



Discover

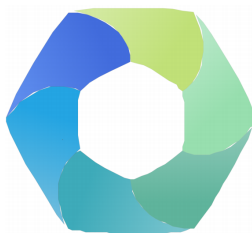
The Bible



# DISCOVER THE BIBLE

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*Daily Readings and Bible Studies*



**FREE** *for* **ALL**  
RESOURCES

**Discover the Bible**  
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Origins (Genesis 1-3)

# Introduction

The Bible is a source of instruction, encouragement, guidance and inspiration to many people. Yet sadly, for many, that is all it is. Selective reading, poor teaching, promise boxes and New Testament Bibles, have left many people totally unaware of the master theme of the Bible.

This theme, the Kingdom of God, flows from the front to the back of the Bible, finding its fulfillment in Christ. Thus, when the front of the Bible is ignored, when the Old Testament is separated from the New Testament, it becomes impossible to see why the Son of God would step from heaven and die on a cross.

Our aim therefore, is to remove the only non-inspired page of the Bible (the one that divides the Old and New Testaments) so that we can treat the Bible as God intended: as a complete work recording 'salvation-history.'

Beginning at Genesis we will see the goodness of God's creation; we will see mankind's rebellion; God's promise of restoration; we will hear his explanation of what it means to be a citizen in his Kingdom; we will meet kings and prophets who point forward to the King; and finally the king himself will be revealed and challenge us to get ready for the consummation of his Kingdom.

The whole Bible will be covered in only eight studies. To help you get the most out those studies, there are daily Bible readings which will prepare you for each study. Do make use of the readings and allow them to help you foster a deeper commitment to reading God's Word personally. Each section will move you from a key Old Testament passage, to its fulfillment or explanation in the New Testament, thus helping you to see the Bible as a whole.

It is our hope that as you see the promises and fulfillments of God revealed in Scripture and worked out in your life, your love for him will grow and that a desire to tell others about his plan of salvation will be sparked in you.

# 1.

# The Kingdom ESTABLISHED

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

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## ***Genesis 1 and 2***

*The readings and study this week will help you to understand God as Creator, humanity as those who bear his image, as well as the purpose for which God brought the world into being. Only in Jesus though, who is both the Creator and the perfect image of God, can we ever enjoy the rest and blessing for which the world was made.*



# Daily Reading



Read **Genesis 1:1-2:3**. Write down all the recurring phrases. What does this tell you about God and creation and how he should be treated?

- > Read **John 1:1-18**. What themes from Genesis recur in this passage?



Read **Genesis 1:26-2:25**. Mankind has been made in God's image. What character traits do you see in God, that were shared by the first people?

- > Read **Colossians 1:15-20**. Who does this passage say Jesus is?



Read **Genesis 1:26-2:3**. If mankind was the highpoint of God's creation, what was the goal of creation, as seen in 2:3? What does this mean?

- > Read **Matthew 11:27-30**. What does Jesus offer people?



Read **Genesis 2:15-17**. What do these verses tell us about the relationship between God and mankind?

- > Read **Hebrews 4:14-16**. What do you learn about Jesus here?



Read **Genesis 1:1-2:25**. Levels of authority are seen in these chapters. In what order do they come and what convinced you of this?

- > Read **Mark 1:14-45**. What authority does Jesus have?

# Group Study

**Re-read the introduction at the beginning of this booklet.**

## **Read Genesis 1:1 - 2:3**

1. Fill out the following table, noticing which phrases are repeated in these verses and then think what they tell us about God.

Recurring Phrases	What these phrases teach us about God

### **God: the King**

*The recurring phrases that dominate the opening pages of the Bible, teach us that God is more concerned about our knowledge of him, than explaining the origin of the world to us. He wants to teach us about himself. Chiefly he wants us to know that **he is King**. This kingship is seen in three major ways:*

#### **God creates**

*The emphasis over and over again, is that God is the instigator of all the activities that brought the universe into being.*

#### **God names**

*As the creator of all things, and therefore as their owner, God names the things he has created.*

#### **God rules**

*Whatever God decided to do, was done. Nothing could withstand the power or the authority of his Word. All things submit to him.*

But these verses also teach us about mankind.

2. How is mankind described in 1:26-30 and how does this make him unique from the animals?
  
3. What God-given ability did mankind possess that showed that they, rather than the other creatures had been made in the image of God?

### **Mankind: the Crown**

*Made in the image of God, mankind is clearly the pinnacle, the highpoint, the **crown of creation**. It was their privilege to be in a unique relationship with God – they were the special focus of his care. But with this privilege came great responsibility.*

### **Read Genesis 2:4-25**

4. As people created in the image of God, and who lived in God's good garden (see 1:31), how were Adam and Eve to relate to God, according to 2:15-17?

### **Obedience: the Rule**

*As the King's creation, it was mankind's responsibility and privilege to have God's Word to rule them. Obedience to that rule, would not only have shown their recognition of God's sovereignty, but also their trust in him. The command to not eat from the one tree, was laid down to protect them: it was part of the goodness of creation. Eating from the tree would have brought death – separation from God – and from that, God wanted to protect them. Here then, we have the pattern of the Kingdom established:*

***God's people, in God's place, under God's (protective) rule.***

5. According to 2:1-3, for what purpose were creation and mankind brought into being?

### **Rest: the Goal**

*The seventh day provides us with the pattern of the Kingdom: God established a perfect creation which he loves and over which he rules. The highest honour is given to mankind as the only part of creation made in God's image. Rest in the kingdom means that everything in creation relates perfectly to everything else and to God himself, just as God intended.*

# Personal Application

1. Who is the hero of Genesis 1 and 2 and how should this change your life?
2. What do **John 1:1-3** and **Colossians 1:15-17** have to teach us about creation and Jesus and your response to him?
3. The goal of creation was for mankind to live at rest and in peace with God. In a turbulent world, where should people be looking for rest today? Read **Matthew 11:27-30**. Where do you look for your rest?
4. How should the creation account of marriage in Genesis 2:23-25, as explained in **Ephesians 5:22-33**, shape our view on marriage?

