

# Homegroup Discussion Guide



# THE MASTER'S PLAN

The Big Picture of the Bible



# THE MASTER'S PLAN

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# THE MASTER'S PLAN

## HOMEGROUPS @ CENTRAL

### Thanks for Being Part of a Homegroup

Central homegroups are the backbone of our church. Sunday services are important, but in homegroups there is greater opportunity for learning together, serving together, caring together, praying together and doing life together. God's people are not saved into isolation, but into a community and the best expression of that community is in homegroups.

### Making the Most of Your Homegroup Time

Anything worth doing is worth doing well. That's why we ask that you treat your homegroup as an important part of the rhythm of your weekly life. There are a few things you can do so that you get the most benefit out of the group and so that you are a benefit and a blessing to the group.

- Be There: Your presence encourages others. It means you are not only committed to the group, but to the other members of the group. Being inconsistent sends a negative message to everyone else.
- Prayer: Pray for the people in your group, especially your group leader.
- Prepare: Read any parts of the Bible that your leader suggests, do any homework that comes out of the study. It will not be onerous and you will benefit from it.
- Care: Be willing to give of yourself to the others in your group. The Bible says, "Love one another for love is from God and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God" (1 John 4:7).

### Why Do the Same Study?

Central Church has recently moved to a system where all homegroups study the same passage or topic that was preached on at the Sunday church service. What are the advantages of doing studies this way?

- Unity: Doing the same study means all across the church we are learning the same things at the same time. It can provide topics of conversation across the whole church.
- Growth: People learn better when they hear things more than once. People learn better when they hear things more than once. Marketing people know this. That is why you see the same commercials on tv

over and over again. But it is true. Most people will only remember one or two points from a Sunday sermon (and they are usually the stories that are told as illustrations). People learn best when given the opportunity to talk over the subject matter. By hearing the sermon on Sunday and then being involved in a homegroup discussion during the week, you will find the message of God's Word is sown more deeply into your heart and mind.

Relevance: By preparing our own studies, we can be specific about issues that impact all of us in our time and place. Most group study materials are from America or were written 10 or 20 years ago and speak to issues of another place or time. You will find that the studies we prepare will be practical and relevant in Ipswich, today.

You will also find that this booklet provides helpful information about what is happening in and around Central Church and will give you up to date information about matters for prayer.



## **Let's Make a Difference in 2012**

There's been all sorts of strange talk about 2012 being the last year for planet earth. It is claimed that the world will end at the end of this year. While we place no weight on myths, it's still worth asking the question ... 'what if?' Jesus made it clear that it could happen at any time. He will return one day and we do not know when that day will be. Our warning is to be ready.

So the question we are going to ask ourselves in 2012 at Central is 'are we ready?' Let's make sure we are by making every day count in 2012. Let's live like Jesus could come back. How will that change the way we speak and act?

Throughout the year we will be hearing from God's Word about His plan for the world and His plan for us as residents of this world. We will also examine what the Bible says about the end times and how we can be prepared, resting assured that Jesus has won the greatest victory over sin and death and will return as the triumphant king for his faithful people.

## **How Can You Make a Difference?**

- Get involved in a new gospel-centred ministry
- Tell people about Jesus
- Get involved in a gospel-centred local social mission
- Go on a short-term mission
- Give money to your church
- Give money to missions
- Pray ... a lot!
- Disciple a new believer
- Get some training for ministry or in the Bible
- Have intentional and encouraging conversations after church
- Follow up other church/homegroup members during the week

CONNECT is the first step along the discipleship pathway. Our CONNECT ministries aim to connect people with Jesus and to his body, the church. Peter Skerman heads up our Connect Ministries, focussing on outreach, missions and helping new people to Central find a home here.



## THE GIFT

It was really hard to count, but we think about 700 people attended The Gift, our special Christmas gift to the city of Ipswich.

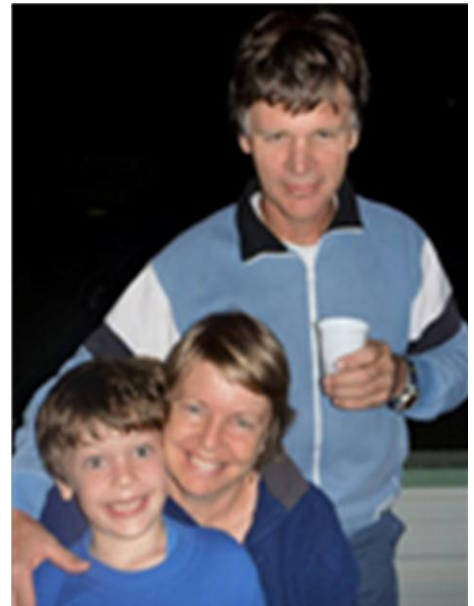
The Friday night family carols event had the lot, from camels to carols. Ipswich Assist was able to hand out hampers to about 50 families, together with presents for their children which were donated by Central Church. The Gift provides a connecting point with our community each Christmas.

## IPSWICH ASSIST

Ipswich Assist opened its doors for 2012 on January 10.

