

# BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



## FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

***Praying for and Respecting Government Officials  
and Anticipating the Messiah  
Psalms 2; 20; 21; 63***

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

## Leaders' Responsibilities:

**Important:** Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #....). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

## Prior to this Coming Session:

**Gathering Time Leader:** Copy the reading from Psalm 72 which is given at the end of the Worship Time. Make three copies and give them to readers ahead of time if possible.

**Bible Study Leader:**

**Worship Time Leader:**

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*Praying for and Respecting Government Officials and Anticipating the Messiah – 25-52-09-en*

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## **Music Sources:**

**Jesus, Lord to Me**, *The Worship Hymnal* #300; CCLI #16976

**Majesty**, *The Worship Hymnal* #297; CCLI #1527

**All Hail King Jesus**, *The Worship Hymnal* #295; CCLI #12877

**He Is Exalted**, *The Worship Hymnal* #296; CCLI #17827

**Be Strong in the Lord**, *The Worship Hymnal* #504; CCLI # 52105

**Gathering Time:** (Suggested time: 15 minutes)***Praying for and Respecting Government Officials  
and Anticipating the Messiah*****Focal Text**

Psalms 2:7-12; 20:1-9; 21:1-7; 63:1-8

**Background Text**

Psalms 72; 110; 132

**Main Idea**

Psalm 2 was written on the occasion of the enthronement of a new king. The king is acknowledged as God's son by adoption on the day of his coronation (Verse 7). This parallels Christ's inherent sonship. Psalm 20 is a prayer for the king as he prepares for battle and Psalm 21 is a thank offering after battle. Psalm 63 is the king's praise to God.

**Questions to Explore**

What are the responsibilities modern day Christians have to the rulers of the countries in which they live?

How does God use human political authorities and institutions to achieve His purposes?

**Teaching Aim**

Learners will appreciate the role of the king in Israel.

Learners will understand the relationship of Israel's kings to the coming Messiah.

Learners will view prayer for rulers as a sacred privilege.

**Gathering together:**

Sing:

**Jesus, Lord to Me**, *The Worship Hymnal* #300; CCLI #16976

**Majesty**, *The Worship Hymnal* #297; CCLI #1527

**First thoughts:** Psalms 72 may have been written by Solomon or it may have been written for Solomon. At any rate it is a wonderful prayer for any leader. We will begin our study on praying for and respecting government officials by listening to a reading from Psalm 72.

Reader 1: Endow the king with your justice, O God,  
The royal son with your righteousness.  
He will judge your people in righteousness  
Your afflicted ones with justice.

Reader 2: He will defend the afflicted among the people  
And save the children of the needy;  
He will crush the oppressor.

Reader 3: He will be like rain falling on a mown field,  
Like showers watering the earth.  
In his days the righteous will flourish  
Prosperity will abound till the moon is no more.

Reader 1: He will take pity on the weak and the needy  
And save the needy from death.  
He will rescue them from oppression and violence  
For precious is their blood in his sight.

Reader 2: Long may he live!  
May people ever pray for him  
And bless him all day long.

## **Closing the Gathering Time:**

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

## 2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

**Note to the Bible Study Leader:** Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

### Teacher Preparation

#### *Praying for and Respecting Government Officials and Anticipating the Messiah*

##### **Focal Text**

Psalms 2:7-12; 20:1-9; 21:1-7; 63:1-8

##### **Background Text**

Psalms 72; 110; 132

##### **Main Idea**

Psalm 2 was written on the occasion of the enthronement of a new king. The king is acknowledged as God’s son by adoption on the day of his coronation (Verse 7). This parallels Christ’s inherent sonship. Psalm 20 is a prayer for the king as he prepares for battle and Psalm 21 is a thank offering after battle. Psalm 63 is the king’s praise to God.

##### **Questions to Explore**

What are the responsibilities modern day Christians have to the rulers of the countries in which they live?

How does God use human political authorities and institutions to achieve His purposes?

##### **Teaching Aim**

Learners will appreciate the role of the king in Israel.

Learners will understand the relationship of Israel’s kings to the coming Messiah.

Learners will view prayer for rulers as a sacred privilege.

