

“What Christians Believe” Bible Study Course

Method

1. The primary aim is to introduce the gospel by means of inductive Bible studies with English as the medium for those who are looking for opportunities to practise English.
2. The inductive Bible study method used in this course means that every study begins with the reading of the set Bible passage followed by answering observation-type questions. This gives everyone a chance to read aloud.
3. After the Bible reading, we go round the circle in turn answering the observation questions and helping with pronunciation and answering any grammar, vocabulary, or content questions which may arise. The group generally seems happier when native English speakers are involved in this part of the study. It is important to let the group know at the outset that if someone feels unable to answer, they are free to say ‘pass’ and the question rolls on to the next person.
4. Try not to get too bogged down with detailed explanations at this stage as it is important to keep the group moving so that they get a clear understanding of what the passage says.
5. Most of the necessary explanation and interpretation can be given during the discussion questions, though some background information may be necessary during the observations questions.
6. Discussion questions are open for anyone to say anything and we usually do not correct English at this stage as it is an opportunity for people to practise expressing their thoughts without feeling under pressure. As long as we understand their meaning we accept what they say.

Use of the Jesus video

Beginning with the study of the birth of Jesus there are directions for use of the Jesus video. We found that in a set course attempting to cover certain important facts about the life of Jesus, we are slowed down by the amount of material to be covered and the slower pace necessary for people with English as a second language. In order to present as complete a picture as possible within the constraints of a ten week course, we decided to insert sections from the video. This also provided necessary links between the popularity of Jesus as studied one week and then the seemingly sudden hostility towards him the next.

‘What Christians Believe’

The course seeks to present what and why Christians believe certain things, consequently it does not seek to be apologetic. The first study is *the fact of God* as presented in the Bible as Creator, Sustainer, etc. and the consequent implications of that fact for daily living. It does not seek to prove the existence of God or deal with questions arising about possible conflict between science and the Bible. Such questions may arise, but even there it is better to let the group members raise the questions themselves than put the questions in their mouths. We have found that the questions students ask are not always the ones we expect.

What Christians Believe

1. The Fact of God

God as Creator, Sustainer, Almighty One (Genesis 1:1-25 & John 1:1-3 & 1:18)

2. God Created Human Beings in His Own Image

The climax of creation, of the dust yet spiritual because made in God's image, the value of human life, made for fellowship with God, marriage a gift of God (Genesis 1:26-2:25)

3. Sin and Its Consequences

God's goodness and provision, a test of obedience, the entry of Satan, temptation, sin, blame, punishment, the promise of a Saviour (Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-24)

4. God's Law for a Healthy Society

God chooses a people, the covenant (Exodus 19:1-7), laws for God's people, their duty to God (Exodus 20:1-11), their relationships with others (Exodus 20:12-17), inability to keep the law shows us our sin and our need for a Saviour (Galatians 2:15-16, 3:23-26)

5. God's Promise

Prophecy of the birth of a child both human and divine, a descendant of David who will set up an eternal kingdom (Isaiah 9:2-7), the Saviour will be a servant who suffers (Isaiah 52:13-53:6)

6. God Keeps His Promise

The announcement to Mary (Luke 1:26-38), and to Joseph (Matthew 1:18-24), the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:1-7), all classes of people worship him (Luke 2:8-20, Matthew 2:1-12)

7. The Life of Jesus

People amazed by his teaching (Matthew 7:28), he had power over sickness (Matthew 8:1-17), power over nature (Matthew 8:23-27), power over demons (Matthew 8:28-34), he expected commitment (Matthew 8:18-23)

8. The Death of Jesus

The triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the cleansing of the Temple provoke the religious leaders into plotting Jesus' death (Mark 11:1-18), Judas betrays Jesus and he is arrested (Mark 14:10, 43-50); the trial of Jesus (Mark 14:53-65, 15:1-15); the crucifixion (Mark 15:16-47); he bore our sins (1 Peter 2:21-25)

9. The Resurrection & Ascension of Jesus

The burial of Jesus (Luke 23:50-56), the women at the tomb (Luke 24:1-12), resurrection appearances of Jesus (Luke 24:13-43), the promise of the Holy Spirit, the ascension (Luke 24:45-53)

10. What is a Christian? The New Birth

Nicodemus, the new birth (John 3:1-16, 1:10-13), life through the Son of God, the Holy Spirit, we live in God, God lives in us, the confidence of the child of God (1 John 4:13-16, 5:11-15)

WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE

1. The Fact of God

Genesis 1:1-25

Introduction

The following points should be kept in mind when reading the Bible account of the creation of the universe:

- The Bible brings a message of salvation to all people, of all times, and therefore uses popular, non-technical language.
- The Bible describes things as seen by the observer. For example, the sun 'rises' and 'sets',
- The Bible communicates its divine revelation through the culture of the authors' place and time.
- The title *Genesis* comes from the Greek translation of the Old Testament and means 'origin' or 'beginning'.
- The tradition of the Jews is that the first 5 books of the Bible were written by Moses. (1350-1225 BC)

Read Genesis 1:1-25**Observation Questions**

1. 1:1-2 Who was involved in the creation of the universe?
2. 1:3, 6,etc. How did God create the universe?
3. 1:1-25 In what order were things created?
4. 1:1-25 How did God feel about what he had made?
5. 1:1-25 What truths stand out about the nature of the whole creation?
6. 1:1-25 What is implied about the nature and character of God?
7. 1:1-25 What is God's relationship to the world and the universe?
8. 1:1-25 What does this chapter *not* tell us about God?

Discussion and Application Questions

1. Do you think there is anything in this account of creation which goes against the theories of modern science?
2. Do you think it is possible for a person to believe that God created the universe and also to believe in evolution?
3. What does this chapter say to:
 - a person who believes there is no God (an atheist)?
 - a person who believes there are many gods (a polytheist)?
 - someone who says that it is not possible to know whether there is a God and if there is a God it is not possible to know anything about him (an agnostic)?
 - the scientist?
 - the astrologer?

4. Compare the Genesis account of creation with the extra information given in John's Gospel chapter 1:1-3, & verses 14 and 18. What more do you understand from this about:
 - what God is like?
 - what Jesus is like and why he is important to the Christian faith?

5. What difference should it make to us if we believe that the world and the universe were created by God?

WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE

2. God Created Human Beings in His Own Image

Genesis 1:26 - 2:25

Introduction

The most important questions we can ask ourselves are:

- Who am I? (Where did human life come from?)
- Why am I here? (What is our purpose in this world?)
- Where am I going? (What is our future?)

The scientific study of all human life (anthropology) fails to answer the above questions. But Christians believe that human life can be truly understood only in the light of God and his purpose for humankind. The Bible states that human life was deliberately created by God.

Read Genesis 1:26 - 2:25

Observation Questions

1. 1:24-26 At what stage in creation did God create human life?
2. 1:26 In what way was the creation of human life similar to the creation of the animals?
3. 1:26 What was God's purpose for humankind?
4. 1:27 In what way was the creation of human life different from all other life?
5. 1:28 What special commands did God give to human beings?
6. 1:29 What did God provide for them?
7. 1:31-2:3 When was the work of creation finished? What did God do on the next day?

Note: In chapter 1 the creation of human life was the climax of God's creation of the universe. Chapter 2 now looks at humankind in greater detail and at their lives as individuals.

8. 2:4-6 What was the condition of the earth as described here?
9. 2:7 How did God create the man? What does this add to the statement of 1:27?
10. 2:8-14 What are we told about the garden which God prepared for the man?
11. 2:15-17 What responsibility, freedom and limitation did God give to the man?
12. 2:18-20 Why did God decide to create a helper for Adam? (Hebrew: Adam = 'man')
13. 2:21-23 How did God create the woman? What was the man's response to her?
14. 2:24-25 What do these verses teach about marriage?

Discussion and Application Questions

1. What do you understand by the statement that God created human beings in his own image? (1:27)
 - What difference should this belief make to the way we treat other people?
 - How do you think this belief would affect a person's attitude to modern issues of life and death?

2. What kind of relationship do you think God intended the man and the woman to have? (1:27 & 2:18-25)
 - Do you think this account suggests that the two sexes are not equal?
3. What evidence can you find that God intended human beings to develop socially, culturally and scientifically?
4. How does this study help you to understand what God intended your relationship should be:
 - to himself?
 - to the natural world?
 - to other people?
5. Would you agree that if it is true that we are made in the image of God, then we can only achieve our full potential (fully develop our gifts and abilities in the best way) by being in a close relationship with God?

WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE

3. Sin and Its Consequences**Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-24****How did it all go wrong?**

God created Adam and Eve in His own image, provided everything they could need, gave them responsibility and opportunities for development, set them to live in an ideal environment and yet in a short time it was spoiled by sin. **What is sin?** The Bible describes it in many ways, e.g. failing to come up to God's standard, rebellion against God, breaking God's law, disobedience to God, going astray or getting lost. It is living and acting independently of God as though we have no need of Him.

