

God's Story – Our Story
Through the Wilderness – Lives Again Our Glorious King!
March 31, 2024

Overarching Theme: 2024 – A Year in God's Story

Instructions:

When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.

Core Point: 2024 can be a year of living into God's Story as we journey from Genesis to Revelation together.

Reflect on this Scripture:

Judges 21:15 ²⁵ *In those days there was no king in Israel; all the people did what was right in their own eyes.*

Luke 24:36-40; 44-47 ³⁶ *While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." ³⁷ They were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost. ³⁸ He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see, for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." ⁴⁰ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.*

⁴⁴ *Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶ and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.*

Commentary:

At the heart of Luke's picture of the cross is the mocking of Jesus as king of the Jews, which draws into a single stark sketch the meaning expressed by the various characters and the small incidents elsewhere in the narrative. Jesus has stood on its head the meaning of kingship, the meaning of the kingdom itself. He has celebrated with the wrong people, offered peace and hope to the wrong people, and warned the wrong people of God's coming judgment. Now he is hailed as king at last, but in mockery. Here comes his royal cupbearer, only it's a Roman soldier offering him the sour wine that

poor people drank. Here is his royal placard, announcing his kingship to the world, but it is in fact the criminal charge that explains his cruel death. Unlike traditional martyrs, who died with a curse against their torturers, Jesus prays for their forgiveness. Like a king on his way to enthronement, Jesus promises a place of honor and bliss to one who requests it. He dies saying 'It is finished,' but his 'kingdom of God' movement is anything but. In the ultimate irony, his resurrection launches a radical, new Kingdom-movement, the very antithesis of human power structures of that day (or any day), chiefly working his Spirit-empowered followers and continues to this day.

-Adapted from *The New Testament in Its World*, p. 626. N.T. Wright and Michael Bird

Questions to Ponder for Accountability in the Group:

1. Why do you think that the original humans depicted in Genesis 1-2 (Adam/Eve) rebelled in Genesis 3, choosing their will over God's will?
2. In Genesis 12, God called Abraham, Sarah and their descendants to be a 'God's will be done rescue party' of sorts for humanity. Reading through the Old Testament, how would you rate their efforts? Defend your assessment.
3. In 1 Samuel, the children of Israel ask for a King who they think will get them back on course. According I and II Kings, these Kings did not have a good track record at all. Why do you think these leaders were almost universally unfaithful?
4. The Gospel of Luke, along with other NT writings, presents Jesus as true "Anointed One" (Messiah – Aramaic; Cristos – Greek; Christ – English) who faithfully lived out God's royal rule, even "reigning" from the cross. Do you think Jesus' ministry would have been as effective had he not been raised from the dead? Why or why not? What is our role as an Easter people today?

Activity for the Life of a Disciple:

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMCC.
2. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: Luke 24: 46-47
⁴⁶ and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.