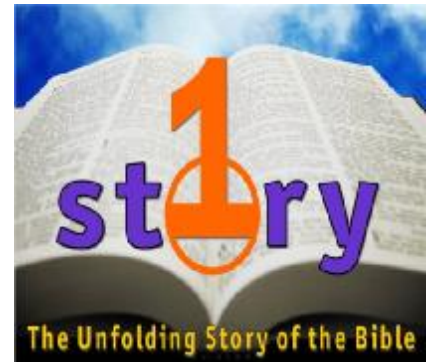


Bible Studies for
Ashfield Presbyterian Church
ashfieldpresbyterian.org.au

One Story: The Bible:

The Bible isn't a textbook of theology, with individual chapters on God, man, Jesus, sin, salvation, church and heaven. And it's not a collection of disconnected stories either. As a whole, the Bible is "the unfolding process of God's dealings with man and of his own self-disclosure to man" (*Gospel and Kingdom*, Graeme Goldsworthy, 18). This self-disclosure culminates in the coming of Jesus, who lived, then died to restore us to the Father, and rose to win new life for us.



Hebrews 1:1-3: In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Every part of the Bible is connected to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus is the one in whom and through whom all the promises of God find their fulfilment. Before we can work out how each part of the Bible applies to us today, we need to work out how each part connects to Jesus. This is the task of Biblical Theology, and the aim of these studies.

The Kingdom of God:

One of the keys to the unlocking the unity of the Bible is the idea of "the kingdom of God." The kingdom of God is:

- God's people
- in God's place
- under God's rule.

The Bible begins and culminates in the Kingdom of God, and different aspects of it are revealed throughout the Bible.

"We first see the Kingdom of God in the Garden of Eden. Here Adam and Eve live in willing obedience to the word of God and to God's rule. In this setting, the Kingdom is destroyed by the sin of man – and the rest of the Bible is about the restoration of a people to be the willing subjects of the perfect rule of God."
(*Gospel and Kingdom*, Graeme Goldsworthy, 47)

These studies plot the unfolding story of the Bible over ten weeks:

1. The King (Genesis 1-2)
2. The Snake (Genesis 3)
3. The Promise (Genesis 12)
4. The Kingdom Comes (2 Samuel 7)
5. The Kingdom Goes (1 Kings 11)
6. The Exile (Jeremiah 29)
7. The coming of the true King (Matthew 1-18)
8. The death of the King (Matthew 16-28)
9. Jesus is King (Acts 2:14-41)
10. God's people in God's place again (Revelation 21-22)

Genesis 1-2: The King



The fact that God is Creator means that he is king over his creation, and that we, as his creatures, are bound to obey him as his subjects. It means he is king over every aspect of his creation. There is no divide between the secular and the spiritual, or the physical and the spiritual. It means that the word of God must judge the ideas of ideas of humanity, rather than humanity sitting in judgment of God's plans and purposes.

1. **Read Revelation 4:11.** On what basis is God worthy of our honour?

2. **Read Genesis 1:1-3.** Before anything, who existed?

How did God create?

Genesis 1:1-2:3 describes creation from above, on a big scale. God is referred to by his title "Elohim" – God. By contrast, in Genesis 2:4-3:24 describes creation from a human level, on a smaller scale. God is referred to by his title and his personal name "Yahweh Elohim" – the LORD God.

3. The rhythm and repetition of the narrative of 1:1-2:3 emphasise the order and design and power of God's creation. He is king over his kingdom. In 1:2, the earth is formless and empty. Days 1-3 bring form to what is formless. Days 4-6 fill up what was empty. Complete the table below with what is created on each day.

	Formless takes form		Empty is filled
Day 1		Day 4	
Day 2		Day 5	
Day 3		Day 6	

4. **Read Genesis 1:24-2:3.** What is God's judgment of his creation before mankind is created?

What is his judgment of it after mankind's creation?

God

The triune God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is eternal. He existed before creation. We see the Spirit of God hovering in 1:2. In Gen 1:26 God says, “Let US make mankind in OUR image. This is best explained by understanding God as triune (three in one).



Mankind

God makes mankind *in his own image*. This reflects the role and nature of God with respect to our **ruling function** (1:26, 28), or to the unity and diversity of being **male and female** just as God is united and diverse as three in one (1:27). It may be a combination of both.

5. What role does God assign to humanity?

God and Mankind

6. John 1:1-4 includes more obviously the Son in the Godhead present before creation. What do we learn about Jesus from these verses?

