

Learn to Read Acts Effectively

Distance Learning Programme

Additional Notes

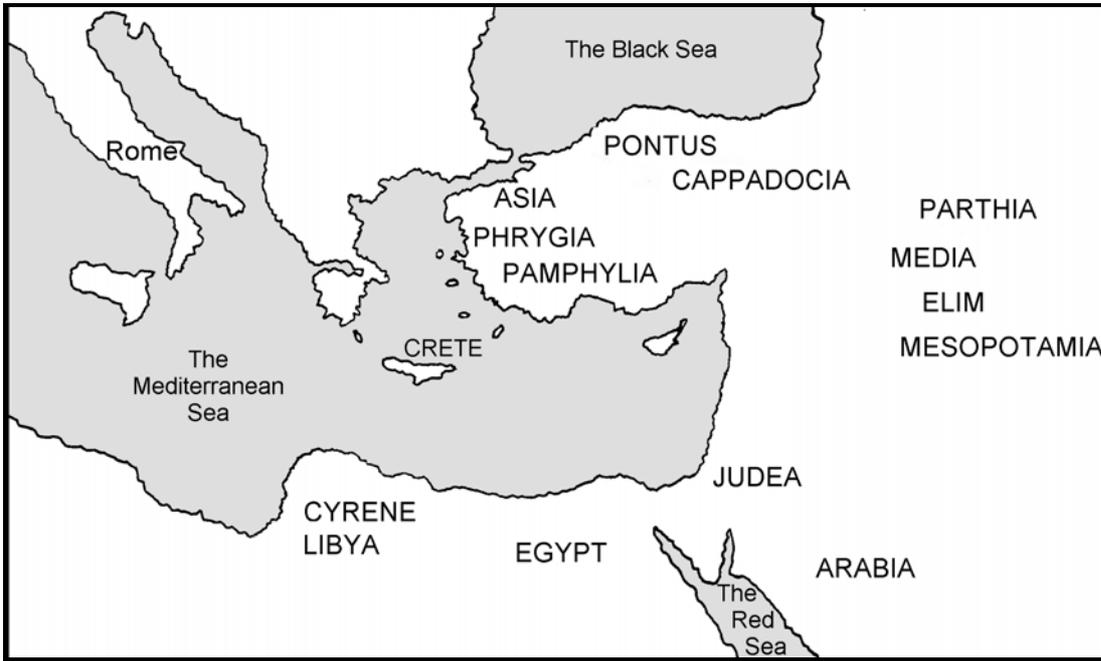
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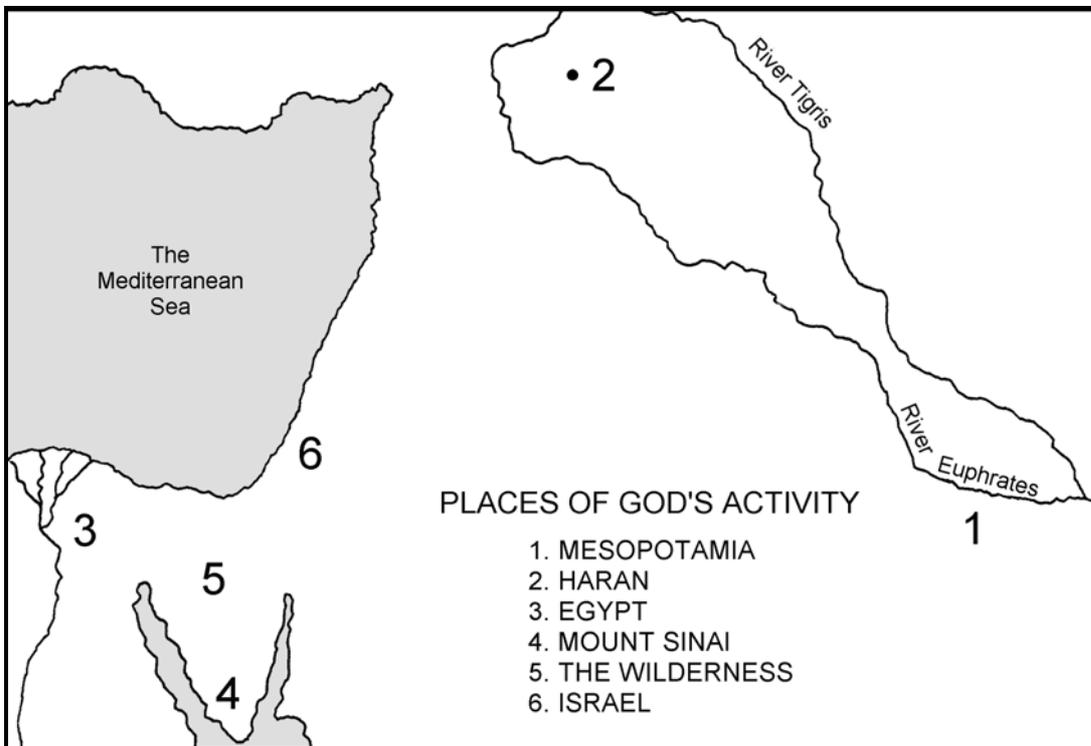
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1. Maps

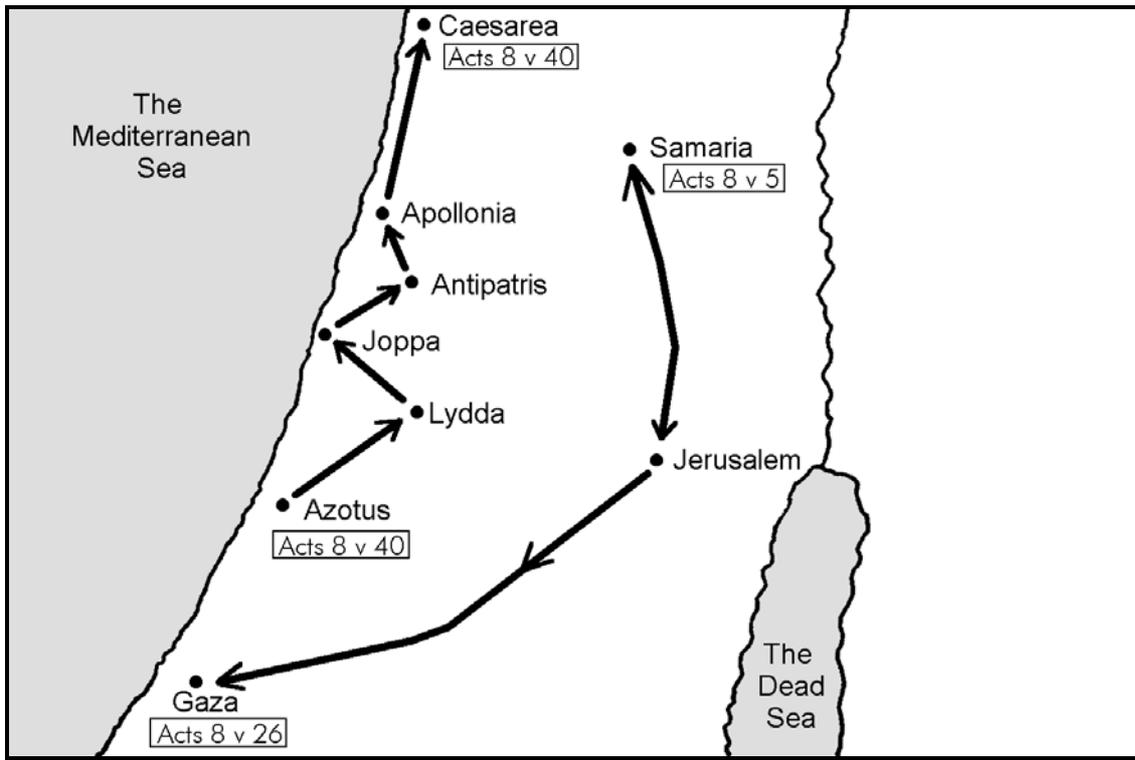
Map 1 - The nations represented in Acts 2 v 8 to 11



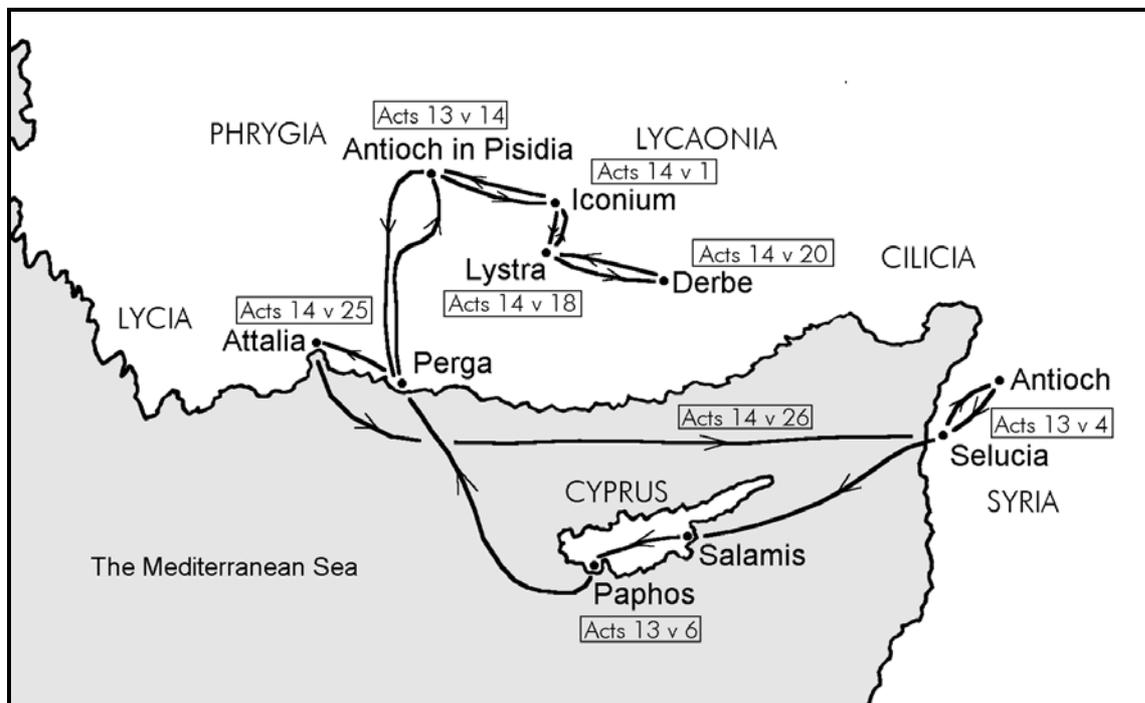
Map 2 - The places mentioned in Stephen's address Acts 7 v 2 to 56



