

Christianity

Section B Religious Education Syllabus

Part I; The Context

The Holy Land



- 3 Provinces
 - Galilee
 - Samaria
 - Judea
- The Birthplace of Jesus
 - Bethlehem
- The Town where Jesus grew up
 - Nazareth
- The River where Jesus was baptised
 - River Jordan
- The place where Jesus met his first disciples
 - Sea of Galilee
- The town where Jesus was arrested, put on trial, put to death & resurrected...

Jerusalem



- Palestine was under Roman rule, Pontius Pilate was the roman governor.
- The Jewish people had suffered many times under foreign rule
- Jews now had to obey Roman laws & pay a lot of taxes.
- The Romans however allowed the Jews to practice their religion & follow their own customs
- The Romans were interested in gaining power & wealth.
- While the Romans counted their coins the Jews awaited a Saviour... a Messiah

Ancient Judaism

- **Abraham**; Father of Judaism. God made a special and sacred promise (covenant) with Abraham, his people became the 'chosen people'.
- **Slavery in Egypt**; A famine breaks out in Canaan, and are forced into slavery in Egypt.
- **Moses**; God called Moses to lead the people out of slavery and into the promise land.
- **Return to Canaan**; The people return to Canaan. And win control again. The Kingdom of Israel is established
- **David**; Becomes king of Israel, wins many battles and makes Jerusalem the capital city. His son Solomon builds the Temple in Jerusalem
- **The Prophets**; Jews find it hard to keep Gods laws, God sends prophets ie Ezekiel to warn them. They do not listen

- **Jerusalem Destroyed;** The country is invaded and the Temple and the city of Jerusalem was destroyed. The people are taken away to Babylon
- **The Exile;** The people worked like slaves in Babylon. They realised that they had deliberately turned away from God. They turned back to God, praying together on the Sabbath. They wrote down their laws and beliefs about God, and formed the Torah.
- **Return from Exile;** Jews were set free and return to Jerusalem where they rebuilt the Temple and make a fresh start as rabbi's start to teach how to practice their faith properly.
- **Foreign Rulers;** Jews pray in local synagogues and try to practice their faith in the right way. Over the next 400 years, several foreign powers invade and take control of the country. The Romans invade Palestine in 63 BCE
- **The Messiah;** The Jews long for a leader, a Messiah to set them free. They hope for someone like David, powerful, who will make their country a great Jewish kingdom.

The Roman Empire



- 63 BC Palestine conquered by the Romans
- 40 BC Romans appointed Herod as King, because Herod was not a Jew he was not accepted by the Jews
- 8-4 BC Birth of Jesus
- 1 AD Pontius Pilate was made governor of the province of Judaea
- 24-25 AD Jesus began his public ministry

Messianic Expectation

- The Jewish people believed that they had a special relationship with God & were His 'Chosen People'
- They had experienced a troubled past & longed for a united & prosperous kingdom like they had under KING DAVID (O.T. Jewish King)
- They waited for a *Messiah* (*Anointed One*) sent by God, a military leader, king like, to free them from Roman Rule and establish a new Jewish Kingdom

Religious Leaders in Palestine

Pharisees
Sadducees
Zealots
Essenes

The Pharisees

- Around 2nd century BC, religious Jews set up a network of local schools to teach the Torah to Jewish boys.
- The Teachers in those schools became known as Pharisees and became very influential
- They were not priests but lay men and were called *Rabbi*, and controlled the *Synagogues*
- The name Pharisee means 'the separated', they separated themselves from general life in Palestine.



Pharisees



- concerned with daily prayer and safeguarding the Jewish religion.
- They believed that the final judgement would come at the end of time and people would rise from the dead and be rewarded or punished for the way they lived their lives.
- They expected the Messiah to free them from Roman rule(i.e. rejected Roman rule) and bring about a new kingdom, like in the days of David

The Sadducees



- Small group of very wealthy and powerful men
- Co-operated with Roman rule and were disliked by the common people.
- Dominated the Sanhedrin (Jewish court of law) and were very influential
- A Sadducee held the position of High priest in Jerusalem and worked with the Romans to ensure their wealth.
- They accepted only the Torah (first 5 books of Sacred Scriptures).

