

What Is The Gospel? Week one – The Gospel from the Beginning

Good stories need interesting characters, like Indiana Jones, Shrek, Hannibal Lecter, Bridget Jones, Scarlet O'Hara and Cruella de Vil. Whether good or bad, these characters capture our attention by making us love or hate them, by comforting or terrifying us, by making us laugh or cry with them, by inspiring or leaving us bewildered. What emotions are stirred in you when you hear the name Jesus? Despite sometimes being portrayed as a one-dimensional, quaint religious figure, the real Jesus, the character revealed to us in the Scriptures, had the ability to elicit powerful emotions from those he encountered. Mentioning his name today can still produce these feelings. The main goal of this Bible study series is to act as a guide through some of the Holy Scriptures that reveal and develop the amazing larger-than-life man named Jesus: The essential character of the Gospel.¹

This first study begins in Genesis, where God declares, "*Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...*" Who is the 'us' and 'our' in God's declaration? Jesus' disciple John answers this question by revealing to us, in the opening lines of his gospel, "*In the beginning was the Word (Jesus), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... Through him all things were made...*" (John 1:1 – 3) From the beginning of the Bible Jesus is portrayed as the Son of God who formed the first stars in the heavens and who created his family on earth in order to bestow on us his infinite love and to bless us with his goodness. Astonishingly, Jesus is later portrayed as the one who submitted to his Father's will and was nailed to a cruel cross as the sacrifice for humanity's sin. As Graham Kendrick's song 'Servant King' declares, "*Hands that flung stars into space; to cruel nails surrendered; this is our God, the Servant King*".

1. Read Genesis 1:1 – 4 and John 1:1 – 5. How do these verses enlarge and brighten our picture of Jesus?
2. Compare Genesis 1:26 – 28 with Colossians 1:15 – 18 & Hebrews 2:6 – 9. How is Jesus both the perfect picture of God and man?
3. Compare Genesis 2:8 – 10 with Revelation 22:1 – 5. How has Christ opened the way back to the tree of life and the original blessing of God?
4. Compare Genesis 3:8 – 15 with Roman 16:20 and Revelation 12:1 – 12. Explain why Jesus is the offspring of Eve who will finally crush The Serpent's (Satan's) head, as proclaimed in Genesis 3:15.
5. Has this study in Genesis helped further develop your understanding of Jesus Christ? If so, how?

¹ After Christ's resurrection, Luke 24:27 records, "*And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, [Jesus] explained to them (two followers) what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.*"