

Kingdom Life

In Matthew

Study Outlines from Matthew's Gospel

KINGDOM  **M**
LIFE

IN MATTHEW

56 study outlines by
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Logo: lamp & scroll,
basin & towel,
in the light of the cross

Kingdom Life in Matthew
Relational Bible Studies using lectionary readings

PART I THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS

Preparation: The coming of Jesus the Messiah

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. The coming of the Lord | Matthew 24:36-44 |
| 2. John the Baptist | Matthew 3:1-12 |
| 3. The Messiah | Matthew 11:2-11 |
| 4. Mary's Son | Matthew 1:18-25 |
| 5. Infancy and childhood of Jesus | Matthew 2:13-23 |
| 6. Reflections on the birth of Jesus | John 1:1-18 |

Commencement: The figure of Jesus the Messiah

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 7. The baptism of Jesus | Matthew 3:13-17 |
| 8. The witness of John the Baptist | John 1:29-34 |

Christ's design for life in God's kingdom

Narrative:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 9. The call of the first disciples | Matthew 4:12-23 |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|

Discourse:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| 10. The sermon on the mount (1) | Matthew 5:1-12 |
| 11. The sermon on the mount (2) | Matthew 5:13-16 |
| 12. The sermon on the mount (3) | Matthew 5:17-26 |
| 13. The sermon on the mount (4) | Matthew 5:27-37 |
| 14. The sermon on the mount (5) | Matthew 5:38-48 |
| 15. The sermon on the mount (6) | Matthew 7:21-29 |

The spread of God's kingdom

Narrative:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| 16. The call of Levi | Matthew 9:9-13 |
|----------------------|----------------|

Discourse:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| 17. The mission sermon (1) | Matthew 9:35-10:8 |
| 18. The mission sermon (2) | Matthew 10:24-33 |
| 19. The mission sermon (3) | Matthew 10:34-42 |

The mystery of God's kingdom

Narrative:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| 20. The revelation to the simple | Matthew 11:25-30 |
|----------------------------------|------------------|

Discourse:

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| 21. The parable sermon (1) | Matthew 13:1-23 |
| 22. The parable sermon (2) | Matthew 13:24-43 |
| 23. The parable sermon (3) | Matthew 13:44-52 |

God's Kingdom on earth and the Church

Narrative:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| 24. The feeding of the five thousand | Matthew 14:13-21 |
| 25. Jesus walks on the water | Matthew 14:22-33 |
| 26. The Canaanite woman | Matthew 15:21-28 |

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| 27. Peter's confession | Matthew 16:13-20 |
| 28. Discipleship | Matthew 16:21-28 |
| Discourse: | |
| 29. The community sermon (1) | Matthew 18:15-20 |
| 30. The community sermon (2) | Matthew 18:21-35 |

Authority and invitation: the ministry ends

Narrative:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| 31. The parable of the labourers | Matthew 20:1-16 |
| 32. The parable of the two sons | Matthew 21:28-32 |
| 33. The parable of the tenants | Matthew 21:33-43 |
| 34. The parable of the marriage feast | Matthew 22:1-14 |
| 35. Paying tribute to Caesar | Matthew 22:15-22 |
| 36. The greatest commandment | Matthew 22:34-46 |
| 37. Hypocrisy and ambition | Matthew 23:1-12 |

Discourse:

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| 38. The final sermon (1) | Matthew 25:1-13 |
| 39. The final sermon (2) | Matthew 25:14-30 |

Conclusion: God's kingdom fulfilled

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|---------------------|------------------|
| 40. Christ the King | Matthew 25:31-46 |
|---------------------|------------------|

PART II THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS

Preparation for the passion of Jesus

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|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. The transfiguration | Matthew 17:1-9 |
| 2. The temptations | Matthew 4:1-11 |
| 3. The meaning of the cross | John 3:1-17 |
| 4. Signs of the resurrection (1) | John 4:5-42 |
| 5. Signs of the resurrection (2) | John 9:1-41 |
| 6. Signs of the resurrection (3) | John 11:1-45 |
| 7. Palm Sunday and the crucifixion | Matthew 21:1-11
Matthew 26:14-27:66 |

Resurrection appearances of Jesus

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| 8. The empty tomb | John 20:1-18 |
| 9. The leaders react | John 20:19-31 |
| 10. The Emmaus road | Luke 24:13-35 |

Observations about Jesus

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| 11. Jesus the Good Shepherd | John 10:1-10 |
| 12. Jesus the way, truth and life | John 14:1-14 |
| 13. Jesus present among his people | John 14:15-21 |
| 14. Jesus prays for his people | John 17:1-11 |

The coming of the Holy Spirit

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| 15. The day of Pentecost | John 20:19-23
John 7:37-39 |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|

Conclusion: The Godhead

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| 16. The Trinity | Matthew 28:16-20 |
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[Appendix 1: Studies arranged according to lectionary readings](#)

[Appendix 2: Studies arranged according to gospel readings](#)

[Appendix 3: Books](#)

Part I THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS

These studies include the Sundays for Advent and Christmas and the Other Sundays of the lectionary year except for the period of Lent to Pentecost.

Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas. The Christmas season includes the Sundays from Christmas Day (25 December) to 5 January. Other Sundays commence with Epiphany from 6 January and continue till the Sunday before Lent which is on the Transfiguration each year. Other Sundays then continue after Pentecost and Trinity Sunday through to Sunday 34, Christ the King, the Sunday before Advent.

The readings for Christmas 2 are omitted if there is only one Sunday between Christmas and Epiphany. Other Sundays will be omitted each year from the lectionary readings because of the varying dates of Easter. Those are usually some of the Sundays 6 to 12.

Part II THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS

These studies cover the period of Lent and Easter to Pentecost and Trinity Sunday.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, forty days before Easter Sunday. The lectionary reading for the Sunday before Lent each year is on the Transfiguration. The Easter season concludes with Pentecost Sunday, which is followed by Trinity Sunday.

A calendar of dates and readings for the lectionary year is available from many Christian bookshops.

Introduction

Matthew the evangelist wrote especially for Jews. He begins his gospel presenting Jesus Christ as the son of David, the son of Abraham. He ends his gospel with the Great Commission declaring that Jesus sends his followers into all nations. In Jesus, God's covenant embraces the whole world.

This radical evangelistic missionary gospel shocked traditional Jews. Matthew insists that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah, backing up his claims with many quotations from the Old Testament. He argues that Jesus did not do away with the Scriptures, but fulfilled them (5:17). He emphasises the missionary nature of Jesus' ministry and of his church.

This gospel continually confronted the Jewish Christian community as well as other Jews. Here is a persistent and urgent call to mission. The good news is for all people, not only for Jews.

Matthew begins his Gospel telling of the coming of Jesus the Messiah who proclaims God's kingdom (1:1; 2:2). The figure of Jesus the Messiah is announced by John the Baptist, as prophesied (3:1-3).

The beginning of the ministry in Galilee shows Christ's design for life in God's kingdom, again fulfilling prophecy (4:15-17, 23). Chapters 5-7 gather the words of Jesus together in 'The Sermon on the Mount' in which we are challenged to seek first the kingdom of God (6:33). Here is the kingdom charter, the ethics of kingdom living. The chapters that follow demonstrate God's kingdom in the works of Jesus.

Matthew gathers the discourses of Jesus as teaching segments throughout his narrative. He often uses the phrase 'kingdom of heaven' for 'kingdom of God' in typical Jewish reverence for the word 'God' (19:23-24).

Jesus' ministry is summarised in 4:23 as teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness. This statement introduces the words and works of Jesus in chapters 5-9. Then in 9:35 the same statement is repeated. Here it introduces the mission of Jesus' followers.

The mission discourse commencing from 9:35 tells of Jesus' plan for the spread of God's kingdom. His disciples will continue his ministry. They will proclaim the kingdom of God (10:1, 7-8).

The chapters following the mission discourse show the radical nature of the mystery of God's kingdom. This mystery is revealed by Jesus to those committed to him (11:27; 13:11), but concealed from others, as indicated in the parable discourses of chapter 13.

Matthew, the only gospel writer to use the word church, points out that Jesus' church has his authority (16:18-19; 18:17-18). The church is the agent of God's kingdom and manifests the kingdom in the world.

Tensions with the keepers of Israel's traditions reached flash point and boiled over into Jesus' arrest and execution. That is the volatile setting in which Jesus pressed his authority and invitation as the ministry ends. The king is crowned with thorns and crucified. Apparent defeat in death is then turned into the amazing victory of resurrection. Christ the King reigns. We all acknowledge his reign in the end. In Jesus' victory we see God's kingdom fulfilled.

The mysteries of the passion of Jesus, his death and resurrection and the promise of the Holy Spirit conclude with the astounding claim in the Great Commission that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Jesus, God's Son, the Messiah. He commissions us to make disciples of all nations. He is with us to the end.

Relational Bible studies

These relational Bible studies can be used for both personal and group study.

Personal study, which may be in preparation for a group session or just for your own interest, will involve reading the Bible passages and thinking about the questions for yourself. It helps to keep a note book or journal of your insights or discoveries.

If these readings are used in your church on Sundays you could work through the study after that Sunday and also read the next study in preparation for the following Sunday. You may have friends with whom you would like to discuss some of the issues.

Group study involves you with others. These studies invite you to relate together at the beginning, to respond to the Bible material in personal ways and to reflect on its meaning for your own lives and circumstances.

A rough time guide for each study would be to allow about 15 minutes for the Relate section, about 30 minutes for the Respond section and another 15 minutes for the Reflect section. Sometimes you will go longer than that, especially at the end. Reading the passages at home before the study helps you become familiar with the topic and gain more from your group discussion.

Any study can be used on its own, so you could select some to suit the number of weeks or studies you want. If your group is large, you will gain more by working in sub-groups of about three to five, particularly for the final section of the study. Smaller groups allow more personal sharing and specific prayer.

Using the lectionary

This study book follows the story of Jesus using lectionary readings from the year of Matthew (Year A). The readings include passages from other gospels as well, especially John.

These group studies may be used following the lectionary dates or may be used independently, in full or in part, at any time. You could try one section to see if it suits your group or meets your needs, such as studies for Lent (see Appendix 1). Some groups may choose to select passages from Matthew only and omit studies from other gospels used in the lectionary readings (see Appendix 2).

Appendix 1 gives you an outline of the lectionary year. For groups following the set dates of Sunday readings the studies from Part II on the death and resurrection of Jesus will fit into Part I at the Lent to Pentecost seasons.

Study 1, The Coming of the Lord, forms a bridge between the previous lectionary year (which concludes with Christ the King) and the new lectionary year. So the first study both looks toward the fulfilment of the coming of the Lord as King and introduces the advent of Jesus.

Part I: The Life and Ministry of Jesus

1. The coming of the Lord

Matthew 24:36-44

Other readings:

Isaiah 2:1-5

Psalm 122

Romans 13:11-14

The Lord's coming at the end of the age, like his first advent, is foretold but mysterious, the fulfilment of our deepest longings but unexpected, the culmination of God's purposes but quite surprising. No one knows when or exactly how the Lord will come. We are warned to be ready, to keep watch, to expect the unexpected!

Relate

1. Introduce yourselves in pairs telling about something you like doing or have achieved. Then introduce your partner to the group.
2. What was something you waited for with great anticipation? How did you feel in that time of waiting? Was its fulfilment as expected?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 24:36-44. Someone could read verses 36-41 and someone else read verses 42-44.
2. How can we be ready for the coming of the Lord? See Isaiah 2:1-5.
3. Why is his coming mysterious and unexpected?
4. What attitude can we have about it? Consider Psalm 122.

Reflect

1. How do you feel about the possibility of the Lord's coming?
2. What difference does it make in our lives if we anticipate the coming of the Lord? Comment on Romans 13:11-14.
3. Conclude in worship or prayer responding to these instructions.

2. John the Baptist

Matthew 3:1-12

Other readings:

Isaiah 11:1-10

Psalm 72:1-8

Romans 15:4-13

The prophetic tradition and message, often quoted by Matthew, continues into the New Testament with John the Baptist. He announces the advent of the Messiah, the coming of the Lord. The kingdom is near. It is to be revealed and demonstrated in the coming One. The old order is passing. The new comes with axe and fire. We are to repent and respond.

Relate

1. How did you become a Christian or get involved in the church?
2. What preacher, speaker or leader has had a strong formative influence in your life? How?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 3:1-12. One person can be narrator and another read the words John spoke.
2. Why was repentance needed? Is it still needed?
3. How did John describe the ministry of Jesus?
4. Why was Jesus' ministry to be so radical? Note Psalm 72:1-8 and Isaiah 11:1-10.

Reflect

1. How would you describe the ministry of Jesus? See Romans 15:4-13.
2. What difference has Jesus made in your own life?
3. Conclude with prayers of thanks and commitment.

3. The Messiah

Matthew 11:2-11

Other readings:

Isaiah 35:1-10

Psalm 146:5-10

James 5:7-10

John the Baptist announced the coming of God's kingdom of righteousness and justice. That clashed with earthly power. So John was imprisoned. He sent his disciples to check with Jesus. Had he been right? Was Jesus the Messiah? Jesus pointed to the evidence, and noted how God's kingdom turns the least into the greatest.

Relate

1. What do you see as the main qualities of a follower of Christ?
2. What impresses you most about the character of Jesus?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 11:2-11. One person could narrate and another read the words of Jesus.
2. How did Jesus' answer to John show that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah? Note Isaiah 35:5-6 and Psalm 146:7-9.
3. Why were prophets like John the Baptist persecuted?
4. Why was Jesus persecuted?

Reflect

1. Are Christians persecuted today? How? Note James 5:7-10.
2. What helps to keep you going when the going gets tough?
3. Pray about that together.

4. Mary's son

Matthew 1:18-25

Other readings:

Isaiah 7:10-16

Psalm 24

Romans 1:1-7

Jesus - Saviour. Immanuel - God with us. Incarnation. Miraculous conception. God's reign comes in unexpected mystery. We only begin to understand Christmas when its wonder and awe break in upon us. We can never fully understand the mystery. But we can adore, worship and have the faith and acceptance which Mary and Joseph showed.

Relate

1. What do you value most about Christmas?
2. How does having goodwill to everyone make a difference?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 1:18-25. Someone could be narrator and someone else read the angel's announcement.
2. What impresses you most about Mary and Joseph? Note Psalm 24.
3. Why are the name Jesus and the description Emmanuel so amazing? Consider Isaiah 7:14.
4. What does the incarnation mean for us? Note Romans 1:2-5.

Reflect

1. When has Jesus, Saviour, had special meaning for you personally?
2. In what ways does Emmanuel, God with us, make a difference for you?
3. Respond in prayer and praise.

