

SESSION 1: LORD OF LORDS & KING OF KINGS

Watch the video or read the script together as a group; then discuss the following questions. Keep in mind the questions are meant to prompt conversation, so don't feel the need to use or discuss every question.

BIBLE REFERENCES

Rev. 19:16, 17:14; Romans 14:9; Luke 17:21, Phil.
2:9-11; Col. 1:15-18; Matthew 28:18

QUESTIONS

1. Why were names important in biblical times? What do the names Jesus is called in Scripture reveal about Him?
2. Since we have never had a king in the United States, describe what you think it might be like to be ruled by a king or lord. Does it change your perception if you are able to choose your king?
3. How is Jesus different from other lords and kings?
4. Why were the names "Lord of lords" and "King of kings" significant to the Jewish people of Jesus' time?
5. How do Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection give meaning to the title, "Lord of lords and King of kings"?
6. What does it entail to proclaim Jesus as Lord and King? In what ways do you live out this profession in your everyday life?
7. If Jesus is king of your life, what implication does that have for your interactions with those around you?

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SESSION 2: KING, PROPHET, AND PRIEST

Watch the video or read the script together as a group; then discuss the following questions. Keep in mind the questions are meant to prompt conversation, so don't feel the need to use or discuss every question.

BIBLE REFERENCES

Genesis 14:18; Leviticus 9; Hebrews 4:15, 7:26-27, 8:1, 9:7

QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by the "three-fold ministry" of Jesus Christ? What is the function of each ministry?
2. In the Old Testament, the function of a priest was to mediate reconciliation between mankind and God. How did the Old Testament priests do this? How does Jesus Christ do this?
3. Read Hebrews 7:26-27 together. Why is Jesus considered the great High Priest?
4. Why did the high priests in the Old Testament have to bring a blood sacrifice in the Day of the Atonement? Why is it that after Jesus' sacrifice, no other sacrifice is necessary?
5. Has someone ever interceded for you? What was your reaction to them? Going forward, how will knowing that Jesus intercedes for you make an impact on your relationship with Him and those around you?
6. What is our response to our freedom from the bondage of sin that we have received through Christ's sacrifice?

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SESSION 3: ALPHA AND OMEGA

Watch the video or read the script together as a group; then discuss the following questions. Keep in mind the questions are meant to prompt conversation, so don't feel the need to use or discuss every question.

BIBLE REFERENCES

Isaiah 44:6; Revelation 1:8-11, 1:17-18, 21:6-7, 22:12-14

QUESTIONS

1. Why are each of Jesus' names significant?
2. What does the phrase "alpha and omega" mean?
3. In Isaiah, God refers to Himself as the First and the Last (a.k.a. the Alpha and the Omega). Later, in Revelation, Jesus refers to Himself by the same name. What does this tell us about Jesus?
4. What does it mean that Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega? How can this title offer you comfort?
5. *God in Christ comprises everything, **all that goes between the Alpha and Omega**.* Take a few moments to talk about all that God has done and is doing between the beginning and the end.
6. Have you ever gone through a difficult circumstance in which you found comfort knowing that Jesus was with you? How can you help others reinforce their trust in Him by recognizing that the First and the Last is in control?
7. How does realizing that God is sovereign over time affect the way you view life?

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SESSION 4: THE WORD OF GOD

Watch the video or read the script together as a group; then discuss the following questions. Keep in mind the questions are meant to prompt conversation, so don't feel the need to use or discuss every question.

BIBLE REFERENCES

Gen. 15:1; Psalm 33:6, 107:20, John 1:1-4, 14, 18, 12:49; 1 John 1:1-4, 4:9, 5:7; Rev. 19:11, 13-16

QUESTIONS

1. Why is Jesus described as the Word of God?
2. Can the concept, "word of God," from the Old Testament relate to Jesus Christ as being the Word of God? How?
3. The first portion of John 1 provides us with foundational truths about Jesus. What do each of the following points mean to you?
 - a. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*
 - b. *All things were made through Him...*
 - c. *In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.*
 - d. *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory...*
4. Sometimes we hear Scripture referred to as "the Word of God," and we've heard today that Jesus is also given that name. Is there a significance in this? Why?
5. How can you encounter the Word, Jesus, when reading Scripture? How can reading Scripture deepen your relationship with Christ?
6. What does Jesus teach us about the God, the Father?

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SESSION 5: THE LAMB OF GOD

Watch the video or read the script together as a group; then discuss the following questions. Keep in mind the questions are meant to prompt conversation, so don't feel the need to use or discuss every question.

