

SPRING 2021

# GOD'S FAMILY

Exploring the history of the family that we've been adopted into



## Who Are Your "People"?

BY CHRISTOPHER TIMSON

Do you have a place you feel like you belong? For me- I'm kind of split between a few geographic places to what feels like "home", but my "People" are my family and friends. That's where I feel like I belong.

In the Old Testament we see a fractured family. With descendants of Cain being opposition to those of Abel as well as the descendants of Ishmael and Isaac being at odds for many lifetimes. Fractured families are part of our history.

Jesus was Jewish. He was born a Jew, lived life as a Rabbi, and he knew the Jewish customs. Did you know that Jesus says in the Gospels that he came for the Jewish people specifically?

Where does this leave us? Well Jesus might have come for the Jews specifically, but then he opened the door for the rest of us to be a part of his family. This is something you have probably heard before, but this act that Jesus did cannot be understated. One of the primary reasons Jesus came was restore the fractured family and welcome all people back to God. Back to one Family.

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STUDY 4

# WE ARE EXILES



## I Am an Exile

Say it with me: "I am an Exile."

An exile? Surely this study isn't saying that you're an exile in the USA is it? An exile is "the state of being barred from one's native country." So what do you think? Are you in your native country? I know this might sound strange so we're going to explore this more during this study, but consider this- As Christians we are citizens of God's kingdom and God's kingdom is where we belong.

As we step into this study keep an open mind, because following Jesus might just make you feel like an exile.

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## Exiles

"In Exile" is an interesting way to describe the life of a Christian, but I think it's appropriate when looking at the whole picture. As Christians we know that life here on earth is not how things are supposed to be. We know that God is working to restore this world back to him and using us in that process. So in one way we are in the place we belong, but in another way this world is missing something. Do you ever feel that tension? This is something that God's family has always known well both literally and figuratively. Let's take a look



## Let's Read: Jeremiaiah 29:4-7

### A letter to Exiles

4 This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon:

5 "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce.

6 Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease.

7 Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."

"seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."

JEREMIAIAH 29:7





## Talk About It

This text we just read is advice from the prophet Jeremiah on how exiles should live in the place where they do not belong. Daniel takes this to heart and lives in this way: Serving the place and people they live around, but only to the point where they are not worshiping other Gods or people.

1. Do you feel like this text applies to modern Christians?
  - a. If so how can we use this text?

This is just one example of living in Exile and the Bible has many more (think Moses and the slaves or Esther). The theme of Exile is everywhere in the Bible.

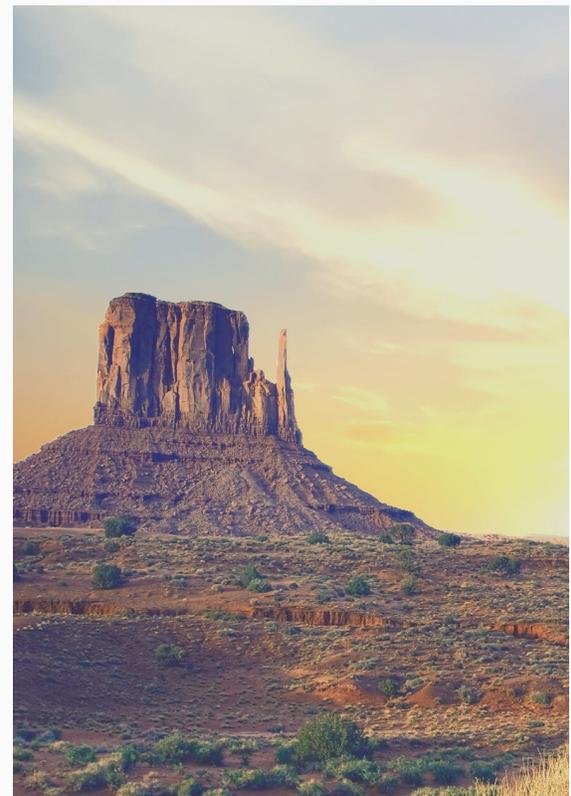
1. What does this mean for us?

## Talk About It

"Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."

1. What does this tell us about God?
2. What does this instruct God's people to do?
 

Remember we have Christians not just living in America, but also in places China, Pakistan, North Korea, and more.
3. Does this bother you?





# Application

## Peter Gives Instructions to Exiles in Rome 1 Peter 2:9-12

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

11 Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.

12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.



## The Call to Action

10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Peter is reminding these Christians of God's Mercy and how they became Christians. What is the purpose of this?

"11 Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.

12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us."

1. As exiles we are called to live to a different standard than the place we reside. What do you think it means to live like an exile in your own life?
2. What is something practical we can do this week that people will see our good deeds? (I know this is SO much harder during the pandemic)



STUDY 5

# WE ARE ROYALTY

## I Am Royalty

Say it with me: "I am Royalty."