5. Infancy and childhood of Jesus

Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

Other readings:

Isaiah 63:7-9

Psalm 111

Hebrews 2:10-18

Wise men from the east visit the new king. The visit provokes Herod into murderous action. Joseph and Mary flee with Jesus. Already the presence of this Messiah ignites the clash of kingdoms, of good and evil. Yet God intervenes. The child is protected, and prepared for his destiny which does involve his death, and his eternal kingdom.

Relate

1. When have you been especially aware of God's care for you?
2. Does God sometimes change our plans? Why?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23. A different reader could read the angel's words.
2. What do you think God's inconvenient instructions meant to Joseph and Mary? Note Isaiah 63:7-9.
3. What attitude can we have to God's interventions? See Psalm 111.
4. Why was Jesus' growth as a child, youth and man necessary and important? Note Hebrews 2:16-18.

Reflect

1. In what ways have you found Jesus' humanity significant for you?
2. Has God's inconvenient intervention sometimes affected you? Has this shown his care for you?
3. Respond with prayers of thanks and praise.

6. Reflections on the birth of Jesus

John 1:1-18

Other readings:

Jeremiah 31:7-14 Psalm 147:12-20 Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-18

The Word was God. The Word became flesh, a human being. The glory of God is seen in him, full of grace and truth. God, veiled in flesh. The incarnate deity. God with us. John's gospel begins with these profound reflections on the mystery of the incarnation.

Relate

1. What do you value most about your beginnings?
2. How have your beginnings helped shape your life?

Respond

1. Read John 1:1-18 silently and meditate on it for a few minutes.
2. What lights up or has special meaning for you in that passage?
3. What do you learn about Jesus from this passage? Note Ephesians 1:18-23.
4. What does this passage promise ultimately? See also Jeremiah 31:7-14.

Reflect

1. What aspects of Jesus' grace and truth mean most to you? Note John 1:14, Psalm 147:12-14, Ephesians 1:3-6.
2. What aspects of Jesus' grace and truth do you see in others in your group? Each person in turn remains silent as others comment on them.
3. How does the awesome greatness of Jesus Christ our Lord affect your life? Respond in worship and prayer.

7. The baptism of Jesus

Matthew 3:13-17

Other readings:

Isaiah 42:1-9

Psalm 29

Acts 10:34-43

Jesus identified himself fully with us in our humanity. Already submitted to the reign of God, he accepted John's baptism in fulfilling all that is right. God must reign, and be seen to reign. Jesus gladly witnessed to this, and the heavens opened on him. The Spirit of God rested on him in full measure.

Relate

1. Were you baptised, and why?
2. What is the significance of baptism for you?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 3:13-17.
2. What was the significance of baptism for Jesus? Note Matthew 3:15.
3. What was the result of Jesus' obedient submission?
4. In what ways did this result confirm and begin his ministry? Note the picture of the Lord's servant in Isaiah 42:1-9.

Reflect

1. What link do you see between baptism, forgiveness and the anointing with the Holy Spirit and power? Note Acts 10:34-43.
2. How does this apply to your life and ministry? Can the group help?
3. Conclude with appropriate prayer and worship. Note Psalm 29, especially verses 1-2, 10-11.

8. The witness of John the Baptist

John 1:29-34

Other readings:

Isaiah 49:1-7 Psalm 40:1-11 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

The Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world. God's unblemished sacrificial lamb is announced to the world by God's prophet, John. God's Spirit rests on Jesus. He baptizes us in the Holy Spirit. He is the Son of God. These astounding claims and incredible titles herald Jesus' ministry.

Relate

1. What titles or descriptions of Jesus have special meaning for you?

Examples in John 1: Word, Light, Christ, Lamb of God, Son of God.

2. How did you come to know Christ personally?

Respond

1. Read John 1:29-34 aloud.

2. How does the title Lamb of God fit Jesus? Consider Psalm 40:1-11.

3. How do John's witness and the Holy Spirit's empowering testify to Jesus as the Son of God?

Note Isaiah 49:1-7.

4. What are some results of the Lord imparting his Spirit to us? See 1 Corinthians 1:1-9.

Reflect

1. What have been some of your most significant discoveries of the Holy Spirit in your life?

2. What would you like the Holy Spirit to do in your life?

3. Pray about this for one another and others.

9. The call of the first disciples

Matthew 4:12-23

Other readings:

Isaiah 9:1-4 Psalm 27:1-6 1 Corinthians 1:10-17

Jesus begins his ministry announcing the kingdom of God, and calling for repentance that accepts God's reign. Matthew emphasises this theme (3:2; 4:17; 10:7). He uses kingdom of heaven and kingdom of God interchangeably - not a place, but the reign of God. Accepting God's reign involves following Jesus who taught and demonstrated the kingdom (4:23).

Relate

1. What impresses you most about the ministry of Jesus?
2. When have you commenced something new in your life or ministry?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 4:12-23, different people reading verses 12-17, 18-20, 21-22, 23.
2. How did Jesus literally fulfil Isaiah 9:1-7?
3. How does Psalm 27:1-6 picture this great light?
4. What does this light have to do with repentance, following Jesus, the good news of the kingdom and healing?

Reflect

1. How do you see that light affecting people
 - (a) in Scripture, e.g. Matthew 4:20, 22, 23;
 - (b) today? Note 1 Corinthians 1:10 and 17.
2. Pray about your response and the needs of others.

10. The sermon on the mount (1)

Matthew 5:1-12

Other readings:

Micah 6:1-8 Psalm 37:1-11 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Jesus' kingdom teaching is gathered together in the Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5-7). It opens with the Beatitudes. They begin and end with reference to the kingdom (5:3,10). Echoing Isaiah 61:1-4, they show God's love for the weak and oppressed and all who seek God's right ways and live according to God's justice, even if persecuted.

Relate

1. What is a motto you like?
2. What is a Bible verse you have as a guide or goal?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 5:1-12, a verse each.
2. What makes the beatitudes so radical or revolutionary? See Micah 6:8 and Psalm 37:1-11.
3. What are some ways the gospel of the kingdom turns everything upside down? Consider 1 Corinthians 1:18-31.
4. How do the beatitudes challenge and change our usual attitudes?

Reflect

1. Which of the eight beatitudes is strongest in your life?
2. Which one or two of the beatitudes do you desire most in your life?
3. Pray together about that.

11. The sermon on the mount (2)

Matthew 5:13-16

Other readings:

Isaiah 58:3-9a

Psalm 112:4-9

1 Corinthians 2:1-11

Kingdom people make an impact in the world. Salt and light. They preserve its goodness, flavour and beauty. They show the way to live in God's favour, and so bring glory to God. Salt may sting, and light may blind darkened eyes, but salt must keep its saltiness and light must shine, not be hidden.

Relate

1. Name a good deed done to you which you really appreciate.
2. What do you appreciate people doing for you at home?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 5:13-16, one read verse 13, another for 14-16.
2. How do we keep our salty flavour and our light shining? Note examples in Isaiah 58:6-9a and Psalm 112:4-9.
3. How does the inner reality of the kingdom transform us and others? See 1 Corinthians 2:1-11.
3. How can we tackle the near edge of big needs in our world?

Reflect

1. What are some practical steps you can take to be salt and light in your circumstances?
2. What are some practical steps your group can take to meet some of the big needs in the world?
3. Pray and plan together about this.

12. The sermon on the mount (3)

Matthew 5:17-26

Other readings:

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 Psalm 119:1-8 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Jesus the Messiah upholds the validity of the Law to its smallest detail, and yet at the same time fulfils and transforms it. He lifts it far beyond legalism to life in God's kingdom under God's absolute rule even over motives and hidden thoughts. The law shifts from being outward rules to inward relationship with God.

Relate

1. When have you kept the spirit, but not the letter, of the law?
2. What is a principle or law you hold to very firmly?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 5:17-26 aloud, a person per paragraph.
2. What does God really want from us? Note Deuteronomy 30:15-20.
3. How are we blessed through obedience? See Psalm 119:1-8.
3. How does Jesus' words turn law inside out, or move from outward conformity to inner commitment?

Reflect

1. How does Jesus' teaching affect your attitudes and actions? Note the call to grow up in 1 Corinthians 3:1-9.
2. In what specific areas do you sense a need in your life for more maturity or inner commitment? Listen also to others' comments on the qualities or strengths they see in you as well.
3. Support one another in prayer.

13. The sermon on the mount (4)

Matthew 5:27-37

Other readings:

Isaiah 49:8-13 Psalm 62:5-12 1 Corinthians 3:10-11, 16-23

Jesus fulfils and transforms the old external law with the inner law of life in the Spirit of God. This is the law of God's righteousness. That righteousness involves open, honest communication. Just yes and no. Kingdom life challenges and transforms legal systems and goes to the heart of the matter, our right relationship with God and others.

Relate

1. Whose word could you depend on when you were younger?
2. Whose word can you depend on now?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 5:27-37 silently.
2. What inner attitude is stressed in these examples?
3. How does God's grace apply to our weakness? See Isaiah 49:8-13.
4. How does God help us live this way? Consider Psalm 62:5-12.

Reflect

1. What is the difference for you between outward law and inner commitment in your life? Note 1 Corinthians 3:16-23.
2. How would you like your inner commitments and outward actions to line up more strongly?
3. Pray about these desires and intentions.

14. The sermon on the mount (5)

Matthew 5:38-48

Other readings:

Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18 Psalm 119:33-40 1 Corinthians 4:1-5

God loves us all, even his enemies. God is perfect. We are to be like him in our relationships also. Love transcends law. We are not to look for the least requirement of law to be righteous but to love, even our enemies. Only then can we be like our Father in heaven.

Relate

1. When has someone gone the second mile for you?
2. When have you gone the second mile for someone, happily?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 5:38-48 as two paragraphs.
2. Love conquers all - or does it?
3. How does Jesus fulfil the law? Compare Matthew 5:48 with Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18 and Psalm 119:33-40.
4. How can we be holy, complete, mature or perfect?

Reflect

1. What does it mean for you to have a clear conscience? See 1 Corinthians 4:1-5.
2. How can your group help you now to be what you want to be?
3. Respond to one another and to the Lord in prayer.

15. The Sermon on the Mount (6)

Matthew 7:21-29

Other readings:

Genesis 12:1-9

Psalm 33:12-22

Romans 3:21-28

The Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5-7) concludes with a strong warning about obedience. These teachings are not merely good advice or great ethics. They require obedience. Our lives, as with the two houses, stand or fall on that obedience, on both hearing and doing. Hearing is not enough. It's the doing that shows obedience.

Relate

1. What family requirements did you enjoy when you were young?
2. What expectations of others do you like fulfilling now?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 7:21-29, different people reading verses 21-23, 24-27, and 28-29.
2. What is the parable really about? Note verses 21, 24 and 29.
3. Why is obeying Jesus more important than doing many good works? Note Romans 3:22-23, 27-28.
4. How is obedience its own reward? Consider Genesis 12:1-3 and Psalm 33:18-22.

Reflect

1. What areas of obeying the Lord give you joy and fulfillment?
2. What aspects of obedience do you find tough at present?
3. Pray about these in caring and supportive ways together.

16. The Call of Levi

Matthew 9:9-13

Other readings:

Genesis 22:1-18

Psalm 13

Romans 4:13-18

God's kingdom spreads in unlikely ways, through unlikely people. A despised collaborator, regarded as a traitor and cheat, is ready to follow Jesus, while defenders of the faith will not. Furthermore, this despised outcast, Matthew, invites his friends and other sinners to share his new friendship with Jesus. They do. The kingdom spreads among them.

Relate

1. When have you given up one thing for something better?
2. How do you feel about that choice now?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 9:9-13. Someone could narrate, others read the words of Jesus and the Pharisees.
2. Why was the call of Matthew so surprising? Note Psalm 13.
3. Why did religious people find this so difficult or repulsive?
4. Why is radical obedience in faith so rewarding? Consider Genesis 22:15-18 and Romans 4:13-18.

Reflect

1. What step of obedience do you want to take just now?
2. What may be involved in that for you and others?
3. Pray for one another as you seek to respond to God specifically.

17. The mission sermon (1)

Matthew 9:35 - 10:8

Other readings:

Genesis 25:19-34

Psalm 46

Romans 5:6-11

The ministry of Jesus is our ministry also. Jesus gave his followers authority to do what he did. He still does. This has dynamic implications for us and the kind of church Jesus wants. It challenges us with the gap between what we read in the gospels and what we do now. Our mission is no less radical or disturbing than Jesus' mission and his disciples' mission were.

Relate

1. When have you helped people or ministered along with others?
2. What did you value about that (e.g. in a home group or team)?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 9:35 - 10:8 aloud, perhaps one verse each.
2. What was Jesus' ministry and motivation (9:35-36)?
3. How did he multiply that ministry (10:1, 7-8)?
4. How has God constantly shown his authority and love? Consider Genesis 25:21-23 and Romans 5:6-11.

Reflect

1. How might the Lord's authority and power affect us? Note Psalm 46:1, 10-11.
2. How can we learn to minister with his authority and power? See Matthew 28:18-20.
3. Do that as you pray together for specific concerns or needs.

18. The mission sermon (2)

Matthew 10:24-33

Other readings:

Genesis 28:10-17

Psalm 91:1-10

Romans 5:12-19

Church history and current explosive church growth in many countries testify to God's power at work in his people as they continue Jesus' ministry. His followers in many places also encounter sustained criticism and opposition. Jesus prepared his followers for this. He still does.

Relate

1. What leader or teacher has had a strong influence on you?
2. What qualities in others have you chosen for yourself also?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 10:24-33, different people reading a paragraph each.
2. Why was Jesus criticised when he proclaimed and demonstrated the kingdom of God? Compare 10:25 with 12:22-28.
3. How did Jesus prepare his followers with both challenge and comfort? See also Psalm 91:1-10.
4. How does God's grace and care sustain us? Note Genesis 28:10-17 and Romans 5:15-19.

Reflect

1. How does working together help us cope with opposition?
2. What are values for you in ministering with others?
3. Pray for one another and others in specific ways.

19. The mission sermon (3)

Matthew 10:34-42

Other readings:

Genesis 32:22-32

Psalm 17:1-7

Romans 6:3-11

The reign of Jesus is both inclusive of all who will come, but exclusive. He divides. That is the tender-tough paradox of the kingdom of God. This is not popular in our age of religious pluralism. Discipleship requires commitment to our Lord, but also brings fulfilment. The least service we do in our commitment to Jesus has its reward.

Relate

1. When have you been confronted in a compassionate or caring way?
2. How do you confront in love?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 10:34-42. Different people could read a paragraph each?
2. How does this passage show both confrontation and compassion?
3. Why is Jesus' claim on us so radical? See 10:39 and Romans 6:3-11.
4. What can we claim from the Lord? Compare Genesis 32:24-28 and Psalm 17:1-7.