##### **Introduction to your personal study:**

In today's world, the citizens of most nations think of royalty as being something out of legend and long past history. We understand the power and roles of dictators, prime ministers, parliaments, presidents, etc. But the role of a king means little to us, especially a king or queen with absolute life and death powers.

In preparation for teaching this session, do some research into the types of monarchies that ruled in the Near East 3,000 years ago. Then you will be better equipped to help the learners to understand their situation in those days and how that relates to our loyalty to Jesus, the Christ—Lord of lords and King of kings!

## Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Introduction**” article found at the beginning of this series (Bible Teaching #....) of Bible Study and Worship sessions. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

## Focusing on the Meaning:

“Scholars for the most part find two sources underlying the account of the origins of Israelite kingship in 1 Samuel 8-12, but differ about their precise delineation. Nevertheless, both sources seem to replicate the pattern for divine kingship: in one (1 Sam. 8; 10:17-27; 11, 12) Saul is elected king with YHWH's approval, defeats Ammon, and is confirmed as king; in the other (1 Sam. 9: 1-10: 16; 13-14,) Saul is anointed king designate, defeats the Philistines, and is said to have “captured the kingship” (1 Sam. 14-47)” (**The Oxford Companion to the Bible**, B.M. Metzger and M.D. Coogan, Eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 414).

David became king following Saul. Both Samuel and Kings (the Old Testament books) tell the story of the youngest son of a Bethlehem farmer who is sought out and anointed by the prophet Samuel on behalf of the Lord (1 Sam. 16). He gains access to the court of Saul, first by his musical ability to soothe King Saul and then by defeating the Philistine champion Goliath (1 Sam. 17). After Saul's death, David becomes king over Judah in the north (2 Sam. 1-2) and then over Israel in the south (2 Sam. 3-5). He thus ruled over all of Israel. “His story is also a part of the story of Yahweh's attempt to maintain or re-create a relationship of loyalty between deity and people. The people's desire for a human king is taken as a rejection of divine sovereignty. Thus, Saul, designated by God at the people's insistence, must be rejected in favor of David, the one whom God has chosen freely (1 Sam. 13-14) (The Oxford Companion to the Bible, p. 154).

David's personal life had many failings – most notably his relationship with Bathsheba and the ordering of her soldier husband, Uriah, to the battlefield in a position where he most certainly would be killed. David's children's lives were rife with sin of many kinds. But, David remains one of the admired heroes of the Old Testament. 1 Chronicles 29:26-28 records the following: **David son of Jesse was king over all Israel. He**

***ruled over Israel forty years – seven in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem. He died at a good old age, having enjoyed long life, wealth and honor. His son Solomon succeeded him as king.***

David is thought to be the author of many of the Psalms. Many Bibles designate those Psalms attributed to David. The psalms reflect faith in God. The theme of the Psalms is the presence of God and the continuing encounter of God and His people in worship. God is present in heaven, in His world, and in Israel's worship. Some psalms reflect repentance for sins committed. These give an understanding of David as a king who sinned and who sorrowed for that sin. Numerous psalms follow the pattern of praising YHWH as the creator or as the victor in some cosmic or mundane martial conflict, in the context of the celebration of his kingship.

His son, Solomon succeeded him and was privileged to build the temple – an honor denied to David. But Solomon's wisdom – a gift of God displayed in his early years (1 Kings 3: 16-28) did not keep him from excesses which included a considerable harem (1 Kings 11:3). Nonetheless, the following tribute is made to Solomon in 1 Chronicles 20:25 ***The Lord highly exalted Solomon in the sight of all Israel and bestowed on him royal splendor such as no king over Israel had ever had.***

The New Testament book of Matthew begins with these words: ***A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham.*** Verses 1-6 trace the genealogy from Abraham to Jesse the father of King David. The following verses 7-16 trace the generations down to ***Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called the Christ.***

"The first messianic title applied to Jesus in the New Testament is Son of David. This title for Jesus provides a major link between the Old Testament and the New. Both Matthew's and Luke's genealogies are at pains to establish that Jesus is descended from David (Mt 1:1-16; Lk 3:31). This enabled early believers to claim the Old Testament promise that there would always be an heir to David's throne (2 Sam 7; Ps 132:11-12)" (***The Disciple's Study Bible***, Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 1988, p. 1169).

