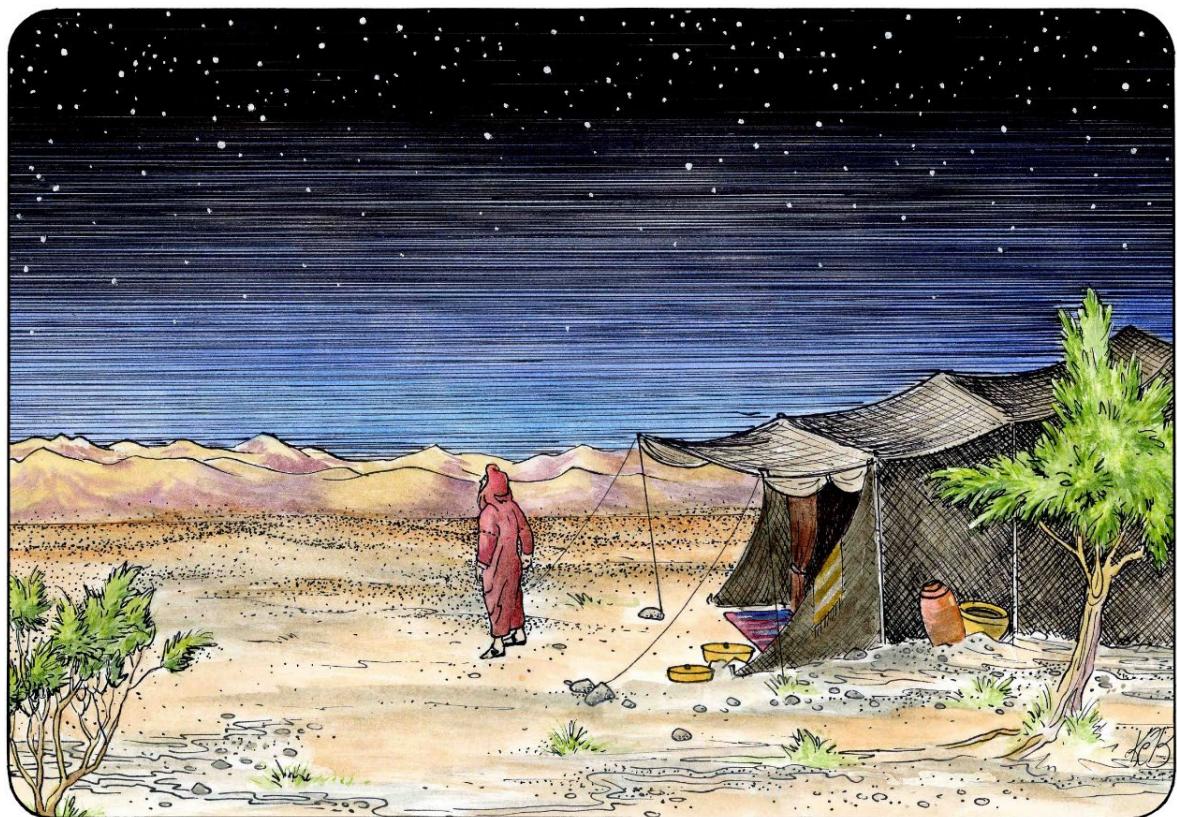


# PROGRESSING TOGETHER



## COURSE 101

### OVERVIEW OF THE BIBLE



He took him outside and said,  
“Look up at the heavens and count the stars, if indeed you can count them.”  
Then He said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

Genesis 15:5

[www.ProgressingTogether.com](http://www.ProgressingTogether.com)

[info@progressingtogether.com](mailto:info@progressingtogether.com)

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# PROGRESSING TOGETHER LEVEL I

## INTRODUCTION TO PART I

The first six courses of the Level I program are designed to help you to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ.



*So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord,  
continue to live your lives in him,  
rooted and built up in him,  
strengthened in the faith as you were taught,  
and overflowing with thankfulness.*

*Colossians 2:6-7*

### PART I: ROOTED IN CHRIST

<b>Course 101</b> Overview of the Bible
<b>Course 102</b> Walking in the Light
<b>Course 103</b> Growing in Christ
<b>Course 104</b> The Church
<b>Course 105</b> Persecution
<b>Course 106</b> The Story of Salvation

In our first course in this series, we will discover God's loving plan to restore mankind which He revealed throughout the Bible.

