

Hello everyone

Over the Summer months our midweek reflection offers us time to reflect on the story that runs through our Bible from the book of Genesis to the book of Revelation.

And then to look at how Christians throughout the centuries have spread the message of God, Jesus Christ throughout the world..

As we reflect we let the Word sink into our lives and questions arise looking for answers. How did you first feel God and the church in your life and how do you continue to feel God's presence.

What picture does the word church bring to your mind?

What questions about God, yourself and his promises are you going to put to God for answer?

Today we start reflecting on the question of just how the early church spread the message, Jesus Christ, son of God, Messiah?

Sarah reflected on the gospels last week.

And today we continue reading the New Testament, but

As we do remember too that for Christians the New Testament flows out of the story of the Old Testament which I summarised two weeks ago.

The story of the Old Testament is based around four promises from God to his people.

In Genesis God promises Noah-I will not destroy all life again

The Lord said in his heart, 'I will never again curse the ground because of humankind...nor will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done.

As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.'

God later promises Abraham-I will make you a great nation

The Lord had said to Abram, 'Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. 'I will make you into a great nation. I will make your name great,.

Then God promises the people through Moses and the 10 commandments that they can face the future confident that God is with them.

And finally, in the Old testament God establishes the royal dynasty through a promise to David- A specific unconditional promise embracing one line of Kings through David.

So rather than think of the Old Testament as a theology book, see it as a story of song, poetry, metaphor and puzzle to get us thinking about what it means to live as a person with God.

When we turn the page from Malachi to Matthew, we step into the New Testament.

The New Testament is a collection of 27 books that Christians believe continues the story of how people experience God in our lives and in the world:

The new Testament contains four gospels that detail the ministry of Jesus.

The gospel writers all start their stories differently.

Mark starts his gospel with these words:

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, Son of God.

Matthew starts with the genealogy of Jesus

Luke tells us that since many have set down an account of the events that have been fulfilled amongst us, I too decided.

John simply tells us that in the beginning was the word.

As we reflect on the gospel and how the authors tells us about Jesus, it is in some ways better to think of them as a collage of how God works with us in our lives rather than as one biography of Jesus

The writers leave plenty of room for us to debate, discuss and live with different interpretation of how we experience the grace of God through Jesus.

The Gospels in the New Testament are followed by a collection of books and letters that describe aspects of the early history of the church.

We also find in the New testament a range of views of how faith works.

and how faith and households worked in the early days of the church.

There is a speech of encouragement, a sermon if you

like, to the Hebrews.

and two different insights into the politics of the early church through exploring the future relationship between people and those who govern them. These ideas are called apocalyptic revelation and the New Testament offers two versions for us to reflect on. They ask us to reflect on either resistance or accommodation of government views.

Today we look at how the gospel writers see the Jesus death and start to reflect on how that affects the way the writers of the New Testament write the variety of books we have. God then asks each of us to do the same; to work out what it means to say that Jesus is the son of God in our lives today as we live out the two commandments to love God and help out our neighbour.

Let us worship God