Sadducees



- Sadducees refused to accept any development of new ideas
- As the Torah does not refer to resurrection of the dead the Sadducees refused to accept belief in life after death.
- Instead they believed that the soul dies with the body
- The Sadducees were not waiting for a Messiah to deliver them from Roman rule but were very interested in wealth

The Zealots



- They were deeply religious Jews who believed that violent action was justified if it was in defence of the Jewish religion.
- The Zealots thought that if people had the courage to rebel against Roman Rule God would send a Messiah
- They expected the Messiah to be a Military leader who would rid Palestine of the Romans
- As a result of this view the Zealots were involved in attacking cities and towns where they killed roman soldiers

Zealots

- The Zealots lead a Jewish revolt against the Romans in Palestine in 66 AD but failed



The Essenes



- These were communities of monks who settled in remote places.
- They believed that they were obeying the word of God by going into the desert and escaping worldly concerns of Jerusalem and the corruption of the Temple.
- They rejected Roman rule
- Isaiah 40:3 *'Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord. Make straight highway for our God across the desert'*.

Essenes



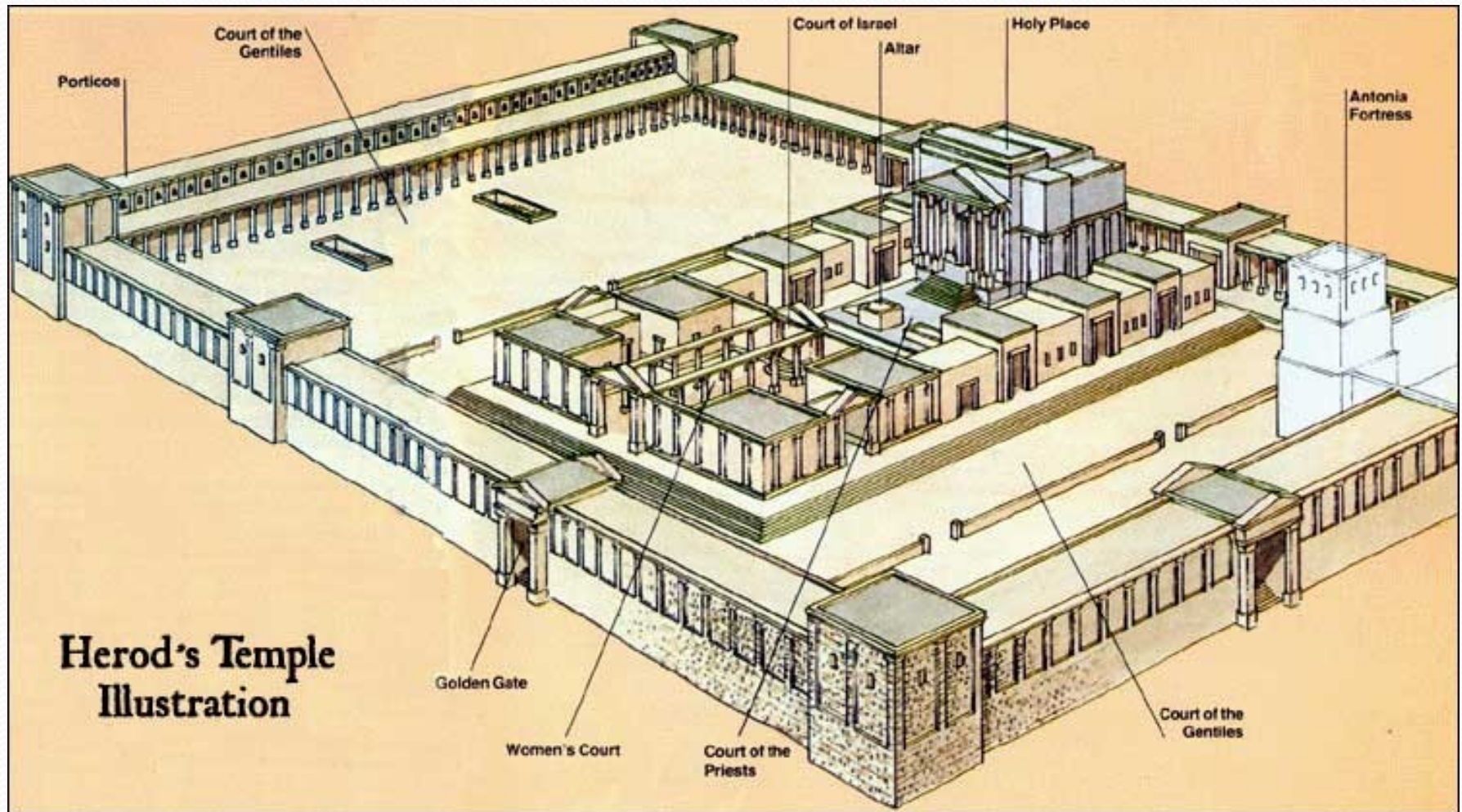
- Men and women wishing to become members had to give away all their worldly belongings
- There was a 3 year waiting period
- New members had to swear to keep their teachings and practice a secret.
- The Essenes believed that a new kingdom was coming and a kingly figure would lead them to war to defeat the Romans.
- The Essenes are said to be the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls

The Sanhedrin



- The word 'Sanhedrin' means assembly
- It was a small but important assembly of Men
- The court of law for the Jewish people

The Jewish Temple



The Temple

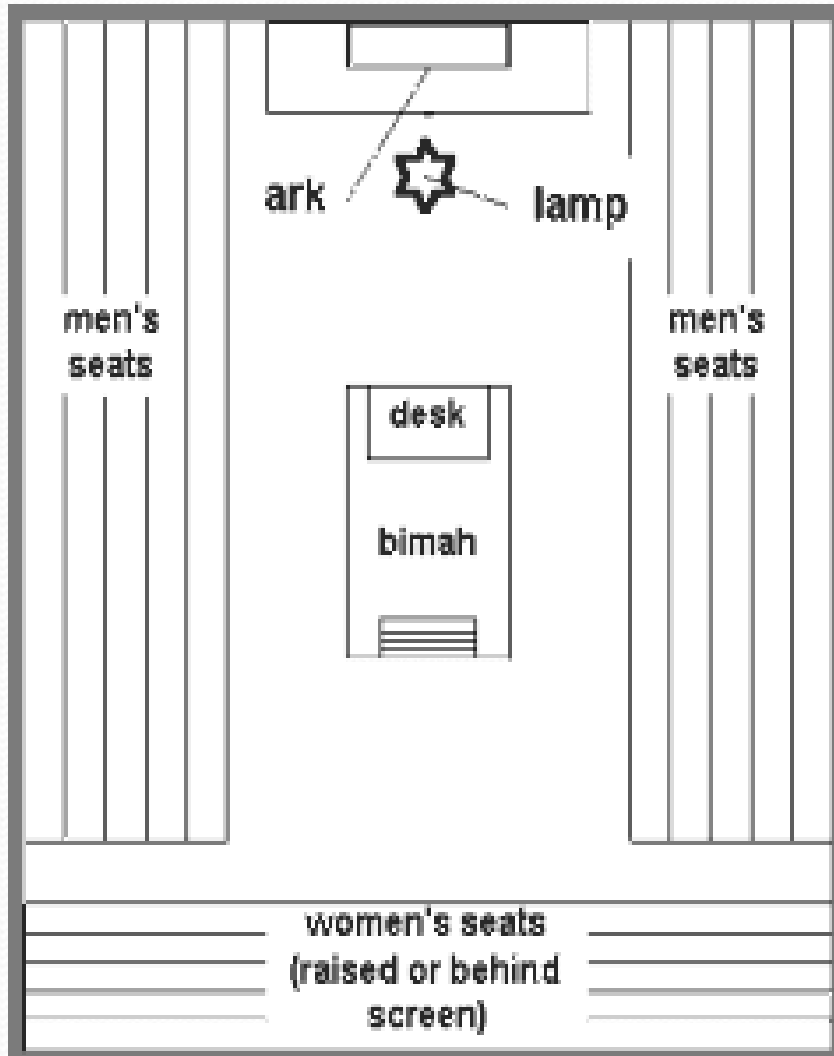
- The Temple was the most sacred building for the Jewish people
- There were area's allocated according to your degree of Holiness
- Women sat in the 'Court of Women' only
- Men sat in the 'Court of Isrealites'
- Only Priests were allowed to enter the 'Court of Priests' and the 'Sanctuary'
- At the heart of the Temple was the 'Holy of Holies', hidden behind a veil it was entered only once a year by the high priest on the Day of Atonement, when he prayed for forgiveness of his people