Each Tuesday, we offer crisis relief and support to Ipswich people. Each day is different as people present with stories of hardship. The ministry is not just about giving out food. The volunteers listen. Some of the most effective ministry is done with the ear. Many people do not have anyone who will just take the time to hear what has been happening in their lives; things like relationship breakdown, abuse, unexpected financial hardship, health trauma. In being a listening ear, the door is opened to give Help, Hope and Support.

Earlier this month, Paul Blake started as the Programme Manager, leading the team and providing direction to the ministry.



## HOMECOMING

In January, the Johansons return for a short time. It will be great to catch up with David, Helen and little David (who's probably much bigger now). David and Helen work with New Tribes Mission in the Philippines. David provides support to missionaries in remote areas. They will spend about 3 months back in Australia to celebrate with their daughter, Rachel, who is getting married on March 10 and with Helen's sister who is also getting married.

Peter Skerman leads our Connect Team Ministries  
[peters@centralchurch.net.au](mailto:peters@centralchurch.net.au)



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# THE MASTER'S PLAN

## GROW

GROW is the second step along the discipleship pathway. Our GROW ministries aim to encourage people to grow as followers of Jesus. GROW is about teaching followers how to hear and do the Word of God and equipping them to be obedient and effective servants in the Kingdom of God.



### COFFEE NIGHT

With Naomi Reed

The Ladies of Central will head to Acacia Ridge to hear missionary and author, Naomi Reed, in February.

When we struggle with comparison, Jesus says, "You follow me". Naomi will be speaking about our struggle with comparison, when look at other people and think we'd be better if we were more like them.

**WHEN** 9 FEBRUARY, 7 PM – 9 PM

**WHERE** ACACIA RIDGE PRESY

**COST** \$5

**REGISTER AT CHURCH TO JOIN OUR GROUP**

### MEMBERSHIP

The next Back to Basics membership course will be in term 2 (just after Easter).

Back to Basics is a 7 week course for anyone who is new to the church or anyone who wants to become a member.

Every time we run Back to Basics we find that whether they've been Christians for 5 minutes or 50 years, those who take part, love it. The material is well presented and always gets good discussion going about the parts of the Bible that are really important and the areas of our Christian life that we all struggle with. And more than that, it provides a great night out to meet more Central Church people and discuss things that really matter.

Why not join the next course?

Manual costs \$10.



### READING IN 2012

2012 is the National Year for Reading in Australia. What will you read? Maybe you are not a reader, but this could be your incentive to give it a go.

The GROW team is encouraging you to read something that will challenge your faith in 2012. Start with the Bible! But also read other great Christian titles. There are plenty available at our **bookshop**.

Biographies of Christians like Keith Green, Hudson Taylor, Corrie Ten Boom or Jim Elliot are always encouraging and inspiring.

Or maybe try some books to help you grow like Radical by David Platt, Transforming Grace by Jerry Bridges or Don't Waste Your Life by John Piper.

While we continue to seek a Grow Pastor, Snr Pastor, Scott Muir will lead our Grow Ministries  
scott@centralchurch.net.au



SERVE is the third step along the discipleship pathway. Our SERVE ministries aim to train, equip and mobilise our people into areas of ministry so that our mission of making followers of Jesus by being followers of Jesus is carried out. Natalie Newell heads up our Serve Ministries, focussing on engaging people in the best ministry fit for them.



## INTRODUCING ...

### **NATALIE NEWELL MINISTRY CO-ORDINATOR**

Natalie is the newest addition to our Ministry Team. Natalie and her family moved up from Grafton in the middle of 2011, being very open to the Lord's leading in their lives. The Lord led them to Central Church and now, very much out of the blue, He's taken them an extra step into serving on our staff team.

Natalie trained as a physiotherapist and met her husband, Rob, studying the same degree. In more recent years Nat has had the joy of caring for their three wonderful children.

Working as a physiotherapist might seem like a strange training ground for ministry, but it's a 'hands-on' (pardon the pun) people job where you have to be a great listener and have the ability to understand people and what they really need – a lot like ministry.

Natalie's faith is central to everything she does. She has a passion for the local church and has had significant experience in children's ministry, connecting churches into the local community, church management committees, ladies Bible study leadership and hospitality.

While a formal ministry job is new to Natalie, the elders have been really impressed with her love for God and for people, not to mention her outstanding people skills. What's more, we think it will be a great asset to have a woman on the ministry team to bring that much needed female perspective!



## IGNITE 2012

### **Children's Ministry Training Day**

Central will be sending as many people as possible to this year's IGNITE conference.

IGNITE is a 'one stop shop' for resources, training, inspiration, networking and more. Enjoy the buzz as you share this day with fellow workers from across the state.

We want everyone involved in kids' ministry to get along and also those who would like to find out more of what kids' ministry is like.

<http://igniteexpo.org.au/brisbane2012/>

**DATE** 3 MARCH 2012

**PLACE** MUELLER COLLEGE, ROTHWELL  
See Nat if you want to get on board.



Natalie Newell leads our Serving Ministries.  
Talk to Nat if you would like to get involved.  
[natalie@centralchurch.net.au](mailto:natalie@centralchurch.net.au)

## DATE CLAIMERS FOR 2012

**9 February**

Ladies Coffee Night with Naomi Reed  
Acacia Ridge Presbyterian Church

**3 March**

IGNITE Children's Ministry Expo  
Mueller College

**9-12 July**



Dr Don Carson at QTC

Canadian author, scholar, teacher and preacher, Dr Don Carson will be in Brisbane as the special guest of QTC, in July. He will run a course during the week and hold a public event on Thursday, 12 July. Mark it in your diary now.