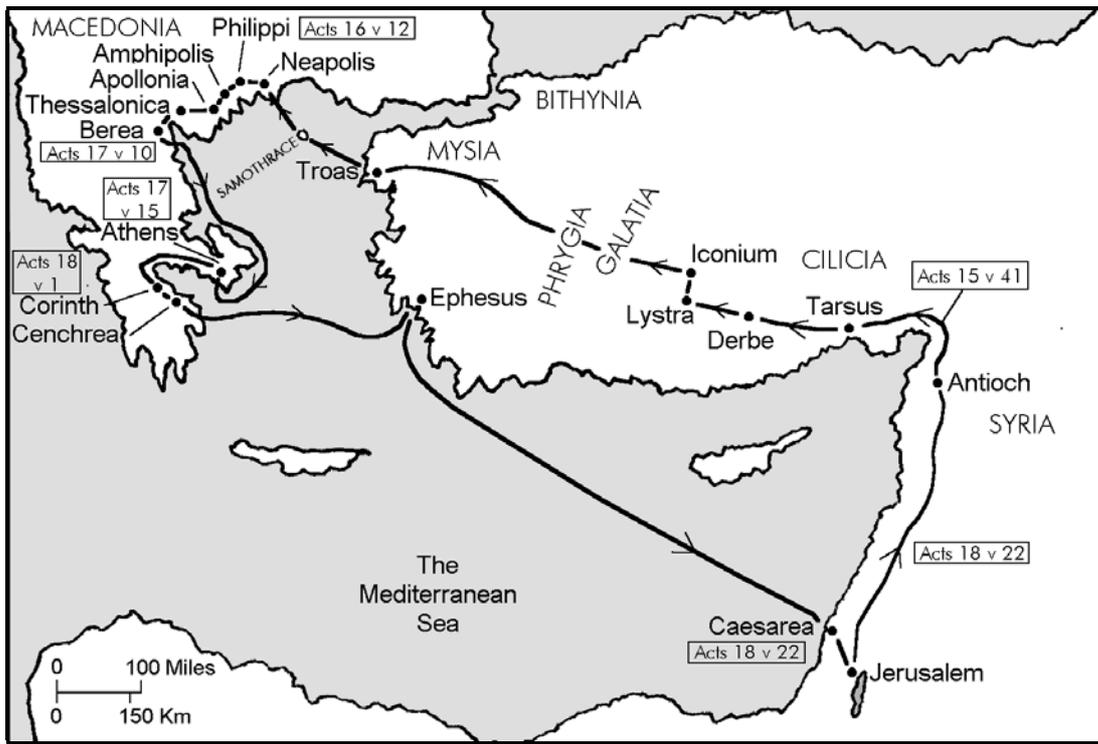
Map 3 - Philip's travels Acts 8 v 4 to 40



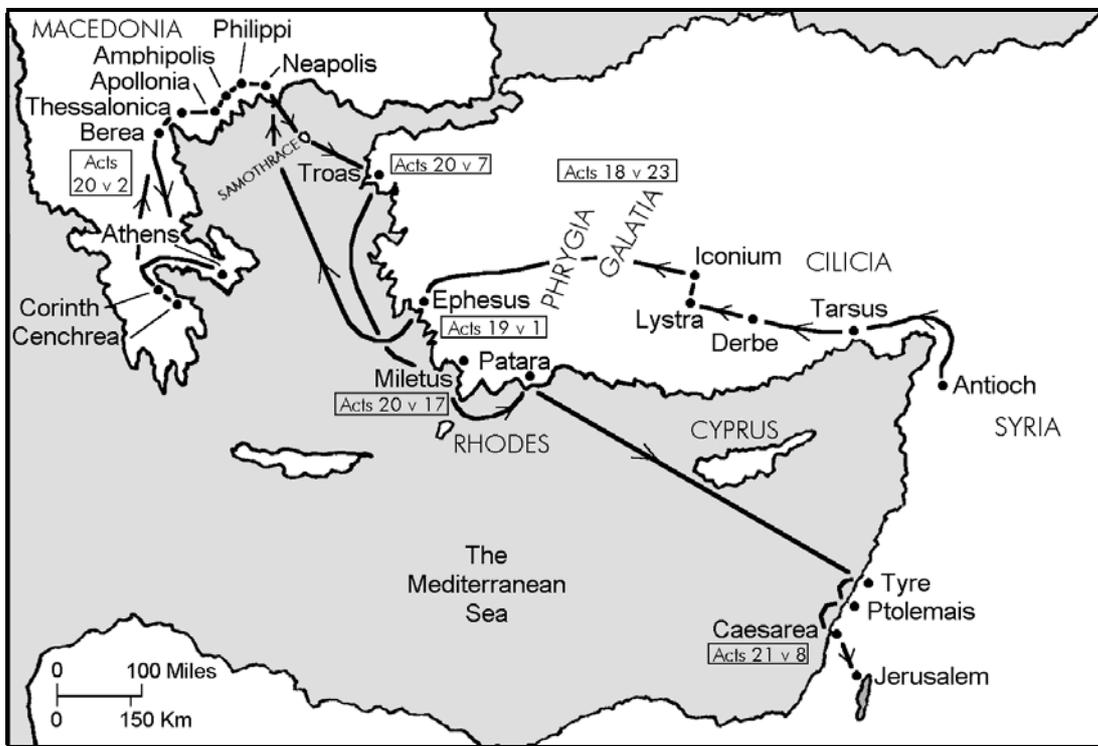
Map 4 - Paul's first missionary journey Acts 13 and 14



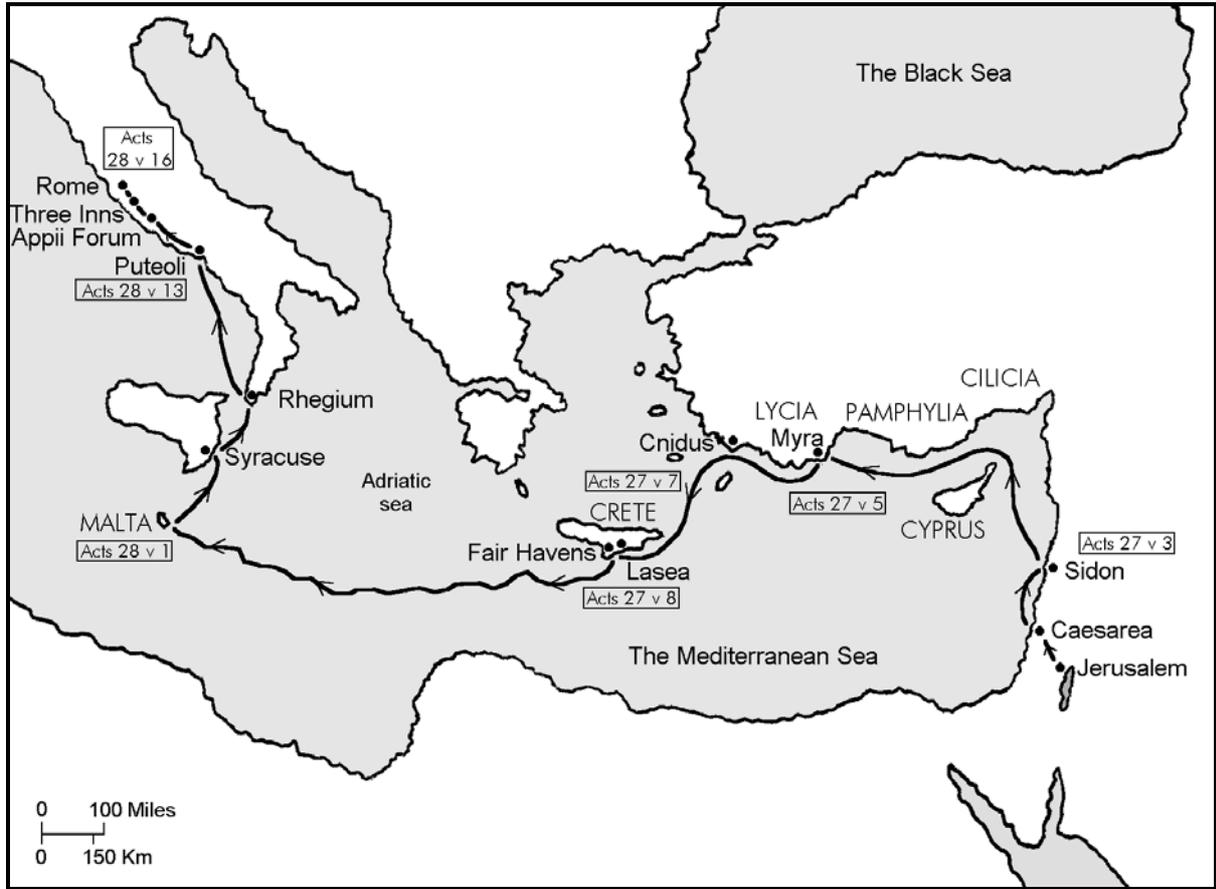
Map 5 - Paul's second missionary journey Acts 15 to 18



Map 6 - Paul's third missionary journey Acts 18 to 20



Map 7 - Paul's journey to Rome Acts 27 and 28



2. Chronology of the Acts

Approx. Date	Event	Reference
29 to 33	THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM	
	The ascension of Jesus	1 v 1 to 14
	Matthias chosen	1 v 15 to 26
	The Holy Spirit given	2 v 1 to 13
	Peter's address	2 v 14 to 40
	Believers baptised	2 v 41 to 47
	A lame man healed	3 v 1 to 11
	Peter's message in the temple	3 v 12 to 26
	Peter and John arrested and threatened	4 v 1 to 22
	Prayer for courage	4 v 23 to 31
	All things common	4 v 32 to 37
	Ananias and Sapphira	5 v 1 to 16
	Arrest of the apostles	5 v 17 to 42
	Welfare overseers appointed	6 v 1 to 7
	Stephen accused of blasphemy	6 v 8 to 15
	Stephen's address	7 v 1 to 53
	Stephen's death	7 v 54 to 60
33 to 36	THE CHURCH IN SAMARIA AND JUDEA	
	Saul's persecution	8 v 1 to 3
	Preaching in Samaria	8 v 4 to 8
	Simon the sorcerer	8 v 9 to 25
	The Ethiopian eunuch	8 v 26 to 40
	The conversion of Saul	9 v 1 to 19
	Initial preaching by Saul	9 v 20 to 31
	Aeneas healed and Dorcas raised to life	9 v 32 to 43
36 to 47	THE CHURCH INCLUDES NON-JEWS	
	Cornelius and Peter see visions	10 v 1 to 23
	Peter preaches to Cornelius and his household	10 v 24 to 43
	Baptism of Cornelius and his household	10 v 44 to 48
	Peter convinces the Jews that non-Jews can be saved	11 v 1 to 18
	Preaching work in Antioch	11 v 19 to 26
	Relief sent to Judea	11 v 27 to 30
	Persecution by Herod	12 v 1 to 4
	Peter freed from prison	12 v 5 to 19
	Herod's death	12 v 20 to 25