- The Jews saw the Temple as the House of God
- It was at the heart of their lives and many Jews visited it once a year during religious festival
- The outer court 'Court of Gentiles' was a place of business where money was changed from Roman into Temple coins.
- Birds & animals were for sale also, to be used as a sacrifice to God in the 'Court of Priests'
- Jesus came into conflict with the Jewish high priests when he became outraged in the 'Court of Gentiles'
 - Mark 11:15-19

The Synagogue



- The Synagogue is at the centre of village & town life.
- Every week the Jews attend on the Sabbath lasting about an hour. This is still in use today
- Men & Women are separated & enter by different doors
- Women sat in the gallery, men sat with their sons(13+)



- A scroll with Jewish scripture was read and the rabbi talks about the readings
- The scrolls are kept in the ARK, they are treated respectfully as they contain the word of God
- A candle is always lighting in front of the ark
- In front of the Ark there is a Menorah, a candelabrum with 7 branches

Part II; Evidence about Jesus

The Old Testament



- This foretells the coming of the Messiah
- It contains 3434 books, describing the creation of the world to the life of Jews.
- The Old Testament Prophets spoke on behalf of God e.g. Jeremaih
- They reminded the Jews about Gods law and warned them against disobeying it.
- The Old Testament traces the history of the Jews

The New Testament

- The New Testament contains the story of Jesus.
- The 4 Gospel writers are called Evangelists
 - Matthew; Mark; Luke & John
- The Gospels came together in 3 different stages
 1. The Actual Events (Jesus life)
 2. Disciples preaching about Jesus
 3. The writing down on the Gospels

Books of the New Testament

Historical

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John
Acts

*"Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord,
when I will make a new covenant"*

Paul's Epistles

Romans
First Corinthians
Second Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
First Thessalonians
Second Thessalonians
First Timothy
Second Timothy
Titus
Philemon

Not Paul's Epistles

Hebrews
James
First Peter
Second Peter
First John
Second John
Third John
Jude
Revelation

Historical Documents

- Josephus
 - Written about 60 AD by this Jewish scholar
- Tacitus
 - Written about 80 AD by this Roman scholar
- Both Historians
 - Described Jesus as a wise man & leader and wrote about Pilate, Jesus death & Resurrection.
 - Neither men had anything to gain by writing about Jesus as neither were followers

Matthew



- Matthew is thought to have been a tax collector called by Jesus (Matt 9:9)
- Written about 85-90 CE (AD)
- Had a wide knowledge of Jewish religion and the Old Testament
- He saw Jesus as the new Moses, the promised one by God
- Taught his followers a new way of living
- Written for *Jewish Christians* in Antioch, Syria his symbol was an angel



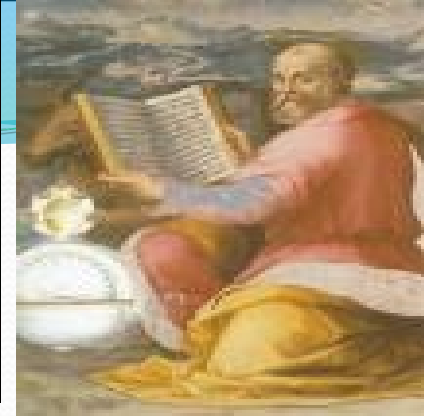
Mark

- Written circa 65-70 CE (AD) in Rome.
- Mark wrote for the community of Christians who were suffering great persecution under Roman Emperor. (Mark's symbol is the lion)
- Mark was well known to Peter and so wrote as Peter told him.
- Much of this Gospel is devoted to Miracles and confirms that Jesus is the promised Messiah, but explains that Jesus had feelings like everyone else.

