

Introduction

This 10 week course takes students on a journey through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, looking at some of the key events in God's plan of salvation.

- The course is comprised of 10 studies with observation and discussion questions.
- 'Filling in the Gaps' sections link together the previous study to the next one in the course.¹
- The NIV Bible text has been included (for students to mark) along with word lists for each study.
- Most of the studies can be finished within an hour, though the later studies may take longer.
- If you use the course you may adapt it to your own needs, change any questions you don't like etc.

A whole year version of the course exists that is designed to fit with the academic year.

- Term 1 Journey from Genesis to Jesus looking at the need for Jesus and the promises of Jesus in the Old Testament and arriving at the events of Christmas just before the Christmas holiday.
- Term 2 looks at Jesus' life and teaching, leading up to his death and resurrection in time for Easter.
- Term 3 looks at additional teaching of Jesus about what it means to be a Christian. The final four sessions look at the spread of the gospel in Acts (2 studies), the second coming and the New Heavens and New Earth.

If you would like a copy of the whole year version, or if you have any questions about the course or comments on the material, please contact Adam Kinnison at adamkinnison@yahoo.co.uk

¹ Feedback from those who have used this 10 week version of the course suggest that students have lots of questions when it comes to the longer 'Filling in the Gaps' sections. You might need to factor in time for this. Alternatively, you could devote one study to looking at the Filling in the Gaps section or omit them completely, giving a verbal summary of the key events at the start of the relevant session. The latter might enable the flow of the series better and keeps the series to 10 weeks.

Exploring the Bible 10 Week Course Outline

No.	Bible Study Title	Bible Text	Page
1	In the Beginning	Genesis 1-2:3	3
2	Man Rejects God	Genesis 3:1-24	6
3	God's Plan to Save Mankind	Genesis 12:1-8	9
4	The Promise of the Christ	1 Chronicles 17:1-15	12
5	The Promise of the Saviour	Isaiah 53:2-12	16
6	The Time has Come!	Luke 1:26-38 & Matthew 1:18-25	23
7	The Death of Jesus	Mark 15:1-39	28
8	Jesus' Resurrection	Luke 23:50-24:53	34
9	The Last Days	Acts 2:1-41	38
10	The New Heavens and the New Earth	Revelation 21 & 22	45

Study 1. In the Beginning – Genesis 1:1-2:3

The Bible

- 66 books written by over 30 human authors during a period of 1,500 years.
- One book whose overall author is God.
- A book in two parts: Old and New Testament.
- A historical book that tells us of real events that happened in the past.
- A book about God and His interaction with people, not a science text book.
- A book about Jesus Christ and God's plan to save mankind through Jesus.

Read Genesis 1:1-25

Observation Questions:

1. (v1) Look at verse 1. According to the Bible, how did the universe begin?
2. (v2) Look at verse 2. What was the earth like at this time?
3. (v3,6,9,11,14,20,24) How did God create everything?
4. (v4,10,12,18,21,25) How is God's creation described?
5. (vv3-13) What did God create on the first three days?
6. (v2 & vv3-13) Fill in the missing words in the sentence: The earth began f_____ and on the first three days God gave it f_____.
7. (vv14-25) What did God create on days four to six?
8. (v2 & vv14-25) Fill in the missing words in the sentence: The earth began e_____ and on the fourth to sixth days God f_____ it.

Read Genesis 1:26-2:3

9. (vv26-27) What was different about man compared with the rest of creation?
10. (vv26&28) What responsibilities did God give to man?
11. (vv29-30) How did God provide for man and all the other living creatures?
12. (v31) How is God's creation described?
13. (2v1-3) What was special about the seventh day?

Discussion and Application Questions:

1. What does this chapter tell us about God? (Think about the repeated words and phrases to help you).
2. How do you believe the world came into existence? What difference does this belief make to the way you live your life? If you become convinced that God made the Universe, what difference do you think that should make to your life?
3. What do you think is the meaning of life? How does this compare to what we have learned today?

Genesis 1:1-2:3 (Study 1)

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. 4 God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

6 And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water." 7 So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. 8 God called the expanse "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

9 And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. 10 God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good.

11 Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. 12 The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. 13 And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

14 And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, 15 and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. 16 God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. 17 God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, 18 to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19 And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

20 And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." 21 So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 22 God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." 23 And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

24 And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. 25 God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

27 So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

29 Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. 30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

2 By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. 3 And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Word List (Study 1)

Genesis 1:1-2:3

Heavens – In the original language this word refers to everything that is above the Earth (from the view point of the person). Heavens and Earth means the whole Universe.

The Deep – The deep waters.

Spirit of God – God exists in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is therefore a person and shares all the characteristics of God with the Father and the Son. He cannot be seen, but his work in people's lives can be seen. He was sent to some of God's people in the Old Testament to equip them for a particular task or role. He is sent to all Christians to help them live more like how Jesus lived and to help them understand God's word and explain it to others. He also gives gifts to God's people to help them serve God and each other.

Hovering – To stay in one place in the air.

Expanse – A huge space.

Gathered – brought together.

Seed-bearing – Something that produces seeds.

Bear – to produce naturally.

According to their kinds – The plants and animals produced fruit and reproduced in the way that God designed them to.

Mark seasons and days and years – To identify the different seasons and days and years.

Govern – To control and manage something

Teem with – To be filled with many.

Fruitful – In this context, to have many children. Generally to produce good results.

Livestock – Animals that are used by humans for food or to use on a farm.

Image: The likeness of something

Likeness: Something that is similar to something else either in character or appearance.

Blessed: To receive a gift from God.

Subdue: To bring something under your control.

Beasts: The animals

Vast array: A large and impressive collection of things.

Holy: Made different by God

Study 2. Man Rejects God – Genesis 3

In Genesis chapter 2, God gave Adam (the first man) a command: “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die”.

Read Genesis 3:1-24

Observation Questions:

1. (v1) Look at what God had said to the man (above). Now look at what the serpent says to the woman. Is what the serpent says true? What has the serpent done to God's words?
2. (vv2-3) Compare the women's response with God's words. Do you notice any differences?
3. (v4) Look at the serpents words to the women. What does the serpent want the women to think about God's word?
4. (v5) Look at the serpents words to the women. How does the serpent want the women to view God?
5. (v6) Why does the woman eat the fruit?
6. (vv7-8) What happens to the man and woman after eating the fruit?
7. (vv9-10) What has happened to man's relationship with God because they ate the fruit?
8. (vv11-13) How do the man and woman respond to God's questions?
9. (vv14-15) What punishment does God give the serpent?
10. (v16) What is the punishment for the woman?
11. (vv17-19) What is the punishment for the man?
12. (vv21-24) What consequences of man's actions do we see here?

Discussion and Application Questions:

1. The fruit was 'good for food, pleasing to the eye and desirable for gaining wisdom'. Why then was it wrong to eat the fruit? (See verse 17)
2. In what ways might we also be tempted to listen to what the serpent says about God's word (the Bible) today?
3. This chapter explains how man's relationship with God has become broken and distant. What hope do you find in this chapter? Look up the following verses:

Verse 9:

Verse 20:

Verse 15:

Verse 21:

Genesis 3:1-24 (Study 2)

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

4 "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. 5 "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

10 He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

11 And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

12 The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

14 So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this,

"Cursed are you above all the livestock
and all the wild animals!

You will crawl on your belly
and you will eat dust
all the days of your life.

15 And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel."

16 To the woman he said,

"I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing;
with pain you will give birth to children.
Your desire will be for your husband,
and he will rule over you."

17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,'

"Cursed is the ground because of you;
through painful toil you will eat of it
all the days of your life.

18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you,
and you will eat the plants of the field.

19 By the sweat of your brow
you will eat your food
until you return to the ground,
since from it you were taken;
for dust you are
and to dust you will return."

20 Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

21 The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. 22 And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." 23 So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. 24 After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Word List (Study 2)

Gen 3:1-24

Serpent – A snake

Crafty – Someone who uses their intelligence to do evil things.

Pleasing to the eye – Something that looks good.