7. The Son wasn't just God, he also became human. What do we learn about the incarnate Son (Jesus when he became a man) from John 1:14?

8. What else do we learn about Jesus from Colossians 1:15-20?

Notice that Jesus is described as the *image* of God (Col 1:15) – just like humans were created in Gen 1:26. He is the perfect example of humanity – humanity the way we were meant to be (of course he is more than that – he is also God). As human, he bears God's likeness and represents him on earth. Colossians 1 goes on to say that, as the leader and prime example of humanity, he leads us back to God, reconciling us (as well as all creation) to God through his blood (see Col 1:19-20).

Back to Genesis

9. What do we learn about the kingdom of God from Gen 1:1-2:3 as:
God's people

in God's place

under God's rule

10. How does Gen 2 describe the method God used to create?

2:7a

2:7b

2:8

2:19

2:21-22

11. What is the condition for Adam and Eve to continue living in the Garden?

What will happen if they break God's rule?

12. The tree of life is the symbol of God's provision of life for his people. What do we learn about the tree as it reappears later in the Biblical storyline?

Eze 47:12

Rev 2:7

Rev 22:2

13. What do we learn about the kingdom of God from Gen 2:4-25 as:
God's people

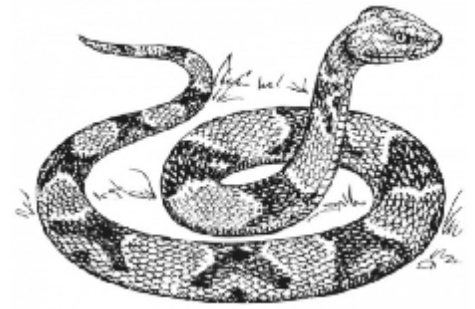
in God's place

under God's rule

PRAYER POINTS:

Genesis 3: The Snake

Genesis 2 describes God's perfect kingdom as consisting of as perfect relationships between people, between people and creation, and between people and God. The fall results in the disruption of each of these relationships. This is the reality of life now.



Read Genesis 3.

1. How did the serpent deceive Eve into disobedience?
2. Which portions of the serpent's statements are true and which are false?
3. How might someone today fall prey to the same tempting question, "Did God really say...?"
4. What command had God actually given about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (2:17)?
5. Why did God command Adam and Eve not to eat from the tree?
6. Who was to blame for the fall?
7. What is the immediate result from the decision to eat the fruit (7-13)?



How does this compare to the situation in the previous chapter?

8. What judgment did God deliver against

The serpent?

The woman?

The man?

9. What mercy and grace does God show Adam and Eve in the midst of judgment?

10. Gen 3:15 is sometimes called the *proto-evangel* – or the first declaration of the gospel. God promises that one of Eve's offspring will crush the serpent's head. Read Revelation 12 to see the battle of God, the Lamb and his people against the serpent from a different perspective. What do we learn about the following individuals: the offspring of the woman?

the serpent?

God?

11. God's warning about eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was that they would die if they did (2:17). Did this happen? In what sense?

12. From this story, how would you define sin and its consequences?

Does this have anything to say about the way the world is today, and the question of suffering?



13. Compare Jesus' temptation to this one (Lk 4:1-13). How was his similar? How were his responses different?

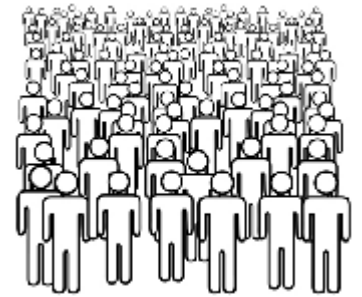
Jesus is the image of God, the firstborn over all creation (Col 1:15-20). He represents God truly on earth in a way Adam and Eve failed to do. What did Jesus achieve by this obedience, not just for humanity but, for the whole creation?

14. The Kingdom of God is the sphere of God's rule in which his creatures submit willingly to this righteous rule. At the end of Gen 3, what is left of our visible representation of God's kingdom as God's people in God's place under God's rule?

