



# TRINITY CHURCH



Growth Group Studies in Biblical Theology

Term 3, 2023

# OVERVIEW

From before creation, God had planned all of history. The Bible tells the story and the shape of all history, from eternity to eternity, creation to new creation. It is the story of the one true God who establishes his kingdom, graciously bringing people into it as his very own sons and daughters and lavishly pouring his blessing out on them.

It is this 'big story' or 'mega-narrative' that will be the focus of this series—the story of God's kingdom.

We will see that we can only properly understand each part of the Bible in light of the whole story and its place in it. This practice is called 'biblical theology' and is an essential skill for all Christians because we can only understand the Old Testament in light of the New, and vice-versa. For example, when we read God's laws regarding clean and unclean foods in Leviticus, we may think that we still need to keep them today. But when we see that these laws were part of the old covenant God made with the nation Israel to set them apart from other nations, and that this covenant has been replaced by a new covenant that extends to all nations, we realise that these laws were there to teach us about our need for a saviour to make us clean and acceptable to God, a saviour who *is* the only clean food we need.

So sit back and enjoy the bird's-eye-view as we journey through God's Word together.

This series aims to:

- show that the whole Bible tells the big story of God's kingdom
- help us grasp the different stages of history
- grow our confidence and skills in Bible reading
- give us greater appreciation for what Jesus has done
- lead to praise of our glorious God for all he's done and is doing.

# TERM 3 OUTLINE

Date	Page Number	Title	Bible Passages
Week 1 <i>24th–30th Jul.</i>	4	The Story of the Kingdom	Luke 24:13–27 Isaiah 46:8–13
Week 2 <i>31st Jul.–6th Aug.</i>	9	The Pattern of the Kingdom	Genesis 2:4–2:25
Week 3 <i>7th–13th Aug.</i>	15	The Perished Kingdom	Genesis 6:1–7:4
Week 4 <i>14th–20th Aug.</i>	21	The Promised Kingdom	Numbers 13:17–14:4 1 Corinthians 10:1–13
Week 5 <i>21st–27th Aug.</i>	27	The Partial Kingdom	1 Kings 2:1–4 1 Kings 9:1–9 1 Kings 11:9–13
Week 6 <i>28th Aug.–3rd Sep.</i>	33	The Provisions of the Kingdom	Leviticus 16:1–22
Week 7 <i>4th–10th Sep.</i>	39	The Prophesied Kingdom	Isaiah 11:1–13 Ezekiel 36:24–32
Week 8 <i>11th–17th Sep.</i>	45	The Present Kingdom	<i>See page 47</i>
Week 9 <i>18th–24th Sep.</i>	50	The Proclaimed Kingdom	Matthew 28:18–20 Luke 24:44–49 Acts 1:3–8 2 Corinthians 5:16–21
Week 10 <i>25th Sep.–1st Oct.</i>	55	The Perfected Kingdom	Revelation 1:1–3 Revelation 20:7–21:8 Revelation 21:9–22:5



*inextricably part of the BIG story, we begin to be able to see and understand how the various stories and parts of Scripture fit within that greater story—the biggest story of all time: the story of the Creator-God who is building his kingdom. At the centre of that story is Jesus—the King of the kingdom.*

## **Pray**

- Thank God for each other
- Pray for specific thanks and requests
- Ask God that his Spirit might enlighten and transform us as we read his word

## **Looking Up**

4. As a group, try to arrange the Bible timeline cards in order.

[Read Luke 24:13-24 but don't read ahead to verse 25]

5. How would you expect Jesus to respond?

[Read v25-27]

6. What had they not believed?

7. What does Jesus' response teach us about how Jesus saw the Bible?

8. What does Jesus' response tell us about the relevance of *all* scripture to us today, this side of the resurrection?

[Read Isaiah 46:8-13]

9. What does this teach us about who God *is*?

10. What does it teach us about what history is and where it's going?

11. Since the Bible is one big, interconnected story of the whole of history, it is a story that we are part of. How does this affect how we read the scriptures?