Then, we will discover who we have become and how we can grow in our understanding of His word and live for Him even in the face of difficulties.

Finally, we will study God's plan of salvation in more detail as it is presented in the first chapters of the Bible, in Genesis.

These courses will deepen your roots in the rich soil of God's word and prepare you for the series of courses in **PART II: BEARING FRUIT FOR GOD'S GLORY**.



# COURSE 101 – Overview of the Bible: God's Plan to Bless All Nations in Christ

## **Objectives of Course 101**

1. *To see the unified story of God's redemption through Jesus*
2. *To understand how God's promise to Abraham was fulfilled in Christ*
3. *To increase confidence in God's faithfulness to His Word and His blessing to those who trust Christ for their salvation*
4. *To be motivated to share in the ongoing fulfilment of God's plan of blessing through bringing the message of the gospel to all peoples*

## **Lessons**

<b>1</b>	God's Promise to Abraham: A blessing for all peoples
<b>2</b>	Sketch of Old Testament History
<b>3</b>	The Gospels: Eye witness accounts of the coming of the Messiah Jesus
<b>4</b>	Acts and the Early Church: Preaching faith in Jesus the Messiah to the ends of the earth
<b>5</b>	The Epistles: Teaching for the Church

## **Introduction**

The aim of this course is to give an overview of the whole Bible.

The Lord Jesus himself gave us the key when he said: "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life." (John 5: 39-40)

He also said: "Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the prophets and the Psalms. Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures." (Luke 24:44-45).

When he spoke of 'the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms' Jesus was referring to the whole of the Old Testament, because, in his day, the Jewish people divided the Old Testament into these three sections.

Jesus came to fulfil the Old Testament and constantly referred to it as the authority behind his teaching.

➤ **Thus, the central theme of the whole Bible is God's plan to send a saviour, who is the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Today, most editions of the Bible group the 39 books of the **OLD TESTAMENT** as follows:

Memorise the categories of the books of the Old Testament. Then, complete the missing names in the table above and commit them to memory too. (You can find songs online that help memorise the 66 books of the Bible. Here are two options: [These are the Books of the Bible](#) or [The Books of the Bible](#).)

The 27 books of the **NEW TESTAMENT** include the four gospels and the Acts of the Apostles which are historical in nature, Romans to Jude which are letters full of teaching to the churches, and Revelation which is a prophetic book concerning the return of Jesus Christ.

<b>5</b>	HISTORICAL BOOKS	Matthew					Acts of the Apostles
----------	------------------	---------	--	--	--	--	----------------------

<b>21</b>	LETTERS (13 by the Apostle Paul; 8 by other writers)	Romans																					
-----------	---	--------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

<b>1</b>	PROPHETIC BOOK	Revelation
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Memorise the categories of the books of the New Testament. Then, complete the missing names in the table above and commit them to memory too.

Jesus prepared the way for the writing of the New Testament when he chose his twelve apostles as eye witnesses who were to conserve and transmit his teachings (John 15.26-27). He also sent the Holy Spirit to help them remember and write down these things (John 14.26). The church is built on the teaching of the apostles (Ephesians 2.20).

➤ **The Bible is a unified whole, with the Lord Jesus Christ at the centre:**

- ✓ The Old Testament predicted in great detail the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- ✓ The gospels are eyewitness accounts of His coming.

- ✓ The epistles, written by these eye witnesses, tell of the founding and building up of His Church as the apostles preached the Good News of salvation in the Lord Jesus and taught all that He had taught.
- ✓ The book of Revelation closes the Bible with prophecy about the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and the final victory.

### ***Introductory Story***

Your group leader will have you watch or listen to a testimony related to the topic of this Course.



## Lesson 1: God's Promise to Abraham

### A blessing for all peoples

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Lesson Objectives**

1. To be able to distinguish the major divisions of the books of the Bible (from Introduction)
2. To praise God for His gracious and free salvation promises and to claim them confidently by faith
3. To appreciate God's desire to use those He calls to extend Abraham's blessing to all peoples of the world
4. To encourage the students to trust God in their own lives and to obey when he asks them to do something.