PRAYER POINTS:

Genesis 12: The Promise

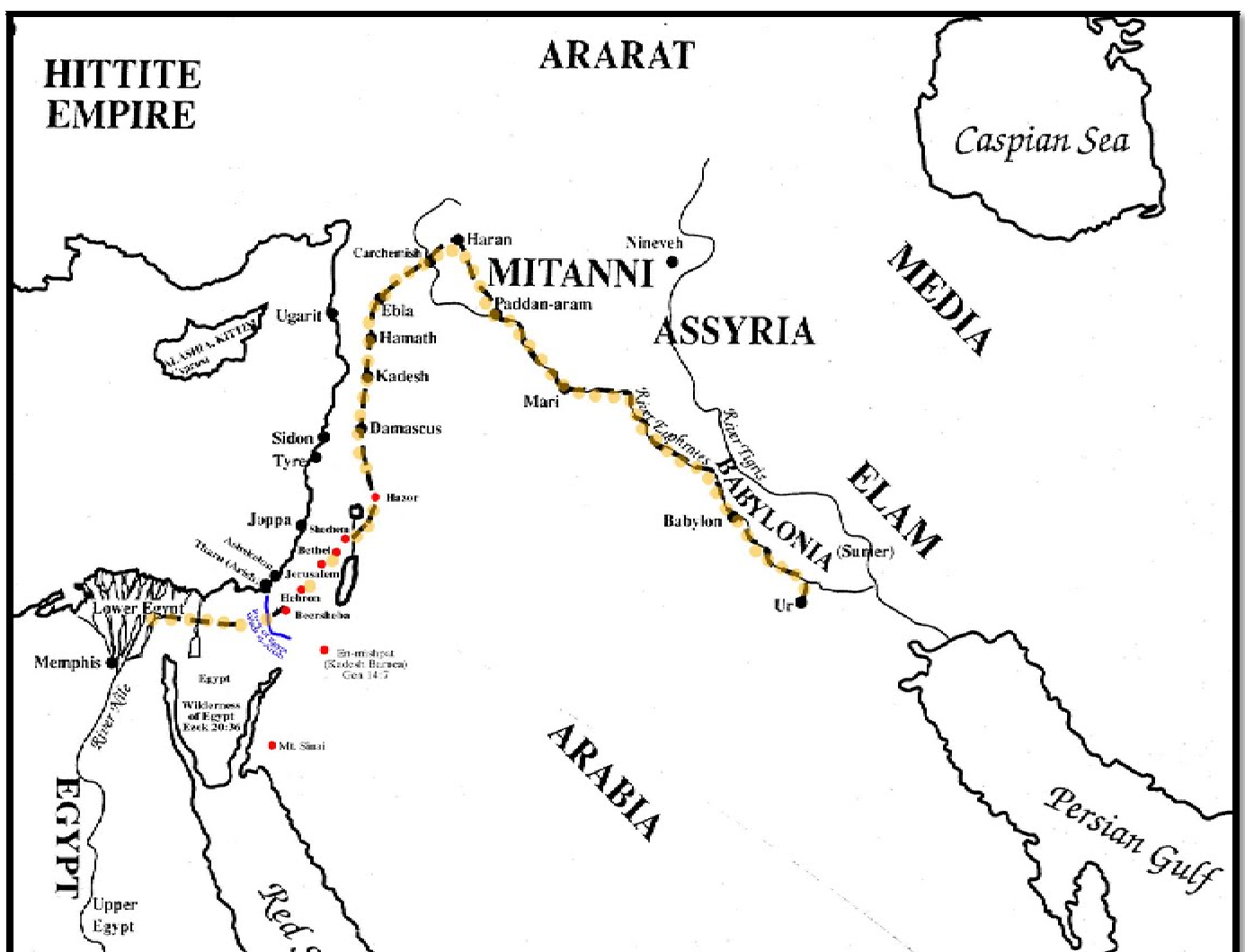
Genesis 4-11 concisely covers a long period of time. It shows one effect of the fall: the breakdown in the relationships between people. The godlessness of humanity results in God's decision to destroy them, and start again with the line of Noah. This proves to be no lasting solution either.



There are, significantly, ten generations described from Adam to Noah. Ten generations from Noah brings us to the next turning point in our Biblical story: Abram. Genesis 12-24 tells the story of Abram, and focuses on God's covenant promises to him.

"God promises the patriarchs that their descendants (God's people) will possess the promised land (God's place) and be the people of God, underneath his authority (God's rule). The historical process by which the people are brought into that situation takes the form of a redemptive act of God. God redeems Israel when he rescues it out of captivity in Egypt." (Gospel and Kingdom, Graeme Goldsworthy, 47)

- I. **Read Genesis 11:31-12:1-9.** Circle the places mentioned in these verses on the map below.



