

JESUS IS LORD!

TEACHING GUIDE

Exploring the Meaning of Jesus' Lordship

A BAPTIST DOCTRINE AND HERITAGE STUDY FOR LIFE TODAY

Janet Burton

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Jesus Is Lord!—Teaching Guide
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About This Teaching Guide

The teaching plans in this teaching guide are designed for teaching the book *Jesus Is Lord!* The book *Jesus Is Lord!* is one of a series of studies on Baptist doctrine and heritage that BAPTISTWAY PRESS®, the publishing arm of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, is producing annually.

The Writer

Janet Burton, the writer of *Jesus Is Lord!—Teaching Guide*, lives in Austin, Texas, and is widely known for her work as a Christian educator, author, and conference leader. She is the author of two books and is a veteran curriculum writer, having written five previous assignments for BAPTISTWAY® Bible study materials.

How to Use This Teaching Guide

This teaching guide is designed to assist leaders who guide the study of the book *Jesus Is Lord!* The suggestions in this guide assume that every participant will have a copy of the book to use in preparation and during the sessions. Participants will gain the most if they will study the assigned chapter prior to each session. In addition to use in the current study, this book and the others in this series of studies are designed so that participants can accumulate for their personal libraries helpful resources on Baptist doctrine and Christian beliefs in general.¹ Each church library needs a copy of this book and the other books in this series as well.

Study Options

Seven study sessions are provided in *Jesus Is Lord!—Teaching Guide*. Decide the best schedule for your church situation. Consider the following suggestions:

- Sunday night worship service for seven weeks
- Wednesday night prayer service for seven weeks
- A combination of Sunday and Wednesday nights for seven sessions in three to four weeks
- Study period prior to Sunday night worship for seven weeks
- Other short-term training opportunities

The basic sessions are designed for thirty-five minute periods but can be expanded by using the additional suggestions. Thirty-five minutes seems most appropriate for use during Sunday and Wednesday night. Lecture is the primary teaching method used in the basic plan,

but other large-group methods are used as needed. The additional suggestions can be used when the schedule allows fifty-five to sixty minutes or when the learning group is small enough to use other teaching methods.

Session Design

Each session (except session seven) is divided into the following four major parts with numbered steps:

- *Introduce the study*—A three- to four-minute idea to help participants relate to the material to be studied.
- *Guide the study*—A thirty-minute procedure that leads learners to investigate and summarize the significant content to be studied.
- *Prepare for the Next Study*—A one- to two-minute assignment that encourages participants to read and study the chapters to be considered during the next study.
- *Additional Ideas*—Teaching ideas that can be used to expand the basic teaching plan.

The teaching plans have been developed with the thought that the audience for this study is not just “regular church attenders.” This study is indeed for them. However, in planning and publicizing this study, consider how you and your church can reach out to people who do not attend church regularly or who are not Christians.

Session Preparation

Read the entire book prior to the study. Knowing the direction and content of the book helps the leader (you) avoid dealing with material that will be studied in a subsequent session. Preview this teaching guide to allow enough time to prepare materials for each session.

Prepare visuals as suggested for each session. PowerPoint® presentations could be developed if you have the equipment, but overhead cels, marker boards, posters, and other visuals can be used as well.² Remember that learners retain more when they both see and hear information. Reading and underlining material in a book also create visual impressions and cause people to think about the content.

Although the steps in the session plans suggest actions you will take, effective learning always is from the perspective of what the participants will be doing. That is why your actions instruct learners to engage in learning activities such as listening, reading, looking, writing, thinking, answering questions, etc.

No teaching plan will fit every leader. Take the ideas given in this guide and use them to develop your own teaching plans. These ideas are provided to make your planning easier.

Notes

1. See the order form at the end of this book.
2. Consult the BAPTISTWAY PRESS website—www.baptistwaypress.org—in the section for “Jesus Is Lord!” for information on PowerPoint® presentations prepared for this study. Handouts, scripts, and similar items for use in the class session are also available in this section at www.baptistwaypress.org.

SESSION *One*

Introduction and Chapter 1, The Heart of the Christian Faith

Introduce the Study

1. Prepare (or ask someone to prepare) a PowerPoint® presentation, overhead cels, or a theme banner to bring continuity to these seven sessions. Whatever means you use, feature the words “Jesus Is Lord!” in large letters. To prepare a theme banner, use a large length of paper (about six feet long) as the background. This background could be craft paper or gift wrap. From quarter-sheets of a bright cover stock, cut the letters, “Jesus Is Lord!”—one letter per quarter-sheet. Glue the letters to the center of the background paper. Using seven more full sheets of cover stock, print one of the seven chapter titles on each. (The largest computer font would work.) Plan to add one chapter title to the theme banner at the beginning of each session. Put up the title of chapter one for this study. If you are using PowerPoint® or an overhead projector, develop a cel of each chapter’s title to introduce each session.
2. Provide copies of the book *Jesus Is Lord!* for each participant. Also have extra Bibles (include contemporary translations), pens, and some hymnals available. Begin by singing or reading aloud the hymn, “Fairest Lord Jesus.”¹ With hymnals open, ask, *What truths about Jesus are stated in the first stanza of this hymn?*

(Jesus is ruler of creation, the Son of God, also human, and to be worshiped.) Then ask, *What does the fourth stanza suggest as the appropriate response of an individual to Jesus?* (glory, honor, praise, adoration) State that the title of our text—*Jesus Is Lord!*—invites us to explore who Jesus is and decide whether we will give him that kind of honor in our lives.