BIBLE REFERENCES

Exodus 12; Isaiah 53:7; John 1:29;
1 Corinthians 5:7

QUESTIONS

1. ICEBREAKER: Who do you know the best (what person in your life)? How did you get to know them so well?
2. How is the importance of the lamb to the Passover meal?
3. Why is Jesus known as the Lamb of God?
4. How are the Passover meal and Holy Communion connected?
5. In the consecration we hear the following words, "the once brought, eternally valid sacrifice of Jesus Christ." Why is it that after Christ's sacrifice as the Lamb of God no other sacrifice is needed or valid?
6. Split your group into pairs. Divide the chapter of Exodus 12 into sections and assign a portion to each pair. Read with your partner. What did your section describe? What references did you find that might refer to Jesus Christ? How do you understand those references?
7. Read together Revelation 5. In this chapter, there is an incredible scene depicted of an unopened scroll that only the Lion of Judah can open. While waiting for the Lion, a Lamb stood in the midst of the elders and then took the scroll and sat on the throne. Then there is a proclamation, *Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing*. Why was the Lamb worthy to open the scroll?
8. Why is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies in the New Testament so significant? How do these prophecies help us to understand the New Testament?

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9. What are some ways to deepen your understanding of who Jesus is? What are the benefits of knowing Jesus better?
10. How did the death of the Lamb of God give us life?
11. What does the sacrifice of the Lamb of God mean to you personally? Share your experience with the group.
12. PERSONAL TAKE-HOME: John 1:29 and Isaiah 53:7 both refer to Jesus as the Lamb of God, and Exodus 12:3 and 4 draw a parallel between the Passover lamb and Jesus as the new Passover Lamb. Find and discuss additional references in the Bible that point to Jesus as the Lamb of God.

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SESSION 6: OUR SAVIOR

Watch the video or read the script together as a group; then discuss the following questions. Keep in mind the questions are meant to prompt conversation, so don't feel the need to use or discuss every question.

BIBLE REFERENCES

Matthew 1:21; Luke 2:11; John 4:10, 4:40-42;
Romans 3:23

QUESTIONS

1. ICEBREAKER: What is your favorite rescue story?
2. What does it mean that Jesus is our Savior? What was He sent to do?
3. Why should everyone who has ever lived need a Savior?
4. The video/script mentions that we receive what we need to overcome our struggles through the incredible gifts given to us by our heavenly Father. What are some of these gifts?
5. Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman was a unique experience. Read John 4:1-30, 39-42. Why was this meeting so unique and what does this interaction teach us about Jesus' mission?
6. The disciples who were on their way to Emmaus also struggled to recognize Christ, just like the Samaritan woman at the well. Read Luke 24:13-35. When was it that they finally recognized Him? Discuss the significance of this. When and where do you recognize your Savior?
7. How does it feel knowing that Jesus was willing to sacrifice His life in order to give you life? What is your response to His salvation?
8. Are we disappointed today that Jesus saves us from our sin and not some of our earthly struggles? What are some ways to keep ourselves confident and resolute as we face the continuing challenges of life?

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9. When we look at the struggles we are facing, is it possible that some might be the result of our own sinfulness? If that is the case, what should our next steps be?
10. It was mentioned in the video/script that even with her lack of understanding, many believed in Jesus after hearing the testimony of the Samaritan woman. Have you ever felt discouraged after sharing the gospel because you felt your knowledge or understanding was not sufficient? What does this account tell you about how God works?
11. **PERSONAL TAKE-HOME:** As you go through your week, be encouraged by the account of the Samaritan woman, and seek opportunities to share your Savior with others.

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SESSION 7: THE COMPASSIONATE ONE

Watch the video or read the script together as a group; then discuss the following questions. Keep in mind the questions are meant to prompt conversation, so don't feel the need to use or discuss every question.

BIBLE REFERENCES

Psalm 116:5; Matthew 9; James 5:11

QUESTIONS

1. ICEBREAKER: What do you picture when you hear the word "compassion"?
2. Reflecting upon the life of Jesus, how would you define compassion?
3. How did Jesus' compassion lead Him to the cross?
4. *Compassion is a true mark of Christian character.* What does this phrase mean to you? Why should we be compassionate?
5. In chapter 9 of Matthew we can read how Jesus demonstrated His compassion by healing. What does that teach us about Him and how does it direct us as His followers? Read through the chapter together if necessary.
6. James 5:11 reads, *"Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord - that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful."* How are compassion and mercy connected? How was God compassionate and merciful towards Job? How is He compassionate and merciful towards us?
7. Find and discuss additional examples in the Bible where Jesus showed compassion.
8. In the session, it was said that *"Christ's compassion always leads to something."* Is this true of compassion in your experience? What might prevent someone from following through on compassion?

