

1. GOD'S FAITHFULNESS – the promised birth of the Messiah

Aim: To show that God is faithful, in promising the birth of the Messiah and His forerunner.

Intro: *The last prophet of the OT was Malachi. What two things did he remind the Jews of?*

1. Mal 4:1-3 God's promised Messiah would come to heal (save) them (the Sun of Righteousness)
2. Mal 4:4-6 Before the Messiah came, God would send another prophet in the power of Elijah to prepare the people so that they would be ready for the coming Messiah (this was John the Baptist).

How long was the period of time from the prophecies of Malachi to the coming of the Messiah?

It was 400 years. During this time of "silence", God was still at work. Unnoticed by most people, God was making everything ready for the coming of the Messiah. He came when the time was right (Gal 4:4).

A. God promised Elizabeth a son – the forerunner

As we begin our study of the NT, in Luke's Gospel who are we introduced to first? (Luke 1:5-7)

We are introduced to an elderly Jewish couple, Zacharias and Elizabeth. They were old and childless.

As Zacharias was performing his priestly ministry, what happened? (Luke 1:8-14)

God's angel (Gabriel) promised Zacharias a son and told him he must name his son John.

What was so special about this promised child? (Mal 3:1; 4:5-6; Luke 1:15-17)

John was God's promised forerunner to the Messiah/Saviour, as the prophets had made known. He would be filled with the Holy Spirit from birth, and make ready God's people in the spirit and power of Elijah.

Whom did the angel say that John would prepare the way for? (Luke 1:17; Isa 40:3-5)

John would prepare the way for the Lord. This clearly means that the Messiah was not just a natural descendant of David, nor a normal human being, but God Himself. (cf. Isaiah 7:14; 9:6).

B. God promised Mary a Son – the Messiah

In Luke 1:26-31 the angel Gabriel was sent by God to give another person a very special message. Who was this and what was the message?

God sent Gabriel to tell a virgin named Mary that God had chosen her to be the mother of the Messiah. It was now God's time to fulfil His promises by sending the Messiah into our world. Mary was just an ordinary young woman who trusted in God as her Saviour (Luke 1:47).

What was the name that Mary was to give to the promised Messiah? (Luke 1:31)

His name was to be Jesus – Jesus is the Greek name for the Hebrew name of Joshua, which means "God our Saviour". How appropriate, then, that the Saviour of the world should be called Jesus.

What other things did the angel Gabriel tell Mary about her future son? (Luke 1:32-35)

- He would be great (eminent and mighty) – consider Col 1:15-18
- He would be called the Son of the Most High and the Son of God
- He would be David's greater Son who would rule forever over the house of Jacob (Israel).

What the angel declared to Mary about Jesus was prophesied long ago by the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 9:6-7. What else did this prophecy tell us concerning who Jesus would be?

He would be Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Eternal Father and Prince of Peace. Clearly, Jesus is divine – He is God (John 1:1) in the flesh. He is Emmanuel, which means "God with us" (Matt 1:23).

According to Luke 1:35 why would Jesus be called the Son of God?

Jesus was not conceived as an ordinary human being, but through the Holy Spirit. This is because He already existed, for He is eternal. God's Spirit planted Him in the womb of Mary. Thus, Mary was the human carrier for Jesus, and Joseph was His earthly carer - not his human father.

What do we learn in Luke 1:36-37?

Nothing is impossible for God. He caused Elizabeth who was barren and old to fall pregnant with John, and God would cause Mary, a virgin, to bear His Son.

What was Mary's response to the angel's message? (Luke 1:38)

Mary trusted in God and accepted His will for her to be the mother of the Messiah. She did this, knowing that she would bear the shame of having a child out of wedlock.

What can we learn from God's words to Mary through the angel and from Mary's response?

With God all things are possible (Phil 4:13). There is nothing impossible with Him. And like Mary, we are to trust God in all things, whether we must bear shame and whether things may seem impossible.

Summary: **God is faithful. Elizabeth would bear the forerunner. Mary would bear the Messiah.**

2. The Birth of John the Baptist

Aim: To consider the birth of John the Baptist and the fulfilment of God's promises.

Intro: *In Josh 21:45 what do we learn about God in the days of Joshua?*

When God makes a promise, He fulfills it; no matter how difficult or how impossible it may seem.

Throughout the OT, God promised to send the Messiah and His forerunner. What happened?

Just as God promised, when the time was right (Gal 4:4), God fulfilled His promises by sending the forerunner first, John the Baptist, and then the Messiah, our Saviour, even Jesus.

In this study, we shall consider the birth of the Messiah's forerunner – John the Baptist.

A. John's Birth

In accordance with God's Word to Zacharias (Luke 1:13) what do we read in Luke 1:57?

Zacharias and his wife Elizabeth had a son, just as God had promised. Although Elizabeth was barren and both were advanced in age, God enabled them to have this promised son, whom they named John.

What extraordinary thing happened when John was born? (Luke 1:59-63)

Zacharias broke custom and wrote that his name should be John (according to what the angel told him in Luke 1:13), and then suddenly as he wrote down his name John's mouth was loosed and he could speak – for he couldn't speak until then, because of how he had doubted the angel's words to him (Luke 1:19-20).

What did these special events, that God had arranged, bring about in the people? (Luke 1:65-66)

They wondered what would become of this child John; God was preparing their hearts for the forerunner.

B. Zacharias' Prophecy

After John's birth, Zacharias prophesied by the Holy Spirit. What do we learn in Luke 1:76?

John would be a prophet of God Most High, who would prepare the way for the Lord, just as Isaiah 40:3-5 had declared. Also, the Messiah is called the LORD – for though the Messiah would come from the line of David, He actually would be God Himself – that's why one of His names is Emmanuel ("God with us").

Note: The Messiah was the Lord, because only the Lord Himself can deliver us from sin, Satan and the sentence of death. No human or angel can save us and deliver us. Only God Himself could.

In what way would John specifically prepare the people for the Lord? (Luke 1:77)

John would give the people the knowledge of salvation. He would do this by calling people to do two things – to repent of their sins, and to receive the Messiah as their Saviour from sin. John would declare the Messiah to be "The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

How does Zacharias describe the Messiah in his prophecy? (Luke 1:67-75, 78-79)

- He would be a "horn of salvation"; ie, Jesus' power (horn) would bring about our salvation – v. 69
- He would be from the line of David in accordance with Old Testament prophecies – vv. 69-70
- He would come to His own people (the Jews), and in accordance with God's covenant with Abraham, He would make them true worshippers of God (in holiness and righteousness) – vv. 72-75
- He would come like the sun rising (Mal 4:2). He would come as the light of the world (John 8:12) into a spiritually dark world, where humans are lost in sin, in order to deliver us – vv. 78-79.
- He would guide us into the way of peace, so that we might no longer be enemies of God, but be reconciled to Him – v. 79.

In what way would Jesus fulfil God's promises to Abraham? (Luke 1:72-73)

Before Abraham went to Canaan, God promised him that one of his descendants would bring blessing to us all (Gen 12:3). Also, after Abraham was tested in sacrificing Isaac, God promised him that one of his descendants would be a blessing to us all (Gen 22:15-18); that blessing was saving us, through faith in Him.

C. John Fulfilling Prophecy

Where did John live until God's time for him to begin his ministry? (Luke 1:80)

He lived in the desert until the time was right for him to prepare the people for the Messiah's coming.

How did John survive in the desert? (Mark 1:6)

John ate locusts and wild honey, and wore clothing of camel's hair. It was far from the normal way of life.

Where he lived and how he survived would have been considered strange by most people. Was it?

No! It fulfilled what was prophesied about him in Isa 40:3. In the desert he would prepare the way for the Messiah. Cf. - every word of prophecy will always be fulfilled, no matter what (cf. Josh 21:45).

Summary: God is faithful; and praise Him for John's birth who prepared the way for the Messiah.

3. The Birth of Jesus the Messiah

Aim: To consider the birth of Jesus our Messiah and the fulfilment of God's promises.

Intro: *With the birth of John the Baptist, what was everything now set for?*

Everything was now set for the long-awaited Messiah to come. Praise God for His awesome faithfulness.

In this study, we shall consider the birth of Jesus – our Messiah and Saviour.

A. The Coming of Jesus

Just as the angel Gabriel had said to Mary (Luke 1:31-35), what came to pass? (Matt 1:18)

Mary conceived a child through the Holy Spirit; the Bible emphasises that this conception was not through normal human means (Mary was a virgin). Thus, this child was the Son of God.

Mary was engaged to Joseph. What did he do when he found out Mary was pregnant? (Matt 1:19)

When Joseph found out that Mary was pregnant, and that he was not the father, according to Jewish law, he could have had Mary killed. But because he loved her, he decided to break off their engagement quietly.

What did God do to ensure that Joseph and Mary would remain together? (Matt 1:20)

God sent an angel of the Lord to appear to Joseph in a dream. The angel told Joseph how the child that Mary was carrying was conceived in her by the Holy Spirit. God gave this special dream so that Joseph and Mary would still marry, and so that Joseph would be the earthly father of Jesus.

What do we know about Joseph and Mary? (Matt 1:19; Luke 1:30)

Joseph was a righteous man and Mary had found favour in God's eyes. God had chosen these two godly people to help raise Jesus, the Messiah, through his early years.

Was there anything else special about Joseph and Mary? (Matt 1:20; Luke 1:27)

They were both of the line of David, as the Messiah had to come from this line according to prophecy. But besides this, they were normal people, who were righteous because of their faith in God – not because they were sinless. Indeed, they were sinners like us (Rom 3:23), and would need Jesus to save them.

Note: The Catholic church believes in the "Immaculate Conception of Mary"; ie, she was born free from original sin and was sinless. This is heresy. Only one was sinless – even Jesus (2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15).

What else did the angel tell Joseph in the dream? (Matt 1:21)

Joseph was to call the baby Jesus, just as Gabriel had told Mary in Luke 1:31. Also, most importantly, Jesus' main ministry was stated: "to save His people from their sins"- just as God prophesied (Isa 53:5-6).

Why was the Messiah given the name "Jesus"?

The name "Jesus" is the Greek equivalent for the Hebrew name "Joshua", which means "Jehovah Saves".

In Matt 1:22-23, what is highlighted?

All that Joseph was told by the angel was in fulfilment of the prophecy in Isa 7:14. Also, as per the prophecy, the child would be called "Emmanuel" (meaning "God with us"), for that's who was being born amongst us. This Child would be none other than God Himself; as Isa 9:6 had also made clear.

What did Joseph do after God had appeared to him in a dream? (Matt 1:24)

Being a righteous man, he obeyed God by taking Mary as his wife. This would have caused Joseph to bear much reproach in the eyes of his Jewish society. Sometimes we are called upon by God, in obeying Him, to bear reproach as well. There is always a cost in obeying the Lord, but there is also great reward.

What does the Bible emphasise in Matt 1:25? Why?

Joseph had no sexual relations with Mary until Jesus was born – God wants us all to know that Jesus was not conceived the normal way. He was conceived miraculously by the Holy Spirit.

B. The Birth of Jesus

Where was Jesus born and how did that come about? (Luke 2:1-7)

Joseph and Mary were living in Galilee, but because of a Roman census, they had to return to Joseph's birthplace of Bethlehem, in order to register. It was here that Mary gave birth to Jesus, fulfilling Mic 5:2.

What was unusual about Jesus' birth? (Luke 2:7)

Since there was no room in Bethlehem, Jesus was born in the place where animals were kept, and he was laid in a manger (a cattle-feeding trough). What humble surroundings for the Messiah, the King of Kings.

So, the promised Messiah was born, just as God had said. What prophecies were fulfilled?

Jesus was born of a virgin (Isa 7:14 & Matt 1:25), born of the line of David (2 Sam 7:12-13 & Matt 1:20), and born in Bethlehem (Mic 5:2 & Luke 2:4-6). God is always true to every prophecy in His Word.

Summary: God fulfilled His promises by sending His Son into the world to be our Saviour from sin.

4. The Shepherds & Wise Men & Herod

Aim: To consider the pronouncement of the Saviour's birth, and the response of different people.

Intro: *Jesus' birth was so special and so unique. In what ways was it unique?*

Jesus was born of a virgin; an angelic choir sang at His birth; a star heralded the Saviour's birth.

In this study, we shall consider the special events at Jesus' birth and the response of people.

A. The Shepherds

Just after Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, how did God make it known? (Luke 2:8-12)

God sent an angel from heaven to tell about the birth to some shepherds in the fields around Bethlehem.

What incredible words did the angel proclaim to the shepherds? (Luke 2:10-11)

The baby that had been born in Bethlehem was the Saviour, the Christ (Messiah), and the Lord.

What response did the angel anticipate from the shepherds? Why?

He anticipated that they would be filled with great joy, because it was such good news that he was proclaiming - the long-awaited Messiah (Christ) had finally been born to save us.

After the angel spoke words of good news, what happened next? (Luke 2:13-14)

The shepherds were privileged to see and hear an angelic choir, who praised God for the Saviour's birth, and who declared God's peace and favour upon us humans through Jesus coming into our world.

After this amazing announcement, what was the response of the shepherds? (Luke 2:15-20)

They hurried to see the Saviour, and they proclaimed all that the angel had told them about Jesus. They then returned home praising God. What a great response! Is our response to Jesus like the shepherds?