3. Invite the group to look at page 8 in the Introduction to *Jesus Is Lord!* and find the second paragraph. It begins: “The New Testament is clear that the Lordship of Jesus is the central belief on which all other Christian teachings are based.” Suggest that they underline that sentence in their books and write in the margin: “Thesis of this book.” Then have them turn to the Contents page (page 5) as you point out the seven statements (chapter titles) of the meaning of calling Jesus *Lord*. Ask, *Which of these seven titles interests you most or raises a question in your mind?* Perhaps some have never thought of Jesus as “King of the Cosmos” (chapter 7). Others may wonder why, if the kingdom of God has already come, we still have so much conflict and evil in the world. State that this study should answer some of those questions and help us develop a clearer view of who Jesus is and the meaning of Jesus’ Lordship. State, *A possible outcome of the study is that some who are now seeking will become ready to invite Jesus to become Lord of their lives.*

Guide the Study

4. Write these three Scripture references on a marker board or tear sheet (or display them by means of PowerPoint® or an overhead projector):

Romans 10:9

1 Corinthians 12:3

Philippians 2:10–11

Invite volunteers to read each Scripture as the group listens for reminders of the title of the book in it. (If participants are not familiar with their Bibles, mark in advance three Bibles with bookmarks and highlighters. Do not print off the Scripture verses, but encourage participants to read the verses directly from the Bible itself.) After each reading, ask, *What does this verse say about Jesus as Lord?* If you are using a marker board or tear sheet, jot responses beside each reference as they are suggested.

5. Follow with a brief lecture about the uses of the word *Lord*, using the book sections, “Uses in the Ancient World” and “Uses in the Old Testament” (see pages 12–15 in *Jesus Is Lord!*). Using PowerPoint®, overhead cels, or a marker board, show this outline as you speak:
 - a. Polite form of address
 - b. Royalty or rulers
 - c. Hebrew *Adonai*
6. Enlist in advance someone to prepare to read the story of Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna, from chapter one (pages 13–14, *Jesus Is Lord!*). Call for this reading now. After the story, ask, *What was Polycarp’s crime? What was his answer when asked to deny his Christ?*
7. Lead the group to search the section, “Uses in the New Testament” (pages 16–18, *Jesus Is Lord!*) by asking these questions. Enrich their answers with additional information from the book.
 - Was the term *Lord* (*kurios*) used of anyone besides God or Jesus? (See Mark 13:35, NASB, NIV, NRSV, KJV; see also page 16 and pages 12–13 in *Jesus Is Lord!*)
 - How did Thomas address Jesus in John 20:28?
 - Compare the three different titles for Jesus in Acts 4:33; 11:17; and 15:26. What are the subtle differences?
 - Why did Paul associate Jesus’ Lordship with his resurrection in Romans 10:9? (See page 18, *Jesus Is Lord!*)

- How did James describe Jesus in James 2:1?
 - What was Peter’s admonition in 1 Peter 3:15?
 - What was John’s ultimate declaration in Revelation 19:16?
8. Complete the study by explaining how the Lordship of Jesus led Baptists to develop their belief in the autonomy of the local church. (See page 19, *Jesus Is Lord!*)

Prepare for the Next Study

9. Note that in the next session we will study chapter two, “Jesus Is God.” Ask these questions to create interest: *How could Jesus be both God (divine) and human? Did Jesus claim to have the authority of God? When we learn about Jesus, are we also learning about God?* State that the next chapter will help us understand the divinity of Jesus.

Additional Ideas

Sharing Personal Testimonies

1. To help people in the group who have not received Jesus as Savior and Lord, end this study session by calling for a few brief answers to this question from people who have trusted Jesus: *How did you first understand what it means to ask Jesus to become Lord and Savior of your life?*
2. If appropriate, close by singing the chorus, “He Is Lord.”²

Agree-Disagree Activity

Print these five responses on a tear sheet: *Strongly Agree; Agree; Not Sure; Disagree; Strongly Disagree*. As you read the following statements, ask participants to raise a hand when you point to the response that

best describes their opinion at this time. (This activity is available as a free, downloadable handout in “Teaching Resource Items” at www.baptistwaypress.org, in the section, “Jesus Is Lord!”) Pause after each question to ask, *Would anyone like to share why you chose that response?*

1. “Jesus Is Lord!” is the most important belief of the Christian faith.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. A person who truly believes that Jesus is Lord is a Christian.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. I would be willing, as some early Christian martyrs were, to die before denying that Jesus is Lord.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. To say that Jesus is Lord is to say that Jesus is truly God.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. A person who cannot avow that Jesus is Lord may be a seeker but is not yet a believer.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. At the end of the age every person will proclaim that Jesus is “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”³

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

Notes

1. “Fairest Lord Jesus,” words, anonymous German hymn, *Münster Gesangbuch*, 1677. *The Baptist Hymnal* (Nashville, Tennessee: Convention Press, 1991), no. 176.
2. “He Is Lord,” words, Linda Lee Johnson, Claire Cloninger, and Tom Fettke; music: stanzas and arrangement, Tom Fettke; traditional refrain. *The Baptist Hymnal* (Nashville, Tennessee: Convention Press, 1991), no. 178.
3. Revelation 19:16.

SESSION *Two*

Chapter 2, Jesus Is God

Introduce the Study

1. Lead the group to turn to chapter two of *Jesus Is Lord!* Ask them to scan the four opening paragraphs on pages 20–21 and circle words that answer this question: *What was the man Jesus like when he lived on the earth?* State, *In this session we will be looking at what it means to believe that Jesus is fully God.* (Consider using the drama reading, “Who Is This Jesus?” found under “Additional Ideas” at the end of this session plan.)

Guide the Study

2. Tell the story about N. T. Wright, printed in the first four paragraphs under “Finding God by Finding Jesus” on page 22 of *Jesus Is Lord!* Ask, *Why do people in today’s society sometimes find it difficult to believe in God?* Follow with this question: *Is it possible to believe in God but not accept the Christian concept of one true God as revealed in Jesus?* (Accept a variety of responses.) Add the title, “Jesus Is God,” to the theme poster (or show it using PowerPoint® or an overhead cel).

3. Put the title “Monotheism: Only One God” on a marker board or tear sheet, and write these Scripture references under it. The sentences in parentheses are for your use.
 - a. John 1:1–3 (“The Word” is John’s way of referring to Jesus.)
 - b. 1 Corinthians 8:6 (Compare to Deuteronomy 6:4–5.)
 - c. Colossians 1:15–20 (“He” refers to Jesus; see Colossians 1:13.)