Dr Carson is a lecturer in New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Seminar in Illinois. He is the author of many books and commentaries, including *The Gagging of God*, *For the Love of God* and *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God*.

**15 September**

Forge (formerly Men's Training Event)  
Brisbane Convention Centre

**Sept-Oct**

Solomon Islands Short Term Mission  
For two weeks during the school holidays

**5-7 October**

Church Camp  
Camp Somerset

**21 December**

The Gift – Carols for the  
Ipswich Community



# THE MASTER'S PLAN

Many Christians, though they've been reading the Bible for many years, still struggle to understand how its various books and stories fit together. They are bewildered as they read the details of family trees, ceremonial washings, names of places they've never heard of and much more and therefore tend to focus just on parts of the Bible that are easier to understand (usually just the New Testament).

But we have a high view of God's Word – that all of it is His written Word to us. Therefore, all of it is important. But that leaves us feeling lost in those difficult passages. What do they mean? Are they important or not?

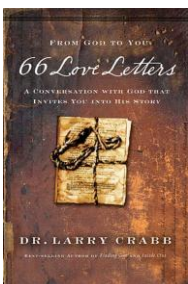
The goal of this series of sermons and studies is to help you see the big picture of the Bible and in seeing the big picture, to have a better understanding of all its parts. The Bible can be a bit like a jigsaw puzzle. It's always easier to do a jigsaw puzzle when you can see where the piece you've got in your hand fits into the bigger picture of the puzzle. That's where the complete picture on the front of the box helps out.

This term we're going to look at that big picture. The Bible is God's revealed plan and purpose for the world. It starts way back and the very beginning when our world was created, and it ends sometime in the future when the world as we know it will end at the Second Coming of Christ and the New Heavens and the New Earth.

My prayer is that at the end of this series, you will have greater confidence in reading all of God's Word, that you will have a greater desire to read all of God's Word and most importantly, that you will be strengthened in your faith as you not only read the Word, but do what it says. And of course, when a church is full of believers who are strongly grounded in the Word of God, so is that church a more healthy church.

## The Kingdom of God

As we walk through the Bible, a unifying theme will be the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is a term used often in the Bible (especially by Jesus) and it reminds us that God is the divine King who rules justly and graciously over His Creation, including all human beings. It is right for humans to acknowledge God as King. We will explain the Kingdom of God pattern through the lens of the theme – God's People, in God's Place living under God's Rule.



## 66 Love Letters (Larry Crabb)

Psychologist and author Crabb serves up what could be his magnum opus, combining his passions for Bible teaching, counseling, and people healing one another in communities. Written as an ongoing dialogue between the author and God about the 66 books of the Bible, Crabb uses first person for both voices. The author's persona progressively learns deeper truths about God's love from each "letter," or book, of the Bible. A great companion for reading through the Bible.



# THE MASTER'S PLAN

week one

## THE BIBLE AND THE KINGDOM

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### For Starters

2012 is the National Year of Reading for Australia. We're encouraged to find a good book and read it. Tell each other in the group about your favourite book. Be an advocate for it ... why should we all read it?

Christians are people of the book - the great book, the Bible. While we do not worship the book, we realise that the God we worship has spoken to us definitively and authoritatively in His Word, the Bible. This series of sermons and studies is designed to help us all grow in our appreciation for this amazing book.

### *The Bible*

The Bible is a big book. In fact, it is a library of 66 books. It was written by about 40 authors over a time span of 1500 years. Much of it is to do with historical issues that are very far removed from us. The last of its books was written close to 2000 years ago. Yet it continues to be a best seller all over the world. Why? Discuss.

So what is the Bible all about? With 66 different books, does that mean it has 66 (or more) different themes and ideas, or is there a unifying theme or thought? In the space below, come up with a one-sentence summary of the message of the Bible.

### AN IDEA

To be part of the Year of Reading, why not have your own book club as part of your group. Choose a good Christian book that you will all read.

When you come together you can discuss what you've read.

*Biblical Theology* is a term we use to describe the way of seeing the Bible as a complete unit with a consistent message throughout all 66 books. Biblical Theology keeps us coming back to context ... understanding each part within the wider context of the whole. What can happen if we fail to do this?

### **From the Word**

Read Luke 24:13-35. When Jesus speaks to these men, what is the main point of his Bible study with them (v. 27)?



Name some of the things you think Jesus might have taught them that day. Are there some significant parts of the Old Testament that you can think of that lead directly to Jesus?

How does this change the way we ought to look at the Old Testament?

### **For Discussion**

New believers often have a vital and enthusiastic relationship with the Bible. They read it and do what it says. But as we listen to sermons and hear biblical scholars, we are sometimes left wondering if it is that simple. When people talk about Greek words, Hebraic literary structures and special cultural issues from 2000 years ago, we can be left thinking the Bible is actually an obscure book whose message is out of reach to the regular 'person in the pew'. Discuss the balance between these two extremes.