100% Human 100% Divine



Luke



- Written around the same time as Matthew, Luke wrote his Gospel for the Gentile Christians. (He was a gentile)
- Luke's caring side is evident through out the Gospel, he was very sympathetic towards the poor and oppressed.
- He showed Jesus as someone who brings love and forgiveness to all. Luke also held a special place for Mary.
- Placed a lot of emphasis on the importance of prayer.
- His symbol is the Bull

John



- Written about 95 CE, John was one of Jesus' youngest disciples.
- We know that Jesus had a special place in his heart for John as, when he was dieing on the cross he asked him to take care of his mother, Mary.
- John shows Jesus as a real human being, sharing in our pain and problems, and good times.
- A lot of the stories found in John are not found in the other 3 Gospels

Synoptic

- Synoptic means 'having the same view point'
- Matthew, Mark and Luke tell very similar stories and so are synoptic.
- Very focused on Miracles, Parables and the Kingdom of God
- Visits Jerusalem only once
- Focused on what Jesus Did

John

- No Parables
- Kingdom of God is only mentioned once
- Jesus Visits Jerusalem a number of times
- Jesus performs just 7 'signs', no reference to exorcisms or Miracles
- Themes of Life and Love
- Focused on Who Jesus Is

Part III; The Person and Preaching of Jesus

What is the Kingdom of God

- Jesus vision of a perfect world, where people allow the love of God to rule their hearts.
- The kingdom of God is Jesus dream or vision of a way of life that loves God and does good to other people
- The kingdom of God is not a place that can be found on a map.
 - It is found in people, in the goodness of their hearts.



- Jesus used words and actions to help people to understand what he meant by the kingdom of God.
 - He told parables to teach people about the love of God
 - He performed miracles to show people the love of God
 - He shared meals and table fellowship to help all people experience the love of God
 - He called people to discipleship so that they could learn from him and follow a way of life based on the love of God
- Jesus words and actions were the first sign that the Kingdom of God had arrived



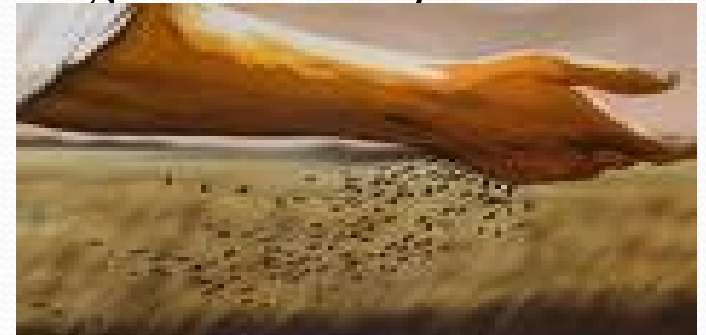
Parables

- A short story told by Jesus to teach the people about the kingdom of God
- The story is based on earth with a message about heaven.
- The parables made the disciples and others question the way they live their lives.
- Jesus used the parables to;
 - Command attention from the disciples
 - Challenge the growth in faith
 - To explain difficult concepts in simple everyday terms

Parables of Growth

The Sower (Matt 13:3-9)

- The stony path represents those who hear Gods message but they fall into temptation
- Rocky ground represents those who hear Gods message, receive it gladly but if it requires extra work, will eventually give up
- Bushes represent those who hear and understand the message but are concerned with wealth and power
- The Good Soil represents those who hear and understand Gods message making changes to respond the message and follow Jesus footsteps



Parables of Forgiveness

- Parable of the Talents (Matt 18:23-33)
- This parable shows how, in the Kingdom of God, forgiveness is both:
 - A gift freely given by God, and
 - A challenge to those who receive this gift, to do the same... forgive others.





Parables about Attitude



- The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)
- In this story Jesus uses the fact that Jews considered themselves to be better than Samaritans.
- In the parable it is the Samaritan who shows what it means to be a good neighbour, while the so called religious people fail to care for someone in need.
- Jesus wanted to teach people about being a good person to everyone despite race, colour or religion

Miracles

- A miracle is an amazing cure or deed performed by Jesus to show the power and love of God.
- Jesus used miracles to show people how Gods love and power exists in the Kingdom of God
- Jesus performed different types of miracles;
 - Healing miracles
 - Nature miracles
 - Expelling miracles
 - Raising to life miracles

Healing Miracles

- Healing a blind man in Jericho
(Mark 10:46-52)
- Healing a person with leprosy
in Galilee (Mark 1:39-
45)

