

In this book, I want you to meet the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am sure you have heard about Jesus Christ. You may know a lot about him. You may know very little about him. You may have been told things about Jesus, and you are not sure if they are true. In this book, I want you to hear the truth about Jesus.

Followers of Jesus believe that meeting him is the best thing that ever happened. That is why they want to share the good news about Jesus and what he has done for them.

So, let us meet Jesus. This book will look at his early years, some things Jesus said, and some things Jesus did. Finally, we will look at the very important last week of Jesus' life.

Enjoy meeting Jesus.

Meet Mike



Mike was born in Liverpool, England, and grew up near Sydney, Australia. He first worked as a high-school teacher in Sydney and Pakistan. Later, he studied at Bible college. Since then, he has spent his life teaching the Bible so that people can meet Jesus and love him and serve him. Today Mike runs the Centre for Biblical Preaching, which helps other Bible teachers to bring the good news of Jesus to people everywhere. He is married to Sarah, and they have four adult children.



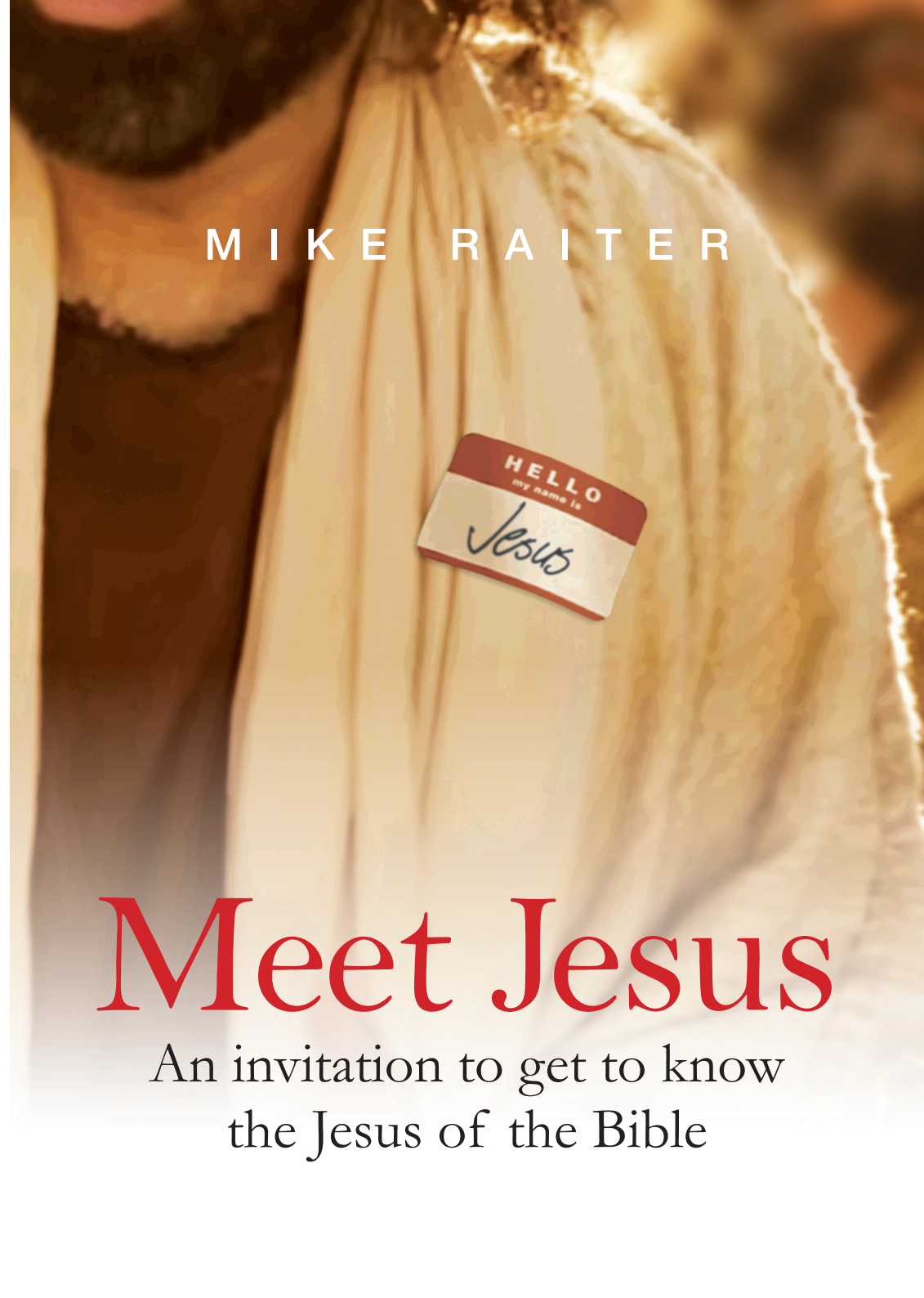
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M I K E R A I T E R