Reflect

1. How are you confronted by the Lord's claim on you?
2. What do you want to claim from your Lord and God?
3. Do that in prayer for one another or others.

20. The revelation to the simple

Matthew 11:25-30

Other readings:

Exodus 1:6-14,22 - 2:10 Psalm 124 Romans 7:14-25a

The mystery of God's kingdom is revealed by God, not discovered or understood by human wisdom. It is hidden from the world but made known by the Spirit of God to those who belong to him. We experience a new perspective in a new dimension of living. God's grace, not our ability or achievement, makes this possible. It transforms our attitudes and actions when we accept that grace.

Relate

1. When has some simple solution to a problem surprised you?
2. What is a profound truth you understand in a simple way?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 11:25-30, one person for each paragraph.
2. What attitude is needed to understand God's ways?
3. What does close union with the Lord do? Consider Psalm 124 and Romans 7:21-25a.
4. How do God's ways turn our ways upside down? Note Exodus 1:22 and 2:10.

Reflect

1. When has a kingdom mystery become clear to you?
2. In what area would you like to be more closely yoked with Jesus?
3. Pray about that together, in faith.

21. The parable sermon (1)

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Other readings:

Exodus 2:11-22

Psalm 69:6-15

Romans 8:9-17

Jesus' parables both reveal and conceal truth. His disciples often missed the point! These stories always have a sting in the tail. Children can enjoy them but they also shock and confront us. The story of the sower does that because we so often have hard hearts, are shallow, or preoccupied with this world's affairs. Kingdom life challenges all that.

Relate

1. When have you become more open to new truth?
2. How has a new perspective changed your understanding and action?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 13:1-9,18-23, different people reading each section.
2. How does the parable illustrate verse 11?
3. How can we understand kingdom mysteries? See Romans 8:9-17.
4. How does God help us in our blunders? Compare Exodus 2:11-22 and Psalm 69:6-15.

Reflect

1. How can we cultivate good soil in our lives?
2. What does this mean for you in practical ways?
3. Commit those ways to the Lord in prayer together.

22. The parable sermon (2)

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Other readings:

Exodus 3:1-12

Psalm 103:1-13

Romans 8:18-25

Jesus often pointed out that only God knows those who belong to him. We can't judge that by human standards. It is revealed by God's Spirit. Weeds and wheat may look much alike at first. Many who think they're in God's kingdom are not. The self-sufficient or proud are in special danger. Those with ears need to hear!

Relate

1. When has your assessment of something needed changing?
2. When have new insights changed your prejudices?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 13:24-30,36-43, two people with a section each.
2. Why are we unable to judge who are the wheat and weeds?
3. What harvest is being prepared now? Note Romans 8:18-25.
4. How does God prepare us for his purposes? See Exodus 3:1-12 and Psalm 103:1-13.

Reflect

1. When has God worked strongly in your weakness?
2. How do you think God wants to work through you in your situation?
3. Claim his help in prayer for one another and others.

23. The parable sermon (3)

Matthew 13:44-52

Other readings:

Exodus 3:13-20

Psalm 105:1-11

Romans 8:26-30

Belonging to God's kingdom is more significant and worth more than anything else on earth. Its value cannot be over estimated. Jesus gave many pictures of the supreme importance of that kingdom. It continues to permeate and transform us, including those who know the scriptures. They can draw on their background in new and dynamic ways. The renewing of the church is like that.

Relate

1. What material possessions do you value most?
2. If you lost your possessions in a fire, what would you start accumulating besides your basic furniture and utensils?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 13:44-52, different people reading each parable.
2. Why is God's kingdom wonderful? Note Psalm 105:1-11.
3. How is the Old Testament enriched by our understanding of Jesus' teaching and demonstration of the kingdom? See verse 52.
4. How does God work out his kingdom purposes in us? Consider Exodus 3:13-20 and Romans 8:26-30.

Reflect

1. What do you value most about kingdom living?
2. What aspects of kingdom life do you desire more fully?
3. Pray about that together.

24. The feeding of the five thousand

Matthew 14:13-21

Other readings:

Exodus 12:1-14

Psalm 143:1-10

Romans 8:31-39

God's kingdom clashes with the kingdoms of this world. Sin is exposed. Herod had imprisoned and killed John the Baptist. Jesus withdrew to a quiet place; but crowds followed. So Jesus' compassion reached out in healing grace, the opposite of power that destroys. Jesus demonstrated love and power that meets needs and involved his followers in that caring and powerful ministry.

Relate

1. When has someone's simple or small act meant a lot to you?
2. When have you done something simple or small which blessed others?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 14:13-21. One person could narrate, others read the words of Jesus and the disciples.
2. How did Jesus show his compassion? Note Romans 8:31-39.
3. How does God's power reveal his love? Compare with Matthew 4:3-4.
4. How is God's love our security? Consider Exodus 12:1-14 and Psalm 143:1-10.

Reflect

1. How can our small acts connect with God's great love and power?
2. What activity of yours do you need filled with God's love and power just now?
3. Pray about that together.

25. Jesus walks on the water

Matthew 14:22-33

Other readings:

Exodus 14:19-31

Psalm 106:4-12

Romans 9:1-5

Jesus stayed in close union with God in prayer. He then demonstrated divine power over nature, and invited others, such as Peter, to participate in his actions. He would not use that power for show or for personal gain, but did reveal his awesome authority to his followers and taught them to trust in God. When they failed he quickly restored them.

Relate

1. When have you seen someone do something risky for God?
2. When have you done something difficult for God?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 14:22-33. Someone could narrate, others read the words of the disciples, Jesus, and Peter.
2. Why did Jesus need to pray alone? Note John 6:14-15, and compare with Matthew 4:8-10 where he chose only God's way for him to reign.
3. Why did Jesus avoid spectacles while demonstrating God's power?
Note Matthew 4:5-7.
4. Why is God's power both glorious and dangerous? Consider Exodus 14:19-31, Psalm 106:4-12, and Romans 9:1-5.

Reflect

1. How did Peter connect with the Lord in this story?
2. How do you want to connect with God in your circumstances?
3. Pray specifically about that together.

26. The Canaanite woman

Matthew 15:21-28

Other readings:

Exodus 16:2-15 Psalm 78:1-3, 10-20 Romans 11:13-16, 29-32

Matthew points out that Jesus' mission was to Israel initially and through Israel to the world. He also shows the missionary heart of Jesus in his travels far to the north and his willingness to respond to the need and faith of Gentiles also. Jesus responded with typical compassion and admiration to the humble faith of the Canaanite woman.

Relate

1. When has an 'outsider' surprised you or challenged your faith?
2. When have you been blessed by someone considered an outsider?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 15:21-28. Different people could read each role.
2. Why would Jesus help 'unclean' Gentiles? Note verse 20 and Romans 11:13-16,29-32.
3. What were Jesus priorities and why was he pleased with the woman?
4. Why are we all outsiders or unclean, in need of God's amazing grace? Consider Exodus 16:2-15 and Psalm 78:1-3,10-20.

Reflect

1. In what ways does the gospel of God's kingdom confront your traditions or prejudices?
2. What steps can you take to be more Christlike?
3. Offer these steps to God in prayer together.

27. Peter's confession

Matthew 16:13-20

Other readings:

Exodus 17:1-7

Psalm 95

Romans 11:33-36

Peter's shocking statement earned Jesus' warm approval. To be a good man or prophet was acceptable; to claim to be the Messiah was seen as blasphemy. The leaders finally had Jesus killed for it. The early Christians were severely persecuted for this claim. Yet Peter got it right, by divine revelation. The church is built on it.

Relate

1. When has some new insight transformed your thinking?
2. How has this affected your attitudes or behaviour?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 16:13-20, someone reading verses 13-16, another reading verses 17-20.
2. Why was Peter's answer so radically different from the others? See also Romans 11:33-36.
3. Why was this revelation so dangerous? Compare verses 16 and 20 with Matthew 26:63-66.
4. Why are God's revelations so surprising and awesome? Consider Exodus 17:1-7 and Psalm 95.

Reflect

1. How does this passage affect your beliefs and behaviour now?
2. What part do you think the Lord wants you to have in his church?
3. Pray about that together.

28. Discipleship

Matthew 16:21-28

Other readings:

Exodus 19:1-9

Psalm 114

Romans 12:1-13

Peter's claim that Jesus was the Messiah was a turning point. From then on Jesus prepared his followers for his death. Peter's rebuke of Jesus earned Jesus' strong rebuke. The way of the cross was inevitable and essential. Jesus would not turn from that. However, it also means Jesus' followers walking that way, even to physical death. It was so then. It still is.

Relate

1. Who has been a good example of Christian discipleship for you?
2. What do you see as important aspects of discipleship?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 16:21-28, someone reading verses 21-23 and another reading verses 24-28.
2. Why did Peter's rebuke earn Jesus' stronger rebuke?
3. Why is the cross central to discipleship? Note Romans 12:1-2.
4. Why is God's claim on us so total? Consider Exodus 19:3-6 and Psalm 114.

Reflect

1. In your discipleship what gifts or ministries do you see most strongly in operation? Note Romans 12:3-13.
2. What gifts do you see most clearly in others in your group?
3. Give thanks for these and pray about their future use.

29. The community sermon (1)

Matthew 18:15-20

Other readings:

Exodus 19:16-24

Psalm 115:1-11

Romans 13:1-10

Jesus brought into being a new community of his followers. To that community of believers he entrusted his ministry. He gave them authority and required unity with mutual reconciliation and respect among them. His church has all the potential of his own ministry on the earth, and is charged with that same ministry.

Relate

1. When have you enjoyed making peace after a disagreement?
2. How do you feel when you are at peace with others?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 18:15-20, a verse each.
2. What is required for unity and submission in the Christian community? Note John 17:20-21 and Romans 13:1-10.
3. What authority does Jesus' church have? Compare verses 17-18 with Matthew 16:18-19.
4. Why are authority and unity so significant? Consider Exodus 19:16-24 and Psalm 115:1-11.

Reflect

1. When have you discovered the presence or authority of Jesus in a new way through forgiveness and unity with others?
2. What do you desire for your group's unity now?
3. Pray for that.

30. The community sermon (2)

Matthew 18:21-35

Other readings:

Exodus 20:1-20

Psalm 19:7-14

Romans 14:5-12

Jesus' community, the church, must be based on love and unity. So mutual forgiveness is essential. In Jesus we have God's forgiveness, unmerited and complete. So we are required to forgive others, fully. This is opposite to the world's standards and behaviour but is demanded of us by our Lord who forgives us totally.

Relate

1. When did you become aware of God's forgiveness in your life?
2. How does that awareness affect you now?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 18:21-35, someone narrating and others reading the words of Peter, Jesus, the king, the servant, the other servant.
2. Why are judgemental and unforgiving attitudes so destructive?
Note Romans 14:5-12.
3. Why does God's forgiveness of us demand our forgiveness of others?
4. How are God's laws both a marvellous guide and a reminder of our need for forgiveness? Note Exodus 20:1-20 and Psalm 19:7-14.

Reflect

1. What link have you found between forgiveness and health or wholeness? Note James 5:16.
2. What forgiveness do you need to receive or give just now?
3. Pray about this with love and gentleness.

31. The parable of the labourers

Matthew 20:1-16

Other readings:

Exodus 32:1-4 Psalm 106:7-8, 19-23 Philippians 1:21-27

Jesus often stressed that the first would be last, and the last first. God's grace cannot be measured by our finite ways or tiny concepts. That grace is infinite, and freely available to all who will respond. Our achievements or efforts do not earn grace. It is a gift. We can be grateful for all God's goodness to us and to others as well.

Relate

1. When have you been surprised by God's generous grace?
2. How does God's grace affect you? Consider Luke 7:47.

Respond

1. Read Matthew 20:1-16, someone narrating and others reading the words of the landowner and the servants.
2. How does God's grace turn things upside down? Consider verse 16 and 19:30.
3. Why do we need God's amazing grace? Note Exodus 32:1-4 and Psalm 106:7-8,19-23.
4. Why does God treat us this way? Compare this story with the story of the prodigal's father going out to both his sons: Luke 15:20, 28.

Reflect

1. Why is serving the Lord its own wonderful reward? Note Philippians 1:21-27.
2. What does God's grace mean for you in your life and work?
3. Pray about that for one another and others.

32. The parable of the two sons

Matthew 21:28-32

Other readings:

Exodus 33:12-23

Psalm 99

Philippians 2:1-13

The kingdom of God belongs to those who say yes to God, who repent, the humble, the outcast. God's grace is freely available. Yet our sin of pride and prejudice may cut us off from that grace, as with Israel's leaders in the days of John the Baptist and Jesus. This story shocks religious people still. Sinners enter the kingdom ahead of those who are self-righteous.

Relate

1. When have you changed your mind about something?
2. Why did you?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 21:28-32, a verse each.
2. Why did this parable sting the good, religious people?
3. Why is it often easier for unbelievers and sinners to enter the kingdom of God ahead of good, moral people?
4. How does our response open the way to discover God's glory and majesty? Consider Exodus 33:12-23 and Psalm 99.

Reflect

1. What do you find most significant about Jesus' wholehearted obedience? Note Philippians 2:1-13.
2. In what ways do you need to change to be like that?
3. Pray about that in surrender and faith.

33. The parable of the tenants

Matthew 21:33-43

Other readings:

Numbers 27:12-23

Psalm 81:1-10

Philippians 3:12-21

God reaches out to us constantly, urgently. Only if we persist in our rejection of that love and grace are we condemned. God does not violate our free will. Time after time God's messengers have been rejected, and even God's Son was killed. This had national consequences for Israel. Our response to God's kingdom has personal consequences for us and for others.

Relate

1. When have you discovered you were needed by others?
2. When have you discovered you were not indispensable?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 21:33-43, a verse each.
 2. What does this story say about God's persistent grace and our response? Note verse 43 and Philippians 3:17-21.
 3. Why does the missionary thrust of this story challenge tradition?
 4. In what ways are God's purposes much bigger than our ideas?
- Consider Numbers 27:12-23 and Psalm 81:1-10.

Reflect

1. What is your response to God's claim on you? Reflect on Philippians 3:12-16.
2. How can your group help you respond more fully?
3. Act on those ideas in prayer together.

34. The parable of the marriage feast

Matthew 22:1-14

Other readings:

Deuteronomy 34:1-12

Psalm 135:1-14

Philippians 4:1-9

The theme of God's abounding grace and invitation continues, along with the awful undercurrent of human rebellion and resistance. Yet grace persists. The missionary nature of God's love cannot be stopped by anyone. It extends to all people, everywhere. The nation of Israel had to learn this. So do we. God will not be limited by any of us.

