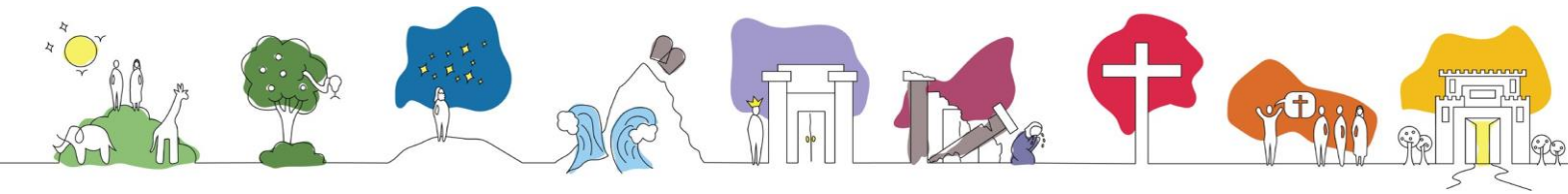


# God's big story



**PICTON & WILTON  
ANGLICAN CHURCHES**

*Life, Growth and Love in Jesus Christ*

## Bible Studies

## Biblical Theology

# God's Big Story

## Biblical Theology Sermon Series

This term we are going to undertake the task of seeing how the whole bible flows in one big story. Understanding how the bible's story progressively unfolds and fits together is called Biblical Theology.

Instead of looking at all of the bible and finding out what the Bible says on one particular topic (a study called Systematic Theology), biblical theology looks at how a story, or a particular theme develops and unfolds throughout the entire sweep of the bible. It experiences the bible's story from 'ground level' and learns from what is going on in the passage that is in front of you at a given time.

Biblical theology then notices how different themes that are picked up throughout the bible's historical story arc, develop, expand, or are later filled with deeper significance as God's revelation continues through the bible.

This term we will follow God's story throughout the pages of the bible, learning who God is, how he relates to his people, and the extents he will go to in order to bring God's people together in God's place under his rule and blessing.

Our study will take us from God's good creation (the garden) to God's wonderful promised New creation (the heavenly city)... and help us see that Jesus' death and resurrection to reconcile all people back to God was his plan and purpose from the very beginning of time.

Each and every step of the way we will see God's amazing goodness, his faithfulness and his amazing acts of salvation. Hopefully this will help us see how we stand truly blessed now, as we await the wonderful time of Jesus' return.

### Memory Verse

"For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God." **2 Corinthians 1:20**



Week 1. The Pattern of the Kingdom  
(18/10/2020)

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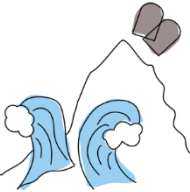
Week 2. The Perished Kingdom  
(25/10/2020)

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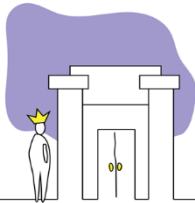
Week 3. The Promised Kingdom  
(1/11/2020)

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Week 4. The Partial Kingdom (People / Blessing)  
(8/11/2020)

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Week 5. The Partial Kingdom (Land / King)  
(15/11/2020)

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Week 6. The Prophesied Kingdom  
(22/11/2020)

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Week 7. The Present Kingdom  
(29/11/2020)

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Week 8. The Proclaimed Kingdom  
(6/12/2020)

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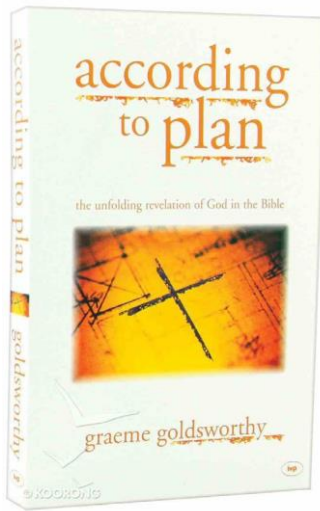


Week 9. The Perfected Kingdom  
(13/12/2020)

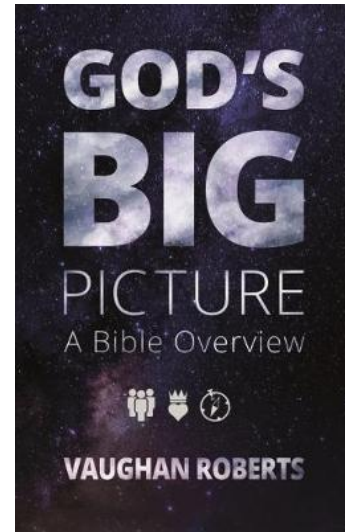
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# Resources

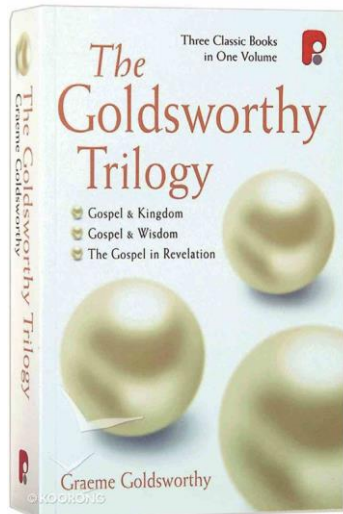
The following are some brilliant books to be reading alongside the sermon series...