Nature Miracles

- Calming a storm on Lake
Galilee (Mark 4:35-41)
- Turning water into wine in
Cana (John 2:1-12)

Expelling Miracles

- Expelling an evil spirit from a
man in Capernaum
(Mark 1:21-28)
- Expelling an evil spirit from a
man in Gerasa (Mark 5:1-20)

Raising to life Miracles

- Raising Jairus' daughter to life
in Galilee (Mark 5:21-42)
- Raising Lazarus to life in
Bethany (John 11:38-44)

Table fellowship

- Table fellowship is the way Jesus shared meals with everyone to show the Kingdom of God is open to all.
- He showed that the Kingdom of God is open to anyone who;
 - Turns away from Sin and wrongdoing
 - Turns towards the love of God



Table fellowship in the Gospels

- Jesus was criticised for being a friend of sinners and social outcasts;
 - ‘When the Pharisees saw Jesus eating with sinners and tax collectors they said to his disciples, “Why does he eat with such people”. On hearing this Jesus said “people who are healthy do not need a doctor, only those who are sick. I did not come to call respectable people, but sinners”
- Jesus and Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)
- Jesus and Levi (Mark 2:13-17)
- Jesus at the home of Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:36-50)

Kingdom of God Discipleship

- A disciple is someone who learns from a teacher (rabbi). Jesus wanted his disciples to learn from him and to follow his example.
- Discipleship involves a total change of heart, a break away from old habits to follow Jesus.
- Jesus needed his disciples to help him establish the Kingdom of God on earth. He trained them to pass on his teaching and way of life to others.
 - Jesus calls his first disciples (Mark 1:16-20)
 - Jesus calls the 12 disciples (Luke 6:12-16)



Beatitudes

- In the sermon on the mount Jesus began by teaching Beatitudes (Matt 5:1-10) The beatitudes list the qualities that Jesus followers must have in order to belong to the Kingdom of God
- Blessed are the *poor in spirit*, for theirs is the *kingdom of heaven*.
- Blessed are they who *mourn*, for they shall be *comforted*.
- Blessed are the *meek*, for they shall *possess the earth*.
- Blessed are they who *hunger and thirst for justice*, for they shall be *satisfied*.
- Blessed are the *merciful*, for they shall *obtain mercy*.
- Blessed are the *pure of heart*, for they shall see *God*.
- Blessed are the *peacemakers*, for they shall be called *children of God*.
- Blessed are they who *suffer persecution for justice sake*, for theirs is the *kingdom of heaven*.

<http://gardenofpraise.com/bibl42s.htm>

Vocation

- Comes from the Latin word 'to call'
- A vocation is a person's sense of being called by God to live in a certain way of life.
- The Christian way of life involves following Jesus' teachings to 'love God and love one another as yourself'
- Jesus calls all of us to a special way of life.

Mission

- Mission is the specific work carried out by members of a Christian community.
- For Example;
 - Sr. Stanislaus Kennedy who set up an organisation that helps young homeless.
 - Mother Teresa set up a community to help the poor in India
 - Brother Roger founded an ecumenical community in Taizé, France

Part IV; The Death and Resurrection of Jesus

Holy Week

- Holy week is the last week of Jesus public ministry before he was put to death.
- The evangelists wanted to stress the importance of Jesus' suffering and death for our sake
 - **Sunday** (Mark 11:1-11) Jesus arrives into Jerusalem; welcomed by cheering crowds waving palm branches 'Palm Sunday'
 - **Monday** (Mark 11:15-18) Jesus went into the temple(Court of Gentiles). He got annoyed at the traders and tried to get them out of the Temple. Pharisees and Sadducees saw him as a threat and plotted against him.

- **Tuesday** Jesus taught in the temple. He was questioned by the Pharisees and Sadducees about his teachings. They were trying to trick him.
- **Wednesday** (Matt 27:5) Judas Iscariot went to Jewish authorities with an offer to betray Jesus so that he would be arrested
- **Thursday** (John 18:1-11) Last Supper. Jesus was arrested in the garden of Gethsemane.
- **Friday** (Luke 22:47-53) Jesus was questioned by the Sanhedrin; put on trial by Roman procurator Pontius Pilate. Jesus was scourged and condemned to death by crucifixion. He was nailed to a cross, suffered a terrible death and his body was buried in a nearby tomb.