The psalms we will examine in this study are written to honor the enthronement of a new king or to pray for the king going into battle or returning from battle and giving thanks. The honoring of the king is an indicator of the Messiah who will follow in the line of King David and will not be just an earthly King, but a heavenly one as well.

### **Psalm 2: 7-12**

***I will proclaim the decree of the Lord: He said to me, "You are my Son today I have become your Father. Ask of me and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will rule them with an iron scepter you will dash them to pieces like pottery.***



***Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.***

“This is a psalm used when Judah enthroned her kings of David’s line. It may also have been a ritual reading used on the anniversary of the king’s coronation. Christians also see this as a messianic song referring to Jesus Christ as God’s Anointed and His Son. Compare Mt 3:17; 17:5; Mk 1:11; Acts 4:25-28; 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5; Rev 1:5; 2:27; 12:5; 19:15 (The Disciple’s Study Bible, p. 636).

“The king repeats the oracle which he has received from the Lord. In the ancient world kings were often thought to be the sons of gods in a literal sense, but this was not the case in Israel. In an adoptive sense Israel was God’s son (Hosea 11:1); so was the king of Israel (II Sam. 7:14; Ps. 89:26-27). Verse 7 makes it clear that the king is acknowledged as God’s son by adoption on the day of his coronation. “Thou are my beloved Son” (Mark 1:11; Matt. 3:17; Luke 3: 22), which is associated with Jesus’ baptism, is a quotation from this verse with the word ‘beloved’ added. Furthermore, the full recognition, in the Resurrection, of Christ’s inherent Sonship (Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:4) parallels the acknowledgement of the ancient king’s adoptive sonship at his enthronement. The vision of world dominion (vs. 8), which goes beyond the actual extent of the realm of any ancient Davidic king, contributed to the eventual Messianic interpretation of the Psalm. Rebels against the Lord’s anointed may expect severe judgment (vs. 9).

*“Exhortation to Submission” (2:10-12).* All rulers are admonished to submit to the lord, which includes submitting to his anointed. Those are counted “blessed” or “happy” who find their security in the Lord and his anointed representative” (**The Layman’s Bible Commentary: Psalms Vol. 9.** Richmond, Virginia: The John Knox Press, 1960, p. 30).

### **Psalm 20: 1-9**

***May the Lord answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you.***

***May he send you help from the sanctuary and grant you support from Zion.***

***May he remember all your sacrifices and accept your burnt offerings.***

***May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed.***

***We will shout for joy when you are victorious and will lift up our banners in the name of our God.***

***May the Lord grant all your requests.***

***Now I know that the Lord saves his anointed;  
He answers him from his holy heaven with the saving power of his right hand.***

***Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.***

***They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm.***

***O Lord, save the king!  
Answer us when we call!***

This psalm is a royal liturgy sung by different voices in the Temple as the king prepares for battle. A Davidic king was about to go to battle. The king has already prayed and sacrifices are being offered by the priests on his behalf. He, and the nation, needed God's presence and protection.

The people pray for victory in battle. "The "name" of the Lord appears three times in this psalm (vv. 1, 5, 7). It is no magic formula assuring success. Rather, the name of God is a symbol of His self-revelation and His presence among His people" (Shepherd's Notes, Psalms 1-50. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999, p. 43).

In verses 6-8 we hear the priest or prophet proclaiming a message of assurance which is the faith that God is sovereign over all. Their enemies place their hope in their military strength, but Israel places her confidence in the name of the Lord.

This wonderful prayer for a leader is one that we want to pray for the leaders of our governments. Sadly, few countries are led by God fearing leaders. Nonetheless, the beautiful psalm can serve as our prayer for our leaders to have the wisdom needed to lead the country. A prayer rather than a criticism will be our most effective hope for impacting the future of our nations.

"Psalm 21 can best be understood as the sequel to Psalm 20. The battle has been fought and won. This is the hymn of thanksgiving for a successful military campaign" (Shepherd's Notes, Psalms 1-50, p. 44).

There is thanksgiving for answered prayer. This is a reminder to us to remember to thank God for the prayers he has answered. All too often, we ask for favours, but fail to express gratitude.