This week might come as a surprise to you, but yes as part of God's family, you come from a line of royalty. This royalty starts in Genesis and is really highlighted in the kingship of Saul and especially David. David would go on to be the "best" king that Israel ever had and he was still a very poor king. Jesus would come from the line of David and be the real true King that Israel needed, but he was a VERY different king than was expected.

Jesus sets the standard of how royalty should lead in his kingdom and it's nothing like you would think a King or Queen would live.

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# Royalty

As Christians we know that Jesus is the one true king, but what does that mean for us? The answer is two-fold. On the one hand we are followers of Jesus so we are his subject, but on the other hand we are co-heirs with Christ and in that way share in his glory and share in his royal bloodline. We have to live in the reality that we are servants of Christ and leaders in this world. In this study we'll explore what the Bible says about our royalty and how we are expected to lead.



"today you have rejected your God, the one who saves you out of all your disasters and your distress, and you have said to him, 'You must set a king over us.'

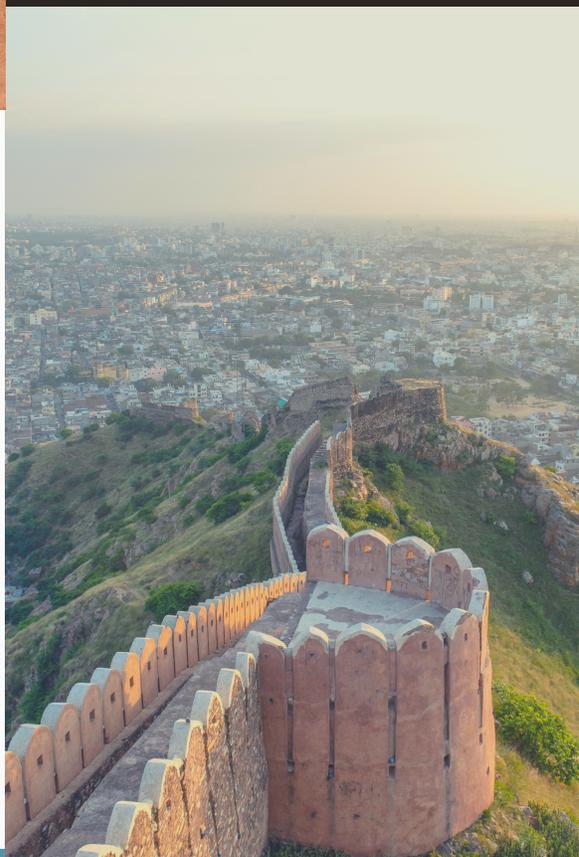
SAMUEL 10:19

## Let's Read: Samuel 10:17-19

### Samuel Appoints a King

17 Samuel called the people together to the Lord at Mizpah. 18 He said to the people of Israel, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says. I brought Israel up out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians, and from the hand of all the kingdoms that oppressed you.

19 But today you have rejected your God, the one who saves you out of all your disasters and your distress, and you have said to him, 'You must set a king over us.' Now line up in the presence of the Lord by your tribes and by your thousands."





## Talk About It

Samuel takes time here to call out the people for their lack of faith. In this story Israel is recovering from 300 years of Judges which is arguably the worst time in the history of God's people. People spent this time in judges "doing as they saw fit" and they became just like those around them. So to recover from this their solution was to appoint a king to make rules and regulations for them. Basically to keep them in line and to win battles

1. Their solution was to appoint a king over them. What do you think God's solution was to their terrible predicament?

God's solution was no different than his solution for humanity has always been. To recognize God as their king and serve him.

1. How can we apply this today?



## Talk About It

"This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says. I brought Israel up out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians, and from the hand of all the kingdoms that oppressed you."

1. Why would Samuel bring these events up?
2. God's people are supposed to be set apart. How are they rejecting this?
3. It was the overwhelming majority for the people to want a human king. Why does humanity tend towards this direction?





# Application

## Paul Addressing the Church in Rome

14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

15 So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father."

16 For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children.

17 And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.



## The Call to Action

17 And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.

1. Paul is calling us Heirs with Christ. What do you think we "inherit?"

Genesis 2:26-28 "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

1. God made it clear that humanity is supposed to rule from the very beginning. What are we supposed to rule?

2. Looking at the one true king Jesus how can we learn from him in how we rule?

3. Genesis tells us that all humanity is made in the image of God and there for is supposed to rule. Knowing that we are all made in the image of God- how does this influence how we should treat each other?

a. How can we put this into action this week?



STUDY 6

# WE ARE SERVANTS

## I Am a Servant

Say it with me: "I am a Servant."

This week might feel like quite a dramatic shift from the last topic of Royalty, but it might be closer than you think. We are royalty, but that requires us to rule like Jesus did. To rule as a servant. Can servants rule though? Yes and as Jesus shows us through his life being royalty that serves others is really the only way we can truly live out our call to rule.