12. How might understanding the Bible as one big story help us when we read parts that seem obscure or strange?

*Once we realise the kind of God we are dealing with and that every page of Scripture tells of him and this wondrous story that we fit into, the Bible comes alive for us. Our joy and faith grow as we continuously see more and more links and the details of the big picture come into focus. This truly is the biggest, greatest story of all—our story—the story of Christ and his kingdom.*

## **Pray**

- Praise God that he is in complete control of history.
- Praise him for revealing his plans to us and sending his Son.
- Thank him that he is bringing it to a very good end.
- Ask him to grow our knowledge and appreciation of him and his big story this term.
- Ask for help with your Personal Reading Challenge this week (see next page).
- Pray for your group's mission partner.
- Pray for Next Gen ministries starting up again this weekend.

## Week 1 Personal Reading Challenge

Using the Bible reading chart supplied in Appendix B (see the back of this booklet), pick a book that you've never read, or can't remember what it's about. Set a challenge to read (or listen to) 5 chapters of it this week. For each chapter, fill in the following chart:

(BOOK)	What do I learn about God's Kingdom/King?	Thoughts	Questions
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			



# WEEK 2: THE PATTERN OF THE KINGDOM

## Connecting

1. Share one thing from this past week that you'd like to thank God for and one thing you'd like to ask God for.
2. What have we learnt so far about the big story of God's Kingdom (Growth Groups and Sunday)?
3. Share any thoughts and/or questions you had from your Personal Reading Challenge this past week.
4. Share something from early in your life that explains who you are and what you value today (eg. family situation, personal or world events, culture, etc.).

## Pray

- Thank God for each other
- Pray for specific thanks and requests from Question 1
- Ask God for his Spirit to enlighten and transform us as we read his word

## Looking Up

5. Discuss the following quote:

"Every culture has a creation account, an explanation for where we come from. These shape each culture's understanding of who we are in the context of the world. These shape and reveal the values and taboos of our cultures. Our creation accounts say a great deal about who we are."

6. What is the Christian belief about creation?

7. What are some ways it shapes our Christian worldview?

*Genesis means 'beginning' in Greek. This book is all about the beginning of the story, the beginning of the earth and the heavens. This book starts with not one, but two accounts of creation. After a cosmic, zoomed-out account in chapter 1, the story backs up and zooms in with a different camera angle to focus on humans and our relationship with God, the creation, and each other. In these two creation accounts combined, we see the pattern or blueprint for God's Kingdom: God's people, in God's place, under God's rule, receiving God's blessing.*



12. What does this tree's presence in the garden hint about:
- the shape the story is going to take?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - God's plans for history?
13. Fill in the 'Development of the Kingdom' table for week 2 (see Appendix A in the back of this booklet).

## Looking Forward

### 14. Choose ONE of the following to discuss:

- A. Christians claim that people were made by a good and powerful God to know and serve him. Pure materialists claim we and everything happened by accident. How do these two views lead to very different views of morality (ie. different values and taboos)?
- B. What are some common issues people have with the Bible's creation accounts? Discuss how the two differing accounts of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 shape our understanding of the kind of literature it is, its intention, and how we ought to read it. How might this deal with some of these objections?
- C. What does the Christian creation account teach us about gender? How would the creation account shape your response to a man who claimed that women are less valuable or less important than men? What does it say to the idea that gender is fluid? (Hint - include 1:26-31 also).

## Pray

- Praise God for his power, wisdom and glory shown in creation.
- Pray that he will help us to see that following his rule is where we find blessing.
- Ask God to help us to be better image-bearers in the world.
- Ask for his help in your reading plan this week.
- Pray for your group's mission partner.
- Pray God will grant our Leadership Team, Scott, Danny & Aimée wisdom.

## Week 2 Personal Reading Challenge

Read or listen to another 5 chapters of your chosen book of the Bible this week (or pick a new one if you finished it).

For each chapter, fill in the following chart:

(BOOK)	What do I learn about God's Kingdom/King?	Thoughts	Questions
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			

# WEEK 3: THE PERISHED KINGDOM

## Connecting

1. Share one thing from this past week that you'd like to thank God for and one thing you'd like to ask God for.
2. What have we learnt so far about the big story of God's Kingdom (Growth Groups and Sundays)?
3. Share any thoughts and/or questions you had from your Personal Reading Challenge this past week.
4. Think of a moment where something went wrong in your life. How did your life change from that point onwards?