### **Psalm 21-1-7**

***O Lord, the king rejoices in your strength.  
How great is his joy in the victories you give!***

***You have granted him the desire of his heart and have not withheld the request of his lips.***

***You welcomed him with rich blessings and placed a crown of pure gold on his head.***

***He asked you for life, and you give it to him – length of days, for ever and ever.***

***Through the victories you gave, his glory is great;***

***You have bestowed on him splendor and majesty.***

***Surely you have granted him eternal blessings and made him glad with the joy of your presence.***

***For the king trusts in the Lord; through the unfailing love of the Most High he will not be shaken.***

This passage promises the king length of days, for ever and ever. This can only be understood as it applies to the Davidic dynasty and ultimately to the Messiah. "The king knew both glory and gladness (vv.5-6) The basis of his greatness is his trust in God's steadfast love (v.&) The human side of that equation is *trust*. The divine side is *covenant love*" (Shepherd's Notes, Psalms 1-50, p. 43).

### **Psalm 63: 1-8**

***O God, you are my God,***

***Earnestly I seek you;***

***My soul thirsts for you,***

***My body longs for you in a dry and weary land where there is no water.***

***I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.***

***Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.***

***I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.***

***My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods;***

***With singing lips my mouth will praise you.***

***On my bed I remember you;***

***I think of you through the watches of the night.***

***Because you are my help,***

***I sing in the shadow of your wings.***

***My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.***

This passionate psalm reflects the need for political leaders to depend on God for help in trouble. "Worship can give kings and rulers new directions and renewed faith. Such worship fulfills their needs much more than the material goods. Private prayer, as well as public worship, is essential for a person in power" (The Disciple's Study Bible, p. 683).

The psalm pictures the person for whom the need for water is extreme. David or other Israelite kings would have known what it was to be out on the desert in need of water.

He compares this to the extreme need for the presence of God. When we think of the issues facing the leader of a country, state, province, city, school, or church, we can appreciate the desperate cry of the psalmist. ***Earnestly I seek you; My soul thirsts for you, My body longs for you in a dry and weary land where there is no water.***

The average person can only vaguely imagine the weight of decision-making which real leadership involves. The psalmist speaks of seeking God in the watches of the night. Whatever the burden one bears, it seems overwhelming in the night. That is when one must cling to God.

Of course, we can only do that if we have encountered God as had the psalmist who said: ***I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.***

“So, says the poet- because of is urgent, longing desire for his God – he has been privileged to behold God in his holy place, the sanctuary, and has been enabled to see God’s strength and glory. It is a magnificent insight. One does not experience a vision of God sitting passively by, awaiting the furious arrival of earthquake, wind, and fire; one must strive after it. It is the insight of disciplined devotion, a daily and constant worship, and what has been called, ‘the practice of the presence of God’ (The Broadman Bible Commentary, Vol. 4, Esther –Psalms, Nashville: Broadman Press, 1971, p. 297).

The psalmist has come to the conclusion ***Thy steadfast love is better than life*** (KJV).

“***My soul clings to thee;*** thus our poet, and quite understandably, since he has recounted in almost extravagant terms his inventory of the divine beneficence. But he does not cling unsupported. ***Thy right hand upholds me*** as if there were the need both for such aid and for the evidence of God’s reciprocal concern for him. The is the rapturous embrace; the soul, enfolded by the mighty arm, clinging to God in mutual fulfillment” (The Interpreter’s Bible, Vol. IV, Psalms, Proverbs, New York: Abingdon Press, 1955, p. 331).

This wonderful psalm is one of comfort for the decision-maker, for the lonely and discouraged person, for the grieving person. It is one to be shared with those people in times of need.

## **Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:**

Help the participants to ask “What are the responsibilities modern day Christians have to the rulers of the countries in which they live?” Help them examine unloving attitudes which they hold toward the rulers of their country. Guide them to understand the absolute necessity of praying for leaders as a sacred privilege even when they do not agree with the values and policies of the leader.

Consider how God does use human political authorities and institutions to achieve His purposes?