Call for each Scripture to be read as the group listens for what it teaches about Jesus being truly God. (If participants are not familiar with the Bible, have three Bibles marked in advance with bookmarks and highlighter.) Enrich their answers from the section “Maintaining Monotheism” (pages 23–24, *Jesus Is Lord!*).

4. Invite two people to read the quotations from Thomas Cahill and Philip Yancey at the end of the section, on page 24 of *Jesus Is Lord!* Lead participants to evaluate whether those statements square with the Scriptures just read.
5. Hand each person this matching quiz, and suggest that they work in partners to complete it. (This activity is available as a free, downloadable handout in “Teaching Resource Items” at www.baptistwaypress.org, in the section, “Jesus Is Lord!”) Instruct the group to match the verse in column 1 with a teaching about Jesus’ divinity and power from column 2.

Column 1	Column 2
a. Mark 2:10	_____ (1) Jesus' statement at his trial
b. Mark 2:27–28	_____ (2) God's affirmation from heaven
c. Matthew 26:63–64	_____ (3) Jesus' own affirmation of himself
d. Luke 4:17–21	_____ (4) Jesus' power to pardon sin
e. Mark 1:23–24	_____ (5) Paul's affirmation of one Lord
f. Mark 9:7	_____ (6) Declaration from demons
g. Matthew 11:27	_____ (7) Lord over the Sabbath
h. Matthew 5:43–44	_____ (8) Jesus' intimate knowledge of God
i. John 2:19–21	_____ (9) Jesus' authority over his temple
j. John 10:30	_____ (10) Old Testament applied to Jesus
k. 1 Corinthians 8:6	_____ (11) Jesus re-interprets the Old Testament law

As they complete the quiz, call for findings. *Answers:* (1) c; (2) f; (3) j; (4) a; (5) k; (6) e; (7) b; (8) g; (9) i; (10) d; (11) h. Have the Scriptures read aloud as answers are discovered. Affirm the group's work, and add enrichment from the section "Ways the New Testament Writers Presented Jesus as Divine" (pages 24–34, *Jesus Is Lord!*).

6. Tell the story of the development of the Nicene (or Nicene) Creed from the section, "Conclusion: Riots in the Street" (pages 34–35, *Jesus Is Lord!*). Display these facts as you speak:
 - a. Arius's challenge to Alexander
 - b. Arius's campaign to teach Jesus as a created being
 - c. Emperor Constantine's council of bishops in A.D. 325
 - d. Response to the Nicene Creed

Conclude with the statement of C. S. Lewis that follows the story (see page 35, *Jesus Is Lord!*). Point out that this realization is what led C. S. Lewis, an avowed atheist, to become a believer in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Prepare for the Next Study

7. State that in session three we will look at this question: *If Jesus is both Lord and God, why is there still so much evil and conflict in the world?* Encourage the group to read chapter three of *Jesus Is Lord!* in preparation for that discussion.

Additional Idea

Drama Reading: “Who Is This Jesus?”

Enlist four people to read these parts at the beginning of the session. Ask them to stand randomly at four different corners of the room and to read in order. (This activity is available as a free, downloadable script in “Teaching Resource Items” at www.baptistwaypress.org, in the section, “Jesus Is Lord!”)

1. Neighbor of Jesus. We couldn't figure out where this Jesus was coming from. He grew up here in Nazareth—went to school at the synagogue with our sons. He was a village carpenter, and he helped us build our homes and furniture. His hands were scarred and splintered, just like ours. But then he visited our synagogue one day and declared himself to be the chosen Messiah of God. When we questioned him, he said the Gentiles often believed more quickly than God's own chosen people! We were incensed! Some of his old school friends even tried to run him off a cliff! How could a man who grew up among us be God's Messiah?

2. Brother. *Just think what it was like for us, his brothers, growing up in a family where the older brother was thought to be sent from God! He was one of us—had the same mother and father—learned the same carpentry trade. He ate with us, slept with us, and worked beside us. Then one day he left home to be a traveling evangelist. He worked day and night trying to set up what he called a “kingdom.” We tried to talk sense to him—to get him to come home and help us in the shop—but he would not hear of it. All of us were so embarrassed, so confused, so angry. It isn’t easy being the brother of a Messiah!*

3. Blind man. *I hear all these accusations and doubts, and I have no answers. I am not an educated man, and I do not know how a common man can be different from the rest of us. All I know is, I was blind, but now I can see. That’s true, friends. I was born blind, and my parents could find no one to help me. All my life I grew up in darkness, unable to make my living, being cared for by compassionate friends. But one day this Jesus came along, made mud from earth and saliva, rubbed it on my eyes, and sent me to wash in the pool. I did that, and I could see! I care not for the accusations and doubts. All I know is, I was blind for years, and now I can see!*

4. Religious leader. *These would-be messiahs come and go on the scene. We have to be on our guard continually to keep the people from being led astray. But this Jesus—he was different from the others. He spent his time among the outcasts, the sinners, the working people. They swarmed after him, believing what he said, claiming to have been healed by him. We fought him on every level. We tried to debate him before the crowds, hoping to discredit him. We forbade him to teach openly. We plotted to get him arrested and off the streets. Finally, when he claimed to have raised a man from the dead, we knew we had to act quickly to protect ourselves from his power. With a little help we were able to get him arrested and crucified. We hoped that would be the end of him.*

SESSION *Three*

Chapter 3, The Kingdom Has Come

Introduce the Study

1. Begin by posing three questions based on the beginning paragraphs of chapter three in *Jesus Is Lord!* (pages 36–37). Allow brief sharing from volunteers on these questions:
 - a. Have you ever waited for two weeks on a medical test report, hoping for the best, but fearing the worst?
 - b. Have you watched your child wait during the month of December, anticipating a much-wanted Christmas gift, excited that you could provide it? Do you recall waiting on such a gift yourself when you were a child?
 - c. Have you listened to a returned P.O.W. describe the months of deprivation he suffered in a cold concrete cell, waiting for release?