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9. As disciples of Jesus, we are to follow Him in having compassion for others. How can we grow in our compassion for others and extend the care of Jesus?
10. Describe a way either that *you showed* compassion to someone else recently, or a time when you saw *someone else* showing compassion. What was the result of these experiences?
11. PERSONAL TAKE-HOME: Commit to seeking an opportunity to show someone compassion this week; someone in your family, in your neighborhood, at work, etc.

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SESSION 8: THE HUMBLE SERVANT

Watch the video or read the script together as a group; then discuss the following questions. Keep in mind the questions are meant to prompt conversation, so don't feel the need to use or discuss every question.

BIBLE REFERENCES

Matthew 28:18; John 13:1-17; Romans 8:29;
Philippians 2:4-7 NIV

QUESTIONS

1. ICEBREAKER: Who in the Bible (besides Jesus) inspires you the most?
2. What are the characteristics of a humble servant?
3. Why was the washing of guests feet a part of the culture in the first century and why was it so out of the ordinary that Jesus chose to do that job?
4. How is Jesus' death on the cross an example of His humble servant mindset?
5. What are some other examples from the Gospels that show us Jesus being a humble servant?
6. Read the account of Jesus washing the feet of His disciples in John 13:1-17. Take a moment to reflect on the things it says that Jesus knew throughout the account. Why is it significant that Jesus knew all the things mentioned in the verses and still decided to serve others? What does this tell us about our priorities in life or excuses we might make that hold up our serving?
7. Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of lords, humbled Himself to serve us. Why is it difficult for us at times to humble ourselves in order to serve others?
8. Disciples of Jesus are expected to align their lives according to His will and mindset. That includes the willingness to be humble servants. How have you been able to align your life in this way?

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SCRIPT & ADDITIONAL CONTEXT

SESSION 1: LORD OF LORDS & KING OF KINGS

In the next few sessions, we'll be discussing names of Jesus. These names, which were inspired by the Holy Spirit through the writing of Scripture, reveal to us who Jesus is and what He has done and will do. To begin our study, we must understand the significance of names in biblical times. Perhaps more so than in modern times, a person's given name said a lot about the individual; it identified something about the circumstances or character of the person. For example, Moses' name means "to draw out", which was given to him after he was pulled out of the Nile River. When we apply this understanding to the many names attributed to Jesus in Scripture, we are able to discover how each name reveals something about His nature, His work on earth on our behalf, and His relationship to God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. For our first session, let's look at Jesus who is exalted as Lord of lords and King of kings.

Let's open our bibles to Revelation where we can read in chapter 19: *On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords* (Revelation 19:16). This verse describes Jesus as He fulfills His promises to come again for His Bride. In Revelation, chapter 17, we read: *They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful* (Revelation 17:14). Here, He is returning with His Bride to establish the kingdom of peace as a continuation of God's plan of salvation. Both verses refer to Jesus appearing from Heaven sometime in the future, with power and glory as the triumphant Ruler.

In order to fully appreciate the significance of the imagery described by John, consider what it was like to live in Jesus' day. The people lived in the time of the Roman Empire, and suffered under the rule of the emperor. The Jewish people were well aware that they were once a nation ruled by kings, and so they longed for God to fulfill His promise to send a king who would free them from Roman rule. When John describes Jesus as Lord of lords and King of kings, he is saying that Jesus is superior to all earthly rulers, exercising His sovereign rule with divine power over creation (Colossians 1:15-18), and is Lord of both the living and the dead (Romans 14:9).

The Revelation of John describes events that are future-oriented. However, by virtue of Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection, the title of Lord of lords and King of kings applies to Jesus already today. We can read in Philippians about the extent of Jesus' sacrifice to atone for sinners. His perfect obedience is the reason that *"God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in*

heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue [shall] acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11). Before His ascension, Jesus confirmed to His disciples that *"all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth"* (Matthew 28:18). The impact of this divine truth has far-reaching implications for the individual, the world, and the church!

For someone who professes to be a Christian, Jesus is Lord of lords and King of kings in their life today. What does this truly mean? First, Jesus governs His church, so all those who believe in Jesus Christ are baptized in the name of the triune God, and profess Christ's life, death, resurrection, and return. The evidence of devotion to serving Jesus is expressed in how we live our lives and align ourselves with the gospel and teachings of Jesus. Think of your heart as a throne where Jesus sits as the Ruler. This is a beautiful picture of our willing submission to the true Lord and King. Unlike many earthly rulers in the course of history who were infected with greed and power and driven by ego, Jesus the King rules in love and humility. He did not come to be served, but to be the servant of all. He tells us, "do as I have shown you." He shares His riches with us so that we can then share these riches with our neighbor. What a joy to serve such a King!