In the first chapters of Genesis, Moses describes the creation, the fall of mankind into sin, the flood, and the Tower of Babel where God divided mankind into many different peoples and spread them out into different places. Then we read in great detail the life of Abraham, a key person in God's plan to send a saviour for all peoples.



#### **Read Genesis 12:1-5; 15:1-6 and Romans 4:1-5, 16-25.**



In Genesis 12:2-3 we have God's covenant promises made to Abraham. What specific things did God promise to do for Abraham?



What three groups, besides Abraham, does God promise to bless?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



When God calls Abraham in Gen. 12:1-5, does He set any conditions that Abraham must meet in order to benefit from the promise? Give reasons for your answer.



Explain how Abraham is an example to us on how to be righteous before God (Genesis 15:1-6).



What miracle was Abraham convinced that God could accomplish? (Romans 4:19-21)



Following Abraham's example of faith, in what way are we to 'believe God' in order for God 'to credit righteousness' to us? (Romans. 4:23-25)



Based on what you have read, tick the following statements that are true:

- God promised blessing only to Abraham's descendants.
- God wanted Abraham to be a blessing for others.
- Abraham would be a curse for all peoples.
- God made a promise to Abraham that concerns all the peoples of the earth.
- Following Abraham's example, we are to earn God's favour by doing good works.
- Abraham believed God that his offspring would be as numerous as the stars in the sky.
- Those who are 'of the faith of Abraham' are also called Abraham's offspring.



### Optional activities

1. Sing a song of worship about trusting in God's promises, for example:
  - [Trust in You](#), Lauren Daigle
  - [You Are My Hiding Place](#)
  - [In God We Trust](#), Hillsong
  - [Abraham's Faith](#), Alison Southall
2. Watch this video retelling [the story of Abraham](#). Then discuss: What could God ask you to trust Him for? What do you need to leave behind?



## Applications

1. Spend some time in prayer and ask God to give you a strong faith like Abraham's. If you have doubted God in some area of your life or have refused to act upon his call, confess this to God and decide to obey.
2. Have you been waiting a long time for God to intervene in a particular situation? Or has God asked you to do something that seems impossible to you? (If someone shares, pray together for this person.)
3. Share with one another an experience where you have trusted in God's promises.
4. In the coming days, open your ears to what God wants you to do; put your faith into practice by answering in obedience.



## Sharing

This week, share with others what you have learned in this lesson. You can also redo the lesson with someone.



## Lesson 2: Sketch of Old Testament History

### The story of Abraham's descendants and the need for a Messiah-Saviour

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Lesson Objectives

1. To develop a sense of the order of major events in the Old Testament and how they point to the need for the Messiah-Saviour
2. To understand that God's people in the Old Testament failed as all humanity to respect God's covenant
3. To recognize our own failure to live up to God's righteous demands and our need for God's grace
4. To encourage the students to memorise and share the story of the Old Testament.



#### How are you getting on?

1. What were the main points of the last lesson?
2. What happened when you shared with others what you learned?
3. What changed in your lives as a result of these teachings?



#### Read Acts 7 and Deuteronomy 9:1-6

In Acts 7, Stephen gives a summary of Old Testament history. Fill in the gaps with the correct names from the following list (The first one is done for you.):

**(Abraham) – David – Isaac – Jacob – Joseph – Joshua – Solomon – Moses**

God appeared to Abraham and commanded him to leave his own country and go to the land which God would show him. (vv.2-3) Abraham became the father of \_\_\_\_\_. (v.8)

Isaac became the father of \_\_\_\_\_, also called 'Israel.' He in turn had twelve sons. (v.8)

\_\_\_\_\_ was sold as a slave into Egypt by his brothers. (v.9) Later he was able to bring his father and brothers to safety in Egypt during a famine.

Jacob and his descendants stayed in Egypt for 400 years and became a numerous people. (v.17) But at the end of that time they were badly treated by the Egyptians. (vv.18-19)

God appeared to \_\_\_\_\_ in the burning bush. He commanded him to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt. (vv.30-34)

\_\_\_\_\_ led the people of Israel into the Promised Land. (v.45)

\_\_\_\_\_ became king of Israel and wanted to build a temple for God. (vv.45-46) But God did not allow him to do this. Instead, his son, \_\_\_\_\_, built the temple. (v.47)

 When God brought his people into the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua, why did He destroy the nations that were living there to give the land to Israel? (Deut. 9:1-6)

---

 In his speech to the Jewish ruling council why did Stephen tell so much of Israel's history? (Acts 7:51-53)

---

 What expression does Stephen use to describe the council (the same expression is used in Deuteronomy chapter 9)?