 47 to 62 THE CHURCH SPREADS THROUGH THE ROMAN EMPIRE

47 to 48	Paul's first missionary journey	
	Barnabas and Saul chosen	13 v 1 to 4
	Preaching in Cyprus	13 v 5 to 12
	At Antioch in Pisidia	13 v 13 to 52
	At Iconium	14 v 1 to 7
	At Lystra	14 v 8 to 20
	Encouragement to the new believers	14 v 21 to 28
49	Problems as the church spreads	
	Conflict over circumcision	15 v 1 to 5
	The Jerusalem conference	15 v 6 to 21
	The Jerusalem agreement	15 v 22 to 29
	Preaching in Syria	15 v 30 to 35
49 to 52	Paul's second missionary journey	
	Division over John Mark	15 v 36 to 41
	The call to Macedonia	16 v 1 to 10
	Events at Philippi	16 v 11 to 40
	Preaching at Thessalonica	17 v 1 to 9
	Preaching at Berea	17 v 10 to 15
	Preaching at Athens	17 v 16 to 34
	Preaching at Corinth	18 v 1 to 17
	Paul returns to Antioch	18 v 18 to 22
53 to 57	Paul's third missionary journey	
	Preaching of Apollos at Ephesus	18 v 23 to 28
	Paul's preaching at Ephesus	19 v 1 to 10
	Miracles and conversions at Ephesus	19 v 11 to 22
	Riot at Ephesus	19 v 23 to 41
	Paul's journeys in Greece	20 v 1 to 6
	Troas to Miletus	20 v 7 to 16
	Message to the Ephesian elders	20 v 17 to 38
	Paul's journey to Jerusalem	21 v 1 to 17
57	Paul arrested in Jerusalem	
	Paul urged to pacify the Jews	21 v 18 to 25
	Paul arrested in the temple	21 v 26 to 40
	Paul addresses the Jerusalem crowd	22 v 1 to 21
	Reactions to Paul's speech	22 v 22 to 30
57 to 59	Paul witnesses to the rulers	
	Paul addresses the Jewish council	23 v 1 to 11
	Jewish plot - Paul sent to Felix the governor	23 v 12 to 35
	Paul before Felix	24 v 1 to 27
	Paul before Festus and his appeal to Caesar	25 v 1 to 12
	Paul before Agrippa	25 v 13 to 26 v 32
59 to 62	Paul's journey to Rome	
	Paul's journey as far as Malta	27 v 1 to 44
	Paul's journey from Malta to Rome	28 v 1 to 16
	Paul preaches in Rome	28 v 17 to 31

3. The significance of the Kingdom of Israel

Israel is at the centre of God's plan in both Old and New Testaments. Look at the cross-references from Acts 1 v 6:

X-Refs-
Acts 1 v 6

Isaiah 9 v 6 and 7; Hosea 3 v 4 and 5; Micah 5 v 2; Matthew 20 v 21;
Luke 22 v 29 and 30.

- Isaiah predicted that a child would be born who would rule justly on David's throne. His rule will be powerful and never ending
- Hosea prophesied that Israel would be without king and worship for a limited period only
- Micah tells us that Israel's ruler would come from Bethlehem
- The mother of Zebedee's sons wanted her two sons to be in high positions in the kingdom over which Jesus will rule
- Jesus promised his disciples that they will help him rule over the nation of Israel

An echo from Luke confirms that Jesus is the one who will fulfil the Old Testament predictions about an endless kingdom of Israel:

Echo -
Jesus to
be king
of Israel

Luke 1 v 31 to 33.

These verses clearly tell us that Jesus will be king on David's throne, which was in Jerusalem, and that his reign will not end.

The echoes below show that the same Israel-centred hope was the basis for the preaching in the Acts:

Echoes -
Hope of
Israel

Acts 26 v 6 and 7; 28 v 20.

If you would like to look further into the subject of Israel being involved in God's plan, have a look at these references and see what you can learn:
Jeremiah 23 v 5 and 6; Ezekiel 37 v 24 to 27; Obadiah 17 to 21; Zephaniah 3 v 15 to 17.

In Acts 1 v 6, the disciples were expecting that Jesus would fulfil these predictions and make himself king at that time.

God's plan started with the Jews, but there are hints all through the Old Testament that non-Jews would also be included:



Genesis 12 v 3; Psalm 72 v 17; Isaiah 60 v 3; Micah 4 v 2.

- The promises to Abraham involved "all the families of the earth" being blessed
- All nations can be included in the blessings of God's plan
- The non-Jews (or Gentiles) will be attracted to God's illuminating message
- Many nations will eventually worship the God of Israel

We shall see how the good news of God's plan was given to the Gentiles as we look further at the book of Acts.



The kingdom of Israel is at the centre of God's purpose. The Old Testament prophets predicted that a king, born in Bethlehem, would have a never-ending reign over the nation of Israel. The New Testament tells us that Jesus is this king, and that we can be in this endless kingdom. People from all nations can be included in this plan.

4. The work of the Holy Spirit

What does the Bible mean by “spirit”?



Look at the *Strong's Concordance* definitions (on page 16) of the word spirit in both Old and New Testaments.

As you will see, the word has a large variety of meanings. We can summarise the *Strong's Concordance* information as follows:

The Hebrew word translated “spirit” in our Old Testament is “ruwach”. Literally it means “air in motion”. Air in motion often makes things happen. High winds can have dramatic effects. The idea of “motivating force” is always behind the use of the word “ruwach”.

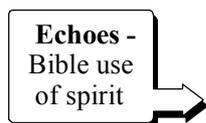
The Greek New Testament word “pneuma” is usually translated “spirit”. “Pneuma”, like the Old Testament “ruwach”, also has the idea of “air in motion” making things happen.

We often use the term “spirit” to describe how a group of people are motivated, e.g. by the phrase “team spirit”.



How does the Bible use the word “spirit”?

Have a look at the echoes to find out:



Genesis 1 v 2; 41 v 8; 45 v 27; Exodus 6 v 9; 35 v 21; Matthew 3 v 16;
Mark 14 v 38; Luke 1 v 47; 8 v 55; 1 Corinthians 2 v 9 to 12.

- God’s spirit was involved in creation
- Pharaoh’s spirit was troubled
- Jacob’s spirit revived
- The Israelites had anguish of spirit
- The Israelites brought the tabernacle offerings willingly
- God’s power was given to Jesus
- The disciples wanted to follow Jesus, but their human nature let them down
- Mary had a joyful spirit because she was to bear the Messiah
- When the girl’s spirit returned, she came to life again
- God communicates His plans for us through His spirit - we will look more at this later

These are typical of the Bible use of the word “spirit” . They indicate “that which enables God or people to do things”, or a “state of mind” which can result in people doing things.

We now wish to look at what the Bible has to say about God’s spirit or motivating power.

Look at these echoes and you will see the idea of “power” linked with God’s “spirit” (If you are using the Authorised Version, you will notice that the term “Holy Ghost” is sometimes used instead of “Holy Spirit”):

Echoes -
God’s spirit
as power

Micah 3 v 8; Luke 1 v 35; 4 v 14 ; Acts 1 v 8; Romans 15 v 13 and 19.



God’s spirit is His power which enables Him to do things.

How does God use His spirit?

We have seen that God’s spirit was involved in creation. If you look at the echoes below, you will see that His spirit also keeps everything alive:

Echoes -
God’s spirit
sustains
creation

Job 33 v 4; 34 v 14 and 15; Psalm 104 v 30; Isaiah 42 v 5.

- Elihu realised that God’s spirit gave him his life
- He also realised that everything would die if God were to withdraw His spirit power
- God’s spirit power sustains the animal kingdom
- Isaiah also reminds us that God’s spirit keeps us alive

We have already looked at the first time God's spirit is mentioned, Genesis 1 v 2.

We can learn other facts from this passage:

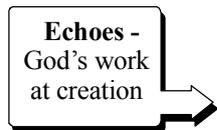
Genesis 1 v 1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep.

And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

There are some interesting echoes which help us understand a little more of what was happening at creation:



Job 26 v 13; Psalm 33 v 6.

- The Job reference tells us that God's spirit was involved in creation
- The Psalm adds that God's word as well as His breath (or spirit) were working

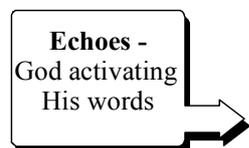
We have already seen that "spirit" has the idea of "making things happen". We can see:

- God's spirit power was present when He spoke
- God's spirit power put into effect that which He intended

We can see that there is a link between the word of God and His spirit - God's spirit is the power which puts into action God's intentions shown by His words. We sometimes go through a similar process when we intend to do something - first we have an idea which we express in words. We then use our limited human powers to put our idea into action.



How does God use His spirit to put His words into action?



Exodus 23 v 20 to 23; Psalm 103 v 20 and 21.

- The Israelites were to listen to the words of the angel because he was giving them God's message
- The angels listen to God's word and have the power to put it into operation

There are many echoes that show the angels putting God's plan into operation:

**Echoes -
Angels
involved
in God's plan**

Genesis 24 v 40; Exodus 32 v 34; Psalm 34 v 7; Matthew 18 v 10; 24 v 31; 28 v 2; Luke 15 v 10; Hebrews 1 v 13 and 14.

- Abraham assured his servant that an angel would help him in his mission
- Moses was assured that God's angel would help him to lead the Israelites
- Psalm 34 tells us that God's angels look after those who fear God
- Jesus told his disciples that angels look after God's humble servants
- The angels will be involved at the return of Jesus
- An angel rolled back the stone at the resurrection of Jesus
- The angels rejoice when anyone turns to God
- The angels look after those involved in God's plan



We can see that the angels accomplish God's purpose and have responsibilities to care for those who fear God. As Psalm 103 v 20 indicates, the angels have more than enough power - the power of God's spirit - to do their work.

We can learn more about how God's spirit works by looking at some Old Testament echoes:

**Echoes -
God's spirit
working in the
Old Testament**

Exodus 35 v 30 to 35; Numbers 11 v 17, 25 and 29; Judges 11 v 29; 1 Samuel 11 v 6.

- God's spirit gave special skill to help make the tabernacle
- Moses and the seventy elders had help from God's spirit
- God's spirit stirred Jephthah into action to deliver Israel from the Ammonites
- God's spirit motivated Saul to help the people of Jabesh Gilead

These references tell us that God's spirit acted when there was a specific task to be done. Some of these examples could be regarded as people being given specific natural abilities to enable them to perform a particular task.

Summary of the work of God's spirit



Spirit indicates "that which enables God or people to do things", or a "state of mind" which can result in people doing things.

God created the world and sustains all life by His spirit.

The angels use the spirit power of God to accomplish His purpose, including guiding and caring for those who respect God's principles.

There are Old Testament examples where God's spirit acted when there was an important task to be done. People were given specific natural abilities to enable them to perform a particular task.

We will now look at what the Bible means by God's *Holy* Spirit.

What does the Bible mean by "holy"?



Look at the *Strong's Concordance* definitions of the word "holy", in both Old and New Testaments, on page 16.

The *Strong's Concordance* definitions tell us that "holy", means "consecrated" or "set apart" and therefore special. A typical example of the Bible use of the word "holy" is Exodus 19 v 5 and 6:

Exodus 19 v 5 "Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.

6 "And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

The nation of Israel were called out and separated, or set apart, from the rest of the nations.

So "Holy Spirit" is God's "motivating spirit" doing a special work.

What does the Bible tell us about the “Holy Spirit”?