Jesus said in the beginning of His earthly ministry that the Kingdom of God is "in your midst" (Luke 17:21). Jesus brought the Kingdom of God to earth and extended the invitation to all to become citizens of His Kingdom through faith in Him. This invitation continues today both on earth and in the beyond, and will be offered until the last Judgment. Jesus, our Lord of lords and King of kings, promises eternal fellowship to those who accept His invitation. In the new creation, the Kingdom of God will become a perfect reality where God will be all in all, and His subjects will offer worship to Him in praise and thanksgiving forever!

Christ's true disciples are those who obey His word and are humble servants. If we profess Jesus as our Lord, it means that we have the same goal as Jesus, which is to share His Gospel with our neighbor for their salvation. It means that we keep our promise to Him to renounce Satan and to surrender our life to the Son of God, for He is the one who has destroyed the works of the devil and gained the victory over death. We prepare for the return of the Lord in all His glory out of our deep love for the King of kings and our desire to be with Him as soon as possible.

SCRIPT & ADDITIONAL CONTEXT

SESSION 2: KING, PROPHET, AND PRIEST

Perhaps you've heard of Christ's 'three-fold ministry'. Jesus Christ acts in the capacity of a King, a Priest, and a Prophet. When we think of a king, we think of ruling and governing. We discussed this in our first session of the month - Jesus wasn't just a king, but the King of kings. In the time of the Old Testament, the function of a priest was to mediate reconciliation between mankind and God. And a prophet proclaims the divine will and foretells coming events. Jesus Christ performed all of these functions and ministries in perfect fashion. For this session, we'll focus on Jesus Christ as a priest, and particularly the title in Scripture, the "High Priest". Let's take a look at the biblical history and context.

The first time we find the word "priest" in the Bible is in Genesis 14. Abraham went to battle in order to rescue his nephew Lot, who had been captured by an enemy army. On his return, Abraham was met by Melchizedek, who was King of Salem and set apart as priest of the Most High God (Genesis 14:18). Melchizedek, whose name means the "king of righteousness," blessed Abraham and the Most High God who gave Abraham the victory in battle. Melchizedek is referred to again in Psalm 110 and in Hebrews 7, and is often understood as a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ's work as a priest.

Continuing in the biblical history, Leviticus 9 explains that Aaron and his sons were chosen by God to begin the priestly ministry. When the Law was given on Mount Sinai, the Levites were identified as the servants of the Tabernacle, with the family of Aaron becoming the priests. This is later referred to as the Aaronic priesthood. The priests were responsible for interceding to God on behalf of the people by offering the many blood sacrifices that the law required. However, once a year, the High Priest entered the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement. Hebrews 9:7 summarizes this Old Testament law and ritual stating, *"into the second part (of the tabernacle) the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins..."*. The high priest held the special responsibility to intercede for the sins of the people.

In the book of Hebrews, Jesus is referred to as the High Priest multiple times. One of the more familiar references is found in Hebrews 4:15, *"For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin."*

When Jesus is called our High Priest, it is with reference to both of these previous priesthoods. Like Melchizedek, He is ordained as a priest, set apart by God. Like the priests in

Leviticus, Jesus offered a sacrifice to satisfy the Law of God when He offered Himself for our sins, as described in Hebrews 7, verses 26-27: *"For such a high Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself."*

Unlike the Levitical priests, who had to continually offer sacrifices, Jesus only had to offer His sacrifice once as He WAS the sacrifice. His once brought, eternally valid sacrifice is the atonement for all of mankind's sins for all time. Jesus' priesthood has no beginning and no end, and it is for all people, for all eternity.

Hebrews 8:1 goes on to explain, *"Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: we have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected and not man."* Jesus isn't just "a" High Priest, He is THE great High Priest. In the new covenant, His intercession is not indirect through continual sacrifice or words, as it was for the Old Testament priests. Rather, His intercession is positional, because He *"is seated at the right hand of the throne"*. As Apostle John writes in 1 John 2:1, *"...these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."* We are "rich in Christ" because He is our advocate!

The three-fold ministry of Jesus Christ is so wonderfully perfect and complete. He is the King because He rules over all, He is the priest because He intercedes on our behalf, and He is the prophet because He foretold everything that was to happen. Jesus' eternally valid sacrifice as the High Priest allows us to continually experience liberation from the bondage of sin, so that we can truly live in Him.