What keeps you from delving deeply into the Word?

The Holy Spirit has an important role to play in our understanding of the Bible. What is it and what difference does knowing this have on the way we approach the Bible (John 16:7-15; Hebrews 4:12)?

### **For Prayer**

Your group leader will have a 2012 Prayer Journal for you. This is something to keep and use throughout the year so you can be intentional about prayer for your group. Start today by actually taking notes and committing to pray for one another. It is something we are told to do in Scripture.



In particular, discuss friends and acquaintances who you would like to share the gospel with. Commit to discuss and pray for them each week.



# THE MASTER'S PLAN

weektwo

## THE PATTERN OF THE KINGDOM

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GENESIS 1 & 2



### For Starters

Start by praying. Turn things upside down this week and pray at the beginning so that you make sure your time of prayer isn't cut short. If your leader has not yet given you your 2012 Group Prayer Journal, get one off him/her now. Make sure you make a note of the things your friends are seeking prayer about and continue to pray for those things during the week.

Don't forget also to pray for the unsaved people you mentioned last week. Did any group members have an opportunity for a gospel conversation during the week? How did it go? Support one another in this.



### From the Word

It all began with God. In the opening pages of the Bible, God speaks and things happen. Here we discover God and his plan for his creation.

**Read Genesis 1:1-2:3** and make a note of the repeated words and phrases.

What do these opening parts of the Bible tell us about God and the world?

What in this passage indicates that human beings have a special place in creation? (see also Genesis 2:15).



### **For Discussion**

What is the appropriate human response to our creator God (read Psalms 8 and 95:3-7)?

From just this brief look at the way God began things in this world, what would you say was His plan? Describe it below ...

What special role do human beings have in that plan and how are you fulfilling that?

Rest is an important theme in the Bible. When God rested from his work, he enjoyed what he had made. It was a day of blessing, goodness, enjoyment. But it was soon spoilt by sin. Read Hebrews 4:1-4 to find out how human beings can enjoy rest with God again.

### **Summing Up**

A key pattern that we will follow all through the Bible is the pattern for the Kingdom of God. We can summarise the Kingdom of God like this:

#### **God's People in God's Place under God's rule.**

In Genesis chapter 1, what have we learnt about God's people?

What have we learnt about God's place for his people? (ie. how God's people are to relate to Creation).

What have we learnt about God's rule? (ie. how God's people relate to God).



### **For Prayer**

Open up Psalm 104 and worship God your creator by praying together using the words of this Psalm to pray.



# THE MASTER'S PLAN

weekthree

## THE PERISHED KINGDOM

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GENESIS 3



### For Starters

A newspaper reporter stops you in the street and asks what you believe is wrong with the world. What would you say?

Today we see how God's perfect pattern for the world He created went wrong.



### From the Word

Read Genesis 3:1-13. How was the serpent crafty?

What is the essence of Adam and Eve's sin?

What were sin's immediate consequences (see also verses 22-24)?

Did Adam and Eve die as God had said would happen?

God then explains what will happen because of their sin. Read verses 16-19 and describe the difference that sin makes.



### **For Discussion**

Discuss the true nature of sin ... what is sin?

What would you say to a non-believing friend who was blaming God for things that are going wrong in their lives?

Hope is not lost. Read Genesis 3:15. Where does this obscure verse take us and what hope does it provide?

### **Summing Up**

Remember our key 'Kingdom of God' pattern that we are following all through the Bible:

#### **God's People in God's Place under God's rule.**

By the end of chapter 3, how has the Fall affected God's people?

How has the Fall affected God's place?

How has the Fall affected God's rule?



### **For Prayer**

Without Christ, all people remain under the curse of sin. Jesus became a curse for us so we might become the righteousness of God (Galatians 3:13). Spend some time thanking Jesus for this and also praying for people you know who do not know this freedom. Make sure you remain consistent in praying for your group's lost friends throughout the term.

weekfour

# THE PROMISED KINGDOM

GENESIS 12-17



## For Starters

Make a timeline of the significant events and people in the Bible. Your leader will have some butcher's paper and a pen so you can work on this together.

God doesn't admit defeat easily. Though sin has done terrible damage to His perfect creation, God's plan is to restore, to renew, and to redeem. And he starts with one man.



## From the Word

Read Genesis 12:1-3. Within these 3 verses we find the promises that the rest of the Bible fulfils. Write down the 7 things God says he will do for and through Abraham.

Why is Abraham chosen for such an important role in world history?

In Genesis 15:1-6 these promises are re-affirmed. What critical thing does verse 6 make clear.



### **For Discussion**

From your knowledge of some other events in Abraham's life, would you say he had perfectly consistent faith in God? What does this tell you about God?

Read 2 Corinthians 1:18-22. How do the promises God made to Abraham find their 'yes' in Jesus? (you might also like to refer to Galatians 3:5-14).

You could summarise the Bible's message so far like this: *We fail, but God succeeds*. How does knowing and believing this have a positive influence on your daily life?

### **Summing Up**

God is restoring his perfect plan. Reflect on God's pattern for the world in the light of the covenant with Abraham:

#### **God's People in God's Place under God's rule.**

In Genesis 12-17, who will be God's people?