Relate

1. What kind of wedding breakfasts have you especially enjoyed?
2. What kind of BYO meals do you enjoy most?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 22:1-14, a paragraph each.
2. How is this story both a warning and wonderful invitation? See Psalm 135:1-14.
3. What is appropriate dress in the king's presence? Note Philippians 4:1-9 and Colossians 3:12-14.
4. How do our lives now affect our future destiny? Consider Deuteronomy 34.

Reflect

1. What can you do to encourage interest in the wedding banquet?
2. Who do you think are most likely to show interest?
3. Pray for them and others, and for your part in the celebrations.

35. Paying tribute to Caesar

Matthew 22:15-20

Other readings:

Ruth 1:1-19a

Psalm 146

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

As hostility toward Jesus by religious leaders increases they try to trap him with sarcastic jibes and evil intentions. Again, Jesus lifts the discussion to bigger issues and challenges them about their priorities and loyalties. Those challenges remain. We all face them! Kingdom life transcends our petty rules and legalism.

Relate

1. What are some conflicting loyalties in your life?
2. What are some of your top priorities?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 22:15-20, someone reading verses 15-17, another reading verses 18-20.
2. What is important about loyalties and priorities? See Ruth 1:1-19a. and Psalm 146.
3. What point did Jesus emphasise in this clash?
4. What priorities does God bless? Consider 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10.

Reflect

1. What does it mean for you to give to God what belongs to God?
2. How do those priorities affect your obligations to human authorities?
3. Pray about those commitments together.

36. The greatest commandment

Matthew 22:34-46

Other readings:

Ruth 2:1-13

Psalm 128

1 Thessalonians 2:1-8

Note the context of the greatest commandment. Jesus replies to heated theological debate by identifying the heart of all theology - knowing God in a loving relationship, lived out in love for others. Further, Jesus shows that the Messiah is more than human: David calls him Lord. Yet the leaders refuse to know God revealed in Jesus the Lord. Jesus calls us all to know God through a commitment of love.

Relate

1. What are some of your earliest memories of human love?
2. How did you become aware of God's love?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 22:34-46, a section each.
2. How can we please God? Note 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8.
3. How does the great commandment challenge other priorities and traditions?
4. Why is loving God and others so greatly blessed by God? Consider Ruth 2:1-13 and Psalm 128.

Reflect

1. What does it mean for you to love God with your whole being?
2. What does it mean for you to love others as yourself?
3. Pray for one another in regard to these challenges.

37. Hypocrisy and ambition

Matthew 23:1-12

Other readings:

Ruth 4:7-17 Psalm 127 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13, 17-20

Jesus denounces the leaders, again emphasising that the greatest are the servants. The humble will be exalted. Here is a terrible warning for those whose doctrine is right but whose attitude is wrong. This chapter has seven woes pronounced against hypocrisy and ambition in the strongest terms, yet ends in the broken hearted cry of love rejected (23:37-39).

Relate

1. What for you is good and bad ambition?
2. How does hypocrisy creep into our lives?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 23:1-12, a paragraph each.
2. Why was Jesus so hostile towards the religious leaders?
3. How does Jesus instruct us to avoid the same trap? Note verses 11-12 and 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13,17-20.
4. What work does God bless? Consider Ruth 4:7-17 and Psalm 127.

Reflect

1. What commitments and service do you offer God?
2. What service do you appreciate in the others in your group?
3. Pray for one another in your response to the Lord's claim on you.

38. The final sermon (1)

Matthew 25:1-13

Other readings:

Amos 5:18-24

Psalm 50:7-15

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Jesus challenges us all to take our destiny seriously. Preparation here affects the future. At the close of his own life and ministry, faced with mounting opposition, Jesus urged everyone to watch out and be prepared. The end must come. Failure to be ready, whenever or however the end may come, would be disastrous.

Relate

1. Do you usually arrive early, on time or late for meetings?
2. What do you prefer to do?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 25:1-13, someone narrating, others reading the parts.
2. How does this story link with the previous one (24:45-51)?
3. How can we be prepared? See 24:36,42 and Psalm 50:14-15.
4. Why is the Lord's coming both encouragement and warning? Note Amos 5:18-24 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Reflect

1. What do you expect the Lord's coming to be like?
2. What preparations have you made?
3. Pray for yourselves and others concerning this.

39. The final sermon (2)

Matthew 25:14-30

Other readings:

Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18

Psalm 76

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Jesus confronts us. He claims us for himself. To ignore him is to refuse him. Response involves faith and action. Our lives count. We are accountable to God and will report in at the end. Our availability counts more than our ability. Abilities vary. We are all required to be faithful, irrespective of our different talents.

Relate

1. What did you enjoy most at school?
2. What do you enjoy doing now?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 25:14-30, a verse each.
2. What is the main point of this story?
3. How is our perception of God affected by our faithfulness to him? Note verses 24-25 and Psalm 76.
4. How should we prepare for the day of the Lord? Consider Zephaniah 1:7,12-18 and 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11.

Reflect

1. What talents or abilities has God given you?
2. What talents or abilities do you see in others in your group?
3. Pray about using these faithfully.

40. Christ the King

Matthew 25:31-46

Other readings:

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 Psalm 23 1 Corinthians 15:20-28

We are servants of the Lord, accountable to him. Whatever we do for others, especially those considered insignificant or unimportant, we do for the Lord himself. Christ the king reigns in mercy and justice with holy love. His kingdom must show this in our lives now.

Relate

1. When has someone helped you?
2. When have you helped someone in need?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 25:31-46, a paragraph each.
2. What does the Lord expect of us? Remember Matthew 22:39.
3. What attitudes produce the actions praised in this story?
4. Where is everything heading? Compare Psalm 23 with Ezekiel 34:20-24 and 1 Corinthians 15:20-28.

Reflect

1. What attitudes or actions do you need to develop more fully as a result of this study?
2. How?
3. Do that in prayer together.

Part II: The Death and Resurrection of Jesus

1. The transfiguration

Matthew 17:1-9

Other readings:

Exodus 24:12-18

Psalm 2:6-11

2 Peter 1:16-21

After Peter's astounding confession that Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus taught his disciples what that meant in terms of his death and resurrection and their discipleship (16:21-28; 17:1). The last journey to Jerusalem started at that time with his transfiguration. His glory was revealed. God gave unqualified approval of his Son.

Relate

1. What was a high point or mountain top experience in your life?
2. What do you think pleases God in your life or circumstances?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 17:1-9 aloud. Different people the spoken parts.
2. About a week after Peter declared who Jesus was (16:16) and Jesus predicted his own death, Jesus was transfigured. How are these events linked? Note Luke 9:31.
3. Why were God's words so important?
4. Why were the shining appearances, the bright cloud and the voice so significant? Consider Exodus 24:12-18, Psalm 2:6-11 and 2 Peter 1:16-21.

Reflect

1. When has God broken through into your life or experience?
2. How do mountain top or valley experiences affect you now?
3. Pray about that, acknowledging God's presence in your situation.

2. The temptations

Matthew 4:1-11

Other readings:

Genesis 2:4b-9, 15-17, 25 - 3:7 Psalm 130 Romans 5:12-19

The way of the cross is the hardest way of all. Temptations divert us. They did not divert Jesus from his total obedience to God's will. Jesus' mission included the cross. He chose to give his life. He lived in full obedience. He alone could proclaim and demonstrate God's kingdom rule in its fullness.

Relate

1. When have you been tempted to doubt God's word?
2. How has God's word helped you deal with temptations?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 4:1-11 aloud. One person could read with the whole group responding together in verses 4, 7 and 10.
2. What did the temptations challenge for Jesus and how did he combat the challenge? See verses 3:17; 4:6.
3. How does temptation challenge us? Note Genesis 2:15-17 and 3:1-7.
4. How does God's faithfulness rescue us? Consider Psalm 130, especially verses 3-5, and Romans 5:12-19.

Reflect

1. How can we deal with temptation? Any examples?
2. How does God's faithfulness and grace apply to us? Any examples?
3. Prayer could include confession, repentance or gratitude to God.

3. The meaning of the cross

John 3:1-17

Other readings:

Genesis 12:1-8 Psalm 33:12-22 Romans 4:1-5 (6-12) 13-17

Jesus knew that his destiny involved sacrificial death on the cross, an ugly instrument of public torture and humiliation. This passage likens his death to the time God's people were saved from death when they looked at the brass serpent on a pole. God's great love gave us salvation through Jesus' death. We only have to 'look and live' or trust God because of Jesus' death.

Relate

1. What gave you security in your childhood or youth?
2. What gives you security now?

Respond

1. Read John 3:1-17. One could narrate, others read the words of Nicodemus and Jesus.
2. What point did Nicodemus miss? Consider Genesis 12:1-8 and Romans 4:1-5,13-17.
3. Why would Nicodemus miss the point?
4. Why is Christianity based on the cross? Note Psalm 33:12-22.

Reflect

1. What difference does believing or trusting God make for you?
2. What security do you have in trusting in Jesus now as well as for life beyond death?
3. Pray with thanks and faith.

4. Signs of the resurrection (1)

John 4:5-26 (27-42)

Other readings:

Exodus 17:3-7

Psalm 95

Romans 5:1-11

Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well at Sychar looks to the time when in Jesus crucified and risen all people will have access to eternal life and will worship God, especially the outcasts and oppressed like that woman. Jesus, in himself, transcends our divisions and hostilities by making us one in him alone.

Relate

1. What non-conformist or different things have you done?
2. What non-conformist or different things would you like to do?

Respond

1. Read John 4:5-26. One could narrate, others read the words of Jesus and the woman.
2. Why was Jesus' action so startling and radical?
3. What did Jesus mean by living water? Consider Exodus 17:3-7 and Psalm 95.
4. How does the living water affect life now? Note Romans 5:1-11.

Reflect

1. How have you become aware of living water or an inner spring?
2. How does Jesus' life in us free us to be like him?
3. Pray about the implications of that for you now.

5. Signs of the resurrection (2)

John 9:1-41 or 9:1,6-9,13-17,34-38

Other readings:

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Psalm 23

Ephesians 5:8-14

Jesus healed a man born blind. He did this on the Sabbath. Jesus pointed out that he himself was the light of the world (9:5), that the blind will see and those who see will become blind (9:39). He broke the traditions to help people. He gave life and wholeness. He still does. Our traditions may blind us to God's great grace and compassion.

Relate

1. When has someone gone out of their way to help you?
2. When has your concern for someone made you break traditions?

Respond

1. Read John 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38. Different people could read each section.
2. Why did Jesus' compassionate act cause so much strife?
3. Why are God's ways often unexpected and disturbing? Compare this story of the blind man with 1 Samuel 16:7, 10-13 and David's attitude in Psalm 23.

Reflect

1. How does living in the light of the Lord's presence and power affect daily life? Note Ephesians 5:8-14.
2. How would you like to be more like the man born blind or like David?
3. Pray about that.

6. Signs of the resurrection (3)

John 11:1-45 or 11:3-7,17,20-27,33b-45

Other readings:

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Psalm 116:1-9

Romans 8:6-11

God's power transcends and conquers death. Jesus demonstrated this in the raising of Lazarus and declared that he himself was the resurrection and the life (11:25). Those who believe in him will never die but live beyond death. Life continues into greater dimensions. We have only just begun.

Relate

1. Who had a strong influence on your life by their example?
2. What is your idea of life after death?

Respond

1. Read John 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 32-45. Different people could read each section.
2. What do verses 25-26 mean for us now and in the future?
3. How does Jesus' resurrection life apply to us? Compare John 10:10 with Psalm 116:1-9 and Ezekiel 37:13-14.
4. How does God's Spirit make this a reality in us? See Ezekiel 37:1-14 and Romans 8:6-11.

Reflect

1. How has God's Spirit changed you?
2. What further changes do you want from the Spirit in your life?
3. Pray about that together.

7. Palm Sunday and the crucifixion

Matthew 21:1-11; 26:14 - 27:66 or 27:11-54

Other readings:

Isaiah 50:4-9a Psalm 118:19-29; 31:9-16 Philippians 2:5-11

Holy Week! No other week in all history is like it. Jerusalem saw the cosmic drama of the universe enacted then. Yet no one there but Jesus knew what really happened. From hosannas to 'crucify him'; from the disciples' highest hopes to their deepest despair; from triumphant celebration to agonising desolation. The end? No. The beginning.

Relate

1. What qualities do you admire most in great people?
2. What do you admire most about Jesus' life?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 21:1-11 and 27:20-26
2. What kind of Messiah did the people want, and get? Compare Psalm 118:19-29 with Psalm 31:9-16 and Isaiah 50:4-9.
3. How does the cross affect us now?
4. Why is Jesus' reign or Lordship so radical and powerful? Compare Matthew 20:25-28 with Philippians 2:5-11.

Reflect

1. What servant qualities do you value or desire in your life?
2. What servant qualities do you see in one another in your group?
3. Pray about that with thanks and faith.

8. The empty tomb

Matthew 28:1-10; John 20:1-18

Other readings:

Jeremiah 31:1-6 Psalm 118:14-24 Colossians 3:1-4
(Acts 10:34-43)

Resurrection! Hope. Doubt. Reports. Rumours. Confusion. Glimpses. Earthquake. Angels. Miracles. Stone rolled away. The tomb empty. A spirit? A real body? Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

Relate

1. When have you been surprised or amazed in your faith journey?
2. What was a new or profound insight for you in your growth?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 28:1-10. Different people could read verses 1-4, 5-7, 8-10.
2. Why do you think Jesus revealed the resurrection to the women first? Note Matthew 27:55-56 and Luke 23:55-56 and John 20:1,14-18.
3. Why is the resurrection so significant? See Acts 10:39-43.
4. What hope does the resurrection affirm? Note Psalm 118:14-24 and Jeremiah 31:1-6.

Reflect

1. What difference does the resurrection make to your life? Note Colossians 3:1-4.
2. What hope or dream do you have for your future?
3. Pray about that together.

9. The leaders react

John 20:19-31

Other readings:

Acts 2:14a, 22-32 Psalm 16:5-11 1 Peter 1:3-9

The incredible was true. Jesus had conquered death. God's Messiah was vindicated. The new order had begun. The king reigned. The mystery deepened. This king lives in his people by his Spirit. He imparted his own Spirit to his followers. Even doubters began to believe. Kingdom life flourished.

Relate

1. What was a celebration especially significant for you?
2. What kind of celebrations do you like most?

Respond

1. Read John 20:19-31. Different people could read the words of Jesus and Thomas.
2. Why do you think Jesus kept reassuring his friends? See verses 19, 21, 26.
3. What impact did the resurrection have on these leaders? See verses 20 and 28, Acts 2:22-32 and Psalm 16:8-11.
4. Why were these details recorded for us? Note John 20:30-31.