SCRIPT & ADDITIONAL CONTEXT

SESSION 3: ALPHA AND OMEGA

Today, we'll dive into the meaning of Jesus' statement, "I am the Alpha and the Omega."

We find this phrase in the last book of the Bible, Revelation, but there is a similar phrase found much earlier in the book of Isaiah. Three times the prophet records God telling His people that He is the first and the last. Here's what the prophet wrote in Isaiah 44:6 – *Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, and His Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: "I am the First and I am the Last; besides Me there is no God."* God was telling His people that He is completely sovereign over time, meaning that He has always had and will have authority for all time. This message was meant to reinforce the people's trust and confidence in God during the turbulent circumstances that they would endure. Those exact words are repeated in Revelation chapter 1, verses 17 and 18 – *And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore... And I have the keys of Hades and of Death."* Here, Jesus connects Himself to Isaiah's prophecy to ease John's mind as He prepares to share His vision. This helps us to see that Jesus is the thread that knits all of Scripture together.

Apostle John records that Jesus identifies Himself as "the Alpha and the Omega" at the beginning and at the end of Revelation. That's fitting, considering that Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet. But its meaning goes much deeper. God in Christ comprises everything, all that goes between the Alpha and the Omega, as well as being the First and the Last.

In Revelation 1, verse 8, we read, *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty..."* This name concisely defines who God is and what He has done. By identifying Himself in this way, Jesus declares that He is God, which is confirmed throughout the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament. Revelation never wavers on the fact that God and His Son are One. Together, they created all things and will bring all things to their conclusion. He has always existed and always will. Jesus is the beginning of all history, and all history points to His victory over all. He was present for the creation of the world and He will be present for the end of the world, and then He will reign for all eternity.

He always was, is, and forever will be.

Christ's eternality is evident at the conclusion of the vision when He shows John the new heaven and the new earth, and then says, *"It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son"* (Revelation 21:6-7). He is the One who will bring into being the new creation, and He is the One who offers eternal life to those who receive the free gift of grace and thirst for this fellowship.

In the last chapter of the Bible, we find the final use of this name: *"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."* Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. (Revelation 22:12-14) Jesus promises that He will return, and as a reward for the faithful, He will bring them into His eternal kingdom. The name "Alpha and Omega," along with the many other names of Jesus, provokes believers to pause and marvel at His majesty. The One who always was, is, and forever will be is in control and will see the plan of salvation through to its completion. Jesus, as the beginning and the end, the first and the last, is the completeness, wholeness, and perfection of all things.

Knowing Jesus by this name reinforces the truth in the hearts of believers that Jesus is always with them. It should serve as a great comfort to those who are in the midst of suffering or a season of hardship because they know that He is in control. It can serve as great inspiration, and fuel the desire in each disciple to share their incredible Savior with the world. Finally, this knowledge serves to solidify confidence in their hearts to remain faithful to Him until all has been completed.

SCRIPT & ADDITIONAL CONTEXT

SESSION 4: THE WORD OF GOD

In today's session, we will focus on the name found predominantly in the gospel of John: "the Word."

In the prologue of his Gospel, John introduces Jesus Christ as the pre-existent Word of God, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... All things were made through Him... In Him was life, and the life was the light of men* (John 1:1-4).

The Greek term for word is *logos*. This term was often used by ancient Greek philosophers, like Plato, not only when referring to the spoken word, but also to the unspoken word – the foundational logic and reason. When applied to the universe, the term *logos* was a reference to the rational principle or force that ordered and regulated the cosmos.

On the other hand, Jews were also familiar with the term. The expression "word of God" is echoed throughout the Old Testament, depicting God in action, particularly in His creation (Psalm 33:6), revelation (Genesis 15:1) and deliverance (Psalm 107:20).

Therefore, John started his Gospel with a term that both Jews and Greeks were familiar with. However, John states that the Logos is not just an impersonal divine power, but God Himself, through Jesus Christ.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This doctrinal affirmation declares His eternal presence as True God and establishes His relationship with the Father and the Spirit, as we can further read in 1 John chapter 5, *For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one* (1 John 5:7).

Through the Word, all things visible and invisible were created. This power over creation not only alludes to the creator as the Son of God, but to His nature as a righteous Judge and Ruler. Jesus Christ is the actual Logos who governs all things (cf. Revelation 19:11,13-16).