2. There are three aspects to the promises God makes to Abram. What are they?

12:2a (see also 13:16; 15:5; 16:10; 18:18)

12:7 (see also 13:14-15; 15:18-21; 17:8)

17:2 (see also 17:8; 18:19)

3. What connection can you see between these covenant promises and our definition of the Kingdom of God?

God also graciously promises to extend these blessings to those not physically descended from Abraham (see Gen 12:3; 17:4-6; c.f. Rom 4:16-18). The story of the Bible is about how God works out those promises.

4. What does God demand of Abram in return?
5. Why does God promise Abram a great name (12:2) when he has foiled the name-building efforts of others (6:4ff; 11:4ff)?
6. God doesn't deliver on these promises straight away. What is Abram's response to God's promise (12:4, 7)?
7. Read Gen 15. Some time later Abram is still childless. His only heir is his servant Eliezer. What do you think Abram fears most (1-3, 8)?
8. How has God already been Abram's shield and great reward?

How have you experienced God as your shield and great reward?

9. What encouragement does God give Abram to keep trusting his promises?

10. What is Abram's response (15:6)?

11. How is faith related to righteousness (15:6 see also Gal 3:6-9)? Which comes first? Which comes from God? Which is indispensable to a right relationship with God?

The vision Abram sees in his dream reflects the practice of the time when making a covenant between two parties. An animal would be cut in two, and both parties would pass between the parts, signifying their declaration that should they break the covenant, then they too should be split in two. The smoking pot and flaming torch represent God himself. God is declaring his commitment to keep the covenant he makes. It is one-sided – Abram does not pass between the pieces, he need only trust God's promise.

Even though Abram believed God, he nevertheless tried to speed up God's plans. He thought that since Sarai was still barren, perhaps God meant him to father offspring through his servant girl, Hagar. Hagar gives birth to Ishmael (see Gen 16).

12. Thirteen years later, Abram and Sarai are still childless. God appears to Abram again and confirms his covenant to Abram with the sign of circumcision. **Read Gen 17:1-14.** If Abram's only responsibility under the earlier version of this covenant was to believe (15:6), what is required this time?

13. The sign of circumcision was for the Jewish people. With the coming of Jesus, Abraham's children became all who had faith in Jesus, from every nation (**read Galatians 3:6-9**). If circumcision is no longer required of God's people, what does he require (Gal 5:6)?

Sarah finally becomes pregnant, and gives birth to Isaac (Gen 21:1-5). God's promises have started to be fulfilled.

However there is a long way to go for their complete fulfilment. Genesis finishes with Abraham's family in Egypt. The only land they possess is a small field which Abraham bought to bury Sarai near Mamre (see Gen 23).

God has begun to redeem his people through the line of Abraham. There is some evidence of the relationship God wants to have with a new people. Humanity can dare to hope that once again God's kingdom, characterised by God's people in God's place under God's rule, will be seen.

PRAYER POINTS:

2 Samuel 7: The Kingdom Comes

"The political, economic and religious achievement of the kingdom of David and Solomon fulfils in a very tangible way the promises to Abraham. This kingdom is by no means perfect, but it displays all the elements of the Kingdom of God" (*Gospel and Kingdom*, Graeme Goldsworthy, 48).



From Abraham to David

In Egypt Abraham's offspring grow from a family into a nation. While this one of God's promises comes into focus, the other two seem more distant. The people not only live away from the promised land, but are the prisoners of a cruel tyrant.

God acts to fulfil his covenant promises to Abraham by raising up Moses to be Israel's leader and to rescue his people (Exodus 2:23-25). It is to

Moses that God reveals his covenant name, *Yahweh*, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Exodus 3:14-15). The Passover protection of Israel's firstborn, and the salvation through the Red Sea show us that redemption is a miracle that only God can achieve (Exodus 6:6; 13:9-16). God's purposes in delivering Israel from Egypt are to provide a picture of how entry into the kingdom is always achieved.



"Only a miracle of God can bring us back to the Kingdom. The Exodus will remain now the key symbol for the understanding of redemption in the life of Israel, and the people of God will be made to recall it as the basis of their response to a God who saves (Exod 20:2; Deut 6:20-25; Josh 24:6-13; Neh 9:6-12; Ps 78; 105)" (Gospel & Kingdom, Goldsworthy, 62)

1. How do the writers of the New Testament pick up the language of the Exodus, and God's rescue of his people, in the following verses?