Where is God's place for his people?

How is God's rule made clear to His people?



### **For Prayer**

Thank God that he chooses people according to his grace and not our good works.

Keep praying for the unsaved people on your list.

# THE PARTIAL KINGDOM

2 SAMUEL 7



### For Starters ... Pray

Let's do things backwards again this week. Start by sharing what has been going on in your lives and support one another in prayer. Doing it this way means you will not run out of time to pray at the end. Make sure you are still using your 2012 Prayer Journal.

What are you looking forward to this year? Is there something that's got you really excited? Something you have great expectations about?

### A Quick Review

When God made his promises to Abraham, it created an expectation of great things to come. Recall the three main things God promised Abraham.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

To get to King David from Abraham, we've had to skip a lot of Biblical history. In brief, the descendants of Abraham became a great nation in Egypt where God preserves them from famine (initially under Joseph). But God then has to save them from the oppression of the Egyptians. In the first half of Exodus, God miraculously brings them out of captivity (saves them) and unites them as a nation with Him as their great God-king. Their national identity is the Covenant he makes with them at Mt Sinai. After 40 years in the wilderness, they at last enter the Promised Land, Canaan, under the leadership of Joshua. But they do not finish the job. Joshua dies and the people become lazy about the other nations who still live in pockets of Canaan. They are happy to co-exist with them instead of driving them out. Under the Judges, the influence of these foreign nations and their foreign gods has a devastating effect on the people. At the end of this period, they decide they need the leadership of a king, and God consents, first with the disastrous Saul (whom they chose) but then with King David (chosen by God).



### From the Word

Look up these passages and make a note of the significant events (including any references to our 'people, place, rule' pattern):

Passage	What Happened
2 Samuel 5:1-10	
2 Samuel 5:17-19, 25	
2 Samuel 6:1-4	
2 Samuel 7:1	

We seem to be in a golden age. Could this be the fulfilment of God's promises? Is this the complete restoration, the fulfilment of God's plan? Read 2 Samuel 7:1-17. Here we find another of the great covenants of the Old Testament – the Davidic Covenant.

What does David want to do for God?

What does God want to do for David instead?

How are these promises similar to what God promised Abraham?

What has been added?

But there's still a problem. What did David's sin with Bathsheba demonstrate (chapter 11)?



# THE MASTER'S PLAN



### For Discussion

Has God's promise to David been fulfilled? How? Come up with some passages of Scripture to prove your point.

Is the fact that Jesus is not only Saviour but also King evident in your life? How?

### Summing Up

Things were looking good during the reign of David. At the point of 2 Samuel 7, identify how God's pattern:

### God's People in God's Place under God's rule.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD	GOD'S PEOPLE	GOD'S PLACE	GOD'S RULE
THE PATTERN Genesis 1 & 2	Adam and Eve	Eden	God's Word
PROMISED Genesis 12-17	Abraham	Canaan	God's Covenant
PARTIALLY FULFILLED 2 Samuel 7			



### For Prayer

Close the night in prayer.



# THE PROPHESED KINGDOM

JEREMIAH



## For Starters

Were you ever in BIG trouble as a kid? Share with the group your biggest trouble and what the consequences were.

Today we see the consequences for Israel's rebellion against God.



## From the Word

We saw last week that while there were some positive signs under David (and also under King Solomon) the big problem for God's people still had not been solved – sin. Both David and Solomon disobeyed God. After Solomon, the pattern of sin continued. There were factions within the nation causing a split between the ten northern tribes (which together became known as Israel) and two southern tribes (known as Judah). The final result of the unfaithfulness of the kings and their people was that God brought judgement upon them.

In 722 BC, Israel was overrun by the Assyrians and in 586 BC, Judah (where Jerusalem was) finally fell to the Babylonians. The people were exiled to Babylon (remember Daniel and his friends).

Read Psalm 137. How does this song capture the feeling of the nation?

This was a time of much soul searching for the remnant of Judah (as they were called). During this period, God raised up prophets who still held out some hope for the future. One of those was Jeremiah. Read Jeremiah 31:10-14; 31-34. What things will God do according to these verses?

The prophets mention two key figures who will take key roles of this restoration. Who are they and what will they do?

Jeremiah 33:14-26

Isaiah 53:1-12



### **For Discussion**

God is a holy God. Sin incurs his wrath. This is clearly demonstrated in the devastating events of the exile. Do you think the Christian church today cares enough about God's attitude to sin? If not, why do you think that?

God deals harshly with sin (as it deserves). We can be repulsed by passages like Isaiah 53, directing us to the cross where Jesus died, but it is important to be confronted by the cruel reality of the crucifixion. Why?

Today, should we relate our situation to that of the exiles – God's people living amongst a nation of people who are anti-God? Read Jeremiah 29:4-7 and discuss if or how this applies to us.

### **Summing Up**

What has happened to the 'Kingdom of God' pattern during the exile?

#### **God's People in God's Place under God's rule.**

What happened to God's people?

What happened to the place that God had for his people?

How is God's rule demonstrated over His people?



### **For Prayer**

Pray that we would seek the welfare of our city here in Ipswich. Ask for God's help to be a positive influence in our city.