B. The Wise Men

Who came in search of Jesus in Matt 2:1-2? Why?

Wise men from the East came in search of Jesus to worship Him. This is because they had seen "His star". These wise men somehow knew that this special star heralded the birth of the king of the Jews.

What does the term "King of the Jews" mean? (2 Sam 7:12-13; Psalm 2:1-12)

It refers to the long-awaited king who would sit upon the throne of David and rule over the house of the Jews. This was Jesus. He would also be the king over all the nations.

When these wise men arrived in Jerusalem, what happened? (Matt 2:2)

They came to Jerusalem, expecting to find the new king. But He wasn't born in a palace in the capital city.

How did Herod and all Jerusalem react to the wise men's visit? (Matt 2:3)

They were troubled about a new king being born; especially Herod. He didn't want anyone else to be king.

After consulting the religious leaders, what did Herod and the wise men learn? (Matt 2:4-6)

They learnt that this new king would not be born in Jerusalem, but Bethlehem, as it says in Micah 5:2.

After leaving Jerusalem, what did they do? (Matt 2:7-10)

They followed the star, and it led them to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born. Note: If they had just followed the star in the first place, they would have arrived there without any problems.

What was the wise men's response when they found Jesus? (Matt 2:11)

They worshipped Jesus and gave expensive gifts. What a great response to Jesus! Is that our response?

Was it right for the wise men to worship Jesus?

Yes! Jesus is God. He is both God and man. In heaven He is constantly worshipped (Rev 5:11-12).

What was the significance of the gifts that the wise men gave to Jesus?

The expensive gifts would have helped Mary and Joseph support Jesus, but each gift also highlighted who Jesus truly was. Gold was for kings - Jesus is the King of Kings. Frankincense was for priests - Jesus is our great high priest. Myrrh was for anointing dead bodies - Jesus would die to save us.

C. Herod

After the wise men worshipped Jesus, what happened next? (Matt 2:12-15)

The wise men went back home and didn't report to Herod where the baby was, for God had warned them in a dream not to tell Herod. Joseph and Mary and baby Jesus also left Bethlehem for Egypt (fulfilling Scripture), for God had warned Joseph in a dream of Herod's evil intentions to kill Jesus.

What was Herod's response to the birth of Jesus and being deceived by the wise men? (Matt 2:16-18)

He became very angry and ordered the slaughter of male babies two years old and younger. Herod's response to Jesus was evil. Today, many have this same response to Jesus. (Cf. the words in Luke 19:14)

Summary: Like the shepherds and wise men, we are to be seekers and worshippers of Jesus.

5. Jesus' Early Years and the Ministry of John

Aim: To consider how God prepared the way for the coming ministry of Jesus the Messiah.

Intro: *Jesus' birth was well received by the shepherds & wise men, but what about the rest? (John 1:11)*
Jesus was not well received. Herod wanted to kill Him, and the people of Jerusalem didn't go to Bethlehem to see the Saviour's birth – just the wise men went.

In this study we shall consider the early years of Jesus, and John's ministry to prepare the way.

A. Jesus' early years

What did Mary and Joseph do with baby Jesus in obedience to God's law? (Luke 2:21-24)

They had Jesus circumcised on the eighth day, and presented their firstborn to the Lord at the temple, in accordance to God's law. Their offering showed that they were poor. Jesus was born into a poor family.

At the temple, some amazing things happened. What were they? (Luke 2:25-38)

A man named Simeon, full of the Holy Spirit, took hold of Jesus and prophesied how He was God's salvation for mankind. Also, Anna, a prophetess, gave thanks for Jesus and spoke of how He would be the means of our redemption (our Saviour from sin). Truly, Jesus would be no normal child.

What does the Bible say about Jesus as He grew up? (Luke 2:39-40)

Jesus grew strong and increased in wisdom. This was necessary for Jesus, for although He was God in the flesh, He was also fully man. Also, God's grace (or favour) was upon Him like no other. This is because He never sinned, but always did God's will; unlike us.

When Jesus was just twelve, what incident occurred in Jerusalem? (Luke 2:41-47)

Jesus was left behind in Jerusalem after His family had celebrated the Passover. But while there, He was discussing spiritual truths with learned men. They were amazed at His understanding and His answers. Again, we see that Jesus was no ordinary Child – here was One who knew God and all spiritual truth.

In Luke 2:48-51 what do we learn about Jesus?

Jesus clearly understood that God was His true Father (not Joseph), and that He was to be about His Father's business. We also see Him submitting to His earthly parents, even though He was God's Son.

In Luke 2:52 what do we learn about Jesus?

He continued to increase in wisdom. Isaiah 11:1-2 tells us that this was because the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him. He also grew in favour with God and man, for His character as a man was the character of God. He was sinless and holy, faithful and true, completely righteous and good, merciful and gracious, loving and kind. No wonder Jesus was a man who found favour with God and men.

B. The ministry of John the Baptist

To prepare people's hearts for the ministry of Jesus, what did John do? (Matt 3:1-3)

John preached a message of repentance, telling people that the kingdom of heaven was near. This was in fulfilment with Isa 40:3-5 – written 700 years before John began his ministry.

What is the kingdom of heaven that John preached about?

The kingdom of heaven is the domain where God rules and where people lovingly submit to Him and live with Him forever. Jesus would bring this kingdom in reach of us. All those who repent and by faith receive Jesus enter this kingdom. They also experience salvation from sin, and the blessing of God's rule.

Repentance is essential for entering the kingdom of heaven. What is repentance?

Repentance means a change of heart & mind in the way we view our sin against God. It's realising:

- 1) God is holy and His righteous anger burns against my sin
- 2) I have sinned and face God's condemnation
- 3) I need to turn away from my sins and come back to God in true sorrow over our sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness, and having a desire to follow His ways

What did John require the people to do as a sign of their repentance? (Matt 3:4-6)

John required them to be baptised in water to indicate that they agreed with God that they were sinners, under God's wrath, and were in need of God's mercy and forgiveness.

How did John's ministry prepare people for the coming of Jesus?

In Jesus is found God's mercy, forgiveness and salvation; if we repent and receive Jesus. Thus, John's message was preparing people so that they might be ready to receive Jesus, by getting them to repent.

Summary: We cannot receive Jesus unless God prepares our heart and we repent of our sins.

6. John's Message and Jesus' Baptism

Aim: To look at repentance and who Jesus truly is through John's ministry; and to look at Jesus' baptism.

Intro: In our last study we considered John the Baptist's ministry. What was the main purpose for it? To prepare the hearts of the people for the coming of the Saviour, by getting people to repent of their sins. In this study we shall continue to look at John's ministry, and also the baptism of Jesus.

A. John's Message

John's ministry was prophesied in Isa 40:3-5 and Mal 4:5-6. How did John fulfill Mal 4:5-6?

In the desert, preparing the people for the Lord (in fulfilment of Isa 40:3-5), John preached in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the people back to the Lord and to each other (cf. Luke 1:17; Matt 17:10-13).

How did many of the Jews respond to John's message? (Matt 3:5-6)

Many believed that John was speaking God's Word, and they confessed their sins and were baptized.

How did John baptise? What did it signify?

John immersed people in the water of the Jordan. It was a sign that they were repenting of their sins; ie, agreeing with God that they were a sinner and needed to turn from their sins to receive God's mercy.

Note: The word "baptize" comes from the Greek word "baptizo." It means to completely immerse. The word "baptizo" was also used in the process of dying cloth. When the cloth was plunged (baptised) into a vat of dye, it would take on the colour of the dye. Just as the cloth was identified with the dye by taking on its colour, so also the Jews identified with John's message of repentance by being baptised.

Can baptism alone make us right with God? What did John say about this? (Matt 3:7-8)

Baptism alone cannot make us right with God. There must be genuine repentance of our sins and then a turning back to God for His mercy and forgiveness. John did not compromise the message. He denounced those who were seeking to be baptised, without any repentance. Many of these were the religious leaders.

What else did John have to say to the religious leaders in Matt 3:9-10?

He warned them about trusting in the fact that they were children of Abraham, as if this meant that they were automatically right with God. It's the same for us. Having Christian parents or being a church attender will not save us. We must personally repent and trust in Jesus.

What did John say about the Saviour in Matt 3:11-12?

He declared that Jesus was far greater than him; he wasn't even worthy to remove His sandals. That's because John knew that Jesus was God's Son. He also made known that Jesus would baptise people with the Holy Spirit, resulting in conversion and transformation. Jesus would also gather those who believed in Him, but would bring severe judgment on those who refused to believe – Jesus was far greater than John.

Read also John 1:24-30. What else do we glean from John's ministry about Jesus?

Jesus is the Saviour - "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world". Jesus is the Lamb God provided to atone for our sins so that we could be forgiven and be reconciled to God. All the sacrifices in the OT pointed to this one - God's ultimate sacrifice for sin. Also, John states that Jesus existed before him, even though He was born after: that's because He knew Jesus was the eternal Son of God.

B. Jesus' baptism

Why did Jesus submit Himself to John's baptism? (Matt 3:13-15; John 1:31-34)

Jesus wasn't baptised to show that He had repented of sin. Unlike us, He is the only One without sin (Heb 4:15). He was baptised to "fulfil all righteousness"; that is, He was baptised to obey His Father's will, for by this means God would manifest Him to John and to the world.

Who came upon Jesus straight after He was baptised? (Matt 3:16)

The Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove, and rested on Him. This showed that Jesus was truly the anointed One – the One God had sent into the world. Note: Messiah means "anointed one".

What else happened after the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus? (Matt 3:17)

God the Father spoke from heaven. How amazing! God confirmed that Jesus is His Son; and that He dearly loves Him, and was fully pleased with Him. Indeed, Jesus perfectly pleased the Father right throughout His life; including in His death. He's the only one who perfectly pleased the Father.

What should we conclude from Jesus' baptism?

Jesus is God's Son. He is the anointed one, the Messiah, the Lamb of God, and the Saviour of the world.

Summary: Jesus is God's Son. We must repent of our sins and believe in Him to be saved.

7. Jesus' Temptation

Aim: To consider that Jesus' was severely tested and tempted, but is the only One who did not yield.

Intro: *We are tempted to sin. So was Jesus. How was He tempted? How did He respond? (Heb 4:15)* Jesus was tempted in all that we are tempted in. Also, He wasn't just tempted during one time in His life; known as the "Temptations of Jesus". He was tempted many times (Luke 4:13). But He never sinned.

A. Jesus in the Wilderness

After Jesus' baptism, that confirmed who He was, what happened next? (Matt 4:1)

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness where he was tempted by the devil. God permitted this.

Note: Often, at the start of a new ministry, we can be tempted and tested by the devil.

Jam 1:13 says that God can't be tempted. How could Jesus be tempted if He is God?

Although Jesus is fully God, He was also fully man. Being a man, He was vulnerable to temptation.

Many doubt the reality of the devil. What does the Bible say about him? (Gen 3:1; Rev 12:9,17)

The Bible consistently confirms the devil's reality. He tempted Adam & Eve in the garden, and constantly opposes God's will and to bring humans under his control. He personally came to test and tempt Jesus.

Why was the devil tempting Jesus? What was he seeking to do?

The devil wanted to bring Jesus under his control (he craves worship) and to take Jesus from the course God had set for Him - to save us from our sins by dying on the cross (he seeks to hinder God's will).

In what way was Jesus made more vulnerable to temptation? (Matt 4:2)

The Spirit led Him into the wilderness to fast for 40 days and nights. He was alone and physically weak.

Note: We are often most vulnerable to sin when we are alone and weak and tired (cf. Matt 26:40-41).

B. Jesus being Tempted

What was the first temptation Jesus faced? Why would this have been challenging? (Matt 4:2-3)

The devil tempted Jesus to use His power to change stones into bread to satisfy His hunger. Being fully human, the devil exploited Jesus' humanity and hunger to tempt Him.

What was Jesus' response to the devil's temptation? (Matt 4:4)

He used Scripture (Deut 8:3) to "cut down" the devil's temptation. Even though we need food to keep our bodies alive (and it's not wrong to eat), above this is the need to obey God. The Father had called His Son to fast. So He would fast, until He was told to stop. Behold Jesus' obedience; even though He was hungry.

In the second temptation what did the devil do? (Matt 4:5-6)

The devil used Scripture (portions of Psalm 91:11-12) to encourage Jesus to test God by suggesting to Him to jump off the pinnacle of the temple - for God would protect Him.

What does this temptation tell us about the devil?

He knows the Scriptures, but he uses it wrongly (cf. Gen 3:1-5 and the way the devil tempted Eve).

In what way did the devil misuse Scripture here? (Psalm 91:11-13)

Satan misused the Scripture, in order to tempt Jesus to do something that was outside God's will. Other Scriptures tell us how we shouldn't behave like this and test the Lord.

How did Jesus respond to the devil's temptation? (Matt 4:7)

He again quoted Scripture (Deut 6:16). Jesus knew that such an action would be testing God. God will protect us, but not necessarily when we choose to act foolishly and do something outside His will. Jesus did not have to test His Father to see if He would take care of Him; Jesus knew this already.