# 2.

# The Kingdom ATTACKED

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## FALL FROM FAVOUR

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### **Genesis 3 to 11**

*The readings and study this week will help you to see the utter depravity of mankind. Humanity is sinful from birth and lives daily with the consequences of that rebellion. Yet, the astonishing truth is that God has always displayed grace and mercy in the face of our hostility, chiefly by sending his Son to destroy evil and to gather a people for himself who will live to praise him for eternity.*

# Daily Reading



Read **Genesis 3:1-13**. What changes do you notice in these verses from: "God's people, living in God's place, under God's rule."

- Read **Romans 5:1-21**. What did Adam and Jesus achieve respectively?



Read **Genesis 3:12-24**. What consequences did God say, would become evident as a result of mankind falling into sin?

- Read **Revelation 21:1-8**. Describe the new heavens and earth.



Read **Genesis 4:1-26**. In the midst of God's anger and judgment, where do we see God's grace displayed in these verses?

- Read **1 John 3:1-20**. What is sin and what has God done for sinners?



Read **Genesis 6:1-9:17**. What is the result of rebellion against God?

- Read **2 Peter 3:3-13**. What are the different ways of viewing judgment?



Read **Genesis 11:1-9**. How is this account similar to the one of the Fall, in Genesis 3?

- Read **Revelation 7:9-17**. Where will this large crowd of worshippers come from?





3. Because of this attempted usurping of God's rule, Genesis 3 tells us how a number of consequences befell the man and his wife, the serpent and the creation. What were these consequences?

**Skim read Genesis 4-11**

4. What are some further evidences in Genesis 4 -11 of human conflict and the wickedness of mankind; things which arose from the fall?



# Personal Application

1. According to Genesis 3:1-11 and **Mark 2:1-12**, what is mankind's greatest problem? Have you recognised this as your greatest problem?
  
2. Compare Genesis 3:22 to **Revelation 22:1-3**. What has happened in between these references to make this reversal possible? See **Romans 5:12-21**. Are you under curse or enjoying blessing?
  
3. What can we do to be saved from the situation we are in? See **Ephesians 2:8-9**. What evidence is there in your life, for your answer?
  
4. What then is the right response to make to what God has done? See **Mark 1:14-15**. Have you obeyed Jesus' command?

# 3.

# The Kingdom PROMISED

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## PROMISES THAT POINT

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### ***Genesis 12 to Sinai***

*The readings and study this week will help you to see that God made gracious promises to bring about an Eden-like situation for sinful humanity. Despite massive obstacles like barrenness, slavery and rebellion, God kept his promises by sending his Son into the world as the fulfilment of all that he had promised, and calls us to put our faith in him.*

# Daily Reading



Read **Genesis 11:27-12:7**. What are the promises that God made to Abram, and what is surprising about them?

- Read **Hebrews 11:8-16**. How would God ultimately fulfil his promises?



Read **Genesis 15:1-6**. How were Old Testament characters made right with God?

- Read **Galatians 3:1-9**. How are people made right with God today?



Read **Genesis 21:1-7 and 22:1-19**. What does this section have to teach us about God's faithfulness to his promises and Abraham's faith in God?

- Read **Hebrews 11:17-19**. Why was Abraham willing to be obedient?



Read **Exodus 1:1-7, 2:23-25, 3:1-15**. Which of the promises of Genesis 12:1-7 are fulfilled, and what is God doing about those which are not?

- Read **2 Corinthians 1:18-22**. How does God fulfill all his promises?



Read **Exodus 12:1-41**. What preceded the Exodus rescue, how was it accomplished and what did it result in?

- Read **Ephesians 1:3-23**. How is the same true for Christians?

# Group Study

**The story so far** ~ *The snake persuaded Eve to disobey God and eat the forbidden fruit. She gave some to Adam and he also ate. Then God spoke to them in judgment, and sent them out of the garden into a world that came under the same judgment. Outside Eden, Cain and Abel were born to Adam and Eve. Cain murdered Abel and Eve bore another son, Seth. Eventually the human race became so wicked that God determined to destroy every living thing with a flood. Noah and his family were saved by building a great boat at God's command. The human race began again with Noah and his three sons with their families. Sometime after the flood a still unified human race attempted a godless act to assert its power in the building of a high tower. God thwarted these plans by scattering the people and confusing their language.*

## **Read Genesis 12:1-3**

1. What three promises does God make to Abram in these verses?

## **The Kingdom Promised**

*When God promised to give Abram many descendants who would live in the land he gave to them, and make them a blessing to all nations, he was setting out to restore the Eden-like situation of Genesis 1 and 2. There Adam and Eve were God's people who lived in his place, the Garden of Eden and were blessed, as long as they lived under his rule.*

2. What do you notice when reading **Genesis 26:1-6** and **28:10-15**? Who are these people?

3. On reading **Genesis 46:8-27**, which of his promises had God set out to fulfil first, and which promises still seemed a long way off?
  