Desirable – Something you want to have.

Wisdom – An understanding of what is true and right as well as the ability to act correctly based on that understanding.

Sewed – To join something together (usually with stitches – a complete loop of a thread and a needle)

Fig leaves – The leaves of the fig tree.

Coverings – Something that is laid over or wrapped around something else with the purpose of keeping it out of sight.

Cool – Temperature below warm but above cold.

Deceived – Misled / made to think the wrong thing because of false information.

Cursed – The person or object that is cursed experiences bad things until the curse is removed.

Livestock - Animals that are used by humans for food or to use on a farm

Crawl – To move along close to the ground.

Belly – The front part of the body (for humans it refers to the outside of the area where the stomach and intestines are located).

Enmity – Rivalry / hatred

Offspring – Usually a persons children but might refer to grandchildren, great grandchildren etc.

Crush – To press or squeeze with force.

Strike – To hit.

Heel – The back part of the foot.

Desire – To want something very much

Toil – Very hard work

Thorns – Plants that are spiky with sharp pointed parts.

Thistles – A type of spiky plant.

Sweat of your brow – To drip liquid from your forehead (the part of the face between the hair and eyes)

Garments - Clothes

Banished – to be officially sent away, usually as a punishment

Drove – sent away with force

Cherubim – a creature from heaven that guarded the way back to the garden of Eden. Two statues of Cherubim were later made to put in the most holy part of the temple. They also appear in a vision of the prophet Ezekiel.

Flashing back and forth – To move very quickly from side to side. The speed of the movement creates the appearance of light suddenly appearing then disappearing.

Study 3. God's Plan to Save People – Genesis 12:1-8

Filling in the gaps

Genesis 4-11 tell us more about the consequences of Adam and Eve's sin. In chapter 4 Adam's first son Cain murders his brother Abel. Later Adam also dies of old age. Chapter 5 provides a list of Adam's descendants. Although they all lived to very old ages, they all eventually die. In Chapter 6 we read that man's wickedness (evil) was so great that God sent a world wide flood to destroy mankind. However he saved a man called Noah and his family. God told Noah to build a large boat in the middle of dry land in which he and his family could be saved. Noah believed God and built the boat and God saved him, his family and also the animals.

In chapter 11 a group of men try to make a name for themselves by making a tower that reaches to the skies. God confuses their language to bring an end to their plan and scatters them over the world. They failed to make a name for themselves, but we do have some names recorded for us in chapter 11. They are names in the family tree of one of Noah's sons and we follow the names down to a man named Terah, the father of Abram, who we will meet today.

Read Genesis 12:1-8

Observation Questions:

1. (v1) In verse 1, God speaks to Abram. What does he ask Abram to leave? What does he ask Abram to do?
2. (v2) What promises does God make to Abram in verse 2?
3. In chapter 11:30 we are told something important about Abram's wife, Sarai. Genesis 11:30: "Now Sarai was barren; she had no children". To be 'barren' means to be unable to have children. What problem does this present to God's promise?
4. (v3) What promises does God make to Abram in verse 3?
5. (vv4-5) How does Abram respond to God's command?
6. (vv4-5) Who else goes with him?
7. (vv6-7) What promise does God make to Abram in these verses?
8. (vv6-7) What information are we told that presents a problem to God's promise?
9. (v7) How did Abram respond to God's promise?
10. (v8) How did Abram respond to God while he was between the cities of Bethel and Ai?

Discussion and Application Questions:

1. Summarise the promises that God made to Abram in this chapter.
2. What things made it difficult for Abram to believe these promises?
3. How does Abram respond to God's promises? What does this tell us about Abram's view of God?

God has made many promises for us in the Bible. As we look into these promises in the coming weeks, think about how you will respond to them.

Genesis 12:1-8 (Study 3)

12 The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.

2 “I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;

I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you.”

4 So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. 5 He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.

6 Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. 7 The LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

8 From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD.

Word List (Study 3)

Genesis 12:1-8

LORD – The personal name for God. It comes from the word Yahweh in the Hebrew language.

Abram – The man who became the father of the nation of Israel. His name was later changed to Abraham

Bless – To give good things.

Curse – To give bad things.

Lot - Abram's **nephew** whose father had died in the previous chapter (Genesis 11:28)

Nephew – The son of a person's brother or sister.

Haran – The name of a city located in the south of modern day Turkey.

Accumulated – to have collected a large number of things.

Canaan – A region, that is now located in modern day Palestine.

Moreh – an Oak tree in the land of Canaan.

Shechem – A city in the land of Canaan.

Canaanites – The people of the land of Canaan, who were known for being very immoral.

Offspring – Usually a persons children but might refer to grandchildren, great grandchildren etc

Altar – A structure (such as a stone) on which people would offer sacrifices to God. The altar would also act as a reminder to future generations of their need for God.

Bethel – A city in Canaan whose name means 'The house of God'. It is located in the modern day West Bank.

Ai – A royal city in Canaan.

Study 4. The Promise of the Christ – 1 Chronicles 17:1-15

Filling in the Gaps

Last week we saw that God made three promises to Abram: The promise of people, blessing and a land. This was the beginning of God's plan to save people and bring them back into a relationship with himself.

The People Promise: At the very old age of 100, God gave Abraham a son which he named Isaac. Isaac had two sons, called Esau and Jacob and Jacob had 12 sons. Jacob had a favourite son, called Joseph. His brothers hated him because of this and they wanted to kill him. When the opportunity came, they decided not to kill him but to sell him as a slave. Through a series of events, God enabled Joseph to become a powerful leader in the land of Egypt. Through his wise leadership, the nation of Egypt had food when all the surrounding nations were suffering in a famine (extreme lack of food). Joseph's father and brothers came to Egypt for food and there they became the nation of Israel.

The Blessing Promise: After Joseph died, the new king of Egypt treated the people of Israel very badly. God used a man called Moses to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt and to the land of Canaan that God had promised Abraham. One the way to Canaan, God gave the people of Israel His law so that they would know how to live as His own people. He also gave them instructions for building a very special building called the tabernacle. This was a bit like a big tent and it represented God being present among His people.

The Land Promise: When the people of Israel came to the land of Canaan they sent spies to look at the land. It was a wonderful land, just as God had promised. However, there were large armies of strong people in the land. The Israelites started to doubt that they could enter the land, but two of the spies called Joshua and Caleb, were convinced they should trust God. The other spies didn't listen and so God caused the people to wander in the desert for 40 years until all those who didn't believe had died. After 40 years, Joshua led the nation of Israel to success in conquering the land.

So the people of Israel settled in the land of Canaan and it became the land of Israel. The promises had come true, but not everything was right. It wasn't long before the people began to forget God and started to believe in other gods from the surrounding nations. The problem of sin still remained. How is God going to deal with this problem? The answer comes in the form of a person: the Christ.

Each time Israel forgot God, God stopped protecting them from their enemies and allowed their enemies to attack them so they would realise their need for God. When they cried out to God for help he sent them a leader who saved them from their enemies. This process continued until Israel asked God for a king so they could be like all the other nations. God gave them a king called Saul, who was tall and strong like the kings of the other nations. However, Saul failed to be the right king for Israel because he didn't obey God. So God gave them another king, called David, who trusted God and obeyed him. David wasn't perfect and made some very big mistakes, but he was a man who believed God and wanted relationship with God. Many of the prayers and songs to God recorded in the Bible book called Psalms were written by David.

It was to King David that God made the promise of the Christ. This was the name given to a king who would reign forever and it was through this person that the problem of sin would be dealt with. We will look this week at the promise of the Christ and next week at how he would deal with the problem of sin.

Read 1 Chronicles 17:1-15

Observation Questions:

1. (v1) What is David concerned about? What do you think he wants to do?
2. (v2) How does Nathan the prophet respond to David? Do you think he supports David's idea?
3. (v3-4) What does God say about David's plan?