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 What does this expression mean?

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 Who is the Righteous One whom the prophets of Israel had predicted would come? What does Stephen accuse them of doing to Him? (v. 52)

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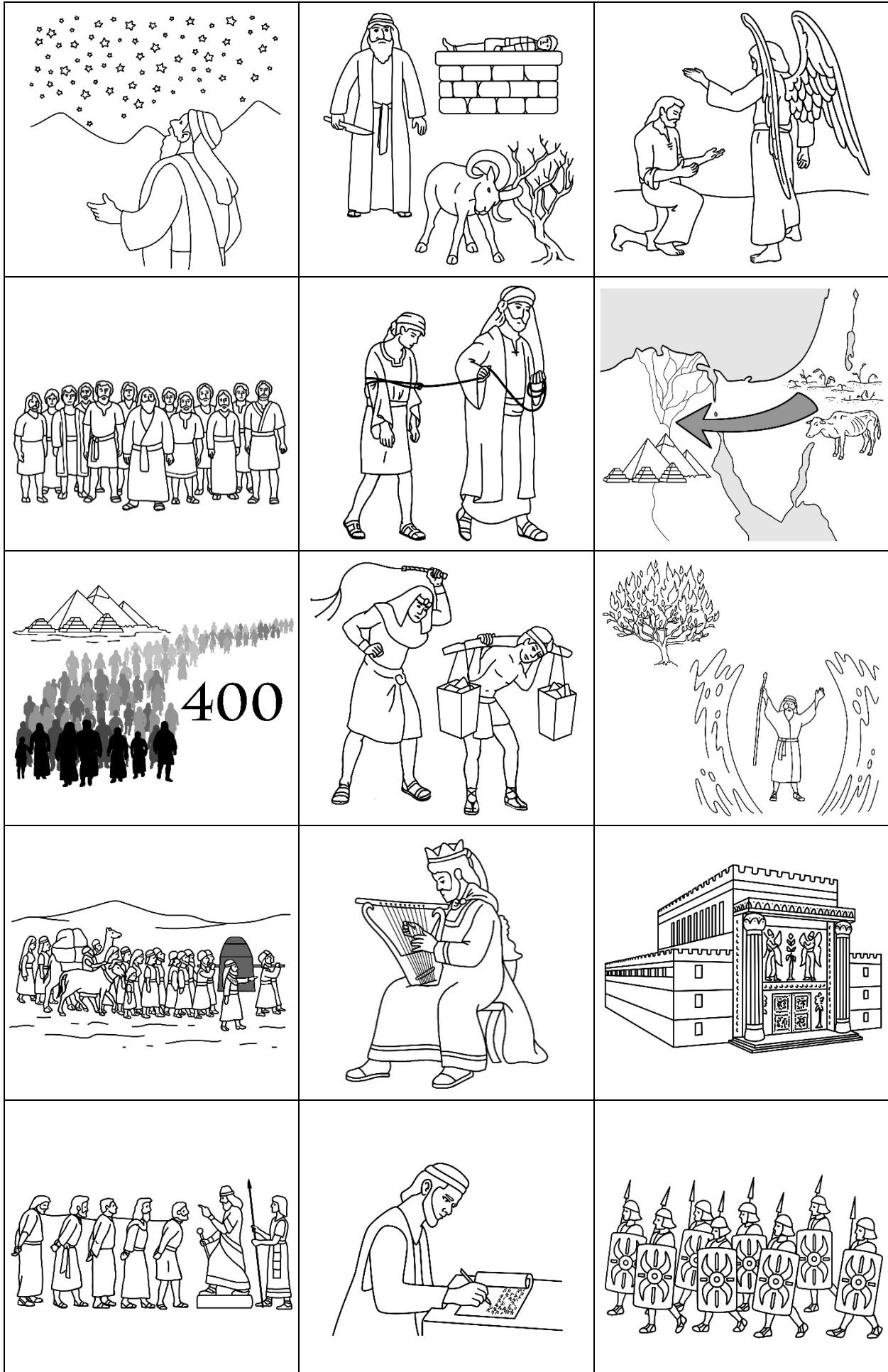
 In verses 42 and 43 Stephen quotes the Old Testament prophet Amos who lived in Israel long after King Solomon. He prophesied the impending judgment of God on Israel. This happened as God had announced by the mouth of Amos and other prophets, and Israel was carried off into exile in Babylon. For the next six centuries until the birth of Jesus Christ, a remnant of Israel lived in its land in reduced numbers and under the domination of various foreign powers.