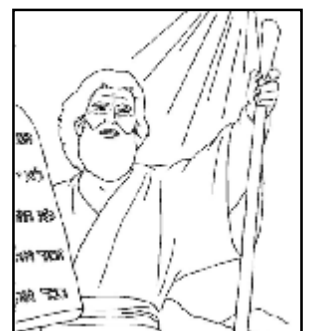
Ephesians 1:7

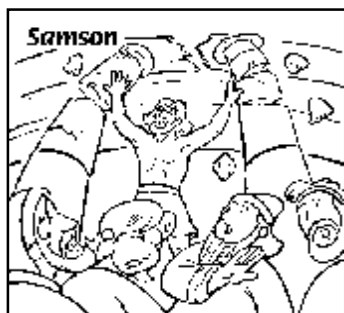
Colossians 1:13-14

1 Corinthians 5:7

It is to a people who are saved *already* by grace that God gives the law (Exodus 20:1-2). The law spells out what it means to live as the people of God in his kingdom. It doesn't *make* them his people.

In the law, in its totality, God reveals his character. It is their faithful response to God's character that will demonstrate that Israel are his children. Despite God's faithfulness, the wilderness journeys show Israel's repeated unfaithfulness.





Nevertheless, God brings them into the promised land, and raises up judges to deliver them. He works out his plans to bring in his kingdom. They are God's people, in God's place, but are resisting to live under his rule. "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25).

King Saul is the people's tragic attempt to have a king like the nations, rather serving God as their king (1 Sam 8:4-9). God rejects Saul, and chooses David instead.

2. **Read 1 Sam 16:7.** On what basis does God choose David?



In 2 Sam 5, David becomes king. Despite his failings, David's reign achieves a stability and prosperity for God's people that represent fulfilment of God's covenant promises. David removes the Philistine threat, and brings the Ark to Jerusalem, symbolically restoring God to the centre of his people (2 Sam 6).

Israel begins to embody God's creative and redemptive purposes for his world, shining as a light to the nations. In Deuteronomy 4:5-8, God explains one of outcomes of Israel's obedience to his law

See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the LORD my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. 6 Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." 7 What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him? 8 And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?

3. Describe the style of "evangelism" that is being described here. Is it about moving out to the nations, or Israel staying where they were and the nations coming in?

How does this change for God's people in the New Testament? See Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 1 Peter 2:9-12.

4. **Read 2 Samuel 7:1-17.** What does David want to build?

5. What does God want to do first?

6. Who has been responsible for David's "good fortune" so far (8-9)?
7. What does the future hold for David and his family (9; 11-15)?
8. What does the future hold for Israel (10)?
9. What similarities can you see between the promises God is making to David, and his earlier promises to Abraham?

What new features have been added?

10. What hint can you see in these verses that mankind may mess things up in the future?

11. **Read 2 Samuel 7:18-29.** David is dumb-founded by the magnitude and scope of God's generosity. If someone asked David to summarise the story of the Old Testament so far, which verses in this section do you think would make up his answer?

12. We can praise God even more joyfully. He has been faithful to his promises in sending Jesus, in David's line, and established a house that will last forever. **Read 1 Peter 2:4-5.** What is the purpose of this spiritual house?

Of what does it consist?

What are the spiritual sacrifices we are to offer to God in response to him?

How are you going with this? How are we, as a church, going with this?

PRAYER POINTS:

1 Kings 11: The Kingdom Goes



1. Think about your own experiences in life. Do you tend to forget about God when things are going well or when things are going poorly? Why is that?
2. King Solomon's reign was the high point in Israel's history. **Read 1 Kings 4:20-34.** What aspects of life are good in Israel?
3. Look at the following references and consider which of God's promises to Abraham or David is being fulfilled
 - a. 1 Ki 4:20
 - b. 1 Ki 4:21
 - c. 1 Ki 6:1-3
 - d. 1 Ki 10:4-9
4. Are there any warning signs about Solomon's reign in 1 Ki 3:1-4?
5. How big was the temple (1 Ki 6:2) compared to the palace (1 Ki 7:2)?

What do the lengths of the two building projects in 1 Ki 6:38-7:1 suggest about their relative importance to Solomon?

6. In Deut 17:16-17, God had given some very clear guidelines for kings. What three things are to be especially avoided?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

7. How does Solomon go at meeting God's three key performance indicators?
 - a. 1 Ki 10:26, 28
 - b. 1 Ki 10:27
 - c. 1 Ki 11:1-8
8. What does God promise to do as punishment (1 Ki 11:9-13)?
9. If Solomon was so wise, how could he go so wrong? Are there any warnings here for us?
10. **Read 1 Ki 12:1-24.** What are the political reasons for the splitting apart of Israel? What are the underlying spiritual reasons?

