

Session 2: The Rejected King

SESSION GOALS

Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

Main Idea: Jesus invites us to know him and to find peace through his sacrifice.

Head Change: To know that God pursues and will not reject those who accept his grace.

Heart Change: To feel God's love and acceptance no matter how far we've strayed from him.

Life Change: To experience Jesus's acceptance, trust him as king of our lives, and be secure in his love for us.

OPEN

When we give someone a particularly special gift, we expect them to respond in gratitude. We may even imagine the specific way they will react to our present.

Think of a time when you gave someone a gift that you thought was special. How did the recipient respond to your gift? Was their reaction what you expected?

Sometimes the most thoughtful gifts aren't fully appreciated. Though Jesus was rejected by his people and continues to be rejected today, he is still Emmanuel: God with us. He has not rejected or forsaken us. In his great love for us, he continues to pursue his children. In this session, Derwin Gray invites us to experience Christmas as an invitation to meet our rejected king.

VIEW

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Derwin Gray's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how Derwin answers the following questions.

Why did Jesus choose to die for us even though he was despised and rejected?

What good has grace brought to us?

Watch Session 2: The Rejected King (15 minutes).

REVIEW

Derwin opened with the Christmas illustration in which a child excitedly opens up all his presents only to mock and reject them. Jesus, he said, was God's gift to us, and Jesus was rejected. **Have you ever been rejected? How did you react?**

In Mark 15:6–15, we find the story of Pilate offering to release one prisoner. Rather than Jesus, the people called on Pilate to release the murderous zealot, Barabbas, whose name meant "son of the father." Ironically, Jesus was the true Son of the Father, and the people settled for a poor substitute. Sometimes we settle for substitutes, as well, looking to things or other people to fulfill us rather than to Jesus. **What situations have drawn you away from God? What recenters you on God?**

Jesus's rejection fulfilled God's purpose for him. He was innocent but God put him in the place of guilty people like you and me. Jesus died for all of us, who are more like Barabbas than we may dare think. **What do you think about being identified as guilty? In what ways do you see yourself reflected in Barabbas?**

Derwin explained how our word "excruciating" was derived from the Latin word for crucifixion to depict something horrifically painful. Jesus experienced excruciating suffering on the cross. **How does this word study influence the way you think about the cross?**

Derwin reminded us Jesus's death was not an accident. God planned to rescue his people from sin and death through the cross. Isaiah 53 predicted that the redeemer would be rejected, despised, and a man of suffering. **What comes to mind when you think of God's overarching, centuries-long plan to redeem you from your sin? How do you respond to such an epic revelation?**

Like children resemble their biological parents, all humans resemble our first parents—we are all rebellious sinners whom God continues to love and pursue. **If you have already accepted Jesus's sacrifice on your behalf, what convinced you to do so? If you haven't put your trust in Jesus yet, what reservations do you have in trusting him?**

[illegible]

BIBLE EXPLORATION

The first-century Jews believed their coming king would be powerful, victorious, and glorious. Jesus fulfilled those expectations, but not in any recognizable way—at the time. Instead, he more closely resembled the suffering servant of Isaiah 52–53.

While the religious leaders during Jesus’s time did not see the connection between Jesus and Isaiah’s prophecy, the writers of the New Testament recognized how Jesus fulfilled the prophecies found in that scroll. Let’s explore the similarities between Isaiah’s words and Jesus’s life.

Note: *In a group setting, consider having individual participants or small groups of participants search each set of passages, then come together to compare and discuss. Have your group members use the next set of questions to generate conversation about the passages.*

Use these questions to discuss each set of passages:

What does the Isaiah passage teach us about God?

How does the New Testament passage shape our views about Jesus?

Read Isaiah 52:13–15, then Matthew 27:26–31.

Read Isaiah 53:4, then Matthew 8:14–17.

Read Isaiah 53:5–6, then 1 Peter 2:24–25.

Read Isaiah 53:7–8, then Acts 8:29–35.

Read Isaiah 53:12, then Luke 22:37, and Hebrews 9:28.

Having connected Isaiah’s prophecies with Jesus’s life, what new truth about Jesus did you learn?

What stood out to you the most from this exercise? Why?

How did comparing these Scriptures lead you to worship God more?

We know from 2 Corinthians 5:21 that Jesus, who “knew no sin” (i.e., he was not a “transgressor”) became our

substitute, punished as a “transgressor,” so that “in him we might become the righteousness of God.” When we look at the cross, we see both the judgment we should have received and God’s relentless love for us. Our sin is so deep that we deserved death, but God loves us so deeply that he sent his Son to suffer in our place. **What does it mean to you that Jesus purposely came to suffer on your behalf? What are some ways you could live in gratitude for Jesus’s sacrifice?**

As Christmas approaches, in what ways could you connect Christ’s death on the cross with the baby in the manger? If you were telling someone about God’s gift to us in Jesus, how might knowing that the cross was God’s loving plan all along influence your explanation?

LAST WORD

When Jesus arrived to carry out the divine rescue plan, the people rejected him. He didn’t look like the savior they had concocted in their minds—instead of a mighty warrior, he was humble, serving, and sacrificial. Just like his disciples and the people in Israel, we also have a chance to choose or reject Jesus.

God loved his people despite their rebellion against him. He loves us, too, no matter how far we stray from him. As Derwin said, God wants us all to know his love and acceptance. He will never reject those who come to him in repentance and joy.

DEEPER WALK

Read: Read 2 Corinthians 5:14–21. Spend time meditating on Jesus’s deep desire to reconcile us to himself.

Pray: Pray for people in your life who have not accepted Jesus as the rightful king he is. Ask God to soften their hearts and open their minds to his saving love.

Memorize: Memorize Isaiah 53:6, “We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way; and the Lord has punished him for the iniquity of us all.”