Follow with these questions for discussion: *Why is waiting difficult? Is there a difference in waiting with dread or waiting with hope? State that in this session we will try to answer the question, If Jesus has already set up his kingdom, why are we still waiting for answers to evil and conflict in our world? Add the title, “The Kingdom Has Come,” to the theme poster, or display it using PowerPoint® or an overhead cel.*

Guide the Study

2. Present a lecture on the “day of the Lord,” using the information in the section “Looking and Longing—An Old Testament Perspective” in *Jesus Is Lord!* (pages 38–40). Prepare to provide a visual aid to the lecture by drawing a two-column chart using PowerPoint®, an overhead cel, marker board, or tear sheet. Label the left column, “Old Testament Perspective.” Label the right column, “New Testament Perspective.” Add these subtopics to the Old Testament column as you speak:
 - a. Definition: God’s intervening in Israel’s behalf
 - b. Elements: three hopes.
 - c. Purification
 - d. Purpose: God’s kingdom established
 - e. Truths about the kingdom
3. Lead the group to review the Old Testament concepts by giving each person a copy of this recall quiz (download a copy from www.baptistwaypress.org).
 - (1) *The day of the Lord* was a time when
 - a. God would judge the pagan nations
 - b. God would favor Israel among the nations
 - c. God’s sovereign rule would begin
 - d. All of the above
 - (2) *The kingdom of God* was
 - a. A frequently-used term in the Old Testament
 - b. The universal rule of Yahweh
 - c. A kingdom for the Jewish nation only
 - d. None of the above

Answers: (1) d; (2) b.
4. Continue the lecture by using pages 40–41 of the section “Looking and Longing—A New Testament Perspective” in *Jesus Is Lord!* Add these subtopics to the right column (see step 2) as you speak.

- a. Kingdom of God/heaven
 - b. When and through whom?
 - c. Various approaches to waiting
 - Qumran
 - Herod
 - Zealots
5. Add “Jesus” to the list under *c* in step four, and invite the group to explore Jesus’ approach to the kingdom. Copy the six questions below onto six 3" x 5" cards, and give them to six individuals or teams to search. Allow about three minutes for research. Then call for Scriptures to be read aloud as answers are given. Enrich the group’s findings from the section “Jesus and the Presence of the Kingdom” (pages 41–43, *Jesus Is Lord!*).
- (1) Why were Jesus’ words in Matthew 4:17 surprising?
 - (2) What did the parable of hidden treasure teach (Matthew 13:44–46)?
 - (3) What are some surprising teachings about kingdom life in Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount (see Matt. 5:38–42).
 - (4) What was God’s role for his people in this new kingdom (Matt. 5:14–16)?
 - (5) What was Jesus’ role in the new kingdom (Luke 4:18–21)?
 - (6) What did Jesus offer as proof that he was the Messiah of the new kingdom? (See Luke 11:20.)
6. Raise the question again, *If the kingdom has come, why is there still so much evil and conflict in the world?* Ask the group to listen as someone reads aloud the section “The Kingdom Comes Completely” (page 44, *Jesus Is Lord!*). During the reading, draw a second two-column chart for the group. Label the left column, “Old Age of Conflict.” Label the right column, “New Kingdom of Peace.”
- Ask the group to suggest some of the problems of the old age that continue today. List responses in the left column. (Possible answers: war, poverty, famine, disease, broken homes.) Ask, *How have the teachings and the presence of Jesus in the world changed the way we approach these problems? How are Christians actively trying*

to eradicate these problems? (Encourage answers, which include such responses as these: bringing God’s Lordship to individual hearts; establishing mission efforts to alleviate human suffering; teaching the principles of kingdom living as established by Jesus; praying for world leaders.) Ask, *What makes Christian efforts different from other, humanitarian efforts?* (Christians affirm the power and leadership of God’s Spirit and have assurance of eventual victory.)

State that Jesus taught that there will be a future time when his kingdom will be fulfilled and these problems will be forever resolved. Call for volunteers to read Matthew 16:27–28 and Revelation 21:1–5. List in the right column characteristics of the new age from Revelation 21:3–5 (God’s presence with us, no tears, no death, no pain). Recall the questions about waiting from “Introduce the Study,” step one, and ask, *Are we waiting with dread, or with hope?*

Prepare for the Next Study

7. Point out that death is a reality for each of us, but Christians do not have to grieve without hope when they lose a loved one to death. Challenge participants to find reasons for hope as they prepare for the next session by studying chapter four in *Jesus Is Lord!*

Additional Ideas

Search for Additional Teachings

Divide learners into three teams. Assign each team to find further teachings about the kingdom in one of these Scripture passages. Record answers as the teams report. The information in parentheses is for your use.

- (1) Paul's view: Acts 19:8 and 28:31 (central to Paul's preaching)
- (2) James's Letter: James 2:1, 5 (a kingdom for all people, no matter their wealth or social status)
- (3) Peter's teaching: 2 Peter 1:5–11 (worth giving one's best to serving)
- (4) John's prophecy: Revelation 11:15 (a future hope)

Hymn Study

Use the text of the hymn “O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee” as a closing prayer.¹ After the first stanza, ask, *How do we partner with Jesus in this world?* (service) Instruct the group to search stanzas two and three for specific ways a believer can work with God as he or she awaits the fulfilling of God's kingdom. Follow stanza four with a prayer that God's kingdom will come in its fullness soon.

Notes

1. “O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee,” words, Washington Gladden; music, H. Percy Smith. *The Baptist Hymnal* (Nashville, Tennessee: Convention Press, 1991), no. 279.

SESSION *Four*

Chapter 4, Death Is Defeated

Introduce the Study

1. Have hymnals available and invite participants to read or sing “Because He Lives.”¹ After the first stanza and chorus, ask, *Why is the resurrection of Jesus important to Christians?* After the second stanza and chorus, ask, *How does the resurrection of Jesus give hope to today’s children?* After the third stanza and chorus, ask, *How does the resurrection of Jesus change the way Christians view their own death?* State that in this session we will explore why the resurrection of Jesus is vital to the Christian faith. Add the title, “Death Is Defeated,” to the theme poster or display it using PowerPoint® or an overhead cel.