## Pray

- Thank God for each other
- Pray for specific thanks and requests from Question 1
- Ask God that his Spirit might enlighten and transform us as we read his word

## Looking Up

*When God's people (Adam and Eve) rejected God's rule, they were cut off from relationship with God and banished from God's place. The pattern of the kingdom perished. But hidden in God's curse was a glimmer of hope—a promise. One day a descendant of Eve would crush the serpent and bring God's Kingdom. But when all of Adam's offspring continue in his rebellion, it looks like God might change his mind.*

[Read Genesis 6:1-7:4]

5. In v6, it looks like God has given up on humanity he created. Has God changed his mind and abandoned his plans to establish his kingdom? What does the story here teach us?
  
6. Life in the garden of Eden (Genesis 2) was a pattern of God's Kingdom. What is the flood a pattern of (hint: 2 Peter 2:4-9)?



7. Noah (like Enoch in Genesis 5:24) 'walked with God'. What should this remind us of from the beginning of the story? What is the hope and good news here for people living in the perished kingdom?

*The flood was like an 'un-creation', going back to Genesis 1:2. The waters above and the waters below again came crashing together and covered the face of the whole earth, covering and destroying all that God had made. After one year and 10 days, Noah and his family came out of the ark onto dry land. It was like a creation take two. God even blessed Noah like he blessed Adam, and gave him rules about what he could and couldn't eat. It is as if creation itself was born again in this act of judgment and salvation. But if this is like a re-enactment of creation, soon comes a re-enactment of the fall. In a scene with many similarities to chapter 3, Noah's son sins and is cursed. Soon after, all mankind coordinates together to rebel against God (Babel 11:1-8). The same cycle from Genesis 3 continues: sin > judgment > grace.*

8. For Noah, obeying God's rule probably felt more like a curse than a blessing at times. But by faith he was rescued from judgement and blessed by God. What aspects of God's rule sometimes feel like a curse to you?

9. What do you think the flood teaches us about God's plan?

*In Genesis 8 and 9 God promises never again to cover the earth in a flood or destroy all creatures 'as long as the earth endures' (8:22); however, this isn't the end of the story...*

10. Fill in the 'Development of the Kingdom' table for week 3 (see Appendix A in the back of this booklet).

## Looking Forward

Take time to reflect on the following individually or in same-sex pairs:

11. What are some sins you struggle with?

12. The heart of sin is failing to trust that God is good and obeying his rule brings blessing. In each of the sins you struggle with, what word of God are you failing to believe and trust is good (even if you know it really well)?

13. How can you use the stories of Adam and Eve and Noah to help you to trust and obey God's rule?

## Pray

- Praise God that he is gracious and compassionate, showing grace to those who submit to his rule.
- Seek forgiveness for our rebellion and failure to trust him.
- Pray that he will help us to see that following his rule is where we find blessing.
- Ask for his help with your Personal Reading Challenge this week.
- Pray for your group's mission partner.
- Ask God to provide the finances we need to keep growing gospel ministry in the Adelaide Hills.

## Week 3 Personal Reading Challenge

Read or listen to another 5 chapters of your chosen book of the Bible this week (or pick a new one if you finished it).

For each chapter, fill in the following chart:

(BOOK)	What do I learn about God's Kingdom/King?	Thoughts	Questions
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			

# WEEK 4: THE PROMISED KINGDOM

## Connecting

1. Share one thing from this past week that you'd like to thank God for and one thing you'd like to ask God for.
2. What have we learnt so far about the big story of God's Kingdom (Growth Groups and Sundays)?
3. Share any thoughts and/or questions you had from your Personal Reading Challenge this past week.
4. What is a promise you remember waiting for with great anticipation (eg. present, wedding, delivery)? What was it like waiting for it?

## Pray

- Thank God for each other
- Pray for specific thanks and requests from Question 1.
- Ask God that his Spirit might enlighten and transform us as we read his word

## Looking Up

*God had made incredible promises to Abraham. He had promised to make his family into a great nation, to be their God and rule them, to bless them and every nation through them, to bring them into the land of Canaan: God's people, in God's place, under God's rule, receiving (and sharing) God's blessing. God had rescued them out of Egypt. He had split the Red Sea for them. He had destroyed the nation of Egypt without the Israelites having to unsheathe a single sword. He had provided food and water for them in the wilderness. He had given them easy victory over every enemy that had come to attack them. All they had done was grumble. Now, finally they arrive at the southern border of the promised land. God tells Moses to send 12 leaders of the 12 tribes of Israel to scout out the land.*

[Read Numbers 13:17-27]

5. What do we learn about the land God had promised to them? What does it teach us about what life in God's place is like?