It is also through the Word that the Father is revealed. The Gospel says in John, the first chapter, verse 18, *No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.* Jesus Christ, being a Person of the Trinity, makes known His mind and will through His unending obedience to the Father, as He explained in the 12th chapter of John, *For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a*

command, what I should say and what I should speak (John 12:49). It is through Jesus that we can learn more about the Father and His will for us. Lovingly, He calls us to a holy life so that we can draw near to Him. In Jesus, we have obtained the perfect model to transform our old nature into a holy one: *In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him* (1 John 4:9).

Finally, through the Word we are also offered the gift of grace. The Son of God, the Logos, became incarnate to redeem us from death and sin through His sacrifice, showing the everlasting truthfulness of God's promises to all, as the disciple testifies in John 1:14, *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

We too, as John encourages, want to proclaim *the Word of life... that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us... that our joy may be full* (1 John 1:1-4).

SCRIPT & ADDITIONAL CONTEXT

SESSION 5: THE LAMB OF GOD

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)

During these next few sessions, we are going to continue exploring who Jesus is by answering Jesus' question: *Who do you say I am?*

The Bible verse that we read was John the Baptist's profession as he saw Jesus approaching. He wanted the people there with him to behold - to see - **the Lamb of God**. What did that mean? He perceived Jesus to be the sacrificial lamb who could resolve the problem of sin, not only for the Jewish people, but for the entire world. He recognized Jesus as the One whom the Old Testament pointed to. So to deepen our understanding in recognizing Jesus as the Lamb of God, let's take a quick look back into the Old Testament.

When we look at the Bible in its entirety, it's amazing how the Old Testament connects to the New Testament and how often it alludes to Jesus' life and sacrifice. One instance of this is the Passover Feast and the Last Supper. We may already know that when Jesus and His disciples gathered at the Last Supper, they were together to celebrate Passover. However, it is more than just a coincidence that the Last Supper happened to be during Passover. We can look all the way back to Exodus 12, when the Passover Feast was instituted, to see how that moment was a foreshadowing for what Jesus would do for all humanity.

Passover was first established before the Israelites fled Egypt to escape slavery, as we can read in Exodus 12:11. Here, God states that the Passover meal should be eaten in haste and with all of their things ready so they could leave Egypt quickly. After this initial Passover Feast when the Israelites left Egypt, Passover was celebrated every year as a remembrance of their freedom and is still celebrated by Jewish people today.

The first and last portions of Exodus 12 are God's instructions to Moses and Aaron on how to celebrate the Passover meal. His specific directions are what reveal the connections to His Son, who would come to earth many years later to give His life for our sins.

In Exodus 12:3 and 4, the Lord instructs Moses and Aaron to tell the Israelites, *"On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house*

take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb." From these verses, we can see that the lamb is given great significance; it is to be shared as the main part of the Passover Feast among many people. We can draw a parallel between this Passover lamb and Jesus as the new Passover Lamb. Jesus is often referred to as the Lamb of God, as seen in John 1:29, and also as "our Passover" by Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:7. Why is the image of a lamb applied to Jesus? Not only does the animal represent the meekness and gentleness of Christ, but just as the Jewish people would bring a lamb to the priest as an atonement for their sin, Jesus was brought before God as a sacrifice on behalf of man's sin. One difference however, is that while the Jews' sacrifice was repeated, Jesus' sacrifice was once and lasts for all time. We are reminded of this every time we celebrate Holy Communion and hear these words during the consecration, *"the once brought, eternally valid sacrifice of Jesus Christ."*

The Exodus verses also put a focus on the sharing of the lamb. The lamb is not meant for just a few people, it is meant to be divided by many, even sharing it with a neighbor's family. This is true of Jesus as the sacrificial Lamb. He did not die for the sins of one person, but for the sins of *all people in all times*.

Isaiah also paints a strong picture of the Messiah's sacrifice, further cementing Jesus as the Lamb of God: *"He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent"* (Isaiah 53:7). Jesus is the Lamb of God because He is both the sacrifice presented to God and the sacrifice provided by God, removing the world's sin and taking it upon Himself alone. There are additional references in the Bible that show us that Jesus is indeed the Lamb of God, and you are encouraged to seek out these passages in your discussion to continue deepening your understanding of who Jesus is. The better we know Him, the more we marvel at the wondrous grace and love of our God, and greater our desire will be to become who He has created us to be.

Jesus is the Lamb of God who gave His life to give us life.
Behold the Lamb of God.

SCRIPT & ADDITIONAL CONTEXT

SESSION 6: OUR SAVIOR

So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world" (John 4:40-42).