Guide the Study

2. Review the ways in which the biblical accounts describe Jesus’ resurrection by having several Scriptures read aloud. Encourage the group to listen for the likenesses and differences.
 - Paul’s list: 1 Corinthians 15:3–8
 - John’s description: John 20:10–18

- Matthew's account: Matthew 28:1–8
- Mark's view: Mark 16:1–5
- Luke's version: Luke 23:55–24:5, 10

After the reading, invite reports on the likenesses and differences. Then ask, *Why did the different writers not agree on the number of women and the number of angels present at the empty tomb? What do you think is the significance?* Use the analogy of “polished witnesses and harmonized accounts” from “Introduction” on pages 48–49 in chapter four of *Jesus Is Lord!*

3. Share comments on the change in the disciples after Jesus' resurrection. Begin by referring to the two paragraphs that precede the section “From Discouraged to Daring” on page 49 of *Jesus Is Lord!* Then use the information in the section “From Discouraged to Daring” on pages 49–52. Visualize these truths with PowerPoint®, overhead cels, or marker board as you speak. For a variation in approach, use the following outline.

- (1) Shattered Hopes

- a. Incomplete expectations (Matthew 18:1; Acts 1:6)
- b. Unfulfilled dreams (Matt. 21:8–11)
- c. Miracles witnessed (John 6:8–12, 19; 11:43–44)
- d. Unheeded warnings (Mark 8:31–32)
- e. Crucifixion and death (Luke 24:19–21)
- f. Burial (John 19:38–39)

- (2) Empty Tomb

- a. Fear turns to joy (John 20:19–20)
- b. Pentecost outpouring (Acts 2:1–4)
- c. Disciples' boldness (Acts 4:18–20)

4. Lead class members to help you emphasize the importance and reality of the resurrection by preparing this visual aid. Secure five pieces of 8½ x 11 cover stock, and print one large, bold letter of the word *A-L-I-V-E!* on each. Attach the following statements and verses to the backs of the appropriate letters.

- A** *At Pentecost.* Peter immediately began preaching the resurrection (Acts 2:22–24).
- L** *Lots used to select a successor.* The new apostle had to have witnessed the resurrection (Acts 1:21–26).
- I** *In miracles.* Peter healed in the name of the risen Jesus (Acts 4:8–10).
- V** *Voiced confessions.* Paul stressed that belief in, and confession of, the resurrected Jesus is necessary for salvation (Romans 10:9–10).
- E** *Early traditions.* The earliest confessions of faith included statements on the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:3–4; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–14).

Enlist five members to hold a letter high and read aloud the statement and verses on the back. After these are presented, attach the cards to the wall (or otherwise display them) to spell out the word *ALIVE!* (This activity could be changed for use by means of PowerPoint®, an overhead cel, or marker board by simply listing the italicized phrases with Scripture references. Present the explanation as each phrase is added.) Conclude this activity by summarizing the material in the section “The Resurrection Leads to Recognition of Lordship” on pages 55–56 of *Jesus Is Lord!*

5. Begin a discussion of the section “Age of the Resurrection” on pages 56–58 of *Jesus Is Lord!* by suggesting a definition of *age of the resurrection*. Suggest that it could be defined as *a new era in God’s rule, which began with Jesus’ resurrection*. Summarize the first paragraph of this section on page 56 and the second paragraph on page 57, which begins, “Jesus’ resurrection is important” Read Matthew 27:50–54 as the group listens for the amazing events that accompanied the death of Jesus.

Call for a volunteer who has experienced the immersion mode of baptism that Baptists practice to describe how Baptists conduct that ordinance. Ask, *When we baptize, why do we put new believers under the water?* Read Romans 6:1–4 as the group listens

for the symbolism. (Affirm the symbolism of dying to sin, being buried with Christ in his death, and being resurrected to a new life.) Ask, *How does the resurrection help us live in victory over sin?*

Call for another volunteer who has experienced the loss of a believing loved one to describe how the resurrection gave hope in that time of grief. Read 1 Corinthians 15:20–26 aloud as the group listens for the essence of the Christian’s hope. (Emphasize that Jesus’ resurrection makes possible our resurrection.)

6. Explore the reverse side, the skeptic’s view that there is no resurrection, from 1 Corinthians 15:12–19. Instruct members to listen to the passage and list six results “if Christ has not been raised” (1 Cor. 15:14). Compile their list on marker board or tear sheet (preaching in vain; faith in vain; people who proclaim the resurrection are false witnesses; Christians are still in sins; believers who have died have perished; Christians are the people most to be pitied). Direct the group to page 59, paragraph two. Refer to the comment in that paragraph from William James and then to the quotation from Morton Kelsey. Encourage group members to respond to the comment and the quotation.

Prepare for the Next Study

7. Pose the question, *How is being part of the church similar to belonging to a family?* Ask group members to think of one analogy and bring it with them to the study of chapter five in the next session. Encourage them to read chapter five in *Jesus Is Lord!* prior to the session.

Additional Ideas

Testimonies of Christ's Presence

One of the strongest proofs of the resurrection comes from the way Christ interacts with Christians through the Holy Spirit on a daily basis. Invite several participants who are believers to prepare two-minute testimonies based on recent experiences with the presence of Christ in their lives. Suggest that they recall a recent discovery in Scripture shown to them by the Spirit; an answer to prayer; a refreshing worship experience; or an assurance that came at the death of a dear friend.

Songs of Assurance

Christians love to sing of their hope. Close by singing the chorus of “Because He Lives” and/or the gospel hymn, “He Lives.”²

Notes

1. “Because He Lives,” words, Gloria Gaither and William J. Gaither; music, William J. Gaither. *The Baptist Hymnal* (Nashville, Tennessee: Convention Press, 1991), no. 407.
2. “He Lives,” words and music by Alfred H. Ackley. *The Baptist Hymnal* (Nashville, Tennessee: Convention Press, 1991), no. 533.