Have a look at the echoes to find out more about the special work of the Holy Spirit:

**Echoes -
Work of
God’s
Holy Spirit**

Isaiah 63 v 9 and 10; Acts 5 v 32.

- Ignoring what God has said is rebelling against His Holy Spirit
- Peter and the other apostles told the high priest that God gave the apostles special Holy Spirit powers as a witness to the message they were preaching

We will now look at other echoes from these two ideas:

**Echoes -
God’s Holy Spirit
involved in what
He has said**

2 Samuel 23 v 2; Mark 12 v 36; Acts 7 v 51; 28 v 25;
Ephesians 6 v 17; Hebrews 3 v 7 and 8; 2 Peter 1 v 21.

- God’s Holy Spirit spoke through David
- Stephen also tells us that rebellion against what God said through His prophets is resisting His Holy Spirit
- The Holy Spirit spoke through Isaiah
- The “sword of the Spirit” is the Word of God
- Hebrews tells us that Psalm 95 v 7 to 11 is the Holy Spirit speaking
- The prophets spoke by the Holy Spirit



These passages make it clear that one very special activity of the Holy Spirit was to give us God’s Word or message.

Echoes -
God's Holy
Spirit a witness
to the apostles'
message

Luke 24 v 46 to 49; John 14 v 26; Acts 1 v 8; 8 v 5 and 6.

- Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the power that would help them preach to all nations
- The Holy Spirit would help the disciples remember what Jesus had said
- Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would help them witness to all the world
- People listened to Philip when they saw his miracles



Here we see another special activity of the Holy Spirit - as a witness to the truth of the apostles' message.

We will now look at some more examples of the special work of God's Spirit power.

Echoes -
Special work
of God's Spirit

Luke 1 v 35, 41 to 42 and 67; Acts 1 v 2; 4 v 8 and 31; 13 v 2 and 4; 15 v 28.

- Jesus was born as a result of the Holy Spirit "overshadowing" Mary
- Elizabeth and Zacharias prophesied about the future when they were filled with the Holy Spirit
- Jesus instructed the apostles "through the Holy Spirit"
- Peter and the early believers preached the gospel when they were filled with the Holy Spirit
- The Holy Spirit directed the work of preaching by Barnabas and Saul
- The Holy Spirit approved the decision of the Jerusalem council



The special work of the Holy Spirit included the birth of the Lord Jesus, the preaching of the gospel and the establishment of the early church.

Summary of the work of God's Holy Spirit

- God's motivating power is referred to as "Holy" when it is performing a special work
- The special work of the Holy Spirit included:
 - * giving us God's Word or message in the Bible
 - * the birth of the Lord Jesus
 - * giving witness (through miracles) to the truth of the apostles' message
 - * the preaching of the gospel
 - * the establishment of the early church

Strong's Concordance definitions

Spirit

7307 ruwach (roo'-akh) Old Testament

from **7306**;

wind; by resemblance *breath*, i.e. a sensible (or even violent) exhalation;

fig. *life, anger, unsubstantiality*; by extens. a *region* of the sky;

by resemblance *spirit*, but only of a rational being (includ. its expression and functions):
air, anger, blast, breath, courage, mind, spirit(ual), tempest, (whirl-) wind (-y).

4151 pneuma (pnyoo'-mah) New Testament

from **4154**;

a *current* of air, i.e. *breath (blast)* or a *breeze*;

by anal. or fig. a *spirit*, i.e. (human) the rational *soul*,

(by impl.) *vital principle*, mental *disposition*, etc.,

or (superhuman) an *angel, daemon*, or (divine) *God, Christ's spirit*, the Holy *Spirit*:
ghost, life, spirit(-ual, -ually), mind.

Holy

6944 qodesh (ko'-desh) Old Testament

from **6942**;

a *sacred* place or thing;

rarely abstr. *sanctity*:

consecrated (thing), dedicated (thing), hallowed (thing), holiness, holy (portion, thing),
saint, sanctuary.

40 hagios (hag'-ee-os) New Testament

from **hagos** (an *awful* thing);

sacred (phys. *pure*, mor. *blameless* or *religious*, cer. *consecrated*):

(most) holy (one, thing), saint.

5. The Bible meaning of “Hell”

We have reproduced the information we gave in the “Terminology” section of Session 5 of the *Learn to Read the Bible Effectively* course to remind you what we saw there.

2. Hell

The entry in *Young’s Concordance* looks like this.

HELL -

1. *The unseen state, sheol.*

- Deut 32.22 and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and
- 2 Sa. 22. 6 The sorrows of hell compassed me about
- Job 11. 8 what canst thou do? deeper than hell
- 26. 6 Hell (is) naked before him, and destruction
- Psa. 9. 17 The wicked shall be turned into hell, (and)
- 16. 10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell

(+ 25 more Old Testament references)

2. *Hades, the unseen world, hades.*

- Matt 11. 23 thou...shalt be brought down to hell: for
- 16. 18 gates of hell shall not prevail against it
- Luke 10. 15 And thou....shalt be thrust down to hell

(+ 7 more New Testament references)

3. *Valley of Hinnom, Gehenna, geenna.*

- Matt. 5. 22 shall say...shall be in danger of hell fire
- 5. 29, 30 thy whole body should be cast into hell
- 10. 28 him which is able to destroy.....body in hell

(+ 8 more New Testament references)

Looking at this, you can see that the word “Hell” is used as a translation of:

1. The Hebrew word “sheol”
2. The Greek word “hades”
3. The Greek word “geenna”

The Hebrew word “sheol” and the Greek word “hades” both mean similar things, i.e. the unseen state or world. We show below the lexicon entries for these words. When you have a Greek or Hebrew word, you can look it up in a lexicon to find out how it is translated.

SHEOL

- grave 31
- hell 31
- pit 3

You can see that the word is translated “hell”, “grave” and “pit”.

HADES

grave 1
hell 10

You can see that, again, the word is also translated grave.

From this you can see that “sheol” and “hades” can both be translated as “grave”.

GEENNA

You can see from the *Young's Concordance* entry that “geenna” is the “Valley of Hinnom”, which is one of the valleys outside Jerusalem. This can be found on most maps of Jerusalem. The Valley of Hinnom was the rubbish dump outside Jerusalem where fires were kept constantly burning to dispose of the rubbish.

In summary, there are three main words that have been translated “hell”. Two can also be translated “grave” and the third was a literal place of continual fires.

6. Evidences of design in nature

Romans 1 v 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. (New International Version)

This verse tells us that evidence of the existence of God is to be seen in the natural world. Many people today believe that our world happened by chance. The book *God Is* by Alan Hayward shows that the world around us must have had a designer. The following is a brief summary of some points from that book.

The just-so world

Advanced life can exist on our planet because conditions are just right for it. Here are just a few of the ways in which conditions on planet earth happen to be just right:

- The right sort of sun
- The right distance from the sun
- The right size
- The right sort of rotation

- Plenty of the right materials
- Freedom from the wrong materials
- The right kind of sea
- The right kind of atmosphere

The first living cell

One of the great mysteries of biology is how the first cell came to exist. There is a tremendous gap between viruses and the simplest one-celled creatures, such as bacteria, and no one knows how it was bridged.

The humble bacterium carries around with it as many life-support systems as a spaceship. All of these life support systems must be in place at the same time before the cell can work. So how did it all start?

Why kangaroos hop

A kangaroo's under-carriage is built like an ingenious system of springs, in which its huge tail plays a major part. It is nature's equivalent of the pogo stick. The kangaroo's hopping-gear is another all-or-nothing system. It is no use at all to the person who holds it until it is sufficiently well formed to operate efficiently at high speeds. A half-evolved kangaroo-kit would only be a drag on its owner. Two short legs plus two long legs plus an awkward great tail would be a perfect recipe for extinction - unless and until they housed an effective hopping outfit.

So what caused the kangaroo's brilliantly successful method of travel to evolve? It certainly could not have been natural selection, which would surely have wiped out the kangaroo's earliest ancestors.

Another unorthodox animal

Research has shown that the camel has not one secret of survival, but several. These are the principal ones:

1. A camel can lose a quarter of its weight by evaporation of water from its tissues without suffering any harm.
2. A camel's urine is very much more concentrated than a man's. Consequently it can get rid of waste products without using nearly as much water as we do.

3. Our bodies need to stay at a constant temperature. A camel can allow his body to vary in temperature much more than we can.
4. A human body is covered with a layer of fat, which keeps the heat in. A camel, however, is covered with hair, which keeps the heat out. The camel stores its fat in its humps.

Did this remarkable collection of properties come together by chance, through a series of evolutionary processes? Or is it more likely to be the work of a purposeful creator, deliberately moulding a creature for desert-living people to use?

The riddle of instinct

Where did all the instincts that animals have come from? Were they programmed into the creatures concerned by some supernatural programmer? Or did they just evolve by natural processes?

Take the strange behaviour of the Australian mallee fowl, *Leipoa ocellata*, sometimes called the incubator bird. The male is a powerful creature, and at nesting time his built-in programme moves him to find a patch of sandy soil where he can excavate a pit about three feet deep and ten or twelve feet across. He then proceeds to drag vegetation into the hole until it is more than brim full. After that he waits until rain has saturated the contents of the pit, and then covers it with a thick layer of sand, ending up with a huge mound perhaps fifteen feet in diameter and five feet high - and all this just to provide his mate with a self-incubating nest!

As every gardener knows, a compost heap gets warm as it rots. But just 'warm' is not good enough for the male incubator bird. His mate's eggs need a constant temperature of approximately 92 degrees Fahrenheit, and he is programmed to ensure that they get it. Several times a day he uses his beak as a thermometer to probe the heap. If the temperature is too high he makes ventilation holes to cool things down; too low, and he adds another blanket of sand. When the temperature is just right he permits the hen to lay her eggs in the compost, but until then he makes her wait.

In the autumn there is less sap in the vegetation, and consequently the mallee fowl's compost heap ferments more slowly and generates less heat. But the incubator bird's instinct tells it how to deal with that situation. Each autumn morning he removes sand from the top of the heap to allow the eggs to be warmed by the sun; and late in the afternoon he puts it all back again, to conserve heat during the night.

Biologists know that this bird's astonishing behaviour is programmed in its nucleic acid molecules, but they cannot tell how it got there. To say, "It must have evolved", is delightfully easy, but to explain how it could possibly have done so is another matter.

The miracle of migration

One of the most remarkable forms of instinct is the power to navigate. Migrating creatures possess this ability to an extraordinary degree. As recently as World War II ships and aircraft could not navigate anything like as well as many living creatures.

Biologists recognise two distinct problems here. First, there is the comparatively easy one: how do they do it? Even this has been only partially answered.

Birds make use of the stars on the early stages of their journey - provided, of course, that the stars are shining. Some species seem to possess a kind of natural compass, with which they can somehow sense the direction of the earth's magnetic field. How they find their way when they approach the end of their journey is a mystery; all we know is that somehow many birds manage to travel thousands of miles and find the very nest they left the year before.

