



# A Clash of Kingdoms Chapter 1

## Ray Vander Laan

### WHY LEARNING COMMUNITIES?

To develop spiritual character and strength to face **anything** by...

1. Learning anchored in Biblical truth but addressing cultural issues
2. Relationships that connect and blossom even outside the meetings

**Ephesians 4:11–16 (ESV)** <sup>11</sup>And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, <sup>12</sup>to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup>until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, <sup>14</sup>so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. <sup>15</sup>Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, <sup>16</sup>from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

**Remember... it's all about putting God's truth into action in everyday lives**

### SESSION 1, "The Gospel of Caesar"

#### → God's Great Story

The Bible is God's great story reclaiming a broken world.

God redeemed a group of slaves from Egypt and brought them to Mt. Sinai.

There He commissioned them to be a "Kingdom of Priests"...

a community of people who would put Him on display by what they said and how they lived  
pledged to live among them, to be present with them,  
told them to live a holy live to show Who God is and what He is like

**APPLICATION:** What does it mean to be a "Kingdom of Priests"?

#### **Exodus 19:1–6 (ESV)**

**Matthew 28:18–20 (ESV)** <sup>18</sup>And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Then God sent His Son Who completed the task of redemption through His death and His resurrection and His ascension. In the process He trained a group of disciples, giving them the same mission Israel had always had: “Be My witnesses. Let your light shine. Hallow My Name. Then He sent them out to the greater world to show through words and actions Who He was and what He had done in His Son, Jesus.

One of those disciples was Apostle Paul to proclaim that a new king has come.

***This study is a challenge to become part of the story***, to accept the call ***“that the world may know”*** Who God is.

### ➔ **Paul proclaims the gospel of Christ to people who live by the gospel of Rome**

**Ephesians 6:19 (ESV)** and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel,

Bible – God’s word, Good News, account of redemption, restoration

Temple to Hadrean – “lord and god, also claimed to bring good news/ gospel” – his good news was paved roads, running water, theaters, temples, an unusual forum

Paul was commissioned to bring Bible good news to “that” world – Phillippi

50,000 miles of paved road in Roman Empire

Paul met Jesus, went through training, went on first missionary tour

Back to Antioch of Syria, then was sent on 2<sup>nd</sup> teaching tour – THIS STUDY

takes Timothy, Spirit wouldn’t let him go where thought he should, kept heading west, vision of Man from Macedonia – God’s instruction to go to Macedonia – got on boat in Turkey and sailed along with Silas, Luke, Timothy stepped on to the road into Macedonia

### ➔ **The *Via Egnatia*: Paul’s route into Macedonia**

**Acts 16:6–10 (ESV)** <sup>6</sup>And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. <sup>7</sup>And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. <sup>8</sup>So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. <sup>9</sup>And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” <sup>10</sup>And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

**APPLICATION:** What is your “Macedonia?”

The road for Paul was ready long before Paul arrived. Paved around 168 BC, almost 200 years before Paul arrived.

Challenge: ***“go to your Macedonia whatever it is.”***

### ➔ **Philippi: battles that changed the world**

Viewing Philippi from atop a hill - named after Alexander the Great's father who rescued the city  
Rome ruled by 2 consuls who ruled for a year

Julius Ceasar defeats Gaul, marches army into Rome, seized power turning Rome into empire instead of Republic

March 15, 44 BC republic supporters, Cassius and Brutus, assassinated Julius in the Senate to save the republic. They fled east, raised an army and returned to Rome to make sure they remained republic

Julius' adopted son, Octavian, and one of best generals, Marc Antony, raised an army in Rome and fought to keep Rome an empirical empire – marched east to face Cassius and Brutus and met on the Plain of Drama outside of Philippi. That battle will determine if there will be an imperial empire with a dictator who calls himself a god with a gospel who says he is the savior of the world during the time Jesus is born or whether it will still be a republic.

2 battles.

October 3, 42 BC – Antony flanked Cassius and cut off supply route – Cassius panicked and committed suicide. Brutus defeated Octavian who ran for his life.

October 23 Brutus made fatal mistake of leaving city walls, attacked and lost. Died, buried but head sent to Rome and placed at the foot of the statue of Julius Caesar in the Forum.

***“and the world began to change... “***

### ➔ **The emperor establishes his claim as Lord and god**

About 10 years later, about 300 miles west, 31 BC, Octavian and Antony faced off – Octavian won, became Caesar Augustus. Antony with partner Cleopatra fled to Egypt and committed suicide and

OCTAVIAN IS LORD AND GOD – the imperial climb to deification will begin. His coins will say, “Savior of the World” His statues will say, “The Deified One”. His gospel will say, “Peace, Security has Come”. The golden age as his writers will put it. And Caesar will be Lord and God.

Caesar's way of bringing the good news – dominator, conqueror, Augustus Caesar

### ➔ **Heroon: built to honor and deify the most accomplished heroes**

Made that climb to see the lengths Octavian would go to in order to become Caesar, lord and god. But the way Jesus came to authority and Lordship was very different. There's a place in the ruins that clearly illustrates that difference

Heroon: “hero” in Greek world was much more than what we think of – in their world if someone appeared to accomplish something almost super human, people would gather and honor them because it was believed that the gods had given them the gift of deification. Not that they would become supreme gods – that's different – but they were given some of the privileges and powers of deification.

What being done for Caesar even when he was alive. Didn't think they could really do anything but could have influence with the gods themselves.

Live your life to put yourself on the top of the heap, excel above others

Philip (Alexander's father) was working toward deification – using others to reach the top – heroon a classic illustration of people trying to use others to become great

➔ **Jesus: exalted to the highest place by being a humble servant**

Listen to what Paul writes to Philippi, the city with the heroon of Phillip – ***a heroon turned USD***  
**Philippians 2:5–11 (ESV)**

It's the power that the Heavenly Father's Kingdom comes – YOUR mind, YOUR attitude must be that way

Paul came to say, "Let me tell you about the Kingdom of God, but it works the exact opposite of your world considers normal.

The model for us: not the heroon, but the life and kingdom of Jesus

Are you ready to humble yourself as citizen of kingdom?

Will mean sacrificing yourself, taking up cross for others

**TAKEAWAYS...**



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