Meet Jesus

An invitation to get to know
the Jesus of the Bible



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the Jesus of the Bible

MIKE RAITER



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SOCIETY**

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INTRODUCTION

I want you to meet a friend of mine. He's someone who wants to meet you. In this book, I want you to meet the Lord Jesus Christ.

I'm sure you have heard about Jesus Christ. You may know a lot about him. You may know very little about him. You may have been told things about Jesus and you're not sure if they're true. In this book I want you to hear the truth about Jesus.

Jesus Christ had many followers. Four of them wrote short books about his life. Their names are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These books about Jesus are called 'Gospels'. 'Gospel' means 'good news'. Jesus came to bring us good news. He taught us about God and how we can know God. He came to give us life that lasts forever. That's good news!

Followers of Jesus believe that meeting him is the best thing that ever happened. That's why they want to share the good news about Jesus and what he has done for them.

So, let's meet Jesus. We'll start with his early years. Then we'll learn about some things Jesus taught (his words) and some things Jesus did (his works). Finally, we'll look at the very important last week of Jesus' life.

We hope you enjoy meeting Jesus.

PART ONE: THE EARLY LIFE OF JESUS

1. The Birth of Jesus

Luke 2:1–12

At that time, Caesar Augustus was ruling the whole Roman world. He made a law and told his men, 'Count everyone who lives in the Roman world.' This was the first time that the Romans had made a list of everyone's names. Quirinius was the Roman ruler of Syria when it happened.

Everyone went to his own home town for the Romans to count them. So Joseph went to his home town, Bethlehem. He was living in the town called Nazareth, in Galilee. Bethlehem was in Judea. King David had been born there, so Bethlehem was called the town of David. Joseph belonged to the family of David. That is why he went to Bethlehem.

Joseph took Mary with him so that the Romans could count them. She went because she had promised to marry him. She was going to have a baby.

While they were in Bethlehem, after some time, her baby was born. This was her first baby, and it was a boy. She put cloths round him. Then she put him in an animal's feeding box. She did this because the rooms for visitors were full of people.

That night some shepherds were living out in the fields near Bethlehem. They were keeping their sheep safe. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to them. A bright light from God shone all round them. That frightened them very much. The angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. Listen! I bring you good news. This news will make everyone very happy. Something happened today in the town of David. Someone special was born. He is the one who will save you. He is the Messiah. He is the Lord. I will tell you how you will know this baby. You will find him with cloths round him. He is lying in an animal's feeding box.'

Did you know?

- Caesar ruled the Roman Empire.
- Caesar wanted everyone to be counted so that he could tax them.
- David was Israel's greatest king who lived one thousand years before Jesus.
- King David was born in Bethlehem.
- A 'manger' is a place where animals feed.
- 'Christ' is a title which means 'God's promised king'.
- Joseph was a carpenter who lived in Nazareth.

The meaning of the story

Jesus' follower, Luke, begins with the story of Jesus' birth. Jesus' birth was a normal birth, but he was a very special baby.

Jesus was born about two thousand years ago in Bethlehem in Israel. Joseph went there with his wife Mary to be counted. Through an angel, God had told Mary that she would give birth to a boy. This boy would be a very special king.

Joseph and Mary called the boy 'Jesus', which means 'God saves'. *No one would have thought that this baby, born in a small village, would be the king and saviour of all people.*

Then something special happened. God sent an angel to tell some shepherds this baby boy would be a king and would save people. This is good news for everyone.

Who is Jesus?

Jesus was born in a small village. His parents were ordinary people. Jesus' first bed was a manger. The first people to hear the good news were shepherds. In humble circumstances, a great king was born.

If we are in trouble, we need a saviour. God sent Jesus to be our saviour.

Thinking about the story

1. What is a saviour?
2. Can you think of anything you need to be saved from?
3. Why were the shepherds afraid?
4. Why is this message 'good news'?