Reflect

1. Why is the resurrection a cause of celebration for us? Note 1 Peter 1:3, 8-9.
2. How can our worship and fellowship celebrate that?
3. Do so.

10. The Emmaus road

Luke 24:13-35

Other readings:

Acts 2:14a, 36-41

Psalm 116:12-19

1 Peter 1:17-23

The risen Lord revealed himself to two of his followers as they walked in fellowship, invited him among them, and broke bread together. Although he could materialise at any time and place, he prepared them for his physical absence and his powerful presence in the Holy Spirit. He lives on in his people. Kingdom life is Jesus' life in us.

Relate

1. When are you most aware of the Lord's presence?
2. How can this affect other times?

Respond

1. Read Luke 24:13-35. Different people read the words spoken.
2. Why do you think Jesus did not identify himself and then disappeared as soon as they recognized him?
3. What impact does believing in the risen Lord have? Consider 1 Peter 1:17-23.
4. How might we respond to our risen Lord? Note Psalm 116:12-19 and Acts 2:36-41.

Reflect

1. When have you been aware of the Lord drawing near to you in your journey? Note Luke 24:32.
2. Can we expect more of these encounters? How and when?
3. Act on that as you pray together.

11. Jesus the good shepherd

John 10:1-10

Other readings:

Acts 2:42-47

Psalm 23

1 Peter 2:19-25

John recorded many discourses which give further insights into the claims and nature of Jesus. Those claims are astounding, and relate to his authority and divinity. Jesus himself is the doorway or gate for his followers. In him we enter into life in all its fulness.

Relate

1. When has someone introduced you into a new situation?
2. What did you appreciate most about that help?

Respond

1. Read John 10:1-10. Someone could read verses 1-6 and another read verses 7-10.
2. How does Jesus' ministry illustrate this passage?
3. How does this passage explain the Lord's care for us? Compare verses 11 and 14 with Psalm 23 and 1 Peter 2:23-25.
4. How can the church live this out? Note Acts 2:42-47.

Reflect

1. What aspects of church life have conveyed God's care for you?
2. How can you help to convey this care to others?
3. Pray and plan about that together.

12. Jesus the way, truth and life

John 14:1-14

Other readings:

Acts 7:55-60

Psalm 31:1-8

1 Peter 2:2-10

Jesus himself is the way to God, he himself is the truth, and he himself is the life. Our eternal destiny lies in him. We share in his life, eternally. The sacrifice of that one life, his triumph over death and his eternal dominion are all we need for life now and for ever.

Relate

1. How did you come to know about or believe in Jesus?
2. What difference does that make to your life?

Respond

1. Read John 14:1-14. Different people could read verses 5 and 8.
2. Why are Jesus' claims about himself so revolutionary or radical?
Note Acts 7:55-60 and 1 Peter 2:2-8.
3. What changes come from believing in Jesus? See John 20:31 and 1 Peter 2:9-10.
4. How does faith in the Lord affect daily living? Note Psalm 31:1-8.

Reflect

1. In what ways does Jesus both challenge and comfort us?
2. In what ways do you need that challenge or comfort just now?
3. Pray about that together.

13. Jesus present among his people

John 14:15-21

Other readings:

Acts 17:22-31

Psalm 66:8-20

1 Peter 3:13-22

Jesus told his disciples that when he had gone he would still be present with them, and with all who believe in him. We share his life. His Spirit lives in us. We know him. This will show in our love for him as we obey his commands. He unites us with the Father and reveals himself to those who love him and obey him.

Relate

1. Which aspects of God's being, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, do you relate to most easily?
2. How do you visualise or think about God when you pray?

Respond

1. Read John 14:15-21, different people reading each verse.
2. How does Jesus describe the Trinity in this passage? See also 1 Peter 3:13-22.
3. How are we caught up into the Trinity? Consider John 14:16-17 and Acts 17:22-31.
4. How can we respond to God? Note Psalm 66:8-20.

Reflect

1. What does this close union with God mean in practice?
2. What prayer or desire do you want to bring to God now?
3. Do that.

14. Jesus prays for his people

John 17:1-11

Other readings:

Acts 1:6-14 Psalm 68:1-10 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

Jesus' farewell discourse ends with a prayer. His disciples must live amid opposition as Jesus did. So Jesus prays specifically for their protection. They are sent into the world as Jesus was sent into the world. They will live in another kingdom while still in the world. They will march to the beat of another drum. They belong to God.

Relate

1. When has someone praying for you or with you made a big difference in your life or situation?
2. When have you prayed with someone and seen it make a difference?

Respond

1. Read John 17:1-11. Someone could read verses 1-5, another 6-11.
2. How are God's glory and eternal life linked in Jesus?
3. How does God's glory affect our daily living? Note Acts 1:6-14 and 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11.
4. How is God's glory revealed in our unity or harmony? Consider John 17:10-11 and Psalm 68:1-10.

Reflect

1. When or where have you discovered God's glory seen in our unity?
2. What are significant ingredients of unity for you?
3. Pray about that for your group or church.

15. The day of Pentecost

John 7:37-39; 20:19-23

Other readings:

Acts 2:1-21 Psalm 104:24-34 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13
(Isaiah 44:1-8)

Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to his disciples as streams of living water. After his resurrection he spoke about the kingdom of God and renewed his promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit. They were filled with the Spirit at the Pentecost harvest festival. The Spirit empowered them. Three thousand were added to them. The church was born.

Relate

1. When has God surprised you?
2. What was a significant encounter with God's Spirit in your life?

Respond

1. Read John 7:37-39. A different person could read Jesus' words.
2. What link do you see between this passage and John 14:16-17 and 20:19-23.
3. How is Pentecost different from the Old Testament accounts of the Spirit? Consider Psalm 104:30-34, Isaiah 44:3 and Acts 2:17-21.
4. What are some results of the Spirit's indwelling? Note Acts 2:1-4 and 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13.

Reflect

1. What are some of the Spirit's gifts in your life and what gifts of the Spirit do you see in others in your group?
2. What spiritual gifts do you desire? Note 1 Corinthians 14:1.
3. Pray about that together.

16. The Trinity

Matthew 28:16-20

Other readings:

Deuteronomy 4:32-40 Psalm 33:1-11 2 Corinthians 13:5-14

Matthew's gospel ends with the Great Commission. All authority belongs to Jesus now. He sends us into the world to make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything he commanded. He is with us to the end.

Relate

1. What qualities do you see in someone with natural authority?
2. When have you exerted your authority?

Respond

1. Read Matthew 28:16-20. A second person could read Jesus' words.
2. How are Jesus's authority and our mission related?
3. How does the greatness of God affect our mission? Consider Deuteronomy 4:32-40 and Psalm 33:1-11.
4. How is God's greatness revealed in the Trinity? Note the Trinitarian benediction or blessing in 2 Corinthians 13:14.

Reflect

1. What part of that benediction means most to you just now?
2. What blessing or benediction do you wish to give each person in your small group?
3. Conclude with thanks in your prayer together.

Appendix 1: Studies arranged according to lectionary readings

Part I THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS

Preparation: The coming of Jesus the Messiah

1. The coming of the Lord Matthew 24:36-44 Advent 1
2. John the Baptist Matthew 3:1-12 Advent 2
3. The Messiah Matthew 11:2-11 Advent 3
4. Mary's Son Matthew 1:18-25 Advent 4
5. Infancy and childhood of Jesus Matthew 2:13-23 Christmas 1
6. Reflections on the birth of Jesus John 1:1-18 Christmas 2

Commencement: The figure of Jesus the Messiah

7. The baptism of Jesus Matthew 3:13-17 Sunday 1
8. The witness of John the Baptist John 1:29-34 Sunday 2

Christ's design for life in God's Kingdom

Narrative:

9. The call of the first disciples Matthew 4:12-23 Sunday 3

Discourse:

10. The sermon on the mount (1) Matthew 5:1-12 Sunday 4
11. The sermon on the mount (2) Matthew 5:13-16 Sunday 5
12. The sermon on the mount (3) Matthew 5:17-26 Sunday 6
13. The sermon on the mount (4) Matthew 5:27-37 Sunday 7
14. The sermon on the mount (5) Matthew 5:38-48 Sunday 8
15. The sermon on the mount (6) Matthew 7:21-29 Sunday 9

The spread of God's Kingdom

Narrative:

16. The call of Levi Matthew 9:9-13 Sunday 10

Discourse:

17. The mission sermon (1) Matthew 9:35-10:8 Sunday 11
18. The mission sermon (2) Matthew 10:24-33 Sunday 12
19. The mission sermon (3) Matthew 10:34-42 Sunday 13

The mystery of God's Kingdom

Narrative:

20. The revelation to the simple Matthew 11:25-30 Sunday 14

Discourse:

21. The parable sermon (1) Matthew 13:1-23 Sunday 15
22. The parable sermon (2) Matthew 13:24-43 Sunday 16
23. The parable sermon (3) Matthew 13:44-52 Sunday 17

God's Kingdom on earth and the Church

Narrative:

24. The feeding of the five thousand Matthew 14:13-21 Sunday 18
25. Jesus walks on the water Matthew 14:22-33 Sunday 19
26. The Canaanite woman Matthew 15:21-28 Sunday 20
27. Peter's confession Matthew 16:13-20 Sunday 21
28. Discipleship Matthew 16:21-28 Sunday 22

Appendix 2: Studies arranged according to gospel readings

I 4. Mary's Son	Matthew 1:18-25
I 5. Infancy and childhood of Jesus	Matthew 2:13-23
I 2. John the Baptist	Matthew 3:1-12
I 7. The baptism of Jesus	Matthew 3:13-17
II 2. The temptations	Matthew 4:1-11
I 9. The call of the first disciples	Matthew 4:12-23
I 10. The sermon on the mount (1)	Matthew 5:1-12
I 11. The sermon on the mount (2)	Matthew 5:13-16
I 12. The sermon on the mount (3)	Matthew 5:17-26
I 13. The sermon on the mount (4)	Matthew 5:27-37
I 14. The sermon on the mount (5)	Matthew 5:38-48
I 15. The sermon on the mount (6)	Matthew 7:21-29
I 16. The call of Levi	Matthew 9:9-13
I 17. The mission sermon (1)	Matthew 9:35-10:8
I 18. The mission sermon (2)	Matthew 10:24-33
I 19. The mission sermon (3)	Matthew 10:34-42
I 3. The Messiah	Matthew 11:2-11
I 20. The revelation to the simple	Matthew 11:25-30
I 21. The parable sermon (1)	Matthew 13:1-23
I 22. The parable sermon (2)	Matthew 13:24-43
I 23. The parable sermon (3)	Matthew 13:44-52
I 24. The feeding of the five thousand	Matthew 14:13-21
I 25. Jesus walks on the water	Matthew 14:22-33
I 26. The Canaanite woman	Matthew 15:21-28
I 27. Peter's confession	Matthew 16:13-20
I 28. Discipleship	Matthew 16:21-28
II 1. The transfiguration	Matthew 17:1-9
I 29. The community sermon (1)	Matthew 18:15-20
I 30. The community sermon (2)	Matthew 18:21-35
I 31. The parable of the labourers	Matthew 20:1-16
II 7. Palm Sunday	Matthew 21:1-11
I 32. The parable of the two sons	Matthew 21:28-32
I 33. The parable of the tenants	Matthew 21:33-43
I 34. The parable of the marriage feast	Matthew 22:1-14
I 35. Paying tribute to Caesar	Matthew 22:15-22
I 36. The greatest commandment	Matthew 22:34-46
I 37. Hypocrisy and ambition	Matthew 23:1-12
I 1. The coming of the Lord	Matthew 24:36-44
I 38. The final sermon (1)	Matthew 25:1-13
I 39. The final sermon (2)	Matthew 25:14-30
I 40. Christ the King	Matthew 25:31-46
II 7. The Crucifixion	Matthew 26:14-27:66
II 16. The Trinity	Matthew 28:16-20
II 10. The Emmaus road	Luke 24:13-35
I 6. Reflections on the birth of Jesus	John 1:1-18
I 8. The witness of John the Baptist	John 1:29-34
II 3. The meaning of the cross	John 3:1-17
II 4. Signs of the resurrection (1)	John 4:5-42

II 15. The day of Pentecost	John 7:37-39
II 5. Signs of the resurrection (2)	John 9:1-41
II 11. Jesus the Good Shepherd	John 10:1-10
II 6. Signs of the resurrection (3)	John 11:1-45
II 12. Jesus the way, truth and life	John 14:1-14
II 13. Jesus present among his people	John 14:15-21
II 14. Jesus prays for his people	John 17:1-11
II 8. The empty tomb	John 20:1-18
II 9. The leaders react	John 20:19-31
II 15. The day of Pentecost	John 20:19-23

Appendix: Books

Renewal Journal Publications

See

www.renewaljournal.com

for Blogs on each book

PDF Books, eBooks, and Paperbacks

Available on

Amazon and Kindle

Most Paperbacks in both

Basic Edition and

Gift Edition (colour)

[Renewal Journal Publications](#)

<https://renewaljournal.blog/>

[PDF Books, eBooks, and Paperbacks](#)

[Most Paperbacks are in both](#)

[Basic Edition and](#)

[Gift Edition \(colour\)](#)

Revival Books

[Flashpoints of Revival](#)

[Revival Fires](#)

[South Pacific Revivals](#)

[Pentecost on Pentecost & the South Pacific](#)

[Great Revival Stories](#), comprising:

[Best Revival Stories](#) and

[Transforming Revivals](#)

[Renewal and Revival](#), comprising:

[Renewal: I make all things new](#), and

[Revival: I will pour out my Spirit](#)

[Anointed for Revival](#)

[Church on Fire](#)

[God's Surprises](#)

Renewal Books

Body Ministry, comprising:

The Body of Christ, Part 1: Body Ministry, and
*The Body of Christ, Part 2: Ministry Education, with
Learning Together in Ministry*

Great Commission Mission comprising:

Teaching Them to Obey in Love, and
Jesus the Model for Short Term Supernatural Mission

Living in the Spirit

Your Spiritual Gifts

Fruit & Gifts of the Spirit

Keeping Faith Alive Today

The Leader's Goldmine

Word and Spirit by Alison Sherrington

Study Guides

Signs and Wonders: Study Guide

The Holy Spirit in Ministry

Revival History

Holy Spirit Movements through History

Renewal Theology 1

Renewal Theology 2

Ministry Practicum

Devotional Books

[Inspiration](#)

[Jesus on Dying Regrets](#)

[The Christmas Message – The Queen](#)

[Holy Week, Christian Passover & Resurrection](#) comprising:

[Holy Week](#), and

[Christian Passover Service](#), and

[Risen: 12 Resurrection Appearances](#)

[Risen: Short Version](#)