Read Genesis 2:15-17 and 3:1-24**Observation Questions**

1. 2:15-17 What did God give the man? What could the man do? What must he *not* do? What reason was given?
2. 3:1 What appeared to speak to the woman? How is he described? What was his question?

Note: In the Bible the serpent/snake represents the devil. Revelation 20:2 calls him 'that ancient serpent who is the devil or Satan'. The Bible does not show us clearly where the devil came from but indicates that he was once an angel, who through pride rebelled against God and was thrown out of heaven. Since then his aim has been to encourage rebellion against God and prevent people from following God.

3. 3:2-3 What was the woman's reply? Was it completely true?
4. 3:4-5 What did the serpent say? What did he say was God's reason for the command?
5. 3:6 What did the woman do next? What steps led to her action?
6. 3:7 What was the immediate result?
7. 3:8-10 What was the next result of their action?
8. 3:11-13 How did they explain their actions to God?
9. 3:14-15 How would God punish the serpent?
10. 3:16 What further consequences would there be for the woman?
11. 3:17-19 How would you summarize what God said to Adam?
12. 3:20 What was the woman's name? What did it mean?
13. 3:21 How would you describe God's attitude to them in this verse?
14. 3:22-24 Look back at Gen 2:9. Why did God expel the man from the Garden of Eden?

Discussion and Application Questions

1. How did Adam and Eve's sin immediately affect their attitude towards themselves, each other and God?
 - How does sin affect our relationship with God?
 - How does sin affect our relationships with other people?
 - How does sin affect our attitude towards ourselves?
2. What can we learn from this chapter to help us recognise and resist temptation to sin?
 - In what ways does Satan try to deceive us today about the benefits and consequences of sin?
3. The Bible teaches that since that first sin all people are born with a sinful, selfish nature so that we all find it easy to sin.
 - What evidence can you find from your own experience that the above statement is true?
 - Is there any hope that we can escape from the power of Satan and the consequences of sin? (Look at Genesis 3:15 and Hebrews 2:14-15)

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4. God's Law for a Healthy Society**Exodus 19:1-8 & 20:1-17****Introduction**

You are what you eat: This is the advice of the dieticians (the experts on food and healthy eating) to people who want to control their weight and have a more attractive appearance. Do you agree that there is some truth in this? The Bible has similar but more important advice: *You are what you worship.* What do you think of this statement?

Background

After Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden, gradually the numbers of people grew and people were scattered throughout the whole world. God then made Himself known to Abraham and promised to bless all the people of the world through his descendants. Because of famine, Abraham's descendants moved down to Egypt and gradually became slaves there for 400 years. But God had not forgotten them and sent Moses to lead them out of slavery and during this period made a covenant (formal agreement) with them so that they would become His people and live by His law.

God Chooses a People - Exodus 19:1-8**Vocabulary**

v.3	<i>the LORD</i>	the English translation of <i>Jehovah</i> , the name by which God made Himself known to Moses (Exodus 3:14 - God told Moses that his name was <i>I AM [Jehovah]</i> which means the one who has always existed and will always exist)
v.3	<i>the house of Jacob</i>	the people descended from Jacob, Abraham's grandson, who was also called Israel
v.5	<i>covenant</i>	an agreement where each side makes promises to the other, e.g. a marriage
v.5	<i>treasured possession</i>	the private treasure of a king, of a special value and a special relationship
v.6	<i>priest</i>	someone who has special access (entry) into God's presence and can lead others there
v.6	<i>holy</i>	separated /set apart to belong to God, for God to use

Observation Questions

1. 19:1-3 Who spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai? What did he tell Moses to do?
2. 19:4 What had the Israelites seen and experienced?
3. 19:5-6 What promise did God make to the people of Israel? (Three things.)
4. 19:5 What promise did God expect Israel to make to Him in return?
5. 19:7-8 When Moses told the people what God had said, what was their response?

The Ten Commandments - Exodus 20:1-17

Vocabulary

v.8	<i>Sabbath</i>	the seventh day of the week set aside as a day of rest
v.10	<i>the alien within your gates</i>	the foreigner living amongst you
v.11	<i>blessed</i>	God made it bring benefit to the people
v.14	<i>adultery</i>	unfaithfulness in marriage by having a sexual relationship with someone else
v.17	<i>covet</i>	wanting something which belongs to someone else

Observation Questions

1. 20: 1-2 Who was the lawgiver and what was his relationship to the people?
2. 20: 3-8 Which four laws were connected with their relationship to God?
3. 20:12-14 Which two laws were particularly related to their home life?
4. 20:13-17 What were the other four laws?