4. (v5-6) Why does he say this?
5. (v7) What change did God bring about in David's life?
6. (v8) What does God promise David in this verse?
7. (v9-10a) What does God promise David in these verses?
8. (v10b) What does God promise David here? How does it compare to what David wanted to do for God?
9. (v11) How will this promise be fulfilled? (What will happen so that it comes true)
10. (vv12-13) What does God promise David about his offspring in these verses?
11. (v14) How long will David's offspring be king?

Discussion and Application Questions:

1. Was there anything wrong with David's plan? How much greater was God's plan?
2. How do the promises in verses 8-10 compare to the promises to Abraham: People, Blessing & Land?
3. What evidence is there in verses 11-14 that the offspring of David will be no ordinary man?

This promise to David was partly fulfilled in his son Solomon, who built the temple (God's house), but the Israelite people knew it was really a promise of a future, greater King who would live for ever – the Christ.

1 Chronicles 17:1-15 (Study 4)

17 After David was settled in his palace, he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am, living in a house of cedar, while the ark of the covenant of the LORD is under a tent."

2 Nathan replied to David, "Whatever you have in mind, do it, for God is with you."

3 But that night the word of God came to Nathan, saying:

4 "Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD says: You are not the one to build me a house to dwell in. 5 I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought Israel up out of Egypt to this day. I have moved from one tent site to another, from one dwelling place to another. 6 Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their leaders whom I commanded to shepherd my people, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?"'

7 "Now then, tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. 8 I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name like the names of the greatest men on earth. 9 And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning 10 and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also subdue all your enemies.

"I declare to you that the LORD will build a house for you: 11 When your days are over and you go to be with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. 12 He is the one who will build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. 13 I will be his father, and he will be my son. I will never take my love away from him, as I took it away from your predecessor. 14 I will set him over my house and my kingdom forever; his throne will be established forever."

15 Nathan reported to David all the words of this entire revelation.

Word List (Study 4)

1 Chronicles 17:1-15

Prophet – A person who would speak God's words.

Cedar – A large type of tree.

Ark of the covenant of the Lord – A wooden chest that contained the two pieces of stone which the law of God was written on. The word covenant means agreement, and the two pieces of stone with the law on them represented God's agreement with his people.

LORD – The personal name for God. It comes from the word Yahweh in the Hebrew language.

Dwell – To live.

Shepherd – Usually a noun for a person who looks after sheep. Here it is used as a verb to describe how the job of the leaders of Israel was similar to the job of a Shepherd with his sheep.

Almighty – The most powerful being.

Pasture – An area of green grass, used to feed sheep.

Flock – A group of sheep.

Cut off – To stop something from making progress.

Oppress – To treat people who are less powerful in an unfair or cruel way

Subdue – To bring something under your control.

Ancestors – Family members in previous generations

Offspring – Usually a persons children but might refer to grandchildren, great grandchildren etc.

Establish – To make something start to exist or start to happen.

Kingdom – The place where a king rules.

Throne – The seat on which the king sits.

Predecessor - The person who had a job or official position before someone else.

Entire – The whole of something.

Revelation – Something that has been revealed (usually by God)

Study 5. The Promise of the Saviour – Isaiah 53:2-12

Filling in the Gaps

Last week we saw that God made some amazing promises to King David about one of his offspring. God promised this offspring would be the one who builds a house for God. He would also be a king forever. God would be his father and he would be God's son.

Some of these promises came true through David's son Solomon. Solomon was given great wisdom by God and he was the one who built the Temple – God's house. Although God didn't live in the Temple, the Temple represented God's willingness to be with his people. During Solomon's time as king, the nation of Israel enjoyed peace and success. Solomon was very rich and towards the end of his life he had many wives. Solomon's heart turned away from God because of his wives and so God took the kingdom away from Solomon. He would not be a king forever. The promises made to King David were speaking of another offspring who would not be born for another 1000 years.

During the time of Solomon's son, Rehoboam, the nation of Israel divided into two parts. From the original 12 tribes of Israel, 10 tribes formed the Northern Kingdom which kept the name Israel. Two tribes (Judah and Benjamin) formed the Southern Kingdom which was known as Judah. Jerusalem and the Temple were in Judah and the people of the Northern Kingdom didn't want to have to go to the Southern Kingdom to worship God. So the king of the Northern Kingdom invented false gods for the people to worship in place of the real God and build their own places to worship these 'gods'. The Northern Kingdom of Israel never turned back to the real God and was destroyed by the nation of Assyria in 722BC.

The Southern kingdom of Judah was more faithful to God. Some of the kings of Judah were described as being like David. However, they were not all faithful and some of the later kings of Judah did things that were even worse than the people of Canaan. So God caused the rulers of the kingdom of Babylon to capture Judah. Many Jewish people were taken into captivity in Babylon around 609BC.

In the years leading up to these events, God sent prophets to both Israel and Judah to warn them about what would happen if they continued to rebel against Him. A prophet was a man who God would use to speak to his people. The prophets explained to God's people that they were doing things that angered God. The prophets also explained to the people that God would forgive them and accept them again if they would turn back to Him. God also used these prophets to tell the people about His future plans. Isaiah was one of the prophets that God used to communicate with his people and in chapter 53 of Isaiah we have a prediction of someone who would come to save God's people from their sins...

Read Isaiah 53:2-12

Isaiah is writing about someone who he calls 'the Servant'. This is the one who will save God's people from their sin.

Observation Questions:

1. (v2) What does Isaiah tell us about the Servant's appearance?
2. (v3) What does Isaiah tell us about the Servant's reputation?
3. (v4) What does Isaiah say the Servant has done for us in verse 4? What does God do to the Servant because of what the Servant has done for us?
4. (v5) What does Isaiah say the Servant has done for us in verse 5? What is the result of the Servant's actions for us?
5. (v6) How does Isaiah describe us in verse 6? What does he say we have done? What does the Lord do about this?
6. (v7) How did the Servant react to the punishment he received in our place?
7. (v8) What happened to the Servant as a result of the punishment? Why did this happen?
8. (v9) Where was the Servant buried after he died? Did he deserve to die?
9. (v10) Who decided that this is what should happen to the Servant? What hope is there for the Servant after his death?
10. (v11) What will happen to the Servant after his death?
11. (v11) What do the Servants death and resurrection achieve? Note: resurrection means 'to come back to life again after being dead'.
12. (v12) What does Isaiah tell us about the Servant's new status after he comes back from the dead? Why will he receive this new status?

Discussion and Application Questions:

1. Compare the status of the Servant before and after his death. Now look at Philippians 2:6-11 in the New Testament. How does the description of the Servant in Isaiah compare to the description of Jesus in Philippians?
2. What evidence do you find in the passage that the Servant didn't deserve to die? What evidence do you find that the Servant was willing to die?
3. What did the Servant's death achieve for us? What did his resurrection achieve for us?

The New Testament says that 'Jesus was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification' (Romans 4:25). Jesus is the Servant that Isaiah promised. Jesus is also the Christ who God promised to David. The whole of the Old Testament has been looking forward to the promise of Jesus being born. Next week we will see this promise come true.

Isaiah 53:2-12 (Study 5)

2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
and like a root out of dry ground.
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

3 He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.
Like one from whom people hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

4 Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.

6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

8 By oppression and judgement he was taken away.
Yet who of his generation protested?
For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was punished.

9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
and with the rich in his death,
though he had done no violence,
nor was any deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,
and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin,
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

11 After he has suffered,
he will see the light of life and be satisfied;
by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many,
and he will bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,
and he will divide the spoils with the strong,
because he poured out his life unto death,
and was numbered with the transgressors.
For he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

Philippians 2:6-11 (Study 5)

- [Jesus], being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
7 rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
8 And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!
9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Word List (Study 5)

Isaiah 53:2-12

Tender – Something that is soft and gentle.

Shoot – A very young plant.

Root – The part of a plant that gets water from the ground. The root usually grows below the ground.

Majesty – The quality of being big, beautiful and impressive. It is often used to refer to a member of the royal family.

Attract – To make someone interested in someone so that they want to spend time with them.

Desire – To want something very much.

Despise – To hate someone and have no respect for them.