Then there are fish like the salmon, which can cross a whole ocean and return unerringly to the self-same stream where it was spawned. Perhaps they go by the taste and the smell of the water around them, or the particular pattern made by the throbbing of the waves; nobody knows for sure.

Some sea animals are almost as brilliant. Every year the grey whale travels from the Arctic Ocean to tropical Mexico, to mate in the same narrow-mouthed lagoon. The fur seal travels much the same route in reverse; he goes from California each year to the Arctic, to mate in the tiny Pribilof Islands.

This brings us to the second question, which is the really difficult one. Did this superb navigational instinct evolve? If so, how? It is another form of the same old problem that we have seen before - what use is a half-developed ability to navigate? About as much good as a compass with no needle!

But that is not all. Let us suppose that one day some imaginative genius will conjure up a faintly plausible explanation of how this instinct might just possibly have evolved in stages. Immediately he would find himself up against another problem.

In one human lifetime the stars all remain in the same part of the sky. That is why we call them the 'fixed' stars, as opposed to the planets, which move in their orbits. We can steer very easily by the Pole Star because, as long as anyone can remember, it has sat right over the North Pole.

Yet ten thousand years ago, what we know as the Pole Star was in quite a different part of the sky. And ten thousand years is only a fleeting moment, compared with the time-scale of evolution. Consequently, if birds gradually evolved their ability to steer by the stars, they must have done it over a period when the stars were wandering all over the sky.

The same difficulty arises with all the other supposed methods of finding the way home. Over the past few thousand years the earth's magnetic field has pointed all ways, and the salt composition of our coastal waters has been continually changing. How could any species first acquire the ability to navigate when all its navigational aids were drifting about? Anybody can use a moving navigational beacon once he has become an expert navigator, of course - but imagine trying to teach yourself the rudiments of navigation while all the available beacons were on the move!

Finally, it should be noted that this near-impossible feat had to be accomplished, not once, but at least three times. If evolution really is the answer, then the navigational instinct must have evolved once in birds, and again in mammals, and yet again in fishes.

Well, where does the truth really lie? Was this extraordinary power evolved, in some manner that no one can even begin to explain? Or did some greater power create it? Which seems more likely?

Playing with fire

There are a number of instances where nature has played with fire, either literally or figuratively. Perhaps the most spectacular case is that of the bombardier beetle who actually repels his enemies with what practically amounts to a flamethrower, like some mythical dragon come to life. He does it by using two dangerous chemicals which, when brought together in the presence of suitable catalysts, will explode.

The explosive chemicals (hydroquinone and hydrogen peroxide) are manufactured in separate glands and stored in separate vessels. The catalyst consists of a mixture of two very different enzymes, each of which has a particular property that makes the mixture a perfect detonator for the beetle's explosive.

At the rear of the beetle's body is a combustion chamber, suitably lined with material resembling asbestos, and an opening which can be aimed at the enemy. When he sees the whites of their eyes, the bombardier beetle injects his two explosive chemicals and his enzyme mixture into the combustion chamber, and - pouff! - the body of a scorched predator falls to the ground.

It is no wonder that an eminent German scientist who has studied its strange chemistry has written, "Such an explosion in a living organism would be inconceivable with any biochemical system other than that of the bombardier beetle."

This extraordinary device is a wonderful aid to survival now that it is perfected. But if it was produced by the blind trial-and-error method of evolution, what horrors the earlier generations of beetles must have endured for the sake of their offspring!

Daredevil flies that live on spiders

Another stunt-man of the insect world was discovered by two research workers in the Central American rain forest. In 1977 they published an account of a tiny fly which spends much of its life in the very last place you would think of looking for a small insect - sitting on the back of a large spider.

This fly indulges in such a seemingly perilous form of hitch-hiking because it has a most unusual way of making a living. The spider it lives on is the handsome *Nephila clavipes*, the golden web spider, which has a strange way of dealing with large, tough insects caught in its web. It injects a dose of digestive juice into the body of the trapped insect, and then waits for it to turn into a tender, sticky mess.

At this point the little fly seizes his opportunity. While the spider is still waiting for his meal to be done to a turn, the fly hops across and lands on one of the still-solid parts of the melting insect. He pokes his mouth into one of the spreading pools of soup, and drinks. It takes him only a few seconds to gorge himself to the full, because his mouth is specially formed for sucking liquids fast. Before the spider is ready to gobble up his own meal, the satisfied fly is stretched out on his host's back once more, enjoying an after-dinner nap.

Like being shot from a gun twice nightly before a large audience, this is a delightfully easy way of making a living - once you have acquired the knack. But while you are learning the trade it must be a very hazardous affair. As the biologists who discovered this enterprising fly have commented: "The behaviour [of the flies] requires precise identification of the host and extremely accurate landing, with any error likely to be fatal."

Any error would be fatal, sure enough. If the fly took up residence on the wrong kind of spider he would starve to death waiting for the soup that the other spiders do not manufacture. And he has to land on a hard portion of the fast-melting insect: if he misjudged his landing place the poor fly would really be in the soup, in more ways than one!

How did this species of fly manage to evolve those two extraordinary abilities of host-identification and pinpoint landing, without becoming extinct while it was still a learner? And how did it come about that it simultaneously evolved the ideal mouth for the job, thus making possible its swift getaway?

If you wish to see more evidence, have a look at the book **God Is* from which the information in this section is taken.

**God Is* by Alan Hayward, published by Printland Publishers, Hyderabad.

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7. The Bible use of “satan”

(If you have received the Learn to Read Luke Effectively course, you will already have seen this information.)

“Satan” in the Old Testament

We have reproduced the *Young’s Concordance* entry for “satan” at the end of this section to enable you to do an in-depth study of this subject if you wish.

In the Old Testament satan is used of people. Sometimes the word “satan” is translated “adversary”:

Echoes-
Satan as a
person

1 Samuel 29 v 4; 2 Samuel 19 v 22; 1 Kings 5 v 4; 11 v 14, 23 and 25;
Psalm 38 v 20; 71 v 13.

We can see that “satan” is used of people who oppose other people in various ways.

Numbers 22 v 22 Then God’s anger was aroused because he went, and the Angel of the Lord took His stand in the way as an adversary against him. And he was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him.

In this verse we see that an angel sent from God was a satan when he stood in the way to obstruct or oppose Balaam on his donkey.

The identification of “satan” in Job is not so straightforward. There has been much argument and discussion about the identity of satan in the book of Job.

Job 2 v 3 Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause."

The words of satan against Job move God to test Job, who clearly understood that his present unpleasant circumstances were from God, as Job 2 v 9 and 10 show. Job 1 v 11 and 42 v 11 also show that God was the power behind Job’s sufferings. The satan did exactly what the serpent did in Eden. The satan in Job was involved in the circumstances that tested Job’s commitment to God. Also, as in the case of the serpent, satan is not mentioned again.

So we have seen that the Old Testament uses satan to describe anyone who opposes another. The motive for opposition can be bad, as in the references in Psalms, or good, as in the case of the angel who opposed Balaam. The Job passage has shown us that, where it is difficult to determine the identity of the satan, he is still under God's control and has no power of his own. Satan is not mentioned after he has caused the circumstances that tested Job. If you look at the references to satan in the *Young's Concordance* entry, you will see that there is no mention of satan having any power similar to God's.

Summary of Old Testament teaching on satan

- Satan is used of people who oppose others or wish evil on others
- Satan is used of angels who oppose people for their good
- The satan of Job was under God's control and used God's power
- The satan of Job was involved in the circumstances that tested Job's faith in God
- The satan of Job plays a minor role and his identity is not revealed
- There is no satan who has the power to rival that of the Lord God

This would have been the understanding of those in New Testament times who read and understood the Old Testament.

"Satan" in the New Testament

In the New Testament the concept of "satan" seems in places to be extended from the Old Testament concept of physical opposition to include opposition from thoughts and ideas as well.

We will look at some of the occurrences of "satan" and see how the New Testament uses the word.

Mark 8 v 33 But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, "Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

As we saw in the Old Testament, people who oppose are called satan. Here Peter opposes Jesus. He tries to stop him doing God's will. He puts thoughts of disobedience into Jesus' mind, but it is up to Jesus to make up his own mind whether he will act on them. Notice how Jesus immediately rejects this temptation.

1 Thessalonians 2 v 18 Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us.

We are not told in this verse what the hindrance was, but it was opposition which prevented Paul from seeing the Thessalonians. Acts 17 v 1 to 9 tells us that the political uproar after Paul's visit was such that he could not return; a believer called Jason had been bound over to keep the peace.

Acts 5 v 2 And he [Ananias] kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet.

3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?"

4 "While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

Here we are told exactly what is meant when it says "satan filled your heart" - notice verse 4 says, "Why have you conceived this thing in your heart?". "Satan" means Ananias' evil thoughts about lying to God.

Luke 22 v 3 Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve.

Here we see that opposition in the form of the idea to betray Jesus had occurred or been suggested to Judas. Circumstances were testing him to see if he would remain loyal to Jesus or not, and he failed the test. Again we see that the identity of the satan is not revealed - it was unimportant in comparison to what Judas was about to do.

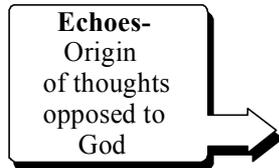
Occasionally it is also used in relation to illness, which opposes or prevents people from living a normal life:

Luke 13 v 16 "So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?"

We can see that the New Testament extends the Old Testament use of the word "satan" from physical opposition to include opposition arising from thoughts, ideas and illness. All these things test our faith and trust in God.



Where do these thoughts opposed to God come from?



Matthew 12 v 35; 15 v 19; Mark 7 v 21 and 22; Luke 6 v 45;
James 1 v 14 and 15; 4 v 1 and 2.

These verses all clearly tell us that we are led astray from God's laws by the wickedness and evil thoughts that come from ourselves.

We have a human nature which, without the correction and guidance of God through the Bible, is naturally inclined to disobedience to God and opposition to His ways.

The term "satan" seems to be used in a similar way to our modern term "the opposition". When companies use the term "the opposition", they mean all of the other people and organisations who are competing against them in any way.

Satan would seem to be the "opposition" to God's laws in the form of wickedness and evil thoughts. It is also used of those who are influenced by those evil thoughts. Temptation occurs when we see situations or hear suggestions based on false ideas that make us inclined to join this "opposition" and disobey God.

All through our lives we are constantly meeting situations where we are faced with having to decide whether we will apply God's principles or not. We are also constantly receiving ideas and thoughts from people and the media which are opposed to God. We have to decide whether we will act on these ideas or not. The term "satan" covers all of this and shows that the opposition comes in many forms, but it can all be regarded as the same opposition, that we must resist at all times.

Summary of the Bible use of "satan"

- Satan is used mainly of opposition to God in thought and action
- These false ideas often come from our own mind
- Often the personal identity of the opposition is not clear
- Our reaction to the opposition is far more important than the opposition itself

Young's Concordance entry

Satan

SATAN, *the hater, accuser.*

1. An adversary of David. B.C. 1017.
1 Ch.21. 1 S. stood up against Israel, and provoked
2. An adversary, opposing spirit.
Job 1. 6 sons of God came ..and S. came also among
1. 7 the LORD said unto S., Whence comest th.?
1.7,9 S. answered the LORD, and said
1. 8 the LORD said unto S., Hast thou consid.
1. 12 the LORD said unto S., Behold, all that
1. 12 S. went forth from the presence of the L.