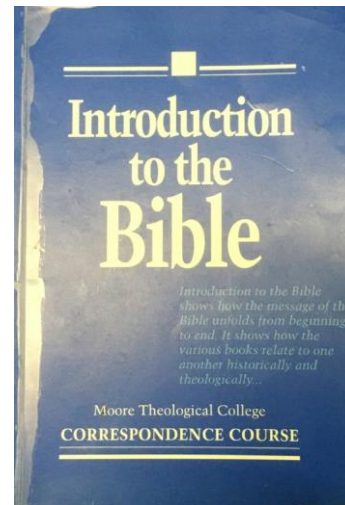
**According to Plan:  
The Unfolding Revelation of God  
in the Bible**  
Graeme Goldsworthy (1991)



**God's Big Picture**  
Vaughan Roberts (2012)



**The Goldsworthy Trilogy:  
Gospel and Kingdom, Gospel  
and Wisdom, the Gospel in  
Revelation.**  
Graeme Goldsworthy (2002)



**Introduction to the Bible**  
Moore College  
Correspondence course  
Preliminary Theological  
Certificate

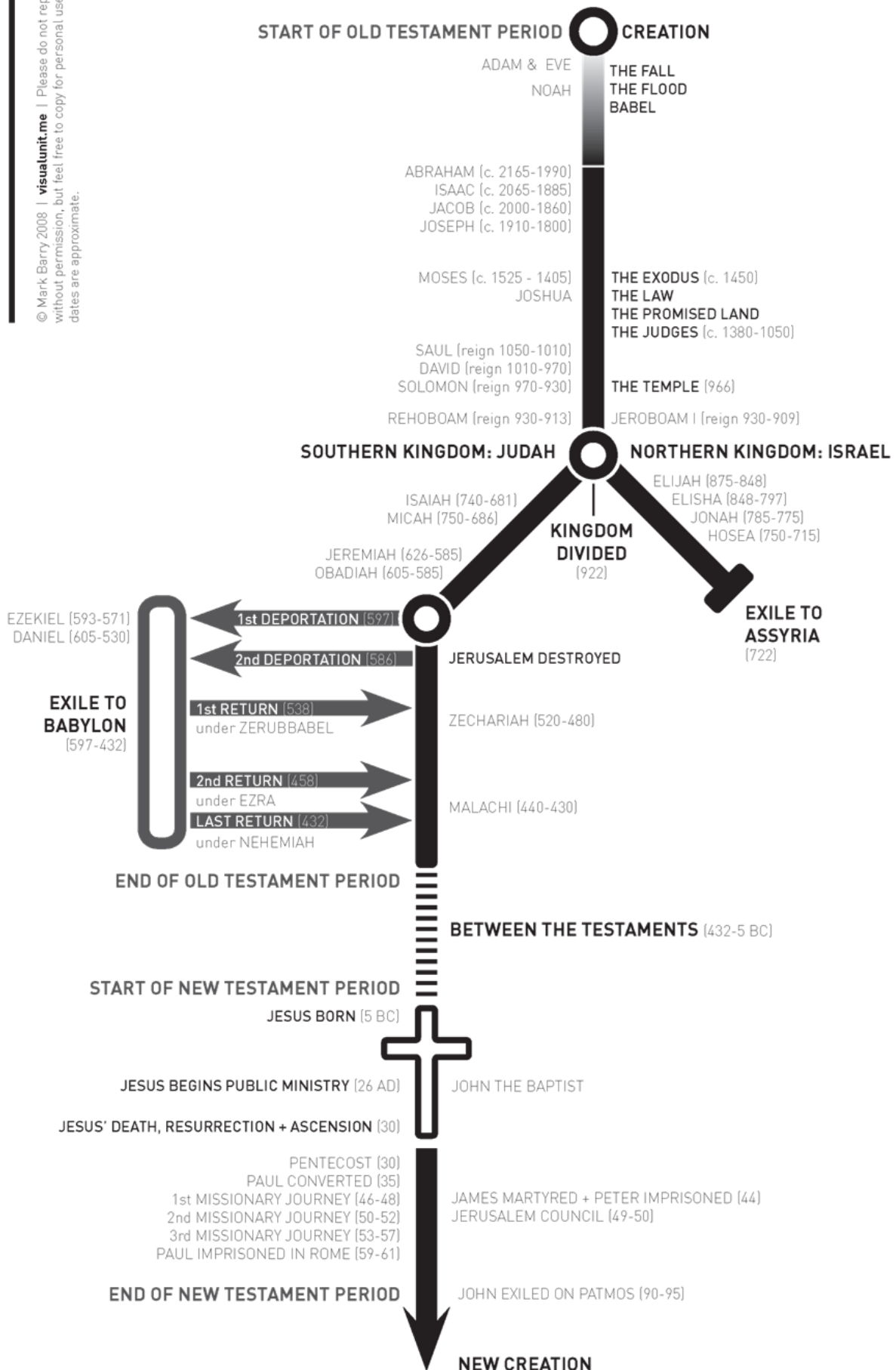
## Websites.

[www.visualunit.me](http://www.visualunit.me)  
[bibleproject.com](http://bibleproject.com)

Helpful resources for the visually minded produced by Mark Barry.  
Excellent videos to fill in the gaps along the way.

# BIBLE TIMELINE

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# TRAVELLING THROUGH THE OLD TESTAMENT

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\*The order of the prophets are approximate, as some of the books are not dated.





## Week 1. The Pattern of the Kingdom

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### **To begin...**

What excites / daunts you about thinking through the whole story of the bible?

What comes to mind when you think of the word “kingdom?”

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

What are the repeated patterns, words and phrases?

What do these patterns tell us about God?

What do these verses tell us about God’s creation?

What are we told about human beings?

Why do humans have a special plan in God’s plans?

What made the 7th day different from days 1 - 6?

## Read Genesis 2:4-25

What is the relationship between:

- God and humans?
- Man and woman?
- Human beings and creation?

Read and compare John 1:1-5 and Colossians 1:15-17. How does Jesus' role relate to Genesis 1 and 2?

What do these chapter NOT tell us about the story of creation? What DO these chapters tell us?

## Reflection

How does the teaching of Genesis 1-2 differ to worldviews in our society? How does it challenge your thinking and behaviour?

When do you need to remember that:

- material things are valuable to God?
- people are made in God's image and are precious?
- rest with God (not work or things or people) is the goal of creation?

What could you do this week to enjoy God as the creator and enjoy rest with him?



# Notes/Prayer





## Week 2. The Perished Kingdom

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### To begin...

What comes to mind when you think of the word “sin?” What is our world’s attitude to sin?

### Read Genesis 3

Satan is the “deceiver” (eg John 8:44; Revelation 12:9), as he manipulates the truth. How does Satan deceive the woman and man?

What did God actually say to the woman and man about the tree(s)?

What did Adam and Eve each do wrong?

Discuss: “God knew good and evil. Adam and Eve then decided they wanted to know for themselves, because they didn’t trust God’s knowledge of good and evil.” Do you agree?

How is Adam and Eve’s rebellion typical of all sin?

Fill in the table below to see how sin has damaged relationships and to see how God's created order is now different...

Relationship	Pre Fall	Post Fall
God and Humans		
Man and Woman		
Human beings and creation		

## Reflection

What part do we play in Genesis 3:1-7? Are we responsible for sin, or was it just passed down to us?

How do the curses that were handed down introduce us to the work of Jesus? (Read Romans 5:12-21 for further clarification.)

How do we see Satan using the same tactics today?

What signs of hope can be seen in this chapter?

How can we be encouraged by this hope?

# Notes/Prayer

KINGDOM of <b>GOD</b>	<b>PERISHED</b> KINGDOM	 <p><b>GOD</b></p> <p>BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS</p>
<b>GOD'S PEOPLE</b> 	No-one	
<b>GOD'S PLACE</b> 	Banished from Eden	
<b>GOD'S RULE &amp; BLESSING</b> 	Disobedience and curse	



## Week 3. The Promised Kingdom

---

### To begin...

If you were asked by a work colleague “What is wrong with this world?”, how would you answer?

Quickly flick through Genesis 4-11. What are some of the events that occur in these chapters?

How universal is the effect of sin we learnt about in Genesis 3? (Eg: See Genesis 6:5-6)

### Read Genesis 12:1-9

What does God promise Abram in these verses?

Compare Genesis 11:4 with Genesis 12:2. What do these verses tell us about humanity and God?

How do Gods promises to Abraham reflect a return to the good creation of Genesis 1-2?

### Read Genesis 15:1-6

In these verses God repeats his promises to Abram. What new things do we discover about God and Abram?

Genesis 15:6 describes Abraham’s response to God’s promises. Put it in your own words.

## **Read Genesis 17:1-8**

What is a covenant? (v2, 3, 7) God confirms his covenant by repeating his promises. List them under these headings:

People -

Land -

Blessing -

## **Reflection**

What would have been hard for Abraham?

## **Read Galatians 3:6-9. 16, 29**

How is God's promise to Abraham fulfilled in Jesus?




## **Read Hebrews 11:8—16**

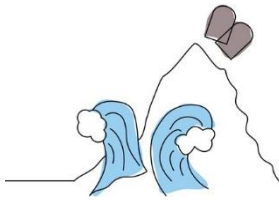
How is Abraham's response of faith to God's promises a model to us?

We, like Abraham, are saved by trust in God's promises. When is it hard for us to believe God's gospel promises of salvation?

Why should it be easier for us to have faith in God than Abraham?

# Notes/Prayer

K I N G D O M of <b>GOD</b>	<b>PROMISED</b> K I N G D O M
<b>GOD'S PEOPLE</b> 	Abraham's descendants
<b>GOD'S PLACE</b> 	The Promised Land
<b>GOD'S RULE &amp; BLESSING</b> 	Blessing to Israel and nations



## Week 4. The Partial Kingdom (People / Blessing)

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### To begin...

Do you think Christian Churches should have the “Ten Commandments” up on their walls? Why or why not?

### Background

A lot has happened between Genesis 12 and Exodus 20. So here is a quick run down.

Genesis 21 – God’s promise is kept to Abraham and Sarah has a son, Isaac.

Genesis 25 -37 – Isaac has 2 Sons: Jacob and Esau. Jacob was the eldest and in line to receive God’s promises, but Isaac is tricked and ends up passing his blessing onto Jacob. Jacob’s family grows as he has 12 sons.

God changes his name from Jacob to Israel (Genesis 32) and his son’s names become the basis of the tribes of Israel.

Genesis 37-50 – Israel’s family is saved from famine by God working through the situation that his son Joseph was placed in. Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt, yet went from slave to ruler over Egypt (2nd only to Pharaoh). Israel’s family was brought safely to Egypt, they were spared from famine and survived.

Exodus 1 – Israel’s family were blessed whilst in Egypt and became so numerous that the land was filled with them (1:7) A new King enslaved them and ordered all the Hebrew male babies to be killed. But despite that order, God blessed his people and they became even more numerous. 1:20)

### Read Exodus 1:6-11

What parts of Gods promises to Abraham do you see being fulfilled at the start of Exodus?

Exodus 2-14 – God raised up Moses and used him to help rescue his people from Egypt. God shows his might and power by sending plagues on Egypt, culminating in the death of the first born son (the Passover 11:29).

God’s people exit (Exodus) Egypt and triumph over them as they pass through the Red Sea. God’s people are saved and the armies of Egypt are defeated. God takes his people from poverty to riches and slavery to freedom.

Exodus 15-18 – God provides for his people as they are in the wilderness, and God brings them to the foot of Mount Sinai, where the action occurs in Exodus 19-20.

In this sweep of chapters.... How do we continue to see God’s faithfulness for his people Israel?

### Read Exodus 19:1-8



What is the existing relationship between God and Israel?

What does God promise to do for his people?

What role does God want the Israelites to play in the world?

In this context, why would God's people need to know and keep God's law?

How does this relate to God's promises to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3?

**Read Exodus 20:1-17**

Group the commandments into the following categories...

Love God	Love Neighbour

Why should Israel keep God's law? Why do the commandments begin as they do (v1-3)?

Should obedience be a pleasure or a burden to God's people? (Exodus 20:2, Psalm 19:7-11)

What will obedience look like in practice for God's people?

**Reflection**

How does God's law reveal:

Our sin? (Further reading Romans 7:7-12)





God's standards?

Our Saviour?

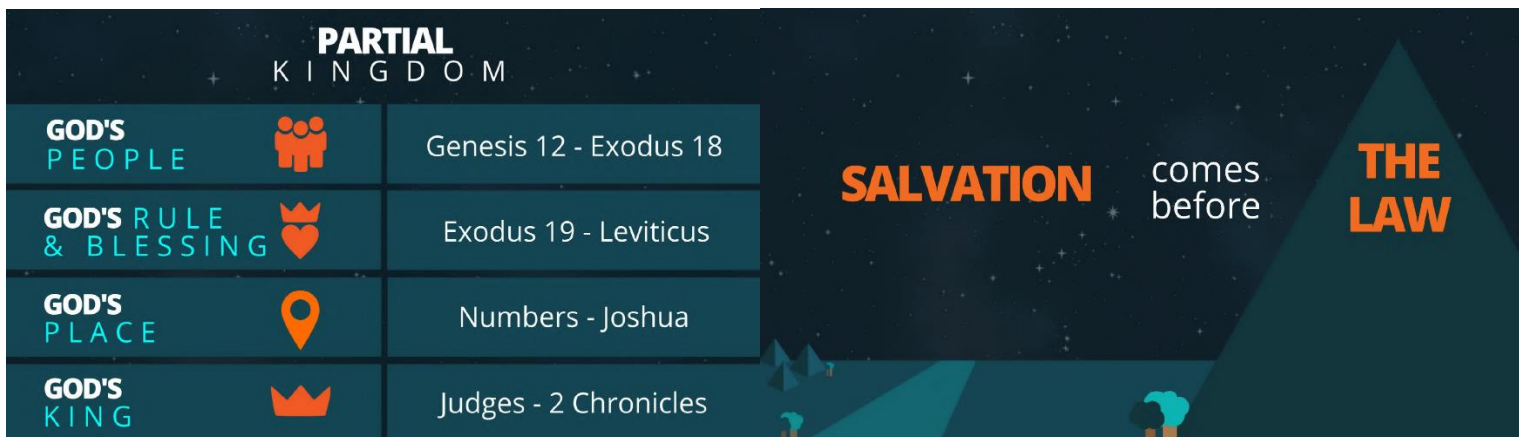
How does the gospel of Jesus Christ help reveal our sin, God's standards, our Saviour and our purpose? (Ephesians 2:1-10, 1 Peter 2:9-10)

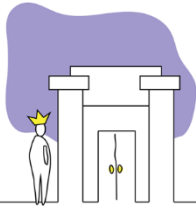
# Notes/Prayer

**PARTIAL**  
K I N G D O M

<b>GOD'S PEOPLE</b> 	Genesis 12 - Exodus 18
<b>GOD'S RULE &amp; BLESSING</b> 	Exodus 19 - Leviticus
<b>GOD'S PLACE</b> 	Numbers - Joshua
<b>GOD'S KING</b> 	Judges - 2 Chronicles

**SALVATION** comes before **THE LAW**





## Week 5. The Partial Kingdom (Land / King)

### To begin...

A friend asks you, “What is the old Testament all about...,” what would you say?

### Background

Once again, a lot has happened between Exodus 20 and 2 Samuel 7. So here is a quick run down.

Exodus 21-40 – God instructs his people more about the covenant he has with them. A large section is taken up with the building of the tabernacle – the tent where God will dwell with his people.

Leviticus – Deuteronomy - God’s people fail to trust God as they were about to enter into the promised land. As a result, they were made to wander in the desert for 40 years, and many of that generation, including Moses were not allowed to enter the land (Numbers 32:13). God renews his promises with his people and they are reminded of God’s faithfulness and their responsibility as they enter the promised land.

Joshua – The book of Joshua is all about God’s conquest of the Land God had promised them. Time after time, God showed that he won the battles for his people, and they were called to trust and obey him. The book culminates with the land being divided between the tribes God’s people and God’s covenant being renewed with his people. The people responded... “We will serve the Lord our God and obey him.” (Joshua 24:24)

Judges – The book of Judges describes what happens after Joshua died. Even though God’s people promised to be faithful to God and his covenant, time and time again the people failed to serve God and obey him, and were unfaithful to God’s covenant.

As a result, there was a time of continual unrest between God’s people and their neighbours (who were incredibly unhappy about God’s people occupying their land). A cycle occurred over and over where the people sinned against God. After a while, God’s people saw the error of their ways and God raised up a Saviour (a Judge) who rescued his people and brought a time of peace again.

However this cycle continued over and over until at the end of the book of Judges, with the sad climax:

*“In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.”* (Judges 21:25)

1 & 2 Samuel – We see the rise of kingship in Israel. Even though the people should have clearly realised that the Lord should have been their King (as Samuel told them over and over), they cried out for a king like the other nations. God gave them that King – Saul: a head taller than everyone else, a king like the other nations.

As Saul failed to obey God, God raised up a king after his own heart... he raised up David. The rest of 1 Samuel is about Saul’s demise and the increase of David’s throne.

1 Samuel sees David installed as king conquer Jerusalem, where God’s people enjoy some peace under David’s godly kingship.

Throughout all this time, God had ‘dwelt’ with his people in the tabernacle, made possible by the sacrificial system.

That leads us to today’s passage...

## Read 2 Samuel 7:1-29

Although not specifically stated, what does David have in mind to do in verses 1-3?

What is your response to this plan: is it a good idea or a bad idea?

What is God's initial response to David's plan and what does this reveal about God's character?

God has his own "building" plans:

- What does God promise for the nation of Israel? (v10-11)
- What does God promise for David and his family? (v9, 12-16, 27)
- What does God promise concerning the coming king? (v13)
- How does Jesus fulfill these promises?  
(Matthew 1:1, Mark 12:35-37, John 2:18-22, Romans 1:1-4)

What similarities and differences can you see between these promises and the earlier promises to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3)?

From verses 18-29, what sort of response does God's grace evoke in David?

## Reflection

David's prayer response in verses 18-29 is beautifully humble. How can God's promises to us (including NT promises) shape our prayer for our...

Homes?

Church?

World?

Ourselves?

## For further reading...

Read these passages and see how formative 2 Samuel 7 is for the rest of the Bible's story.

Psalms 89, 110, 132

Isaiah 9, 11

Jeremiah 23, 33

Ezekiel 34, 37

Matthew 1, 2

2 Timothy 2:8

Revelation 5:5

# Notes/Prayer

K I N G D O M of <b>GOD</b>		<b>PARTIAL</b> K I N G D O M	<b>2 SAMUEL:</b> The Reign of David   <p>'I will be his father, and he will be my son... Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.'</p> <p><b>2 Sam 7: 14, 16</b></p>
<b>GOD'S PEOPLE</b> 		The Israelites	
<b>GOD'S PLACE</b> 		Canaan	
<b>GOD'S RULE &amp; BLESSING</b> 		God's law and king	

# Between weeks 5 and 6...

## Background

David's kingdom and his son Solomon's kingdom were both high points and low points for God's people. Their kingdoms are a great reminder about the sinfulness of man and our great need for salvation. David's kingship was a model for the kingship of Israel, however even though David was God's king, he was still deeply flawed. (Read 2 Samuel 11 and 12 to get an example.)

Solomon became king after David's death, and built the physical temple for God's people in Jerusalem. During Solomon's reign, Israel experienced somewhat unrivaled peace and prosperity. God gave Solomon wisdom that surpassed all others and the nations flocked to marvel at the splendor of God's people and God's king. It seems as though God's promises to Abraham's family had been fulfilled. However sadly, whatever goes up... must come down (especially for King Solomon). Even though Solomon experienced unrivaled prosperity, he typified the unfaithfulness of God's people to God during this time. In spite of the fact that God had spoken to him in person and given him so much... Solomon chose a path of unfaithfulness to God's covenant. That was a horrible decision for the leader of God's people. He hoarded wealth. He acquired chariots. He put confidence in his own might above God's. Not only that, but Solomon was prolific in marriage. His foreign wives turned his heart away from the Lord (1 Kings 11:1-5) so much so that the writer of 1 Kings comments that *"Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done."* (1 Kings 11:6)

The aftermath of Solomon's kingship brought a catastrophe upon God's nation. His son's Jeroboam and Rehoboam divided the nation into North and South under their own kingships. The North retained the name of Israel under Jeroboam's kingship and the south was known as Judah under Rehoboam's kingship. So bad was the feud between the 2 kings that Jeroboam set up a new altar at Dan and Bethel (in the north – Israel) so that the people could worship God there and not in God's temple in Jerusalem. The kings of Jeroboam's kingdom (Israel) were all horrid, and turned away from worshiping the lord and worshiped other gods.

Rehoboam's southern Kingdom (Judah) was a little better. Amidst bad kings, Judah had some wonderful kings (like Josiah) who loved the Lord. As God was faithful to his promises, Judah maintained a descendant from David's family in kingship over his people.

During this time, God sent many prophets to warn his people about the consequences of turning away from his covenants. (Elijah and Elisha take up a majority of the accounts in 1 and 2 Kings.) God repeatedly said through his prophets that if God's people were to repent from their evil ways and return to him, God would be loving and forgiving, and judgement would not come upon them. Much of this time is written about in the books of 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles, the major prophets and the minor prophets, (quite a large section of the bible). It is therefore very important to know the setting and intended audience (be it Israel or Judah, or both) when reading through this literature.

These books of history and prophecy give reason for the fall of the northern kingdom (Israel) to Assyria in 722 BC and the southern Kingdom (Judah) to Babylon in 586 BC. As Babylonian empire came in and laid siege to Jerusalem, the temple was destroyed and many of God's people were taken into exile in Babylon as punishment. We will spend some time in study 6 looking at the start of the book of Hosea. Hosea was a prophet who spoke to the northern kingdom of Israel. Hosea's message was one of destruction that would come upon God's people because of their disobedience. Yet despite that ominous description, Hosea also carried a wonderful promise of restoration. It gives us great insight into God's relationship with his people. It also shows God's amazing faithfulness to his covenant promise, despite the continual unfaithfulness of his people towards God.



## Week 6. The Prophesied Kingdom

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### To begin...

Why can it be easy for us to forget about God?

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?

### Read 2 Kings 14:23-29

How would you describe Jeroboam's (not Solomon's son) reign as king?

### Read Hosea 1:1-2:1.

What reason does God give for Hosea's unusual choice of marriage partner?

Forsaking the Lord is described as spiritual adultery. Why do we rarely think of Sin this way?

How do the names of Gomer's children help us to understand what has happened to the relationship between God and his people?

### Read Hosea 2:2-13

How will God respond to his peoples unfaithfulness? Although

confronting, how is this an expression of God's love?

## **Read Hosea 2:14-23**

What is surprising about God's response to his peoples unfaithfulness?

## **Read Hosea 3**

How does what takes place in Hosea 3 further add to our picture of God's covenant relationship with his people?

## **Reflection**

What hope is presented for the future of God's people? (look for echoes of the promises to Abraham and David)

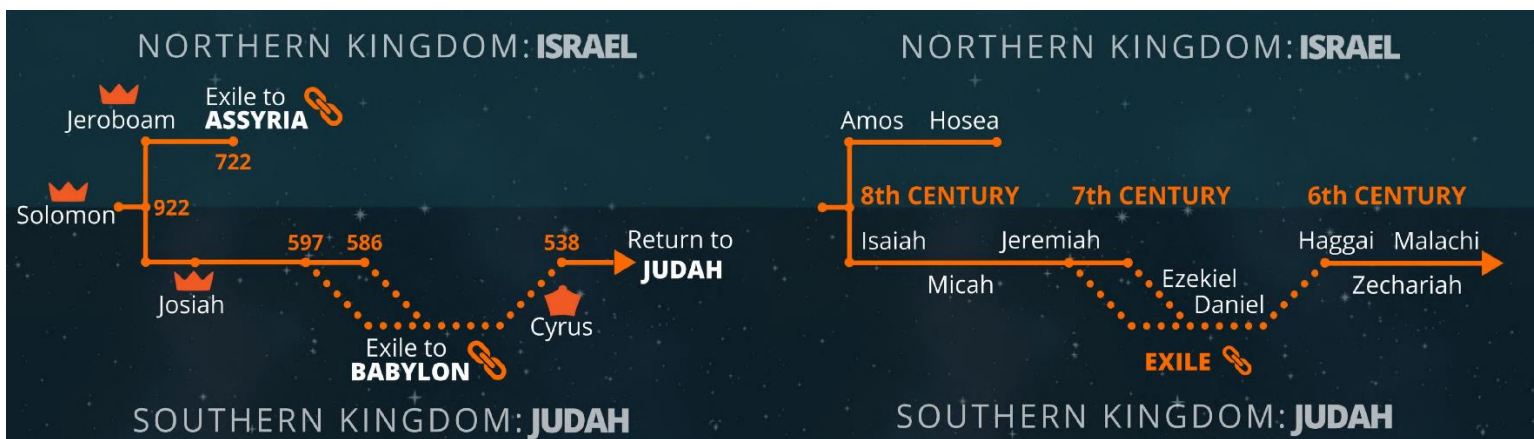
What do we learn about God from these chapters in Hosea? In turn, what do we learn about ourselves?

How does understanding the depth of our unfaithfulness towards God help us appreciate the work of God shown in Jesus?



# Notes/Prayer

KINGDOM of GOD	PROPHESIED KINGDOM
GOD'S PEOPLE 	New Israel including the nations
GOD'S PLACE 	New temple = new creation
GOD'S RULE & BLESSING 	New covenant & new king



# Between weeks 6 and 7...

## Background

Between the start of the exile and Jesus' birth, 600 years elapse. God's people (the southern nation of Judah) were carried off into Exile in Babylon in 597BC. This was part of God's judgement upon his people for their unfaithfulness to him and his covenant. The book of Daniel gives insight into the way God was working through some of his people whilst they were in exile in Babylon. During the Exile, it seems as though all of God's promises had unraveled. God's people were no longer in God's Land and they were certainly not experiencing his blessing as they were in captivity in a foreign country. However, despite the obvious judgement God's people were experiencing, God was still faithful to his people, and after a time, was going to restore his people back to the land he had taken away from them. The book of Ezekiel shows us that even though the people had departed from the land, God's glory remained with them throughout this time.

The Babylonian empire came to an end in 539BC at the hands of King Cyrus the Great (of Persia) under God's sovereignty. At that time Cyrus proclaimed that God had given him the kingdoms he had, and God had appointed him to build (rebuild) the temple at Jerusalem. (Ezra 1) God's people in Exile then returned to the land and went about the task of rebuilding the temple and the city of Jerusalem under the approval of King Cyrus.

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah record this happening. Upon the completion of the foundation temple there was much rejoicing in the city. Many shouted great praise to God for his goodness. But in a tragic statement of reality, not all rejoiced. Ezra 3 captures the moment beautifully.

*<sup>10</sup> When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, ... And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. <sup>12</sup> But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid, while many others shouted for joy. <sup>13</sup> No one could distinguish the sound of the shouts of joy from the sound of weeping, because the people made so much noise. And the sound was heard far away. (Ezra 3:10-13)*

God's people were in the land once more, but the blessing and prosperity that they enjoyed were only a pale shadow of what had been promised to God's people. Expectation was high. God's people were looking forward to a time where the blessing promised to Abraham would benefit the whole earth.

God had promised his people through the prophets a time coming where there would be a new covenant between God and his people, where God's law would be put on his people's hearts and minds and each of God's people from the least to the greatest would know God. In this covenant, God would forgive his people's wickedness and remember their sin no more. (Jeremiah 31:31-34) God had promised also that a new king would come from David's line who would be anointed with the Spirit of God and would rule with the wisdom and righteousness of God (Isaiah 11:1-5). He would also be a servant who would draw all nations to himself so that God's salvation would reach the ends of the earth. (Isaiah 49:6) Not only that, the restoration of Jerusalem would lead to a time where the God's people in God's land under his rule would be reminiscent of a new creation. (Isaiah 65:17-25) In this complete restoration by God's king, the sound of weeping and crying would be heard no more and the people would be blessed by God. This was far from what the people experienced in Ezra's time.

After God's people were back in the land and the prophets had spoken, there was a time of silence for 400 years in between the Old and New Testaments. Therefore, expectations of this coming time of worldwide blessing coming from God's people were still incredibly high (perhaps even higher now that the Romans were occupying Israel). When would this King (Messiah) come? Who would this Messiah be? How would he bring this new covenant and amazing blessing? Luke gives us a glimpse at the beginning of his gospel



## Week 7. The Present Kingdom

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### To begin...

What extent would you go to, to save someone you loved?

If you were God, how would you bring salvation to all mankind?

### Read Luke 1:5-25. (Miracle baby 1)

God broke his silence to his people through a message to Zechariah. What is the great significance about Zechariah's son?

### Read Luke 1:26-38 and 46-50. (Miracle baby 2)

Who is Mary's son described as being?

In what ways will Mary's son fulfill the promises God had made to his covenant people (eg Genesis 12:1-3 and 2 Samuel 7)

### Read Luke 1:67-79

Why does Zechariah praise God?

What do we learn about the salvation Mary's son will bring?

### Read Romans 5:1-11

Notice all the past tenses in these verses. How did Mary's child (Jesus) bring salvation? What do we experience "now", and what is "not yet"?

## Reflect

Like Zechariah, praise God for the wonder of being saved through Mary's son, God's promised King.

# Notes/Prayer





## Week 8. The Proclaimed Kingdom

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### To begin...

If you knew with certainty that Jesus was going to return in

- 100 years,
- 1 year,
- 1 day,

how would your life change?

“Christians can’t help but speak of Jesus.”: Discuss.

### Background

Over the last months we have seen how God’s promises to his people speak of a great time, where God’s people will live in God’s place under his rule and blessing. Last week we were able to see how Jesus came as the fulfillment of those promises. He came to abolish the hold that sin had over us and defeat death so that we might be able to experience a wonderful relationship with God once more.

As Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, he promised that he would return. As those who have faith in Jesus, we joyously await his return, knowing that we will experience forgiveness and blessing with God for eternity in the resurrection on that day.

After Jesus’ resurrection the disciples were given the Holy Spirit. They were changed from a timid bunch of followers into a spirit empowered proclaiming band of brothers. As the Spirit came upon them at Pentecost, they began to proclaim the Kingdom of God and Jesus the resurrected King. As the disciples did this: They were Jesus’ witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

We live 2000 years after the resurrection as those who have been blessed by the gospel of Jesus Christ going out to the ends of the earth. As we live 2000 years after Jesus’ resurrection we also, like the disciples, still eagerly await his return.

However, as we await we are reminded (from what we learnt looking at eschatology in Term 3 2019) that we live in the overlap of the ages. We live in the time where God’s kingdom has come in Jesus, but has not been consummated completely. This is something we are looking forward to on the day he returns.

We are raised with Christ and seated with him in the heavenly realms as we await knowing that he will show us the incomparable riches of his grace in the future. (Ephesians 2:6-7)

Well then... if that day is coming... why the delay?

To answer, simply... all those who will know Jesus kingship, haven’t come to a knowledge of Jesus’ kingship yet. Jesus has made it clear to us that we are therefore in a time of gospel proclamation to the nations, to the entire world. Thankfully this is not a task we do ourselves. Just as the disciples were Spirit empowered, Jesus has given believers the Spirit in order to equip them to build up the church and proclaim the gospel and to remain faithful to him until we experience the final resurrection.

Paul speaks of this ministry / this service we have in light of our future hope in 2 Corinthians 4.

## **Read 2 Corinthians 4:1-6**

When are we tempted to use 'shameful ways' or 'distort the word of God' in evangelism?

What can we learn from Paul's example?

What response should we expect when we speak of Jesus?

- What can make the job difficult?
- What encouragements are we given?

## **Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-12**

In what sense are we "jars of clay"?

To what extent do v8-12 reflect your experience of evangelism?

Why has God allowed us to be weak?

## **Read 2 Corinthians 4:13-18**

What do these verses tell us about what we can expect now, in this present age?

What will we receive in the age to come?

## **Reflect**

What are you looking forward to about Jesus' return? How can you fix your eyes on what is eternal?

As a "jar of clay" this week, how can you help someone see the light of the gospel?

# Notes/Prayer







## Week 9. The Perfected Kingdom

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### To begin...

When you think of “heaven,” what comes to your mind?

What has struck you about the character of God as you have taken a quick journey through the whole bible in the last term?

### Background

We have been waiting nearly 2000 years for Jesus’ return but the delay will not go on forever. The world is heading for a conclusion. Just as over and over we have seen God be faithful to his promises in the first coming of Jesus, so he will fulfill his promises about his second coming. Jesus will come again and complete God’s eternal plan of salvation; he will introduce the perfected kingdom.

Today we are going to look at the end of the book of Revelation. In some ways we have gone full circle as Gods people are presented in God’s place under his rule and blessing. But there is something beautifully new and amazing about this future.

### Read Revelation 21:1-8

What images are used to describe the perfected kingdom? How do

these images build on Old Testament promises?

What will life be like in the perfected kingdom?

How is this description of God’s new creation different and/or better to the ways people often think about heaven?

### Read Revelation 22:1-6

The descriptions here pick up on features of Genesis 2:8-14 & 3:14-24.

What connections can you see? How does the new creation compare with the present one we experience?

## For further reading

Much of Revelation 21 & 22 draws deeply upon concepts and promises from the Old Testament. To get a taste for it, read these few passages from Isaiah and see the connections to Revelation.

Passage	What connections do we see?	What can we conclude?
Isaiah 54:11-15		
Isaiah 55:1-5		
Isaiah 60:1-3		
Isaiah 65:17-25		

## Read Revelation 21:22-22:5

What features of the perfected kingdom are described here? Who will enjoy this new creation?

## Reflect

According to Revelation 21 & 22 how should we think about our future as God's people? What makes it so good?

Do you think we Christians think enough about the 'things that must soon take place' (22:6)?

Why/why not? How would it help us if we did? What can we do to make this more 'real' for us?

# Notes/Prayer