Discussion and Application Questions

1. Ten Laws are not very many. Why do you think they are so few?
2. In what ways might people today (we ourselves) break the first two commandments?
3. What does it mean to misuse the name of God? Why is it so serious?
4. Which laws do you think are most important if we are to enjoy a healthy and stable society?
5. What would be the benefit of the Sabbath law? Do you think it is still relevant today?
6. What can we learn from these laws about the character of the Lawgiver?
7. Do you think it is possible for us to keep these laws?

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5. God's Promise

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Discuss: Why are people so interested in fortune-tellers? Do you really want to know the future?

Introduction

One thing we can be sure about is that God knows the future because everything is under his control. As we read the Old Testament (the story of the old covenant), we see how God's people failed to keep the Law and broke the covenant so human life became more and more corrupt. So God promised to make a new covenant by sending a Saviour who could forgive sin and change lives. God made these future events known to prophets who spoke God's message and often wrote it down. Their prophecies/predictions were made centuries before the events happened.

A. The Promise of a New Covenant - Jeremiah 31:31-33 (Jeremiah prophesied from 626-584 BC)

Observation Questions

1. 31:31-32 What happened to the old covenant?
2. 31:33 How would the new covenant be different?

B. The Promise of a New King - Isaiah 9:6-7 (Isaiah prophesied from 758-694 BC)

Vocabulary

v.7	<i>increase</i>	growth
v.7	<i>establishing</i>	setting up and making permanent
v.7	<i>upholding</i>	supporting, maintaining
v.7	<i>righteousness</i>	justice, goodness, virtue
v.7	<i>zeal</i>	enthusiastic and persistent action
v.7	<i>accomplish</i>	to complete, finish, get something done successfully

Observation Questions

1. 9:6 What four names are given to the child born to be king?
2. 9:7 What royal family is he descended from? How is his government different from all other governments?

C. The Promise of God's Servant who Suffers to Save Others - Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Observation Questions

1. 52:13 What will the servant do and be? (*exalted* = greatly honoured)
2. 52:14 What happened to the servant? (*appalled* = shocked; *disfigured* = scarred, marked; *marred* = spoiled)
3. 52:15 What effect will the servant have upon many nations and rulers?
4. 53:1-2 What was the appearance of the servant like? (v.2. *majesty* = kingliness)

5. 53:3 How was the servant treated? (*esteemed him not* = did not honour him)
6. 53:4 What did the servant do for people? (*infirmities* = weaknesses, sicknesses; *stricken* = struck, made to suffer; *smitten* = struck, with a disease or suffering; *afflicted* = having physical or mental suffering)
7. 53:5-6 Why did the servant suffer? What are the results of his suffering? (*iniquities* = sins, wrongdoing; *transgressions* = breaking God's law, sins; *gone astray* = gone the wrong way, got lost)
8. 53:7 How did the servant behave while people made him suffer? (*oppressed* = treated with cruelty and injustice; *slaughter* = killing; *shearers* = the farmworkers who cut the wool from the sheep)
9. 53:8 How was the servant treated?
10. 53:9 What happened to his body after his death? (*assigned* = allocated, given)
11. 53:10 Who else was involved in the servant's suffering and death? (*guilt offering* = a sacrifice offered to God to ask for forgiveness of sin; *prolong* = to make something/an event/last longer.)
12. 53:11 What would be the result of the servant's life, suffering and death? (*will justify many* = will bring many into a right relationship with God)
13. 53:11-12 What will happen to the servant after his death? (*the spoils* = the treasures taken from a defeated enemy after a war; *poured out his life* = gave his life; *numbered with* = included amongst; *made intercession for* = prayed for)

Discussion and Application Questions

1. Most Jewish people refused and still refuse to accept that Jesus was the one promised by God. Why do Christians accept that Jesus is the promised Saviour who fulfilled the prophecies (made the promise come true)? Compare with Acts 8:26-35.
2. What have you learned from this study about God's purpose in sending Jesus into the world? What response should we make to God in return?

WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE

6. God Keeps His Promise**Matthew 1:18-25, 2:1-12**

Discuss: Did anybody ever make you a promise which seemed too good to be true? How did you feel when the promise was kept? (Or not kept?)

Background: God's promises to His people were treated very seriously and every one prayed that they would come true during their lifetime. Every Jewish woman hoped and prayed that she would be privileged to be the mother of the Messiah/Christ (the one chosen and sent by God). Unfortunately, everyone remembered that God promised to send a great king but did not remember that he would also be a servant who would suffer for his people.

THE PROMISE COMES TRUE!

Note: The group could read the following Luke passages in dramatic style e.g.

