

The world we all want.

Finding your place in the Bible's big story

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The World we all want

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We all dream of a better world...

We all dream of a better world—a world of security, plenty and friendship. Christians believe that God promises just such a new world. And the Bible is the story of what God had done and what he will do to keep that promise.

The world We All want is for people who are interested in discovering the message of the Bible. It is an introduction to the whole Bible story—the story Christians believe to be the story of our world and its future.

You can work through this course on your own, with a friend or as a group. But there is a big advantage in doing it with a Christian. They will be able to help you see how God's story is working out in their life, and answer any questions you may have.

Each session looks at some passages from the Bible. This is the most important part of the course. It is an opportunity for you to find out for yourself what the Bible actually says. There is also a section of the Bible to read in preparation for the next session if you would like to, although you do not have to.

If you are reading a novel, it feels like cheating to read the last page and discover how it ends. But *The world we all want* starts at the end of the Bible's story with God's promise of a new world. It then goes back to the beginning and works through to the point in the story where we are today. The diagrams show the big story of the Bible in its proper sequence. This means that the diagrams are numbered differently from the sessions.

We hope you enjoy working through this book, and that, as you start to see how wonderful God's story is, you'll also start to see how his story can become yours.

Steve & Tim

March 2011

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SESSION ONE

God promises the world we all want



God promises the world we all want.

*We know this promise is real because in history Jesus
has given us a glimpse of the world we all want.*

1. What kind of a world would you like to live in?



Everybody's idea of a perfect world is different. Some people would play football all day. Other people would ban it. But when we think about it seriously there are common themes to our dreams. There is a world we all want.

It's a world without poverty—a world of plenty and provision. It's a world without pollution and the threat of global warming. It's a place where we don't grow old and where we never lose those we love. It's a place where we're not hurt by other people and we don't hurt them.

The good news is that the Bible tells us that *there is* such a world.

Revelation, chapter 21, verses 1–5

Read this extract from the Bible, and use it to answer the following questions.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."



creation ~ made



rebellion ~ spoiled



abraham ~ promised



israel ~ failed

⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!"
Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

2. *What is this new world like?*



3. *What surprises you about this new world?*



This description of the new heaven and the new earth uses vivid picture language. The sea represents a source of threat, so a world without a sea is a world of safety and security (verse 1).

Jerusalem is God's city and the bride is a picture of God's special relationship with his people. God promises that people will know him and live in his new world.



jesus ~ shown



cross ~ achieved

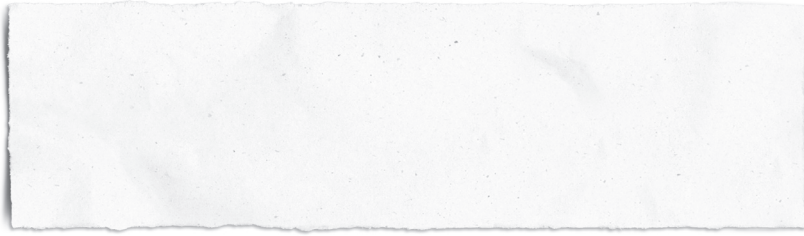


church ~ announced



new creation ~ finished

4. *Who is at the centre of this new world?*



At the moment, we are at the centre of our world. We live our lives without God. But, three times in verse 3, we are told that in this new world *God will be with his people*.

You might not think that having God looking over your shoulder is such good news. But, as we will discover, *God with his people* is actually the world we all want...

Revelation, chapter 22, verses 1–6

Read this extract from the Bible, and use it to answer the following questions.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

³No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

⁶The angel said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place."



creation ~ made



rebellion ~ spoiled



abraham ~ promised



israel ~ failed

5. *What more are we told about what this new world will be like?*



6. *What surprises you about this?*



In the Bible, God promises that a new world is coming—the world we all want. It paints an attractive and compelling picture of this world for us.

7. *Look again at Revelation 21 v 5 and 22 v 6. What are we told about these words of promise?*



jesus ~ shown



cross ~ achieved



church ~ announced



new creation ~ finished

This new world is not going to come about because of revolutionaries, business people, politicians or philosophers. The Bible claims that only God can bring this wonderful new world into existence. God says these words of promise are “trustworthy and true”.

But it sounds too good to be true. Is this just wishful thinking? How can we be sure? The Bible says we *can* be sure that God will bring this new answer to the problems of this world. And that we can be sure our hopes and dreams of a new world will become reality. We can be sure because that there was a time when people glimpsed the world we all want. There was a time in history when one man was able to show what God’s new world would look like.

Mark, chapter 5, verses 21–43

Read this extract from the Bible, and use it to answer the following questions.

When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered round him while he was by the lake. ²² Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet ²³ and pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” ²⁴ So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. ²⁵ And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. ²⁶ She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. ²⁷ When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸ because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” ²⁹ Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

³⁰ At once Jesus realised that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?” ³¹ “You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’” ³² But Jesus kept looking around to see who had



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done it. ³³ Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. ³⁴ He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

³⁵ While Jesus was still speaking, some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "Why bother the teacher any more?"

³⁶ Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, "Don't be afraid; just believe." ³⁷ He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. ³⁸ When they came to the home of the synagogue ruler, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. ³⁹ He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep." ⁴⁰ But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, "*Talitha kum!*" (which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). ⁴² Immediately the girl stood up and walked around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. ⁴³ He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

This book of the Bible is not talking about something *that may happen in the future*. It is describing something that *has already happened in history*.

It was written by a man called Mark, who knew people who had seen these events and probably saw some of them himself. Mark tells us about a man called Jesus who lived about 2,000 years ago.



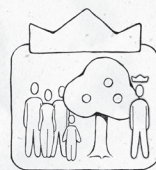
Jesus ~ shown



cross ~ achieved



church ~ announced



new creation ~ finished

8. *What does Mark show us about Jesus?*



9. *We have read about a world with “no more death or mourning or crying or pain”. How do we see a glimpse of God’s new world in these verses?*



Mark tells us about a woman who was ill. In her day, her condition meant that she would have been an outcast. And there seemed to be no hope of cure (verses 25–26). But Jesus changed everything (verses 29 and 34). Mark goes on to tell us of a young girl who was raised from death. Jesus simply spoke to her and she came back to life (verses 41–42). The mourning and crying stopped.

It was only a glimpse of God’s new world. Even as Jesus was giving life back to the girl, thousands of other people in the world were dying. So the world we all want did not exist fully. But it was the real thing. It was as though a curtain was pulled back and we were allowed a brief look at the world that God promises. If what we read about Jesus in the Bible is real, then God’s new world is not just a dream.



creation ~ made



rebellion ~ spoiled



abraham ~ promised



israel ~ failed

10. The Bible says God promises a new world. What difference do you think this should make to your life now?



SUMMARY

God promises the world we all want. He promises:

- a wonderful new world where people will know God (represented in the diagrams by a person)
- that we will enjoy a new world (represented in the diagrams by a tree)

We can trust this promise because Jesus has given us a glimpse of God's new world.

BEFORE THE NEXT SESSION

- Read the Gospel of Mark, chapter 4 v 35 to chapter 5, v 43.
- Think about how Jesus shows us the world we all want. What will it be like?
- What do you learn about Jesus that is new to you, or that surprises you?



Jesus ~ shown



cross ~ achieved



church ~ announced



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