Familiar – Well known to you.

Esteem – To admire someone and have respect for them.

Bore – Past tense of **bear**.

Bear – To carry or take something.

Considered – To think about something carefully before making a decision or forming an opinion.

Stricken – Affected by serious problems.

Afflicted – To suffer pain or trouble.

Pierced – To have a sharp object pressed into your skin.

Transgressions – When a person disobeys God's laws.

Crushed – To have been pressed or squeezed with force.

Iniquities – Evil, wickedness. The word means something like 'crooked or bent'.

Peace – When used in the Bible peace not only refers to an absence of conflict, but also to everything being completely right.

Wounds – An injury in which your skin or flesh is damaged, usually very badly.

Healed – To become well again.

Astray – To become lost or to go to the wrong place.

Oppressed – To have been treated in an unfair or cruel way usually by people who are more powerful than yourself.

Lamb – A young sheep.

Slaughter – The killing of an animal for its meat.

Shearers – A person who cuts the wool off a sheep.

Judgement – Punishment for doing wrong.

Generation – A group of people who were born and live around the same time.

Protested – A strong complaint or disagreement.

Assigned – To send someone to a particular place.

Grave – A place under the ground where a dead body is placed.

Wicked – Evil.

Violence – The use of physical force to cause injury or damage to something or someone.

Deceit – To not tell the truth in order to mislead someone.

Suffer – To feel pain in your body or your mind.

Offering – Something presented to God.

Sin - Rejection of God as the king of our lives and instead putting oneself as the most important thing in our life.

Offspring – Usually a persons children but might refer to grandchildren, great grandchildren etc.

Prolong – To make something last longer.

Will – What someone wants to happen.

Prosper – To be successful or do well.

Satisfied – To have all that you want or need.

Knowledge - The facts that a person knows about something.

Righteous – Someone who does what is right.

Servant – Someone who does work for someone else.

Justify – To be made legally right before God. To no longer deserve punishment from God for the bad things that you have done.

Bear – To carry or take something.

Portion – Part of the total.

Spoils – The benefits that someone gets when they win something (often used for the riches to be gained after winning a war).

Poured out – To put some drink into a glass or other container. Here is a reference to the willingness to pour out his blood.

Numbered with the transgressors – Received a criminals death and burial.

Intercession – To speak positively about someone to a person in authority so the authority will change their mind about them.

Philippians 2:6-11

In very nature – Exactly like

Equality – To be equal. Usually when thinking about having the same rights and status.

Rather – Used to introduce a new statement that is true, having just introduced a statement that is not true.

Servant – Someone who does work for someone else.

Likeness – Something that is similar to something else in character or appearance.

Appearance – The way that someone or something looks.

Humbled – In this context – to take a lower status than he deserved.

Obedient – To do what a person or law tells you to do.

Cross – The Roman form of **execution** that was only used on the very worst criminals.

Execution – Punishment for a crime that ends in the person being punished dying.

Exalted – To be given a higher status.

Bow – To show respect by leaning forward and getting on one knee.

Heaven – The perfect place where the spiritual part of a person who has believed in Jesus goes when the person dies.

Under the earth – Referring to the place of punishment where people, who have not believed in Jesus, go when they die.

Acknowledge – To accept and admit that something is true.

Christ – Jesus title. Means anointed one. Anointed means 'set apart for God's work'. This was the title that the people of Israel used for a special king that God had promised would one day come. This King would rule his people with great power and would be a king forever.

Glory – A word to describe greatness that is indescribable (cannot be described)!

Study 6. The Time Has Come! – Luke 1:26-38 / Matthew 1:18-25

Filling in the Gaps

Two weeks ago we saw that God promised King David that one of his offspring would be a king who reigns forever – the Christ. Last week we saw God make a promise that 'the Servant' would save God's people from their sin. Who would be this servant king? We will find out today, but first let's complete our journey through the Old Testament.

If you remember, the Northern Kingdom of Israel was captured by the Assyrian Empire in 722BC and never returned. The Southern Kingdom of Judah was captured by the Babylonian Empire in 609BC. God used a prophet called Jeremiah to make a promise to the people of Judah. He promised that after 70 years of captivity in Babylon, they would be able to return to Jerusalem. After 70 years of captivity, a man named Daniel read and understood Jeremiah's prophecy. He prayed to God that the people would be able to return and rebuild Jerusalem. Daniel was a man who trusted God and was one of the captives in Babylon. He cared about God's reputation and God answered his prayer.

The nation of Babylon was defeated by the Persian Empire and Cyrus, the king of Persia, sent some of the people of Judah back to rebuild the temple and restore their nation. God moved Cyrus heart to cause him to do this. Some of the people returned and began to rebuild the temple. However the new temple was not as impressive as the old one and this made some of the older people sad. The temple represented the fact that God was willing to live with his people. In just over 400 years time, God was going to do something incredible: He was really going to live among his people as a man – Jesus Christ.

The Old Testament finishes with the book of Malachi, written 400 years before Jesus birth. It promises someone would come who would prepare peoples hearts to be ready for Jesus. We call this person 'John the Baptist'.

The New Testament begins with the words "This is the genealogy of Jesus the Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham:". We then have a list of names from Abraham, through David to Jesus. God made great promises to both Abraham and David. These promises are to become true in Jesus....

The Announcement to Mary: Luke 1:26-38

Observation Questions:

1. (1:26-28) How is Mary described in these verses?
2. (1:29) How does Mary react to the greeting of the Angel?
3. (1:30-31) What is the Angel's message to Mary?
4. (1:32-33) How is Jesus described in these verses?
5. (1:34) How does Mary react to the Angel's message?
6. (1:35) What answer does the Angel provide to Mary's question?
7. (1:36-37) What example does the Angel use to show that 'Nothing is impossible for God'?
8. (1:38) How does Mary now react to the Angel's message?

The Announcement to Joseph - Matthew 1:18-25

Observation Questions:

1. (1:18) What was Mary and Joseph's relationship when she became pregnant?
2. (1:19) What did Joseph plan to do? (What did he think had happened?)
3. (1:20 & 24) Why did Joseph change his mind and marry Mary as originally planned?
4. (1:21) Why was the child named *Jesus*? What does *Jesus* mean?
5. (1:22-23) In what ways would Jesus be different from all other children?
6. (1:18 & 24-25) How do we know that Joseph was not the father of Jesus?

Discussion Questions

1. What evidence is there from these two passages that Jesus is the Christ, who God had promised to David and also the Servant Saviour who God promised through Isaiah?
2. What else do we learn about Jesus identity from these passages? What do we learn about Jesus purpose for being born?
3. How do Mary and Joseph respond to the messages the angels brought them? How will you respond to the news that Jesus has been born?

Luke 1:26-38 (Study 6)

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you."

29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. 31 You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. 37 For nothing is impossible with God."

38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

Matthew 1:18-25

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. 19 Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

22 All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us."

24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. 25 But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Word List (Study 6)

Luke 1:26-38

Angel – A messenger of God. Angels are created by God but they are spiritual creatures and therefore do not appear in the story of the creation of the earth.

Nazareth – The largest city in the north of Israel

Galilee – The northern region of Israel

Virgin – Someone who has not had sexual intercourse (sex)

Pledged – A very serious public promise that should not be broken

Descendant – A relative of someone who lived in the past

David – Israel's greatest king

Favoured – Receiving better treatment than other people

with child – To be carrying a baby that is yet to be born

Jesus – The name means 'The Lord saves'

Most High – A name for God that implies He is the most powerful being

Throne – Here referring to Jesus ruling as a king

Reign – To rule or have power over something

house of Jacob – Refers to the people of Israel who all descended from a man named Jacob

Kingdom – The place where a king rules

Holy Spirit – God exists in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is therefore a person and shares all the characteristics of God with the Father and the Son. He cannot be seen, but his work in people's lives can be seen. He was sent to some of God's people in the Old Testament to equip them for a particular task or role. He is sent to all Christians to help them live more like how Jesus lived and to help them understand God's word and explain it to others. He also gives gifts to God's people to help them serve God and each other.