### **For Personal Reflection:**

**What have I learned from this study?**

**What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?**

**What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?**

## **Bible Study Plan** (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

### ***Praying for and Respecting Government Officials and Anticipating the Messiah***

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

**Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.**

#### **Focal Text**

Psalms 2:7-12; 20:1-9; 21:1-7; 63:1-8

#### **Background Text**

Psalms 72; 110; 132

#### **Main Idea**

Psalm 2 was written on the occasion of the enthronement of a new king. The king is acknowledged as God's son by adoption on the day of his coronation (Verse 7). This parallels Christ's inherent Sonship. Psalm 20 is a prayer for the king as he prepares for battle and Psalm 21 is a thank offering after battle. Psalm 63 is the king's praise to God.

#### **Questions to Explore**

What are the responsibilities modern day Christians have to the rulers of the countries in which they live?

How does God use human political authorities and institutions to achieve His purposes?

#### **Teaching Aim**

Learners will appreciate the role of the king in Israel.

Learners will understand the relationship of Israel's kings to the coming Messiah.

Learners will view prayer for rulers as a sacred privilege.

#### **Connect with Life:**

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***Praying for and Respecting Government Officials and Anticipating the Messiah – 25-52-09-en***

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Open the study with this: For many years the Israelite people had been led by godly leaders and prophets. But day came when the elders came to the last of those, Samuel, and said to him **You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have** (1Samuel 8: 5)

The Lord indicated to Samuel that it was not is leadership that was being rejected but the leadership of the Lord Himself. Samuel appointed Saul as the first king of the Israelite people.

## **Guide the Study:**

From the Teacher training material discuss Saul's rule as king and the choosing of David to succeed him.

Say: We will examine four passages of scripture to help us understand the interweaving of these psalms as indicators of the needs and desires of the kings of Israel – most specifically David who is probably the author of these psalms - and the indicators of a Messiah to come.

Have someone read Psalm 2:1-12.

Explain: This is what is called an enthronement psalm or one used on the anniversary of the king's coronation. Verse 7 makes it clear that the king is acknowledged as God's son by adoption on the day of his coronation.

Encourage responses: Does this verse remind you of similar New Testament verses which refer to Jesus the Messiah? (Examine Mark 1:11; Matt. 3:17; Luke 3: 22).

Have someone read verse 8.

Then ask: Did any Israelite king achieve world domination? No. Then, to whom does this verse refer?

Allow a moment for thinking before suggesting: It is a reference to the Messiah.

State: Consider the advice to the kings given in verses 10-11. Does that advice apply to leaders in today's world?

Suggest: Psalms 20 and 21 are psalms which speak of the prayers made for the king before battle and thanksgiving given after a successful battle.

Have someone read Psalm 20: 1-9.

Say: This psalm is a royal liturgy sung by different voices in the Temple as the king prepares for battle. A Davidic king was about to go to battle. The king has already prayed and sacrifices are being offered by the priests on his behalf. He, and the nation, needed God's presence and protection.

Continue: The people pray for victory in battle. "The "name" of the Lord appears three times in this psalm (vv. 1, 5, 7). It is no magic formula assuring success. Rather, the name of God is a symbol of His self-revelation and His presence among His people"

Have someone reread vv. 6-8.

Ask: What is the assurance given here? What is more important – military strength or confidence in the Lord?

Inquire: What is our responsibility when our leader does not seek the Lord's guidance? (We must pray for him).

Have someone read Psalm 21: 1-7.

Explain: Psalm 21 can best be understood as the sequel to Psalm 20. The battle has been fought and won. This is the hymn of thanksgiving for a successful military campaign.

Comment: We often fail to express thanksgiving for good leadership or for diplomatic achievements or military victories.

Have someone reread 21:4.

Encourage a brief discussion: To whom would these verses apply? (This would apply to David's lineage, not to his actual physical life. Therefore, it refers ultimately to the Messiah).

Have someone read Psalm 63: 1-8.

Ask someone to comment on how this psalm makes them feel.

Continue: What is the image given here? (Extreme thirst in a desert place)

Add: Would King David have experienced this? (Yes, probably on more than one occasion).

Have the group consider how this psalm reflects the anguish a leader facing a major decision might have.

Examine verse 2 with the learners.



Seek an answer: Where has the king found his strength?

Answer your question if needed: In the sanctuary beholding the power and glory of the Lord. David would have worshipped the Lord in the place holding the Ark of the Covenant for the temple was not built. But he also worshipped God in the outdoors. A sanctuary is any place where we can encounter God. David had a lifetime of worship.

Now ask: What does the psalmist say is better than life in verse 3?