SESSION *Five*

Chapter 5, A New Family Is Formed

Introduce the Study

1. Write this question on a marker board or a tear sheet or display it using PowerPoint® or an overhead cel: *How is belonging to a church similar to being part of a family?* Recall from “Prepare for the Next Study” in session four that group members were to bring one analogy of why the church is like a family. Call for sharing, and write responses under the question. Invite someone to read or tell the joke found in the introduction to chapter five (page 61, *Jesus Is Lord!*). Add the title “A New Family Is Formed” to the theme poster or display it using PowerPoint® or an overhead cel.
2. Read the last sentences of the introduction aloud: “You cannot be a committed follower of Christ on the one hand and not a committed church member on the other. Being a Christian disciple and belonging to a church go together” (page 61, *Jesus Is Lord!*). Ask, *Do you agree or disagree with these statements, and why?* Allow time for discussion. State that in this session we will explore what it means to belong to Jesus’ new family and consider whether that is a step we need to take.

Guide the Study

3. Share the situation described in the section “Sheep Without a Flock” (pages 62–63, *Jesus Is Lord!*) in this way. Make two columns on marker board or tear sheet. Label the left column “Infrequent Attenders” and the right column “Non-Attenders.” Ask the group to brainstorm reasons each group might give for not making a solid commitment to today’s church. (Enrich their thoughts with reasons in this section of *Jesus Is Lord!*) Refer to the statistic in paragraph two of page 62 about the sixty-two percent who do not attend church but claim to be followers of Christ.

4. Lead the group to imagine that they have been elected to a task force whose job is to reclaim infrequent attenders and enlist non-attenders. Ask that they begin their task by searching the following Scriptures with you to discover New Testament reasons for the importance of the church. Enrich their answers from the section “Belonging to the Family” (pages 63–64, *Jesus Is Lord!*). These references could be assigned to individuals or teams for research. Information in parentheses is for your use.
 - Romans 8:15–17 (The Spirit makes us sons and daughters, heirs, brothers and sisters in Christ.)
 - Galatians 3:26–29 (We share a common Father and heritage.)
 - 1 Thessalonians 4:9 (Believers are to love one another as brothers and sisters.)
 - 1 Timothy 5:1–3 (We are instructed to care for one another, showing kindness.)
 - 1 John 4:19–21 (We are commanded to love fellow believers.)

Summarize by asking, *How would you convince a person who never or infrequently attends church that belonging to and participating in church is an important part of God’s design for believers?* (Suggest that the group verbalize personal testimonies of what the church family has meant to them.)

5. Explain the meaning of the Greek work for church, *ekklesia*, as given in the section, “The Gathered People of God” (pages 65–66, *Jesus Is Lord!*). Lecture on the gathered church, displaying these points as you speak.
 - a. The church compared to marriage (Ephesians 5:25)
 - b. The church as the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12)
 - c. The church as the new people of God (Eph. 2:12–13; 1 Peter 2:10)
 - d. The church as a fruitful vineyard (John 15:1–8)
 - e. The church defined most often as “a local group of baptized believers” (page 65, *Jesus Is Lord!*)
 - f. Local churches addressed (1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; Revelation 2:1, 8)
 - g. The local church and the universal church compared
 - h. The common commission of all believers (Matthew 28:18–20)

6. Give participants copies of the following matching quiz, and instruct them to match each verse in column 1 with a truth from column 2 (download a copy from www.baptistwaypress.org and duplicate).

Column 1**Column 2**

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| a. Matthew 16:18 | _____ (1) To be in Christ is to be a part of the church. |
| b. 1 Corinthians 12:27 | _____ (2) The church experiences “new life” in Christ. |
| c. 1 Corinthians 12:12–13 | _____ (3) Jesus calls the church “my church.” |
| d. Romans 6:3–4 | _____ (4) The church experiences Jesus’ resurrection power. |
| e. Ephesians 1:18–23 | _____ (5) The church is Christ’s body. |

After a few minutes compare answers. *Answers:* (1) b; (2) d; (3) a; (4) e; (5) c. Differentiate between the church and the kingdom of God as explained in the section “The Church and the Kingdom of God” (pages 67–68, *Jesus Is Lord!*).

7. Initiate a discussion of “consumer mentality” as described in “Church Shopping and Hopping” by asking a participant to read aloud the four wrong questions often asked (page 69, *Jesus Is Lord!*). Inquire why this is not a healthy approach to finding a church. Follow with, *What are some better questions we could ask?* Read the last paragraph on page 69 of *Jesus Is Lord!*
8. Refer to and read or tell one or more of the stories on pages 71–77, such as the story on pages 71–72 of the pastor’s visit; Fred Craddock’s testimony on pages 74–75; the young woman’s comments on page 76; and/or the conversation between a son and his father on page 77.

Prepare for the Next Study

9. Read this quotation from chapter six, to be studied in the next session: “If we are honest with ourselves, we have to admit that many Christians in consumer-driven America live as materialistically as their unbelieving neighbors. Our cars are just as luxurious, our homes just as grand, and our possessions just as plentiful” (page 80, *Jesus Is Lord!*). Challenge the group to study chapter six and decide whether that evaluation is fair.

Additional Ideas

Conversational Scripture Reading

Enlist three volunteers to read the story of the rich ruler conversationally from Luke 18:18–25. Assign one to read the quoted words of Jesus, the second to read the quoted words of the ruler, and the third to read the connecting narration outside of quotation marks. After the reading, ask the group to explain why they think the man turned away. Conclude with the quotation of Dietrich Bonhoeffer on “cheap grace,” found in the section “Beyond Self to Service” (page 70, *Jesus Is Lord!*).

True or False Quiz

Read each statement aloud and invite answers and discussion (or download from www.baptistwaypress.org and duplicate). Enrich the discussion with ideas from the two sections “Power Among God’s People” and “A Place for Everybody” (pages 71–75, *Jesus Is Lord!*).

- ___ 1. Church members are to encourage and support one another in our common journey of faith.
- ___ 2. Church members are to strive to meet one another’s needs because they carry the love of Christ in their hearts.
- ___ 3. It is appropriate and helpful for believers to discipline a church member who is living outside the boundaries of scriptural teachings.
- ___ 4. One purpose in using our spiritual gifts and abilities is to strengthen our fellow believers.
- ___ 5. The church is one place on earth where everyone should feel equal and everyone should be treated the same.

