Heaven is for the repentant, the childlike, and the humble
- Matthew 18:23-35- the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him...
- Matthew 19:14- the Kingdom of Heaven is like children whose parents bring them to Jesus to be blessed by him
- Matthew 19:23-24- the Kingdom of Heaven is difficult for the rich to enter
- Matthew 20:1-16- the Kingdom of Heaven is like the landowner who went out early one morning to hire workers for his vineyard...
- Matthew 21:31-32- the Kingdom of God will accept corrupt tax collectors and prostitutes because they actually repent
- Matthew 21:43: the Kingdom of God will be taken from those who do not bear fruit and given to those who do
- Matthew 22:2-14- the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a king who prepared a great wedding feast for his son...
- Matthew 23:13- the Kingdom of Heaven can be misrepresented by hypocrites and false teachers
- Matthew 25:1-13- the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom...
- Matthew 25:14-30- the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip...
- Mark 1:15- the Kingdom of God is near!
- Mark 4:26-29- the Kingdom of God is like a farmer who scatters seed on the ground...
- Mark 4:30-32- the Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed planted in the ground...
- Mark 10:14- the Kingdom of God belongs to those like little children brought by their parents
- Mark 10:15- the Kingdom God is something to be received like a child receives a gift
- Mark 10:23-25- the Kingdom of God is difficult to enter for the rich
- Luke 1:33- the Kingdom of God has no end
- Luke 4:43- The Kingdom of God has Good News that must be preached about

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- Luke 6:20- the Kingdom of God belongs to the poor
- Luke 7:28- The Kingdom of God is made of of “less” and “greater” people
- Luke 8:10- The Kingdom of God has secrets
- Luke 9:11- the Kingdom of God can be taught about (people can learn about it)
- Luke 9:27- the Kingdom of God is not merely a spiritual/eternal Kingdom that will exist in a future time/place
- Luke 9:62- The Kingdom of God is meant for those who look ahead, not backward
- Luke 10:8-12- the Kingdom of God is nearer than we think
- Luke 12:31- the Kingdom of God is to be sought above any other thing
- Luke 12:32- the Kingdom of God is something he gives away
- Luke 13:18-19- the Kingdom of God is like a tiny mustard seed planted in a garden...
- Luke 13:20-21- the Kingdom of God is like the yeast a woman used in making bread...
- Luke 13:22-30- the Kingdom of God has a narrow door...
- Luke 14:7-24- the Kingdom of God is not what it seems...
- Luke 17:20-21 the Kingdom of God can't be detected by visible signs...
- Luke 17:21- the Kingdom of God is already among you
- Luke 18:18-30- the Kingdom of God is difficult for the rich to enter
- Luke 18:29-30- the Kingdom of God requires sacrifice
- Luke 22:18- the Kingdom of God will have wine in it
- Luke 22:29- the Kingdom of God will include eating and drinking
- John 3:3- the Kingdom of God is seen by those who have been born again
- John 3:5- the Kingdom of God cannot be entered unless one has been born of water and Spirit
- John 18:36- the Kingdom of God is not of this world

Many years ago, I (John) created a brief study guide called “What does the Bible have to say about government?” While not exhaustive, it will help you focus on scripture and engage one of the most important tools God has given his people. I hope you’ll learn a few things. I hope it will expose your thoughts, assumptions, and presuppositions that are not aligned with the ideals of God. When that happens, my prayer for you is that you would repent of your sin. Maybe, that sounds harsh. It’s also true. The only “fix” we have, the only thing we can truly count on and trust in, is the righteousness of God. It is for this reason Jesus came to earth; he came to make things right, to restore our relationship with God so that we would be part of the Kingdom.

Read Deuteronomy 17:14-20, then respond to the following questions:

- What reason is given for WHY the people will want a king?
- Make a list of the things that God says a king should be, should do, and should not do.
- Why did God tell Moses what was going to happen?
- What is the point behind all of these rules and regulations?

Read 1 Samuel 8, then respond to the following questions:

- Why did the people want a king?
- Who were the people REALLY rejecting when they asked for a king? Why?
- Compare/contrast verses 11-17 with Deuteronomy 17:14-20.
- Why would God give in to the people like this?

Read Matthew 22:15-22, then respond to the following questions:

- The Pharisees were a group of Jews who were nationalistic and hated the Roman Empire and its rule over Israel. The Herodians were a group of Jews who supported the Roman rule of the Herods. Knowing this, why would the Pharisees and Herodians join forces?
- Why did Jesus respond in the way he did?
- What was Jesus trying to communicate about government in his response?

Read Acts 4 and 5, then respond to the following questions:

- According to chapter 4, verse 19, the apostles are not following the governing authority. What is the reason given?
- According to chapter 5, verse 29, the apostles are not following the governing authority. What is the reason given?
- How were the situations in these 2 chapters similar?
- Was it right or wrong for the apostles to do what they did? Why?