In the third temptation, what was the devil up to? (Matt 4:8-9)

The devil tried to get Jesus to worship him. His desire is for people to worship him as God. He tempted Jesus to do this by offering Him all the kingdoms of the world. Jesus would receive all this after the cross (Phil 2:9-11). So, the devil was seeking to not only get Jesus to worship him, but also to bypass the cross.

What was Jesus' response to devil's temptation? (Matt 4:10)

Jesus commanded the devil to go, and again He used God's Word (Deut 6:13) to declare that only the Lord God is to be worshipped. Note also that Jesus called the devil "Satan"; which means "adversary".

What did Satan do after this, and what did God do? (Matt 4:11)

At Jesus' command, the devil left. Jesus, even while fully human, was far greater than Satan. God then comforted His Son by sending angels. God will always comfort us in our trials (2 Cor 1:3-4).

Summary: As Jesus did, temptations are overcome through the word of God and obedience to God.

8. Jesus Begins His Ministry

Aim: To show that Jesus is God's Son and that He has the authority to save mankind.

Intro: *Before Jesus began His ministry, what important events occurred beforehand? (Matt 3:13-15; 4:1)*

At Jesus' baptism God the Father declared who Jesus truly is, and He was anointed for ministry by the Holy Spirit. But straight after this, Jesus was tempted by the devil. But He was resolute in doing God's will, which would include Him carrying out the ministry that His Father had given Him – to save us.

In this study we shall consider the beginning of Jesus' ministry that would be about our salvation.

A. Jesus' Message

What happened to John the Baptist as Jesus began His ministry? (Mark 1:14; Matt 14:3-10)

John was taken into custody by king Herod because he had challenged him about unlawfully taking his brother's wife. Then, when an opportune time arose, king Herod had John killed.

Although John tragically died, in God's eyes, he had fulfilled the ministry he was sent for. What were some of the main points of John's ministry? (Matt 3:1-3, 11; John 1:29, 3:26-30)

He prepared the hearts of the people for the Lord's coming by calling them to repent.

He declared how great Jesus is, compared to himself, and how Jesus would baptise with the Holy Spirit.

He made clear that Jesus is the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"; our Saviour.

He pointed people away from himself to the Lord Jesus and said, "He must increase, but I must decrease".

As Jesus began His ministry, what did He declare? (Mark 1:14-15)

Jesus declared that the time was now right for God to reveal His great plan of salvation for mankind. God's kingdom was at hand for the King (Jesus) had come to open the way to it. Jesus declared that people had to repent and believe in the Gospel in order to enter this kingdom, and to receive God's salvation.

From the beginning, Jesus preached repentance and faith. What are we to repent of and believe in? We are to repent (turn away) from our sins. John the Baptist had declared this as well. Without repentance we cannot receive God's salvation. But we must also believe. We are to believe in the gospel.

What is the Gospel? (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

The word Gospel means "good news". The Gospel is the "good news" of Jesus. It tells us about who Jesus is and what He did for us to save us from our sins. To believe in the Gospel is to believe in Jesus.

Why is the message Jesus declared called "good news" or Gospel? (Eph 2:1-5; Col 1:13-14)

It tells us how us sinners can be forgiven of our sins and be made right with God, so that we may not perish in hell, but have eternal life. Through our sins we were under Satan's power, and face eternal separation from God, but Jesus came to deliver us from this – this is the Gospel. What good news!

To help Him in His ministry, what did Jesus do? (Mark 1:16-20)

Jesus called men to follow Him and become "fishers of men". They had to leave everything behind to become a follower of Jesus. They became disciples, or learners, of Jesus. He personally taught them, and He also sent them out to tell others about the Gospel in order to bring others into God's kingdom.

If we are a follower of Christ, how should we be living our life? (Matt 16:24-25)

We should be just like the disciples of old – leaving the world behind and following Jesus, listening to Jesus and learning from Him, and impacting this world for Christ and God's kingdom.

B. Jesus' Authority

What was different about the way Jesus taught the people compared to the scribes? (Mark 1:21-22)

Jesus taught the people with authority compared to the scribes. The scribes taught God's Word as a duty, and with their limited insight. But Jesus taught knowing the truth of God's Word, as He is God and is from the Father, and is the truth (John 1:1,18; 14:6). He also taught with power, performing miraculous deeds as He spoke. But even how He spoke was so special (cf. John 7:45-46).

In Mark 1:23-28 how did Jesus specifically show His authority to those He was teaching?

Jesus cast out an evil spirit from a man. This showed He had authority even over the devil and his spirits.

Just before the unclean spirit left the man, what did the unclean spirit say? (Mark 1:24)

The unclean spirit testified that Jesus is the Holy One of God, who has power to send them to hell.

The unclean spirit recognised Jesus' power and authority. How do most view Jesus today?

Sadly, most have no idea that He is the Lord, who has all power & authority over all (cf. Matt 28:18-20).

Summary: Jesus is Lord and has the authority to command us to repent, believe and follow Him.

9. Jesus' Power to Heal

Aim: To show Jesus' great power and compassion to heal people while He walked this earth.

Intro: *Jesus performed many miracles in His ministry. What was the purpose of them? (John 6:14)*

John the Apostle calls Jesus' miracles in his Gospel "a sign"; that's because they serve as a sign to point us to the obvious truth that Jesus is God's Son.

Jesus had extraordinary power to heal diseases. What diseases could He heal? Did He heal all? There was no disease Jesus couldn't heal. No sickness was beyond Him. But He did not heal everyone. He had the power to, but He only healed those whom His Father told Him to heal (John 8:28-29).

In this study we shall consider Jesus' healing people – it was an integral part of His ministry.

A. Jesus' the Healer – it's extraordinary

At the beginning of Mark, after casting out a demon, who did Jesus heal? (Mark 1:29-31)

He healed Simon's mother-in-law (Simon was a disciple of Jesus, whose name was changed to Peter). His mother-in-law had a fever, but when Jesus took her by the hand and lifted her up, the fever left her.

In Mark 1:40-42, Jesus healed an outcast of society. Who was this?

He healed a leper. In Lev 13:45-46 a leper had to cry out "unclean", so that people would not touch him and contract the disease. But Jesus reached out His hand and touched this man, and He was healed.

In the healing of this leper what do we note about Jesus?

Jesus didn't just have power to heal. He was moved with compassion at the man's request. After saying "If You are willing, You can make me clean", Jesus replied in love, "I am willing; be cleansed." Jesus always healed people according to God's will, but He also healed people with a heart of compassion.

In Luke 17:11-19, what healing do we read of? What lessons do we learn?

In this passage, we read how Jesus healed a group of ten leprosy men. They were healed as they obeyed the Lord by going on their way to show themselves to the priest. But only one returned to give thanks to the Lord. So often, the Lord can heal us or touch us, but we can neglect to thank Him.

In Mark 5:25-34 a woman was healed. What problem did she have and what do we learn?

A woman had been bleeding for 12 years, and no doctor could help her. She had spent all her money in finding a cure. But when she touched Jesus' garment, she was instantly healed. We learn that it was her faith in Jesus (and her persistence) that caused her to be healed.

In Mark 7:31-35 what miraculous healing took place?

Jesus healed a man who was deaf and dumb. As in other healings (but not all), Jesus touched the man to heal him. He touched His ears and tongue. Even today, the Lord can "touch" our life from heaven.

Read Matt 8:5-13. How is the healing in this passage different to others?

Jesus healed a centurion's servant by just speaking the word. He did not go and touch the servant, but just told the centurion to go home and that his servant would be healed. This shows us that Jesus can heal, even when He is not physically present (so, He can heal us from heaven, if He chooses).

In John 5:2-9 what type of healing took place?

Jesus healed a paralysed man who had been like this for 38 years. Although many at the pool were sick, and though He had the power to heal all, He only healed this man - for this was God's will.

B. Jesus the Healer – who is He?

In John 9:1-11 what miraculous healing took place? Why was it done?

Jesus healed a man born blind from birth. What an extraordinary miracle. But Jesus had the power to do such an amazing thing. It was also done to glorify God (John 9:3).

What did this miracle make clear? (John 9:30-33)

Since such a miracle had never taken place before (v. 32), the healed man rightly deduced (v. 33) that Jesus must be from God. This miracle proved that Jesus was no ordinary man, or even a prophet of God.

What do all the healings of Jesus teach us concerning Him?

They teach us that Jesus is God's Son; that He is divine, that He is one with God, and is God (John 1:1).

Jesus also fulfilled prophecy in regards to healing people (cf. Luke 7:18-23; Isa 35:5-6, 53:4, 61:1). What does this reveal?

Jesus is the promised Saviour; the Christ. He is the One whom God sent to save us from our sins.

Summary: **Jesus' power to heal shows us that He is God's Son; and our promised Saviour.**

10. Jesus' Power Over Creation

Aim: To show that Jesus is the Creator and has power over His Creation

Intro: *Have you ever been in a severe storm? How did you feel?*

You probably felt powerless and scared; hopefully you also prayed and sought God's help.

We are absolutely powerless against a storm. We cannot stop a cyclone's devastation. Nor can we defy the laws of nature. But there is One who could, as we shall see in this study.

A. Changing water into wine (John 2:1-11)

What was the first miracle Jesus performed when He began His ministry? (John 2:1-11)

He changed normal water into good-quality wine, right before many witnesses at a wedding feast.

What does this miracle indicate about who Jesus is? (John 2:11)

This miracle manifested His glory; that is, it revealed that Jesus was no ordinary man. To change one element into another element is impossible. This meant Jesus had extraordinary power over elements.

B. Calming the storm (Mark 4:35-41)

What situation did the disciples find themselves in? (Mark 4:37)

They were in a boat being swamped by waves because of a fierce storm on the lake. They were terrified.

What was Jesus doing? What do we learn from this? (Mark 4:38)

Although the disciples were greatly alarmed, Jesus was sleeping in the stern of the boat. He was not alarmed. He trusted His Father completely in all things. But He was also tired and exhausted; showing us that He was also fully man.

After the disciples woke Jesus, what did He do? (Mark 4:39)

He got up and said "Hush, be still". Then instantly, the wind died down and it became perfectly calm.

What was the response of the disciples? (Mark 4:41)

They became very afraid of Jesus saying "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

Who then is this man?

This miracle showed that Jesus has absolute power over Creation. No person can do such things. Truly, Jesus is Lord over His Creation. He just needs to speak the word and it obeys Him.

C. Walking on water (Mark 6:45-51)

What amazing miracle did Jesus perform in this event? (Mark 6:45-51)

He walked on water, and on the waves, even though the sea was being stirred up by the wind.

What effect did this have on His disciples? (Mark 6:49-50)

They were greatly frightened and thought they were seeing a ghost.

When Jesus came into the boat what happened? What do we learn from this? (Mark 6:51)

When Jesus entered the boat the wind stopped and it became calm. Again, we see how Jesus had power over Creation, such that He could defy gravity and cause the waves to support Him and obey Him.

D. Jesus the Creator

What do we learn about Jesus from John 1:1-3?

Jesus was in the beginning with God the Father, and all things were created by Him. There is nothing that He has not created. The Father created as well (Rev 4:11); but He created through the Son.

In Col 1:15-16 what do we learn about Jesus?

Jesus is the "image" of the invisible God; that is, the visible and exact manifestation of God in the flesh (Hebrews 1:3). He is the "firstborn" of all creation; that is, the one who has "first rights" over all Creation because He is the Maker of all. Again, we read that there is nothing that He has not created.

Read Col 1:17 and Heb 1:3. What do we learn in these verses?

Jesus is the one who not only made all things with the Father, but He holds all things together; it's not the laws of science, but Jesus' power that holds the whole universe together, and who sustains it. Wow!

If we understand who Jesus really is, how should we view the accounts of His power over nature?

We should have no problem accepting how He could change water into wine, calm the sea, and walk on water. We don't have to minimise these accounts – as some try and do. They really happened because of who Jesus is. And it should fill us, like the disciples of old, with awe and reverence for Christ. He is God!

Summary: Jesus the Saviour is our great Creator and Sustainer whom we can depend upon.

11. Jesus' Power Over Darkness

Aim: To show how Jesus has power to deliver people from Satan, and to transform their lives.

Intro: *Many people today are incapacitated by Satan without realising it. [Discuss]*

Consider: People are caught up in cults and religions that Satan has orchestrated; others are caught up in human secularism or human philosophy without realising that Satan is behind it; some (not all) are in rehabilitation centres under the influence of evil spirits. But there is one who can set us free – even Jesus.

In this study we will consider Jesus' power over spiritual darkness, evil spirits, and Satan himself.

A. The Demon-Possessed Man

When Jesus and His disciples arrived at the Gerasenes who did He meet? (Mark 5:1-5)

He met a man who was controlled by an unclean spirit (actually many unclean spirits, as we read in v. 9). He was in a terrible state. He lived in a cemetery, gashing himself and screaming out amongst the tombs.

What is meant by the term "unclean spirits"?

Unclean spirits are evil spirits, or demons, from Satan, and they seek to take control of certain areas of a person's life. As we can see in Mark 5, they gave the man extraordinary strength, but they also left him in a terrible state. Satan and his demons only want to destroy us and make our lives miserable.

Was this man able to deliver himself at all? Why not?

This man could not release himself from the power and control of the evil spirits. People had even tried to restrain him, but the demons enabled him to break every chain. He was absolutely helpless and powerless against Satan's forces. Humanly speaking, there was no hope for him.

