

# STUDY GUIDE

## ***JESUS THE KING:***

### ***UNDERSTANDING THE LIFE AND DEATH OF THE SON OF GOD***

#### **BY TIMOTHY KELLER**

HIS PLACE CHURCH, APRIL 6 – MAY 30, 2019

THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 2019:

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"BEFORE" (PP. XIII–XXII):

1. Which of the following is NOT one of the statements that Keller writes to explain the purpose of this study:
  - a. "It is an extended meditation on the historical Christian premise that Jesus's life, death, and resurrection form the central event of cosmic and human history as well as the central organizing principle of our own lives."
  - b. "The whole story of the world—and of how we fit into it—is most clearly understood through a careful, direct look at the story of Jesus."
  - c. "My purpose here is to try to show, through his words and actions, how beautifully his life makes sense of our own."
  - d. "Before we can understand what the 'Christ of faith' may have to offer us, we need to establish the basic facts of the life of the 'Jesus of history.'"
  
2. According to Keller, which of the following is NOT true of David Strauss's 1860 book, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*?
  - a. This book convinced Friedrich Nietzsche that he could not know who Jesus really was
  - b. In reading the Gospel accounts through an antisupernaturalist lens, this book fails to make sense of why Jesus was crucified or why his disciples remained loyal to his teaching after his crucifixion
  - c. This book argues compellingly that the Gospels are not long-evolving oral traditions but rather oral histories, written down from the accounts of the eyewitnesses
  - d. This book continues to challenge the faith of students in "the Bible as literature" undergraduate courses

3. At the conclusion of this chapter, Keller cites “The Book that Understands Me,” by Emile Cailliet. Which of the following is the best summary of the point that Keller draws from this essay?
  - a. Seeing your friend die in front of you with a bullet in his chest can shake even the best constructed philosophical arguments
  - b. There is no satisfaction like sitting under a tree in your own garden and reading a book that you yourself have compiled
  - c. The person of Jesus presented in the Gospels fulfills our longing for someone who understands our spiritual plight and demonstrates his power to redeem us
  - d. You should be wary of ministers who give French Bibles to women strolling with their children in baby carriages
  
4. **Discussion Question:** Whereas in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the revelation that Jesus is the Messiah is one of the central plotlines of the narratives, the Gospel of John opens with a profound statement of the deity and messiahship of Jesus. John 1:1 declares Jesus to be God, and Andrew announces Jesus as the Messiah in John 1:41. How does this difference affect the stories that John presents in his Gospel?

THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2019:

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CHAPTER 1: “THE DANCE” (PP. 3–14):

5. In this chapter, Keller shows us that God’s action in the creation and redemption of the world reveal God to be a Trinity. What is the significance of starting this study of the life of Jesus by expositing the doctrine of the Trinity?
  - a. The doctrine of the Trinity sets Christianity apart from the other monotheistic religions of Judaism and Islam
  - b. The doctrine of the Trinity showcases some of the greatest intellectual achievements in the Christian tradition
  - c. The doctrine of the Trinity teaches that God in his interior life enjoys relationships of love, and therefore relationships of love are what life is really all about
  - d. The doctrine of the Trinity demonstrates that God is a personal God, because love relationships can only exist between persons

6. Which of the following represents Keller's theological analysis of the temptations that Jesus faced in the wilderness?
  - a. The temptation was that Jesus would use his divine power to overcome the limitations of the incarnation
  - b. The temptation was that Jesus would step out of orbit from the Father and the Spirit and become self-centered
  - c. The temptation was that Jesus would come to see the demonic as an impersonal force
  - d. The temptation was that Jesus would become proud of his own moral perfection
  
7. **Discussion Question:** In Matthew 1:20, 2:13, and again in 2:19, an angel appears to Joseph and instructs him on what to do next. We understand that Muslims in the Middle East are experiencing dreams and visions of Jesus and are coming to faith in Christ. How can Matthew 1 and 2 inform our theology of dreams and visions today?
  
8. **Discussion Question:** In Matthew 3:4, John the Baptist is described as dressed in a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt, which is precisely the dress by which Elijah was recognized (see 2 Kings 1:8). How does the ministry of Elijah prefigure the ministry of John the Baptist?
  
9. **Discussion Question:** Each of the Synoptic Gospels records first the baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13–17, Mark 1:9–11, Luke 3:21–22), then the temptation (Matthew 4:1–11, Mark 1:12–13, Luke 4:1–13), then the call of the disciples (Matthew 4:18–22, Mark 1:16–20, Luke 5:1–11), and then the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. What is the significance of this order of events?

THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 2019:

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CHAPTER 5: "THE POWER" (PP. 52–62):

10. Citing Richard Bauckham and Vincent Taylor, Keller notes that Mark includes seemingly irrelevant details in his narrative which affirm that the story represents an authentic memory of an eyewitness. Which of the following details from Mark's account of the stilling of the storm does Keller take as an example of this?
  - a. That Jesus was in the stern
  - b. That Jesus was asleep on a cushion
  - c. That the waves broke over the boat
  - d. That the disciples cried, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

11. Keller notes that the disciples were afraid *before* Jesus stilled the storm, but they were terrified *after* Jesus stilled the storm. Which of the following best describes the spiritual lesson that Keller draws from this observation?
- Through the stilling of the storm the disciples came to realize that Jesus is God, and we should expect today to recognize the power of God in nature
  - The disciples realized that Jesus was even more unmanageable than the storm, and we should expect today that God will allow events beyond our control for purposes beyond our understanding in our lives
  - The disciples realized that Jesus would allow them to be tested severely in the future, but we should expect today that God no longer allows such drastic testing during our own day
  - The disciples believed that Jesus did not care about whether their fishing company “tanked” or not, and we should expect today that God is more concerned about the state of our souls than the success of our businesses
12. **Discussion Question:** After Jesus calms the storm, he asks the disciples why they were so afraid. Why does Jesus ask them this? How would you have responded if you were one of the disciples?
13. **Discussion Question:** God still allows severe testing in the lives of his disciples today. How should we counsel fellow believers who are in the middle of a severe trial and who express to us fear that God is allowing their faith to be overwhelmed by a storm?

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CHAPTER 6: “THE WAITING” (PP. 63–74):

14. In this story, Keller explores the patience of faith that is required of Jarius. What in this story would have naturally caused Jarius to be very impatient?
- Jarius wanted the woman who had suffered with the issue of blood for twelve years to be healed as soon as possible
  - Jarius wanted the woman’s physicians whose treatments had only made her worse for the past twelve years to be fired as soon as possible
  - Jarius wanted Jesus to address the crowds assembled for the synagogue’s twelfth-year anniversary as soon as possible
  - Jarius wanted to Jesus arrive at his house so that he could heal his twelve-year-old daughter as soon as possible

15. In this chapter, Keller says that “Jesus will not be hurried” (p. 67). Which of the following is the best summary of the spiritual lesson that Keller draws from the story of Jairus?
- God is eternal, and so his plans require vastly more time to complete than we could possibly imagine; it’s best simply to let be what will be
  - God knows everything, and so God knows that he will be able to correct anything that is out of place before the end of time
  - Jesus’ plans do not operate according to our schedules but they do bring about restoration in our lives at a much deeper level than we originally think to ask for
  - Jesus’ plans are designed to require the maximum faith from us that we can muster
16. **Discussion Question:** When Jesus heals the woman with the issue of blood, he says to her: “Daughter, your faith has made you well” (Mark 5:34, ESV). What does Jesus mean that it was the *faith* of the woman that healed her?

THURSDAY, MAY 2, 2019:

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CHAPTER 11: “THE TRAP” (PP. 134–150):

17. At the beginning of this chapter, Keller cites Andrew Walls, the historian of world Christianity, noting that in the twentieth century....
- Christianity receded or grew only marginally in Africa, Latin America, and Asia but grew dramatically in Europe and North America
  - Christianity receded or grew only marginally in Europe and North America but grew dramatically in Africa, Latin America, and Asia
  - More than 50 percent of Christians in the world now live in the northern hemisphere
  - The center of world Christianity shifted from the Mediterranean world to the global north

18. Which of the following is the best paraphrase of Keller's explanation of Jesus' teaching that it is harder for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to get into the kingdom of God (see Mark 10:25)?
- The "needle's eye" was a gate in Jerusalem's walls that was very narrow and through which camels laden with goods could not easily pass
  - Wealth has an incredible power to deceive us into thinking that we are self-sufficient, and without the miraculous intervention of God, no one who possesses wealth would escape this delusion
  - The Aramaic word "camel" sounds very much like the Aramaic word for "twine," and so Jesus is saying that it requires great care and concentration for the rich to enter the kingdom of God
  - Jesus is condemning the rich as intrinsically wicked and condoning the poor as intrinsically virtuous
19. **Discussion Question:** Keller paraphrased Andrew Walls' observations eloquently on world Christianity when he wrote: "When Christianity is in a place of power and wealth for a long period, the radical message of sin and grace and the cross can become muted or even lost" (p. 136). How do you see this principle playing out today?
20. **Discussion Question:** Keller writes: "When Jesus called this young man to give us his money, the man started to grieve, because money was for him what the Father was for Jesus. It was the center of his identity" (p. 144). What do you find your attitude toward money to be as you read this story?

THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2019:

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CHAPTER 14: "THE FEAST" (PP. 178–188):

21. In order to trace as accurately as possible the theology of the atonement, Keller poses the question: "Why in the world would the sacrifice of a woolly little quadruped exempt you from justice?" (p. 179). Which of the following is the best response to this query?
- The point of the Gospels referring to Jesus as the "Lamb of God" was to prove that Jesus fulfilled the prophecy in Isaiah 53
  - The best way to explain an oath from biblical times is to compare it to the signing of a contract in modern times
  - The Passover is an illustration pointing to the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, who took upon himself the divine judgement for the sins of the world
  - The atonement is a mystery—like the three persons of the Trinity or the two natures of Christ—and cannot be explained by rational theories alone

22. Which of the following lists represents the four promises of God commemorated at Passover in the four cups of wine?
- For the delivery of the Torah, for freedom from slavery, for redemption by God's divine power, and for a renewed relationship with God
  - For a renewed relationship with God, for freedom from slavery, for redemption by God's divine power, and for rescue from Egypt
  - For freedom from slavery, for redemption by God's divine power, for the conquest of Canaan, and for a renewed relationship with God
  - For rescue from Egypt, for freedom from slavery, for redemption by God's divine power, and for a renewed relationship with God
23. **Discussion Question:** Keller writes: "All real, life-changing love is costly, substitutionary sacrifice" (p. 183). Is this true in your own experience? How could you use this principle to explain the gospel to someone in a conversation?

THURSDAY, MAY 23, 2019:

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CHAPTER 17: "THE END" (PP. 212–231):

24. When Jesus was asked directly during his trial whether he was the Messiah, he responded in which of the following ways?
- Jesus said "I am the Son of Man," thereby affirming his genuine humanity
  - Jesus said "I am not," thereby denying that he was guilty of blasphemy
  - Jesus said "I am," thereby both affirming that he was the Messiah and also claiming the divine name from Exodus 3:14
  - Jesus remained silent, thereby affirming that the Sanhedrin already knew that Jesus was the Messiah
25. Keller notes that all four of the Gospel writers emphasize that the crucifixion happened in the dark. What is Keller's point in drawing attention to this historical detail?
- That the darkness was a supernatural darkness and displayed the darkness and disintegration that Jesus experienced at the hand of God's judgement as our substitute
  - That the darkness could not have been caused by a windstorm, since Passover is always celebrated in the wet season in Israel
  - That the darkness could not have been caused by a solar eclipse, because Passover is always celebrated at a full moon
  - That the darkness was a supernatural darkness and was intended to remind the people of the darkness over the land of Egypt during the first Passover

26. **Discussion Question:** What do you understand Jesus to mean when he says during the Last Supper “this is my body” and “this is my blood” (see Matthew 26:26–28, Mark 14:22–24, Luke 22:19–20)?
27. **Discussion Question:** What is it that we can do as believers today to pursue the unity of the church for which Jesus prays in John 17:20–21?

THURSDAY, MAY 30, 2019:

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CHAPTER 18: “THE BEGINNING” (PP. 232–246):

28. Keller recounts the absolute surprise with which the news “He is risen!” reached the disciples. And yet, Keller explains that the disciples should not have been surprised to hear this. Why?
- Because the story of Jonah and the whale prefigured Jesus’ own death, burial, and resurrection
  - Because the disciples should have known well the prophecies from the Old Testament concerning the resurrection of the Messiah
  - Because Jesus had specifically told his disciples three times that he would rise again from the dead
  - Because the concept of resurrection was plausible in the worldview of the ancients
29. The earliest witnesses to the empty tomb were all women. Which of the following observations does Keller draw from this fact?
- That demonstrates Jesus’ special relationship with his women followers
  - That the women followers had greater faith than the twelve disciples
  - Since the testimony of women was not considered legally valid in first-century Jewish culture, the only reasonable explanation why all of the four Gospels would include this fact is that it was true
  - The Gospel writers list the names of the women followers probably because they were all still alive at that time and could be called on to verify the account
30. **Discussion Question:** Each of the four Gospels concludes with the resurrection. How ought the story of the resurrection to enter into our sharing of the gospel?