Encourage the group to consider what the psalmist or the king might have thought about in “the watches of the night”.

Have someone read vs. 7-8.

Ask: How comforting are these words? Discuss the word picture which is given.

### **Encourage Application:**

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Help the participants to answer: “What are the responsibilities modern day Christians have to the rulers of the countries in which they live?” Help them examine unloving attitudes which they hold toward the rulers of their country. Guide them to understand the absolute necessity of praying for leaders as a sacred privilege even when they do not agree with the values and policies of the leader.

Consider how God does use human political authorities and institutions to achieve His purposes?

**Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time.** Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

# YOUTH!!! TAKE TEN

## Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

### ***Praying for and Respecting Government Officials and Anticipating the Messiah***

**Psalms 2:7-12; 20:1-9; 21:1-7; 63:1-8**

**A youth will lead the following activity and comments.** No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

### ***For Good or for Evil***

Young people represent a key force for good or for evil in any country. Youth are *hopeful and desire change*. They can often see how old structures need to be improved. They are passionate for equality for all. They are often leaders in environmental issues.

But youth can also be drawn into causes without considering the long-term consequences. Youth from many countries have joined with ISIS and other terror groups in horrific killings. They may have truly felt that they were joining a cause with a noble purpose or they may just have wanted to be in on the action. For many of them, this meant death to others and to themselves.

Pray today for wisdom to see how you as a young person can truly make significant changes in government in the country where you live. Pray for government leaders – even those with whom you disagree – that they may lead with wisdom and discernment.

**Worship Time** (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Praying for and Respecting Government Officials  
and Anticipating the Messiah*****Psalms 2:7-12; 20:1-9; 21:1-7; 63:1-8****Beginning the Service:**

Sing:

**All Hail King Jesus**, *The Worship Hymnal* #295; CCLI #12877**He Is Exalted**, *The Worship Hymnal* #296; CCLI #17827**Be Strong in the Lord**, *The Worship Hymnal* #504; CCLI # 52105**Offering:****Praying for the World:**

An unreached people group with little hope and one of the highest suicide rates in Russia lives in Chuvashia; a republic within the Russian Federation. Although many of the 815,000 Chuvash speak Russian, they continue to teach the Chuvash language. The Bible in their heart language was completed three years ago. Pray that the Chuvash will use this Bible and find Christ as Saviour.

**Sharing Guide:**

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

## **An Understanding Mind – a Listening Heart**

### **1Kings 3:7-9**

***Now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?***

These verses indicate a number of important truths. Solomon acknowledged the Lord as his God and the one who made him king. He also acknowledged that he was but a servant. Solomon called himself a child and acknowledged his inability to carry out his duties for his people. The term child is probably a reference to his age, but more specifically to his inexperience.

We do not know how old Solomon was, but in 1 Chronicles 22:5 and again in 29:1 David speaks of him as being young. ***David said, “My son Solomon is young and inexperienced, and the house to be built for the Lord should be of great magnificence and fame and splendor in the sight of all the nations. Therefore I will make preparations for it.” So David made extensive preparations before his death (22:5). Then King David said to the whole assembly: “My son Solomon, the one whom God has chosen, is young and inexperienced” (29:1).***

David not only made preparations for the temple, he also gave specific advice to Solomon as recorded in 1 Chronicles 22: 11-13 ***Now, my son, the Lord be with you, and may you have success and build the house of the Lord your God, as he said you would. May the Lord give you discretion and understanding when he puts you in command over Israel, so that you may keep the law of the Lord your God. Then you will have success if you are careful to observe the decrees and laws that the Lord gave Moses for Israel. Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged.***

Solomon had at least two major tasks. He was to build a temple worthy of admiration by other nations as well as by the Israelite people. It was to be of great magnificence and fame and splendor. Obviously, there would have been many competing ideas as to what constituted magnificence and splendor. There would be competing interests for being chosen for the many tasks of building. This was truly a life-encompassing task.

But at the same time, Solomon was king and responsible for ruling the nation. David indicated that in order to do that he would need discretion and understanding and strength and courage. He could not let fear or discouragement deter him from the work he was to do.

In Solomon's petition to the Lord when he became king, he asked for a discerning heart. The King James Bible translates this as an "understanding mind". "In the original Hebrew, that phrase is *lev shome'a* which literally means "a listening heart".