Overshadow – To cover something, like being covered with the shadow of a large object. This was a way of expressing God's protection upon Mary

Holy – Made different by God

Barren – Unable to have children

May it be to me as you have said – May the things you have said come true.

Matthew 1:18-25

Christ – Means anointed one. Anointed means 'set apart for God's work'. This was the title that the people of Israel used for a special king that God had promised would one day come. This King would rule his people with great power and would be a king forever.

Came together – Had sexual intercourse

Righteous – Someone who always tries to do what is right

Expose – To reveal or make known something that has been hidden

Disgrace – The loss of honour or respect; a feeling of shame

Conceived – To form (in this case to become pregnant or to form a baby)

Sins – The things that we do that result from our selfishness, which go against God's character and break God's laws.

Fulfil – To bring about the result of something that was previously promised

Prophet – A person who would speak God's words

Immanuel – a name for Jesus that means 'God with us'

Commanded – To instruct someone to do something with authority

Union – sexual intercourse

Study 7. The Death of Jesus – Mark 15:1-39

Filling in the Gaps

The first four books of the New Testament are often called the four gospels. Gospel means 'good news' and these books tell us the good news about Jesus. They tell us who Jesus is and what he was born to do. They were written so that we might believe that Jesus really is the promised Christ, God's only Son, and that by believing in Jesus we might be saved from our sin and have eternal life (See John 20:31)

After Jesus' birth, we don't hear much about him until he began teaching people about God at the age of around 30 years old. He began his teaching by saying 'The time has come, the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!'. In the first part of each of the gospels we read about Jesus doing many amazing things (called miracles) that proved that he was God's King and demonstrated to people what God's perfect kingdom was like. He healed people's sicknesses, he fed the hungry, he sent away evil spirits, he calmed a powerful storm and he raised dead people back to life again. People were amazed at his teaching and his miracles and they began to follow him.

However, not everyone liked Jesus. The Jewish religious leaders were jealous of him. They feared him because of the things He did and said. They thought that he was only a man but that he was claiming to have the power of God and they wanted to kill him because of it.

Jesus followers knew that He was the Christ, God's promised king, but they didn't know what this really meant. They thought He would be the one to lead the Jewish people out of their current occupation by the Roman Empire. However, Jesus had a far greater purpose to his life. He had come, not to free people from captivity to the Romans, but to free people from their sin and enable them to come back to a relationship with God. This would be achieved through his death and his resurrection and we will look at these two events in the coming weeks.

Jesus says in Mark 10:33-34 *"We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and **will hand him over to the Gentiles, 34 who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.**"* This is the reason that Jesus came. These events are the most important events in history and we will look at them in the next two weeks, starting today with Jesus' death.

Jesus Trial before the Roman Governor (called Pilate): Mark 15:1-15

1. (vv1-5) How does Jesus respond to Pilate's, question? How does Jesus respond to the chief priest's accusations? How does Pilate react to this?
2. (vv6-11) Who does the crowd want Pilate to release? Why do they choose this person? What was this person like in comparison to Jesus?
3. (vv12-14) What do the crowd want Pilate to do to Jesus?
4. (vv10,14-15) What does Pilate think about Jesus' case? What does Pilate decide to do to Jesus? Why does he do this considering what he thought of Jesus' case?

Jesus' Death: Mark 15:16-39**Observation Questions:**

5. (vv17-20) Who would normally wear a purple robe and a crown? Why do the soldiers dress Jesus like this? What does this tell you about who they think Jesus is?
6. (v16-27) List each of the things that the soldiers do in these verses (Hint: Look for each reference to the word 'they')? Who does it look like is in complete control of the situation?
7. (v29-32) What do the passers by, chief priests, teachers of the law and criminals all do to Jesus?
8. (v29-32) What do the passers by and religious leaders want Jesus to do?
9. (v32) Why do they want him to do this? What does this tell you about who they think Jesus is?
10. (v33) What strange thing happens in this verse? What do you think it represents?
11. (v34) What does Jesus say in this verse? Why do you think he says it?
12. (vv35-36) What do some of the people standing near think might happen after Jesus had cried out? What does this tell you about who they think Jesus is?
13. (v37-38) What happened instead?
14. (v38) Why do you think the temple curtain was torn from the top? What is the significance of the curtain being torn in two?
15. (v39) What does the centurion think about who Jesus is? Why does he think this?

Discussion and Application Questions:

1. Read the following parts of Psalm 22: **Psalm 22:1;6-8;15-18**. What evidence is there here that it is God who is in complete control of Jesus death and not the soldiers?
2. What responses to Jesus do we see in these passages (Think about Pilate, the soldiers, those standing by Jesus at the cross, the chief priests and the centurion)? Who do you think Jesus is and how will you respond to him?
3. Why did Jesus die? How will this affect you?

Mark 15:1-15 (Study 7)

Very early in the morning, the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin, reached a decision. They bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate.

2 “Are you the king of the Jews?” asked Pilate.

“Yes, it is as you say,” Jesus replied.

3 The chief priests accused him of many things. 4 So again Pilate asked him, “Aren’t you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of.”

5 But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed.

6 Now it was the custom at the Feast to release a prisoner whom the people requested. 7 A man called Barabbas was in prison with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising. 8 The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did.

9 “Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?” asked Pilate, 10 knowing it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him. 11 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead.

12 “What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?” Pilate asked them.

13 “Crucify him!” they shouted.

14 “Why? What crime has he committed?” asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, “Crucify him!”

15 Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

Mark 15:16-39

The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. 17 They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. 18 And they began to call out to him, “Hail, king of the Jews!” 19 Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. 20 And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him. 21 A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross. 22 They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull). 23 Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. 24 And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get.

25 It was the third hour when they crucified him. 26 The written notice of the charge against him read: ‘the king of the jews.’ 27 They crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left. 29 Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, “So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, 30 come down from the cross and save yourself!” 31 In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. “He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself! 32 Let this Christ, this King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe.” Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

33 At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. 34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?”—which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” 35 When some of those standing near heard this, they said, “Listen, he’s calling Elijah.” 36 One man ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to take him down,” he said. 37 With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. 38 The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. 39 And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, “Surely this man was the Son of God!”

Psalms 22:1; 6-8; 15-21

1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?

6 But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people.

7 All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads:

8 “He trusts in the Lord; let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him.”

15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death.

16 Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet.

17 I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me.

18 They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.

Word List (Study 7)

Mark 15:1-15

Sanhedrin – The council of the Jewish religious leaders.

Bound – To tie something up so that it is secure and cannot move.

Pilate – Pontius Pilate is the name of the Roman governor of Judea during the days of Jesus later life.

Jews – Followers of the Jewish religion.

Accusing – To say someone has done something wrong.

Custom – Something that people do that is traditional or usual for a particular occasion.

Feast – The Passover feast. The celebration of the Passover event when the people of Israel were led out of captivity in Egypt to the promised land of Canaan. God sent an angel to pass over the land of Egypt and kill all the male children who were the first to be born in their family. The Israelite people were instructed to put the blood of a lamb on their doorpost so that the angel would pass over their house and not kill the child. Many Egyptian sons died and so the king of Egypt allowed God's people to leave.

Barabbas – The name of a man who was in prison for murder and rebellion.

Insurrectionists – People who led a rebellion against the government.

Uprising – The act of rebelling against a government.

Envy – The feeling of discontent (not being happy enough with what you have) when we see the success or high position of another person.

Stirred up – To cause people to think or act differently than they would have done without any intervention.

Crucify – A form of punishment that was kept for the worst criminals in Roman times. The criminal would be killed by having their hands and feet nailed to a cross and then left to die of suffocation (not being able to breathe).

Satisfy – To please someone by giving them something they want or need.

Flogged – To hit someone repeatedly with a stick or a whip as a punishment.

Mark 15:16-39

Soldiers – In this case, members of the Roman army.

Praetorium – The tent of a Roman general (leader).

Company – in this context, a group of soldiers.