We may be glad that we are not like this man, but what does the Bible teach us in Eph 2:1-3?

Every person born into this world is under Satan's control. We are often not possessed by evil spirits, but Satan can enslave us to various sinful practices. Even when Satan treats people seemingly well by getting them to enjoy the pleasures of this world, he is still out to destroy us (cf. John 8:44).

What was the response of the unclean spirits to Jesus? (Mark 5:6-7)

They knew exactly who Jesus was; the Son of the most high God, and they trembled before Him. They knew he had power over them – even the power to banish them into pits of darkness and hell itself.

After commanding the demons to come out of the man, what did Jesus permit them to do? (Mk 5:8-13)

He permitted them to enter a herd of swine. Notice how Jesus had absolute control over them. They could only make requests, but whatever Christ commanded, that's what the demons had to do.

What do we learn about Jesus' power over Satan and his demons?

Jesus is the supreme ruler over Satan and all of his evil spirits. He created them good, but they rebelled against God and were thrown out of heaven (Revelation 12:3-4,7-9). He has absolute power over them, and He can do with them whatever He pleases. We have no power over Satan, but Jesus does.

At Jesus' command, the demons went into the pigs. Where will He send them one day? (Rev 20:10)

Jesus didn't send the evil spirits into everlasting punishment at that time. It wasn't God's time to finally punish them for their rebellion and sin. Nevertheless, God will one day cast them into hell forever.

B. The Changed Man

What change did Jesus make to this man? (Mark 5:14-15)

He was completely set free from Satan's power and was wonderfully transformed such that he could sit peacefully in his right mind. Such is the transforming power of Jesus when we come face to face with Him. He doesn't just put a "bandage" on our brokenness, but transforms us completely (cf. 2 Cor 5:17).

What was the reaction of the local people to what Jesus did? (Mark 5:16-17)

They were more concerned about the loss of their pigs than about the liberation of this man. They were also probably frightened of the change Jesus had made and His power. People can often react like this.

The man wanted to follow Jesus but what did Jesus tell him to do? (Mark 5:18-20)

He was to tell what great things the Lord had done for him and how he had received mercy from the Lord. Though people knew him as a mad, uncontrollable, and dangerous man, now they would hear the testimony of a transformed man, who had experienced the grace, mercy and power of the Lord Jesus.

Have you experienced Jesus' power & mercy? Do you have a testimony to share? Do you share it?

Summary: Jesus has all power to set us free from the power and influence of Satan (Col 1:13-14).

12. Jesus' Power over Death

Aim: To show that Jesus has power over death, and has power to give life to whom He chooses.

Intro: *We are all subject to decay and death. What does this result in according to Eccl 8:8 & Heb 2:15?*
We feel powerless and fearful, as there's nothing we can do to avoid it or overcome it (cf. also Heb 9:27).

We've seen how Jesus has power over sickness, creation and Satan. He also has power over death.

A. Jesus raises a girl from death (Mark 5:21-24; 35-43)

In Mark 5:21-24 what did a man named Jairus do? Why? (Mark 5:21-24)

He pleaded with Jesus to come and heal his sick daughter. He believed Jesus could heal his daughter.

When Jairus was told that his daughter had died, what did Jesus do? (Mark 5:35-36)

Jesus encouraged Jairus by telling him not to be afraid; only believe.

When Jesus said to the crowd that the girl was asleep, what did the crowd do? (Mark 5:37-40a)

The crowd laughed at Him, for they knew she was dead; not asleep. But Jesus used the term "sleep" for He knew what He would do – "awaken" her from death (cf. John 11:11-14).

After dismissing the mourners what happened next? (Mark 5:40-43) What's so remarkable?

Jesus took her by the hand and said "Little girl, I say to you, get up!" – and she did! It was as easy as that, for Jesus to raise her from the dead. As a result, those present were completely astounded.

What does this show us about Jesus?

Jesus has power over death; just by a word He can raise the dead.

B. Jesus raises a widow's son (Luke 7:11-17)

Upon seeing a widow who was attending her son's funeral, what did Jesus do? (Luke 7:11-13)

Jesus, full of compassion, said to her "Do not weep". He knew what He was about to do for her.

What amazing thing occurred? (Luke 7:14-15)

Jesus touched the coffin and said "Young man, I say to you, arise!" and the dead man immediately sat up and began to speak. Incredibly, the widow's son was raised from the dead. He had been dead a whole day.

What was the reaction of the people who witnessed this? (Luke 7:16-17)

Great fear came upon them and they began glorifying God. They knew someone great was in their presence.

C. Jesus raises Lazarus (John 11:1-44)

Why did Jesus delay going to heal Lazarus when he was sick? (John 11:1-4)

Jesus knew that it was for His Father's glory and for His glory that Lazarus die and then be raised to life. It was also so that the disciples might believe in Jesus (John 11:15), and His power over death.

When Jesus went, at God's timing, who met Jesus first, and what was she told? (John 11:17-26)

Martha was the first to meet Jesus. She left her house and went to see Jesus. And she was blessed to hear Jesus declare something so profound: He is the resurrection and the life, and if we believe in Him we will live; physical death will have no power over us. In Christ, our physical death is entrance into eternal life.

After this revelation, what did Jesus ask Martha and what was her response? (John 11:26-27)

He asked her if she believed, and Martha responded affirmatively that she did. She believed in Him.

Read John 11:28-32. What do you think of Mary's response?

It was the same as her sister Martha (v.21). They believed Jesus could have healed Lazarus; but that's all.

When Jesus saw the people weeping, He wept. Why? (John 11:33-35)

Jesus began to weep, not for Lazarus, but after seeing the grief of the people and the effect that death has on us. Although Jesus is God, He is touched by our grief and sorrow (cf. Heb 4:15-16).

Read John 11:36-37. Even though Jesus wept, what was the response of some?

Some scolded Jesus for not coming earlier to heal Lazarus of his sickness. They thought wrongly of Him.

When Jesus ordered the stone to be rolled away from the tomb, what happened? (John 11:38-41a)

Mary thought it was not a good idea, as Lazarus had been dead four days already (there would have been a stench). But in response to Jesus words, and by faith, Mary permitted the stone to be removed.

After telling Mary to believe, what did He do? (John 11:40-44)

Jesus prayed to His Father, acknowledging that He always hears Him. Then He said "Lazarus, come forth". At Jesus' words, Lazarus came out of the tomb – alive from the dead – and still embalmed. Wow!

What does this show us in regard to who Jesus is? (cf. John 5:24; John 11:25-26)

He is God's Son. He has power to raise the dead. He has power to resurrect us and give us eternal life.

Summary: If we believe in Jesus, we will live in glory forever, and with a new body (1 Thess 4:16-17).

13. Jesus Power To Feed Us

Aim: To show that Jesus has power to feed our bodies, as well as to feed our souls with the Bread of Life.

Intro: *One of Jesus' great miracles was when He fed 5000 people. What was so extraordinary about it?* He wasn't just multiplying the fish & loaves to feed all the people. He was creating food from nothing. It's impossible to create something from nothing – but Jesus could; for He is truly the Creator God.

A. Feeding the 5000

Why did many people follow Jesus? (John 6:1-2)

They followed Him for physical benefits (and because they hoped He would deliver them from Rome).

But why did Jesus come? What should people have followed Him for? (John 1:29; John 6:68-69)

They should have followed Him because He's the Saviour who can deliver us from the consequences of our sins, and because He has the words of eternal life, and is able to grant us the gift of eternal life.

Many today follow Jesus for wrong reasons. What's some of those reasons?

They follow Him to have a better life for themselves here; cf. the "health, wealth & prosperity" doctrine.

What important Jewish feast was at hand during this event? What was it a picture of? (John 6:3-4)

It was the feast of the Passover. This was when the Jews remembered how in Egypt, the firstborn was delivered from death by having a lamb killed, and by applying its blood to the doorposts of their houses. Jesus is our Passover Lamb. He shed His blood to deliver us from spiritual death when applied to our life.

In John 6:5-7, Jesus asked Philip a question. Why?

Jesus knew what He was going to do, but He asked Philip this question in order to test his faith. The Lord often may test us with circumstances to see if we have faith to trust God and look to Him.

What did one of Jesus' disciples bring to the Lord's attention? (John 6:8-9)

Andrew mentioned there was a lad with five loaves and two fish; but he knew this would go nowhere.

What did the Lord do with the boy's "lunch"? (John 6:10-11)

He gave thanks to His Father and then He miraculously multiplied the fish and loaves so that a great crowd of people (5000 people) were satisfied.

What can we learn from this outstanding miracle?

Jesus is God and Creator. Also, when we give into the Lord's hands our "little things", He can do great things with it. This includes everything; no matter how small. This is because of who He truly is.

What's the main point from the twelve baskets of food leftover? (John 6:12-13)

Everyone had ample food to eat; that's because the Lord is generous & gracious (cf. Psa 23:5; Phil 4:19).

What did the people think of Jesus and what did they intend to do? (John 6:14-15)

The people thought Jesus was the "Prophet"; ie, the one Moses spoke of in Deut 18:15. They intended to make him king as they thought He would be like Moses, providing for them and delivering them from their enemies (in their case, the Romans). How wrong they were about what He came to do!

What did Jesus do when they intended to make Him king? (John 6:15)

Jesus withdrew from them for He knew His mission was to go to the cross and die for our sins.

B. Feeding us the Bread of Life

After the crowd caught up with Jesus again, what did He say to them? (John 6:26-27)

He chastised them for following Him to only have their stomachs filled. Then He urged them to "work" not just for physical food, but for the spiritual food that leads to eternal life, which He alone can give.

What is the "work" we must do to have eternal life? (John 6:28-29)

The all-important "work" is to believe in Jesus as our Saviour and Lord. Good works won't ever save us.

How did the crowd respond to Jesus' words? (John 6:30-31)

Even though the crowd had witnessed an incredible miracle in the feeding of the 5000, they basically wouldn't believe in Him unless He did a miracle – like what Moses did when he gave the people manna.

Jesus responded to the crowd by correcting Him. But what else did He do? (John 6:32-33)

He told them Moses didn't give them manna – God did. But now God had given them something greater – it's Jesus Himself, who is the true bread from heaven that gives life to us spiritually dead people.

What great declaration did Jesus make next, after they asked for "this bread"? (John 6:34-35)

Jesus is the bread of life. If we come to Him by faith, we will never spiritually hunger or thirst, but have eternal life. Like we take in food physically, by faith we must take Jesus into our life for spiritual life.

Summary: **Jesus is the Bread of Life. Spiritual life and satisfaction comes when we receive Him.**

14. The Transfiguration of Jesus

Aim: To show that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, as testified by His transfiguration on a mount.

Intro: *Jesus, the Son of God, came from heaven. But what form did He choose? (Isa 53:1-2; Phil 2:6-7)* He chose to come so humbly, laying aside His heavenly glory, and taking on a very plain and ordinary human appearance. And He came as a servant – to serve us.

In this study, we shall consider a special time when Jesus questioned His disciples about who He truly was, and some of them even beheld His true glory, at what is called the Mount of transfiguration.

A. Jesus in the eyes of the people

What did Jesus' neighbours say about Him? (Mark 6:2-3)

They said He was just a "carpenter's son"; one of the local citizens.

In John 10:19-20 what did many in the crowd say about Jesus?

They said He was an insane man and had a demon.

When Jesus asked His disciples who people thought He was, what did they say? (Mark 8:27-28)

They said that people thought He was John the Baptist come back from the dead, Elijah who had come back down to earth, or one of the prophets.

What did the disciples answer when Jesus asked them who He was.? (Mark 8:29; Matt 16:16)

Peter responded by saying that He is the Christ; that is, the special anointed One that God promised to rescue us and rule us. In Matt 16:16 we also read that Peter declared Jesus to be the Son of the living God. He knew that Jesus was God's eternal Son, and that He had come from the Father.

Why is the question "Who do you say I am?" so important?

We cannot be saved unless we know and believe who Jesus truly is. He is not just a good man, or a moral teacher, or some prophet, as many think. He is the Christ, God's Son, and our only Saviour from sin.

B. Jesus transfigured before His disciples

After Jesus questioned His disciples as to who He is, what happened next? (Mark 9:2-3)

Throughout Jesus' ministry He had hid His true glory from the eyes of man. People just saw Him as a plain Jewish man, but before three disciples He was transfigured such that He shone forth His true glory.

What did the transfiguration make clear to the disciples?

It proved that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus' birth, His baptism, and His miracles all proved this, but here the disciples caught a glimpse of His true glory and majesty.

Who appeared with Jesus? (Mark 9:4)

Moses and Elijah appeared. Moses was the One whom God gave His law to on Mt Sinai, and Elijah was one of God's great prophets who pointed people to the Lord.

What does the appearing of Moses and Elijah prove?

It proves that there is life beyond the grave. We are not annihilated. We are not reincarnated into a different form. We continue to live beyond the grave. However, only those, like Moses and Elijah, who trust in God have life with the Lord in Heaven. The rest are in their graves awaiting the Day of Judgment.

What did Jesus, Moses and Elijah speak about? (Luke 9:30-31)

They were speaking about Jesus' departure; ie, His death and resurrection. In other words, they were speaking of that greatest event that would secure our salvation, which God had promised through His prophets. What more important thing is there to speak of, then how Jesus saved us from our sins?