Conflict with Authority

● Religious Trial

- Jesus was brought to the house of the high priest
- Questioned by Caiaphas, leader of the Sanhedrin.
- Jesus was asked if he was the Messiah, he said he had a special relationship with God.
- The Sanhedrin was furious and found Him guilty of blasphemy
- Jesus had broken a Jewish law so it was decided he be put to death, but the Sanhedrin did not have the power to execute him.

● Political Trial

- Jesus was taken to the governor's palace the next morning
- Jesus was questioned by Pilate, he tried to find out if Jesus was a political troublemaker
- Jesus was asked if he was king of the Jews, he replied saying his kingdom was not of this world
- Pilate thought Jesus was innocent, but under pressure from the Sanhedrin agreed that he was breaking a Roman law by claiming to be a king
- Pilate found Jesus guilty of treason and was sentenced to death instead of Barabbas.

Resurrection

- Resurrection is the central Christian belief that Jesus rose from the dead 3 days after he was crucified.
- It shows us that
 - There is life after death
 - Jesus is the promised Messiah
 - The power of good has triumphed over evil
 - Jesus offers hope to all humankind that death is not the end

Transformation



- Jesus' appearance and his nature were changed after the *resurrection*. He was different yet somehow everything about him was still the same.
- After the **Resurrection**, Jesus appeared to:
 - Mary Magdalene at the tomb (John 20:11-18)
 - Disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35)
 - Disciples in a house in Jerusalem (John 20:19-25)
 - Thomas in a house in Jerusalem (John 20:24-29)
 - Disciples beside lake Galilee (John 21:1-14)



Passover

Eucharist



Ascension

- For 40 days after his death Jesus appeared to his apostles many times and continued to teach them about the kingdom of God.
- He told them ‘Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift I told you about, the gift my father has promised. John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the holy spirit’.
- After saying this, the disciples watches as Jesus was taken up to heaven and a cloud hid him from their sight.



Part V; Faith in Christ

Pentecost

- 10 days after the Ascension, the disciples gathered to celebrate **Pentecost**, as Jesus had promised he would send the Holy Spirit during this festival.
- The disciples met in a room in Jerusalem, and the sound of a **powerful wind** filled the room.
- **Tongues of fire** appeared to the disciples and rested on their hands. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages.
- The **Pentecost** is often referred to as ‘the birthday of the church’, as the Apostles then began to publicly preach.

Son of Man v Son of God

- This title was the first used in the Old Testament to describe a heavenly representative of great power and dignity, who would remain faithful to and act for God and for the people in the event of a final time or trial or crisis.
- In marks gospel, Jesus used this title 14 times when he was describing himself
- This title was used to describe the Risen Jesus.
- This term helped the early Christians to understand the bond between God and Jesus.
- It emphasised the fact that Jesus was not just a very powerful human, but the he shared in the very nature of God.



Christ among His People



First Christians

- The People of God: Christian communities past and present who believe in God and follow the teaching of Jesus
 - They had faith in Jesus, the Son of God (Faith)
 - On Sunday, the day of the Resurrection, they met in each others homes and celebrated the breaking of bread, as Jesus had requested. (Worship)
 - They shared everything with each other and helped people in need (Way of life)

- The first followers were not trying to start a new community of faith but simply groups of Jews who
 - Believed Jesus was the Messiah
 - Followed Jesus' commandment to love God and love their neighbour.
- Slowly over time they began to see that their way of life, faith and worship was different than other Jews
- At this stage they realised they could no longer become known as Jews and so Christianity began.

St Paul

- He spread the Christian message beyond Palestine to parts of the Roman empire.
- St. Paul was originally a Jew, a strict Pharisee who persecuted Christians in Jerusalem
- He became a follower of Jesus as a result of a religious experience on the Road to Damascus
- He felt called by God to spend the rest of his life as a Christian missionary. He set out on 3 missionary journeys around the Mediterranean.
- As a Roman citizen who spoke 4 languages he could easily move around the Empire.
- He wrote letters, or epistles, offering support and advice to each community he established.
- St. Paul was arrested & brought to Rome where he was martyred for his faith in 65 CE