Ah yes, a listening heart that is sensitive both to the voice of God and to the needs of the people. A heart, not of sentimentality, but of spiritually and morally informed observation, reason and reflection within the awesome mandate such leadership implies". (Harbeck, Warren, **Cochrane Eagle**, May 7, 2015, p.22, [www.coffewithwarren.com](http://www.coffewithwarren.com))

Solomon asked that he would be able to distinguish right from wrong. That is not as easy a task as one might think. There are competing ideas of what is right and wrong. The leader must discern what is best for his people in the time and circumstance in which he or she governs.

David told Solomon that keeping the law of the Lord your God would bring success. Keeping the law seems to be so basic to good leadership that we wonder why so many leaders at every level of government act as if they are not responsible to do that. Whether it is the spiritual laws given by God or the laws determined by the nation or province or state in which one lives and governs, keeping the law is basic to success. We must pray for our leaders that they are never tempted to forget that truth.

We must also pray that they have the understanding mind or listening heart which Solomon desired. It is easy for leadership to lose touch with ordinary people and their hopes and desires and needs. Pray today for leadership that they will stay tuned to the needs of the people they govern.

David told Solomon to be strong and courageous and to not be afraid or discouraged. Leaders daily are confronted with decisions which need a strong and courageous decision to be made. Sometimes, that decision is unpopular even with those closest to him or her. Pray that leaders can make strong and courageous decisions.

Of course, leaders are at times afraid and discouraged. World issues seem impossible to resolve; war daily is fought in many countries. Terrorism is a fear for most people in the world today. How can leaders of countries responsible for the well-being of their citizens not be personally afraid and discouraged. Can we pray for them in this reality.

A wise pastor wrote these words following a major change in government in a peaceful, prosperous, and law-abiding province. Some were alarmed at the changes they felt might be coming. The pastor reminded them that "Jesus was surrounded by government. Herods and Caesars were all about legacy and power and strength. There were government-sponsored edifices, soldiers marching in formation, taxes being imposed. Government was everywhere. Yet how much did Jesus even mention them? Never! Only once does he speak of Herod. People warn Jesus, "Be careful! Herod is after you!" The Master simply replies, "So? Do you expect me to stop God's work just because of Herod?" That was it. His focus was wholly on the work of God.

As ours should be. There is a greater Kingdom in the world than any that can be elected or seated in a royal chamber. This Kingdom brings light, love, life, and salvation. No electoral candidate would dare promise these things. The world will continue on. It was never our enemy, or our ally. We ought to pray for those in authority. **God is forever.**" (Hoover, Wayne. THEWHITEASIANPASTOR.BLOGSPOT.COM, May 11, 2015.)

The Kingdom to which we belong brings light, love, life and salvation. Our earthly well-being may be dependent upon the place we live and the government of that place. But our heavenly home is secure. Our immediate task is to pray for those in government who today need an understanding mind and a listening heart.

### **Call to Commitment:**

Pray for leaders to have the ability to make wise decisions.

Pray for them to balance competing interests within those of influence.

Pray that they may keep the law; pray that they may never feel that they are "above the law".

Pray for courage.

Pray for them to not be fearful or discouraged.

Pray for them to distinguish right from wrong.

Pray for other needs you see in the world or in your community.

### **Concluding the Service:**

Sing: **Be Strong in the Lord**, *The Worship Hymnal* #504; CCLI # 52105

Make 3 copies of this reading and give them to readers ahead of time if possible.

**Taken from Psalm 72**

**Reader 1: Endow the king with your justice, O God,  
The royal son with your righteousness.  
He will judge your people in righteousness  
Your afflicted ones with justice.**

**Reader 2: He will defend the afflicted among the people  
And save the children of the needy;  
He will crush the oppressor.**

**Reader 3: He will be like rain falling on a mown field,  
Like showers watering the earth.  
In his days the righteous will flourish  
Prosperity will abound till the moon is no more.**

**Reader 1: He will take pity on the weak and the needy  
And save the needy from death.  
He will rescue them from oppression and violence  
For precious is their blood in his sight.**

**Reader 2: Long may he live!  
May people ever pray for him  
And bless him all day long.**