Purple robe – purple cloth was very expensive.

Thorns – The sharp part of a plant that would be painful to touch.

Hail – To show approval.

Spit – To force some of the clear liquid called saliva out from the mouth.

Homage – To do or say something to show respect or admiration.

Mocked – To say or do things to a person so that others will laugh at them.

Crucify – A form of punishment that was kept for the worst criminals in Roman times. The criminal would be killed by having their hands and feet nailed to a cross and then left to die of suffocation (not being able to breathe).

Cyrene – A place in North Africa in modern day Libya.

Alexander and Rufus – names of the sons of Simon, who were probably known to Mark (who wrote this part of the Bible)

Cross – The two large pieces of wood held together, that would be used for the crucifixion.

Golgotha – A place in Jerusalem. The name means the place of the skull.

Myrrh – A sticky, brown substance used to make incense, perfume and medicines. It was often used on dead bodies to make them smell nicer for burial.

Lots – A way of choosing an outcome to a problem by chance. Usually this would involve people being given similar objects of different sizes, such as sticks of different length, and then the objects would be picked at random to see who would be chosen.

Third hour – 9am

Robbers – Thieves/people who steal things.

Hurled – To throw something with force.

Insults – Harmful words.

Temple – The building where the Jewish people would go to make sacrifices to God. It symbolised God's presence with his people on earth.

Chief priests and the teachers of the law – The Jewish religious leaders.

Christ - Means anointed one. Anointed means 'set apart for God's work'. This was the title that the people of Israel used for a special king that God had promised would one day come. This King would rule his people with great power and would be a king forever.

Heaped – to pile things up/ to put lots of things on top of each other.

Sixth hour – Noon/midday.

Ninth hour - 3pm.

Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani – Aramaic language

Forsake – To leave someone (or stop helping them) when they still need you.

Elijah – The name of one of the people in the Old Testament who was used by God as a prophet (someone who spoke God's message to God's people). Elijah didn't die. Instead God took him to heaven. The Old Testament finishes by saying that Elijah would be sent to earth again before the Lord comes himself (Malachi 4:5-6). Jesus says elsewhere that John the Baptist represented the coming of Elijah again (Matthew 17:11-13).

Sponge – Material that is used for absorbing liquid (holding onto a lot of liquid)

Breathed his last – Died.

Curtain of the temple – A large piece of fabric (material made from cloth) that separated the Most Holy Place in the temple from the rest of the temple. Only one man was allowed behind the curtain, once a year. He needed to make a sacrifice before entering.

Torn – Ripped apart.

Centurion – Roman soldier in command of 100 men.

Psalms 22:1; 5-8; 16-21

Groaning – A sad sound made because of pain or grief.

Worm – A small, slimy animal.

Scorned - To strongly criticise someone in a way that shows you think they do not deserve respect.

Despised – To hate someone and have no respect for them.

Deliver – To bring someone out of a difficult situation.

Delights in – To take great pleasure in something/To find great happiness from something.

Potsherd – A broken piece of pottery.

Roof of my mouth – The top of the mouth.

Gloat – To look at someone's bad circumstances with happiness that it is not your own circumstances.

Garments – Clothes.

Study 8. Jesus' Resurrection – Luke 23:50-24:53

Filling in the Gaps

Last week we saw that Jesus was willing to die so that he might save people from their sins. However Jesus didn't remain dead. Remember Jesus words to his followers before he died *"We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, 34 who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. **Three days later he will rise.**"* Today we will look at the events that took place three days after Jesus had died...

Luke 23:50-24:12 – The Empty Tomb

Observation Questions:

1. (23vv50-51) From these verses, what do we know about Joseph?
2. (23vv52-54) What did Joseph do with Jesus' body?
3. (23vv55-56) What three things did the women do?
4. (24v1) What were the women planning to do on the first day of the week (Sunday)?
5. (24vv2-4) What three strange things did the women find as they came to the tomb?
6. (24v5) What question did the men ask the women? What does this tell us about what has happened to Jesus?
7. (24v6-8) What do the men say has happened to Jesus? Why should the women not be surprised by this?
- 8 (24vv9-10) What did the women do when they had returned from the tomb?
9. (24v11) What did the Eleven followers of Jesus think about what the women had said? Why did they think this?
10. (24v12) How did Peter respond to what the women said?

Jesus then met with two of his followers on the road to a town called Emmaus. They had been discussing Jesus death and the report that he had come back from the dead. Jesus helped them to understand the significance of the events by telling them what the Old Testament part of the Bible says about himself. In particular He spoke of how He had to die and rise again. The two went to report this to the Eleven followers of Jesus...

Luke 24:36-53 – Jesus Appears to his Followers

Observation Questions:

11. (vv36-37) How did Jesus' followers react to Jesus' appearing among them? Why did they feel this way?
12. (vv38-39) What evidence was there to convince them it was actually Jesus they were speaking to?
13. (vv39-43) What other evidence did Jesus provide them to confirm that he was not a ghost?
14. (vv44-45) By talking about the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms, Jesus was referring to the whole of the Old Testament part of the Bible. What does Jesus say about the Old Testament here?

15. (v46) What does Jesus say had to happen to him?
16. (v47) What does Jesus say would happen after these events?
17. (v48) How does Jesus describe his followers? What responsibility does this imply that they have?
18. (v49) What help will they receive for this task?
19. (vv50-51) What do these verses tell us about where Jesus is now?
20. (vv52-53) How would you describe the feelings of Jesus' followers in these verses? How does this compare to how they felt in verse 37?

Discussion and Application Questions:

1. What evidence do we find in these passages that Jesus rose from the dead?
2. How did the various people spoken of in the passage react to the news that Jesus had come back from the dead? (Think about the women, the Eleven and Peter).
3. How will you respond to the news that Jesus has risen from the dead? If you believe that Jesus has risen from the dead, what difference do you think this should make to the way you live your life?

Luke 23:50-24:12 (Study 8)

50 Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, 51 who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea and he was waiting for the kingdom of God. 52 Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body. 53 Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. 54 It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. 55 The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. 56 Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

1 On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. 5 In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? 6 He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 7 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" 8 Then they remembered his words.

9 When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. 10 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. 11 But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. 12 Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

Luke 24:36-53

36 While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

37 They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. 38 He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? 39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

40 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. 41 And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate it in their presence.

44 He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.

50 When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. 51 While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. 52 Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. 53 And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

Word List (Study 8)

Luke 23:50-24:12

Council – The council spoken of here is the Sanhedrin, the group of people who had said that Jesus should die.

Upright – Respectable/ Someone who wants to do what is right.

Consented – To have agreed to do something.

Judea – The Southern region of Israel.

Arimathea – A town to the north west of Jerusalem (the capital)

Kingdom of God – The place where God is honoured as the king. This often refers to Heaven.

Pilate – Pontius Pilate is the name of the Roman governor of Judea during the days of Jesus later life.

Tomb – The place where people's bodies are placed when they die.

Preparation Day – The day before the Jewish day of rest.

Sabbath – The Jewish day of rest (on Saturday).

Galilee – The northern region of Israel.

Commandment – One of the ten rules set out by God and given to the people of Israel to tell them how they should live in order to please God. One of the commandments was to keep the rest day special, so that they could spend time worshipping God instead of going about their daily work.

First day of the week – Sunday.

Stone – A large stone used to shut the tomb.

Wondering – To think about something because you want to know more facts or details about it.

Gleamed – To shine brightly.

Bowed – To show respect by leaning forward and getting on one knee.

Risen – Come back to life!

The Son of Man – The name Jesus used most often when talking about himself. It comes from the Old Testament book of Daniel (7:13-14).

Delivered – To hand over.

Sinful – To actively want to disobey God and have nothing to do with him.

Crucify – A form of punishment that was kept for the worst criminals in Roman times. The criminal would be killed by having their hands and feet nailed to a cross and then left to die of suffocation (not being able to breath).

Eleven – Jesus closest followers.

Magdalene – A female name.

Apostles – Literally the word means 'someone who is sent'. Here it refers to Jesus closest followers.