Pray again for your unsaved friends.



# THE MASTER'S PLAN

weekseven

## THE PRESENT KINGDOM

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LUKE 2:26-45 and more



### For Starters

When has your patience been tested? Tell the group about it.

400 years had passed since the close of the Old Testament writings. The prophets had been silent. The people of God had gone from one captivity to the next. By the time the pages of the New Testament open, it is the Romans who are in charge.

Describe what you imagine to be the feeling amongst the Jewish people at this time.



### From the Word

At last the silence is broken. **Read Luke 2:26-45.**

What claims are made about the baby Mary will bear?

Thinking back over our Old Testament studies, what is significant about the Old Testament names the angel mentions in verses 32 and 33?

Read John 1:29-32. What special part of Jesus' ministry was John referring to in these verses and what do you think the average Jew listening in would have thought of this?

Read Hebrews 1:1-2. What do these verses tell us about Jesus, in particular, why he came?



### For Discussion

If you could create a mission statement for Jesus when God sent him into the world, what would it be? Summarise it in one or two sentences.

You may have heard it said that Jesus fulfils the 3 major Old Testament leadership roles of Prophet, Priest and King. Discuss amongst your group how he does this and then complete the statements below:

Jesus is the final and great prophet because ...

Jesus is the final and great priest because ...

Jesus is the final and great king because ...

What does it mean practically for us today that Jesus is each of these roles to us?

Jesus is my prophet therefore ...

Jesus is my priest therefore ...

Jesus is my king therefore ...

### Summing Up

In Mark 1:15, Jesus declares, 'Behold, the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the good news.' Jesus completes the kingdom pattern.

**God's People** (Jesus is the perfect human being and representative head of God's people)

**God's Place** (Jesus is the very presence of God and his people are 'in him')

**God's Rule** (Jesus is the King who reigns forever)



### For Prayer

Make a list of the great things about Jesus – both his character and what he has done. Go around the group thanking Jesus for each of them (short, one at a time prayers are good!).

# THE PROCLAIMED KINGDOM

## 2 CORINTHIANS 4



### For Starters

If the gospel of Jesus is so life-changing, why don't more people believe it?

We saw last week that Jesus (his life, death and resurrection) is the climax of God's revelation. He is the promised Messiah who died for the salvation of all who believe. So what else is there to say? Jesus is the climax, but not the end. Revelation from God continued and of course, human history continues.



### From the Word

Read 2 Corinthians 4. Here Paul speaks about the on-going ministry of God's people in proclaiming the kingdom of God. From this chapter, how would you describe how this gospel proclamation is going?

What is the central message Paul proclaims and why is this so important (v. 5)?

What is the treasure he mentions in verse 7?

Why does he describe God's people (including himself) as jars of clay?

Make a list of the things in this passage that encourage and give great hope.



### For Discussion

Why does our plainness and weakness bring glory to God?

Do the words Paul uses in this passage sound like what is happening in your life?  
What would you need to change?

The coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 is a monumental step in redemptive history. The Spirit's significance is actually the context of 2 Corinthians 4 (see 2 Corinthians 3). How does the Holy Spirit bring new light to the pattern of God's people, in God's place, living under God's rule?

Last week we discussed how the Kingdom of God had come in Jesus. How do we reconcile the fact that Jesus is reigning in glory with the fact that life is still hard?

### Summing Up

Let's summarise our pattern throughout the Bible and fill in the blanks for the current period (ie. from Christ's ascension right up to now).

THE KINGDOM OF GOD	GOD'S PEOPLE	GOD'S PLACE	GOD'S RULE
<b>THE PATTERN</b> Genesis 1 & 2	Adam and Eve	Eden	God's Word
<b>PROMISED</b> Genesis 12-17	Abraham	Canaan	God's Covenant
<b>PARTIALLY FULFILLED</b> 2 Samuel 7	Israel	Canaan (and Ark)	God's King
<b>PROPHESED</b>	Exiles	Canaan	Prophets reminding them of God's law
<b>PRESENT KINGDOM</b>	Jesus	Jesus	Jesus
<b>PROCLAIMED (CHURCH)</b>			



### For Prayer

Spend some time talking about who you want to share the gospel with. Thank God that you are just a clay jar and that shining light into people's hearts is His job. Pray for those people you've listed.



# THE MASTER'S PLAN

weeknine

## THE PERFECTED KINGDOM

REVELATION 21:1-8; 21:22-22:5



### For Starters

Describe heaven. How do you imagine it?

The Bible starts with perfection and ends with perfection. Just like all good stories there is a beginning, a problem, a solution to the problem and a glorious ending.



### From the Word

Read Revelation 21:1-8 and 21:22-22:5.

Think back to the Garden of Eden and compare it with what you read in Revelation. What is the same? What is different?

What other Scriptural images and echoes do we find in these verses from Revelation?

Describe what life is like in this new creation?

Who will be part of this new creation according to these verses?



### For Discussion

John Piper says that if we hoping for heaven because we want a place where there is freedom, joy, peace etc ..., without firstly wanting to be with God, then we have missed the point of the gospel and will not actually receive heaven. How is that a test of our motives?

Some would say it is the work of Christians on earth to strive to make earth like heaven will be. Do you agree?