[Risen: Long version](#) & our month in Israel

[Mysterious Month – expanded version](#) [Risen: Long version](#)

[Kingdom Life series](#)

[Kingdom Life: The Gospels](#) – comprising:

[Kingdom Life in Matthew](#)

[Kingdom Life in Mark](#)

[Kingdom Life in Luke](#)

[Kingdom Life in John](#)

[A Preface to the Acts of the Apostles](#)

[The Lion of Judah series](#)

[The Titles of Jesus](#)

[The Reign of Jesus](#)

[The Life of Jesus](#)

[The Death of Jesus](#)

[The Resurrection of Jesus](#)

[The Spirit of Jesus](#)

[The Lion of Judah](#) – all in one volume

[Discovering Aslan](#) - comprising:

[Discovering Aslan in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe](#)

[Discovering Aslan in Prince Caspian](#)

[Discovering Aslan in the Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'](#)

[Discovering Aslan in the Silver Chair](#)

[Discovering Aslan in the Horse and his Boy](#)

[Discovering Aslan in the Magician's Nephew](#)

[Discovering Aslan in the Last Battle](#)

General Books

[*You Can Publish for Free*](#)

[*My First Stories* by Ethan Waugh](#)

[*An Incredible Journey by Faith* by Elisha Chowtapalli](#)

Biographical:

[***God's Surprises***](#)

[*Looking to Jesus: Journey into Renewal & Revival* - Geoff's autobiography](#)

[*Journey into Mission* – Geoff's mission trips](#)

[*Journey into Ministry and Mission*](#)

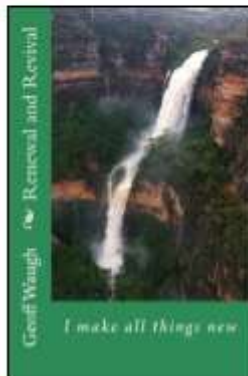
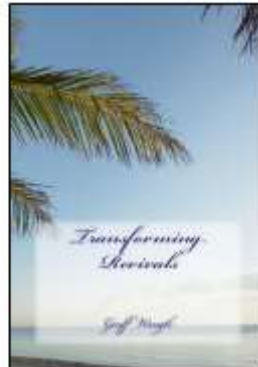
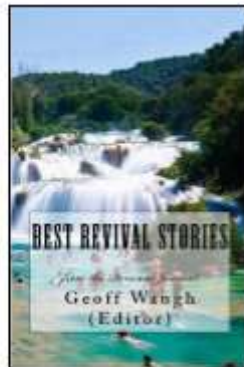
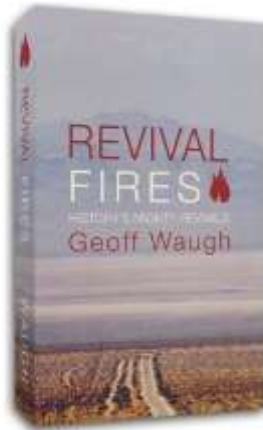
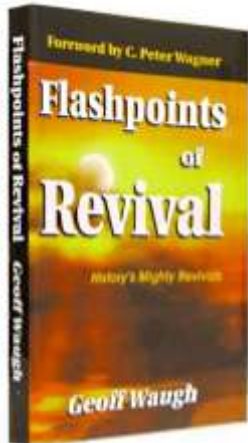
[*King of the Granny Flat* by Dante Waugh](#)

[*Exploring Israel* – Geoff's family's trip](#)