What did God the Father do at the transfiguration? (Mark 9:5-7)

He enveloped the disciples with a cloud and spoke to them. He spoke the Ten Commandments from Mt Sinai. He spoke at Jesus' baptism. Here He spoke again, for He had something very important to declare.

What did God the Father declare?

He declared who Jesus is; His beloved Son. He also declared that we must listen to Him.

Why is it absolutely critical that we listen to Jesus? (John 6:68-69; John 14:6; Rom 10:17)

Jesus alone has the words of eternal life. If we want to be saved from our sins and be received into heaven when we die, then we must listen to Him; we must listen to the Gospel He proclaimed. In a nutshell, only He can save us. We must repent of our sins and receive Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. Have you?

Summary: Jesus is God's Son. We must listen to Him and believe in Him to be saved and have life.

15. You Must Be Born Again

Aim: To show from Jesus' teaching that a person can only be saved if they are "born again".

Intro: *What do religious people think when it comes to being right with God?*

They think that by their religious service and observing religious practices that this will please God and make them right with God, and ensure their entrance into heaven.

What does God think of this?

God is not impressed. Religion is man's way of being right with God; listening to men rather than God. It ignores what God has declared, and it bypasses what God has done for us through the cross of Christ.

In this study, we'll consider what Jesus said about being right with God (cf. Mark 9:7; John 6:68).

A. We must be born again

A man came to Jesus at night? Who was he? (John 3:1-2)

Nicodemus was a Pharisee; a member of the Jewish ruling council (Sanhedrin). They ruled Israel from a spiritual perspective, setting the rules in worshipping God, and living a religious life pleasing to God.

What made Nicodemus different from the other Pharisees? (John 3:2)

The other Pharisees hated Jesus and saw Him as a threat to their way of life (John 11:47-48). They did not believe He was from God, or the Christ. However, Nicodemus knew that He had to be from God because of the miraculous signs He performed.

What most important word did Jesus give to this religious man in John 3:3?

He told him that he must be born again if he was to see God's kingdom; that is, to be part of God's family and to have eternal life. Even though he was a religious man, and probably thought like any other Jew, that he was already in God's family, Jesus knew that he wasn't unless he was born again.

What did Jesus mean by the statement "You must be born again"?

We must be born of God's Spirit (see John 3:5). We are spiritually dead (Eph 2:1) because of our sin, and cannot see or enter God's kingdom unless we are made alive by God's Spirit. The term "born again" can be translated "born from above", indicating that God is the only One who can give us this new life.

How did Nicodemus respond to Jesus' statement? (John 3:4)

Nicodemus couldn't make sense of it. He thought it was about being born a second time as a baby.

What did Jesus answer Nicodemus and what did He mean? (John 3:5)

Jesus emphasised that being born again meant being "born of water and the Spirit". The water Jesus spoke of is not baptism - baptism cannot make us children of God. It can either mean that we must be born of flesh (with water referring to our birth when the water breaks). It could also refer to the "water of life" (John 7:37-39); ie, Jesus was putting a double emphasis on the need to be born of God's Spirit.

What else did Jesus say to Nicodemus in John 3:6-7?

There are only two categories of people; those who are born once (born of flesh), and those who are born twice (born of flesh, but more importantly, born of the Spirit). Only the latter shall see and enter God's kingdom. Jesus also told Nicodemus that he shouldn't be surprised at this. This is because the Old Testament prophets spoke of this truth (Ezek 36:26-27).

Read John 3:8. What does this mean?

The Spirit's work is mysterious. We don't know who will be born again, but it's evident when a person is.

B. How one can be born again

Nicodemus still did not understand the re-birth; so what did Jesus explain to Him? (John 3:9-15)

Jesus explained to him something more essential; how one can be born from above. It is by faith in Jesus Christ. Anyone who believes in Jesus is instantly born again (John 1:12-13; John 7:37-39; Acts 2:38).

What illustration did Jesus use to explain what it means to believe in Him? Why? (Numb 21:5-9)

He used the Old Testament story of the bronze serpent. When the people were dying from snake bites as a punishment for their sins, God ordered Moses to make a bronze serpent. It was lifted up high, so that all who looked to it would be spared. In the same way, Jesus was lifted up (on a cross) so that if we, who are dying in our sins, would look to Him, we would be saved from our sins and have spiritual life.

God chose for Jesus to be "lifted up" on a cross. What really happened when He was "lifted up"?

He was lifted up on a cross in order to bear the punishment of our sins (Isa 53:5-6). Because of this, when we look to Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, we are forgiven of our sins and then receive God's Spirit.

Summary: **Have you been born again? Unless we are, we shall not see or enter God's kingdom.**

16. Christ's Seeking and Shepherding Heart

Aim: To show that Christ seeks after us to save us and to shepherd us.

Intro: *Why did God send His eternal Son Jesus into our world according to John 3:16-17?*

Although God is holy and we are sinners, He so loves us and sent His Son to save us – not condemn us.

A. Parables on the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin and the Lost Son

In the parable on the lost sheep, how much value did the lost sheep have? (Luke 15:1-7)

Great value! The shepherd left the other 99 and went in search of the lost one, so that it might not perish.

What does this parable teach us in regards to Christ and us?

We are of great value to God (cf. Luke 12:6-7). Although we are sheep that have all gone astray (cf. Isa 53:6), Christ came to seek us and to save us and to bring us back home to God.

In the next parable in Luke 15:8-10, what do we learn in regards to Christ and us?

We are like the lost coin. We are lost, in the sense of being separated from God, just as the coin was separated from the woman. But Christ seeks to find us and bring us back to God.

The shepherd rejoiced. The woman rejoiced. What do we learn about God from these parables?

God rejoices greatly when one lost person is found; even the angels rejoice. It's a really big thing in heaven when a person, who was separated from God, is found by Christ, and puts their faith in Christ.

Read Luke 15:11-13 –parable of the lost son. What did the young son do? Who does he represent?

He turned away from his loving father, and chose to live a wayward life in the world. He represents us. We have done the same (Rom 3:23). We have turned away from our loving Father to enjoy worldly pleasures.

What caused the wayward son to be awakened? (Luke 15:14-17) What does God often do to us?

When the son ran out of money from loose living, a severe famine struck the land, and he found himself in great need, thinking of home. God also brings us to the end of ourselves, so that we may look to Christ.

What did you notice happened to the wayward son's heart after the famine? (Luke 15:18-19)

He was humble, and acknowledged his sin. We must come to this place too if we are to be saved.

Upon returning home, what unexpected response did the son receive? (Luke 11:20-24)

While he was still some distance away, the father ran to him and embraced him. He did not receive a "telling off", for the father loved him. He rejoiced, because his lost son was found and back home.

What was Jesus seeking to teach us from this parable?

We are all like the prodigal son. But if we would humble ourselves, acknowledge our sins, and turn to God through Jesus, then God will welcome us and embrace us with much rejoicing. He loves us.

How much does God really love us? (John 3:16; Rom 5:6-8)

God loved us so much that He gave us His most precious gift, the gift of His Son Jesus Christ, so that through His death and resurrection, we might not perish, but have eternal life. However, as the Bible says, we must believe in Jesus and accept this gift if we are to have eternal life.

B. Jesus the Door and the Shepherd

Read John 10:1-10. What important things do we learn about Jesus?

Just as a middle-eastern shepherd would shepherd his sheep and bring them through the door into the sheep pen, so Jesus is our shepherd, as well as the door through whom we enter into God's kingdom.

Consider John 10:9 and John 14:6. What important truths do we learn here?

Jesus is the only door and the only way to God. There are not many ways to God – just one; even Jesus.

In John 10:8 who are the "thieves and robbers" that Jesus is referring to?

They are false prophets and false teachers who seek to lead people to God some other way.

Read John 10:10. What contrast is made between Jesus and the "thieves and robbers"?

The "thieves and robbers" bring spiritual harm and spiritual death to those who follow them. They steal and kill (for they are workers of Satan), but Jesus came to give us life; abundant and spiritual life.

Besides being the door, who else is Jesus? (John 10:11-18)

He is the good shepherd who knows us and cares for us. But above all, He laid down His life to save us from Satan and sin. He willingly laid down His life, bearing our sins, so that we could be saved.

Who are God's sheep? What blessings do they have? (John 10:27-30)

God's sheep hear Christ's voice and they know Him and follow Him. They will never perish. They will never be separated from Christ or God. Their salvation is secure through Christ (cf. Rom 8:31-39).

Summary: God so loved us that He sent His Son to seek and save us and to bring us back home.

17. The Light of Christ and our Lost State

Aim: To show Jesus is the Light of the World, and without Him we are in darkness and spiritually lost.

Intro: *It's not pleasant to be lost. Have you ever experienced this? How did you feel? [Discuss] The Bible says that, without Christ, we are spiritually lost. What does this mean?*

We are separated from God, having no idea about God and life and what's beyond the grave, and our need for salvation from sin. Sadly, spiritually lost people are not normally aware of their lost state.

In this study we will consider our lost state and the light of Christ.

A. Our Lost State

In Eph 2:1-3 what is our state before we come to Christ?

We are spiritually dead, under the influence and rule of Satan, and facing God's wrath because of our sin.

In Eph 2:11-12 we read of the state of Gentiles (non-Jews). How is our state described?

Without Christ, we are strangers to God's promises, without hope and without God – spiritually lost.

But even Jews were lost. What did Jesus say to the Jewish religious leaders in Matt 23:13-28?

The religious leaders followed their own rules and performed made-up religious rituals, rather than following God's ways. They assumed they were right with God, and even boasted in their right state before others. But they were lost, in spiritual darkness, and nothing but blind guides leading others astray.

In Luke 18:9-14 Jesus gave a parable. Who was this parable for and what was the point of it?

It was directed to the Jewish religious leaders who trusted in their own righteousness. The Pharisee in the parable boasted about how good he was. But the humble tax-collector admitted he was a sinner in need of God's mercy. The tax collector was right with God. But the Pharisee was not – he was still lost.

In His teaching, Jesus revealed that there is a way to be right with God; to no longer be in darkness and to no longer be spiritually lost. What is that way? (John 14:6; Acts 16:30-31)

Like the tax collector, we must humble ourselves and acknowledge our sins, and we must turn to Jesus and trust in Him as our Saviour and Lord. He is the only way. We'll remain lost if we come any other way.

What happens when we come to Christ by faith? (Rom 8:1; John 5:24; Col 1:13; 1 Pet 2:9)

We move from being under God's wrath to being free from condemnation, from being spiritually dead to being spiritually alive, and from being in spiritual darkness to being in Christ's kingdom of light.

B. The Light of Christ

In contrast to us being spiritually lost and in darkness, who is Jesus? (John 1:1-9)

Besides being our God and our Creator, He is the light of men. He came to enlighten us to the truth.

Jesus being the Light was prophesied well before He came. What did Isa 9:1-2 declare?

Jesus would come to Galilee, to a people in darkness, who were spiritually blind and lost, but Jesus' light would open their eyes to the truth and He would bring them to God – if they would put their faith in Him.

Read Isa 42:5-7. What does this prophecy declare?

Jesus would not just be a light to the Jewish nation, but to all the nations (cf. also Isa 49:6).

In John 8:12 Jesus made a very important declaration. What was it? What does it mean?

Jesus is the Light of the world; for all people and for all time. No one can know God except through Him (cf. John 1:18). Only He can enlighten our mind in regards to God, ourselves, life and salvation.

What was the promise Jesus made in John 8:12?

Those who follow Jesus shall not be in darkness. They will no longer be alienated from God. Instead, they will have Jesus' Light of Life to enable them to be spiritually alive and in relationship with God.

In John 1:5 and John 3:19-21 what do we read concerning people in response to Christ's light?

Many humans don't comprehend that Christ is the light (John 1:5). Also, they hate the light (John 3:19-21), because Christ's light reveals their sinful deeds. As a result, they turn away from the Light (Jesus).

In John 12:35-36 what does Jesus urge people to do?

He urges us to walk in the Light and to believe in the Light (in Him). Unless we do, we will remain in darkness and be spiritually lost, and will not see heaven. We also cannot be God's "sons of Light".

When we receive Jesus as the Light of the World, what do we become? (Matt 5:14; Phil 2:14-16)

We become "lights of the world" too. We are to shine Christ's light so that others may come to Him. Like the way the moon reflects the sun's light, we are to reflect Christ's light to others; we are "sons of light".

Summary: Jesus is the Light of the world; without Him, we are lost and in spiritual darkness.

18. The Sermon on the Mount (part one)

Aim: To highlight the main teaching Jesus gave for those who are in God's kingdom through faith in Him.

Intro: *Once we have put our faith in Jesus for salvation, not only have we been forgiven and have a home in heaven, but we are part of God's kingdom here on earth. What does this mean for you? [discuss]* It means that we have a responsibility to participate in God's kingdom. We are no longer in Satan's kingdom, but have been freed to live fully for God; doing His will and pleasing Him. Our lives should be radically different to how we once lived. In His Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7), Jesus spelt this out.

A. Christ-like Beatitudes

How does Jesus describe the state of the person who follows His teaching? (Matt 5:3)

The Greek word *makarios* is used. It means "blessed"; ie, blessed with God's joy and peace and favour.