Reflect back over the last 8 studies. How has your appreciation and understanding of the Bible grown?

### Summing Up

Let's summarise our pattern throughout the Bible and fill in the blanks for the current period (ie. from Christ's ascension right up to now).

THE KINGDOM OF GOD	GOD'S PEOPLE	GOD'S PLACE	GOD'S RULE
<b>THE PATTERN</b> Genesis 1 & 2	Adam and Eve	Eden	God's Word
<b>PROMISED</b> Genesis 12-17	Abraham	Canaan	God's Covenant
<b>PARTIALLY FULFILLED</b> 2 Samuel 7	Israel	Canaan (and Ark)	God's King
<b>PROPHESED</b>	Exiles	Canaan	Prophets reminding them of God's law
<b>PRESENT KINGDOM</b>	Jesus	Jesus	Jesus
<b>PROCLAIMED (CHURCH)</b>	Christians (new Israel)	God's people (via the HS)	New Covenant (mediated by Jesus and with help of HS)
<b>PERFECTED</b>			



### For Prayer

Read through Psalm 119:129-136 and turn its words into your group prayer concerning your love for God's Word.



# THE MASTER'S PLAN

## AROUND THE BIBLE IN 40 DAYS

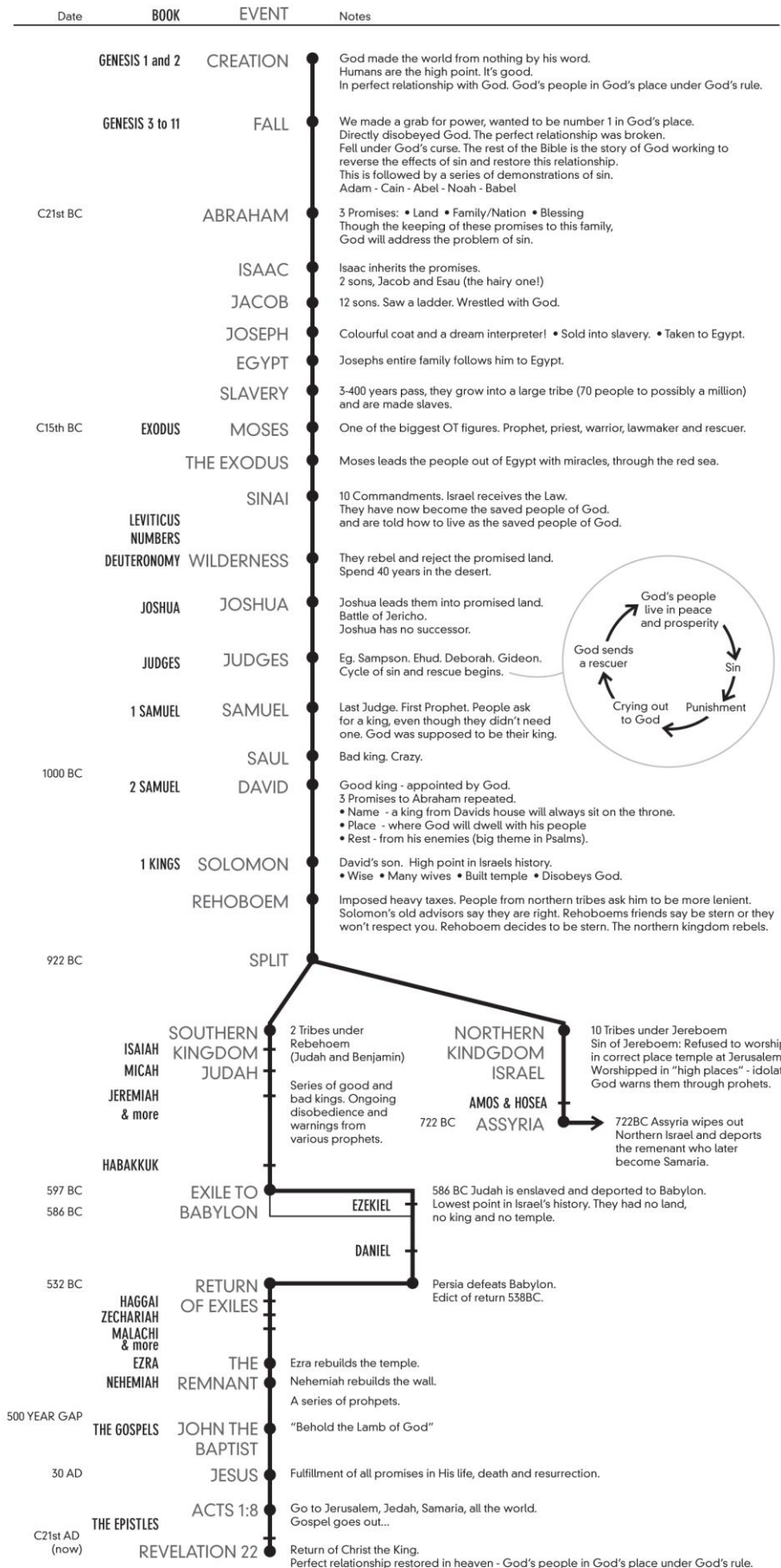
### 40 IMPORTANT PASSAGES FROM GENESIS TO REVELATION

As we go through this series, you might like to spend your personal devotion times stepping through these Bible highlights. As you read, write down what you are learning. Answer these questions:

- What is this telling me about God?
- What is this telling me about the world?
- What is this telling me about me?
- What is this telling me about Jesus?
- How should I live today in response?

<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 1	Genesis 1-2	Creation	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 21	Matthew 5-7	Jesus & the Law
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 2	Genesis 3	The Fall	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 22	John 3	God's Love
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 3	Genesis 6-9	Judgement & Grace	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 23	John 11	Power Over Death
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 4	Genesis 12, 15, 17	Abraham	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 24	Luke 15	Kingdom Parables
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 5	Genesis 21-22	Promises Kept	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 25	John 17	High Priestly Prayer
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 6	Exodus 3-4	Moses Called	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 26	Matthew 26-27	The Crucifixion
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 7	Exodus 12-14	Salvation	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 27	Matthew 28	Resurrection
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 8	Exodus 19-20	The New Nation	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 28	Acts 2	The Holy Spirit
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 9	Joshua 1 & 3	Promised Land	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 29	Romans 3	Justified by Faith
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 10	1 Samuel 16-17	God's King	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 30	Romans 8	Life in the Spirit
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 11	2 Samuel 6-7	People, Place, Rule	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 31	1 Cor 13	Love
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 12	1 Kings 3; 8:1-9:9	Solomon	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 32	1 Cor 15	Our Resurrection
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 13	2 Kings 25	Judah Falls	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 33	Galatians 5	Freedom & Fruit
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 14	Ezra 1-3	Exiles Rebuild	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 34	Ephesians 2 & 6	Saved by Grace
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 15	Isaiah 9, 53, 61	The Messiah	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 35	Phil 1:18-2:18	Christ's Humility
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 16	Jeremiah 29-31	New Covenant	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 36	Col 1:15-2:15	Jesus' Supremacy
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 17	Ps 1, 23, 46, 146	Songs to God	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 37	Hebrews 10- 11	Jesus and Faith
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 18	Luke 1-2	The Messiah	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 38	James 1	Hearing & Doing
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 19	John 1:1-18	Who is Jesus?	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 39	1 John 4-5	God is Love
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 20	Luke 4	Jesus' Ministry	<input type="checkbox"/> DAY 40	Revelation 21-22	New Heaven & Earth

# time line



## FURTHER READING

### **God's Big Picture by Vaughan Roberts**

Scott based this series on this book. It is easy to follow and aimed at the average Christian who wants a better understanding of the Bible. At present, Koorong has these for \$6 each.

### **66 Love Letters by Larry Crabb**

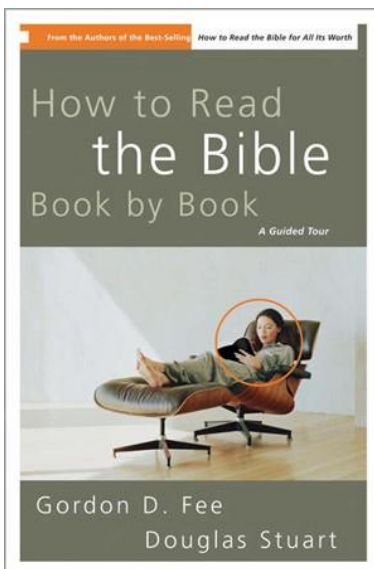
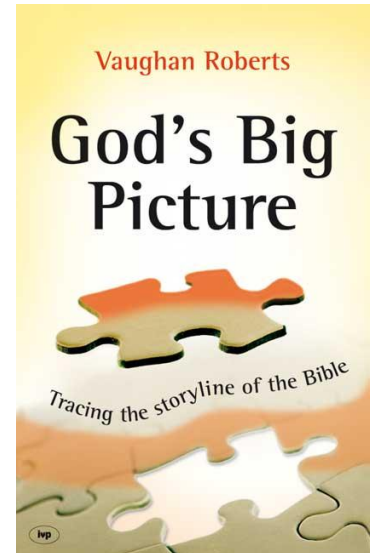
Larry Crabb has a dialogue with God trying to find out why each book of the Bible was written. He gives a few pages on each book, getting to the main point of each book. This is a pastoral book.

### **Gospel and Kingdom by Graeme Goldsworthy**

A small book which helps you see how the Kingdom of God is a unifying theme for the whole Bible. Rather than going book by book through the Bible, Gospel and Kingdom gives you all the tools you need to interpret the Bible correctly.

### **The Unfolding Mystery by Edmund Clowney**

Clowney walks you through the main events of the Bible and gives a thorough explanation of them.



### **How to Read the Bible Book by Book by Fee and Stuart**

Fee and Stuart give you an overview of every single book in the Bible, explaining who wrote them, why they wrote them and then walking you through the flow of each one. An excellent resource for only \$20.

### **The Faith of Israel by William Dumbrell**

This is a more academic walk through the Old Testament. A great reference book.





# THE MASTER'S PLAN

This homegroups discussion guide was prepared for the Homegroups Ministry of Central Church Ipswich. Studies written by Scott Muir – 2012.