From this point on the nation is split into a northern kingdom (Israel) and a southern kingdom (Judah). Some kings are wicked, some aren't too bad, but the big picture, whether in the north or the south, is that everyone has rejected God.

11. How does Elijah summarise the situation in Israel (1 Ki 19:10)?
12. Jump forward to 732 BC. **Read 2 Ki 17:1-23.** What happens to Israel and why?
13. Things are no better in the southern kingdom of Judah. What is Jeremiah's message to Judah from God (Jer 11:6-13)? Of what are the people guilty of?
14. Throughout her history God's people refuse to be holy. As followers of Jesus, we are called to be holy (1 Pet 1:13-16). What does this mean in practical terms? How are you

going at this? Is there any real difference between your life and those of your non-Christian friends? Why, or why not?

15. Judah lasts longer than Israel, but her fate is no different. **Read 2 Ki 25:1-26.** The year is 588 BC. What happens to Judah?

16. What is the state of the fulfilment of God's promises to Abraham's descendents at the end of 2 Kings?

The failure of Solomon's kingdom "serves to underline what has been apparent all along – that the historical process from Abraham to Solomon always falls short of the glory of God's true kingdom, even though it reveals the nature of that kingdom. In the face of the judgment upon Israel's sin (climaxing in the destruction of the nation), the prophets restate the promise of the kingdom as something that will be fulfilled in the future" (*Gospel and Kingdom*, Graeme Goldsworthy, 48).

PRAYER POINTS:

Jeremiah 29: Exile

The northern kingdom of Israel have been exiled to Assyria. The southern kingdom of Judah has been exiled to Babylon. God's promises to Abraham seem as unlikely to be fulfilled as when he first made them.



1. Lamentations was written at the time of the exile. **Read Lamentations 1.** What reasons does it give for the exile?

What emotional effect did the exile have on the people of Judah?

2. **Read Lamentations 3:19-33.** In the midst of great despair, what is the writer's basis for hope?
3. According to the prophets, what will happen after the exile?
 - a. Jer 29:10-14
 - b. Jer 31:31-34
 - c. Eze 37:21-28
 - d. Isa 65:17-25
4. **Read Daniel 3.** What lessons do you see here about how the exiles are to live in Babylon?

What signs of comfort can be seen in the experiences of Daniel and his colleagues?

5. How does God want his people to respond to the exile?
 - a. Jeremiah 29:4-9

b. Daniel 9:1-19

6. In the prophetic promises to God's exiled people, two specific individuals will play an important role. Who are they and what do they do?

a. Person 1: Jer 33:14-26 and Isa 11:1-5

b. Person 2: Isa 52:13-53:12

God promises that, after the exile, he will usher in a new covenant. Two individuals play a key role in this new situation – a king in David's line who will rule with righteousness, and a servant who will somehow provide forgiveness of sin. In God's wisdom, Jesus Christ fills both those roles. He is our Messiah, the Servant King

7. The Christian's position is quite similar to that of the exiles in Babylon. We are strangers in a land that is not our ultimate home (1 Peter 1:1). How does the promise of our heavenly home help us deal with life? See Romans 8:18-39 and 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10.

8. What words of advice does 1 Peter 2:11-12 give? What specific things can we do to put these verses into practice?

"The return from the Babylonian exile fails to produce the Kingdom foretold by prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. The post-exilic prophets, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, continue to direct the eyes of Israel away from their present history to the great future day when the perfect and everlasting Kingdom of God will be revealed. The Old Testament ends on the note of promise and expectation. There is no fulfilment in sight as the Jews enter nearly four hundred years of prophetic silence between the two Testaments" (*Gospel and Kingdom*, Graeme Goldsworthy, 48).

PRAYER POINTS:

Matthew 1-18: The coming of the King

The Old Testament finishes with God's promises to Abraham and David of a kingdom (God's people in God's place under God's rule) seemingly a long way off. His people are either scattered among the nations, or else in the Promised Land under the rule of foreigners. However the prophets look forward to the day when God will fulfil his promises through his Messiah.



1. Matthew's Gospel begins with a genealogy of the line of Jesus (Mt 1:1-17). Considering God's promises made in the Old Testament, what names in this list are significant?

What does the genealogy suggest about Jesus?

2. After Jesus is born, who do the Magi come looking for (Mt 2:2)?
3. What message does John the Baptist declare (Mt 3:2)?

What about Jesus' message (Mt 4:17)?