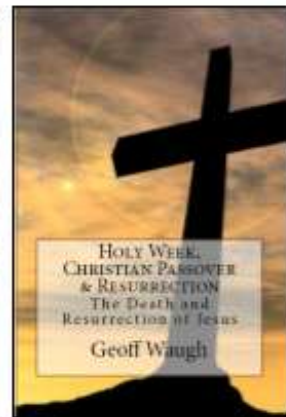
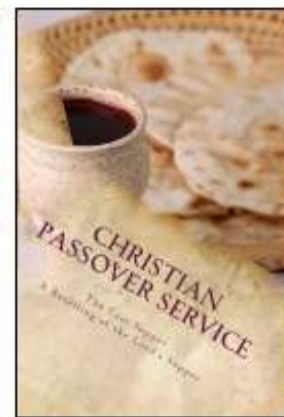
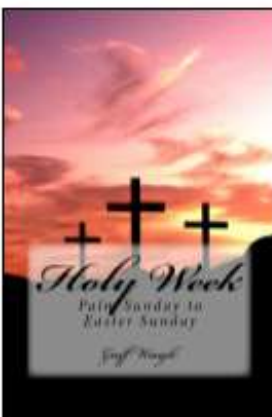
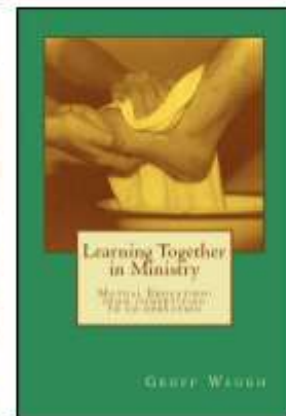
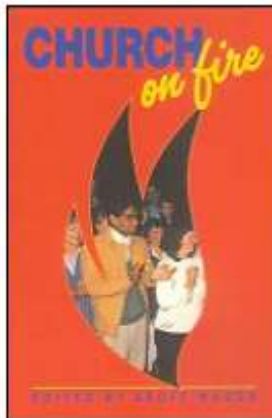
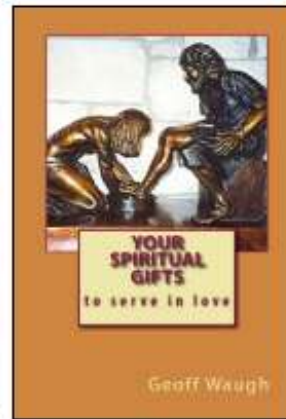
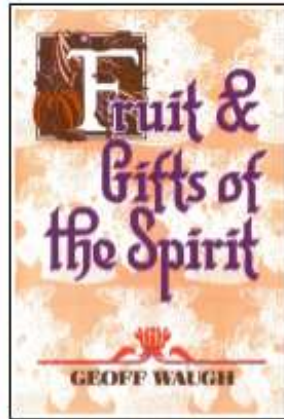
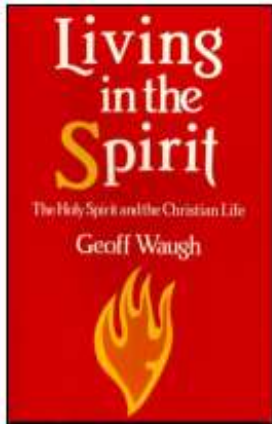
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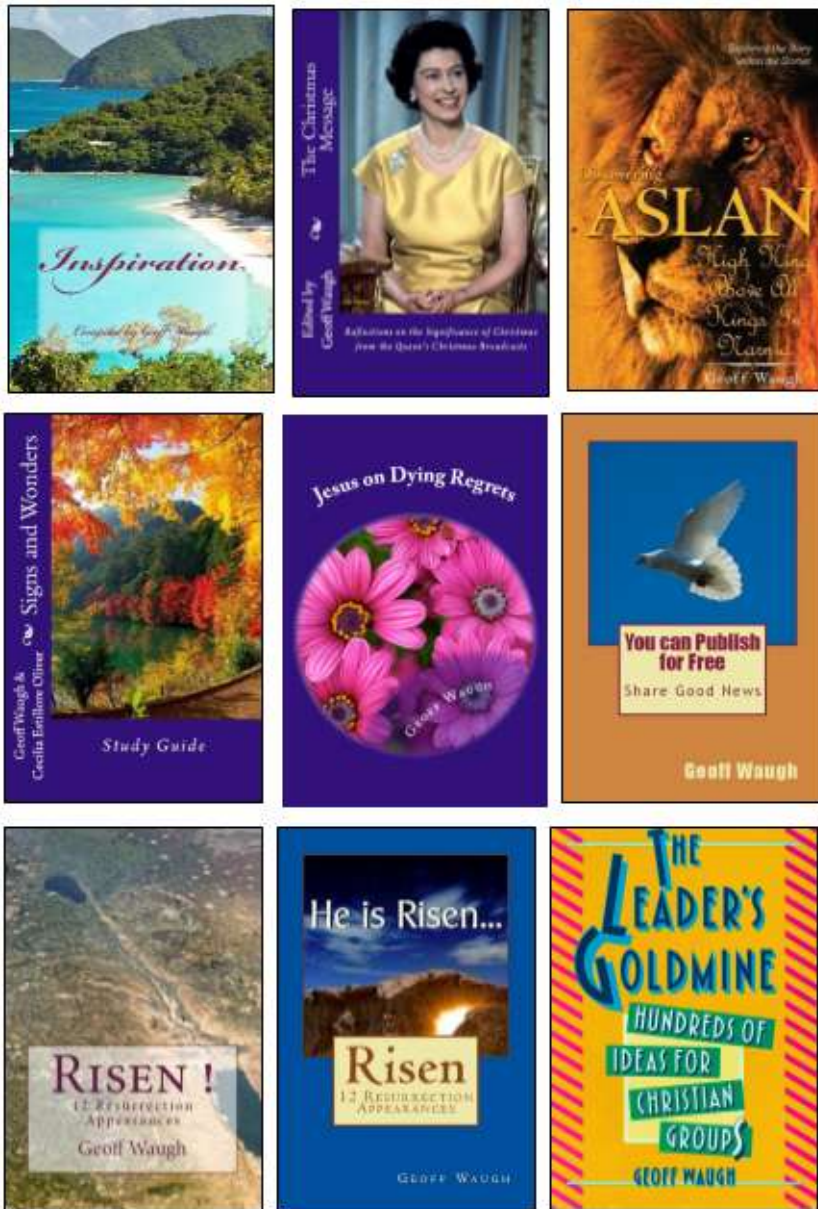
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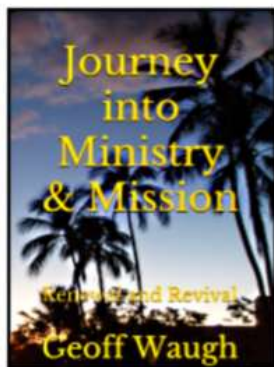
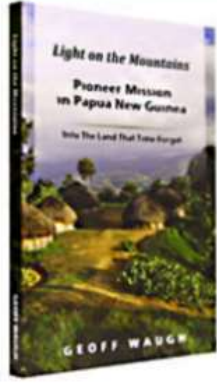
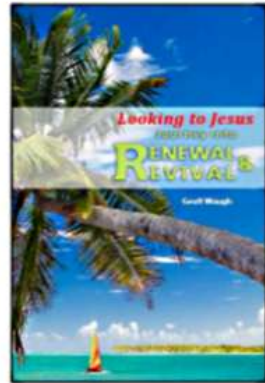
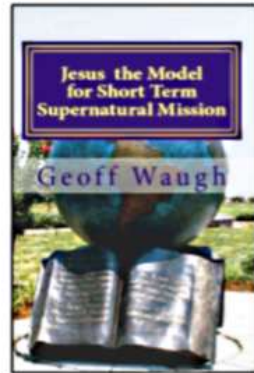
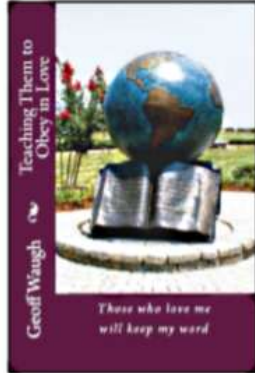
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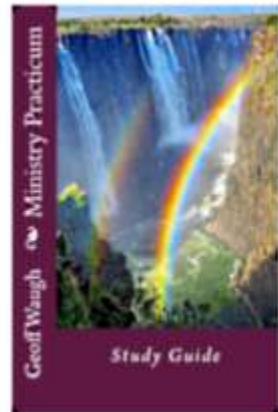
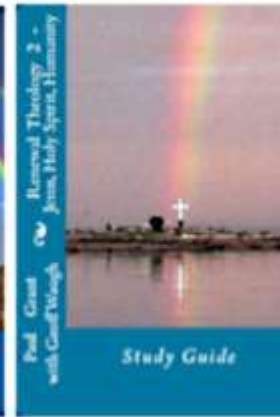
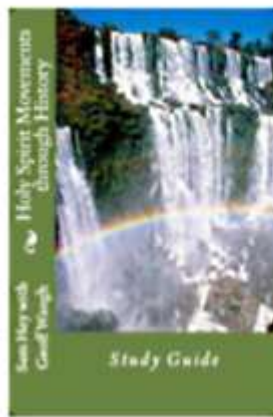
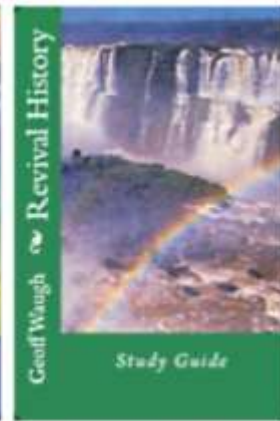
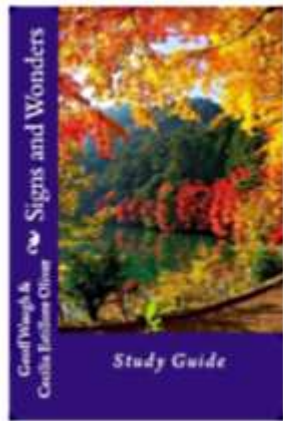
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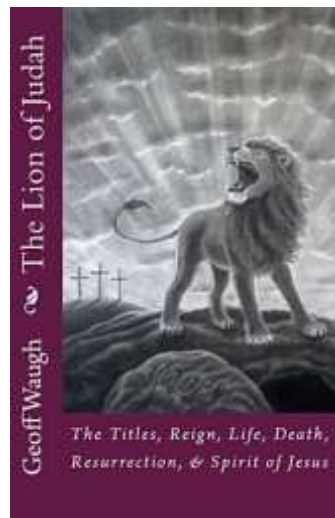
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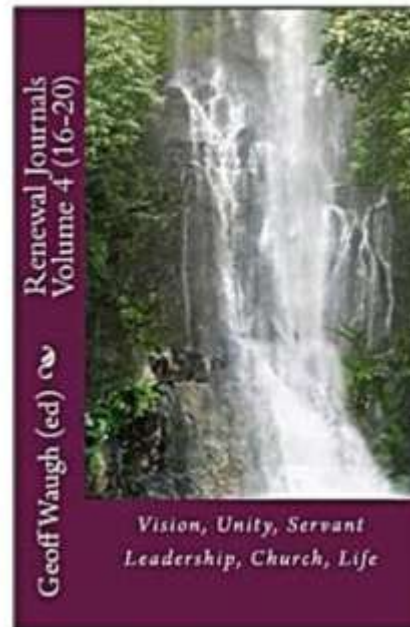
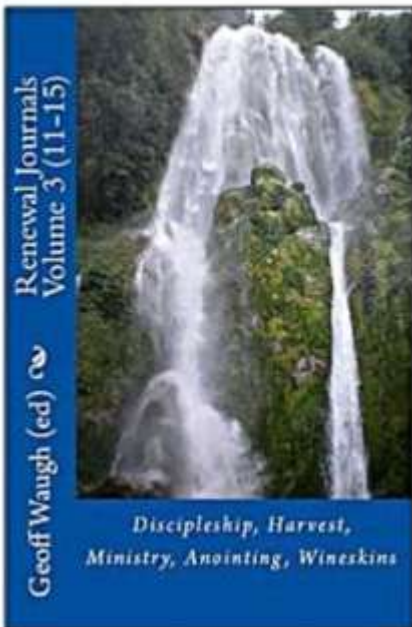
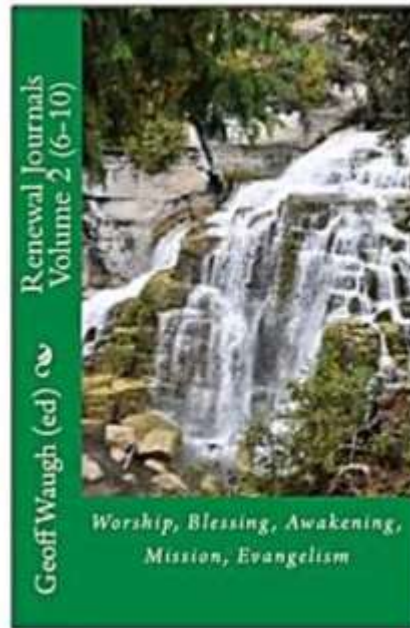
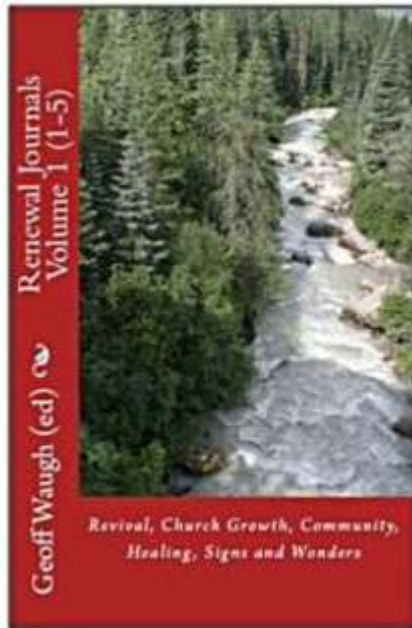
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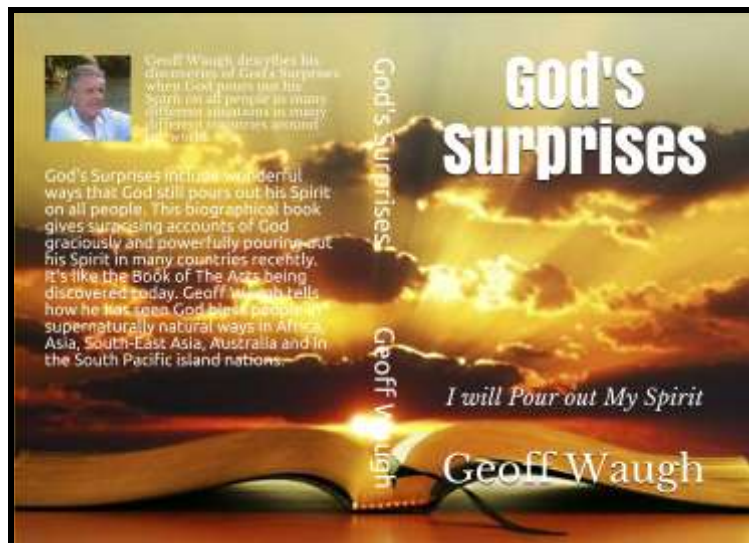
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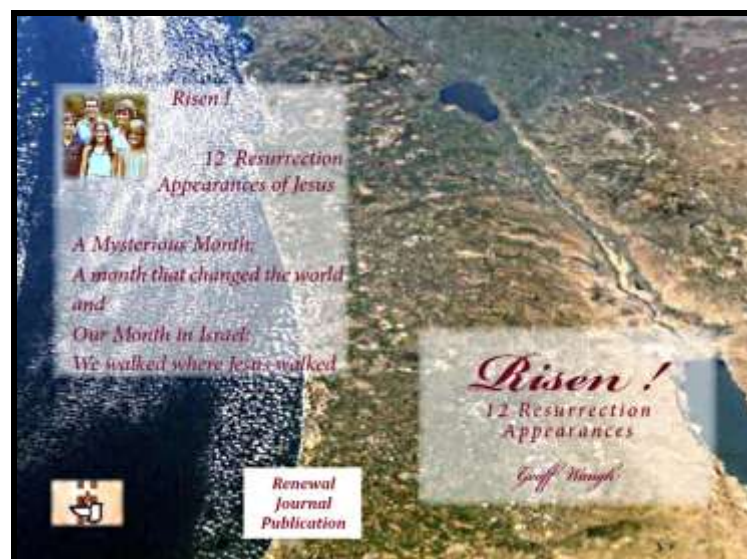
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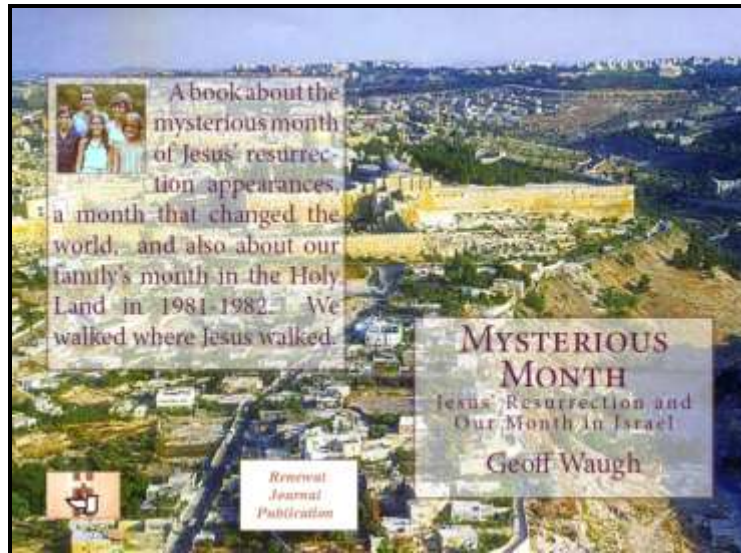
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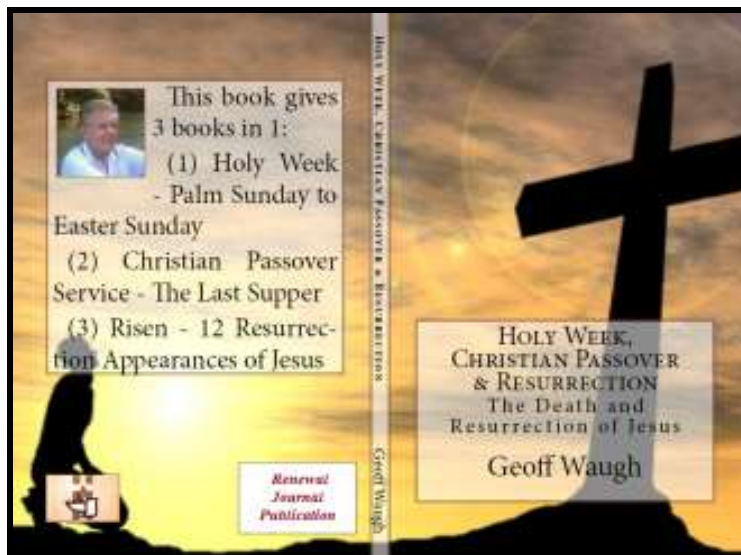
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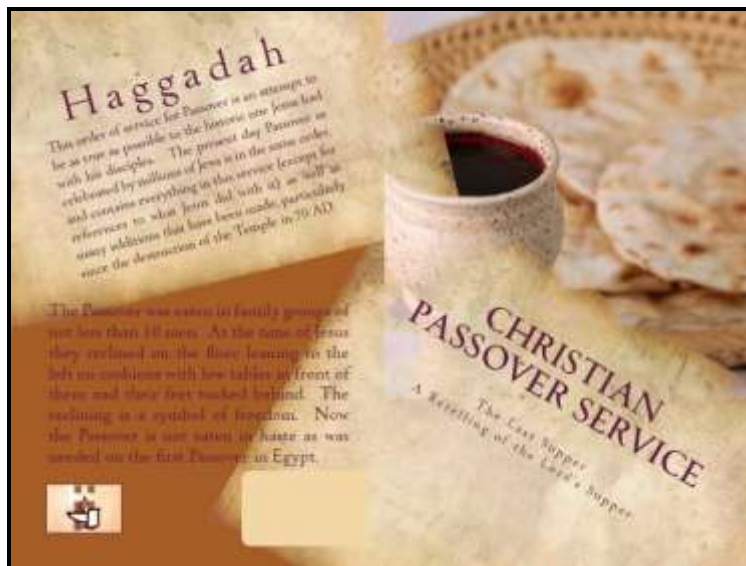
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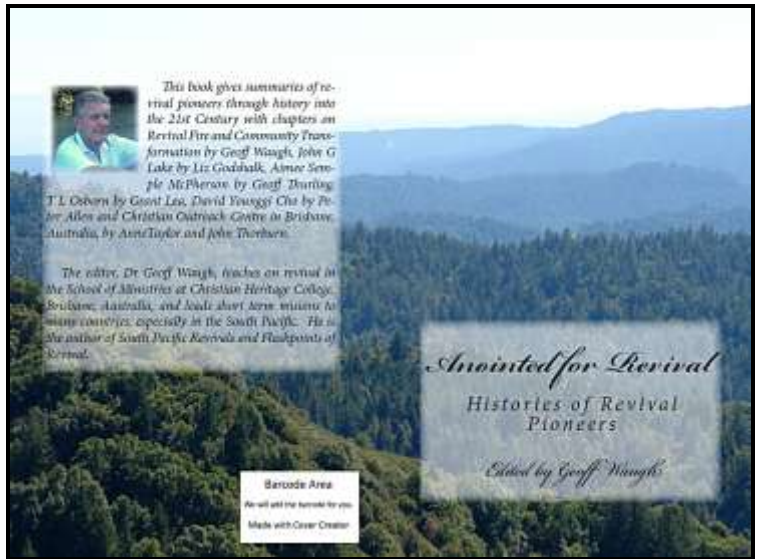
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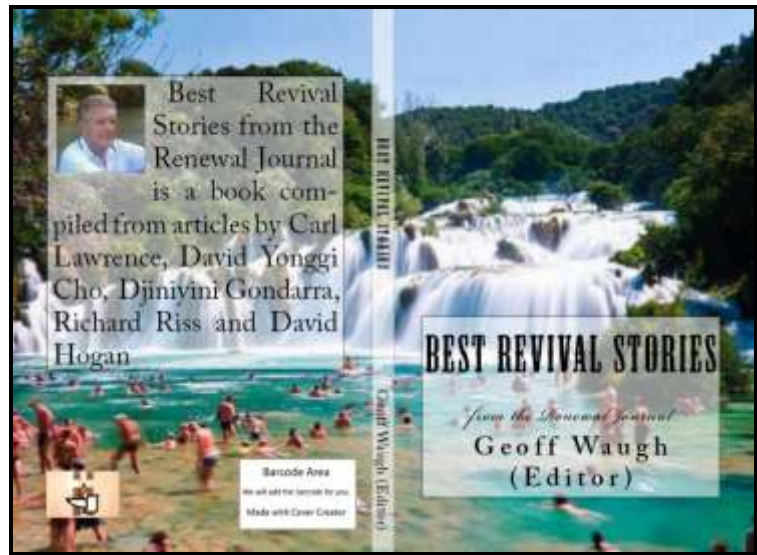
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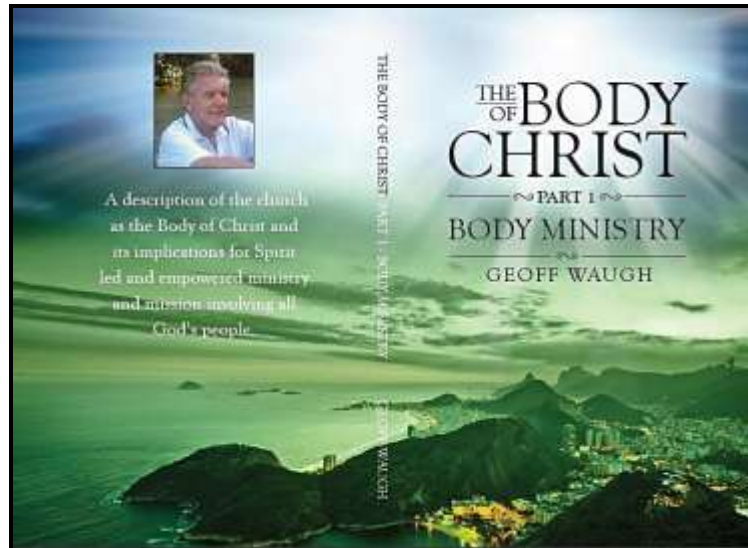
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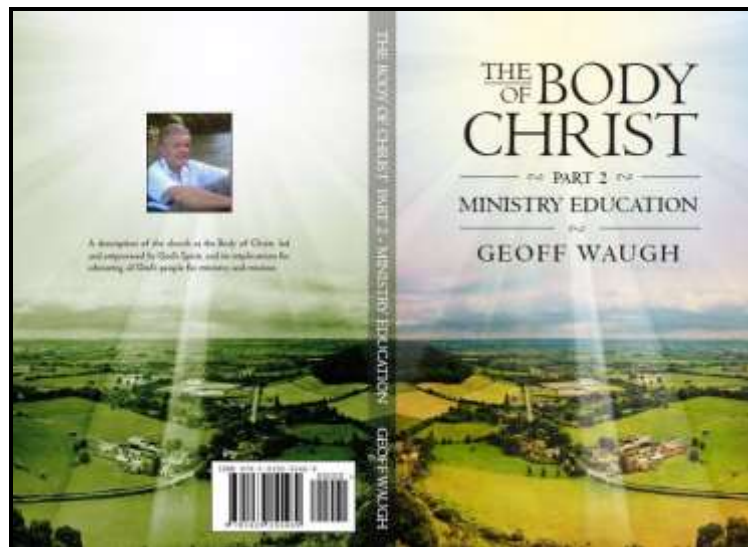