- Luke 1:26-38 - have three readers, a narrator, the angel, and Mary;
- Luke 2:1-7 - a narrator;
- Luke 2:8-20 - a narrator, an angel, a group of angels, and a group of shepherds.

A. The Announcement to Mary: Luke 1:26-38**B. The Birth of Jesus: Luke 2:1-7****C. The Announcement to the Shepherds: Luke 2:8-20**

Note: The story of the birth of Jesus is told in the Gospel of Luke from Mary's point of view, while the Gospel of Matthew tells it from Joseph's point of view. We shall now look briefly at the introduction on the video of the life of Jesus to see these events as recorded from Mary's point of view.

D. The Announcement to Joseph - Matthew 1:18-25**Observation Questions**

1. 1:18 What was Mary and Joseph's relationship when she became pregnant? (*pledged* = promised, engaged; *found to be with child* = found to be pregnant)
2. 1:19 What did Joseph plan to do? (What did he think had happened?) (*righteous* = good, just; *expose* = to make public, to let everyone know; *he had in mind* = he planned)
3. 1:20 & 24 Why did Joseph change his mind and marry Mary as originally planned? (*what is conceived in her* = her pregnancy, the new life growing in her)
4. 1:21 Why was the child named *Jesus*? What does *Jesus* mean?
5. 1:22-23 In what way would the child be different from other children? (*to fulfil* = to make happen, to make come true; *prophet* = a messenger from God who sometimes had messages about the future; *virgin* = a woman who has never had a sexual relationship)
6. 1:18 & 24-25 How do we know that Joseph was not the father of Jesus? (*no union* = no sexual relationship)

E. The Visit of the Wise Men from the East - Matthew 2:1-12

Observation Questions

1. 2:1-2 Why did wise men from the east go to King Herod's palace?
2. 2:3-4 How did the king feel? What did he do? (*chief priests and teachers of the law* = the religious leaders, especially those familiar with the Old Testament prophecies)
3. 2:5-6 What was he told? How did they know?
4. 2:7-8 Where did the king tell the wise men to go? What did he tell them to do afterwards?
5. 2:9-11 How did they find the right place? How did they feel? What did they do when they saw the child? (*incense* = a sticky product from a plant or tree which produces a sweet smell when it is burned, it was often used in worship; *myrrh* = a sticky substance from a plant which was used in making perfume or medicine)
6. 2:12 Why did the wise men *not* go back to tell King Herod where the child was?

Discussion and Application Questions

1. Poor Jewish shepherds and wise men from the east were the first people to be told about the birth of the Saviour. What does this tell us about God's purpose when he sent Jesus into the world?
2. What do we learn from the prophecies and the accounts of the birth of Jesus about what kind of person the Saviour would be?
3. What have you learned from this study which may be helpful to you as you live your daily life?

WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE

7. The Life and Work of Jesus

Matthew 7:28 - 8:34

Introduction: Of all the great religious leaders of the world, Jesus Christ alone claimed to be God.

Discuss: How can we find out whether his claim was true or false? Does it matter whether it is true or false?

Read Matthew 7:28 - 8:17

Observation Questions

1. 7:28-29 Why were the crowds amazed at the teaching of Jesus? (*amazed* = surprised; *authority* = the right to exercise power, the power of someone whose will and commands must be obeyed by others)
2. 8:1-2 What did the man with leprosy ask Jesus to do? (*leprosy* = a disease which affected the skin and the nerves)
3. 8:3-4 How did Jesus reply? What happened? What did Jesus tell him to do? (*as a testimony* = as evidence)
4. 8:5-6 Why did a centurion come to Jesus? (*centurion* = a Roman army officer in charge of a hundred men)
5. 8:7-8 Jesus offered to go and heal the servant. What did the centurion say? (*I do not deserve* = I am not good enough; *come under my roof* = come into my house)
6. 8:9 How did he explain his faith that Jesus could heal with a word?
7. 8:10 What did Jesus say about the centurion? (*astonished* = amazed, surprised)
8. 8:11 Who would be able to come to the feast in the kingdom of heaven?
(*Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob* = the ancestors of the Jewish people)
9. 8:12 What would it be like for those thrown out of the feast? (*gnashing* = grinding teeth together)
10. 8:13 What did Jesus tell the centurion? What happened?
11. 8:14-15 Who was sick in Peter's house? What was wrong? What did Jesus do? What happened? (*to wait on him* = to serve him)
12. 8:16-17 What happened in the evening? How did Matthew explain it? (*demon-possessed* = under the power of evil spirits)

Discussion and Application Questions

1. Think about the different kinds of people who were healed and the different methods which Jesus used to heal them:
 - Why was it surprising that the man with leprosy and the Roman centurion came to Jesus?
 - What was surprising about the different ways Jesus healed people?