Some additional points to ponder:

- Were the governing authorities in power then proper and just? Are our governing authorities NOW proper and just? How would we know?
- If ALL authority that exists has been “established by God”, shouldn’t we always obey it? Why? Why not?

Here are a few things to keep in mind as you read, study, and discuss:

- The Bible was not written in English, we are reading a translation from the original Hebrew, Greek or Aramaic. Some of the words chosen by the translators may not necessarily express everything the original authors meant to express. Its helpful to read in different translations to help determine meaning.
- Remember that other people are not our enemy.
 - "...You must be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry"- James 1:19.
 - "Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves...You must have the same attitude that Christ had"- Philippians 2:3, 5.
- The last thing that Jesus prayed for his disciples was that they'd be unified- John 17.

As you read through the texts, the following five questions can help you find significance. When you study a passage ask yourself:

1. How can this passage increase my knowledge of God?
2. Is there a sin for me to avoid?
3. Is there a promise for me to trust?
4. Is there an example for me to follow?
5. Is there a command for me to obey?

There are a number of resources that have been used in prep for this guide and series. Here are just a few:

Boyd, Gregory A. (2005). *The Myth of a Christian Nation: How the Quest for Political Power is Destroying the Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Jesus-Centered Bible. (2015). Carol Steam, IL: Lifetree.

Leeman, Jonathan. (2018). *How the Nations Rage: Rethinking Faith and Politics in a Divided Age*. Nelson Books.

Leeman, Jonathan and Naselli, Andy. (2020). *How Can I Love Church Members with Different Politics*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway.

Schaeffer, Francis A. (1981). *A Christian Manifesto*. Westchester, IL. Crossway Books.

Schaeffer, Francis A. (1977). *How Should We Then Live: The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture*. Video Series, Available on Amazon Prime and YouTube.

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This study guide will follow our Fall 2020 message series.

You can join us live at WestWay for the 1015 or watch online at [youtube.com/westwaychristianchurch](https://www.youtube.com/westwaychristianchurch) or [westwaychurch.com/live](https://www.westwaychurch.com/live).

October 4 2020-

1 Kings 3

October 11 2020-

Genesis 9:5-6 and Matthew 5:13-16

October 18 2020-

Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:17

October 25 2020-

Acts 2; Galatians 2:11-21

November 1 2020-

Ephesians 6:10-18

November 8 2020-

1 Timothy 2:1-4

October 4 2020- 1 Kings 3

Primary Verse: “When all Israel heard the King’s decision, the people were in awe of the king, for they saw the wisdom God had given him for rendering justice”- 1 Kings 3:28.

Before you 1 Kings 3, read chapters 1&2 for some context and background. Then, read 1 Kings 3. Take a moment and write down any questions you might have or things you don’t understand.

After reading and studying, spend some time discussing the following:

Why do you think God asked Solomon to ask for whatever he wanted?

What characteristics do you see Solomon display in this chapter?

Why would Solomon ask God for wisdom? What does this tell us about Solomon and his concern for the people he was to lead?

Do you think Solomon’s decision in resolving the case between the two women was an easy one? Why or why not?

Consider the following statement in light of what you read in 1 Kings 3:

Wisdom is the capacity of mind that combines the fear of the Lord with the skill of living in God’s created but fallen world in a way that yields justice, peace and flourishing (Leeman, How Can I Love Church Members with Different Politics).

How did Solomon demonstrate wisdom (according to the above statement)?

In light of your personal life experience, relationships, education, time in God’s word and prayer life, where have you gained the most wisdom in your life?

When has your life been fulfilled from following God’s wisdom? What’s happened in your life when you did not follow God’s wisdom?

Why is wisdom needed in order to render justice that honors God?

What is an area in your life right now that requires wisdom from God?

As a group, spend time praying for wisdom. Think about the wisdom needed to live your life faithfully to God, the wisdom needed to participate in our governmental process, and that our leaders would seek wisdom from God, above all else.

October 11 2020- Genesis 9:5-6 and Matthew 5:13-16.

Primary Verse: “If anyone takes a human life, that person’s life will also be taken by human hands. For God made human beings in his image”- Genesis 9:6.

Conversation Starter: When you hear the phrase “separation of church and state,” what comes to mind?

Read Genesis 9:5-6 and Matthew 5:13-16. Take a moment and write down any questions you might have or things you don’t understand.

In *How the Nations Rage*, Leeman writes, *Government has three purposes...to render judgment for the sake of justice...to build platforms of peace, order, and flourishing...to set the stage for redemption...The church, too, serves governments as a model of justice and righteousness in both word and deed. But the ultimate purpose of the Church (and every individual church) is not to serve the government or the nation. It is to worship God and to prepare people for the worship of God. Churches do this, in part, by teaching members to be good citizens. But the worship of God is ultimate, not state or nation.*

Spend time talking about these things; how does government do them well? Poorly? Why?