The disciples' message (Mt 10:7-8)?

In what sense is the kingdom "near" rather than "arrived"?

When did it/ will it arrive?

The good news announcement of the gospel is that Jesus is God's king come to bring in his kingdom, in fulfilment of all God's promises.

4. How does Matthew summarise Jesus' ministry at Mt 4:23?

At Mt 9:35?

5. Skim through the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7). What is life like in God's kingdom?

How do you get into it?

How do you become great in it?

How is it different from earthly kingdoms?

6. **Read Mt 8:10-13.** Is the kingdom of God just about Israel?

What are the criteria for membership?

7. What do we learn about the nature of the kingdom from the following passages?:
Mt 13:24-30; 31-43:

13:31-33:

13:44-46:

18:1-4:

8. Look back over your answers to questions 5,6 and 7. Circle three words that describe attitudes or actions that you need to work on to live more fully in God's kingdom that Jesus brings in. Write them below.

What concrete steps can you take to develop these characteristics?

How can your Home Group help?

"Jesus declares, 'The time is fulfilled; the Kingdom of God is at hand' (Mark 1:14). He thus introduces the gospel as the bringing near of the kingdom. What it means for the kingdom to be 'at hand' rather than fulfilled emerges as the New Testament expounds the gospel. Jesus is the fulfilment of the promises, but, at this stage, the fact that God's kingdom will triumph can only be received by faith. The New Testament describes in various places the future consummation of the kingdom where the people of God know fully and by sight that which they now only have by faith. When Christ appears at his second coming, the saints of God will appear with him and the eternal kingdom will be made plain (Colossians 3:4)

(Gospel and Kingdom, Graeme Goldsworthy, 48-49).

PRAYER POINTS:

Matthew 16-28: The death of the King

The prophetic promise of God's kingdom focussed on two figures; the son of King David (Jer 33:14-26), and the suffering servant (Isa 52:13-53:12). As we follow Jesus through Matthew's gospel, we see how Jesus' expectations for himself involve joining those two roles. He is the Servant King who did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mt 20:28). The crowd imagined, instead, a king who would lead a political uprising overthrowing the earthly rule of Rome.



1. What does Jesus warn his disciples is in store for him?
 - a. Mt 16:21
 - b. Mt 20:17-19
2. What are the implications of this type of kingship for the behaviour of his followers?
 - a. Mt 16:24-26
 - b. Mt 20:25-27

When Jesus enters Jerusalem, the crowd cheer him as a conquering king (Mt 21). Instead of riding a warhorse, he chooses a donkey. Instead of raising an army and storming the Roman strongholds, he heads for the temple and casts out merchants and money-changers. The focus for Jesus' kingdom is people meeting with God.

3. In Jerusalem he tells a tragic autobiographical prophetic parable (Mt 21:33-46). What do we learn about the following from this parable?

God

Jesus

God's people

4. How do the Jewish leaders respond to this parable (Mt 21:45-46)?
5. **Read Mt 24:1-14.** In this chapter Jesus warns the disciples about coming events. What are the disciples' questions that Jesus answers (24:3).

The disciples expected the destruction of the temple predicted by Jesus (24:1), as well as Jesus' coming, and the end of the age to all happen together. All these things would happen on "the day of the LORD." The nature of God's kingdom is somewhat different however. In Jesus' life, the Kingdom of God was near. The kingdom would begin at his death, resurrection and ascension. Following this, times would be difficult for his followers. But they are only the beginning of the birth pains (24:8). The culmination or consummation of the kingdom will only be seen when Christ returns to judge and rule.

6. What is our responsibility in light of Jesus' present and coming kingdom (24:13-14)?

How well are we doing at that? How can we do it better?

What help does Jesus promise in this chapter?

7. Jesus' preferred title for himself is "Son of Man". He takes it from Daniel 7:13-14. What aspects of kingship do we see here?

How is this kingdom different from earthly kingdoms?

How does this prophecy sustain him during his arrest and trial (Mt 26:64)?

8. This is really a proclamation that Jesus will be crowned king in God's heavenly throne room, over God's kingdom. When do you think this happens?
9. What references can you find that Jesus is king of God's kingdom in Matthew's passion narrative?

27:11

27:29

27:37

27:42

In God's wisdom, Jesus fulfils the prophetic promise of both the suffering servant whose stripes bring healing to many and the son of David who rules over God's kingdom forever. **Read Isa 52:13-53:12**, then spend some time praising God whose will it was to crush his son (Isa 53:10), and praising Jesus whose life was a guilt offering that sprinkles us clean.