- What do we learn about Jesus' concern for people and his power to help them?
2. What was so special about the centurion's faith which made Jesus praise it so much?

View the Jesus video beginning from the storm on Galilee up to Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi.

Read Matthew 8: 23-34

Observation Questions

1. 23-25 What happened when Jesus was in a boat with his disciples? What was Jesus doing? What did the disciples do?
2. 26 What did Jesus say? Then what did he do? What happened next? (*rebuked* = scolded, told them off)
3. 27 What effect did Jesus' actions have on the men who were with him in the boat?
4. 28 Who met them when they got to the other side of the lake? Where did they come from? What were they like?
(*demon-possessed* = controlled by evil spirits, *tombs* = graves, *violent* = using physical force, dangerous)
5. 29 How did they speak to Jesus? What did they say? (*to torture* = to cause severe pain as a punishment)
6. 30-32 What did the demons beg Jesus to do? What happened? (*herd* = a large number of animals kept together)
7. 33-34 What did the men who were responsible for the pigs do? What was the result? (*tending* = taking care of)

Discussion and Application Questions

1. What do we learn from the passage we have just read about the power of Jesus?
 - How would you describe his authority?
 - What did the demons expect Jesus to do?
2. If you were one of Jesus' disciples at that time, what might you be thinking about Jesus?

Read Matthew 8:18-22

Observation Questions

1. 18-20 What did a teacher of the law say to Jesus? What did Jesus reply? (*teacher of the law* = a religious leader/teacher)
2. 21-22 What did another disciple say to Jesus? What did Jesus reply?

Discuss: What do you think Jesus' answers to the two men who wanted to be disciples meant? What did he want them to do before they decided to follow him? (Compare Matthew 10:37-39) Do you think his demands are too difficult?

WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE

8. The Arrest, Trial and Death of Jesus

Introduction: Why should somebody who had great power to do good and who did so much to help the people and bring God's message to them, finally be rejected and put to death? Someone has said that Jesus was not condemned to death for anything he had done. He was condemned for who he claimed to be!

At this point view approximately 8 minutes of the Jesus video from the point of the Entry in Jerusalem up to 'Render to Caesar'.

Discuss: The Jesus video shows us some of the events leading up to the death of Jesus. From the excerpt we have just watched, what do you think were the reasons for the plan to arrest and kill Jesus?

A. The Arrest of Jesus and His Trial by the Jewish Council - Mark 14:43-65

Observation Questions

1. 43-45 Who sent a crowd of armed men to arrest Jesus? How did they know which person was Jesus? (*the Twelve* = the twelve disciples; *armed men* = men with weapons; *clubs* = heavy sticks; *Rabbi* = Teacher)
2. 46-47 What did one of the disciples do when Jesus was arrested? Who was injured? (*seized* = quickly took hold of)
3. 48-50 What did Jesus say? How did he explain their actions? (*rebellion* = armed opposition to the government; *temple courts* = the courtyards inside the walls of the Temple)
4. 50-52 What did Jesus' disciples do? What happened to a young man who was following Jesus? (*garment* = an item of clothing; *naked* = without any clothes on)
5. 53-54 Where did they take Jesus? What did Peter do? (*the Sanhedrin* = the most important Council of the Jews)
6. 55-56 What were the chief priests trying to do? What problem did they have? (*testified falsely* = told lies in evidence)
7. 57-59 What did some witnesses say? Was it true? Could their evidence be used against Jesus?
8. 60-61a What did the high priest ask Jesus? What did Jesus say in reply?
9. 61b-62 What question did the high priest ask next? (*the Christ/Messiah* = the one God promised to send; *the Blessed One* = God; *the Son of Man* = the title which Jesus used to speak of himself)
10. 63-65 How did the high priest react to Jesus' words? What was the verdict? What did some people begin to do? (*tore his clothes* = an act to show anger or grief; *blasphemy* = words insulting to God; *blindfolded* = covered the eyes)

B. The Trials of Jesus before (i)Pontius Pilate (the Roman Governor), (ii)King Herod and (iii)Pontius Pilate

View the Jesus video showing the trials of Jesus before Pilate and Herod.

Discuss: Isaiah's prophecy about God's servant who would suffer says: *by oppression and judgment he was taken away.* (*oppression* = cruel and unjust treatment) How many times did this come true in the trials of Jesus before the judgment (verdict) was finally given that he should be executed?