(+ 9 more Old Testament and 35 New Testament occurrences given below)

Job 2 v 1, 2, 3, 6, 7	Mark 4 v 15; 8 v 33	Romans 16 v 20	1 Timothy 1 v 20; 5 v 15
Psalms 109 v 6	Luke 4 v 8; 10 v 18;	1 Corinthians 5 v 5; 7 v 5	Revelation 2 v 9, 13, 24;
Zechariah 3 v 1, 2	11 v 18; 13 v 16; 22 v 3;	2 Corinthians 2 v 11;	3 v 9; 12 v 9; 20 v 2, 7
Matthew 4 v 10;	22 v 31	11 v 14; 12 v 7	
12 v 26; 16 v 23	John 13 v 27	1 Thessalonians 2 v 18	
Mark 1 v 13; 3 v 23, 26	Acts 5 v 3; 26 v 18	2 Thessalonians 2 v 9	

If we look up "satan" in the lexicon at the back of *Young's Concordance*, we find the following entry:

SATAN

be an adversary 5
resist 1
adversary 7
Satan 19
to withstand 1

8. Jesus as the Son of God

We have seen from the cross-references from Acts 9 v 20 (Session 5, page 10) that Jesus is often referred to as the Son of God. Have a look at the echoes and see what we can learn about the relationship between God and Jesus:

**Echoes -
Jesus is the
Son of God**

Luke 1 v 30 to 35; John 3 v 16; 20 v 17; Romans 8 v 3; Galatians 4 v 4;
1 Peter 1 v 3.

- Mary was to “conceive” and “bring forth” Jesus, just like any other mother. The big difference was that Jesus had no natural father, God’s power came upon Mary
- God sent His “only begotten Son” to save us from permanent death
- Jesus regarded God as his God and Father
- God sent His Son to overcome sin in the same flesh that we all have
- Galatians 4 v 4 confirms what we have seen from Luke - Jesus had God as his Father and Mary as his mother
- Peter tells us that God was not only Father to Jesus, He was also his God
- Peter also tells us that our hope for the future comes through the resurrection of Jesus

From these verses we see the following:

- 1) Jesus was the only Son that God has had
- 2) Jesus had our human nature
- 3) Our future hope comes through the resurrection of Jesus
- 4) God was the God of Jesus

We will now look at echoes from these four points and see what else we can learn:

**Echoes -
Jesus is
God’s
only Son**

John 3 v 18; 1 John 4 v 9.

- We can escape condemnation by believing in Jesus’ saving work
- God showed His love to us in sending His unique Son to give us life

**Echoes -
Jesus had
our human
nature**

Acts 2 v 30; Romans 1 v 3.

- Christ was a descendant of David
- Jesus had the same human nature as David’s descendants

Echoes -
Our future hope
comes through
the resurrection
of Jesus

John 11 v 25; Romans 6 v 4 and 5; 1 Corinthians 15 v 20 to 22.

- We will be raised if we believe in Jesus
- Baptism is the way we show that we are starting a new life now and have the hope of the resurrection
- Christ is the first of those who will be raised from the dead. All those “in Christ” will also be raised

Echoes -
God was
Jesus’ God

2 Corinthians 11 v 31; Ephesians 1 v 3 and 17.

- All these verses show clearly that God was the God of our Lord Jesus Christ

We have seen that the relationship that Jesus has with God is important to us:



- Jesus had God as his Father and Mary as his mother
- This enabled him to overcome sin in the same human flesh that we all have
- We can be raised from the dead in the same way that Jesus was if we believe in Jesus and are baptised

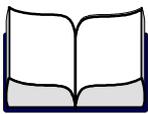
9. The letter to the Galatians

Summary:

This is a letter to the churches in Galatia. Paul encourages the believers not to return to the keeping of the law of Moses, but to keep the one true gospel based on God's promises to Abraham, which are inherited through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul explains that all people - both Jews and Gentiles - can be involved in God's plan.

Chapter 1 - Keep to the one true gospel

Key Verses:

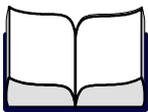


Read Galatians 1 v 6 to 12

- The Galatians were listening to ideas which were not from the true gospel
- Paul was opposed to any one with false messages
- Paul had received his message from Jesus himself

Chapter 2 - The superiority of faith over law

Key Verses:



Read Galatians 2 v 16, 20 and 21

- We cannot be justified (made right) with God by keeping the law of Moses
- We can be made right with God by faith in the work of Jesus
- Christ showed his love to us by dying for us
- We should show our gratitude and follow Christ's loving example

Chapter 3 - God approves those who trust in Him

Key Verses:

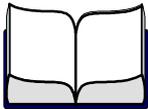


Read Galatians 3
v 6 to 9, 13 and 14, and 26 to 29

- God approved of Abraham because he believed and trusted in Him
- God told Abraham that those with similar trust would also be approved
- Through the work of Christ we can be associated with the promises to Abraham
- To inherit the promises, we must believe in the work of Jesus Christ and be baptised into him

Chapter 4 - The benefits enjoyed by believers

Key Verses:

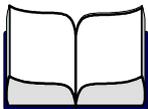


Read Galatians 4 v 4 to 7

- We no longer have to try to live under the law of Moses
- By baptism into Christ we can be adopted as sons of God
- We should then be motivated with Christ-like attitudes

Chapter 5 - The conflict between flesh and spirit

Key Verses:

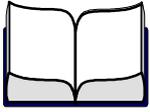


Read Galatians 5 v 17 to 26

- God has shown us through the message given by His Spirit that there is a conflict between our natural inclinations and His ways
- Our natural inclinations result in all kinds of evil
- Those who follow principles shown to us by God's Spirit have a loving, peaceable attitude

Chapter 6 - Applying the principles of God's Spirit

Key Verses:



Read Galatians 6 v 7 to 10

- Following our natural inclinations will lead to death
- Applying the principles shown to us by God's Spirit leads to eternal life
- Applying spiritual principles means helping others in whatever way we can

Lessons for us



- We must listen to the one true message from God and ignore false ideas
- Abraham was approved by God because he trusted in what God had promised
- We can be approved by God if we put our trust in God's plan through Jesus and are baptised
- If we are baptised into Christ, God will then adopt us as His sons
- God has shown us through the message given by His Spirit that there is a conflict between our natural inclinations and His ways
- We can have eternal life if we apply spiritual principles in our lives and show Christ-like attitudes

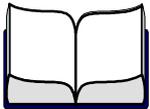
10. The letter to the Philippians

Summary:

This is a warm letter to a faithful ecclesia encouraging believers to be joyful and content even in difficult circumstances.

Chapter 1 - Paul's joyfulness and aims

Key Verses:



Read Philippians
1 v 3 to 6, 15 to 20, 27 and 28

- Paul was joyful for the Philippians' involvement in preaching God's message
- He was thankful that God's message was being spread by whatever means
- He wanted to honour Jesus in his actions
- He also wanted the Philippians to be worthy of Christ's message and to be faithful in their lives regardless of the consequences

Chapter 2 - Reflecting the mind of Christ

Key Verses:

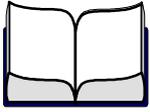


Read Philippians 2 v 2 to 5 and 14 to 16

- We should be united in reflecting the love and humility of Christ, caring for each other
- We should be a shining example in a wicked world, holding fast to the faith

Chapter 3 - Paul's appreciation of the hope in Christ

Key Verses:

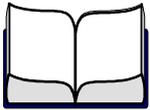


Read Philippians 3 v 7 to 11

- Paul considered the hope in Christ far more valuable than any thing else in his life
- His main aim in life was to understand God's plan through faith in Christ and to be raised from the dead

Chapter 4 - Achieving peace of mind

Key Verses:



Read Philippians 4 v 4 to 7, 11 to 13

- Paul encourages the Philippians to "rejoice in the Lord always"
- Paul tells the Philippians not to worry, but to ask God about all their problems
- God will then give them peace of mind
- Paul had learnt to be content in all circumstances

Lessons for us



- Like the Philippians, we should honour Christ's message in our lives regardless of the consequences
- We should be united in giving an example to others in showing the love and humility of Christ
- Our main aim in life should be our involvement in God's plan through Christ
- We should try to be content in all situations and not worry, but ask God about our problems

11. The two letters to the Thessalonians

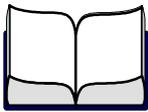
1 Thessalonians

Summary:

This is a letter of encouragement and instruction from Paul to the believers as they wait for the return of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 1 - The good example of the Thessalonians

Key Verses:

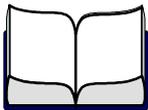


Read 1 Thessalonians 1 v 7 to 10

- The Thessalonian believers were a good example to the people in the surrounding area
- They had told people about the gospel message
- They put their trust in God
- They forsook other gods to serve the living and true God
- They were waiting for the return of Jesus

Chapter 2 - The Thessalonians' conversion

Key Verses:

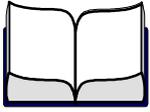


Read 1 Thessalonians 2 v 11 to 13

- Paul encouraged the Thessalonian believers to honour God in their behaviour
- He reminded them that they had been invited to be part of the kingdom of God
- He was pleased that they realised that the message was from God - and had believed it

Chapter 3 - Paul's concern for the Thessalonians

Key Verses:

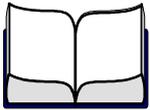


Read 1 Thessalonians 3 v 11 to 13

- Paul hoped to come to Thessalonica, God willing
- He hoped that their love and concern for each other would grow
- He hoped that they would be approved by Jesus at his coming

Chapter 4 - The resurrection and Christ's second coming

Key Verses:



Read 1 Thessalonians 4 v 14 to 18

- As God has raised Jesus from the dead, so He will raise those who trust in His plan through Jesus
- The resurrection will be at the return of Jesus
- Both dead and living believers will then meet Jesus

Chapter 5 - Preparing for the return of Jesus

Key Verses:



Read 1 Thessalonians 5 v 4 to 8

- Believers should be expecting the return of Jesus
- This expectation should show in their lives
- Their faith hope and love should show that they are not part of this world

Lessons for us



- We should follow the example of the Thessalonian believers and:
 - * put our trust in God
 - * forsake other gods to serve the living and true God
 - * live in expectation of the return of Jesus
- We should honour God in our behaviour and remember that we have been invited to be part of the kingdom of God
- We should have concern for others
- Our lives should show that we have the hope of the resurrection

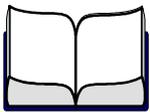
2 Thessalonians

Summary:

Paul again encourages and instructs the Thessalonians, saying that Christ will come, but before this there will be a “falling away” from true religion.