In our session today we respond to the question of who Jesus is with the answer, **Jesus is our Savior**. Savior is a name for Jesus that means *He saves His people from sin*. That's why God's plan of coming and dwelling amongst us came into being. Recall what the angel told Joseph about Mary's pregnancy, *and she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins* (Matthew 1:21). And then recall the message of the angels to the shepherds in Luke 2:11, *"for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."* This great news announced so long ago should continue to facilitate feelings of incredible joy in our hearts because each one of us is a sinner who is in need of a Savior. All of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23) and none of us can save ourselves. Born to all who accept Him in faith is a Savior. Do we understand why we need a Savior? And are our hearts filled with joy and peace because we know that we have a Savior?

It's so important that we recognize our need and that Jesus is our Savior. But it's possible, even after meeting Jesus and knowing our own sinfulness that we might not recognize Him as our Savior. The Bible passage that we heard at the beginning of this session came from the conclusion of Jesus' experience with the Samaritan woman. Jesus met her alone by the well and during their conversation she recognized that there was something different about Him. He was a Jewish man speaking to a Samaritan woman. He came to the well without a bucket to draw water and asked her for a drink. Jesus revealed to her intimate details about her life. And despite Jesus telling her plainly that He was the Christ, she still was uncertain. When she returned to her village and spoke to the people about Him she wondered and asked the question "could this be the Christ?" She had come face-to-face with the Savior and struggled to recognize Him fully. Jesus spoke to her about her struggle to recognize Him: In John 4:10 we read: *Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."* It's possible to come near to the Lord and miss recognizing Him and the gifts He wants to share. Those who recognize and believe in Jesus Christ as the Savior receive the gift that

satisfies the desire of the soul, the Spirit of God. How has your life been changed by your recognition of the gift of God in Jesus Christ your Savior? What effect has the "living water" had on you?

Even with her lack of understanding, many believed in Jesus after hearing her testimony. Many Samaritans sought after Jesus and spent two days with Him. The result of their listening to Jesus, was their proclamation that He truly is *the Christ, the Savior of the world*. It would be an incredible experience for us if we could meet with Jesus face-to-face today and listen to Him speak. We can experience His voice in the divine Word and sacrament and we can become convinced again and again that He truly is our Savior.

Our Savior, Jesus Christ, saves us from our sin. For some, this might be a disappointment because there are so many other things that cause us to struggle. We often hear about how the Roman dominance over the Jewish people is what they were hoping to be saved from. How disappointed some may have been that Jesus didn't come to set them free from the rule of Rome. How disappointed some may have been when they realized that the Savior didn't just come to deliver the devout Jewish people, but also the Samaritans and other Gentiles. Are we disappointed today that Jesus saves us from our sin and not some of our earthly struggles? Are we disappointed when we see someone not like us accepting the invitation of the gospel? Remember what Jesus said to the Samaritan woman about the living water. Through faith in Him, He not only saves us from the entrapment of sin, but also shares with us that living water that works to sustain, empower, equip, and edify. Through the incredible gifts given to us by our heavenly Father we receive what we need to overcome our struggles. We just have to recognize what He has shared with us and engage with His Spirit to put these gifts into action.

Jesus is our Savior! Because of this, we have reason every day to celebrate Him, grow in His likeness, and give glory to God.

SCRIPT & ADDITIONAL CONTEXT

SESSION 7: THE COMPASSIONATE ONE

In this session, we'll dive deeper into an aspect of Jesus' nature that led Him to the cross - **His compassion**.

One definition of compassion is *sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it*. Note that compassion is not just sympathy or pity. True compassion combines recognition and concern with help. Jesus Christ is the greatest example of one who shows true compassion. He doesn't just see us in our suffering and feel sorry for us—He alleviates our suffering. Christ's compassion always leads to something.

In both the Old and New Testaments, Jesus is described as being **full of compassion** (Psalm 116:5, James 5:11). We can find evidence of this truth throughout the New Testament. For this small group, we'll focus on His example of compassion found in Matthew 9:35-37:

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few."

Verse thirty-five highlights the extent of Jesus' compassion, shown through His teaching, preaching, and healing. In the ninth chapter of Matthew alone, there are seven examples where Jesus showed compassion toward those in need. In verse two, Jesus heals a paralytic and forgives him of his sins. In verse ten, we find Jesus eating, and presumably preaching and teaching, at a table full of tax collectors and sinners. In verse twenty-two, Jesus heals the woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years. In verse twenty-five, He raises to life the daughter of a ruler named Jairus. In verse twenty-nine, He gives sight to blind men. And, in verse thirty-three, He heals a mute and demon-possessed man. In each of these examples, note that Jesus' compassion leads to action.