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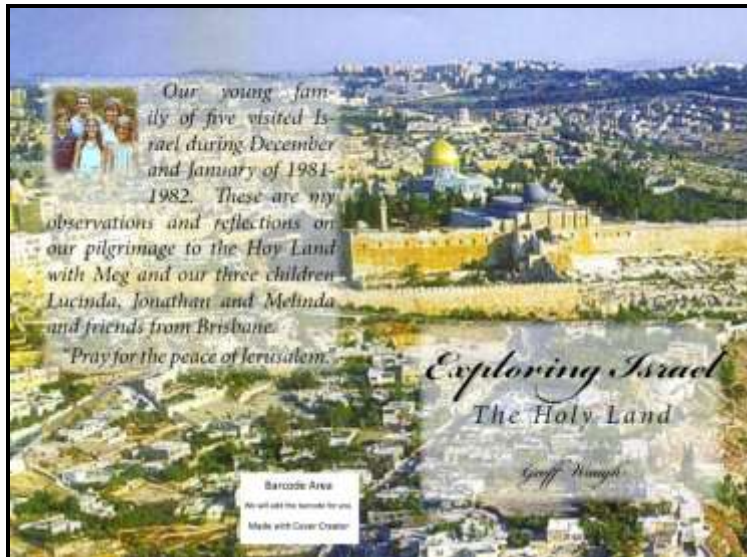


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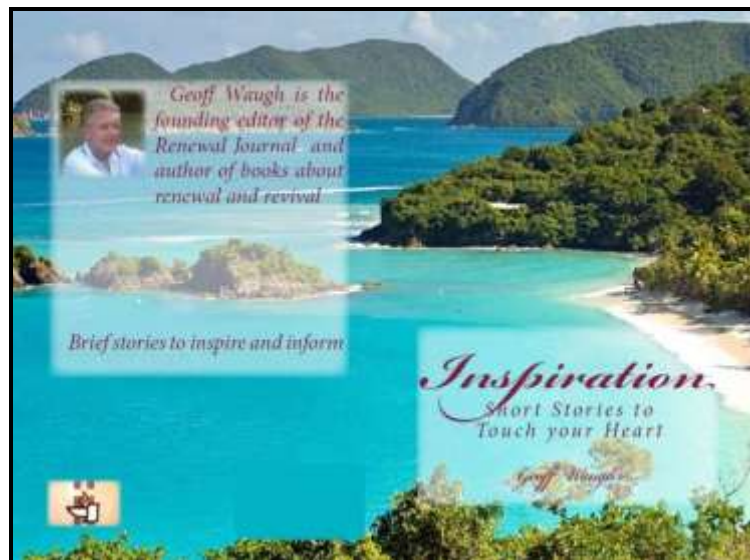
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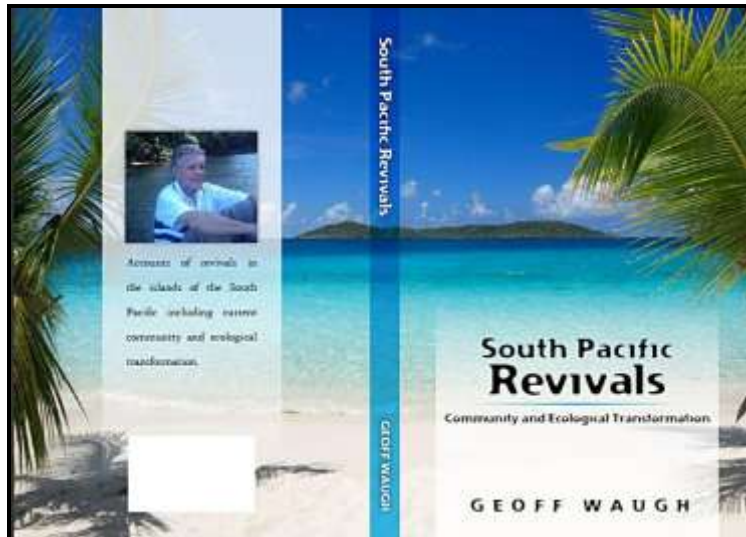
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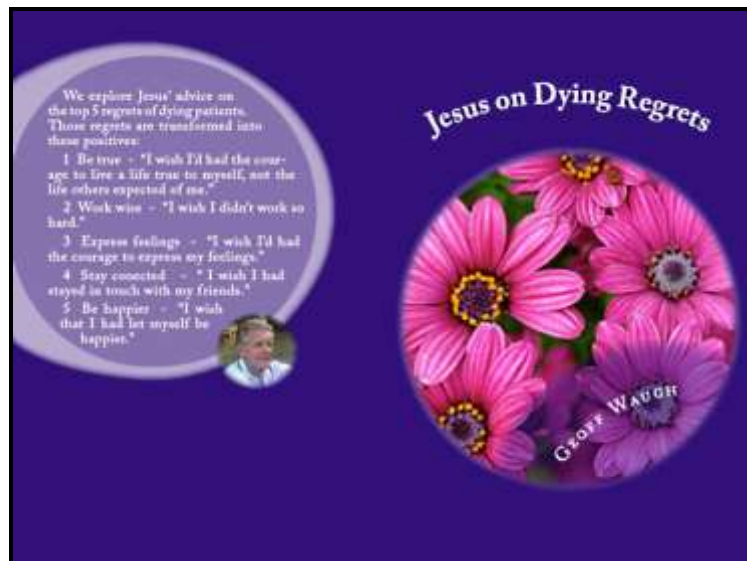
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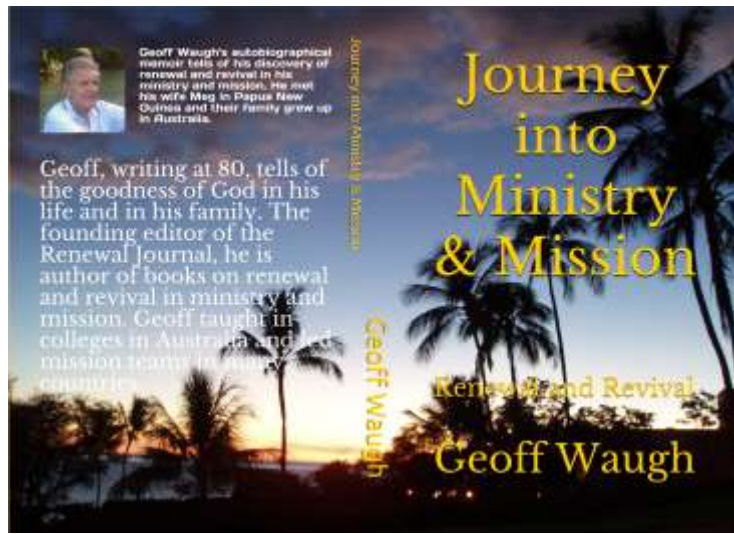
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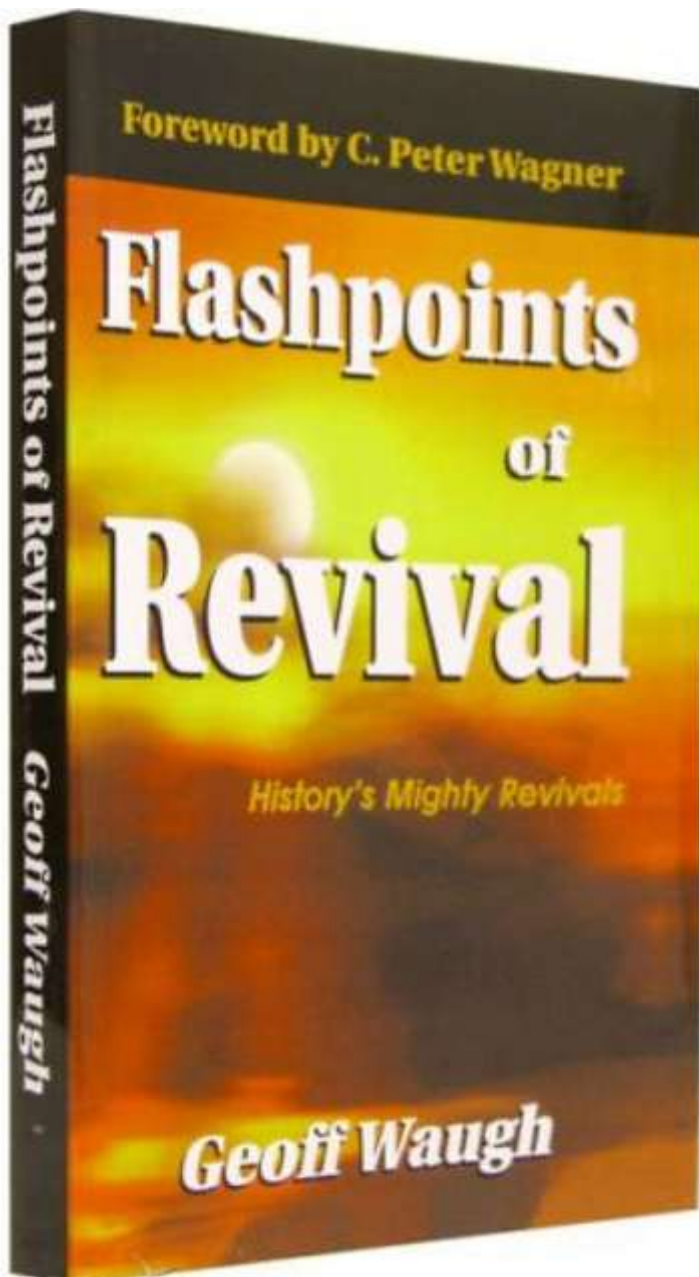
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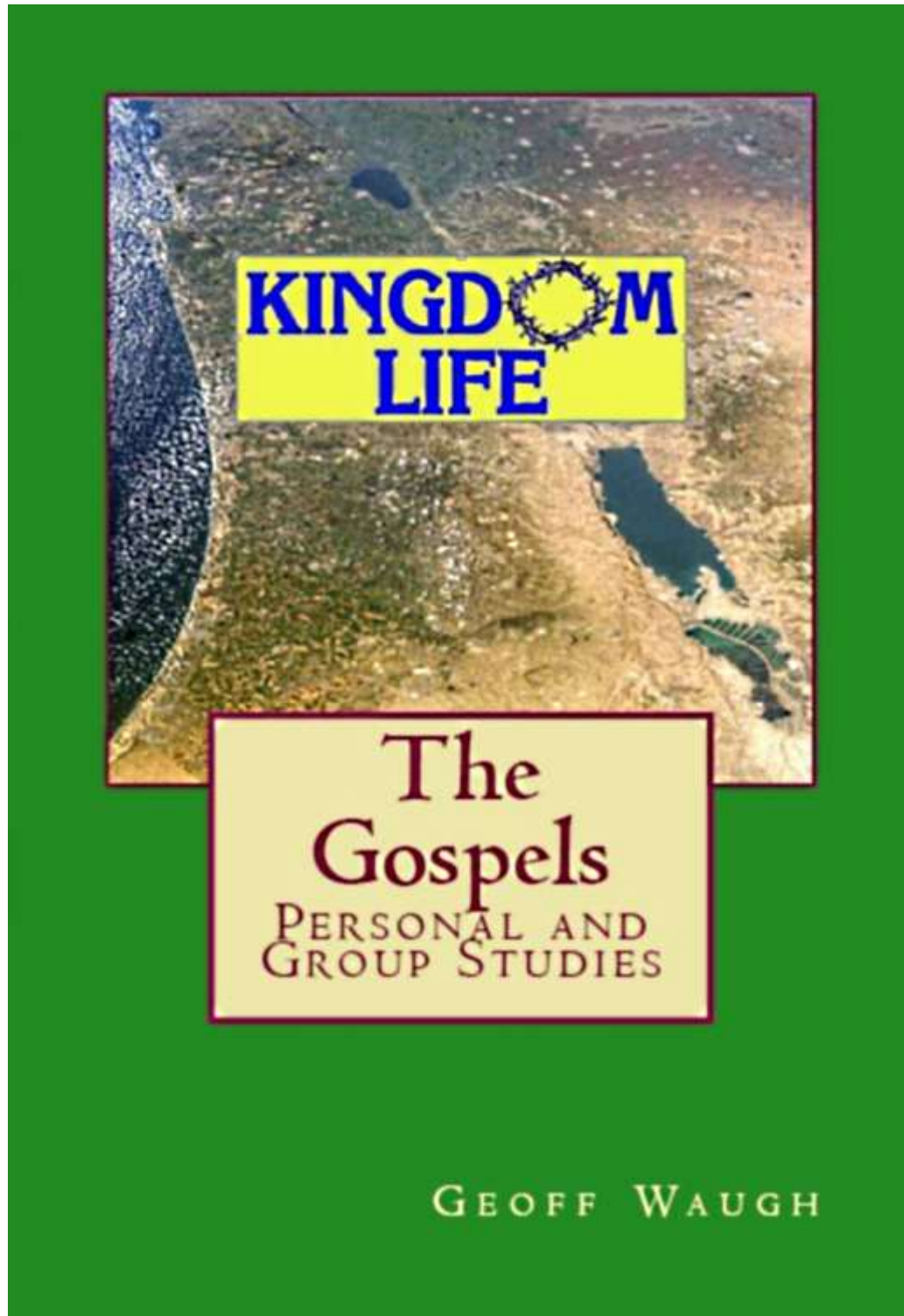
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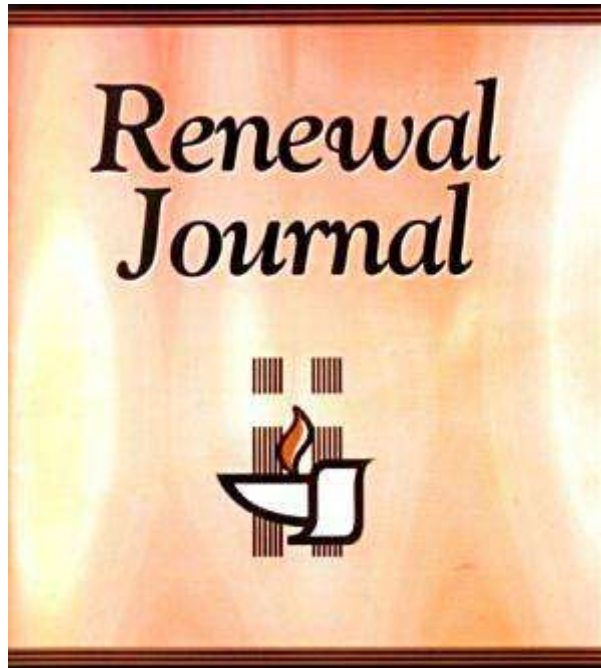


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