Nonsense – Something that doesn't make sense.

Study 9. The Last Days – Acts 2:1-41

Filling in the Gaps

In our last study we saw that, just before he went back to heaven, Jesus said *“This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”* Today we will see these words coming true. We meet Jesus' disciples all together in Jerusalem, just after Jesus had gone back to heaven. They were celebrating Pentecost. Pentecost was a festival that was held to thank God for the harvest.

Acts 2:1-41

Observation Questions:

1. (vv1-4) What four things happened on the day of Pentecost?
2. (vv5-6) Why did a crowd of Jews come together around the followers of Jesus?
3. (vv7-11) Why was this so amazing to the crowd of Jews?
4. (v12) How would you describe the feelings of the crowd? What question were they asking?
5. (v13) What did some people think had happened?
6. (vv14-16) How does Peter answer these people?

In the Old Testament part of the Bible, before Jesus death and resurrection, the Holy Spirit was given to certain people for a short time for a specific purpose. Occasionally people would be given the Holy Spirit for a large part of their life, such as King David, but this was very rare. Peter quotes from the prophet Joel to explain that the events that were happening on this day of Pentecost identified the beginning of a new section of history. He calls it the 'last days'.

7. (vv17-18) In what way are the last days different from the time before Jesus death and resurrection?

Verses 19-20 speak of the signs that will identify the time when Jesus returns to the earth to bring about the final judgement of God.

8. (v21) In view of the fact that Jesus will return to the earth in judgement, what is the most important thing for people to do now, while they have the chance?

Peter now explains how the events of Pentecost relate to Jesus death and resurrection.

9. (v22) Why should the Jews in Jerusalem have accepted Jesus?
10. (v23) What did they do to him instead?
11. (v24) Why did Jesus not remain dead?
12. (vv25-31) How did King David predict what would happen to Jesus?
13. (v32) What other evidence was there that Jesus came back from the dead?
14. (v33) How does Peter link the events of Jesus death and resurrection to the events of Pentecost?

15. (v34-36) What status has God given to Jesus? What had the Jews done to this special person?
16. (v37) How did the Jews respond to Peter's message?
17. (v38) What does Peter say the Jew's should do? What will this achieve?
18. (v39) Who is this promise for?
19. (v40) What was Peter's desire for the people?
20. (v41) What was the response to Peter's words and pleas?

Discussion and Application Questions:

1. We currently live in the 'last days'. What is different about the 'last days' compared to the rest of history? How does this relate to the events of Pentecost?
2. What does Peter teach us about Jesus in his talk?
3. The Bible tells us it was our sin that caused Jesus to die on the cross. The words that Peter addresses to the Jews 'God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ' could equally be addressed to us. How does this make you feel? What does Peter say you should do about it? What promise does he give to those who are willing to do this?

Acts 2:1-41 (Study 9)

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? 9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" 12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. 15 These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! 16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17 "In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions,
your old men will dream dreams.
18 Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy.
19 I will show wonders in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below,
blood and fire and billows of smoke.
20 The sun will be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood
before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.
21 And everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

22 "Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. 23 This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. 24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. 25 David said about him:

"I saw the Lord always before me.
Because he is at my right hand,
I will not be shaken.
26 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;
my body also will rest in hope,
27 because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,
you will not let your holy one see decay.
28 You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence.'

29 "Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. 30 But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. 31 Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. 32 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. 33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. 34 For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

"The Lord said to my Lord:
"Sit at my right hand

35 until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet.”

36 “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Word List (Study 9)

Acts 2:1-41

Pentecost – Was an important festival in the Jewish calendar. It celebrated the gathering of the harvest and the purpose of the celebration was to be thankful to God for the harvest. People would give offerings to God in proportion to the size of the harvest.

Violent wind – A very strong wind with great force.

Heaven – The perfect place where the spiritual part of a person who has believed in Jesus goes when the person dies.

Tongues of fire – A small flame.

Separated – To move apart from one another.

Holy Spirit – God exists in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is therefore a person and shares all the characteristics of God with the Father and the Son. He cannot be seen, but his work in people's lives can be seen. He was sent to some of God's people in the Old Testament to equip them for a particular task or role. He is sent to all Christians to help them live more like how Jesus lived and to help them understand God's word and explain it to others. He also gives gifts to God's people to help them serve God and each other.

Tongues – Languages.

Spirit – The Holy Spirit.

Enabled – To give someone the ability or opportunity to do something.

Jerusalem – The capital city of Israel.

God-fearing – Someone who believes that God exists and this makes a difference to their life, although they are not a Jew or a Christian.

Every nation under heaven – Every nation in the world (heaven here refers to the sky).

Bewilderment – To be very very confused.

Utterly – Completely.

Galileans – From the region of Galilee in the north of Palestine.

Native language – The language you learn to speak when you first start to speak.

Parthians, Medes and Elamites – Regions of modern day Iran.

Mesopotamia – Area around the river Tigris in modern day Iraq.

Judea – The area around Jerusalem.

Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia – Areas of modern day Turkey.

Cyrene – A city in Libya.

Judaism – The Jewish religion.

Cretans – People from the island of Crete.

Declaring – Speaking about something.

Wonders – Something amazing.

Perplexed – Confused because you cannot understand something.

Made fun – To make a joke about someone or something in an unkind way.

Eleven – The eleven chosen disciples of Jesus.

Addressed – To speak to a particular group of people.

Suppose – To believe that something is true based on your experience and knowledge.

Prophet – A person who would speak God's words.

Visions – A picture in your mind of a future event.

Billows of smoke – Smoke that raises in a cloud.

Glorious – Awesome/wonderful.

Accredited – Someone who is officially approved by a higher authority.

Miracles wonders and signs – The things that Jesus did which went against the laws of physics to show that He was God. Like calming a storm by speaking to it and healing the sick.

Deliberate – Intended/not done by chance or accident.

Foreknowledge – Knowledge of events before they happen.

Wicked – Evil.

Agony – Extreme pain.

Shaken – To feel nervous or frightened because of something that happens.

Rejoices – To give thanks and praise.

Abandon – To leave someone when you should stay with them to look after them.

Realm – A particular area or country.

Holy – Made different by God.

Decay – To be gradually destroyed as the result of a natural process of change.

Confidently – To be certain of something.

Patriarch – An important, respected ancestor.

David – The greatest King of Israel.

Tomb – The place where you put a dead body.

Oath – A formal promise.

Descendants – A relative of a person who lived in the past.

Throne – The seat on which a monarch (king or queen) sits.

Resurrection – Coming back to life from the dead, never to die again.

Messiah – God's promised king.

Witnesses – People who saw an event and report about what they saw to others.

Exalted – To be given a higher status.

Right hand – Speaks of having equal power with someone.

Ascend – To go up.

Footstool – A small, low piece of furniture for resting your feet on.

Assured – To be certain of something.

Crucified – A form of punishment that was kept for the worst criminals in Roman times. The criminal would be killed by having their hands and feet nailed to a cross and then left to die of suffocation (not being able to breath)

Cut to the heart – To feel deeply upset.

Apostles – Literally the word means 'someone who is sent'. Often it refers to the eleven disciples and Paul.

Repent – To understand that you have offended God, to say sorry and to ask for his help in living for Him and to turn away from the things that offend Him.

Baptized – An outward sign of an inward change in a person who has trusted in Jesus.

Forgiveness – Willing to forget bad things that people have done to you and not let those bad things get in the way of your relationship with that person.

Sins – Acts of disobedience to God.

Corrupt – Doing dishonest, illegal or immoral things to gain money or power.

Study 10. The New Heavens & New Earth – Revelation 21 & 22

Filling in the Gaps

In our last study, we saw that we are living in the 'last days'. This is the time when the good news about Jesus is being told throughout the world. Just before going back to heaven Jesus said to his followers *"you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth"*. Last week we read in the book of Acts how the Holy Spirit was given to Jesus' followers at Pentecost and they began telling the good news about Jesus to people in Jerusalem. The rest of the book of Acts follows the spread of this good news into Judea and then to Samaria and then to various other parts of the world.