Read Acts 2:42-47 and 1 Corinthians 5&6. How does the church “do justice”?

Re-read Genesis 9:5-6, then consider and discuss the following statement:

The trouble is that governments cannot change the heart, which is precisely why God has authorized them to use force. They might incentivize fallen hearts here and there... But a government can no sooner change the nature of a heart that a zookeeper can change a leopard’s spots (Leeman, How the Nations Rage).

As a group, spend time praying we would identify ourselves and each other as followers of Jesus Christ above any other identity. Pray that we, as individuals and as a church, would see our role as the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Pray that we would take these roles seriously and give of our time, treasure and talent to these ends.

October 18 2020- Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:17, 2 Corinthians 5:20-2, and Ephesians 6:20.

Primary Verse: “Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed their by God”- Romans 13:1.

Read Romans 13:1-7, 1 Peter 2:13-17, 2 Corinthians 5:20-21, and Ephesians 6:20. Take a moment and write down any questions you might have or things you don't understand.

After reading, spend some time discussing the following:

What do these verses say about government and our interactions with it?

As a group, spend time in prayer, thanking God for our government and the authority it wields. Pray for our leaders and give thanks for them. Ask God for the strength to be faithful ambassadors of God: speaking boldly about the Gospel of Jesus Christ as our primary message.

October 25 2020- Acts 2; Galatians 2:11-21

Primary Verse: “Here we are—Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, the province of Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and the areas of Libya around Cyrene, visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism), Cretans and Arabs. And we all hear these people speaking in their own languages about the wonderful things God has done!”- Acts 2:9-11.

Take a moment and read Deuteronomy 16:9-12 for some context and background. Read Acts 2, then Galatians 2:11-21. Take a moment and write down any questions you might have or things you don't understand.

After reading, spend some time discussing the following:

Why were the nations gathered in Jerusalem? What was the purpose of the Festival of Harvest?

How did the God-fearing Jews from around the world respond when they heard the gospel in their language? Why?

Talk about the role of the Holy Spirit in bringing these people together. Why was He needed?

What was the problem in Galatians 2? What did Peter do? Why was Paul so confrontational?

What are ways you've seen division in the church today? How can we focus on unity?

As a group, spend time in prayer thanking God for his plan of salvation. Thank God that while you were once spiritually dead because of your disobedience and many sins, because He is rich in mercy and love...God gave you life. Ask him to put you in contact and relationship with people of different cultures, ethnicities, and languages in order that you would experience God's desire for a multi-ethnic Kingdom. Ask God that WestWay would experience the fullness of God's Kingdom in this manner.

November 1 2020- Ephesians 6:10-18

Primary Verse: “For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places”- Ephesians 6:12.

Read Ephesians 6:10-18. Take a moment and write down any questions you might have or things you don't understand.

After reading, spend some time discussing the following:

At the end of a letter filled with instructions about how to behave as a unified group of people focused on who they were in Christ, Paul uses the phrase “A final word” before identifying the real enemy. Why?

Paul refers to strategies of the devil. Spend a few minutes reading through Genesis 3:1-5, Job 1:6-12, Matthew 4:1-11, and 1 Peter 5:8. What sorts of strategies does the devil use? How do you see these at work?

When you think about your own engagement in politics...who is your enemy? What does your social media life demonstrate?

Talk about the ways God's armor allow us to both defend ourselves against our spiritual enemy and go on the offense against our spiritual enemy.

How can you ensure you are fighting the real battle?

As a group, spend time in prayer in confession over the times in your life you've fought the wrong enemy. This might look like: mischaracterization, generalizations and stereotyping, slander, or assigning motive. Ask God to help you see and recognize when the real enemy is at work, then respond using the weapons only God provides.

November 8 2020- 1 Timothy 2:1-4

Primary Verse: “I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity.”

Read 1 Timothy 2:1-4 and 1 Samuel 24 and 26. Take a moment and write down any questions you might have or things you don't understand.

After reading, spend some time discussing the following:

Why should we pray for our leaders? How should we pray for them?

What does it mean to “live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity”?

What did David mean by calling Saul “the LORD’s anointed one”? What does this tell us about those in authority over us?

List some examples of authority over you. Do you view them as the “LORD’s anointed”? Why or why not?

You’ve probably heard “No matter what happens, God is in charge” ALOT over the past few weeks. Do you believe this is true? How have you demonstrated this in your thoughts, words, and deeds?

Once again, the church’s most powerful political message is the gospel. And the church’s most powerful political testimony is being the church (Leeman, How the Nations Rage).

As a group, spend time in prayer for our nations’s leaders. Ask God to give them wisdom needed to lead. Ask God to call the church to fulfill it’s role of being salt and light in the world. Ask God to help you to be a faithful ambassador of Christ. Ask God to help WestWay become a church that glorifies God by being a gathering of all nations. Ask God to help us be aware of our spiritual enemy. Ask God to help you live in the hope and promise delivered by God’s Kingdom.