 According to the two verses quoted by Stephen why did God allow Israel to be carried off into captivity? (Amos 5:25-27)

---



Cut out the pictures below and use them to retell the story of the Old Testament.







## Optional activity

Memorise the story of the Old Testament as laid out in this lesson. Cut out the pictures on the previous page and use them to retell the story. Here is the text corresponding to the 15 pictures:

1. God appeared to Abraham and commanded him to leave his own country and go to the land which God would show him.
2. Abraham became the father of Isaac.
3. Isaac became the father of Jacob, also called ‘Israel.’
4. He in turn had twelve sons.
5. Joseph was sold as a slave into Egypt by his brothers.
6. Later, he was able to bring his father and brothers to safety in Egypt during a famine.
7. Jacob and his descendants stayed in Egypt for 400 years and became a numerous people.
8. But at the end of that time they were badly treated by the Egyptians.
9. God appeared to Moses in the burning bush and commanded him to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt.
10. Joshua led the people of Israel into the Promised Land.
11. David became king of Israel and wanted to build a temple for God. But God did not allow him to do this.
12. Instead, his son, Solomon, built the temple.
13. Many years later, the judgement of God fell on the people of Israel, just as the prophets had foretold: they were carried off into exile in Babylon.
14. The prophets also predicted the coming of the Righteous One, the Messiah.
15. For the next six centuries until the birth of Jesus Christ, a remnant of Israel lived in its land in reduced numbers and under the domination of various foreign powers.



## Applications

1. Pray and ask God to show you where you fail to live up to His righteous demands. Confess this to God and ask Him to forgive you. Then, as a group, praise God for his grace and mercy towards you.
2. Idolatry and rebellion are often mentioned in the history of the people of Israel. What sort of idolatry and rebellion do you see in your own nation? Take some time to pray for your nation and its rulers (1 Timothy 2:1-2).
3. Through the story of the Old Testament, we see that God intervenes again and again in the history of nations. What does this teach us about God? How does that change the way you see current events? In the coming days, as you watch the news, remember this and pray for the situations that are presented.



## Sharing

This week, share with others what you have learned in this lesson. You can also redo the lesson with someone.



## Lesson 3: The Gospels

### Eye witness accounts of the coming of the Messiah Jesus

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Lesson Objectives

1. To be able to explain 2-3 Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament which were fulfilled in Jesus Christ
2. To understand how Jesus' death and resurrection were equally the fulfilment of OT prophecies about the Messiah-Saviour
3. To be encouraged in faith by realising the strength of the eye-witness testimony of the apostles to Jesus' death and resurrection
4. To pray for family members, neighbours, friends and colleagues to be open to listening to the Scriptures.



#### How are you getting on?

1. What were the main points of the last lesson?
2. What happened when you shared with others what you learned?
3. What changed in your lives as a result of these teachings?



#### Read Matthew 1:18- 2:23 and Luke 24:13-49.



Why did the angel tell Joseph that the child to be born to Mary was to be named 'Jesus'? (Matthew 1:21)



How were the chief priests and teachers able to tell Herod that the Christ was to be born in Bethlehem? (Matthew 1:18-2:23)



List the passages in Matthew 1:18 to 2:23 which are quotations from the Old Testament, fulfilled in the coming of Jesus Christ. For each passage, note what was prophesied in the Old Testament and the fulfilment in Christ. To help, two examples are given below.

Matthew	Old Testament	Fulfilment
1:21	Ps 130:8 He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.	Jesus will save his people from their sins.

1:22,23	Isaiah 7:14	
2:5,6	Micah 5:2 From Bethlehem will come a ruler over Israel whose origins are from ancient times.	
2:15	Hosea 11:1 Out of Egypt I called my son.	
2:18	Jeremiah 31:15	
2:23	Ps 69:7 I endure scorn and shame. Is 9:1,2 A great light is seen in the land of Zebulon and Naphtali in Galilee	Jesus grew up in a town of Galilee, called Nazareth; the name symbolizes scorn and shame.