4. What is Abraham's great grandson, Joseph's hope based on in **Genesis 50:22-26**?

### **Kingdom obstacles**

*Sometime in the early second millennium BC, God called Abraham out of Mesopotamia to Canaan. He promised to give this land to Abraham's descendants and to bless them as his people. Abraham went, and many years later he had a son, Isaac. Isaac in turn had two sons, Esau and Jacob. The promises of God were further established with Jacob and his descendants. He had twelve sons, and in time they all went to live in Egypt because of a famine in Canaan. As this narrative unfolds, we notice how numerous obstacles appear to make the fulfilment of the promises distant and even impossible. Childlessness, disobedience and failure to possess the Promised Land of Canaan, are problems that recur in every generation of Abraham's family. Yet through all this, God is seen to be faithful; a mighty God whose promises cannot be overrun by even the greatest of obstacles. Thus we see, that although the people are outside the promised land, they have grown to be a very great family.*

### **Read Exodus 2:23-25**

5. What do these verses tell us about the situation regarding the promises of God?

## **Read Exodus 3:9-15**

6. What action does God implement to show his faithfulness to the descendents of Abraham?

### **The Way Out**

*Being absolutely faithful to all that he had promised, God set out to rescue his people from Egypt and take them to the Promised Land. However, Pharaoh was unwilling for the people to leave Egypt, and so Egypt suffered numerous plagues at the hand of God. Exodus 12 chronicles the events that took place before the rescue, how the rescue was achieved, and what the result of the rescue was. Read:*

*Exodus 12:1-11 What preceded the rescue?*

*Exodus 12:12-13, 29-30 How was the rescue achieved?*

*Exodus 12:31-36 What were two results of the Lord's actions?*



# Personal Application

1. What does **1 Peter 1:3-5** say about how the promise of land to Abraham, is fulfilled? Which land are you living for?
2. What does **Galatians 3:16** and **26-29** say about how the promise of descendants to Abraham, is fulfilled? Are you part of the family?
3. What does **Galatians 3:13-14** say about how the promise of blessing to Abraham, is fulfilled? Are you a recipient of God's blessing?
4. Read **Romans 7:14-25**. What are we all enslaved by? What is our only hope of freedom?
5. What does **Galatians 3:6-9** have to teach us about the way to be right with God? How do you seek to be right with God?
6. If Abraham was made right with God through faith in the promises of God, what did his faith lead to? See **James 2:20-24**. Is this true for you?

# 4.

# The Kingdom EXPLAINED

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## THE LAW THAT LEADS

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### ***Sinai to Saul***

*The readings and study this week will help you to see that God desired obedience from his rescued people. However, when they were not obedient he nonetheless provided a way out for them through sacrifice and graciously gave them the Promised Land. But even then, they turned their backs on God by rejecting his rule over them.*

# Daily Reading



Read **Exodus 19:1-20:17**. What should have motivated the Israelites to obey God? What had he done for them?

- Read **Galatians 2:16-17**. What place should obedience have for us?



Read **Exodus 35:1-35**. How well did Israel obey the commands of God? What was their problem?

- Read **Romans 7:7-25**. What is the good news as we struggle with sin?



Read **Leviticus 16:1-34**. What is atonement and why is it necessary?

- Read **Hebrews 9:1-28**. Why don't Christians celebrate the Day of Atonement?



Read **Numbers 13:16-14:35**. Why did the Israelite's failure to enter the Promised Land invoke such fierce punishment on them, from God?

- Read **Hebrews 3:7-4:11**. What is one of the marks of being a Christian?



Read **Deuteronomy 28:1-68**. What were the consequences of obeying and disobeying God's Law?

- Read **Romans 2:12-16**. What does disobedience to God result in?

# Group Study

**The story so far** ~ In time, the descendants of Jacob living in Egypt multiplied to become a very large number of people. The Egyptians no longer regarded them with friendliness and made them slaves. God appointed Moses to be the one who would lead Israel out of Egypt to the promised land of Canaan. When the moment came for Moses to demand the freedom of his people, the Pharaoh refused to let them go. Through Moses, God worked ten miracle-plagues which brought hardship, destruction and death to the Egyptians. Finally Pharaoh let Israel go, but then pursued and trapped them at the Red Sea. Then God opened a way in the sea for Israel to cross on dry land, but closed the water over the Egyptian army, destroying it.

## **Skim read Exodus 15:22-19:2**

Use the map at the back of the book to plot Israel's route after captivity.

1. What is surprising about this journey? In the light of the promises made to Abraham, why do you think God led them there as he did? See **Exodus 3:12**.
2. In a rather long section, Exodus 19 → Leviticus → Numbers 10, the Israelites remain camped at Mt Sinai. What does **Exodus 19:3-6** have to tell us about the purpose for which God had taken them there?
3. After pledging their allegiance to God in 19:7-8, and having received his law, how did the Israelites respond? See **Exodus 32:1-4**.

4. Skim through **Exodus 24-40** and **Leviticus 1-6**. What is the main emphasis of these chapters? Why do think this is the case?
5. What would be the consequences of obeying and disobeying God's Law, according to **Leviticus 26**?

### **The Kingdom Explained**

*After their release from Egypt, Moses led the Israelites to Mt Sinai. There God gave them his Law in which he explained that for Israel to be his people and to live under his blessing, they were to be obedient to him. At one point, while Moses was away on the mountain, the people persuaded Aaron to fashion a golden calf. Thus they showed their inclination to forsake the covenant and to engage in idolatry. God also commanded the building of the tabernacle to symbolise his presence among the people, and he gave rules of sacrificial worship (in Leviticus) by which sinful Israel could approach him. Failure to obey him would have resulted in God's curse resting on them, while obedience would have brought rich blessing.*

6. After leaving Mt Sinai, the Israelites were led by God in a northerly direction towards the Promised Land (Numbers 10:11-13), but after sending spies into the land, refused to enter. What was God's response to this rebellion? See **Numbers 14:11-35**.

7. Forty years later with a new generation of Israelites freshly taught (in Deuteronomy) about how to live under God's rule, in God's place, as God's people, they entered the land under Joshua's leadership, they destroyed their enemies and divided the land between the tribes. Summarise Joshua's address to the people as found in **Joshua 23**.
  
8. After a time of relative instability under the judges, summarised in Judges 2:10-19, Israel showed herself to have not listened carefully to Moses' or Joshua's call to covenant faithfulness. How does **1 Samuel 8:1-9**, show their rebellion against God? Also see **Deuteronomy 17:14-20**.
  