C. The Execution of Jesus - Mark 15:15-39

Observation Questions

1. 15 Why did Pilate release Barabbas (a murderer)? What did Pilate then do with Jesus? (*flogged* = beaten with a cane or whip; *to be crucified* = to be executed by being nailed to a cross).
2. 16-18 What did the soldiers do to Jesus? (*hail!* = greetings to you!)
3. 19-20 What else did the soldiers do to Jesus? (*staff* = a walking stick; *paid homage* = showed the kind of respect which should be shown to a king; *mocked* = laughed at, ridiculed; *to crucify* = to kill by nailing to a cross)
4. 21-24 Who carried the cross for Jesus? What did people offer Jesus? What did they do with his clothes? (*myrrh* = a substance from a plant which was used for making medicine or ointment)
5. 25-27 What time was Jesus crucified? What was written above the cross? Who else was executed at the same time?
6. 29-30 What did the passers-by shout at Jesus? (*hurled* = threw [by shouting]; *to destroy* = to pull down)
7. 31-32 How did religious leaders mock Jesus? Who else mocked Jesus? (*heaped* = piled up, loaded more on)
8. 33-34 What happened at the sixth hour? How long did it last? What did Jesus shout out? (*forsaken* = left alone)
9. 35-36 What did people think? What did they do?
10. 37-39 What happened when Jesus died? What did the centurion say? (*breathed his last* = died)

Discussion and Application Questions

1. What do you think was the reason for the darkness over the land for three hours? What do you think is the answer to Jesus' question: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (verse 34)
2. Many people were involved in the death of Jesus. Who do you think was really responsible?

Peter wrote: He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree (cross), so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. (1 Peter 2:24)

Paul wrote: God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE

9. Jesus is Alive!**Luke 23:50 - 24:53****Introduction**

When we visit other countries we are often shown the graves of important people. Jesus was an important person whose life and teaching changed history and he has changed the lives of millions of people, of many different countries, through the centuries since he lived on earth. Yet today nobody knows exactly where he was buried. That seems strange until we remember that a grave is only important if the body of an important person lies in it. As soon as the disciples knew that Jesus had risen from death, his grave was no longer important to them.

A. The Burial of Jesus - Luke 23:50-56, The Women's Visit to the Tomb - Luke 24:1-8, and Peter's Visit to the Tomb - Luke 24:9-12

Think about the following questions while we view the Jesus video:

- How do you think the people who believed in Jesus felt when they saw him die?
- The women who went to the tomb early on the first day of the week were very surprised to find the tomb of Jesus empty. Why had they not remembered Jesus' words? What was the reaction of the disciples to their good news?

View the Jesus video from the darkness to Peter's visit to the tomb (6 minutes).

B. The Experience of Two Disciples on the Road to Emmaus - Luke 24:13-35**Observation Questions**

1. 13-16 Where were two disciples going that same day? How far was it? What were they talking about? Who came and walked along with them? Why did they not recognise him?
2. 17-18 What did Jesus ask them? Why did the question surprise Cleopas? (*faces downcast* = sad/miserable faces)
3. 19-21 How did they answer Jesus' next question? How did they describe Jesus? What had they been hoping?

(*prophet* = a messenger from God; *deed* = action; *to redeem* = to save/ to set free)

4. 22-24 Why had the women amazed them? What had the women seen? What had they been told? What did their friends find when they went to the tomb? (*tomb* = grave/burial place; *a vision* = seeing something or someone from God; *companions* = friends, people who spend their time together)
5. 25-27 What did Jesus call them? Why should they believe that it was necessary for Jesus to suffer as he had? How did he explain everything to them? (*foolish* = silly; *the Christ* = the Messiah/the one chosen by God to save people; *glory* = the splendour/majesty of heaven; *Moses* = the writer of the first five books of the Bible; *the Scriptures* = the holy writings/ the Old Testament)
6. 28-30 What did Jesus do when they got near to the village where the two disciples were going? Why did they invite Jesus to stay with them? What did Jesus do when they were going to have a meal together? (*urged strongly* = they kept on asking / they used arguments to convince him; *gave thanks* = thanked God for the food)

7. 31-32 When did they recognise that their guest was Jesus? What happened when they recognised him? What had they felt when Jesus had been explaining the Scriptures to them? (*their eyes were opened* = they understood; *hearts burning* = feeling comforted/encouraged; *within* = inside; *opened the Scriptures* = explained the Scriptures)
8. 33-35 What did they decide to do? What were they told as soon as they arrived? What did they do? (*the Eleven* = the twelve disciples minus Judas who had committed suicide; *assembled together* = gathered together)

c. Jesus Appears to the Disciples - Luke 24:36-49, and the Ascension - Luke 24:50-53

Observation Questions

1. 36-39 How did the disciples feel when Jesus suddenly appeared among them? What did they think? What did he invite them to do? (*startled* = shocked/extremely surprised)
2. 40-42 What did Jesus show them? Why did they still not believe Jesus was real? How did he prove he was not a ghost? (*broiled* = barbecued or grilled; *in their presence* = while he was with them/in front of them)
3. 44-46 What did Jesus explain to them? What did he help them to do? (*be fulfilled* = will come true/will happen)
4. 47-49 Now Jesus was alive, what message should be preached to all nations? What did Jesus promise to send the disciples so that they could be his witnesses? How long were they to wait in the city?
5. 50-53 Where did Jesus take the disciples? What happened while he was blessing them? What did the disciples do then? (*Ascension* = the going up, from 'to ascend' which means to go up; *the vicinity of* = near to)

DISCUSS

1. Why do you think Jesus took so much time explaining the Scripture to the disciples? Why was it important?
2. If it is true that Jesus is alive today, what difference should it make to the way we live our lives and the way we face the future?

View the Jesus video from *Jesus appears to the disciples to conclusion* (10 minutes).

WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE

10. What is a Christian?

Introduction

What do you think a Christian is? Which of the following answers is closest to your idea?

- somebody who believes in doing good and helping others
- somebody who believes in God
- somebody who was born into a Christian family
- somebody who has been baptised and goes to church
- somebody who is trying to follow the teaching of Jesus
- somebody who believes in the Christian religion
- or some other definition?

How can we find the right answer? We need to look at the teaching of Jesus and his disciples.

A. Jesus' Conversation with Nicodemus - John chapter 3:1-16

Observation Questions

1. 3:1-2 Who was Nicodemus? What did he think about Jesus? (*Pharisees* = a special group in the Jewish religion who strictly emphasised the need to keep the religious laws; *miraculous* = supernatural, something done by God; *signs* = miracles, supernatural actions)
2. 3:3-4 What did Jesus say to Nicodemus? Did Nicodemus understand? What did Nicodemus ask? (see *the kingdom of God* = experience God's rule and become one of his people / become one of God's children/have eternal life)
3. 3:5-7 What must happen before a person can enter the kingdom of God? Was Nicodemus qualified to enter the kingdom of God?
4. 3:8-10 To what did Jesus compare God's Spirit? In what ways are the wind and the Spirit similar? Did Nicodemus understand?
5. 3:11 Why should Nicodemus believe what Jesus said? (v.12) Did Nicodemus believe him? (v.13) Why was Jesus qualified to speak of heavenly things? (*the Son of Man* = the title which Jesus used to speak about himself)
6. 3:14-15 What did Jesus predict about himself? What was the purpose of his being 'lifted up'?

(Note: v. 14 refers to the time when the people of Israel were wandering in the desert and they became impatient and spoke against God and Moses. So God sent poisonous snakes amongst them as a punishment and many were bitten and died. Then the people confessed their sin and asked Moses to pray for them. So God told Moses to make a model of the snake and hold it up on a pole and anyone who was bitten could look at it and be healed. Numbers 21:4-9)

7. 3:16 What moved God to give his one and only Son? What would *not* happen to those who believe in God's son? What *would* happen? (*perish* = to lose life/ to suffer destruction/ to come to an untimely end)

Discuss

Why did Jesus tell Nicodemus he must be born again? If Nicodemus, a religious leader, was not qualified to enter the kingdom of heaven, who would be qualified? What do Jesus' words tell us about his attitude to religion?

B. The New Birth - John 1:10-13

Observation Questions

1. 1:10-11 Who made the world but was not recognised when he came into the world? (Compare vv.1-3 & v.14)
2. 1:12 To whom did he give the right to become children of God?
3. 1:13 How did they become the children of God? (*not of natural descent* = not of human parents)

Discuss

What is the meaning of believing in Jesus as explained in John 1:12? How may a person receive Jesus?

c. The Confidence of God's Children - 1 John 4:13-16 & 5:11-15

Observation Questions

1. 4:13-14 What has God given to His children? How does the Holy Spirit help our relationship with God?
2. 4:15-16 What happens to the person who believes that Jesus is the son of God? How is that person's life changed?
3. 5:11-12 What has God given to his children? Where is it? How may we receive it?
4. 5:13-15 Who was John writing to? Why did he write to them? What is the confidence of the child of God?

Discuss

1. How do God's children have the power and the confidence to live life in a way that pleases Him?
2. 'All God's children are Christians but not all who call themselves Christians are God's children.' Do you agree?