However, there is a difference between these examples and the seventh example of compassion outlined specifically in verse thirty-six. In the previous examples, Jesus heals various physical conditions - blindness, immobility, muteness, even death. In verse thirty-six, Jesus' concern is over something much greater - the state of the soul. Here, *Christ was moved with compassion* because the people were without a shepherd. The scribes, Pharisees, and religious leaders were not providing what was needed for their souls, and so the

people were destitute, wearied, and of poor spiritual health. This was Jesus' greatest concern, and the deepest source of His compassion.

The action that results from Jesus' compassion toward this great multitude, and from His concern over there being plenty to harvest but only few laborers to do the harvesting, can be found in verse thirty-eight: *Therefore, pray the Lord of harvest to send out laborers into His harvest*.

Here, Jesus' compassion leads to a call for prayer. He sees that there is a great need for shepherds - those who can guide and lead the people spiritually - and so He instructs His disciples to pray earnestly for this need to be met by God. What a beautiful example of compassion the Lord Jesus gives us!

As Jesus' disciples today, it's important that we pause and consider our own compassion. Is our compassion a reflection of the compassion of Christ? Do we not only recognize need and suffering, but also seek to alleviate it? Compassion is a true mark of Christian character. Certainly, we can't heal as Christ healed, or teach as Christ taught. Only He can fully alleviate suffering, and only He has words of life that can truly satisfy the soul. However, there is much that we can do. A kind, healing word or gesture can go a long way toward alleviating suffering. Taking some time to listen to someone or to just be with them can also make a considerable impact. And, as Christ clearly showed us, so can prayer. Often we think that a grand gesture is needed or required, when what Christ is really calling us to do is pray.

May the Lord increasingly open our eyes and hearts to the needs and suffering of others, and may we be filled with the compassion of Jesus Christ.

SCRIPT & ADDITIONAL CONTEXT

SESSION 8: THE HUMBLE SERVANT

In today's session we'll delve into the account of Jesus washing His disciples' feet and see what we can learn from it as His disciples today.

Jesus' earthly life was characterized by His selfless love, and one of the expressions of this love was **His service**. He served His Father and the people with whom He shared life and, through His example, He also taught us how we can show our love for Him and for our neighbor. During His work on earth, Jesus repeatedly instructed His disciples that selfless service and humility are the ways of His kingdom. This was also one of His last teachings, as He gathered with His disciples before the Feast of the Passover for the last meal that He would have with them.

In chapter 13 of the Gospel of John, we can read about this account, which begins with a brief introduction that the hour of Jesus has come, emphasizing His love for His disciples. *When Jesus knew that His hour had come... having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end* (John 13:1). Jesus, being fully aware that the "hour" has come, that He would return to the Father, and be betrayed by one of His friends, performs a solemn and deliberate act: He washes the feet of the twelve.

In Jesus' time, when a guest arrived at a meal, it was common for the host to provide water so that they could wash their hands or feet, or have someone else wash them. Washing the feet of the guests was not only done for hygienic purposes, it was also a symbolic recognition of honor and social standing. As a rule, this task was assigned to a slave or a servant. Furthermore, the washing of feet was normally done before the meal. It appears, however, that Jesus washes the disciples' feet after the meal had begun, as we can read in John 13:3-5, *Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.*

The fact that Jesus carried out this act at an unexpected moment served to highlight the importance of the act itself; this teaching was fundamental to a life of discipleship. Moreover, Jesus' service in this event is emphasized by the fact that He girded Himself. This is what servants and slaves customarily did at the time. However, when Jesus shares His reflection on what He has done, He calls Himself "Lord and Teacher," as we read in verses 14 and 15: *If I then, your Lord*

and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.

Although He washes the feet of the disciples, He is still their Lord and Teacher. In this sense, nothing has changed. However, Jesus was not promoting His status above theirs. Rather, He is expressing His lordship in His self-debasing service, and demonstrating that the extent of love He calls us to manifests itself in service to our neighbor.

The call to serve that the Lord addresses to each of us does not mean that we need to alter our occupations, professions, or roles in society. It also does not mean that we need to change our personality or who we are. Rather, He calls us, regardless of our status or position, to demonstrate our love for our neighbor through humble service, genuinely looking out for the well-being of others.

Paul reminds us that this instruction of Jesus Christ for His disciples still applies to us today - *...not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, He made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness* (Philippians 2:4-7 NIV).

This mindset of Jesus is how He expects, and explicitly instructs, His disciples of all times to align their lives. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, condescended out of love for us. He possessed all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18), and yet He became Man, lowering Himself to serve all.

God has predestined that all those whom He foreknew should *... be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren* (Romans 8:29). It is His will that all His children develop a servant's heart, such as that of our Lord and Teacher.