9. Under the king they requested, what became of the nation, according to **1 Samuel 31:1-7**?

# Personal Application

1. With so much emphasis on the Law of God, what is the purpose of the Law according to **Romans 3:20**? Has the Law done this for you and have you sought atonement through Jesus as **Romans 3:21-26** says?
2. The earthly sanctuary of God spoke of his desire to live amongst his people, and also of the difficulty of approaching the throne-room of God. The nearer one came to the Holy of Holies, the more prohibitive were the barriers and the fewer the people who were permitted to pass through them, as Hebrews 9:1-7 tells us. What took place, that now enables people to enter the presence of God? See **Mark 15:37-39, Hebrews 9:12-14, 10:19-20**. Have you entered the presence of God?
3. Compare how you feel about standing before God, with what **Hebrews 10:22** says. Why do you feel that way?
4. What should you learn about the Christian life from Israel's conduct during their desert wanderings, according to **1 Corinthians 10:1-13**?

# 5.

# The Kingdom FORESHADOWED

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AWAITING THE KING

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## ***David and Solomon***

*The readings and study this week will help you to see that God promised David that he would raise up a king from David's family who would rule forever. Solomon his son, built the temple where it was possible to meet with God through sacrifices, but he was not the King. The perfect King, Jesus, confirmed by his resurrection, is the fulfilment of God's promise.*



# Daily Reading



Read **2 Samuel 7:1-17**. What promises does God make to David and how similar are they to the ones he made to Abraham in Genesis 12?

- Read **Acts 13:22-35**. Who fulfills the promise to David? Why?



Read **2 Samuel 11-12**. What do we notice about David, the man of God, in these chapters?

- Read **1 John 1:8-2:6**. What is the only way to find forgiveness for sin?



Read **1 Kings 3:1-15**. Written by Solomon, how does Proverbs 26:4-5 reflect Solomon's wisdom?

- Read **Matthew 12:42**. How did Jesus show his greater wisdom?



Read **1 Kings 8:14-53**. For what purposes would people approach the Lord's temple?

- Read **Hebrews 10:1-18**. Why don't we need to make sacrifices anymore?



Read **1 Kings 10:23-11:8**. In what ways did Solomon fail as Israel's king? Where did he go wrong?

- Read **Hebrews 1:1-13**. How is Jesus a greater king than Solomon?

# Group Study

**The story so far** ~ Israel's first king, Saul, arose out of the nation's sinful desire to have what the surrounding nations had. They were not content to have God alone as their King, so they demanded an earthly king. Saul had a promising start to his reign but eventually showed himself to be unsuitable as the ruler of the covenant people. While Saul was still reigning, David was anointed to succeed him. At the age of 30, David became king and almost immediately secured peace and rest for the nation, due largely to his successful recapture of the ark of God and its placement in Jerusalem.

## **Read 2 Samuel 7:1-16**

1. What is David's desire according to verses 1-7?
2. How does God respond to David's desire? What plans does God have for David and for the future, according to verses 8-16?
3. What similarities exist between the situation of Genesis 1 and 2, the promise of Genesis 3:15, the promises made to Abraham in Genesis 12 and the promises made here to David?



6. Throughout Solomon's reign there are hints that all is not going well. Look up the following verses and describe Solomon's faults, using **Deuteronomy 17:16-17** as a yardstick by which to measure him:

1 Kings 3:1-4

1 Kings 10:26-28

1 Kings 11:1-8

**What goes up, usually comes down!**

*The accounts of David and Solomon are remarkable for the highs and lows they respectively reach. As God's appointed king, David received a re-statement of the promises made to Abraham, to take the people back to an Eden-like situation. The people of God would live in God's place, under the rule of his King, enjoying the rest of the seventh day. Amazingly, the promised King would be eternal – his Kingdom would rule forever – and this eternal King, would be God's Son. However, while waiting for the arrival of that King, others from the house of David would reign, but sadly they would not be without blemish or sin.*

*Like his father David, Solomon's career had it's ups and downs. David brought the ark to Jerusalem, Solomon built the temple. David brought peace to the land, Solomon kept it up. David fell into adultery, murder and deceit, and Solomon broke the commands laid down for kings to follow.*

*Yet through all this turmoil and change, God remained faithful to his word, as we see in 1 Kings 8:23-24, 56.*

*Two things remain to be seen though: what will be the consequences of David and Solomon's sin, and will God keep his promise to raise up an eternal King?*

# Personal Application

1. What do **John 1:49** and **Acts 2:29-33, 13:22-23, 32-34**, teach us about who Jesus is? Do you accept this?
2. Read **John 1:14, 2:12-25**. From tabernacle to temple to Jesus, God has always dwelt amongst his people. How does Jesus fully realise what the tabernacle and temple stood for? Of what significance is it then, that a mosque is now built on the site of God's temple? Does your answer fit in with **Revelation 21:22**? Where do you meet with God?
3. What does Jesus call his disciples to do in the light of this great authority – authority achieved through his death and resurrection? **See Matthew 28:18-20**. Is this a priority for you?
4. How have you responded to the humble, yet nevertheless awesome, rule of Christ the King?

# 6.

# The Kingdom REJECTED

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Prophets that Prepare

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## ***Solomon to Exile***

*The readings and study this week will help you to see that despite God warning the people of Israel and Judah by sending them prophets, they nevertheless continued in their rebellion, so God kept his promise and sent them into Exile. Sin (which results in eternal Exile) can only be overcome through Jesus the Good Shepherd laying down his life for the sheep.*

# Daily Reading



Read **1 Kings 11:9-13 and 11:42-12:30**. What was the result of Solomon's sin?

- Read **John 4:1-26**. What did Jesus want the Samaritans to know?



Read **1 Kings 18:16-40**. What did Elijah the prophet hope to achieve through this confrontation?