In Matt 5:3-9 what are the seven characteristics that should be seen in a Christian?

Poor in spirit – humble before God (1 Pet 5:5); can't save ourselves and can't live without His help

Mourn – sorrowful over sin, leading to genuine repentance (2 Cor 7:10)

Gentle or meek – kind and considerate toward others, just as God has been to us (Tit 3:4-5)

Hunger and thirst for righteousness – seeking to please God through Christ (Rom 6:12-14)

Merciful – compassionate toward others, just as God has been merciful to us (1 Pet 1:3, 1 Pet 2:10)

Pure in heart – a heart that has pure motives through the work of God's Holy Spirit (1 Pet 1:14-16)

Peacemakers – seeking peace with all people rather than causing trouble (Heb 12:14)

What does Jesus say after each "beatitude"? (Matt 5:3-9)

He gives a wonderful promise of blessing; each one being appropriate to the beatitude given.

What attitude does Jesus say we should have when we are persecuted? (Matt 5:10-12)

We should rejoice because of our reward in heaven is great, and we are in the company of the prophets.

B. Christ-like Behaviour

In Matt 5:13 how are Christians described? What does this mean?

We are to be the "salt of the earth". Salt is used to preserve food from going off. So we are to be used by the Lord to stop this world from going completely rotten through sin. To accomplish this, we must remain "salty", which means being Christ-like in an ungodly world; ie, living out Christ's beatitudes.

In Matt 5:14-16 Christians are described as the "light of the world". What are we to do?

We are not to hide the light of Jesus in us, but to let it shine by being Christ-like, so that God is praised.

What does Jesus compare anger to? (Matt 5:21-22)

He equates anger to murder. If we are angry with somebody it is as serious as murdering them. So, stop it!

What are we to do if we are not right with a fellow brother or sister? (Matt 5:23-26)

We are to put things right. To God, this is more important than religious service.

The act of adultery is a terrible sin, but what else does Jesus describe as adultery? (Matt 5:27-28)

Lusting after a woman in your heart is equal to the sin of adultery. Christians are therefore not to lust.

What attitude are we to have when it comes to sin in our life? (Matt 5:29-30)

We are to be serious and ruthless in removing sin from our life – if we do not repent of our habitual sins and take the necessary action to root it out, we need to question whether we are a true follower of Jesus.

How should a Christian view marriage? (Matt 5:31-32)

We are to be committed to marriage. Divorce is not an option, unless our spouse has committed adultery.

How should the word of a Christian be taken? (Matt 5:33-37)

His word should be truthful, without need of oath or promise. Let your "yes" be "yes".

In Matt 5:38-42 what does Jesus teach us to do?

We are not to pay back evil for evil, or take revenge, when people hurt us. Instead, we are to do them good.

How is a Christian to act towards his enemies or to those who persecute him? (Matt 5:43-44)

He is to love his enemies and pray for those who persecute him – indeed, he ought to pray for their salvation and God's blessing on their lives, rather than for God to curse them and destroy them.

Who are we like if we should live like this? (Matt 5:45-48)

We are like Christ; but we are also like our Father, who is perfect and good to the righteous and wicked.

It is impossible to live out Jesus words by ourselves. What do we learn from John 15:1-5?

We must abide (or remain) in Jesus, having His Spirit help us, for without Him we can't do anything.

Summary: This glorious Christian life Jesus teaches us can only be lived out when we abide in Him.

19. The Sermon on the Mount (part two)

Aim: To highlight the main teaching Jesus gave for those who are in God's kingdom through faith in Him.

Intro: *How do you know if you are a genuine Christian? (cf. Rom 8:9; 2 Cor 13:5; 2 Pet 1:8-10)*

We know we are a genuine Christian if we bear the evidence of Christ living in us by His Spirit; and this will be evident by the way we live. In this study Jesus will emphasise the importance of "bearing fruit".

A. Giving and Prayer

What common teaching did Jesus give for both giving and prayer? (Matt 6:1-6)

We are not to give and pray for show. We're to do things in a way that pleases God; not impress people.

What things did Jesus highlight about prayer in Matt 6:7-8 and Matt 7:7-11?

We are not to pray by rote (meaningless repetition), for God knows our needs before we ask Him. We pray to a good Father who loves to hear us and answer our requests (according to His will – 1 John 5:14).

What key elements do we see in the prayer that Jesus gave us as an example? (Matt 6:9-13)

1) We are to address God as our Father; 2) We are to revere God in prayer; 3) We are to pray centring on God's kingdom and will to be done; 4) We are to pray for our daily needs; 5) We are to pray for forgiveness; 6) We are to ask God to keep us from temptation and from evil. *Are our prayers like this?*

What did Jesus stress in Matt 6:14-15?

In prayer, we will only be forgiven by our heavenly Father after we have forgiven others who have wronged us. God will not forgive us if we hold anything against another (cf. also Matt 18:21-35).

B. Treasures and Worry

What two types of treasure does Jesus mention, and what does He teach us? (Matt 6:19-21)

There is earthly treasure (money, possessions) that will not last, and there is heavenly treasure (rewards from serving God and saving souls) that will endure forever. *What treasure are our hearts centred on?*

Jesus talks about the eye in Matt 6:22-24. What is He talking about?

We can live life two ways. We can choose to live life with our earthly eyes desiring earthly goods. This leads to darkness in our soul. Or we can live life by the "eye of faith" (2 Cor 5:7), looking to God and serving Him. Such a person has light in their soul. In reality, we can only live one or the other (Gal 6:6-7).

Why shouldn't we worry about temporal needs? (Matt 6:25-34; 1 Pet 5:6-7)

We shouldn't worry for our heavenly Father is aware of all our needs and will always supply those needs (Psalm 37:25). As He cares for all His creatures (Psalm 145:14-16), He will care for us.

God will meet all our needs, but what are we required to do? (Matt 6:33)

We are to put God and His kingdom first in our lives. This means serving Him first; not self.

C. The Right Way and the Right Foundation

What are we commanded not to do? (Matt 7:1-5; Jam 4:11-12)

We are not to judge one another. We are to be discerning, but not condemning. Judgment is the Lord's.

What two gates are mentioned in Matt 7:13-14? What do they stand for and where do they lead?

There is a narrow gate that leads to eternal life, and a wide gate that leads to hell. The narrow gate stands for Jesus (John 10:9) and the narrow way is "Jesus way". It's a hard way, because its challenging to follow Jesus in this fallen world. The wide gate and broad way stand for the ways of this world. It's easier, but it leads to hell. Jesus said that few are on the narrow way; most are on the broad way.

How are we to distinguish the true Christian from the false one? (Matt 7:15-20)

The true Christian, who has entered the narrow gate, bears good fruit (the fruit of the Spirit - Gal 5:22-23). The false Christian bears bad fruit (the fruit of the sinful nature - Gal 5:19-21).

What did Jesus warn us about in Matt 7:21-23?

People will be turned away from heaven on Judgment Day, although they acknowledged Jesus as Lord, and did mighty things in His name. This is because they loved and practiced sin. They never knew Jesus; that is, they had never entered the narrow gate by personally repenting of their sins and trusting in Him.

How did Jesus conclude the Sermon on the Mount? (Matt 7:24-27)

He gave a parable on two foundations, challenging us to consider what foundation we're building our life on. The true Christian endures for he builds his life on the rock (on Jesus) by **hearing and acting** on His words. Everyone else will come to ruin for they build their life on sand (human philosophies, etc).

Summary: There are two ways; Jesus' way that leads to life; the world's way that leads to death.

20. The Gospel of Christ and the Heart of Man

Aim: To consider people's responses to the Gospel of Christ in the light of the condition of their heart.

Intro: *Many hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but their responses vary. Discuss (cf. 2 Cor 2:15-16)*

The response to the Gospel as we share it with people varies so much – from people being drawn to Christ and to others strongly resisting it. In this study we shall consider the response of the rich young ruler to the Gospel, and Jesus' teaching on this matter.

A. The rich young man

A rich young ruler came to Jesus with an important question. What was it? (Mark 10:17)

He asked Jesus what he needed to **do** to inherit eternal life. This is because he thought that eternal life could be obtained by human effort. *How common is this thinking?*

What is the first thing Jesus said to this man? (Mark 10:18)

Jesus corrected him on his notion of "good". This young man called Jesus "good", not because he recognised Jesus to be good because He was God, but he thought that Jesus was a good man like himself. But Jesus wanted him to realise that no ordinary man is good. Indeed, no one is good (Rom 3:10-12), except God alone. NB: Jesus' answer wasn't implying that He Himself is not good (for He is God).

After correcting him, what did Jesus do next? Why? (Mark 10:19; Rom 3:20)

Jesus applied the law of God to this young man's heart. Jesus deliberately did this, to help him realise that he was not good, as he thought. Like for all, he had sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Rom 3:23).

Why is it necessary to preach God's law first, as Jesus did, before we preach the Gospel? (Gal 3:24)

God's law convicts us of sin. It shows to us that we are not good, and that we need to be saved from our sins. Only when we realise this, can we then appreciate the Gospel and turn to Jesus as our Saviour. Consider: the law ploughs up the hardened human heart to make ready the seed of the Gospel.

What did the young man say to Jesus in regard to the law? (Mark 10:20)

This man said that he had kept the commandments. Most people think this too. But in actual fact, we have all failed to keep God's law. For example, if you hate someone it is equal to murder (Matt 5:21-22). If you lust after someone you commit adultery (Matt 5:27-28). Even if we think we obey the laws of God, we still do not obey them perfectly. Often we break them by having wrong thoughts, desires and motives.

What sin did Jesus bring to light with this man? (Mark 10:21; Mark 12:28-31)

Jesus pointed out that he had broken the two great commandments. He did not love his neighbour as himself, as he was not prepared to help the poor. Also, he loved his wealth more than he loved God, breaking the first commandment which teaches us that we must not put anything and anyone in the place of God.

What does the Bible say at the beginning of Mark 10:21a? What does this mean for you?

It says that "Jesus felt a love for him", even though this young man was proud and did not see himself as a sinner. God loves each of us too, even though we are sinners. He desires that we humble ourselves, and that we see ourselves as sinners in need of His salvation, so that we may not perish but have eternal life.

What was the man's response to Jesus' words? (Mark 10:22)

The young man went away sad. He was not willing to turn from his money and follow Jesus for salvation. Note: Jesus did not chase after him and "water down" the requirements for salvation (cf. Mark 8:34).

B. The Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:3-20)

In Mark 4:3-9, in the parable of the Sower, Jesus gave us important teaching when it comes to the Gospel and our hearts. What does the seed stand for in the parable of the sower? (Mark 4:14)

The seed stands for the Word, or more specifically, the Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ.

What are the four types of hearts that the Gospel seeks to enter? Who do they stand for? (Mk 4:15-20)

1. The hard heart: These people reject the Gospel, and then Satan takes the Gospel away from them.
2. The rocky ground heart: They want everything Jesus has to offer, but have no commitment to Him.
3. The thorny ground heart: They want Jesus plus the things of this world (including riches).
4. The good heart: They gladly receive the Gospel, and give their heart completely to Jesus.

Only the fourth category is a true Christian. What characterises them? (Mark 4:17, 19, 21)

They do not fall away (permanently) from trials/persecution, they do not have one foot in the world and one foot in Christ's kingdom, and they bear the fruit of salvation after being born again of Christ's Spirit (cf. Gal 5:22-23). This is because they have truly given their life to Jesus and love Him more than anything else.

Summary: **What type of heart do you have? Do you bear the fruit of salvation? Are you saved?**

21. The Triumphal Entry and the Passover

Aim: To show that Jesus came into the world as the Lamb of God to save us from our sins.

Intro: *What is the view of most people as to why Jesus came to this earth? [Discuss]*

Some believe He came to give us moral teaching and to show us how to live. Others believe He came to show us God's love. In this study we shall consider the real reason as to why Jesus came to this earth.

A. Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem

Why did Jesus ask two disciples to bring Him a donkey and its colt from Bethphage? (Matt 21:1-5)
Jesus was about to fulfil an Old Testament prophecy (Zech 9:9) concerning Himself. As the King, He would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey's colt.

What does this prophecy and Jesus' entry indicate about His purpose in coming to Jerusalem?
Though He be the King of kings, He didn't ride into Jerusalem in a chariot or on a large white steed. He rode in on a donkey's colt, humbly and gently, for He came as the Saviour King; not as a military king.

What was the reaction of the crowd as Jesus rode into Jerusalem? Why? (Matt 21:6-11)
The crowds praised Jesus and honoured Him by spreading their coats and palm branches before Him. They did this because they thought Jesus would be their new king to deliver them from the Romans.

But why did Jesus enter Jerusalem? (Mark 10:45; John 1:29)
He did not enter to become their political & military king, but to die on a cross and be our Saviour. He came to serve us and to lay down His life on the cross in order to bear our sins and grant us salvation.

Instead of going to the palace and becoming the next king, what did Jesus do? (Matt 21:12-13)
He went to the temple and cleansed it, consumed with zeal to make His Father's house a house of prayer. Jesus was always about honouring His Father and doing His will; not doing what others wanted Him to do.