Chapter 1 - God’s judgements

Key Verses:

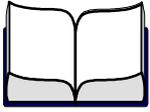


Read 2 Thessalonians 1
v 6 and 7, 11 and 12

- When Jesus returns God will judge those who have persecuted believers
- Paul prayed that the Thessalonian believers would be worthy of their place in God’s plan

Chapter 2 - Falling away from God's true message

Key Verses:

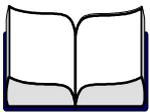


Read 2 Thessalonians 2
v 3 to 8 and 15

- Jesus would not come before there had been a departure from God's true message
- A system would arise that had false teachings and claimed to speak with God's authority
- The seeds of this system were around in Paul's time, but it was being restrained
- The restraint was to be removed and then the system would continue until its destruction at the return of Jesus
- The believers were encouraged to hold onto the true teachings

Chapter 3 - Request for prayer, warnings against idleness

Key Verses:



Read 2 Thessalonians 3
v 1 to 3 and 10 to 13

- Paul asked for the believers to pray that he might be able to continue preaching despite the opposition
- He encouraged them to continue to support themselves and be active in a good way

Lessons for us



- We must not be surprised that there has been a departure from God's true message
- This will continue until the return of Jesus
- We must hold on to God's true teachings

12. The two letters to the Corinthians

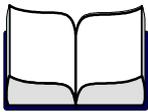
1 Corinthians

Summary:

This is a letter from Paul dealing with problems which had arisen in Corinth, and reminding believers of the principles by which they should live.

Chapters 1 and 2 - Divisions condemned and spiritual wisdom

Key Verses:



Read 1 Corinthians
1 v 10 to 13, and 2 v 7 to 11

- There should be no divisions in the church
- The natural mind cannot appreciate God's plan
- We can only understand God's principles and purpose if we listen to God's message

Chapters 3 and 4 - Christ the centre of God's plan

Key Verses:

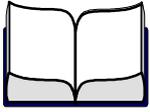


Read 1 Corinthians
3 v 9 to 11, and 4 v 1 and 2

- Those involved in spreading the knowledge of God's plan are working with Him
- Jesus is at the centre of God's plan
- Those involved in God's plan should remember their responsibilities to handle God's message faithfully

Chapters 5 and 6 - Immorality must be judged

Key Verses:

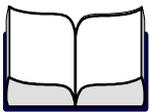


Read 1 Corinthians
5 v 1 to 3, and 6 v 7 to 11

- Paul condemned the immorality in the Corinthian church
- There were many other ungodly practices in Corinth
- Paul reminded his readers that followers of Jesus Christ should avoid such things

Chapters 7 and 8 - Principles of marriage and conscience

Key Verses:



Read 1 Corinthians
7 v 3 and 4, 8 and 9, and 8 v 10 to 13

- Husbands and wives must show love and consideration to each other
- Single people can follow Paul's example and give their lives to God, but there is nothing wrong in marrying if they wish
- We must avoid doing things which can cause others to stumble in their faith

Chapters 9 and 10 - Preaching to all and glorifying God

Key Verses:

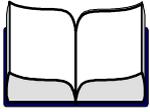


Read 1 Corinthians
9 v 16 to 22, and 10 v 11 to 14 and 31

- Paul did all he could to give God's message to all people by whatever means he could
- We should learn from the failings of the children of Israel recorded in the Old Testament, and God will help us to avoid such failings
- We should remember God in everything we do

Chapters 11 and 12 - The Lord's supper and unity of believers

Key Verses:

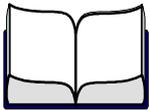


Read 1 Corinthians
11 v 23 to 28, and 12 v 12 to 20

- Paul emphasises the importance and solemnity of remembering the Lord's death
- All of the members have their part to play in the body of believers

Chapters 13 and 14 - Spiritual gifts

Key Verses:



Read 1 Corinthians
13 v 1 to 3, and 14 v 1 to 4

- Love is far more important than all other spiritual gifts, and we are worthless to God if we do not have love
- It is better to help others understand God's message than to speak in a foreign language which cannot be translated

Chapters 15 and 16 - The resurrection and final instructions

Key Verses:



Read 1 Corinthians
15 v 16 to 26, and 16 v 13 and 14

- If Christ did not rise from the dead, the rest of us have no hope of rising either
- But Christ *did* rise from the dead - the first of many
- The rest will rise at the return of Christ
- Christ will then reign on the earth until all enemies - including death - are destroyed
- We should stand fast in the faith and show that vital characteristic of love

Lessons for us



- Believers should be united in their common hope of escape from our greatest enemy - death
- We can only be part of God's plan if we listen carefully to His message
- Love is the greatest spiritual attribute of all
- All true believers have the hope of the resurrection from the dead

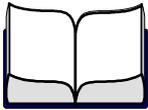
2 Corinthians

Summary:

This is another letter from Paul to believers at Corinth, stressing the need to be resolute despite all opposition, as they try to live the new life in Christ.

Chapters 1 and 2 - Comfort and forgiveness

Key Verses:



Read 2 Corinthians
1 v 3, 4 and 7, and 2 v 5 to 7

- The gospel message was (and still is) a comfort to those who have problems
- Paul recommended that if anyone had caused problems in the church, they should be reprimanded, and forgiven when they admitted their fault

Chapters 3 and 4 - The new covenant and Paul's zeal in preaching

Key Verses:

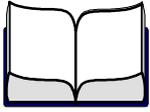


Read 2 Corinthians
3 v 5 to 8, and 4 v 5 and 6

- The new covenant in Christ is far superior to that of Moses
- Paul does not preach about himself, but about Jesus Christ and the wonder of God's message

Chapters 5 and 6 - Paul's desire and sufferings

Key Verses:

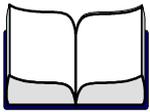


Read 2 Corinthians
5 v 18 to 20, and 6 v 4 to 10

- God has healed the breach between Himself and us through Jesus' work
- Paul desired that people should respond to this work
- Paul points out that he and others have suffered many things to bring them God's valuable message

Chapters 7 to 9 - Repentance and giving

Key Verses:



Read 2 Corinthians
7 v 9 to 12, 8 v 3 and 4, and 9 v 6 and 7

- True repentance has great benefits to all concerned
- Paul praises a generous attitude to giving financial help to other believers
- God blesses people who have a generous attitude

Chapters 10 and 11 - Paul's attitude and false teachers

Key Verses:

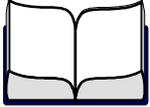


Read 2 Corinthians
10 v 7 and 14 to 18, and 11 v 2 and 3

- All believers belonging to Christ's church are equal
- Paul's primary object was to tell people of God's plan through Jesus
- Paul warned that they could be deceived by false teachers

Chapters 12 and 13 - Paul's attitude to problems and his final encouragements

Key Verses:



Read 2 Corinthians
12 v 7 to 10, and 13 v 5 and 11

- Paul realised that God can give us problems to limit our pride and make us trust in God
- Paul encouraged the Corinthians (and us) to:
 - * Check that we believe the true message concerning Jesus and his work
 - * Try to apply the whole of God's message in our lives
 - * Live in peace

Lessons for us



- The gospel message is a comfort to those who have problems
- God's plan through Jesus is far superior to any other
- Jesus heals the breach between God and us
- God encourages a generous attitude
- We should be careful not to be deceived by people who do not have Christ as their authority
- Problems can encourage us to trust in God

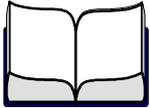
13. The letter to the Ephesians

Summary:

This is a letter calling believers to a united life in Christ, as part of God's great plan.

Chapter 1 - The greatness of God's purpose in Christ

Key Verses:

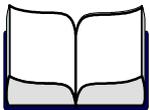


Read Ephesians 1 v 3 to 6, 22 and 23

- God knew what was going to happen in advance and He has chosen those who are to benefit from His great plan through the work of Jesus
- God has made Jesus to be over all things and to be the head of the true church

Chapter 2 - Salvation through faith in Christ

Key Verses:



Read Ephesians 2 v 8 and 11 to 13

- Our salvation is through faith and is a gift of God
- Unless we are associated with Christ we have no hope at all. But by association with Christ's sacrifice, we can all be involved in God's covenants made with Israel which are fulfilled in Christ

Chapter 3 - The Gentiles part of God's plan

Key Verses:

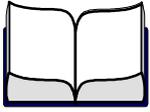


Read Ephesians 3 v 6 to 9 and 17 to 19

- Paul wanted everyone to know that all people can be part of God's wonderful plan through Jesus
- Paul's prayer is that we should understand the love of God and Christ

Chapter 4 - The one body of believers has many parts

Key Verses:

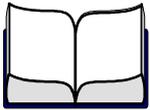


Read Ephesians 4 v 4 to 6 and 11 to 15

- There is one body of believers, but individuals have different roles
- True believers will not be influenced by deceitful ideas from other people

Chapter 5 - Believers should show love in behaviour and marriage

Key Verses:



Read Ephesians 5 v 1 and 2, 22 to 25

- We should show love in our lives following Christ's example of sacrifice for us
- Husbands and wives should show the same love that exists between Christ and the true church

Chapter 6 - Personal relationships and the believers' armour

Key Verses:



Read Ephesians 6 v 1 to 9 and 13 to 18

- Believers should show love and consideration in all of their relationships
- They should be able to defend themselves from all ungodly influences

Lessons for us



- God has put Jesus over all things and made him head of the true church
- Believers are saved by complete trust in God's plan through Jesus
- True believers should resist being influenced by deceitful ideas from other people
- True believers should reflect God's love in all relationships, following Christ's example

14. Bible teaching on the judgement

Four echoes give us the basic Bible teaching on the judgement :



John 5 v 28 and 29; Romans 14 v 10 to 12; 2 Corinthians 5 v 10;
2 Timothy 4 v 1.

We learn the following facts from these verses:

- For believers who die, judgement will be after resurrection
- All believers will stand before Christ's judgement seat
- They will then "give an account of themselves" to God
- The outcome will be based on what they have done in our lives
- The judgement will take place at the return of Jesus

There are other passages which expand these basic principles:

John 5 v 24 Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

This verse tells us that , if we "hear the words of Jesus and believe them" we will not be condemned. ("Judgement" in this verse is the word "krisis", which implies a separation, condemnation or punishment.)

2 Timothy 4 v 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Paul was confident that, "having kept the faith", he would be given life.

James seems to summarise the principles of judgement:

James 2 v 20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?

22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?

23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.

24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.



The Bible tells us that:

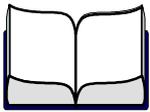
- If we are among the believers, we will all stand before Christ at his coming
- We will not be condemned if we “hear the words of Jesus and do them”, “keep the faith” and remain “in Christ”
- If we “keep the faith” we will be “justified” or “made right with God” in the same way that Abraham was
- If we have “kept the faith”, there will be nothing to answer for because we have been “made right with God”, and we will not be condemned

15. The letter to the Romans

Summary:

In this letter, Paul covers all the important aspects of God's message to us. Because of this, we will look at this letter in a little more detail than the rest.

Romans 1 v 1 to 17 - Greetings and introduction to God's righteousness



Read Romans 1 v 16 and 17

The phrase "the righteousness of God" in verse 17 is a phrase which perhaps needs a little explanation.