This is called servant leadership and this is what Jesus modeled for us everyday of his life. Jesus isn't what you would expect from a leader. He wasn't a John Wayne or Chuck Norris type of guy. Did Jesus have power? Well of course, but the way he chose to lead was by love and sacrifice. This isn't easy and it isn't very appealing, but it is our calling and it will change the world.

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## Servant Leadership at Hope

A couple years ago Hope had the opportunity to welcome some Yezidi people of our local community to church just for a fun day and to get to know them. During this time every leader that was present was playing with the kids and serving those people. Some with conversation and others just with time. It was a little awkward with language barriers but we all had fun.

A couple days later the leader of the program that connected us reached out to us to let us know that they were so impressed with all of our leadership spending time with them. They told me that when the Yezidi people learned that I, who was playing with the kids, was actually a Pastor it really caught them off guard. They would never expect a religious leader to do something like that.

To this day we still are in contact and some of those kids are hearing about Jesus because of the continued servant leadership of people like Marah and others. It changes lives.

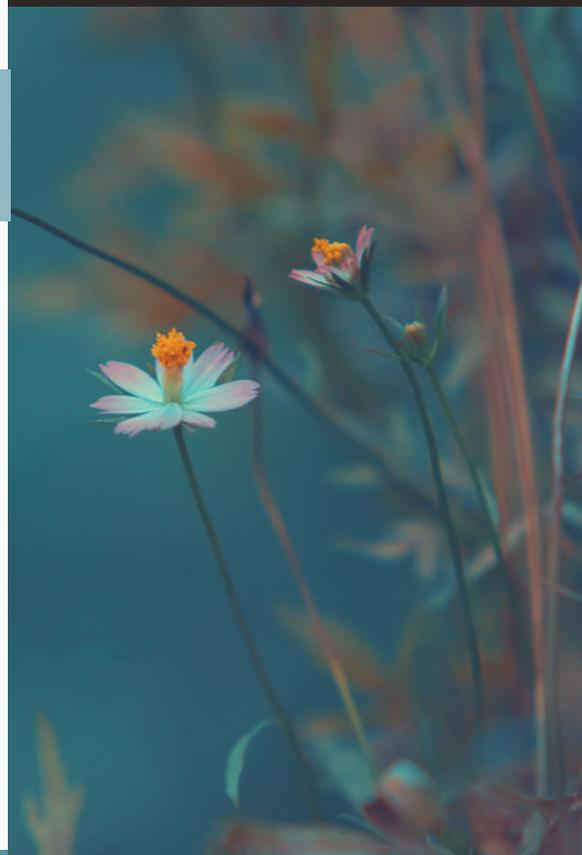


## Let's Read: John 13:12-17

12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16 Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

JOHN:14-15





## Talk About It

Jesus acknowledges here that while he is still their lord and master, serving them is the right thing to do. Jesus as a servant leader isn't a hugely new idea for us as Christians, but think about how radical this is to people at the time of Jesus or people that aren't Christians today.

1. Applying this to the day it was taught for the first time- the idea of the Jewish Messiah serving others was insane for most people. Most Jews were expecting a waring and conquering king. What is so different about Jesus?

Jesus doesn't just say it's good to serve, but does preforms one of lowliest services available to the disciples. In those days the roads would have been disgusting so in turn so would have everyone's feet.

1. What is a way we can serve like Jesus here? Where can we lower ourselves to help others?



## Talk About It

2 The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. 3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God;

1. We're going backwards for a second here. The events take place just before our last reading. What does this tell us then? Jesus washed Judas's feet with full knowledge of his betrayal.
2. The ultimate form of service is seen here Jesus washes the feet of his enemy and then immediately calls us to do the same. What does this tell us about how we should treat our enemies?





# Application

## Paul Addressing the Church in Colossae (Chris's Version)

Col 1:24-29 (This is my (Chris's) Version, but feel free to read a traditional version as well)

Even now I am thankful for any suffering I endure for you and I am made even more full because it makes me more like Christ when I serve and suffer for the church. God told me to be a servant of the church and to share every bit of the word of God with you. This timeless mystery of the Word of God has been made known to His people and even now the Gentiles know as well. This mystery is Christ in you. We talk about and live out the teaches of Christ so that we would all be more like him. This is my mission and I devote my entire life to it so that Christ would continue to work in me and change me.



## The Call to Action

We are more like Christ when we serve the Church

1. This is probably the hardest application because it has so many applications. How do we serve the church? Talk about how you can do better at this either inside the church or serving those outside the church.

Serve your enemy and serve the church

1. These are the two things we talked through in this study. It can basically be summed up as this: Serve others. Serve those you love. Serve the stranger. Serve even your enemy when you know they have wronged you.
2. Take some time in your group asking for needs and praying over each other. Servant leadership starts here. The first shall be last and those who serve make the best leaders.