PRAYER POINTS:

Acts 2:14-41: Jesus is King

In the last couple of studies we have followed the theme of kingship through Matthew's Gospel. Ch 27 finishes with Jesus dead and entombed. However, in Ch 28, God raises Jesus from death showing that wicked men and Satan do not have the last word, vindicating Jesus as Lord and Saviour and defeating death forever.



1. **Read Matthew 28:18-20.** After his resurrection, on what basis does Jesus command his disciples to go and make disciples of all nations?

What command does he give them?

What promise does he provide?

2. **Read Acts 1:1-8.** Luke takes up the story of what happens after Jesus' resurrection. His "former book" is Luke's Gospel. Do you see any significance for what Acts will describe in Luke's description that his former book described all Jesus **BEGAN** to do and teach?

What did Jesus speak about with his disciples after his resurrection?

What question do the disciples ask after Jesus promises the Holy Spirit? Why? (See Eze 36:24-28; Joel 2:28-32; Jer 31:31)

What is Jesus' reply?

What does this suggest about the nature and extent of Jesus' kingdom?

3. **Read Philippians 2:8-11.** What does God do for Jesus? Why?

What is Jesus' position now?

4. What does God communicate in raising Jesus according to Romans 1:4?

5. **Read Acts 2:32-36.** After Jesus pours out the Holy Spirit on the disciples, as he promised, Peter explains the significance of the resurrection to the assembled crowd. What points does he make?

6. **Read Acts 2:37-41.** How do the crowd respond?

This amounts to recognising Jesus as King. That is, living under God's rule (as seen in Jesus).



The resurrection is God's declaration that the end times have begun. His gift of the Holy Spirit is his down-payment guaranteeing the future reality that God will dwell with mankind completely and without barrier (see the next study). At the moment, both God's presence and resurrection-life are only experienced in part. The Christian life is lived in between the inauguration of the end times (Jesus' resurrection) and their consummation (Jesus' return).

THE KINGDOM OF GOD:

GOD'S PEOPLE IN GOD'S PLACE UNDER GOD'S RULE

So what does it mean that Jesus is King of the Kingdom of God? If the Kingdom of God is God's people in God's place under God's rule, what does it mean now to be God's people? Where is God's place? Is being under God's rule different since Jesus?

7. **Read I Peter 2:4-17.** What does this passage teach us about living in God's kingdom under King Jesus?

God's people (see especially I Peter 2:9-10)

In God's place (see especially I Peter 2:4-5)

Under God's rule (see especially I Peter 2:16)

PRAYER POINTS:

Revelation 21-22: God's people in God's place again

The teaching of the Bible is that it is not only Christian who are a new creation (2 Cor 5:17), but that, one day,

God will undo the old creation and the new creation will take place. This will be a regeneration not just of believers, but of the whole Universe.



1. **Read Isaiah 65:17-25.** Is this talking about an earthly place, or a heavenly place? Is it a place within history, or outside of history?
2. What elements can you find in this prophecy of:
God's people:

In God's place:

Under God's rule:

Christians live now by faith in the Spirit, in between the beginning of the kingdom and its consummation when Christ returns. "The return of Christ ends the overlap of the ages and makes the reality of the kingdom universally visible" (Graeme Goldsworthy, *According to Plan: The unfolding revelation of the Bible*, p298).

3. **Read Romans 8:18-25.** How is the Christian life described now?

How is creation described now?

What are we hoping for?

4. **Read 1 Corinthians 15:20-26.** On what basis will the dead be raised?
5. **Read 2 Peter 3:9-13.** Why is God "slow" to destroy the wickedness of the world?

What will happen to the old creation?

What will replace it?

What are the implications of this truth for our behaviour?

6. **Read I Thessalonians 4:14-18.** What will happen to believers at that time?

What should be our attitude in light of this truth?

7. **Read Revelation 21:1-5.** How does this passage describe the new heavens and earth?

8. **Read Revelation 21:22-22:5.** What does this passage add to the ideas we have already seen about the new heavens and earth?

9. Compare this picture of the new heavens and earth to that of the first heavens and earth God created in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:8-25). What are the similarities?

What are the differences?

In what sense has humanity returned to Eden?

In what sense is it better?

If this is the final goal of creation, why did God allow everything else to occur in between? Why not just create things like Revelation 22?

10. As you consider the paradise of eternity, read Revelation 22:20. Is this your prayer also?

PRAYER POINTS:

