

Understanding

The

Bible

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INTRODUCTION

"What is life?" - "What are we?" - "Why are we here?" - "Where are we heading?" - "What is it all about?" - "Does life have a purpose?"

The Bible claims to provide the answers to these questions, beginning from before any physical matter existed up to after it all finishes.

Although the Bible is a collection of books by various writers over numerous years, it is not a jumble of disjointed documents thrown together under one cover. There is an underlying theme throughout the book: God's purpose behind creation, His strategy to accomplish it, Satan's persistent attempts to thwart it and how God finally accomplishes it.

The Bible is like an unfolding drama having an idyllic start quickly shattered by evil. An ongoing conflict ensues which eventually reaches a crucial climax. Virtue prevails and the end is just and good.

Even though it is like a drama it is not written as fiction. The writers claim to be stating facts.

Course Details

This is a free home study course of 10 chapters, aimed at providing an overall understanding of the Bible, showing how it all harmonises - without going into a lot of detail.

The study aims to tell it as the Bible says it. It is not trying to prove the Bible. The lessons concentrate on trying to help people to understand what the Bible is all about.

However we will gladly consider any questions you might ask on the authenticity of the documents that make up the Bible.

If you would like information on the historical authenticity of the Bible documents - ask us for our free leaflet : **Fact Sheet 01"THE DOCUMENTS"**

If you want to have an overall understanding of the Bible, this could be the course for you.

Reading Matter

Chapters 1 to 9 have lists of suggested readings. So you will need a copy of the Bible. If this is a problem please let us know. You do not need any other books to complete this course.

You can use almost any of the well known popular translations of the Bible. But we would advise you not to use paraphrases. Paraphrases, such as "The Good News Bible", are not suitable for this kind of study.

Test Questions

Chapters 1 to 9 have one or more questions mostly based on the subject matter of that unit. These are phrased so as to promote thought. The purpose of this course is designed to increase understanding so the questions have been framed with that in mind.

The questions are not set to test your skill and the answers will not be graded. Should you choose to send them to us (and there is no obligation to do so), we will carefully consider your answers with a view to making helpful comments. We want this course to be as beneficial as possible.

At the end of this series of lessons we have provided our suggested answers to these questions.

Useful References

There is a list of Bible references at the end of each chapter. These are for those who want to do further study.

We use abbreviated Bible references. These abbreviations are explained in the first chapter. This knowledge will also be useful to you when you read books which refer to passages in the Bible.

Copyright

You might want to keep referring to these notes even after you have completed the course. So you may keep them and copy them. All we ask is that they are copied as they are, including the copyright notice and that they are not sold.

They may not be sold and the text must not be altered without our permission.

Acknowledgement

We are grateful to all who have helped us in the preparation of this course. We pray that through this work the Lord will be glorified.

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Chapter 1 - THE BIG ISSUE

(The Beginning)

A Panoramic View of the Bible

Many Documents - One Book.

In the Bible there are 66 documents written by over 40 authors over more than 1,500 years. They vary in style and content yet there is one fascinating theme. Their subject matter extends from before everything was created to after the whole universe is annihilated.

Two Parts - One Whole

It has two sections: the Jewish sacred writings which Christians call the Old Testament (OT for short) and the Christian sacred writings called the New Testament (NT).

The Old Testament documents were written from about 1,400 BC to about 400 BC

The New Testament documents were written later, from about 30 AD to about 95 AD.

This course is designed to help you to understand both the Old Testament and New. Quotations will be our own renditions, unless otherwise stated. If a quotation is significantly different in your Bible please let us know the translation you are using and the reference.

References

The books of the Bible have been given names and divided up into chapters and verses to help us to find where passages are. This is done by giving the name of the book, then the chapter then the verse in that order. If there is more than one book of the same name, the book number is given first. Book names are usually shortened to the first two or three letters. The names of the books of the Old and New Testaments are usually listed at the beginning of the Bible. The New Testament Books are sometimes listed again at the beginning of the New Testament.

References will always be in this sequence: book number, abbreviated book name, chapter number, a colon, verse/s. Additional chapters and verses are separated by commas.

1Cor.15:24-28, 51-58 is the 1st. letter to the Corinthians, chapter 15 verses 24 to 28 and verses 51 to 58. Be careful to distinguish Jn.3:16 from 1.Jn.3:16. Jn.3:16 is The Gospel of John chapter 3 verse 16. 1.Jn.3:16 is John's 1st. letter chapter 3 verse 16. Since there is only one book named Philemon and since it has only one chapter, Phm.4 is the letter to Philemon verse 4 - not chapter 4. In older Bibles a letter is called an epistle.

Setting the Scene

The Bible is like an unfolding drama but it is not written as fiction. It states everything as fact. This unit sets the scene before going into the pace of the action. The following units proceed through the drama to its completion.

There are two realms: the physical and the non-physical. The drama is taking place in the non-physical realm and being played out in the physical realm¹. The main character is God. He is not physical. He is spirit². God is almighty³, all-knowing⁴, impartial⁵, totally sinless and altogether good⁶. He has always existed. Only God has no beginning⁷. He made all the universes and everything in them from nothing⁸. He created all the angels. They are spirit (not physical) but they have sometimes appeared as human beings⁹. God made absolutely everything there is¹⁰, and in all this He has a purpose. To understand the Bible we need to understand this purpose.

God created Adam and his wife Eve - the first man and woman. Adam was a perfect man and Eve was a perfect woman. God gave them an idyllic environment. There was no sin, no disease, no death. Everything was absolutely perfect. Adam and Eve lived in perfect harmony with God. Tragically, one arrogant angel leads a rebellion. He is called "Satan", meaning "antagonist"¹¹ and his followers are called "demons" or "devils". He constantly strives to thwart God. Yet, despite all the turmoil that ensues, there are always the few who implicitly love and trust God - and are sure that He will fulfil His purpose - come what may.

Intrigue and Sediton.

God provided Adam and Eve with every kind of fruit and vegetable for food but made one restriction - They were not to eat the fruit of a tree called "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil". God said that if they disobeyed Him they would "begin to die" - death would set-in. Satan put it to Eve that God lied and was devious. Satan wanted Eve to distrust God and to persuade Adam to disobey God¹².

Satan is also known as "the devil", meaning "the slanderer"¹¹. He accuses God of being dishonest and unjust. This is called "The lie"¹³. However, God is honest, just and good. This is "the truth"¹⁴. How God accomplishes His purpose despite Satan's persistent intrigue underlies the whole drama of the Bible. There are many clues but the pieces only fall into place towards the end¹⁵.

God's Strategy

Adam and Eve did fall into Satan's trap. But even before God created anything He knew what Satan would do. God already had His contingency plan in place¹⁶. Here, right at the beginning of the Bible, we have the first clue. God informed Satan that the woman's seed [B] would win the contest. God told Satan "It is He who will crush your head...". That would be the crisis point. Then the purpose of it all would become fully obvious - to those who trusted God.

The words - "her seed"[A] tell us that His birth would take place without a man being involved. From then on Satan tries to forestall the birth of that male child. But when would the woman's seed be born and how would He defeat Satan? Right at the beginning, the Bible student is challenged to search for - when and how?

The Sequence of Events

The Old Testament records predictions about, and events leading up to, the child's birth and life. The New Testament records the birth of that male child, and how He vindicated God's integrity, restored the status quo¹⁷.

Reading Matter

Before answering the questions, please read in the Bible - Genesis chapters 1 to 3.

Note:-

- A)Thousands of years before scientists knew women had "seeds" (eggs) God mentions it.
- B)We will be using the phrase the woman's seed a lot, for the predicted male child.

For more detail on the "the woman's seed" ask for our free leaflet:- **"THE SEED OF THE WOMAN"**.

Questions :-

- 1.Why did Eve want the forbidden fruit ?¹⁸
- 2.Why did Adam accept the forbidden fruit?
- 3.How did Adam and Eve's sin affect their personal friendship with God?¹⁹
- 4.What kind of person is Satan?

Useful References:-

- 1 Eph.6:12, Job 1:6 ff.
- 2 Jn.1:18, Jn.4:24, 1 Tim.6:16, 1 Jn.4:12
- 3 Mk.14:36, Rev.19:6
- 4 Heb. 4:13, 1 Jn.3:20
- 5 Rom.2:11, 1 Pet. 1:17
- 6 Num.23:19, Ps.34:8, 52:1, Rom.2:4, James 1:13 & 17
- 7 Deut.33:27
- 8 Neh.9:6, Acts 14:15, Heb11:3
- 9 Heb.13:2
- 10 Ps.33:6-9, Jn.1:1-3, 10 & 14, Col.1:16-17
- 11 Rev.12:9, 20:2
- 12 1 Tim.2:14
- 13 Jn.8:44 "speaks the lie"
- 14 Jn.14:6, 18:37, Rev.15:3
- 15 Rom.16:25, Eph.1:9-10, 3:3-11, Col.1:26-27, 1Tim.3:16
- 16 Rom.8:29, Eph.1:4, Rev.13:8
- 17 Jn.17:25-26, 1 Cor.15:24-28, Rev. 15:3-4, 19:2,6
- 18 Gen.3:6, 1 Jn.2:16
- 19 Isaiah 59:2

Chapter 2 - GOD'S FAITHFUL PRESERVED

(From Adam to Babel)

Looking for Clues

Would a virgin really give birth to a male child?¹ How would He defeat Satan? Would He restore man's friendship with God? Devout men longed for His coming². He was known as "the coming one"³. The OT leads towards His coming. We use bold italics to emphasise what we think were clues to His coming and what would happen then.

God made clothes for Adam and Eve. He could have made them from wool or cotton but He chose to use animal skin. An innocent animal killed for the benefit of guilty man.

Adam and Eve are sent out of the garden. From now on they have to sweat to grow food, a constant reminder to take notice of God.

But Does It Improve?

Their sons, Cain and Abel, offer sacrifices to God - Abel's animal sacrifice was approved but Cain's vegetable sacrifice was rejected⁴.

[For more comment on sacrifices ask for our free leaflet:

"THE ODD PHENOMENON OF OFFERING SACRIFICES."]

In a rage, Cain slew his brother Abel. This was the first murder. Because of this God made the soil less fertile, making it still harder to grow food. Would this make mankind respect God as he should?

Eve had another son. He replaced Abel. Eve named him Seth, which meant "designated". Evidently Eve understood that Seth was designated to be ancestor to the woman's seed.

Seth's son, Enosh, began formal devotions⁵ and his great-great-grandson, Enoch, was so devout that God took him directly to heaven. Even so - as the earth's population grew, wickedness increased, until the whole world was riddled with violence. Only one decent person remained, Enoch's great-grandson, Noah. He was a very good man who gave the people sound advice but no-one took any notice of him⁶.

God's Judgement:

God decided to drown all life on the earth except for Noah, his family and live specimens of every kind of animal. God told Noah how to build an enormous vessel ("ark"). It was approximately 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high with 3 decks, a volume of 1.5 million cubic feet. In this they were kept safe when the flood came. The water covered the whole earth rising 23 feet above the highest hills. After 12 months they were able to come out of the "ark" and Noah offered sacrifices to God.

The earth's environment was much harsher than before⁷. This could be why God authorised them to eat meat. Also it could be why mankind's life expectancy gradually went down from over 900 years to about 75 years. The oldest man on record is Methuselah, Enoch's son. He lived 969 years and died in the same year that the flood started. Seth, Enosh, Enoch, Methuselah, and Noah were all ancestors of the woman's seed⁸.

Approximate Time-scale (ref. Ussher)

Year zero The Creation 6,000 years ago.
Year 1,650 The Flood 4,350 years ago

Methuselah was 250 years old when Adam died. Noah was 600 years old when Methuselah died.

The World Re-populated From Noah's Sons

Mankind refused to disperse around the world. Instead they decided to establish a city with a large tower as the focal point. So God scattered them everywhere by making them speak different languages. Despite man's persistent rebellion God always has a faithful "remainder"⁹.

Reading Matter

Before answering the questions, please read carefully Genesis chapter 3 to chapter 11 verse 9 and then re-read this unit.

Questions:-

- 1.Explain how the ancestry of the woman's seed was nearly wiped out.
- 2.Explain in which of the three ways Cain was being tempted [Gen.4:2-9].

Useful References:-

- 1 A virgin birth had to be supernatural. Luke 1:34-35.
- 2 Matt.13:17, Luke 24:25, John 8:56, 1.Pet.1:10-12
- 3 Matt.11:3, 22:39
- 4 Hebrews 11:4
- 5 Gen.12:8, Joel 2:32, Acts 2:21,22:16.Yahweh=He exists
- 6 1 Pet. 3:20, 2 Pet. 2:5
- 7 Gen.2:5-6
- 8 Luke 3:23-28, Psalm 90:10
- 9 Isaiah 1:9, Joel 2:32, Matt.22:14

Chapter 3 - GOD SELECTS A FAMILY

[Abraham to Joseph]

Centuries elapse - woman's seed not born

After the flood, mankind sank into idolatry. Rather than worshipping the Creator, they worshipped the creation and things they made with their own hands¹.

Abram (a faithful descendant of Noah's eldest son, Shem[A]) lived in the luxurious city of Ur [located in south-east Iraq]. God asked Abram to abandon his home for territory his descendants would inherit. But Abram himself would not inherit it. Living in tents like a nomad, he let God lead him from place to place not even knowing where he was going². Arriving in Canaan [modern Palestine/Israel] God showed Abram all the land his descendants would inherit and made several promises to him:-

a. His descendants would inherit all that land.

b. His descendants would be a great nation and be innumerable, like the stars and the sand on the seashore[B].

c. In his "seed" all the nations would be blessed³. Could this be the woman's seed?

Suddenly, a priest of God, Melchizedek, King of Salem [modern Jerusalem] confronts and blesses Abram. This King-priest is obviously Abram's superior, yet we never meet him again.

God renamed Abram, Abraham [father of multitudes] and his wife Sarai, Sarah [princess]. Sarai was childless and too old to have children. Still they trusted God⁴. Then miraculously, aged Sarah did have a son, Isaac. Then God put Abraham's faith to the test. God asked him to sacrifice that son, the heir to the promises⁵. Abraham made an altar [where Jerusalem is]. He laid Isaac on it - raised his knife and ?

God repeated the promises to Isaac. Isaac had twin sons named Esau and Jacob. Esau, the heir, didn't value his birthright⁶, which included being ancestor to the woman's seed. But Jacob appreciated its importance and persuaded Esau to part with it. God changed Jacob's name to Israel, which means - Ruling with God. Jacob had 12 sons. One, Joseph was sold into slavery. Despite this, he became governor over all Egypt's produce⁷. In Canaan famine threatened the lives of Jacob's family. They sought relief in Egypt. Joseph persuaded the Pharaoh [king] to let them live in Egypt.

Jacob predicted that the descendants of another son, Judah[C] would retain their tribal identity[D] until "Shiloh" came. Shiloh means "He to whom it belongs". Could the person called "Shiloh" be the woman's seed?

The Book Called Job

This book tells of a thoroughly good man of God named Job who lived in Uz⁸ [south Jordan] probably when the Israelites lived in Egypt.

In extreme suffering, castigated by his friends, Job made four astounding statements:-

"Even if He/it slays me, yet I will confidently wait for Him. I can definitely acquit myself before Him" (13:15,16a). That is - before the LORD God.[E]

"Because I personally know that my redeemer lives, and that at the end[F] He will stand upon the earth". (19:25)

"So after my skin is destroyed, yet in my body I will behold God[G], Whom I, me-myself, will behold for myself. That is my own eyes will see and not someone else's." (19:26-27a), then at the end of v.27:-

"My yearning for this engrosses me."⁹

Many of God's prophets had this yearning¹⁰.

Approximate Time-scale

Year Zero	The Creation	6,000 yrs. ago
Year 1,650	The Flood	4,350 yrs. ago
Year 2,080	Call of Abraham	3,920 yrs. ago
Year 2,280	Joseph in Office	3,720 yrs. ago
Year 2,480	Job (very approx.)	3,520 yrs. ago

Suggested Reading

Genesis 11:27-12:9, 13:1-18:15, 21:1-14, 22:1-19, 23:1-2, 24:1-67, 25:7-11, 25:19-26:5, 27:46-28:5, 28:10-17, 29, 30:22-24, 31:3, 33:18-20 35, 37-50.
Job 1:1-10, 13:15, 19:23-27.

Oddities to ponder over

- ? Will the virgin's son be in some way similar to Melchizedek?¹¹
- ? Abram had to travel a long way to Moriah. Did God have a special reason for asking Abraham to sacrifice his son in Moriah ?

Question:-

How did God use Joseph to preserve the tribal line, through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Judah, from extinction?

Interesting Notes:-

- A) Shem's descendants are called Semites.
- B) Thousands of years before scientists knew it God said the stars were innumerable.
- C) The word Jew comes from the name Judah.
- D) When Jerusalem was destroyed (AD 70) all the tribal records were lost. So "Shiloh" had to come before then.
- E) The word "Him" in Job 13:15 & 16 refers to "the LORD" in 12:9. When every letter in the words GOD and LORD are capitals, they are from the Hebrew word YHWH. Some Bibles use the word "Jehovah". The Hebrew word YHWH means "He exists" - God is real.
- F) Since "Shiloh" had to come before AD 70 what did Job mean by "at the end"? What was going to end at or before AD 70?¹²
- G) When would Job, in his body, behold his redeemer - God - on the earth? ⁹

Useful References:-

- 1 Rom.1:19-25.
- 2 Acts.7:2-5, Heb. 11:8-9,13.
- 3 Gal. 3:8. Heb. 11:12. "seed" is singular (See :
- 4 Rom.4:16-21, Heb. 11:11. Gal. 3:16).
- 5 Heb. 11:17-19, James 2:21-23.
- 6 Heb.12:16-17.
- 7 Acts 7:9-15.
- 8 1 Chron.1:4,17
- 9 Matt.27:50-54
- 10 1 Peter 1:10-12
- 11 Ps.110, Heb. 5:1-10, 6:19-20, 7:1-22.
- 12 1 Cor.10:11, Gal.4:4 Heb.1:1-2, 8:13 & 9:26.

Chapter 4 - GOD PREPARES A NATION

[Moses to Joshua]

Centuries later they were still in Egypt

A later Pharaoh, who did not know about Joseph, despised and enslaved Jacob's numerous descendants. Amazingly, Pharaoh's own daughter adopted one of their children, named Moses. In due time God made Moses a prophet[A]. God used Moses to bring the Israelites[B] out of pagan Egypt¹ and to make them into a distinctive nation for God, as part of His ultimate purpose for all nations - for all mankind².

The Exodus from Egypt

The first book of the Bible, called Genesis meaning origin, records how everything began from creation up to when God's chosen race, Jacob's family, settled in Egypt. The second book, called Exodus meaning departure, explains how the Israelites came out of Egypt and became a separate nation with their own political and religious laws, known as Moses' Law³.

The Plagues:

God inflicted increasingly severe plagues on the Egyptians to persuade Pharaoh to release the Israelites, and to make everyone realise that there is one living God⁴ (God had told Moses to tell Pharaoh that God's name is "He exists"[C]) but as each plague subsided Pharaoh became more and more obstinate

The Passover:

The last of the plagues killed all the Egyptians' first-born males, both children and cattle. God instructed the Israelites to observe an annual feast to commemorate this last plague. It was called the Passover because the angel of death past over the Israelites firstborn and did not slay them. God could have spared the Israelite firstborn without the Israelites having to slay an innocent lamb. Seeing God does not do things without reason, had it something to do with God's ultimate purpose for mankind - through the woman's male seed? It is significant that:-

- a) Only firstborn males were killed.
- b) The lamb had to be an unblemished male.
- c) Only one lamb is allowed for each household.
- d) None of the lamb's bones were to be broken.
- e) The shedding of its blood is emphasised.

The Tabernacle (Tent of Meeting):

Whilst in the Sinai peninsula, God gave Moses precise instructions on how the Israelites were to make a special tent (tabernacle) and its furniture. This was to be the focal point of their worship. It had two rooms but only one entrance. Only the son's of Moses' brother - Aaron - could perform the priestly duties connected with the tabernacle.

The inner room was where YHWH made His presence known. Theologians call that presence the SHEKINAH, which is a noun form of the Hebrew word SHAKAN (to dwell). God said He would dwell in the tabernacle and when it was dedicated YHWH's glory filled it. Only the high priest could enter the awesome inner room and only once a year.- the Day of Atonement. Then he had to take with him the blood of sacrificed animals both for his own and the people's sins⁵.

God ordained many daily and annual rituals involving the sacrifice of innocent animals.

After Moses

After Moses' death his aide, Joshua[D], settled the nation of Israel in Canaan, the land God had promised to Abraham's descendants.

God said He would send another prophet like Moses⁶. When would this be and would he be the woman's seed?

God's Covenant with the Nation of Israel

YHWH would be their God and they would be His people. If they trusted Him implicitly, they would prosper, but if they let Him down He would punish them severely. To this they all agreed.

Approximate Time-scale

Year	Zero	The Creation	6,000 yrs. ago.
Year	1,650	The Flood	4,350 yrs. ago
Year	2,080	Call of Abraham	3,920 yrs. ago
Year	2,280	Joseph in Office	3,720 yrs. ago
Year	2,480	Job [very approx.]	3,520 yrs. ago
Year	2,510	The Exodus	3,490 yrs. ago
Year	2,570	The Occupation	3,430 yrs. ago

Oddities to ponder over

?? The tabernacle. Its rituals and the festivals.

?? The stress on firstborn and on sacrifices.

?? The scapegoat sent into the desert.

[For more on sacrifices ask for our free leaflet:- **"THE ODD PHENOMENON OF OFFERING SACRIFICES"**.]

??All the ritual had to be done exactly as God had instructed.⁷

??Those dying from the snake bites had to gaze at a bronze snake.⁸

Suggested Reading

Exodus 1:1-6:13, 6:28-14:31, 18:1-27:21, 31:18, 33:7-23, 34:11-16, 40:12-35.

Leviticus 5:7-10, 8:10-12, 9:1-10:3, 16:6-10,27-31, 20-22, 23:26-32.

Numbers 3:1-13, 8:1-4, 18:21-24, 21:4-9, 27:15-23.

Deuteronomy 7:1-11, 11:26-32, 12:1-11, 18:15-22, 25:5-10, 30:15-20, 31:1-8,14-18, 23, 24, 25, 26, 34.

Joshua 1:1-9, 2:1-24*, 6:1-27*, 23, 24.*cp.Matt.1:5

Questions:-

1. Why did Melchizedek not have the qualifications to be a priest under Moses law?
2. Does God need sacrifices to pacify Him?
3. Describe how the promised prophet would be like Moses [Deut.18:15-20]

Interesting Notes:-

- A) A prophet was a person through whom God spoke.
- B) Jacob's descendants were called Israelites.
- C) Exod.3:14-15. See Unit 3, note E.
- D) "Joshua" and "Jesus" mean "YHWH saves".

Useful References:-

- 1 Acts 7:18-36, Heb. 11:23-29.
- 2 Gen.18:18, Gal.3:8.
- 3 Josh.8:31, 1.Cor.9:9
- 4 Rom.9:17, Heb.10:31.
- 5 Heb.9:1-10:23
- 6 John 1:21,25, 6:14 Acts 3:22-23, 7:3
- 7 Heb.8:5
- 8 John 3:14-15.

Chapter 5 - THE NATION CONSOLIDATED

[Judges to David]

The Book Called Judges

This book records how, after Joshua's death, YHWH continued to rule Israel through judges. Even so, the Israelites repeatedly alternated between loyalty to God and defiance against Him.

The Book Called Ruth

The book of Ruth is about an Israelite's widow. Though she was a foreigner she was faithful to YHWH. Through a strange law she became King David's great-grandmother and ancestor to the woman's seed.

We Want A King !

Samuel was the last judge in Israel. This was because his sons were so corrupt that Israel rejected YHWH's rule and demanded a king instead. God did choose a king for them - Saul of the tribe of Benjamin. So Samuel anointed Saul with oil[A] to be king over Israel.

Saul rebelled against YHWH, so David of the tribe of Judah was appointed to succeed him. David had his faults but he never rebelled. He always trusted YHWH, even when as a fugitive his life was constantly in danger. God called David "a man after My own heart."¹⁰

[Recall from Unit 1, how - the Devil makes folk distrust God - the virgin's Son vindicates God.]

David the Prophet

David was both king and a prophet. He wrote most of the songs in the book called The Psalms. His psalms expressed his experiences and his trust in YHWH. As with Moses and Melchizedek he had characteristics which reflected the anticipated man-child. Where David's psalms went beyond his own experiences, they portrayed his descendant - the virgin's son.

See Psalm 2 "YHWH said to me: You are my Son ... I will deliver to you the nations as your inheritance and the ends of the earth as your possession. You will rule them with an iron sceptre²." David's kingdom did cover all the territory promised to Abraham from the river Euphrates in the north to the gulf of Aqaba in the south, but he did not rule to the ends of the earth.

Expressions in Psalm 22 like "They spike my hands and my feet" and "They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my vest" also transcend David's own experiences³.

In Psalm 16:10 "You (YHWH) will not leave my soul in the place of the dead; neither will You let Your Holy One see decay." David's body decayed long ago. Could this Holy One be the virgin's son?⁴ Evidently David had a longing similar to Job's (refer to Unit 3).

A Temple for YHWH

David made Zion his capital. Zion is Jerusalem. This is Salem where Melchisedek was king and is also Moriah[B], where Abraham offered up Isaac⁸.

David recovered the Ark of the Covenant and placed it in the inner room of the tabernacle. He also wanted to replace the "tent of God" with a permanent structure (a temple) but God denied him that privilege because David was a man of war. That honour was given to David's son - Solomon, who succeeded David to the throne.

David bought Araunah's/Ornan's threshing floor on mount Moriah where Abraham offered up Isaac. There he built an altar. This place became the focal point of Israel's worship.

David made extensive preparations for the building of the temple and handed on a flourishing and stable kingdom to Solomon.

Approximate Time-scale

Year	Zero	The Creation	6,000 yrs.	ago.
Year	1,650	The Flood	4,350 yrs.	ago
Year	2,080	Call of Abraham	3,920 yrs.	ago
Year	2,280	Joseph in Office	3,720 yrs.	ago
Year	2,480	Job [very approx.]	3,520 yrs.	ago
Year	2,510	The Exodus	3,490 yrs.	ago
Year	2,570	The Occupation	3,430 yrs.	ago
Year	2,680	Ruth	3,320 yrs.	ago
Year	2,900	Saul crowned king	3,100 yrs.	ago
Year	2,950	David anointed king	3,050 yrs.	ago

Oddities to ponder over

? Reference: Psalm 110:1 - "YHWH said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." In what way could David's descendant be his Lord?⁹

Suggested Reading

Judges 2. 21:25.

Ruth 1. 2. 4.

1 Samuel 1. 8-10. 15.10 16:1-13. 18:5-11. 19. 20. 24

2 Samuel 5. 6:1-19. 7. 11. 12:1-14.11 24.

1 Kings 2:10-12.

1 Chronicles 21:18-28. 22. 23:1.

Questions:-

1. What positions did: 1) Melchisedek, 2) Moses and 3) David hold?
2. Explain from the Law of Moses how Ruth came to be an ancestor of David.

Interesting Notes:-

A) When God chose priests and kings they were anointed with oil, so they were called "YHWH's anointed". The words Messiah and Christ both mean anointed.

B) Moriah means Chosen by YHWH or YHWH provides. Chosen for what, provides what?

Useful References:-

- 1 Deut.25:5-10, Matt.1:5
- 2 Acts 13:32-33, Heb.1:5, Rev.2:27
- 3 John 19:13-24, 20:27
- 4 Acts 2:22-36
- 8 Gen.22:2
- 9 Matt.22:41-46
- 10 Ps. 89:20, Acts 13:22

Chapter 6 - THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

[Solomon to the Dissolution of the Nation]

Solomon's Temple

Solomon built the temple of God in Moriah. At its dedication YHWH's glory (the SHEKINAH) filled the temple. This magnificent building became the focal point of the nation's worship. Like the tabernacle it had: only one entrance; an outer room and an inner room. As before, only Aaron's descendants could perform the priestly duties. Only the high priest could enter the most holy inner room and only on the Day of Atonement. Again he had to take with him the blood of sacrificed animals, both for his own and for the people's sins.

Volumes could be written on the temple - its layout; its furnishings; the priests and their duties; the washings; immersions; sacrifices; offerings; sabbaths; national holy-days, etc. Devout Israelites longed to experience the future glories depicted by it.

Solomon's Reign

God gave Solomon the wisdom he needed to rule Israel. His reign began well but sadly he regressed to indulging in luxury, pleasure and idolatry. Coming to his senses he gave wise guidance to his son and heir Rehoboam¹ but he was not one to value sound advice.

The Kingdom Divides Into Two

Despite the counsel of the wise elders, Rehoboam imposed excessive taxes on his people. Consequently ten tribes rebelled and formed the northern kingdom, called the Kingdom of Israel. Rehoboam's sadly depleted kingdom was called the Kingdom of Judah.

Both kingdoms and their kings oscillated between faithfulness and idolatry, despite the pleadings of YHWH's prophets - Two notable prophets of this period were Elijah and Elisha - Israel became so evil that God sent them into captivity. In Judah, even children were sacrificed to idols[A]. Judah ignored the warning signs, so they too were taken captive into Babylon, Jerusalem and the temple being destroyed. Was this the end? Had Satan thwarted YHWH?

Genesis to 2nd. Kings

In the Hebrew and Greek canon of the scriptures, all the books from Genesis to 2nd. Kings begin with the Hebrew letter vav (Hebrew for "and")[B]. This series of documents is evidently one continuous book, with the possible exception of Ruth. As one inspired writer laid down his pen the next picked his up[C]. Originally this "book" was kept in the Ark of the Covenant[D], then it was added to by subsequent prophets[E]. It begins with the creation and ends with the Babylonian captivity. First, Israel was taken captive. That was the end of the northern kingdom as a separate nation². Later, the southern kingdom was taken captive. That also was a devastatingly traumatic event but it was not the end of Judah.

1st. & 2nd. Chronicles

The books, 1st. and 2nd. Chronicles and Ezra are consecutive in the Greek canon and also begin with the letter vav. In the Hebrew Bible, Ezra and Nehemiah are one book. Evidently these four books are also one continuous narrative.

You will have noted how the line of the woman's seed is channelled through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah - David's ancestor. The Chronicles start a new series of documents. They present the history of the Kingdom of Judah from a different angle.

1st.Chronicles documents the nation's family trees, beginning with Adam. Then after reporting Saul's death it records David's reign and how, shortly before he died, he handed over the kingdom to Solomon, along with the detailed plans for the building of the temple.

2nd.Chronicles records Solomon's and Rehoboam's reigns, then it concentrates on the history of the southern kingdom - Judah - ending with the Babylonian captivity and the destruction of Solomon's Temple. But suprisingly, the very last two verses leap forward 70 years to a decree by the Persian king Cyrus, that the temple should be rebuilt.

Approximate Time-scale

Year	Zero	The Creation	6,000 yrs.	ago
Year	1,650	The Flood	4,350 yrs.	ago
Year	2,080	Call of Abraham	3,920 yrs.	ago
Year	2,280	Joseph in Office	3,720 yrs.	ago
Year	2,480	Job [very approx.]	3,520 yrs.	ago
Year	2,510	The Exodus	3,490 yrs.	ago
Year	2,570	The Occupation	3,430 yrs.	ago
Year	2,680	Ruth	3,320 yrs.	ago
Year	2,900	Saul crowned king	3,100 yrs.	ago
Year	2,950	David anointed king	3,050 yrs.	ago
Year	2,990	Solomon - King	3,010 yrs.	ago
Year	3,000	Temple dedicated	3,000 yrs.	ago
Year	3,015	The kingdom Divided	2,975 yrs.	ago
Year	3,280	Israel's Captivity	2,720 yrs.	ago
Year	3,415	Judah's Captivity	2,585 yrs.	ago

Oddities to ponder over

* There were five large mobile tanks at both sides of the temple - ten in all. The priests immersed animals in these to prepare them for sacrifice.

* The last faithful king of Judah - Josiah - was killed in a battle on the plain of Megiddo (Hebrew - Armageddon. Rev.16:16).

Readings:-

1 Kings	3:5-28; 6:37,38; 11 to 13; 17 to 19; 21; 22.
2 Kings	1 to 6; 8; 23:24-37; 25.
1 Chronicles	10:1-11:9; 15:1-3,25-28; 16:1-4; 28 to 29:28.
2 Chronicles	1:7-12; 2:1-6; 3 to 7; 8:1-5; 9; 10; 11:1-17; 12; 28; 33 to 36

Questions:-

1. Does God need a temple to live in ?
2. Why did they have to follow the details, for building the temple and its artefacts, precisely?

Notes:-

- A) This was in the Hinnon valley (Ge-Hinnon), SW of Jerusalem. Because of these horrors, the name of that valley came to depict Hell.
- B) In Deuteronomy, vav occurs at the start of the third verse, after a short introduction.
- C) Joshua 24:26 "and Joshua wrote these words in God's law-book".
- D) Deuteronomy 31:24-26 " when he had written all the words of this law in a book, Moses told the Levites to... Take this, the book of the law, and put it at the side of the ark of the covenant of YHWH your God."

E) 1.Samuel 10:25 "...Samuel ... wrote, the regulations for kings, in the book and deposited it before YHWH..."

References:-

- 1 Prov. 1. Eccl. 1 & 12.
- 2 Ezek. 37:15-22. Hosea 8:8.

Chapter 7 - GOD CLEANSSES THE NATION

[The Captivity to the Golden Years]

Pre-Captivity Warnings Ignored

Joel warned Judah of invasions from the north. Hosea warned Israel, Amos and Micah warned both kingdoms, that they would be taken into captivity. Israel's captivity had little effect on Judah's conscience. Rather than heed the warnings, they persecuted the preachers.

Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel warned Judah that it also would be taken captive and that Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed.

Restoration Promised

The same prophets, and Daniel, promised that God would restore the temple, Jerusalem, and the nation, despite the depths to which they had sunk. Habakkuk questioned why God used the wicked to punish His people. God promised that their enemies would be punished for their excessive wickedness. The political world as they knew it, would disappear[A]. Empires and nations would vanish but God's people would survive and be repatriated as one nation again, under YHWH. They would be a faithful "remnant", cleansed from idolatry.

A Remnant Return

Seventy years after Israel and Judah were taken captive Cyrus issued his decree for the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. A purged remnant of all the tribes returned to the devastated land as one nation under the banner of Judah. From then on the term Jews referred to the whole nation. Before, it was confined to Judah¹. The restoring of Israel to Judah is predicted as two sticks becoming one. Ezra and Nehemiah [continuation of Chronicles]

After repeating Cyrus' decree, the book Ezra, recounts the rebuilding and rededication of the Temple. Nehemiah narrates the rebuilding of walls of Jerusalem by a beleaguered "remnant"[B]. God always has a faithful remainder.

The Silent/Golden Years

The temple was rebuilt, the city walls were restored and the nation cleansed, never again to turn to idolatry. There followed the promised idyllic existence. They lived freely and unharassed for about 300 years. First under the protection of Persia, then Greece, until Antiochus Epiphanes imposed Greek culture. The last straw for the Jews came when he sacrificed a pig on the sacred altar. That provoked a civil war. The Jews gained a short period of independence but the Golden years were never to be regained. The Roman invasion ushered in the predicted political chaos which was to precede the coming of the day of YHWH.² Then a humble, disparaged Messiah would establish His eternal kingdom having a new and better covenant than that which was given to them under Moses. His kingdom would be spiritual. He would conquer with His "mouth" not with the sword.

God's Purpose Would Not Be Thwarted

The underlying theme of Isaiah is that God would ensure that the virgin[C] would give birth to a son called Emmanuel[D]. So whatever happened, however great the catastrophes, Judah would survive. A purged remnant would return[E] and the kingdom be restored in preparation for that event.

Jeremiah made similar predictions and stated that a new covenant would replace the old.

When would these things happen?

In the book of Daniel, graphic vision portray the Anointed's[F] eternal kingdom being established during the time of the Roman empire. Daniel predicts that the Messiah would come 69 x 7 years after an edict to rebuild Jerusalem, that during the next 7 years He would be killed and He would bring sacrifices to a conclusion, thus rendering everything associated with the temple redundant.. Zechariah predicts that at that time, which he refers to as "that day", God's covenant with the Jewish nation would be terminated and several other astounding paradoxical things would happen.

For more detail on "in that day of the Lord" ask for our free leaflet:- "**THE MOUNT OF OLIVES SPLIT**".

Jews called Malachi the "seal of the prophets". Malachi closes with a promise that Elijah would come first, to prepare the way for the Messiah³.

Eager Anticipation

"Since the beginning, no one heard, no one perceived, no eye saw, except you O God, what He prepares for those who await Him." Isaiah 64:4

Approximate Time-scale

Please see the accompanying chart

Oddities to ponder over

? Why did God bother to restore that wicked nation? Surely it was not a petty-minded face-saving operation.

Readings:-

Ezra	1. 3-6. 10
Nehemiah	1-4. 6. 8-10. 13.
Isaiah	1-2. 4. 6. 7. 9-11. 13-14. 23-24. 28. 40-42. 52-53. 55. 61. 63-66.
Jeremiah	1. 16. 23. 25. 29-31. 33. 39. 43-44. 46-52.
Ezekiel	4-6. 8. 11. 18. 24-31. 34-37. 43:1-5
Daniel	1-2. 7. 9.
Hosea	1. 3. 8. 11. 14.
Joel	1-3
Amos	1. 2. 8. 9.
Micah	1. 4. 5.
Malachi	3:1-6. 4.
Zechariah	1. 8. 9. 11:7-17. 12:8-10. 13.

Question:

Why did God ask Isaiah to take his son with him when he was sent to Ahaz ?
(Isaiah 7).

Notes:-

A) Some predictions are in highly figurative language, for example: Babylon's overthrow and the religious/political chaos during the Roman occupation of Palestine, are depicted as disasters happening to the sun and moon etc..

B) This is the end of the second series of historic narratives which begin with 1st.Chronicles. (see Unit 6).

- C) Isaiah 7:14. Hebrew: ha'alma = the virgin.
This has to be the woman's seed - Gen.3:15.
- D) Emmanuel means - God with us.
- E) The name of one of Isaiah's sons, She'ar-yashuv, means - a remnant will return.
- F) Anointed = Messiah.

References:-

- 1 2.Kings 16:6, 25:25.
- 2 Acts 2:19-20
- 3 Matt.17:9-13

Chapter 8 - HE COMES !

[The Messiah Enthroned]

A Roman Colony - Corrupt and Dejected

Daniel's 69 x 7 years were almost over². The Jews' fervently anticipated a Messiah. They thought that he would throw-off the cruel Roman yoke. This provoked the Romans to crush any sign of revolt.

The chief priests lived in style. The temple outer courtyard had become a market, where money was changed into "holy" money to buy animals on sale there for sacrifice. Radical religious leaders, concerned with outward observance, lacked compassion. Zealots agitated for armed resistance. The perplexed humble poor bore the brunt of it all⁴.

In The Village of Bethlehem [About BC 4]³

Here in obscurity - unannounced, except to a few shepherds - a young virgin gave birth to a son - the Messiah!⁵ - Many still find that hard to believe⁶.

They named him Jesus[A]. Both his mother and her husband, Joseph, were from Judah's tribe and direct descendants of king David⁷. Whilst Jesus was still an infant, the local puppet king, paranoid at the thought of being deposed, massacred all children under two. Forewarned, the family had fled into Egypt⁸. Once again Satan had failed to thwart the man-child⁹. After the king died they returned to Israel but settled in the north, in industrial Nazareth[B].

The Messiah is Here !

30 years on, crowds flocked to uninhabited places in Judea, to hear a priest's austere son – John[B] - preach "Repent for heaven's kingdom is near". He claimed to be preparing the way for "the Lord". He was not really Elijah but he had his spirit and zeal¹. It is essential to appreciate the spiritual nature of Old (and New) Testament visionary predictions.

John immersed people in water for their sins to be forgiven but when his second-cousin (Jesus) asked to be immersed, John felt unworthy for the task. However the Lord Jesus persuaded him that it was the right thing to do. The miracle that followed made John realize that his own second-cousin was the long-promised Messiah. John had performed the priest's task of preparing him for sacrifice, by plunging him in water¹⁰. John announced to his followers that the Lord Jesus was God's sacrificial lamb who would take away the world's sin.

Direct Confrontation with Satan

Satan immediately tried to tempt the Lord Jesus and failed. He had assumed that they both had the same basic desires. You see - Satan has no idea what altruism is¹¹. The Messiah sympathised with people who had problems. He was not self-seeking.

The Imminent Heavenly Kingdom

The Lord Jesus taught many people about his kingdom, saying that it was imminent, that it was not earthly but spiritual and to enter it one had to undergo a spiritual birth. He claimed to be the son of God and to have existed eternally¹². Yet some wondered if he was the promised Messiah because he advised them against resistance and encouraged them to love their enemies. However he denounced bigotry. The religious elite reacted badly to that.

The Nation's Covenant with God Severed

The radical Jews plotted with the quisling priests to have him arrested. After 3 1/2 years they managed to get Jesus convicted of treason and executed. That finally severed their covenant with God and instituted a new one, validated by the shed blood of God's lamb¹³ - the ultimate sacrifice¹⁴. Though it seemed Satan had succeeded, after 3 days the Lord Jesus came out of his tomb¹⁵. Many of the ancient saints also came out of their tombs and were seen in the city of Jerusalem¹⁶.

The Messiah's Kingdom Established¹⁷

During the next seven weeks he prepared his disciples for the start of his kingdom here on earth, then he returned to heaven. Empowered by the Holy Spirit of God they began that work on the day of Pentecost. Those who believed that the Lord Jesus is the Messiah and repented of their sins, were immersed in water for their sins to be forgiven. That immersion depicted the Messiah's burial and resurrection. By it they buried their old life, rose to a new life¹⁸. This spiritual kingdom, which began in Jerusalem¹⁹ has spread throughout the world²⁰. Innumerable people of all nations have visualised him nailed to the "cross"²¹ - seen that it was for them he died²² - and become his devoted subjects in his heavenly kingdom. They were given a new name – Christian [C]²³. They strive to do the Divine will on earth as it is done in heaven²⁴.

Readings:-

Matthew 1-4:17. 5-13. 16. 17. 20:17-29. 22-28.
Mark 1. 9. 10:35-45. 12. 15. 16.
Luke 1-2. 17:20-21. 20:39-47. 24.
John 1. 3. 4. 7. 18-21.
Acts 1-2.7:48-11. 14. 15. 17. 20-22.

Questions:

- 1 Did Satan tempt the Lord Jesus in the same three ways that Eve was tempted?
- 2 What is the difference between the kingdom the Jews expected and the Lord Jesus' kingdom?

Notes:-

- A) John (Heb.-Yohanan) means YHWH is gracious.
- B) Jesus (Heb.- Yashua) means YHWH is salvation.
- C) Christian means: one devoted to the Messiah (Christ)

References:-

- 1 Malachi 4:5-6.
- 2 Daniel 9:24-27.
- 3 Micah 5:2
- 4 Joel 2:30-31. Ps. 82:1-5
- 5 Gen. 3:15. Is. 7:14. 9:6
- 6 Is. 53:1-2. Jer. 31:22.
- 7 Gen. 49:10. Is. 9:7. Mic. 5:2
- 8 Hosea 11:1
- 9 Is. 66:7. Gal. 4:4. Rev.12:5,13.
- 10 2 Chr.4:6 (The Hebrew for AV "wash" = plunge. J.C.Ellicott's commentary)
- 11 1 Cor.2:14-15. 1 Pet. 5:8
- 12 Ps. 2:7. Heb. 1:2. Is.9:6
- 13 Zech. 11:10-11. 13:1
- 14 Dan. 9:27

15 Gen. 3:15. Ps. 16:10,11. Is. 53:7-11. Rom. 1:4
16 Job 19:25-26
17 Colossians 1:13
18 Rom. 6:1-6
19 Is. 2:1-4. Micah 4:1-3
20 Hos. 1:10. Rom. 9:24-26.
21 Gal. 3:1. 1 Cor. 1:23-24.
22 Is.53:4-6. Gal 2:20.
23 Is.62:2. 1 Pet. 4:16
24 Is. 2:4. 11:1-10 Micah 4:3.

Chapter 9 - THE OUTCOME

[God's Purpose Accomplished]

The New Covenant

The night the Messiah was betrayed, whilst observing the Passover Feast he instituted a new feast. Using a loaf of unleavened bread to represent his body, broke it and gave it to his apostles[A]. He also passed a cup of grape juice to them saying, "This is my blood of the New Covenant[B] being shed to remove many people's sins"¹. Ever since then Christians have come together in groups on the first day[C] of every week to commemorate how the Lord died for them. In the Bible this is called "The Lord's Supper" or "The breaking of the Loaf"².

In English translations of the Bible these groups are called "churches"[D] and all of them worldwide are called "the church"³. The Lord Jesus is building his church by adding to it repentant baptised[E] believers⁴. The word "church" never means a building. The early churches mostly met in houses.

Two distinctions between the Old and New Covenants are:

- 1) Jews were members of the Old from birth, but only those who have had a change of heart can be members of the New⁵.
- 2) The Old Covenant was for the nation of Israel⁶, whereas the covenant of the heavenly kingdom is open to people of any nation. God said to Abraham "All the nations of the world will be blessed in your seed"⁷.

The Heavenly Kingdom

The kingdom of heaven (Jesus' kingdom) is here on earth. Because it is heavenly, its citizens are to do God's will on earth the way it is done in heaven. They are to beat their swords into ploughshares and people who are like wolves are to live in harmony with those who are like lambs⁸. Becoming a citizen is called being born again - from above⁹. Citizens are called new creatures because of the change from being sinful self-centred people to Christ centred loving people. They strive to be more and more like the Lord Jesus who loves us and gave himself for us. So he will not be ashamed to call us his brothers and sisters.

The letters (epistles) in the New Testament were written to advise Christians and churches to be good servants of God, to remain faithful in adversity and to reassure them of their eternal inheritance. They also warn us of the grim end awaiting disbelievers and the disobedient¹⁰. The book of Revelation is written in highly figurative language but has the same purpose. The Lord Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and on earth. He will reign over his kingdom until the end of the world. Then he will hand it over to God. God's purpose will then be fully accomplished¹¹.

The Future

Many see death as a fearful leap into the unknown. It need not be so. Faithful Christians eagerly look forward to the day when the Lord Jesus will take them to be with him in God's glorious presence eternally¹². God will bring the creation to an end and the Lord Jesus will judge everyone. God has assured us of this and confirmed that Jesus was everything he claimed to be, by raising him from the dead. Disbelieving and rebellious people will be shut out from God's presence and suffer perpetual torment along with Satan and his angels¹³.

God Vindicated.

In Unit 1 we saw how Satan slandered God and destroyed man's fellowship with God. That raised the issue: does God care about us? and: Is he just?

In God's son we see what God is like¹⁴. Looking at Jesus' life and how he died for us - we realise that God loves us and wants us all to be saved.

"God Himself verified His love for us, in Christ dying for us whilst we were still sinners." Rom.5:8.

Readings:-

Romans	1. 2. 6. 8. 16.
1 Corinthians	10:15-22. 11:17-34. 15. 16.
2 Corinthians	4:1-6. 5.
Galatians	2:20 to 3:29. 6.
Ephesians	1. 2. 4. 5.
Philipians	1. 2.
Colossians	2.
1 Thess.	4.
1 Timothy	3.
Hebrews	1. 2. 8 to 10.
2 Peter	2. 3.
Rev.	1 to 5. 21. 22.

Question:

What are the similarities and differences between man's relationship with God in the garden before the fall and in the eternal kingdom of heaven?

Notes:-

- A) "apostle" - an envoy, usually of Christ.
- B) The Greeks had no word for "covenant", so in the N.T. their word for "testament" was used.
- C) "first day of the week" is a Hebraism for:-
from sunset Saturday to sunset Sunday
- D) "church" (ekklehsia) a company of people.
- E) "baptize" (baptizw) immerse, dip under.

References:-

- 1 Matt. 26:14-50. Mark 13:10-35. Luke 22:1-23.
- 2 Acts 2:41-42. 2:42. 20:6-12.
- 3 Matt.16:28. Acts 2:47 A.V. 9:31. 20:28.
- 4 Acts 2:37-41,47 A.V.
- 5 Jeremiah 31:31-35.
- 6 Exodus 19:4-6. Deuteronomy 5:1-3.
- 7 Genesis 12:3. 18:18. 26:4. Isaiah 2:2.
- 8 Isaiah 2:2-4. 11:1-10. 65:25. John 18:36
- 9 John 1:12-13. 3:3-6.
- 10 Matt. 19:29. 22:13. 25:31-46.
- 11 Matt. 28:18-20.
- 12 John 12:25-26. 14:1-4.
- 13 John 5:22-29. Acts 9:30-31. Hebrews 12:14, 26-28.
- 14 John 1:14-18. 14:1-11. 17:25-26.

Chapter 10 - SUMMARY

[From Eternity to Eternity]

God's Purpose and Strategy

Before creation God had His purpose¹. He made everything through and for the Messiah². They created everything perfectly³. Then Satan slandered God' putting the barrier of sin between God and man⁴. But God already had his strategy in place. The virgin's man-child would crush Satan's head⁵. Satan persistently tries to thwart it and the Messianic line often came near to extinction. Cain slew Abel who was replaced by Seth (the "designated" one) From Seth came faithful Noah⁶ whose family were rescued out of the wicked world by the universal flood. From Noah's son, Shem, came faithful Abraham, in whose seed all nations of the earth would be blest. Trusting God he offered up his son of the promise, Isaac, to God⁷. Just like God was going to offer up His son of the promise for us. Abraham offered tithes to the King-priest Melchizedek who prefigured the coming Messiah⁸.

From Isaac came Jacob who was renamed Israel. He wrested the inheritance from Esau⁹ because he appreciated its significance. Jacob's son, Joseph, saved the family from starvation - in Egypt¹⁰. Jacob predicted that the tribe of Judah, would not lose its identity until the rightful owner came[A]. The Messiah came from that tribe. Faithful Job expressed his yearning for the day when he would rise from his grave to see His redeemer - God - on the earth¹¹. God, intending that the man-child would come through Israel, brought them out of Egypt¹².

The tabernacle was set up, which predicted the way people of the world would be brought into fellowship with God¹³. Sacrifices (with emphasis on firstborn), the Passover and the Day of Atonement were instituted to show how the "lamb of God" would die for the sins of mankind. Another prophet like Moses was promised and the New Covenant predicted¹⁴. King David, of the tribe of Judah and the prophet Isaiah, predicted that the Messiah would rise from the dead¹⁵. King Solomon built the temple on Moriah in Melchizedek's city where Abraham offered up Isaac¹⁶. It had ten large portable tanks in which animals were plunged in preparation for sacrifice[B].

The nation split and sank into idolatry. God warned them they would go into captivity but nothing would thwart the virgin giving birth to the man-child called Emmanuel[C]¹⁷. A remnant of the reunited nation would return under the banner of Judah¹⁸ to enjoy a long period of peace and prosperity followed by crises, during which the Messiah. would set up his everlasting kingdom¹⁹. The spiritual kingdom which the Messiah would set-up was portrayed as spiritual Jerusalem - the city of Zion on the highest mountains - with the law of YHWH going out from it, with all nations flocking into it and foreign priests worshipping in it²⁰.

The Messiah would come 483 years after the edict to rebuild Jerusalem. In 3.1/2 years he would be killed and the sacrifices rendered obsolete²¹. The old covenant would be terminated when they pierced the hands of the Messiah and valued him at 30 pieces of silver. In that day a fountain of living waters would spring in all directions from Jerusalem, YHWH would become ruler over all the earth²². Elijah would herald the Messiah's coming²³.

He Arrives !

The Messiah was born of a virgin in Bethlehem²⁴. He escaped Herod's slaughter. God brought him back from the security of Egypt - to Nazareth²⁵.

John - in the spirit of Elijah - proclaimed "the heavenly kingdom is imminent". At the Lord Jesus' request John immersed him - God's sacrificial lamb - in water²⁶.

Religious fanatics expected a military leader who would defeat the Romans. The Lord emphasised the spiritual nature of his kingdom²⁷. Though they had him executed for treason²⁸. by this his goal

to die as the supreme sacrifice for mankind was achieved²⁹. The old covenant was replaced by the new, embracing people of all nations. When the Lord Jesus rose from the dead, many saints came out of their tombs and were seen in Jerusalem. Having received all authority in heaven and on earth he prepared his apostles for the start of his kingdom³⁰.

His Kingdom Established

After his ascension the kingdom began, on the day of Pentecost. and the Lord Jesus added repentant baptized believers to his church. It spread from Jerusalem all over the world³¹, a spiritual refuge in a world of turmoil³². His subjects were called Christians. When the world ends, the Messiah will hand his kingdom over to God³³. Its citizens will be with him praising God, eternally in heaven³⁴.

YHWH Vindicated

The Lord Jesus' loving sacrifice for the sins of mankind, negated Satan's slander of God, and provided the way for man to be "new creatures", reconciled to God³⁵. The way is open to all³⁶.

Notes:-

- A) "Shiloh" (Gen.49:1,10) the owner. Ezek.21:27
- B) 2 Chr.4:6 (The Hebrew for AV "wash" = plunge.
J.C.Ellicott's commentary)
- C) Emmanuel means - God with us.

References:-

- 1 Eph.1:4, 9-10, 3:3-11. Col.1:26-27. 2.Tim.1:9.
Titus 1:2. 1.Peter 1:20. Rev.13:8.
- 2 Eph.3:9. John 1:1-3. 14. Col.1:16-17. Heb.1:2.
- 3 Gen.1:31
- 4 Gen.3:1-5. Is. 59:2.
- 5 Gen.3:15.
- 6 Gen.6:8, 7:1. 2.Pet.2:5
- 7 Gen.22:1-19. Heb.11:17-19. James 2:21-23.
- 8 Gen.14:18-20. Ps.110:4. Heb.7:1-3, 14-17.
- 9 Gen.25:34. Heb.12:16
- 10 Gen.42:2. 45:1-8.
- 11 Job.13:15,16. 19:25-27.
- 12 Ex.4:22,23. Hos.11:1. Matt.2:14-15.
- 13 Ex.25 to 27. Heb.9:1-14. 24-28.
- 14 Deut.18:15-19. 34:10. John 1:21,25,45. Acts 3:22. 7:39. Jer.31:31-34. Heb.8:7-13.
- 15 Ps.16:8-11. 22:16. Is.53. Acts 2:24-32. 8:32-35 13:32-37.
- 16 Gen.14:18. 22:2 2 Sam.24:18. 1.Chron.21:18. 2.Chron.3:1
- 17 Is.7:14. Matt.1:22-23.
- 18 Is.1:9. Jer.23:1-6. Ezek.37:1-23.
- 19 Dan.2:34-45. 7. Joel 2:28-22. Acts 2:16-22. Zech.9.
- 20 Is.2:2-4. 66:18-23. Mic.4:1-5. Zech.14:16-19.
- 21 Dan.9.
- 22 Zech.11:10-13. 12:8-10. 13:1. 14:8-9.
- 23 Mal.3:1-2. 4:5-6.
- 24 Jer.31:15-22. 40:1. Mic.5:2-3. Matt.2:6. John 7:42 Gal.4:4.
- 25 Matt.2:13-23.
- 26 Is.40:1-11. Matt.3:1-3,13-17. 11:14. Luke 1:17. John 1:29-41.
- 27 Matt.25:31-46. Luke 17:20-21. John 3:3-8. 6:15. 8:23. 18:36-37

28 Luke 23:1-3. John 19:12-16.
29 Num.21:9. Matt.16:21. John 2:19-21. 3:14,15. 12:23-24,27,32.
30 Matt.26:28. 27:52-53. Acts.1:3
31 Acts 1:6-8. 1:25 to 2:4,33-47. Col.1:13. 2:23
32 Matt.11:28-30.
33 1.Cor.15:23-28.
34 John 12:26 14:1-3. 1.Thess.4:13-18. Rev.5:12-15
35 2.Cor.5:17-21. Eph.4:20-24.
36 2 Pet.3:9. 2.Tim.1:15-16.

Key to Chapter 1 - THE BIG ISSUE

These are our suggested answers to the questions set in Chapter 1, with some additional information and a brief summary of that unit.

Question 1. Why did Eve want the forbidden fruit ?

Gen.3:6: She was tempted by physical desire: it "was good for food". She was tempted by her eyes: "it was pleasant to look at". She was tempted by pride: desired it "to get wisdom".

Supplementary information:

We are always tempted in one or more of these three ways. That has not changed in 6,000 years.

In 1st.John 2:16 these three ways are stated:-

- 1."The desire of the eyes". We feel we must have what we see.
- 2."The desire of the flesh". We feel we must have what is nice to taste or touch or smell.
- 3."The boastfulness of lifestyle". Pride. We want to be seen to be important.

Question 2. Why did Adam accept the forbidden fruit?

Whereas Eve was conned by Satan, Adam was not [see 1 Timothy 2:14]. He knew that Satan was lying. We suggest Adam succumbed to Eve's allurements. See Genesis 3:12 "The woman that you gave me it was she who gave me fruit from the tree and I ate it", and Genesis 3:17 "God said to Adam: because you listened to your wife's voice ...".

Supplementary information:

It appears that he was under pressure. He had the choice of being faithful to God or of pleasing his wife. 1.Corinthians 7:32-33. He accepted the fruit from his wife showing that obeying God was of less importance to him than pleasing Eve. The outcome was: Adam failed God, his wife and all his offspring. Romans 5:12.

Question 3. How did Adam and Eve's sin affect their personal friendship with God?

Gen.3:7-8,10 They were riddled with guilt and tried to cover themselves. Their sin formed a barrier between them and God (See Isaiah 59:2).

Question 4. What kind of person is Satan?

Gen.3:1-5 He is crafty. He pretends to be doing a favour. He sows doubt (verse 1 "Did God indeed really say ..."). He lies (verse 4 "you will not begin to die"). He slanders God (verse 5 "for God knows ..."). He obviously resents God.

Supplementary information:

Satan claims he holds the moral high ground (2.Corinthians 11:14), but he is really trying to drag everyone down to his level (1.Peter 5:8). We are advised not to be outwitted by him (2.Corinthians 2:11).

RECAPPING

- 1.God created everything perfectly.
- 2.To incite man to sin, Satan slandered God.
- 3.God predicted that a virgin would give birth to a son, the woman's seed.
- 4.The virgin's son would defeat Satan and restore the status-quo.

Key to Chapter 2 - GOD'S FAITHFUL PRESERVED

Here are our suggested answers for Chapter 2.

Question 1. Explain how the ancestry of the woman's seed was nearly wiped out. Cain slew noble Abel. Able was replaced by Seth (meaning "designated") Gen. 4:25. He was designated ancestor to "the seed" Gen. 3:15. Centuries later, mankind became so corrupt. that only one good person remained a descendant of Seth Noah. Only his family survived the flood.

Question 2. Explain in which of the three ways Cain was being tempted [Gen.4:2-9] Pride (Gen.4:5,7). God rejected Cain's sacrifice because he had not done it faithfully (Heb.11:4). Cain's pride was hurt. He became enraged. The sin of pride mastered him. He lured his innocent brother into the fields, attacked and murdered him.

Supplementary information:

Gen.4:6-7 "Cain, why are you enraged? Why are you morose? If you conformed you would be buoyant, but since you're rebellious then sin crouches at the opening and wants to consume you, but you yes you must overcome it."

John 8:34 "Anyone sinning is sin's slave".

RECAPPING

1. God created everything perfectly.
 2. To incite man to rebel, Satan slandered God.
 3. God predicted the virgin's son who:
 4. would defeat Satan, restoring the status-quo.
 5. Seth - ancestor to the virgin's son.
 6. The world was repopulated from the flood's sole survivors faithful Noah's family.
- Understanding the Bible

Key to Chapter 3 - GOD SELECTS A FAMILY

Here is our suggested answer for Chapter 3.

Question. How did God use Joseph to preserve the tribal line, through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Judah, from extinction?

Joseph's jealous brothers sold him as a slave to the Midianites who in turn sold him to the captain of Pharaoh's guard. Even so God enabled Joseph to become governor over all of Egypt's produce. Forewarned by God of a severe famine Joseph stored enough food for the Egyptians and to sell to others. So Jacob's family escaped dying from starvation because they were able to get food in Egypt. Gen.37:1-28, 41:14 to 42:2, 45:1-8, Acts 7:9-18

Supplementary information:

God has a purpose and invites mankind to be involved in that purpose. Those who love Him and respond to Him will experience difficulties but God works through even their hardships for their good. Romans 8:28-29

RECAPPING

1. God created everything perfectly.
2. Satan slandered God, causing man to sin.
3. God predicted the woman's seed who:
4. would defeat Satan, restoring the status-quo.
5. Only Noah's family survived the flood.
6. Abraham offers up Isaac.
7. Promises made to Abraham and Isaac.
8. Joseph saved Jacob's family from famine.
9. "Shiloh" to come from Judah's tribe.
10. Job expected to meet God on the earth.

Key to Chapter 4 - GOD PREPARES A NATION

Here are our suggested answers for Chapter 4.

Question 1. Why did Melchizedek not have the qualifications to be a priest under Moses law? Under the law of Moses, a priest had to be a descendant of Aaron. Melchizedek lived over 400 years before Aaron and before Moses received the Law. Gen.14:18-20. Ex.13:1-2 Num.3:5-13

Question 2. Does God need sacrifices to pacify him?

God gets no joy out of innocent animals being killed and it is impossible for their blood to forgive our sins. Micah 6:6-8. Psalm 40:6-8. Heb.10:4-10

Supplementary information:

Practices described in the Old Testament will seem strange until they are seen as predictions illustrating the spirit of the New Covenant. [See Hebrews chapters 5 to 11 and Psalm 110:4.]

Question 3. Describe how the prophet God promised, would be like Moses [Deut.18:15-20]. He would be an Israelite (c.p.Deut.17:15) and God would put His words in his mouth (c.p.Deut.34:10 & John 17:8).

Supplementary information:

The phrase in v.18 "from among their brethren" means the same as in Deut 17:15. i.e. an Israelite. Centuries later the Israelites still expected that prophet to come. John 1:21,25,45, Acts 3:22, 7:37.

RECAPPING

1. Satan slandered God, causing man to sin.
2. The woman's seed is promised.
3. Abraham offered up Isaac.
4. Joseph saved Jacob's family from famine.
5. "Shiloh" to come from Judah's tribe.
6. Job expected to meet God on the earth.
7. Israel's exodus out of Egypt under Moses
8. Passover and Day of Atonement institute
9. A prophet like Moses promised.
10. Israel occupies Canaan under Joshua.

Key to Chapter 5 - THE NATION CONSOLIDATED

Here are our suggested answers for Chapter 5.

Question 1. What positions did: 1) Melchisedek, 2) Moses and 3) David, hold?

- 1) Melchisedek was a king and a priest. Gen.14:18.
- 2) Moses was a prophet of God
- 3) David was a king and a prophet. (1.Sam.16:6-13, Acts 2:29-30, 2.Chron.28:12, 2.Chron.6:4)

Supplementary information:

Moses was a unique OT prophet having personal access to God. Exodus 33:11, Deuteronomy 34:10.

Question 2. Explain from the Law of Moses how Ruth came to be an ancestor of David. If an Israelite died childless, the Law required a kinsman to take his wife. The firstborn from that union carried on the dead man's name (Deut.25:5-10). So Boaz (of Judah's tribe) took the Moabitess, Ruth. Their firstborn was David's grandfather - Obed.

Supplementary information:

Obed was the Lord Jesus' ancestor. Matt.1:5-16.

RECAPPING

1. Satan slandered God, causing man to sin.
2. The woman's seed promised.
3. Abraham offered up Isaac.
4. Joseph saved Jacob's family from famine.
5. "Shiloh" to come from Judah's tribe.
6. Job expected to meet God on the earth.
7. Israel's exodus from Egypt under Moses.
8. Passover and day of Atonement instituted.
9. A prophet like Moses promised.
10. Israel occupies Canaan under Joshua
11. Judges rule Israel. Samuel is the last judge.
12. They demand a King. Saul is anointed king.
13. David, of Judah's tribe, succeeds Saul.
14. David makes Jerusalem his capital city.
15. David buys Araunah's threshing floor.

Key to Chapter 6 - THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

Here are our suggested answers for Chapter 6.

Question 1. Does God need a temple to live in ?

The eternal God who created and made everything does not need a building to live in. (2.Chron.6:18. Isaiah 66:1-2. Acts.7:46-50, 17:23-25)

Question 2. Why did they have to follow the details for building the temple and its artefacts, precisely?

They portrayed how God would provide a way for all mankind to be forgiven and have fellowship with Him. (Hebrews 8:5, 9:1-12,23-28. 10:1-23)

RECAPPING

1. Satan slandered God, causing man to sin.
2. The woman's seed promised.
3. Abraham offered up Isaac.
4. Joseph saved Jacob's family from famine.
5. "Shiloh" to come from Judah's tribe.
6. Job expected to meet God on the earth.
7. Israel's exodus out of Egypt under Moses
8. Passover and day of atonement instituted.
9. A prophet like Moses promised.
10. Israel occupies Canaan under Joshua.
11. Judges rule Israel. Samuel is the last judge.
12. They demand a King. Saul is anointed king.
13. David of Judah's tribe succeeds Saul.
14. David makes Jerusalem his capital city.
15. David buys Araunah's threshing floor.
16. Solomon builds the temple on Moriah.
17. The nation splits into two and degenerates.
18. Israel and Judah taken captive into Babylon.
19. The temple and Jerusalem destroyed.

Key to Chapter 7 - GOD CLEANSSES THE NATION

Here is our suggested answer for Chapter 7.

Question: Why did God ask Isaiah to take his son with him when he was sent to Ahaz ? (Isaiah 7).

Syria and Israel's threat to attack Jerusalem perplexed king Ahaz. God sent Isaiah, to advise Ahaz that the real threat was Assyria from whom he sought protection. Even so, God's purpose would not be thwarted. A remainder would return. Which is what Isaiah's son's name, She'ar-yashuv, means. (Isaiah 10:20-22. Romans 9:27-29)

RECAPPING

1. Satan slandered God, causing man to sin.
2. The woman's seed promised.
3. Abraham offered up Isaac.
4. Joseph saved Jacob's family from famine.
5. "Shiloh" to come from Judah's tribe.
6. Job expected to meet God on the earth.
7. Passover and Day of Atonement instituted.
8. A prophet like Moses promised.

9. David of Judah's tribe succeeds Saul.
10. David makes Jerusalem his capital city.
11. Solomon builds the temple on Moriah.
12. The nation splits into two and degenerates.
13. Virgin's son, Immanuel predicted.
14. New Covenant predicted.
15. Israel and Judah taken captive into Babylon.
16. The temple and Jerusalem totally destroyed.
17. The restoration of the remnant predicted.
18. The Anointed One {the Messiah} predicted.
19. Termination of the Covenant Predicted.
20. Israel and Judah re-united as Jews.
21. The remnant, purged of idolatry, return.
22. The temple and city walls rebuilt.
23. The remnant enjoy about 300 golden years.
24. Crises come before the Messiah comes..
25. "Elijah" is to be the Messiah's herald.1

Key to Chapter 8 - HE ARRIVES !

Here are our suggested answers for Chapter 8.

Question: 1 Did Satan tempt the Lord Jesus in the same three ways that Eve was tempted? Please refer to Unit 2 in the answer to unit 1 question 1 and the supplementary information. Matt.4:1-11. Satan appealed 1) to sight: 2) to the physical: a) to hunger - "turn these stones into bread", b) to greed - all the glorious kingdoms of the world could be his. 3) to pride: a) twice to prove himself with a show of power with the words "if you are the Son of God", b) with the offer of total world power with no effort involved other than simply bowing down to Satan.

Question: 2 What is the difference between the kingdom the Jews expected and Jesus' kingdom? They expected the Messiah to overthrow the Romans and rule Palestine [Luke 24:21, Acts 1:6]. The jesting at the cross was because they thought the Lord Jesus had intended to do just that [Matt.27:37-44 Mark 15:26-32]. Jesus made it clear that his disciples did not fight to defend him because his kingdom was spiritual and not earthly [John 18:36 Luke 17:21].

RECAPPING

1. Satan slandered God, causing man to sin.
2. The woman's seed promised.
3. Abraham offered up Isaac
4. Promises made to Abraham and Isaac.
5. "Shiloh" to come from Judah's tribe.
6. Job expected to meet God on the earth.
7. Passover and Day of Atonement instituted..
8. A prophet like Moses promised.
9. David of Judah's tribe succeeds Saul.
10. Solomon builds the temple on Moriah.

11. The nation splits into two and degenerates.
12. Virgin's son, Immanuel predicted.
13. The New Covenant predicted.
14. Israel and Judah taken captive into Babylon.
15. The temple and Jerusalem totally destroyed.
16. The restoration of the remnant predicted.
17. The Anointed One {the Messiah} predicted.
18. Termination of the Old Covenant Predicted.
19. Israel and Judah re-united as Jews.
20. The remnant return and rebuild the temple.
21. The remnant enjoy about 300 golden years.
22. Crises come before the Messiah comes..
23. "Elijah" is to be the Messiah's herald.
24. John the priest's son heralds the Messiah..
25. The Ultimate Sacrifice/The New Covenant.
26. Messiah Enthroned. His kingdom established.
27. It spreads from Jerusalem - world wide.

Key to Chapter 9 - THE OUTCOME

Here is our suggested answer for Chapter 9.

Question: What are the similarities and differences between man's relationship with God in the garden before the fall and in the eternal kingdom of heaven?

In the garden of Eden it was an innocent physical existence on earth, not knowing sin or guilt, with perfect friendship with God. Genesis 1:26 to 2:25.

In heaven it will be an everlasting perfect spiritual existence with God and "the Lamb" - as new persons, having known sin, guilt and experienced God's cleansing and forgiveness.

1.Cor.15:35-58. 2.Cor.12:1-4. Col.3:1-4. Rev.22:1-5.