What is meant by "righteousness"?



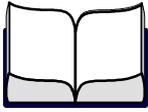
Look at the *Young's Concordance* entry on page 59.

We can see that *Young* tells us that righteousness is "rightness" or "justice". So God's righteousness is His rightness or justice.

Bearing this in mind, Paul tells us several vital things in these verses:

- The gospel message is the power of God which can save us
- We need to believe
- The offer is open to all believers, both Jews and non-Jews
- The rightness or justice of God is shown in the gospel message
- The just (those who are right with God) will live because of their faith

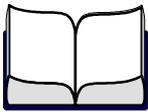
Romans 1 v 18 to 32 - God's wrath on ungodly people



Read Romans 1 v 18 to 32

- The wrath of God comes against people's ungodliness and injustice
- The evidence of God's hand is all around in creation
- But people prefer to ignore God and behave as *they* want to
- People who don't behave as God wants are deserving of death

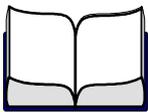
Romans 2 v 1 to 32 - Only God can judge



Read Romans 2 v 1 to 5

- We cannot pass judgement on others, because we all do wrong by pleasing ourselves
- God's judgements on those who ignore Him are just and true

Romans 3 v 1 to 20 - All people are unjust



Read Romans 3 v 9 to 12 and 20

- Jews are no better than Gentiles - all are sinners and are inclined to ignore God
- No one can be justified or "made right" with God by trying to keep laws

At this point Paul has reached the depressing conclusion that there is no hope for any of us.

Romans 3 v 21 to 31 - How we can be right with God

Verse 21 of chapter 3 starts the message of hope and begins “But now...”, indicating that things have now changed from the depressing picture we previously arrived at.

This section is a summary of how we can be right with God, without God compromising His rightness and justice (righteousness). God could not just ignore man’s rebellion, that would not have been just and right. So God has devised a scheme by which we can be forgiven without compromising His principles. To help you understand these arguments we have reproduced verses 21 to 31 along with helpful comments on each verse:

3 v 21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

God has shown us a right way not involving keeping the law of Moses. This was foretold in the Old Testament in the prophecies about Jesus.

22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;

This approval by God can be gained by anyone and comes about by belief and trust in God’s plan through Jesus.

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

We are reminded of our hopeless position before God.

24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

We are made right before God by God’s grace, or “unmerited favour”, in His plan to save us by Jesus.

25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,



What is meant by “propitiation”?



Look at the *Strong’s Concordance* definition on page 28.

We can see that “propitiation” is a means of God showing mercy and reconciliation.

If we bear in mind that, under the law of Moses, the blood of sacrificial animals was shed when the offerer acknowledged his sin, verse 25 tells us:

- God sent Jesus as a means of showing His mercy in covering our sin in order to reconcile (or restore good relations with) us
- This covering of our sins was achieved by the sacrificial blood of Jesus
- By our faith and trust in the sacrificial death of Jesus we are acknowledging our sin and showing that God was right and just in punishing sin with death
- Jesus' sacrifice is effective in covering past sin

26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

God's plan shows that He is always right and just in all that He does. His plan also enables Him to justify or make right those who have faith in Jesus.

27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.

We cannot claim any credit for ourselves in gaining God's approval, because we have not earned it.

28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

Men and women become acceptable to God through their belief and trust in God's plan through Jesus rather than through the law of Moses.

29 Is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also,

The God of Israel is everybody's God - the God of all who will become involved in His plan.

30 since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith..

God will approve everyone who has faith in His plan.

31 Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

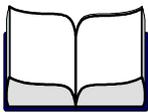
Salvation through faith does not make the law of Moses itself a bad law.

If we consider this carefully we can see:

- God was the instigator of the plan by which we can be saved
- We are approved following our faith and trust in His plan
- The sacrifice of Jesus is the means by which our sins can be covered
- God's justice is not compromised in this process
- God's plan humbles us because we cannot earn God's approval
- This plan is open to all

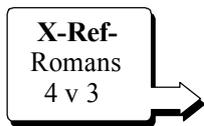
This, then, is the heart of God's plan, and the rest of Romans looks at related aspects.

Romans 4 v 1 to 12 - Abraham justified by faith



Read Romans 4 v 3

The cross-reference helps us to understand what is involved here:



Genesis 15 v 3 to 6.

Here we see the basis of Abraham's faith:

- Abraham had no children and no prospect of having them, naturally speaking
- God told him that he would have a son who would be the start of the growth of a large nation
- Abraham believed and trusted that God would do as He said, despite the fact that he could see no way at that time of how it might happen

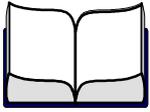
Abraham was approved or justified by faith in action in his life.



Read Romans 4 v 9 to 12

- By his faith, Abraham was accounted right with God before he was circumcised as a Jew
- Any one having faith like Abraham will be right with God regardless of whether or not they are circumcised

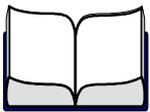
Romans 4 v 13 to 25 - Abraham received the promise because of his faith



Read Romans 4 v 13 and 23 to 25

- The promise made to Abraham (Session 2, page 9) was given because of his faith
- We can have a part in the promise to Abraham if we have faith like his
- Our faith in God's plan can enable us to be approved before God
- Jesus was delivered to death and rose again so that we can be right in God's sight

Romans 5 v 1 to 21 - The result of God's plan through Jesus



Read Romans 5 v 1 to 11

- Being justified by faith brings peace with God (v 1)
- We can regard problems as the discipline required to make our attitude right with God (v 3)
- We realise the love that God has shown to us in devising a plan by which we can have the results of our sin removed (v 8)
- We can be reconciled to God through our Lord Jesus Christ (v 11)

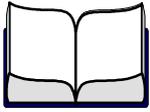
Romans 6 v 1 to 23 - How we should respond to God's plan



Read Romans 6 v 1 to 6

- We should not continue sinning just to encourage God's grace to operate
- We should be baptised in order to associate ourselves with the death of Jesus
- We will then also be associated with the resurrection of Jesus
- Our baptism also symbolises the death of our old way of life, and our acknowledgement that, as sinners, we deserve death

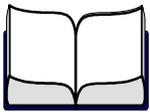
Romans 7 v 1 to 25 - The law cannot save us



Read Romans 7 v 12 to 15, 24 and 25

- The law of Moses was holy and its commands just
- The law showed that people were sinners because they could not keep it
- Sin results in death
- Through Jesus Christ we can be delivered from death if we have a mind that respects God's laws

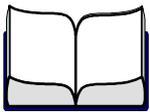
Romans 8 v 1 to 39 - We are saved through Christ



Read Romans 8 v 1 to 3

- Those who are "in Christ" will not be condemned
- God's plan has removed the law of sin and death
- This is all possible through God sending Jesus, who had our nature
- Jesus then overcame sin in our nature

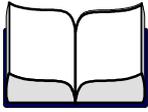
Romans 9 v 1 to 33 - Israel's failure to be right with God



Read Romans 9 v 30 to 33

- The Gentiles, who made no attempt to be approved by God under the law of Moses, can now be right with God through faith in His purpose with Jesus
- The Jews tried to be right with God by keeping the law
- They failed because they did not have faith, but thought they could earn His approval by keeping the law meticulously, which was impossible
- They were unable to accept that God would require belief in Jesus

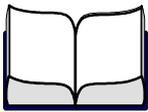
Romans 10 v 1 to 21 - Israel's need of the gospel



Read Romans 10 v 1 to 4

- Paul wanted the Jews to be saved
- The Jews were enthusiastic about serving God, but they did not know how to do it correctly
- They did not know about God's justice, and tried to be right with God by their own means
- Jesus removes the need for the law of Moses if we trust in his saving work

Romans 11 v 1 to 36 - God has not rejected the Jews



Read Romans 11 v 1 to 5

- God has definitely not rejected the Jews
- In Elijah's time there were still some faithful Jews left, even though the majority were idolaters
- Even so there were some Jews in Paul's time who believed and will be saved by God's grace

Romans 12 v 1 to 21 - The believers' character and way of life

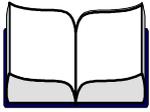


Read Romans 12 v 1 to 5

We should:

- Appreciate all that God has done for us in sending Jesus, and give our lives as living sacrifices to God
- Avoid following the world's thinking
- Have a godly mind and try to do His will
- Not be self-centred, but work together with other believers as one body

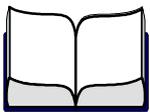
Romans 13 v 1 to 14 - Believers' attitude to authorities and other people



Read Romans 13 v 7 and 8

- We should submit to authorities and pay our taxes and other dues
- We must show love to all

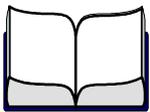
Romans 14 v 1 to 23 - Believers' attitude to fellow believers



Read Romans 14 v 1 to 3, 10 to 13 and 19

- We should not judge one another in personal matters of conscience
- Christ will be the judge
- We must avoid causing problems for fellow believers
- We should always try to be peaceable and helpful

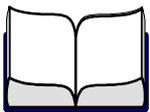
Romans 15 v 1 to 33 - Helping one another and glorifying God



Read Romans 15 v 1 to 7

- We should try to help those weaker than ourselves
- We must follow Christ's example and consider other people's needs even when this causes difficulties for us
- We will then all glorify God together

Romans 16 v 1 to 27 - Greetings and Paul's final message



Read Romans 16 v 25 to 27

- God is to be glorified for His gospel message in the Scriptures, which can save all those who have faith in it

Lessons for us



- We are all sinners and inclined to ignore God
- No one can be “made right” with God by trying to keep laws
- God sent Jesus to enable us to “be right” with God and so restore good relations with Him without God compromising His justice
- By our faith and trust in the sacrificial death of Jesus we are acknowledging our sin and showing that God was right and just in bringing death as a punishment for sin
- This plan, which is open to all - Jews and Gentiles - humbles us because we cannot earn God’s approval
- Our faith in God should be shown by our trust in Him in difficult times
- Baptism associates us with God’s plan through Jesus and symbolises the death of our old way of life
- We should live a selfless life showing love to all and encouraging fellow believers

Young’s Concordance entry

Righteousness

RIGHTEOUSNESS -

4. *Rightness, justice, dikaiosune.*

- Matt. 3. 15 it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness
 5. 6 do hunger and thirst after righteousness

- Rom. 1. 17 For therein is the righteousness of God re.
 3. 5 commend the righteousness of God, what
 3. 21 But now the righteousness of God without
 3. 22 Even the righteousness of God (which is)
 3. 25 declare his righteousness for the remission
 3. 26 declare .. at this time his righteousness

Strong’s Concordance definition

Propitiation

2435 hilasterion (hil-as-tay'-ree-on) neut of a derivative of **2433** (see below);
 an *expiatory* (place or thing), i.e. (concr.) an atoning *victim*, or specifically the *lid* of the Ark
 (in the Temple): mercyseat, propitiation.

2433 hilaskomai (hil-as'-kom-ah-ee) middle voice from the same as **2436**;
 to *conciliate*, to *atone* for (sin) or *be propitious*: be merciful,
 make reconciliation for.

Notes