Why did Jesus call the two disciples on the road to Emmaus ‘foolish and slow of heart’? (Luke 24:25-27)



Who were the eyewitnesses whom Jesus refers to in Luke 24:46-48?



Of what events were they eyewitnesses?



Why is this of importance to us?



## Optional activities

- Review the above chart of prophecies fulfilled during Christ's birth from Matthew chapters 1 and 2, and indicate what they foretold about Jesus' nature, ministry and life in the chart below. Then, complete the chart below after reading the following additional Old Testament prophecies: Isaiah 9:1-7; Zechariah 11:12-14; Isaiah 42:1-7; Psalm 22; Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12; Hosea 6:2; Psalm 2:6-12. Where you are able, try to provide the New Testament text that confirms the fulfilment of each prophecy.

EVENTS IN JESUS' LIFE FORETOLD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT		
Old Testament prophecy	Teaching about the coming Messiah (fulfilled in Jesus)	New Testament fulfilment
<b>BIRTH, NATURE AND ORIGIN</b>		
Isaiah 7:14	He would be born as a baby (man) and also Emmanuel, the eternal God with us.	John 1:14; Galatians 4:4-5
Micah 5:2		
Jeremiah 31:15		
Isaiah 9:2 and 6-7		
<b>LIFE</b>		
Hoshea 11:1		
Zechariah 11:12-13		
<b>MINISTRY</b>		
Psalm 130:8		
Isaiah 9:1-3		

Isaiah 42: 1-7	He would be humble and not harm his enemies. v2-3 -establish justice on earth. v3-4 -be a light to the Gentiles. v4,6 -open the eyes of the blind and free captives. v7	Matthew 12:15-21
<b>DEATH</b>		
Psalm 22		
Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12		
<b>RESURRECTION</b>		
Psalm 16:9-10		
Hoshea 6:2		
<b>ASCENSION &amp; REIGN</b>		
Isaiah 9:6-7		
Psalm 2:6-12		

2. In groups of two, perform a dialogue between a Christian and someone who is open to listen but not yet a believer. The Christian will persuade the seeker about Jesus' true identity using some elements learned in this lesson. Then, swap the roles. Some of the pairs can present their dialogue in front of the whole group.



## Applications

1. Spend some time praising God for His word that can be fully trusted and for Jesus, the promised Messiah, our Saviour.
2. Think of some of your friends, family members, colleagues or neighbours who are ‘foolish and slow of heart’ in a spiritual sense. In groups of two or three, pray for the Holy Spirit to work in their hearts and that they will become open to listening to the Scriptures. In the coming days, keep praying for the people who were mentioned in your group.



## Sharing

This week, share with others what you have learned in this lesson. You can also redo the lesson with someone.



## Lesson 4 : Acts and the Early Church

**Preaching faith in Jesus the Messiah to the ends of the earth**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Lesson Objectives

1. To understand how the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations is the fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham
2. To realize the ministry and passion of the Apostle Paul to preach the Good News of the promise to the nations
3. To embrace the privilege of announcing the blessing to the ends of the earth



### How are you getting on?

1. What were the main points of the last lesson?
2. What happened when you shared with others what you learned?
3. What changed in your lives as a result of these teachings?



### Read Acts 1:1-9 and Acts 26:1-32



In the Early Church, the apostles preached faith in Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth.



According to Acts 1:1-9 what did Jesus command his disciples to do once they had received the Holy Spirit?



In your own words what does the phrase '*to the ends of the earth*' mean?



How does this relate to Gen 12:3, which we studied in lesson 1?



The apostles obeyed Jesus' command and preached salvation in his name. Many believed and churches were founded (Acts chapter 2 and following). The apostle Paul wrote many letters to the churches. They can be read in the New Testament.



Read Paul's testimony before King Agrippa in Acts 26:1-32. How did Paul treat believers in Christ before he too became a believer? (Acts 26:9-11)

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How was he, too, an eyewitness of Jesus Christ? (Acts 26:12-15)

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What mission did the Lord give to Paul? (v. 15-18)

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What did Paul do in obedience to this mission? (v. 19-20)?