B. The Jewish Leaders and Judas

What was the reaction of the Jewish leaders to all that Jesus was doing? (Mark 14:1-2)
They were greatly alarmed and sought to put Jesus to death. They were jealous of Him, and felt that He would draw the people away from them (cf. John 11:47-48).

During this time, what happened in the home of Simon the leper? (Mark 14:3-9)
Jesus was anointed with very costly perfume by a woman. The disciples were indignant at the waste, as the perfume could have been sold to help the poor. But Jesus rebuked them for their attitude.
Note: A similar incident occurred before the triumphal entry in Martha, Mary and Lazarus' home, when Mary anointed Jesus' feet. Again, the disciples were indignant, and especially Judas (cf. John 12:5-8).

Although the woman may not have known this, what was she actually doing? (Mark 14:8)
She had anointed Jesus' body for His burial. Jesus knew that His death was at hand.

After this incident, what did Judas do? Why? (Mark 14:10-11; Matt 26:14-16)
Judas went to the religious leaders to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, thus fulfilling Zech 11:12-13. When it seemed he wasn't going to receive any personal benefits from following Jesus, and after being reprimanded by Jesus for his comments against Mary anointing Him (John 12:7-8), he was willing to sell Jesus to His enemies. Note: Thirty pieces of silver was the price of a common slave.

C. Jesus and the Passover

What did Jesus celebrate with His disciples before His death? What was this about? (Mk 14:12-16)
Jesus and His disciples celebrated the Passover Feast. This Feast recalled how God spared Israel from the death of the firstborn while in Egypt, by the sprinkling of the blood of a lamb over the door of their house.

What parallel exists between this feast and what Jesus was about to do? (1 Cor 5:7; John 1:29)
Jesus is our Passover lamb, who shed His precious blood to spare us from God's wrath and eternal death, due to our sins. Note: When we are covered by His blood, God judgment for our sins "passes over" us.

While celebrating the Passover, what incident occurred? (Mark 14:17-21)
Jesus made it clear that one of His disciples would betray Him. The disciples were astonished and had no idea who it was. But all along, Jesus knew who it was (cf. John 6:70-71), for He knows all things.

What lessons do we learn from Judas? (Matt 7:21-23)
It doesn't matter how close we are to Jesus' followers, and even if we do Christian things, and look like a follower of Jesus. If we don't repent, personally trust in Jesus as our Saviour, and follow Him as our Lord, we will perish. In the end, Judas loved money more than Jesus. He went to Hades to await judgment.

Summary: Only Jesus, as God's Lamb, is able to save us from our sins. This is why He came.

22. The Lord's Supper and Christ's Arrest

Aim: To show that Jesus gave us the Lord's Supper and He gave Himself into the hands of His captors.

Intro: *Why did Jesus enter Jerusalem? What did the crowds presume? Why do you believe He entered?* The crowds, and even Jesus' disciples, presumed that Jesus entered Jerusalem to be the king of the Jews and to use His awesome power to liberate the Jews from Roman control. But He came to save us from sin and Satan and the sentence of eternal death; not to save the Jews from the Romans.

A. Jesus and the Lord's Supper

During Passover, why did Jesus take some bread and say "Take it; this is My body"? (Mk 14:22) Jesus did this to establish the practice of the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion) amongst believers. The bread He gave them to eat symbolised how He gave His body up to save us (which He was just about to do). Just as the Passover lamb gave up its body to save the firstborn from death, Jesus gave up His body to save us from judgment and eternal death.

When Jesus took the cup, what did He mean by the words He said? (Mark 14:23-24)

Jesus took the cup, filled with red wine, the second emblem in the Lord's Supper, to symbolise how His blood was poured out (which He was just about to do) for the forgiveness of our sins. As Jews knew, blood had to be shed for the forgiveness of sins (Heb 9:22). Jesus was our Passover Lamb (1 Cor 5:7), who shed His blood so that we could be forgiven (Rev 1:5), and be saved from sin's consequences.

In Luke 22:20, Jesus said "this cup ... is the new covenant in My blood." What does this mean? Jesus' blood was shed in order for God to establish a new covenant, or agreement, between Himself and us. This new covenant involved us being justly forgiven for all our sins, of being made God's child, rather than being His enemy through sin, and of God becoming our Father, rather than our judge (Heb 8:10-12).

What did the early church practice regularly? (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 11:23-25)

They practiced taking the bread and cup when they met, to remember what Jesus had done for them. Today, we do the same. Each Sunday, we celebrate what we call the Lord's Supper, in order to remember Jesus in the way He instructed us to. We remember how He gave up His body and shed His blood for us.

When we have the Lord's Supper what should we be conscious of? (Mark 14:25; 1 Cor 11:26)

We are proclaiming His sacrificial death for us sinners, until He returns. Then, we will eat and drink together with our Lord in the new kingdom, commencing at the Lamb's marriage supper (Rev 19:7-9).

B. Jesus in the Garden and His Arrest

After the Lord's Supper, where did Jesus go and what happened to Him? (Mark 14:26, 32-36)

Jesus went with His disciples to a garden called Gethsemane, which is on the Mt of Olives. While here, He became greatly distressed and troubled, so much so, that he sweated drops of blood (Luke 22:44). He also earnestly prayed that His Father might spare Him from going to the cross, but only if it was His will.

Why do you think Jesus suffered such agony in the garden?

Jesus knew that when He went to the cross, He would bear our sins, and incur God's full wrath, which meant being separated from Him. It was this that caused Him to ask the Father to save Him from the Cross.

What happened while Jesus was earnestly praying that God might deliver Him? (Mark 14:37-42)

The disciples fell asleep, not supporting Jesus during His time of need. He challenged them to watch and pray, for in temptation, the spirit is willing but our flesh is weak. Do we watch and pray when tempted?

After confirming it was His Father's will for Him to die, what did Jesus do? (Mark 14:41-42)

Jesus arose to meet those arresting Him. From this point on until He died on the cross, Jesus was so determined to do His Father's will. He knew this was the only way we could be saved.

Judas, leading an armed crowd, betrayed Jesus with a kiss (Mark 14:43-46). *But what do we learn in Matt 26:48-54 and John 18:4-9?*

Everything that happened fulfilled Scripture. Also, Jesus gave Himself into their hands (John 10:18). He could so easily have rescued Himself by His almighty power or by calling on angels.

What remarkable act did Jesus do when Peter struck the slave of the high priest? (Luke 22:50-51)

He healed the man's ear, even though he had come to arrest Jesus. See how He loved His enemies.

After His arrest and then challenging the crowd, what did the disciples do? (Mark 14:47-50)

They all fled; no one remained to support Him. They were unfaithful, but He was faithful to the end.

Summary: Jesus gave Himself up for our salvation – The Lord's Supper reminds us of this.

23. The Trial of Jesus

Aim: To show that Jesus was tried and condemned even though no fault was found in Him.

Intro: *What do we learn from 1 Peter 2:21-23?*

Jesus was perfect. He never sinned. Even when He was falsely condemned, derided and treated with such cruelty at His trial and on the cross, He still remained sinless. One look at Jesus before His accusers should silence us and move our hearts deeply with how perfect He truly is; He alone is the righteous One.

A. Jesus was tried by the Jewish leaders

After Jesus was arrested they lead Him to the high priest, where the chief priests, elders, and scribes had gathered. What were these religious leaders seeking to do? (Mark 14:53-55)

The religious leaders were seeking to find evidence against Jesus so that they might put Him to death.

Did they find any evidence against Him? Why not? (Mark 14:56-60)

No evidence was found against Him, for Jesus hadn't done anything wrong. Indeed, they were trying to find fault in the only perfect One who has ever lived. Never had He sinned, whether in word, thought or deed. He was sinless (2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:22; 1 John 3:5)

At the beginning of Mark 14:61 what does the Scripture say about Jesus? Why?

He was silent before His accusers. By this He fulfilled Scripture (Isa 53:7). Jesus was not seeking to defend Himself, but to allow Himself to be offered up as a perfect sacrifice for sin; thus, He was silent.

What did the high priest eventually ask Him, and what was Jesus answer? (Mark 14:61-62)

The high priest directly asked Jesus if He was the Christ, the Son of God. At this, Jesus did not remain silent but made it absolutely clear that He was. He also went further, to declare that He would be at God's right hand of power, and one day return (in power and great glory as other Scriptures declare).

What was the response of the religious leaders to Jesus' words? (Mark 14:63-65; Isaiah 50:6)

They were filled with anger and rage for they believed He was blaspheming. They condemned Him to death, and they spat at Him, beat Him, and mocked Him, fulfilling Scripture; and Jesus did not retaliate.

While Jesus was being condemned to death, what do we learn of Peter? (Mark 14:54, 66-72)

While in the courtyard, Peter was identified as one of Jesus' disciples. This he denied three times, until a rooster crowed, as Jesus prophesied (Mark 14:29-30). Upon realising what He had done, he went away and wept bitterly. But because of God's grace, it was not the end. Peter would become a great apostle.

B. Jesus was tried by Pilate

Why did the Jewish leaders bring Jesus to Pilate the Roman governor? (Mark 15:1; John 18:31)

They didn't have the right to kill Jesus, and so they sought for Pilate to give the authority to put Him to death. Before Pilate, they charged Him with sedition and for being a rival king (Luke 23:2).

What did Jesus answer Pilate when asked if He was the King of the Jews? (Mark 15:2)

He confirmed He was, for Jesus was a descendant of King David and was indeed the King of the Jews.

Many accusations were brought against Jesus. What was Pilate amazed with? (Mark 15:3-5)

Pilate was amazed at how Jesus was silent before His accusers, again fulfilling Scripture (Isaiah 53:7).

Pilate tried to release Jesus through an annual custom. Why? Who was released? (Mark 15:6-11)

Pilate wanted to release Jesus because he knew the religious leaders were envious of Him. But when Pilate nominated Jesus, or a wicked man named Barabbas, to be released, the crowd chose Barabbas.

What did the crowd want to do with Jesus? (Mark 15:12-14)

Stirred up by the religious leaders, they cried out for Jesus, the sinless One, to be crucified.

What did Pilate end up doing? (Mark 15:15)

Wishing to please the crowd, he released Barabbas and had Jesus scourged and delivered to be crucified. What a terrible choice, all because he wanted to please the crowd. Do we seek to please people or God?

What did scourging involve? Why did Jesus allow Himself to be scourged? (Isaiah 53:5)

With scourging, a whip was used that consisted of lashes of leather with pieces of sharp metal and bone. With the prisoner tied down and arms extended, repeated whippings laid open the skin, cutting flesh, muscle, and nerves, often putting the victim into severe shock. Some died from scourging. Jesus was scourged as part of bearing the punishment of our sins. His scourging heals us spiritually of our sins.

Summary: **Jesus was falsely accused and condemned, scourged and beaten. Through offering Himself for us, as a perfect sacrifice, He would make atonement for our sins.**

24. The Death and Burial of Christ Jesus

Aim: To show that Jesus' death & burial was to atone for our sins so that we could be forgiven & saved.

Intro: *What is the greatest event in all human history? Why is Jesus praised in glory? (Rev 5:9-12)*
Jesus Christ, God's Son, dying on the cross for our sins is the greatest event in all human history. Even heaven praises Him over it. Thus, there's no other message greater than that of the Cross (1 Cor 2:2).

A. Jesus' crucifixion

After Jesus was handed over by Pilate to be crucified, what happened to Him? (Mark 15:16-20)

The whole Roman battalion gathered around Jesus and they mocked Him by dressing Him in a purple robe (the colour for kings) and putting a crown of thorns upon His head. Though He is the King of Kings, they mocked Him with a crown of thorns. They also beat the crown into His skull and spat at Him.

What did Jesus decline to take? Why? (Mark 15:21-23)

After being led out to Golgotha, which was just outside the city wall, they tried to give Jesus a special drink to deaden the pain from crucifixion. But He refused it, for He wanted to suffer fully for us.

After this, Jesus was crucified. What was crucifixion? (Mark 15:24)

Crucifixion was a form of execution used by the Romans for the worst of criminals. Large nails were driven through a person's hands and feet into a wooden cross. The person endured hours and sometimes days of intense physical agony before dying. Death eventually came by suffocation and exhaustion.

What do we read in Psalm 22:16 (written 1000BC) and Isaiah 53:5 (written 700BC)?

We read that Jesus would be pierced for us. What is amazing is that crucifixion was unknown back then.

What did the soldiers do after crucifying Jesus? (Mark 15:24)

They gambled for His clothing, fulfilling another prophecy in Psalm 22:18.

What sign did Pilate have written and placed above Jesus head? Why? (Mark 15:26)

The sign read "the King of the Jews", for Jesus was crucified for being a rival king; yet He is the King.

Did Jesus die alone? What prophecy was fulfilled? (Mark 15:27-28; Isaiah 53:12)

Jesus died with two robbers on either side of Him, fulfilling yet another Scripture in Isaiah 53:12.

While on the cross, what were people doing? (Mark 15:29-32; John 2:18-22)

People were mocking Jesus, including the criminals. Some mocked Him over His words about destroying the temple and raising it again in three days (although He was speaking about His resurrection). Again, the actions of the people around the cross fulfilled the very words we read in Psa 22:6-8.

In Mark 15:33-34 what significant things occurred?