- Read **John 14:5-11**. What is Jesus' view of the many gods of the world?



Read **Jeremiah 11:1-23**. What was the content of Jeremiah's prophecy concerning Judah?

- Read **Mark 12:1-12**. How were the prophets (and Jesus) treated?



Read **2 Kings 17:1-23 and 25:1-12**. What was the final outcome for both Israel and Judah, after their refusal to obey the prophets?

- Read **Revelation 21:22-22:21**. What hope do Christians exiles have?



Read **Ezekiel 34:1-16**. What was one of the major causes of the Exile and what was God going to do about it?

- Read **John 10:1-18**. How does Jesus compare to the OT kings?

# Group Study

**The story so far** ~ After the failure and death of the first king – Saul – David became king in about 1000 BC. Due to his successes Israel became a powerful and stable nation. He established a central sanctuary at Jerusalem, and created a professional bureaucracy and permanent army. David's son Solomon succeeded him in about 961 BC and the prosperity of Israel continued. The building of the temple was one of Solomon's most notable achievements. Sadly though, the reigns of David and Solomon were both tainted by their proneness to fall into sin, leaving the nation to wonder who their eternal King would be.

1. Look back to Study 5 to recap on Solomon's rebellion.

## **Read 1 Kings 11:9–13 and 1 Kings 11:42–12:20**

2. What did God say would be the consequence of Solomon's rebellion, and how did the fulfillment of what God said, come about?

### **1 & 2 Kings – The Moving Spotlight**

*After the promises made to David concerning a King who would rule forever, and the division of the nation into Israel (the northern kingdom under Jeroboam) and Judah (the southern kingdom under Rehoboam), it is as if a spotlight swings from north to south in search of this promised king. Would he be found?*

3. Describe the kings of the north (Israel) after reading these references:  
1 Kings 15:25-26, 15:33-34, 16:29-33, 22:51-53
4. Are things going any better in the south (Judah)?  
2 Kings 8:16-19, 16:1-4, 18:1-4, 21:1-6



## **Kings and Prophets**

*As a whole the kings of Israel and Judah are a sorry bunch of idol worshippers, none of whom were able to bring about lasting reform in the nation or the eternal promise of rest. Even individual kings who showed faithfulness to God, were quickly replaced by kings who did not fear the Lord. It was during this time of apostasy and rebellion, that a great number of the prophets did their work. God sent his messengers – the prophets – to speak words of warning to Israel and Judah respectively.*

5. Elijah and Elisha were prophets who warned Israel about the consequences of rejecting God's law. What is Elijah's assessment of how things are going? **See 1 Kings 19:10.**
  
6. Amos and Hosea were two prophets who also called Israel to repentance. How does Hosea think Israel is doing? **See Hosea 4:1-3.**
  
7. Jeremiah was one of the prophets who brought God's message to Judah. **Look at Jeremiah 11:6-13.** What is Jeremiah's message?

### **Ever hearing. but never perceiving!**

*Although the people of Israel and Judah heard God's command of repentance come to them over and over again through countless prophets, they did not perceive the danger they were in, and simply carried on, in their wicked ways. The warning that came to them was based on what God had promised would happen to those who disobeyed – and it did!*



# Personal Application

1. In what ways was Jesus similar to the Old Testament prophets? **See Acts 7:51-53.** What warning does this bring to us?

2. **Read 1 Peter 1:10-21.**

How was the grace that the prophets spoke about, fully realised?

What did it cost God, for us to be forgiven?

Israel and her kings failed to be God's holy people. As followers of Jesus today, we are also called to be holy. What does this mean in practical terms?

What things about holy living do you find difficult?

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

# 7.

# The Kingdom AT HAND

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The Time is Fulfilled

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## ***Exile to Christ***

*The readings and study this week will help you to see that although God's people returned from Exile physically, they were still in Exile spiritually. Their hearts had not changed. Thankfully God promised to change their hearts through someone he would send. That promise and all the other promises God had ever made, were fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus.*

# Daily Reading



Read **Ezekiel 36:1-38**. What would happen after the Exile?

> Read **Matthew 1:1-17**. What is Matthew saying with his genealogy?



Read **Nehemiah 9:1-37**. Having returned to the land, how do the people acknowledge the goodness God has shown his people?

> Read **Romans 3:21-26**. How has God dealt with all sin?



Read **Nehemiah 10:30-39**. How well do the Jews keep these promises, according to Nehemiah 13:6-27?

> Read **Romans 7:7-25**. What hope do Christians have as they fight sin?



Read **Luke 3:23-4:13**. Having shown his readers Jesus' family heritage and displayed Israel's history, why does Luke then tell us of Jesus' wilderness encounter with the devil?



Read **Hebrews 8:6-9:15**. How did Jesus solve mankind's greatest problem, namely sin?

# Group Study

**The story so far** ~ Solomon allowed political considerations and personal ambitions to sour his relationship with God, and this in turn had a bad effect on the life of Israel. Solomon's son began an oppressive rule which led to the rebellion of the northern tribes and the division of the kingdom. Although there were some political and religious high points, both kingdoms went into decline. A new breed of prophets warned against the direction of national life, but matters went from bad to worse. In 722 BC the northern kingdom of Israel fell to the power of the Assyrian empire. Then, in 597 and 586 BC the southern kingdom of Judah was devastated by the Babylonians. Jerusalem and its temple were destroyed, and a large part of the population was deported to Babylon.

1. The Exile from the land, has strong similarities to the Fall of Genesis 3. In both cases God's special people rebel against his rule and are thrown out of their special land as punishment. The big question is: Will God set out to restore Israel as he did after the Fall, or has he given up? What is the answer according to the prophets; what would happen after the Exile?

Jeremiah 29:10-14

Jeremiah 16:14-15

Ezekiel 37:21-28

Ezekiel 36:33-36

Isaiah 65:17-25

2. Within these future plans for God's people, three specific individuals will play an important role. Who are they and what will they do?

Person 1: Jeremiah 33:14-26

Person 2: Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Person 3: Daniel 7:9-14

3. After 70 years in Exile, Cyrus King of Babylon allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem. After acknowledging that it was their own sin that led them into exile, the people dedicated themselves to righting those wrongs. What do they promise?

Nehemiah 10:30

Nehemiah 10:31

Nehemiah 10:32-39

4. Some time later, having returned to Babylon to report to Cyrus, Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem. What did he find?

Nehemiah 13:10-11

Nehemiah 13:15-18

Nehemiah 13:23-27

5. Why then does the promise of **Jeremiah 31:31-34** become so important?

### **A Book without a Conclusion**

*Although some of God's people returned to God's land after their Exile, their persistent difficulty was to live under the rule of God. But not only that, it seemed as if God's promises were never going to be fulfilled. Once, hopes and dreams had been high: a Davidic ruler would reign, a suffering servant would forgive sin, and a son of man would conquer all enemies. But where were these people? Would the God of the covenant who had previously been faithful to his promises, remain faithful now, even in the midst of the people's ongoing rebellion?*

6. How do the various Gospels describe the coming of Jesus into the world?

Matthew 1:1-17

Mark 1:1-3, 38-39

Luke 1:31-33

John 1:14

7. In what terms did Jesus describe his entry into the world?

Mark 1:14-15

Luke 4:14-21

8. How is Jesus life and ministry described in **Luke 24:25-27, 44-47 and Acts 13:32-33**?

### **The End of the Exile**

*In Jesus the Exile had come to an end. God's people, those who had submitted to the rule of the Gospel, to repent and believe, were privileged to be in God's land as they submitted to Jesus. In Christ, the promises of God had found their fulfillment. The reversal of the Fall, through the destruction of Satan, at the cross, had finally been achieved.*



# Personal Application

1. Have you accepted that the work Jesus came into the world to do, he came to do for you? **See Mark 2:17 and Luke 19:10.**
2. Do you believe that Jesus' death is central to salvation? **See Hebrews 9:11-15.** Why do you think this?
3. What would you say if someone asked you who Jesus was?
4. All God's promises have been fulfilled in Christ. Christians have received all the blessings won for them by Christ. All this they possess by faith, but they wait to receive it finally 'by sight'. What confidence do you have of actually receiving it? **Look up Ephesians 1:13-14.**

# 8.

# The Kingdom CONSUMMATED

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Return to Paradise

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## ***Christ to New Creation***

*The readings and study this week will help you to see that while Christians wait for the consummation of God's Kingdom where all his promises will be fulfilled, they are to participate in the coming of the Kingdom by living godly lives and telling others about King Jesus. When the Kingdom finally comes they will receive resurrection bodies and live forever in the presence of Christ, for the praise of his glory.*

# Daily Reading



Read **Acts 1:1-11**. What do Jesus' disciples learn about the kingdom of God, its coming, and their participation in it, from these verses?



Read **Luke 19:11-27**. What is the responsibility of the King's servants while he is away? If he returned now, would he be pleased with you, or would you be found wanting?



Read **2 Peter 3:1-18**. What will characterise the last days? Why has the Lord not yet returned? What things must we do, and what must we avoid, in these last days?



Read **Revelation 21:1-8**. What promises do you see fulfilled in the events described by these verses?



Read **Colossians 3:1-5**. What should mark the Christian's life today? Why?

# Group Study

**The story so far** ~ In 538 BC Cyrus the Persian King allowed the Jews to return home and to set up a Jewish state within the Persian empire. There was local opposition to the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple. Many of the Jews did not return but stayed on in the land of their exile. In the latter part of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, Alexander the Great conquered the Persian empire. The Jews entered a long and difficult period in which Greek culture and religion challenged their trust in God's covenant promises. In 63 BC Pompey conquered Palestine and the Jews found themselves a province of the Roman empire. During the reign of Caesar Augustus, Jesus Christ was born at Bethlehem. He embarked on a ministry of preaching, teaching and healing, which lasted for 3 years. Growing conflict with the Jews and their religious leaders led eventually to Jesus being sentenced to death by the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. He was executed outside Jerusalem, but rose from death 2 days afterward and appeared to his followers on a number of occasions. After a period with them, Jesus was taken up to heaven.

## Read Acts 1:1-11

1. What 2 things that Jesus spoke about before his ascension, according to verses 1 – 5, may have lead to the disciples question in verse 6?
2. Re-write verse 6 in your own words.
3. Verses 7 and 8 are Jesus' answer to the disciples' question. The answer is: 'now' and 'not-yet'. The Kingdom is 'not-yet' here, and no one knows when it will be consummated (verse 7). But it is also here 'now' (verse 8). How is this the case?
4. What encouragement do the disciples receive from the men?

### **How the Kingdom Comes**

*Although the person and work of Jesus fully reveal the Kingdom of God, there is a sense in which all Christians are called to participate in its coming. It comes through the preaching of the gospel (witnessing to Christ) under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The power of the Kingdom therefore, lies neither in the Holy Spirit's work alone, nor in the word of Christ alone, but in both together.*

5. **Look up Romans 8:18-25.** As people living in this world, doing the work of Spirit-enabled Word-proclamation, what is our experience?

Why is this our experience?

What is our hope?

What is creation's hope?

6. On what basis can Christians be certain that their bodies will be redeemed? **See 1 Corinthians 15:20-22, 50-58.**

Why do our bodies need to be changed?

When will these things take place?

What should characterise our lives, while we wait for that day?



# Personal Application

When the Bible talks about the present, with the view to giving structure to our lives, it always refers back to the Gospel event and then forward to the consummation of the Kingdom. **Colossians 3:1-5** is such a passage. Write out these verses across the following 3 columns of the table below, to show how past and future events shape our lives in the present.

Gospel Event	Christian Life	Consummation

1. What should our lives be characterised by, now? Why? Is this true for you?
2. Why is Ephesians 1:10 such a good summary of the Bible's overall message?
3. How have you found this Bible overview helpful?
4. What have you had to change in your understanding and in your lifestyle?
5. If, after telling a friend what the Bible's message is, they say to you, "So what?" what would you answer?

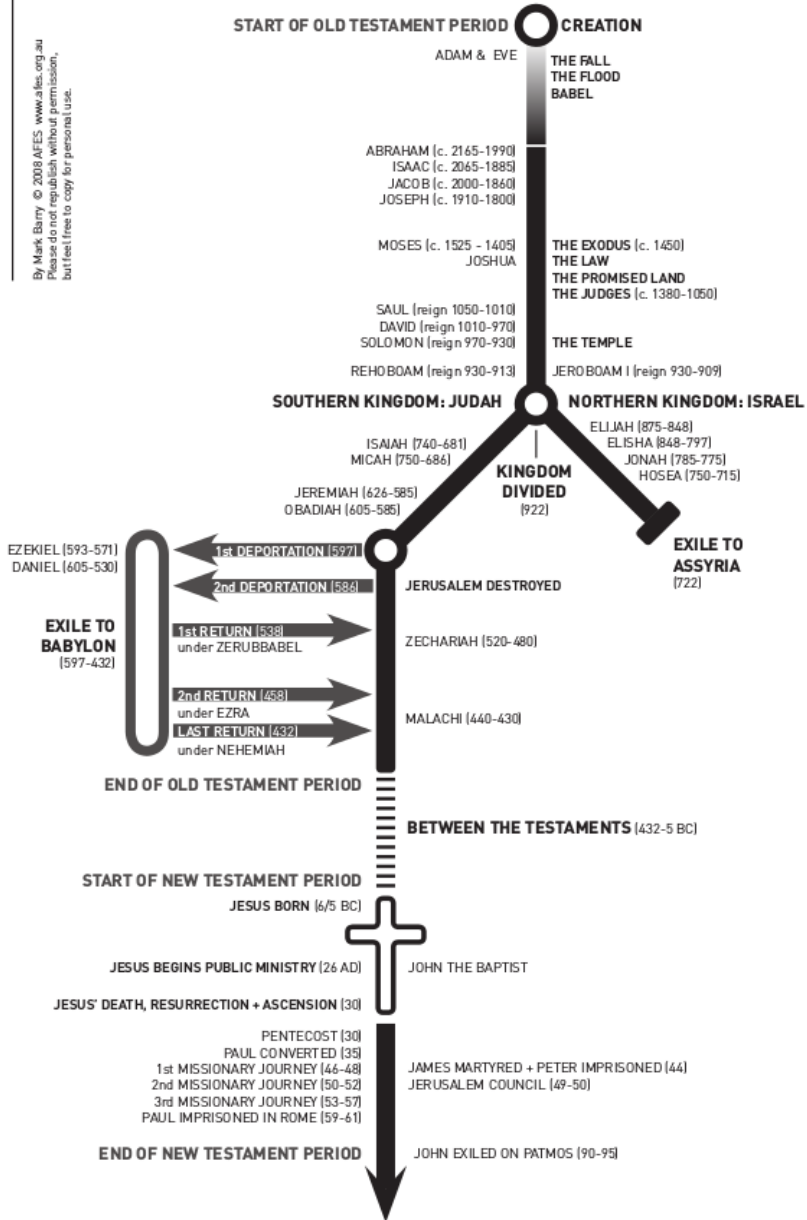




# APPENDIX 1

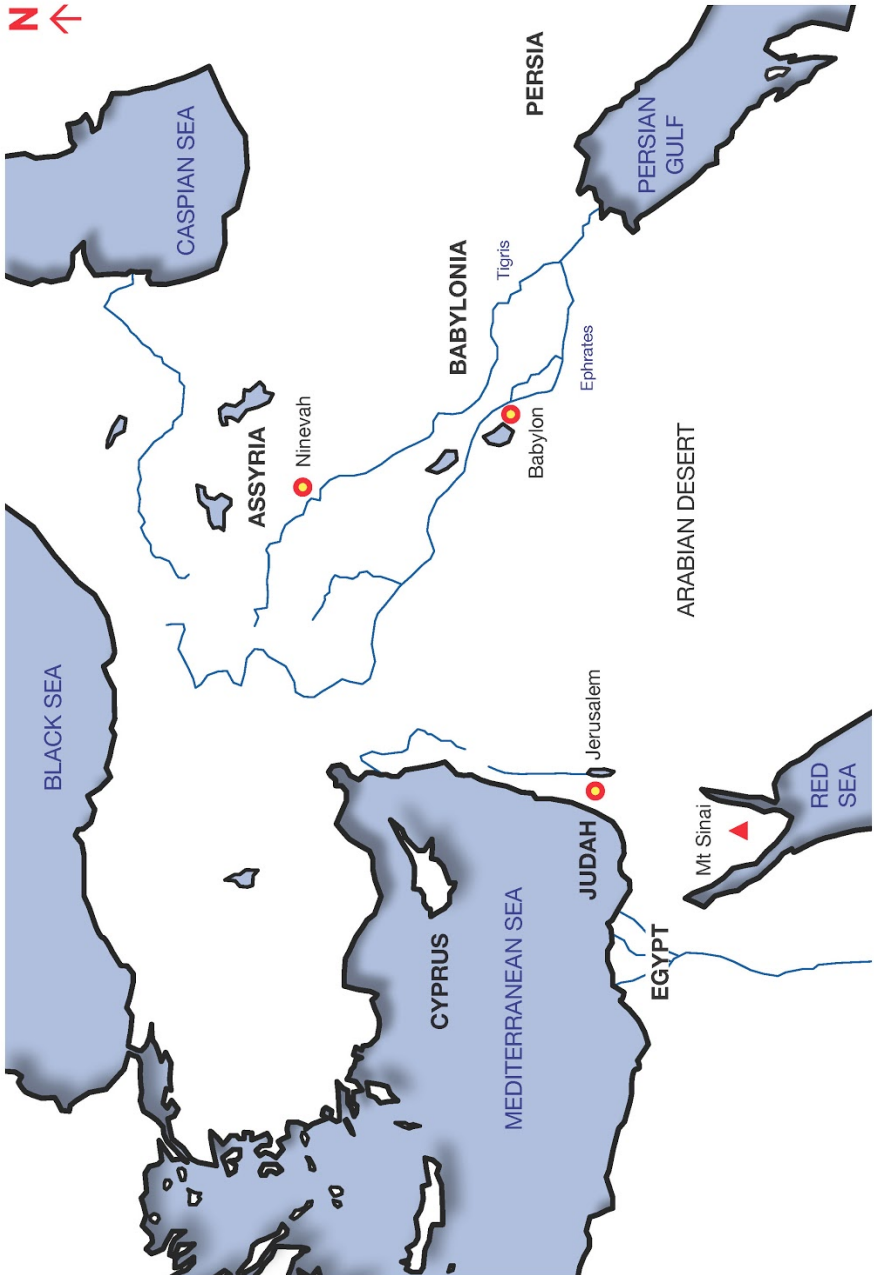
## BIBLE TIMELINE

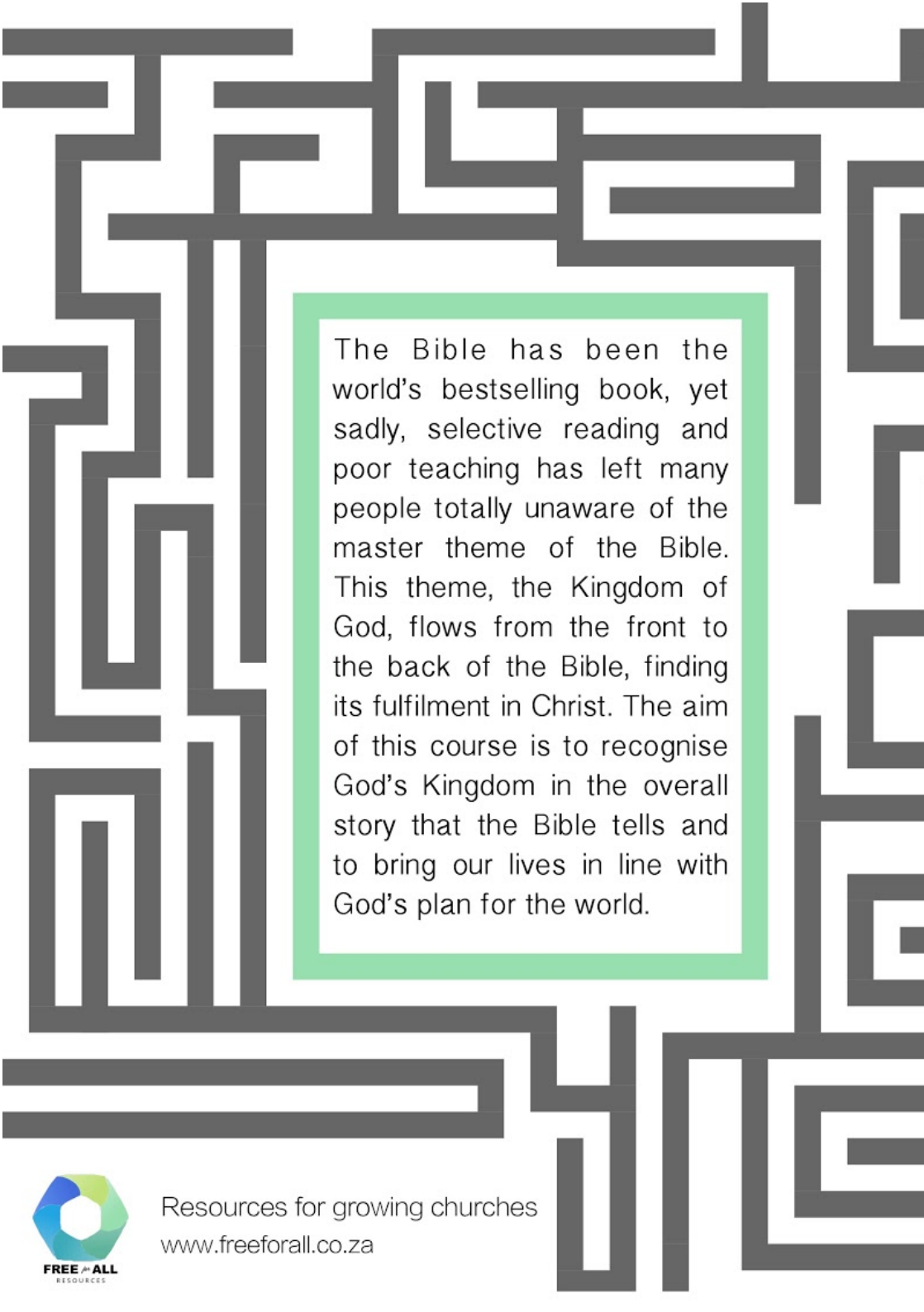
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## APPENDIX 2

### Israel, Surrounding Nations and Landmarks





The Bible has been the world's bestselling book, yet sadly, selective reading and poor teaching has left many people totally unaware of the master theme of the Bible. This theme, the Kingdom of God, flows from the front to the back of the Bible, finding its fulfilment in Christ. The aim of this course is to recognise God's Kingdom in the overall story that the Bible tells and to bring our lives in line with God's plan for the world.



Resources for growing churches  
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