SESSION *Six*

Chapter 6, We Are to Live Jesus' Way

Introduce the Study

1. At the top of a marker board or tear sheet write this question (or display it using PowerPoint® or an overhead cel): *In light of Christ's Lordship, how should a believer's lifestyle be different from that of a non-believer's?* Read the quotation from chapter six posed at the end of session five: "If we are honest with ourselves, we have to admit that many Christians in consumer-driven America live as materialistically as their unbelieving neighbors. Our cars are just as luxurious, our homes just as grand, and our possessions just as plentiful" (page 80, *Jesus Is Lord!*).

Divide the space under the question into two columns. Label the left column "Believers." Label the right column "Non-believers." Ask the group to scan paragraph three of chapter six (page 78, *Jesus Is Lord!*) and list for the right column the commitments of many non-believers (money, sex, personal fulfillment). Pose the following questions for discussion:

- What would you like to say to the author to refute these claims?
- Which of the secular pitfalls on the list are most evident among church attenders?

Read aloud the sentence in paragraph two on page 79 that begins, “Various surveys . . .” Challenge the group to look at this chapter and determine to what extent they have allowed the words of Christ to impact their everyday lives. Add the title “We Are to Live Jesus’ Way” to the theme poster or display it using PowerPoint® or an overhead cel.

Guide the Study

2. In the left column under “Believers,” write “Stuff to Store.” Point participants to that subtopic in the section “Given to Gold” (see pages 80–81, *Jesus Is Lord!*). Call on a volunteer to read the author’s experience, beginning with the sentence in the paragraph that begins, “The last time I moved . . .” and continuing through the sentence on page 81 that begins, “Then we die . . .” Under “Stuff to Store,” write the word, “affluenza.” Ask the group to circle the word in their books on page 81, and invite someone to share the definition from that paragraph.

Under “affluenza” add, “the Diderot Effect.” Lead the group to find the explanation of that term in the first paragraph on page 82. Ask, *What is the danger of that syndrome?*

3. Encourage the group to turn together to the story of the rich ruler in Luke 18:18–27. Consider reading this story aloud conversationally if the group did not do this in the previous session. (See “Additional Ideas” in session five.) Pose these questions for discussion:
 - How did Jesus feel about this man?
 - Why do you think the man turned away?
 - Was Jesus’ requirement unreasonable?
 - Does Jesus ask this total abandonment of wealth from every believer?
 - When is enough, enough? Or, when are possessions okay?

Call for volunteers to read these warnings in Scripture about wealth: Matthew 6:19–21, 24, 33; 1 Timothy 6:6–10, 17–19. In the “Believers” column, mark out the words “Stuff to Store,” “affluenza,” and “Diderot Effect.” Ask, *From these Scriptures, what are some better principles for Christians to follow regarding money and possessions because of the Lordship of Christ?* (Affirm answers like these: emphasize treasure in heaven; put God’s work first; be content with enough; control your desires; trust God, not money; do good works; share.)

4. Enlist a volunteer to read the story of the nursing student, told under the subtopic, “Upside Down” (pages 85–86, *Jesus Is Lord!*). In the “Believers” column write the heading “Relationships” and the subheadings “Marriage” and “Human Sexuality.” Lecture on these topics, providing a visual display with PowerPoint®, overhead cels, or marker board. Write or display this outline as you speak:
 - (1) Marriage
 - a. Compare to Christ and his church (Ephesians 5:32–33)
 - b. Reality of divorce
 - c. Abandonment of commitment
 - (2) Human sexuality
 - a. Sexual behavior outside of marriage
 - b. Cohabitation among Christians
 - c. Acceptance of same-gender sexuality
5. Read or tell the story of the author’s ministry to a man dying of AIDS, including the letter written to him after the funeral. (Find these under the subheading, “Same-Gender Sexuality” on pages 88–91, *Jesus Is Lord!*) Follow the story by quoting the author’s conclusion: “The church is going to face a growing pressure to accept same-gender sexuality or be accused of narrow-minded bigotry. Homosexuality is going to be a watershed issue in church life in the coming years.” Allow participants to agree or disagree, and to give their reasons.

Follow the discussion by calling for a reading of Romans 1:21–27 from two different Bible translations. Raise these questions for further discussion.

- If the Bible so clearly teaches that same-gender sexuality is sin, can Christians refuse to present that teaching to the world?
 - Does God hate both the behavior and the sinner, or only the behavior?
 - What is the right thing for churches to do regarding ministry to people with homosexual tendencies or with sexually-transmitted diseases?
6. Complete the lecture using the information in the section titled “Discrimination” (pages 91–94, *Jesus Is Lord!*). Continue to add to the outline begun in step four, as follows:

(3) Discrimination

- a. Eleven o’clock Sunday morning segregation
- b. Narrow groups of people
- c. Ethnic exclusions
- d. Age-group exclusions

Close with the quotation by Clarence Jordan (pronounced *Jur’ dan*), who founded Koinonia Farm in 1942 (page 93, *Jesus Is Lord!*). Note that Habitat for Humanity was born out of the Koinonia Farm experience.

Prepare for the Next Study

7. Refer to chapter seven, “Jesus—King of the Cosmos,” and to “Conclusion—This Book’s and Yours,” in *Jesus Is Lord!* Note that chapter seven deals with a topic we often do not think about concerning Jesus and that “Conclusion—This Book’s and Yours” summarizes the book and calls for a decision about Jesus’ Lordship. Challenge the group to read both the chapter and the conclusion before the final session.

Additional Idea

Attitude Test

On marker board or tear sheet, write three possible answers: *Always*; *Sometimes*; *Almost Never*. Encourage participants to respond silently as you read these questions. (This activity is also available as a handout for downloading from www.baptistwaypress.org.)

- (1) My family and I work hard at resisting pressure to spend selfishly.
- (2) We strive to give generously to our church and charitable causes.
- (3) I have made a firm commitment to make my marriage work.
- (4) We teach and model principles of morality.
- (5) I believe Christians should seek to minister to people whose lifestyle is outside the teachings of the Bible.
- (6) Our church treats equally people of all ages, economic situations, and racial backgrounds.

SESSION *Seven*

Chapter 7, Jesus—King of the Cosmos, and Conclusion— This Book’s and Yours

Introduce the Study

1. Point out that the universe we can see is this many miles across: 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 (that’s a million million million million miles).¹ Display the number. Mention, too, that all the physical matter we can see in the solar system takes up about a trillionth of the available space.² Then refer the group to Isaiah 40:12 and Psalm 24:1–2, and enlist two people to read each passage aloud.³ State that in this lesson we will explore Jesus’ Lordship over all the world and all the universe.

Invite comments as to what the group thinks of when they heard the word *cosmos*. Lead the class to see that *cosmos* refers to all the universe, all the created order. State that the *cosmos* belongs to our God and the Lord Jesus! Add the title “Jesus—King of the Cosmos” to the theme poster, or display it using PowerPoint® or an overhead cel.

2. Display these portions of the outline of chapter seven using PowerPoint®, an overhead cel, a marker board, or a tear sheet, as follows:
 - a. Lord over Jews and Gentiles
 - b. Lord over Believers and Unbelievers

- c. Lord over the Living and the Dead
- d. Lord over This World and the World to Come
- e. Lord over All Spiritual Forces and Authorities

Read the second paragraph of the introduction to chapter seven on page 96 of *Jesus Is Lord!* It begins, “When applied . . .” Follow with this question: *Is your view of Jesus big enough to include all these areas of the known and unknown?* State that in this session we will be faced with a decision—whether to accept Jesus as Lord, live his way, and receive his blessings; or to refuse him and be “lord” of our own destinies.

Guide the Study

3. Lecture from the section “Lord over Jews and Gentiles” (pages 97–98, *Jesus Is Lord!*) using these points from Acts 2:32–36. Display these points as you speak:
- The resurrection affirms Jesus’ divinity (Acts 2:32).
 - Jesus is now in a position of authority (Acts 2:33).
 - Jesus sits at the right hand of God (Acts 2:34).
 - Jesus is both Christ and Lord of the universe (Acts 2:36).

End this portion of the lecture with Acts 15:11, “But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are.” State that the Christian position is that salvation and eternal life come in the same way for every person—through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

4. Raise these questions for discussion. Use the information in “Lord over Believers and Unbelievers” and “Lord over the Living and the Dead” (pages 98–100, *Jesus Is Lord!*) to enrich the discussion.
- (1) What reasons do people today give for refusing to believe in Jesus?

- (2) What will happen concerning Jesus' Lordship when Jesus returns at the end of the age? (See Philippians 2:10–11 and paragraph one, page 99, *Jesus Is Lord!*)
 - (3) According to Romans 2:6–11, what will happen on the day of God's judgment?
 - (4) Who will give an account of themselves on the day of God's judgment?
5. Enlist a participant to read the first paragraph on page 101 in the section "Lord over This World and the World to Come." It begins, "While Jesus' reign . . ." In advance, have a second group member prepared to read aloud the Scripture passages referred to in that paragraph. Invite a third member to read from Mark 14:62 Jesus' own words about his Second Coming, which he spoke at his trial. Draw a circle on marker board or tear sheet to represent eternity, without beginning or ending. Draw a very short line within the circle to visualize time and the created universe. State that the Lordship of Jesus extends far beyond the world of time and space as we know it to be. Remind the group that the infinite cannot be understood by the finite.
6. Begin a lecture from the section, "Lord over All Spiritual Forces and Authorities" (pages 101–105, *Jesus Is Lord!*) by explaining the struggle between light and darkness and how Jesus brought and is light. Use John 1:1–14 to develop these ideas:
- Jesus was the Word who was with God before creation (John 1:1–2).
 - Jesus was the Creator of the universe and all life (John 1:3).
 - In the cosmic battle between light (good) and darkness (evil), many do not recognize or accept Jesus (John 1:4–5).
 - Those who believe by faith are born into a new life (John 1:11–12).
 - Jesus came into the world in human form for a time to show us the truth and grace of God (John 1:14).

Display the following topics, using PowerPoint®, an overhead cel, a marker board, or a tear sheet.

- (1) Satan
- (2) Demons
- (3) Cosmic Powers
- (4) Death

Invite the group to help you complete this lecture. Divide into four teams, and ask each team to prepare a three-minute presentation of their subtopic from the section, “Lord over All Spiritual Forces and Authorities.” Instruct them to include two Scriptures from their assigned section in their presentation. (An alternate method would be to ask four of the more knowledgeable members to each take one section and prepare their presentation before class begins.) Affirm their work, and close this portion of the study with material under the section “Glory to God.”

Bring the Study to Conclusion

7. Present a summary of the teachings of *Jesus Is Lord!* using PowerPoint®, overhead cels, a marker board, or a tear sheet. Refer the group to “Conclusion—This Book’s and Yours.” Going section by section, invite the class to suggest a key learning or learnings from each chapter. Write down ideas on a marker board or tear sheet.

Read the first paragraph under “A Decision Determines” (page 110, *Jesus Is Lord!*). Tell the story on pages 110–111 of the person who visited Dr. Batson’s office. Share the thoughts in the next-to-last paragraph on page 111, and invite people to decide to make Jesus *Lord* if they have not done so.

Lead the class to say together, “Jesus is Lord!” End the study by singing the chorus of “He Is Lord.”⁴ Invite any who wish to make a commitment of their lives to Jesus as Lord to remain after the study and talk with you further.

Notes

1. Bill Bryson, *A Short History of Nearly Everything* (New York: Broadway Books, 2003), 18.
2. Bryson, *A Short History of Nearly Everything*, 24.
3. See Jim Denison, Lesson Five on Psalms, *Adult Online Bible Commentary* (Dallas, Texas; BAPTISTWAY PRESS, 2006), at www.baptistwaypress.org.
4. “He Is Lord,” words, Linda Lee Johnson, Claire Cloninger, and Tom Fettke; music: stanzas and arrangement, Tom Fettke; traditional refrain. *The Baptist Hymnal* (Nashville, Tennessee: Convention Press, 1991), no. 178.

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