Darkness came over the land, symbolic of how our blackness (sins) was placed on God's Son Jesus (Isa 53:6). Jesus' cry of abandonment shows us the effect of our sins; it caused Jesus to be separated from the Father. This was the first time in all eternity when the Father and the Son were separated; for our sake.

When Jesus breathed His last (Mark 15:35-37), what did He cry out (John 19:30)? Why?

He cried out "It is finished". This is because Jesus had finished the work of redemption. He had laid down His life as an atonement for our sins, and through His death, the penalty for sin had been paid for in full.

What happened precisely at the moment Jesus died? What did this signify? (Mark 15:38)

The veil of the temple was ripped from top to bottom. This signified that the way into the Holy of Holies (into God's presence) was now open through what Jesus accomplished for us on the cross. We have no need of priests or sacrifices now. Through faith in Jesus we can approach God (Heb 4:14-16).

Why did the centurion say "Truly this man was the Son of God"? (Mark 15:39)

He said this after noticing the way Jesus breathed His last and the events that occurred at the moment of Jesus' death. Although he had seen many die upon a cross, never had he seen anyone die like Jesus did.

B. Jesus' burial

After Jesus died, what happened to His body? (Mark 15:42-46) Who helped Joseph? Why?

Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, placed Jesus' body in a burial cave belonging to him, fulfilling Isa 53:9. Nicodemus helped him (John 19:38-39). Both Joseph and Nicodemus were "secret" followers of Jesus.

Who saw where Jesus' body had been laid? Why is this important? (Mark 15:47)

The woman who attended to Jesus during his earthly ministry saw where He had been laid. This is important, for it means they didn't go to the wrong tomb on Easter Sunday. His tomb was truly empty.

Summary: **God could never forgive us for our sin and accept us, unless the punishment for our sin was completely paid for. Jesus, and only Jesus, paid it completely and perfectly.**

25. Jesus' Resurrection from the Dead

Aim: To show that Jesus' rose from the dead, and that we have a sure and living hope beyond the grave.

Intro: *How do most people view death (cf. Heb 2:14-15)?*

Many these days don't seem to be fussed about dying, until it comes upon them. Then they can become quite anxious and scared – just as the Bible teaches. But if we have Jesus, we have nothing to fear.

In this study we will consider the great hope we have because Jesus conquered the grave.

A. The Account of Jesus' resurrection

As the women came to the tomb what did they expect to find? What did they want to do? (Lk 24:1)

They expected to find the body of Jesus, and anoint it with spices. They didn't believe He would be alive.

NB: It was a Jewish custom to anoint a body before it's buried, but because Jesus had been hurriedly buried, and just before the Sabbath, they had to leave it until after the Sabbath – early Sunday morning.

What was the shock that the women received as they came to the tomb of Jesus? (Luke 24:2-3)

The large stone (boulder) to the tomb had been rolled away and the body of Jesus was not there.

Who suddenly appeared before the women and what did they say? (Luke 24:4-7)

Two angels suddenly appeared, and told them that Jesus was not here. He had risen, just as He had said.

What had Jesus said to His followers again and again? (Mark 8:31, 10:32-34)

Jesus made it clear that He would die, and rise again on the third day. They should have known.

What was the response of the disciples when the women told them Jesus was alive? (Lk 24:8-11)

The disciples thought that the women were speaking nonsense. None of them had believed Jesus' words that He would rise from the dead. And they certainly wouldn't believe the women.

What did Peter and John do after hearing the women's story? (Luke 24:12; John 20:2-10)

They ran to the tomb and also found the body of Jesus not there. While Peter was perplexed at this, John was the first to believe - in the sense that Jesus' body wasn't there.

What happened as Mary Magdalene remained and stood weeping at the tomb? (John 20:11-15)

Two angels asked her why she was weeping. When she explained why, she turned around and saw what she thought was the gardener, and asked Him where He had placed Jesus' body.

What did the gardener say, and what was Mary's reaction? (John 20:16-17)

The gardener said "Mary", and immediately she knew it was Jesus and she turned to embrace Him.

What important words did Jesus say to Mary; and for her to pass on to the disciples? (John 20:17)

Jesus wanted Mary to tell His disciples that He is to ascend to His Father and God, who is now our Father and God. Jesus' death and resurrection allows us to have the same relationship with the Father as He has.

What did Jesus' do to help His disciples believe He had risen from the dead? (Luke 24:36-43)

He appeared before them, and asked them to touch Him. He even ate in their presence. He was no ghost.

Thomas missed out on seeing the risen Jesus. What did he do when told? (John 20:24-25)

He refused to believe that Jesus was alive. Like many today, he would not believe. He was such a sceptic.

What happened the following week when Thomas was with the disciples? (John 20:26-28)

Thomas saw the risen Lord, who declared to him what he had said in his unbelief. But then Thomas responded with "My Lord and my God". He now knew that Jesus was alive. He also knew what it meant.

Why was it impossible for Jesus to remain dead? (Acts 2:24-28)

It was prophesied (Psalm 16:10) that Jesus would not remain dead. Besides that, because He was sinless, death could not hold Him, and because He's God and the author of life, death could not defeat Him.

B. The implications of Jesus' Resurrection

What does the resurrection prove? (Romans 1:4; 4:25)

The resurrection proves that Jesus is the Son of God. He is no mere human being; He is God (John 1:1). It also proves that God was satisfied with His Son's sacrifice for our sins, so that we stand fully justified.

What does the resurrection mean for us? (Heb 7:25; 1 Cor 15:50-57)

Jesus is alive and is able to save us completely for He ever lives to make intercession for us. Also, just as Jesus was raised from the dead, He will raise us from the dead if we believe in Him.

What does the resurrection mean for all people? (Acts 1:11; Matt 25:31-46)

Jesus will come again, and judge those who didn't believe in Him, and they will spend eternity in hell, but those who believed in Him, will enjoy eternal life in God's glory. He is our only hope (1 Pet 1:3).

Summary: Only Jesus defeated death, only He gives eternal life; if we believe in Him (1 Jn 5:12)

26. The Coronation of the King

Aim: To show that Jesus' ascended to the throne and is the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

Intro: *Many don't believe that Jesus rose from the dead. Many more have no idea that He's not just living – He's reigning. How do you view Christ's reign? What does He do? How does that comfort you?* What a joy to know that Jesus forever lives and reigns – even over this fallen world. In this study we will consider the glorious reign of Christ at the Father's right hand.

A. Christ's Ascension

After Christ's resurrection and before His ascension, what do we learn from Acts 1:1-3?

Jesus remained on earth 40 days before He ascended, during which time He gave many convincing proofs that He was truly alive; it was a bodily resurrection. He also instructed them about the kingdom of God.

What key instructions did Jesus give during this time according to Matt 28:18-20 & Lk 24:46-49?

According to Matthew's Gospel He commissioned His followers to disciple and to baptise and to teach others, promising that He would be with them. In Luke's Gospel He commanded them to be witnesses of His death and resurrection, and to preach repentance for the forgiveness of sins and to proclaim His name to people around them. He also spoke of them being empowered by the Holy Spirit.

The coming of the Holy Spirit is further explained in Acts 1:4-8. What do we learn here?

The coming of the Holy Spirit upon believers was according to the Father's promise. It would happen after Christ went home to heaven (John 16:7). He would come and give followers of Jesus power to live for God, and to be Christ's witnesses throughout the world. They would not be alone (John 14:16-18).

After these most important instructions, that also apply to present-day followers of Christ, Jesus ascended. What do learn about the ascension from Luke 24:50-53?

Jesus blessed them before He was lifted up to heaven, and the disciples worshipped Him. Instead of being sorrowful as He left, they filled with joy and were continually praising God.

In Acts 1:9-11 what do learn further about Christ's ascension?

Jesus was lifted up and went up into the clouds and beyond. This fascinated the disciples. But then two angels came and affirmed that Christ had gone to heaven, and that He would return again one day, from heaven, through the clouds. What an ascension! And what a reminder! Christ will return!

B. Christ's Coronation

What happened to Jesus when He ascended? We have some great verses on this. What do we learn from Dan 7:13-14?

Jesus ascended and was presented before the Ancient of Days (God the Father), and was given dominion, glory and the kingship of God's eternal kingdom. Can you imagine the ceremony of His coronation?

In Phil 2:6-11 what do we read?

After Jesus humbled Himself and died in our place, God highly exalted Him. He is the Lord of all, and according to God's will, all heaven and all creation, all angels & humans & demons are to submit to Him.

In Rev 19:16, what strong title does Jesus have? What does this mean?

He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He rules and reigns over all Creation; including our earth.

In Heb 1:3, and in other places in the New Testament, where is Jesus' position declared to be?

He sits at the right hand of God the Father. The right hand is the honoured and preferred side. He is the Father's delight, and sits with Him, ruling and reigning as one.

C. Christ's Reign

During this time before Christ returns, what do learn about His reign in 1 Cor 15:22-28?

Jesus is bringing everything into submission to Him, and then He will hand all things to the Father. He will even abolish death. Everything will be brought beneath His feet –that's where things are heading.

How are we to understand Jesus' reign and the state of this current world that's opposed to God?

Jesus' present reign includes Him being patient and giving people opportunity to turn to Him to be saved (2 Peter 3:9). But when He returns, the time of grace will end, and He will bring judgment upon those who did not repent, and He will bring everything under His control (cf. Rev 11:15-17).

During this present time, what very special thing is Jesus doing for us in His reign? (Rom 8:31-35)

He is interceding for us before the throne, and He is with His people, helping us, through His Spirit.

Summary: **Although we live in a fallen world, Jesus reigns and He intercede for us (Heb 7:25)**

27. The Return of the King

Aim: To show that Jesus' will come back to receive His children to Himself and to judge the world.

Intro: *The Bible makes it absolutely clear that Jesus will return. How do most people in our society view His second coming? What do they think will happen when He returns? [Discuss]*

Many don't believe Jesus will return, as they don't believe in the resurrection. Others who think it might happen often have no idea of the power and glory that He will return with, and what He will do when He comes back. In this final study we will consider Christ's glorious return and the implications of it.

A. Christ the King

Jesus' first and second comings will be so different. Contrast Phil 2:6-8 with Matt 24:29-31.

When Jesus first came, He came so humbly, emptying Himself of divine glory and being born as a helpless baby. He came to serve us and to die for us. But at Jesus second coming, He will come as the King, with divine power and blinding glory, with all God's angels, and with absolute power.

In Rev 1:12-16 we have a description of the glorified Lord Jesus. In this state He will be returning. What stands out as you read what John the apostle beheld?

Jesus is full of divine glory. His face shines like the sun, His eyes are like a flame of fire, and His voice is majestic. He will return as the King of Glory; as the Lion of Judah rather than as the Lamb of God.

What do you make of the response of Creation at Christ's return? (cf. Matt 24:29; Rev 6:12-14)

Before Jesus, the sun will be darkened, the stars will fall from the sky, and the sky will split apart like a scroll, and every mountain and island will be shaken and moved from its place. This is Creation's response, because Creation recognises who Jesus truly is – the Great King of glory and the Creator.

B. Christ the Saviour

When Jesus returns in glory, what will one of His tasks be according to 1 Thess 4:13-17?

Jesus will bring with Him those who died in Christ, and He will resurrect their dead bodies so that their eternal soul will have an eternal glorious body. If we are a follower of Jesus, and are on earth when He returns, our bodies will be resurrected too. And above everything, we shall be with the Lord forever (v. 17), never to be separated from Him; no longer walking by faith, but always in His presence.

Read 1 Cor 15:51-57. What else do we learn in this passage?

At Christ's return, we who are alive, will be changed in the twinkling of an eye as we ascend to be with Jesus. Jesus will give us victory over death, even causing our bodies to become immortal & imperishable.

Consider 1 Thess 1:9-10. When Jesus returns, and receives us, what will He rescue us from?

He will rescue us from the coming wrath of God. We will be spared God's judgment, both on this earth, as well as eternity in hell. We have been freed from wrath (1 Thess 5:9) and condemnation (Rom 8:1).

C. Christ the Judge

When Jesus returns, He will not only receive those who trusted in Him, He will also come to perform another important task according to His Father's will. What is that? (Rev 6:15-17)

He will execute God's wrath on all those who did not repent and turn to Him to be saved.

How will the people, left behind, view the coming of Jesus? Why? (Matt 24:30; Rev 1:7)

The people will mourn and weep, because they will instantly be aware that they failed to do the most important thing, that is, to turn to Jesus and be saved. And now they will be judged for their sins and for their refusal to repent and receive Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

At Christ's return, some amazing things will occur. What do we read in 2 Thess 2:8 & Rev 19:20?

The one known as the anti-Christ, or the Man of Lawlessness, or the Beast, will be destroyed so effortlessly by Jesus at His coming, and he will be thrown alive into hell, together with his right-hand man, the "false prophet". The most powerful earthy ruler, who will kill Christians and force the whole world to worship him, will be judged and thrown into hell – instantly. What power Jesus has!

D. Christ and You

In the light of Christ's return, what are we urged to do? (Matt 25:32-44)

We are urged to "be ready"; not just because He might come back today, but we also might die today.

How can we "be ready"? (Luke 24:46-47; John 1:12-13; Acts 20:18-21)

We can only be ready by repenting of our sins and receiving Jesus as our Lord and Saviour.

Summary: **Christ is returning – are you ready? Will you be received by Him or left behind?**