[Read Numbers 13: 28-14:4]

6. Why do the leaders and Israelites respond like this? What are they failing to grasp about God and his kingdom promises?

7. How is *our situation* similar to those Israelites (think kingdom)?

8. How are *we* like those Israelites?

*The Israelites paid the price for failing to trust God. Because of the contempt they showed towards God and his promises, God sent them back into the wilderness for 40 years. The whole generation who saw his signs and rebelled died and did not enter the land. Many, many years later, the apostle Paul writes about these events.*

## Looking Forward

[Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-13]

9. How does Paul see these historical events in light of Jesus and the kingdom?

10. What do these events teach us about inheriting God's kingdom?





## Pray

- Ask God to help you heed the warning from Numbers and hold onto God's promises.
- Ask God's forgiveness for ways we act just like Israel.
- Pray for people you know who have turned their backs on God's promises. Ask that God would bring them to repentance and faith.
- Ask for help in your Personal Reading Challenge this week (see below).
- Pray for your group's mission partner.
- Ask God to help us as a church, be more inviting.
- Thank God that we can partner with Strathalbyn Church of Christ to run Explore in Strathalbyn. Ask that we and they would be bold in inviting guests, and that our guests would come to faith.

## Week 4 Personal Reading Challenge

Read or listen to another 5 chapters of your chosen book of the Bible this week (or pick a new one if you finished it).

For each chapter, fill in the following chart:

(BOOK)	What do I learn about God's Kingdom/King?	Thoughts	Questions
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			

# WEEK 5: THE PARTIAL KINGDOM

## Connecting

1. Share one thing from this past week that you'd like to thank God for and one thing you'd like to ask God for.
2. What have we learnt so far about the big story of God's Kingdom (Growth Groups and Sunday)?
3. Share any thoughts and/or questions you had from your Personal Reading Challenge this past week.
4. Watch the clip in the QR code. How is it a bit of an illustration of the Bible's story?



## Pray

- Thank God for each other
- Pray for specific thanks and requests from Question 1.
- Ask God that his Spirit might enlighten and transform us as we read his word

## Looking Up

*On Sunday we saw God's promise grow. The serpent-crushing, donkey-riding, eternal lion-king of Judah would come from the family of David. This son of David would be Son of God, would build a house for God's name, will crush his enemies, judge the nations, establish peace, be an eternal priest, be flogged by men. Now David is near death and he passes the baton to his son Solomon.*

[Read 1 Kings 2:1-4]

5. What does David say is required of the king of God's people?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What does the 'if' hint at?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. Separate into pairs and divide these passages from 1 Kings equally. In each passage, what kingdom promises can you see fulfilled in some way?

A. 3:16-28

B. 4:29-34

C. 5:1-5

D. 6:11-14

E. 8:3-13

F. 10:23-25

8. What does life in Solomon's Kingdom tell us about what the Kingdom of God is like?

9. Fill in the 'Development of the Kingdom' table for week 5 (see Appendix A in the back of this booklet).

[Read 1 Kings 9:1-9 & 11:9-13]

10. How does this show us that the Kingdom of Israel was only a partial kingdom, not the final fulfillment?

*The partial kingdom didn't last long. After only one generation of peace and blessing, the kingdom was torn in two after Solomon's death, just as God had promised. 200 years later, the northern kingdom (Israel) was destroyed completely by Assyria and its people scattered, never to return. 136 years after that, the southern kingdom (Judah) is conquered by Babylon. As God warned, the temple is destroyed, the throne becomes vacant and the remnant of God's people are taken away as exiles. The partial kingdom was no more. But God's promises hadn't failed. He always had a bigger goal in mind.*

## **Looking Up**

11. Choose ONE of the following topics to discuss:

**A. Christian Zionism and modern day national Israel**

Many Christians believe that the establishment of a rebuilt nation of ethnic Israel in the Levant is part and parcel with the final coming of God's Kingdom, and that the Jews have a God-given right to claim possession of Palestine.

How does the big story of the kingdom and God's promises throughout the whole Bible shape the way we think about modern-day, national Israel and the land of Canaan, and about Christian political efforts to establish national Israel?

## B. Utopian worldview

We live in a culture where many assume that with education, good leaders, good laws, and prosperity, humanity will slowly become more peaceful, more loving, more safe and more moral.

How does the story of the rise and fall of Israel within the overall story of God's Kingdom shape the way we think about politics, progress and the future of humanity?

## Pray

- Praise God that his plan was bigger than national Israel in Canaan under a flawed king.
- Thank him for the way the highest heights of Israel's history foreshadow the fulness of God's coming kingdom.
- Ask God to help us not to long for an earthly kingdom in this creation, but his heavenly kingdom in the new creation.
- Ask for help with your Personal Reading Challenge this week (see below).
- Pray for your group's mission partner.
- Pray that the churches in our area would faithfully follow and proclaim Christ and not distort or abandon the gospel.

## Week 5 Personal Reading Challenge

Read or listen to another 5 chapters of your chosen book of the Bible this week (or pick a new one if you finished it).

For each chapter, fill in the following chart:

(BOOK)	What do I learn about God's Kingdom/King?	Thoughts	Questions
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			



# WEEK 6: THE PROVISIONS OF THE KINGDOM

## Connecting

1. Share one thing from this past week that you'd like to thank God for and one thing you'd like to ask God for.
2. What have we learnt so far about the big story of God's Kingdom (Growth Groups and Sundays)?
3. Share any thoughts and/or questions you had from your Personal Reading Challenge this past week.
4. Weird law challenge: you have five minutes to search through Leviticus and find the most unusual/random law you can. Share your laws and vote a winner.

## Pray

- Thank God for each other
- Pray for specific thanks and requests from Question 1
- Ask God that his Spirit might enlighten and transform us as we read his word

## Looking Up

*Some of the Old Testament laws are weird. There are laws about diet, mildew, menstruation, hand washing, sacrifices, fabric and everything in-between. Today we are stopping to consider how the law that God gave Israel fits into the story of God's Kingdom.*

5. What is the law?

6. What was the purpose of the law? Why did God give it to Israel?

*The law had multiple purposes: it set his people apart from the nations, it brought about order in society. But ultimately, the law was given to reveal our unholiness and teach us that unholy people cannot come into the presence of a holy God unless their sin is taken away. The law taught God's people that the Kingdom of God cannot be established without an acceptable sacrifice for sin.*

[Read Leviticus 16:1-22]

*The most holy place of the tabernacle was where God dwelt amongst his people and met with them. It was the place where blood sacrifices for sin were made and was later replaced with the temple.*

7. What do these verses teach us about the kind of access the Israelites had to God? What do we learn when we compare this to the pattern of the kingdom where God walked in the garden with Adam and Eve?
  
8. The purpose of this special event in the calendar was atonement. What does atonement mean?
  
9. God provided these sacrifices to deal with the people's sin. What do the two goats tell us about what is needed for atonement?
  
10. Why did God appoint priests? Couldn't he have just gotten everyone to offer their own sacrifices?
  
11. Do you think that Aaron and the Levitical priests could ever fully deal with the barrier of sin that stands between God and man? Why/why not (see v6 & v34)?



## Pray

- Praise God that Jesus has fulfilled the law for us and dealt with our sin.
- Thank God for drawing us near to him.
- Ask God to help us understand and apply the purpose and intent of the law.
- Ask for help in your Personal Reading Challenge this week (see below).
- Pray for your group's mission partner.
- Give thanks for BCSA (Bible College of South Australia). Ask that God would raise up many to be trained to teach, lead and equip his people in SA and beyond as we all work in his harvest together.
- Pray for Explore starting next Monday.

## Week 6 Personal Reading Challenge

Read or listen to another 5 chapters of your chosen book of the Bible this week (or pick a new one if you finished it).

For each chapter, fill in the following chart:

(BOOK)	What do I learn about God's Kingdom/King?	Thoughts	Questions
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			

# WEEK 7: THE PROPHESED KINGDOM

## Connecting

1. Share one thing from this past week that you'd like to thank God for and one thing you'd like to ask God for.
2. What have we learnt so far about the big story of God's Kingdom (Growth Groups and Sundays)?
3. Share any thoughts and/or questions you had from your Personal Reading Challenge this past week.
4. Share something that has given you hope. Why did it?

## Pray

- Thank God for each other
- Pray for specific thanks and requests from Question 1
- Ask God that his Spirit might enlighten and transform us as we read his word

## Looking Up

*The partial kingdom collapsed because Israel failed to keep the covenant God made with them at Sinai. The partial kingdom collapsed because the son of David sinned. God's people were driven out of God's place. The glory of God left the temple and it was destroyed. Sacrifices for sin could no longer be offered. But God's covenant to Abraham hadn't failed. Everything was going exactly to plan. The prophets pointed forward to the coming of God's Kingdom, through the coming of the one they called the Messiah. The serpent-crushing, righteous-ruling, donkey-riding, nation-judging, enemy-crushing, priestly-mediating, peace-bringing, forever-reigning, lion of Judah who is the son of God was still to come from the cut off stump of David's line.*

[Read Isaiah 11:1-13]

5. How does the promises in this prophesy eclipse the partial kingdom in these ways:
  - A. God's people
  - B. God's place



C. God's rule

D. God's blessing

6. How is it similar to the pattern of the kingdom in Genesis 1 & 2?  
How is it different?

7. How is the branch from David's family different to Adam?

[Read Ezekiel 36:24-27]

8. Why does God promise a new covenant? What was wrong with the old covenant (Sinai)?

9. What is different about this new covenant?

10. Fill in the 'Development of the Kingdom' table for week 7 (see Appendix A in the back of this booklet).

## Looking Forward

11. Satan tries to steal our assurance as God's people. What comfort does this new covenant bring that the first covenant never could?

[Read v28-32]

12. What effect does God's grace have on those whom he has cleansed? How is this true in your life?

13. With what little we know about the new creation, what are some things you can't wait to experience/discover?

## Pray

- Praise God that all the law and prophets pointed to Jesus and the new covenant in his blood.
- Thank him for cleansing us from our sin, changing our hearts of stone and putting his Spirit in us.
- Ask God to teach us to loathe our sins and live by the Spirit.
- Ask for help in your Personal Reading Challenge this week.
- Pray for your group's mission partner.
- Pray for Explore.

## Week 7 Personal Reading Challenge

Read or listen to another 5 chapters of your chosen book of the Bible this week (or pick a new one if you finished it).

For each chapter, fill in the following chart:

(BOOK)	What do I learn about God's Kingdom/King?	Thoughts	Questions
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			

# WEEK 8: THE PRESENT KINGDOM

## Connecting

1. Share one thing from this past week that you'd like to thank God for and one thing you'd like to ask God for.
2. What have we learnt so far about the big story of God's Kingdom (Growth Groups and Sundays)?
3. Share any thoughts and/or questions you had from your Personal Reading Challenge this past week.
4. On a whiteboard or butchers paper, brainstorm every Old Testament promise of God that you can think of.

## Pray

- Thank God for each other
- Pray for specific thanks and requests from Question 1
- Ask God that his Spirit might enlighten and transform us as we read his word

## Looking Up

*When Jesus began his ministry, he went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The Kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:15). God had promised his kingdom. Now the king had come. In the coming of Jesus, the kingdom broke into the present.*

5. Revisit your brainstormed promises. Discuss how Jesus fulfils each of those promises.

*2 Corinthians 1:20 says 'No matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes!" in Christ.' When Jesus (in disguise) was talking with two disturbed and downhearted disciples on the road to Emmaus after his resurrection, he explained that 'all the scriptures' pointed to him, his death, his resurrection and his glory.*

6. How should this truth affect the way we read the Old Testament?

7. Work through each of the following New Testament passages about Jesus and match them up to the Old Testament promises on the right hand side (there could be multiple links for each passage):

Matthew 21:6-11

Exodus 12:12-14

Luke 2:4-7

Leviticus 16:1-5

Luke 1:30-33

Genesis 3:15

John 2:19-21

Haggai 2:6-9

1 Corinthians 15:21

Micah 5:2-4

1 Corinthians 15:55-56

Psalms 22:7-8, 16-18

Hebrews 7:26-28

2 Samuel 7:12-16

Luke 24:44-47

Psalms 110:1-4

Hebrews 8:1-5

Deuteronomy 18:18-19

Luke 22:14-20

Isaiah 7:14

John 10:11-15

Isaiah 53:4-12

John 1:29

Jeremiah 31:31-32

*In the coming of Jesus, we see the pattern of the kingdom perfectly fulfilled in him. Jesus is God's anointed king/servant/Son in perfect relationship with him, Jesus is the perfect image of God –the place where God lives among his people, Jesus is the Davidic king who speaks with the authority of God, Jesus is the source of God's blessing to all nations.*

8. Fill in the 'Development of the Kingdom' table for week 8 (see Appendix A in the back of this booklet).

## Looking Forward

Some Christians mistakenly only read the New Testament, thinking these are the bits about Jesus.

9. Split into two groups and form debating teams. Take five minutes in your groups to plan your arguments and nominate your speaker. The first team will have one minute (use a timer) to argue that Christians don't need to bother with the Old Testament. The second team will have one minute to argue that Christians need a Bible diet that covers all of scripture. Vote a winner at the end.
10. Discuss any important points to add.
11. Look at Appendix B (in the back of this booklet) which breaks the Bible up into its different genres. Which genres do you tend towards? What genres do you tend to neglect?

## Pray

- Praise God that Jesus has come.
- Thank him that the whole of Scripture points to Jesus.
- Ask God to grow our knowledge and love for Jesus the king.
- Ask for help with your Personal Reading Challenge this week.
- Pray for your group's mission partner.
- Pray for Explore.



## Week 8 Personal Reading Challenge

Read or listen to another 5 chapters of your chosen book of the Bible this week (or pick a new one if you finished it).

For each chapter, fill in the following chart:

(BOOK)	What do I learn about God's Kingdom/King?	Thoughts	Questions
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			

# WEEK 9: THE PROCLAIMED KINGDOM

## Connecting

1. Share one thing from this past week that you'd like to thank God for and one thing you'd like to ask God for.
2. What have we learnt so far about the big story of God's Kingdom (Growth Groups and Sundays)?
3. Share any thoughts and/or questions you had from your Personal Reading Challenge this past week.
4. Other than the gospel, what's the best news you've ever gotten to deliver?

## Pray

- Thank God for each other
- Pray for specific thanks and requests from Question 1
- Ask God that his Spirit might enlighten and transform us as we read his word

## Looking Up

*All of God's promises found their fulfilment in Jesus. His sacrificial death opened the door for people to enter into the kingdom by faith. The kingdom is now, but it's not yet. After his resurrection, he returned to the Father, promising never to leave us, but to come soon and bring the kingdom into its final, perfect fulfilment. This is where you and I find ourselves today—the last days.*

5. Who are God's people now?

6. Where is God's place now?

7. What is God's rule now?

8. What are God's blessings?

9. Fill in the 'Development of the Kingdom' table for week 9 (see Appendix A in the back of this booklet).
10. Why has Jesus left a gap between His first coming and His second coming? Why didn't he just bring the fulness of the kingdom in one?

[Read Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 24:44-49 & Acts 1:3-8]

11. What do Jesus' parting instructions in these verses teach us about this age we live in between Jesus' first and second comings?

## **Looking Forward**

[Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21]

12. Is the job of proclaiming the gospel for all Christians, or just some?

13. A famous quote says “Preach the gospel. If necessary, use words.” This is popularised with the ‘social gospel’—an approach to mission where the focus is good works. Use the big story of God’s Kingdom to evaluate these approaches to mission.
14. How must Jesus’ purpose for this age shape our personal priorities?
15. What will you do as a result of what we’ve learnt today?

## Pray

- Praise God that he is patient and wants all people to come to repentance.
- Thank him for giving us his Spirit and adopting us.
- Ask God to embolden us to proclaim Christ until he returns.
- Ask for help in your Personal Reading Challenge this week (see below).
- Pray for your group’s mission partner.
- Pray for Explore.

## Week 9 Personal Reading Challenge

Read or listen to another 5 chapters of your chosen book of the Bible this week (or pick a new one if you finished it).

For each chapter, fill in the following chart:

(BOOK)	What do I learn about God's Kingdom/King?	Thoughts	Questions
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			



4. In pairs, share your favourite place on earth ...

- Why is it your favourite?
- What is it that you love about it?
- How has it shaped you?
- How does it make you feel/affect you: to be there, to not be there, to miss being there, to think about being there, to know you're going there soon?

### Pray

- Thank God for each other
- Pray for specific thanks and requests from Question 1
- Ask God that his Spirit might enlighten and transform us as we read his word

### Looking Up

*All of history tells one story. From creation to new creation, the Bible tells the story of the kingdom that God is building. All of God's promises find their ultimate fulfilment in Jesus—the lion of Judah who crushed the snake, the perfect lamb of God who sacrificed himself for our sin, the great high priest who mediates for us in the true heavenly temple, God himself who came to his people. Now, his Spirit-filled people proclaim the good news that the king has come and invite people into his kingdom. Soon he will return to remove sin and death forever. But it's no patch-up job ...*

[Read Revelation 1:1-3]

5. What themes do we find in these verses?



6. Why do we find the 'nearness' hard to believe? Why is this emphasised so much throughout the New Testament?

*Christ's return will bring about the perfection of God's Kingdom: the serpent crushed, the unrighteous judged and punished, death destroyed, creation renewed and restored.*

[Read Revelation 20:7-21:8]

7. What will Christ's second coming mean:
- A. for the serpent?
  - B. for creation?
  - C. for all people?
  - D. for followers of Christ?

E. for those who don't follow Christ?

F. for death?

*Christ's coming means an end to the curse: no more death, no more sin, no more pain, no more serpent—new creation without stain. Yet it isn't a return to the time of Adam and Eve—the perfection is far greater than the pattern.*

[Read Revelation 21:9-22:5]

8. How do we see the pattern developed into the perfected Kingdom?

A. God's People

B. God's Place

## C. God's Rule

## D. God's Blessing

9. Fill in the 'Development of the Kingdom' table for week 10 (see Appendix A in the back of this booklet).

## Looking Forward

10. How does the perfected kingdom give us a far better hope than this picture?



11. What are ways we speak about eternity that aren't true, or aren't helpful for a proper understanding about the Bible's teaching on eternity?

12. How does God's revelation of the end affect our joy and hope in the face of less-than-ideal circumstances in this life?
  
13. How does the certain hope of the perfected kingdom take stress out of this life?
  
14. How can we practically encourage each other to live for the new creation?

## Pray

- Praise God that he has given us a guarantee of what is to come.
- Thank him for dealing with sin and preparing a place for us.
- Ask God to direct our hearts to his heavenly city.
- Ask for help with your Personal Reading Challenge this week (see below).
- Pray for your group's mission partner.
- Pray that those who attended Explore would come to Christ and be established in the faith.

## Week 10 Personal Reading Challenge

Read or listen to another 5 chapters of your chosen book of the Bible this week (or pick a new one if you finished it).

For each chapter, fill in the following chart:

(BOOK)	What do I learn about God's Kingdom/King?	Thoughts	Questions
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			
(ch.)			

# APPENDIX A: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE

Week	God's Kingdom	God's People
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

# KINGDOM

God's Place	God's Rule & Blessing

## THE OLD TESTAMENT | 39 BOOKS

NARRATIVE	WRITINGS	PROPHECY
PENTATEUCH *	JOB	MAJOR
GENESIS	PSALMS	ISAIAH
EXODUS	PROVERBS	JEREMIAH
LEVITICUS	ECCLESIASTES	EZEKIEL
NUMBERS	SONG OF SONGS	DANIEL
DEUTERONOMY	LAMENTATIONS	MINOR
		HOSEA
JOSHUA		JOEL
JUDGES		AMOS
RUTH		OBADIAH
1&2 SAMUEL		JONAH
1&2 KINGS		MICAH
1&2 CHRONICLES		NAHUM
EZRA-NEHEMIAH		HABAKKUK
ESTHER		ZEPHANIAH
		HAGGAI
		ZECCHARIAH
		MALACHI

## THE NEW TESTAMENT | 27 BOOKS

GOSPELS	NARRATIVE	LETTERS	PROPHECY/LETTER
MATTHEW		PAUL → CHURCHES	REVELATION
MARK		ROMANS	
LUKE	ACTS	1 CORINTHIANS	
JOHN		2 CORINTHIANS	
		GALATIANS	
		EPHESIANS	
		PHILIPPIANS	
		COLOSSIANS	
		1 THESSALONIANS	
		2 THESSALONIANS	

PAUL → INDIVIDUALS
1 TIMOTHY
2 TIMOTHY
TITUS
PHILEMON
GENERAL
HEBREWS
JAMES
1 PETER
2 PETER
1 JOHN
2 JOHN
3 JOHN
JUDE

# APPENDIX B

## THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

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\* Pentateuch – the first five books of the Old Testament