---



How does what you read in Acts 26:17-20 relate to Acts 1:8?

---



According to Paul, what had the prophets and Moses predicted would happen concerning the Christ? (Acts 26:22-23)

---



What was Paul's wish when he spoke to King Agrippa, Festus and the others listening to his defence? (Acts 26:28-29)



### Optional activities

1. Watch one of these two short videos (less than 2 minutes each): [The Spread of Christianity Video 1](#) or [The Spread of Christianity Video 2](#). They give an idea of how the message of the gospel has spread all over the world from the start of the church until the present day. (However, the recent growth of the church in China and South Korea is not mentioned.) Thank God for all the believers who have shared the Gospel through the ages and pray for the parts of the world that are still unreached.
2. How did the Gospel reach your country and your locality? Take some time to share about the history of your church. Praise God that your own nation has been blessed in this way.



## Applications

1. Share with one another how you came to know Christ. Thank God for those who shared the Gospel with you.
2. As a believer, you have also received the power of the Holy Spirit to be Christ's witness (Acts 1:8). How can you be a witness of Jesus in your context?
3. Have you encountered similar obstacles to those faced by the first believers? What did you learn from this experience? How can today's story encourage you when you face such situations?
4. In groups of two or three, pray again for the people for whom you prayed all week. Ask God to open up opportunities for you to be a witness to them and to explain the Gospel. Pray that their hearts will be burning within them when you explain the Scriptures to them. Keep praying for these people all through the coming days.



## Sharing

This week, share with others what you have learned in this lesson. You can also redo the lesson with someone.



## Lesson 5: The Epistles

### Teachings for the Church

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Lesson Objectives**

1. *To recognise (the role of the law and) the importance of faith in God's grace in acquiring the promise of salvation*
2. *To widen appreciation of the glorious universal Church as Christ's new people*
3. *To be strengthened and rejoice in our identity as children of Abraham by faith and in the blessings of our inheritance; to be able to explain two or three of these blessings*
4. *To praise God for the unity that exists between believers in Christ Jesus and to grow in that unity.*



#### **How are you getting on?**

1. What were the main points of the last lesson?
2. What happened when you shared with others what you learned?
3. What changed in your lives as a result of these teachings?



#### **Read Galatians 3:6-29 and Ephesians 2:11-22.**



Who are the true children of Abraham and in what sense are they his descendants?  
(Galatians 3:6-7, 26-29)



How do the Scriptures foretell that God would justify all people by faith and not by works?  
(Galatians 3:6-12)

Verse.6 (See Genesis 15: 6):

Verse 8 (See Genesis 12: 3):

Verse 10 (See Deuteronomy 27: 26):

Verse 11 (See Habakkuk 2: 4):



Who is the ‘seed’ of Abraham through whom God blesses all peoples? (Galatians 3:16-19)



Why did God give the law (i.e. the Ten Commandments, etc.)? (Galatians 3:19-24)



**Reread Galatians 3:26-29 and Ephesians 2:11-22.**



Between what social groups were there barriers in the early Church period?



How does God in Jesus Christ unite people?



What are the privileges mentioned in these verses that all believers have in Jesus Christ?



### Optional activities

1. Sing a worship song celebrating our unity in Christ, for example:

- [Oh, How Good It Is](#), Keith and Kristyn Getty
- [The Church’s One Foundation](#), Indelible Grace

- [He reigns](#), Newsboys
2. Watch the following video of the '[Revelation Song](#)' sung in many languages. Then praise God for our unity in Christ beyond cultural, social and political barriers.



## Applications

1. If we are justified by faith and our righteousness cannot come from the Law, how does that change our relationship with God? Discuss this with one another.
2. Which barriers are there between people in your culture and society? Pray that those barriers would be broken down in Christ and that there would be real unity among believers.
3. Pray and ask God to show you if you do not consider others as equally part of the family of God because of social, ethnic or gender differences. Confess this to God; ask him to forgive you and to change your attitude so that you will truly see all believers as one in Christ Jesus.



## Review of Course 101

Review the five lessons of this Course. As a group, make a collective drawing summarising what you have learned and illustrating how it has affected your lives.



## Sharing

This week, share with others what you have learned in this lesson. You can also redo the lesson with someone.