Early on in the book of Acts we meet a man called Saul. He was a Jewish man who was very committed to God. He was sure that Christianity was wrong and because of this he was putting Christians in prison and trying to kill them. On one occasion he went off to Damascus in Syria. He planned to put the Christians in Damascus into prison because of their belief in Jesus. On the way to Damascus, Jesus appeared to him in a vision. Jesus told Saul that he had a job for him to do. Saul was the person Jesus had chosen to tell the non-Jewish people the good news. Saul obeyed Jesus and changed his name to Paul to show that he was a changed person.

The second half of the book of Acts follows Paul as he journeys to various places in modern day Turkey and Greece. Everywhere he goes, he tells people about Jesus. When a group of people in each location believe in Jesus a church starts to meet in that location. A church is a group of Christians who get together to listen to the teaching of the Bible and remember what Jesus has done for them. Paul wrote many letters to the churches. He wrote to help them understand how they should live, now that they are trusting in Jesus. Many of these letters now form a large part of the New Testament part of our Bible.

The book of Acts ends with Paul in Rome, which was at that time the most important city in the world. Since that time the good news about Jesus continues to be told across the world and churches have started in almost every country of the world. However, the last days will not last forever. God has given us this time to respond to the good news about Jesus. One day it will be too late. The Bible promises that one day Jesus will return and on that day it will be too late to respond to the good news.

When Jesus returns, God will bring about the end of this world. Each one of us will face God in judgement. After the judgement God will make everything new and that's what we will be looking at in our study today. We will look at God's promise of a new heaven and earth and we will think about who can be part of this new creation...

Revelation 21:1-8

Observation Questions:

1. (v1) What significant change will occur in the Universe after the final judgement?
2. (v2) Jerusalem was the capital city of God's people and the city that contained the temple. How is the New Jerusalem described here?
3. (v3) What significant difference will occur in the relationship between people and God after the final judgement?
4. (v4) At this time, what will God do for his people? What will be missing in the new creation?
5. (v5) What promise does God give here? What does God ask John (the author of this letter) to do with the promise? Why does he ask John to do this?

6. (v6) How is God described in this verse? What do we learn about his generosity here?
7. (v7) What condition is given here for someone to inherit God's kingdom?
8. (v8) Who will not inherit God's kingdom? What will happen to them instead?

Revelation 21:9-21 describes the New Jerusalem in more detail. It uses many pictures from the Old Testament of the 12 tribes of Israel, the tabernacle and the temple. These pictures illustrate how the New Jerusalem will consist of all of God's chosen people, both from Old Testament times and New Testament times. God will be in the centre of all his people.

Revelation 21:22-22:5

9. (v22) What is absent from the New Jerusalem? Why is it no longer needed?
10. (v23) What else is absent from the New Jerusalem? Why are they no longer needed?
11. (vv24-26) What will be brought into the city?
12. (v25) What difference does this verse describe between the New Jerusalem and the old Jerusalem? How will this difference be possible?
13. (v27) Who will not be able to enter the New Jerusalem? Who are the only ones who can enter?
14. (22v1) What else will be present in the New Jerusalem? What is its source?
15. (22v2) What else will be present in the New Jerusalem? What benefit does it bring?
16. (22v3) What else is absent from the new creation?
17. (22vv3-5) What do we learn about those who live in the New Jerusalem from these verses?

Revelation 22:6-16 tells us that we can trust the vision that was given to John, which he wrote down for us today. In these verses he repeats the phrase 'Behold, I am coming soon', speaking of Jesus' second coming. We are also reminded that Jesus is the eternal God who has always existed and will always be king. In verses 14-15 he once again speaks about the fact that not everyone will be able to enter the New Jerusalem. To be part of this new city we must have our 'robes washed'. All evil will remain outside the New Jerusalem.

Revelation 22:17-21

18. (v17) What message do the Spirit and the church and all who hear and obey Jesus have for the rest of the world?
19. (vv18-19) What two things should we avoid doing with this message? This is also true for the whole of the Bible.
20. (vv20-21) How does the Bible end?

Discussion and Application Questions:

1. Compare the description of the New Heavens and the New Earth with (a) the garden of Eden and (b) the current heaven and earth. What excites you about this new creation?

2. Looking at Rev 21:27 and also at Rev 22:14: "*Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city*". Who is able to enter the new creation? How can a person have 'their robes washed' or 'their name written in the lambs book of life'?

3. Revelation 21-22 say that Jesus is coming soon. How can we be prepared for the day he comes? What should we be doing in the time between now and that day?

4. Will you trust in Jesus and receive forgiveness for your sin? If you do, you will have the right to enter this new creation and eat from the tree of life.

Revelation 21:1-8 (Study 10)

Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

5 He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

6 He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. 7 Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children. 8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

Revelation 21:22-22:5

22 I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. 24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. 25 On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. 26 The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. 27 Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

Chapter 22:1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. 3 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

Revelation 22:17-21

17 The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.

18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. 19 And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll.

20 He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.”

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people. Amen.

Word List (Study 10)

Revelation 21:1-8

Heaven – A word either used to describe the sky or the spiritual realm where God's people go when they die.

Holy City – Holy means different from anything else, so this is a very special city.

Jerusalem – The capital city of Israel.

Bride – A lady who is about to get married.

Throne – A special chair a king or queen sits on.

Dwelling – A place where someone lives.

Dwell – To live somewhere.

Wipe – To clean or dry something by moving a cloth over it.

Mourning – The process of expressing great sadness because someone has died.

Old order of things – The way things were in the past.

Trustworthy – Something that can be trusted.

Alpha – The first letter of the Greek alphabet.

Omega – The last letter of the Greek alphabet.

Thirsty – The feeling that you want or need something to drink.

Spring – A source of water.

Victorious – To be a winner of a competition or battle.

Inherit – To receive something from someone else, usually when they die, but in this case when we die!

Cowardly – To lack courage to do something that you should do/ to not be brave enough.

Vile – Extremely unpleasant/lacking any morals.

Sexually immoral – Those who offend God in their sexual behaviour.

Idolaters – Those who put anything else before God in their lives.

Consigned – To put someone or something somewhere, usually where they wouldn't want to be.

Fiery – Full of flames.

Sulfur – A yellow chemical element with a strong smell, used for making medicines and explosives.

Temple – The building in Jerusalem that represented God's presence among his people. The Israelites would go to the temple to make sacrifices to God to restore their relationship with Him.

Lord God Almighty – A name for God the Father.

Lamb – A description of Jesus Christ.

Glory – A word to describe greatness that is indescribable (cannot be described)!

Splendour – The beautiful and impressive features of something.

Honour – The respect that someone receives from others.

Impure – Any immorality that causes someone to fall short of God's moral standard.

Shameful – Something so bad that you feel ashamed because of it.

Deceitful – Dishonest behaviour in order to trick someone.

Angel – A spiritual being that acts as a messenger of God and often looks a bit like a human in form.

Crystal – A clear rock that looks like glass.

Bearing – Producing.

Yielding – Producing something useful.

Curse – The bad things that occur in the world as a result of mankind's rejection of God in the Garden of Eden.

Servants – Someone whose job it is to serve a master.

Foreheads – The upper part of your face, between your eyes and hair.

Reign – To have particular influence and power.

Spirit – The Holy Spirit - God exists in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is therefore a person and shares all the characteristics of God with the Father and the Son. He cannot be seen, but his work in people's lives can be seen. He was sent to some of God's people in the Old Testament to equip them for a particular task or role. He is sent to all Christians to help them live more like how Jesus lived and to help them understand God's word and explain it to others. He also gives gifts to God's people to help them serve God and each other.

Prophecy - A message from God.

Scroll – A long roll of paper with official writing on it.

Plagues – An uncontrollable and harmful increase of anything.

Testifies – To make a statement about what you have seen so that others can know about it too.

Amen – Often used at the end of prayer to indicate agreement with the one praying.

Grace – God's undeserved goodness to us.