2. The Visit of the Wise Men

Matthew 2:1–12

Jesus was born in a town called Bethlehem, in Judea. King Herod ruled Judea at that time. After Jesus was born, some wise men came from a country in the east to Jerusalem. When they arrived there, they asked people, ‘Where is the baby who has been born as the King of the Jews? We saw his special star when it first appeared in the sky. So now we have come here to worship him.’

Herod heard what the men were saying. And he had trouble in his mind. All the people in Jerusalem also had trouble in their mind. Then Herod asked all the leaders of the priests and the teachers of God’s Law to meet with him. He asked them, ‘Where will God’s Messiah be born?’ They replied, ‘The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem in Judea. This is what the prophet wrote about it:

“People who live in Bethlehem,
your town is a very important town in Judea.
A person born in your town will become a leader of my
people Israel.
He will lead my people like a shepherd leads his sheep.”

Then Herod secretly called the wise men to meet with him. They told him the time that the star had appeared. Then Herod sent the men to Bethlehem. He said to them, ‘Go and look everywhere for this child. When you find him, come back here and tell me where he is. Then I can also go and worship him.’

After the men had heard the king, they left to go to Bethlehem. They could see the same star that they had seen before. They were very happy when they saw the star. It moved along in front of them. Then it stopped above the place where the child was staying. The men went into the house and they saw the child. He was with Mary, his mother. They went down on their knees in

front of the child and they worshipped him. Then they opened their bags. They took out valuable gifts and they gave them to the child. The gifts were gold, incense called frankincense, and also myrrh. After that, God said to them in a dream, 'Do not go back to see Herod again.' So the men followed a different road to return to their own country.

Did you know?

- Herod was a king in Israel. He later tried to kill Jesus.
- 'Wise men' gave advice to kings.
- 'Messiah' is another word for 'Christ', God's promised king.
- A prophet brings a word from God to the people.
- Jesus was about two years old when the wise men came to Bethlehem.

The meaning of the story

After Jesus birth, the family stayed in Bethlehem. While they were there, they received some surprising visitors. From far away, 'wise men' came to Bethlehem.

Two things led these wise men to Jesus. First, they saw a special star in the sky. They believed that a special star in the sky showed that an important king had been born.

The second thing that led them to this king was the Bible. Many years before, God had spoken through a prophet. The prophet said that one day a great leader would be born in Bethlehem. Now this leader had come. The wise men believed what God had said by his prophet.

They came to a house in Bethlehem. There they found Joseph and Mary and the young child, Jesus. They knew that Jesus was this king.

Then they fell on the ground and worshipped him because they knew he was someone much greater than they were.

Who is Jesus?

When the wise men came to Bethlehem, Jesus did not look like a king. But they knew God had sent Jesus to rule, because he had put a star in the sky to tell people about his birth. God had spoken through a prophet to announce he would be born in Bethlehem. The wise men worshipped him, because they knew he was a king greater than any other king.

Thinking about the story

1. What led the wise men to Jerusalem?
2. Why were the wise men so happy?
3. Why did the wise men worship Jesus?
4. Why did the wise men not return to Jerusalem?

3. The Baptism of Jesus

Luke 3:16, 21–22

John knew what they were thinking. He said to them, ‘I baptize you with water. But someone else is coming soon. He is much greater than I am. I am not good enough even to undo his shoes for him. This other person will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

...

While John was still baptizing all the people, he also baptized Jesus. When he did that, Jesus was praying. Then the sky opened. The Holy Spirit came down on to Jesus. When he came down like that, he looked like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son and I love you. You make me very happy.’

Did you know?

- John was a prophet.
- John was called ‘the Baptist’ because he baptised people in water.
- The ‘Holy Spirit’ is God living in his people.

The meaning of the story

It is now about thirty years later. Jesus began the work God sent him to do.

If someone important, like a king or a president, is coming to a town, then there are lots of things to get ready. John baptised the people to get them ready for the coming of their king. The people needed to be clean to meet their king, Jesus.

John baptised people in water. Water makes us clean on the outside of our bodies. But, water cannot take away the dirt which is on the inside. We are dirty in our hearts. *We all need someone to make us clean on the inside.*

Jesus' baptism is different from John's because Jesus baptises people with God's Spirit. God's Spirit makes people clean on the inside. God's Spirit is like a fire. A fire burns away everything that is dirty. Jesus washes us with God's Spirit and makes us truly clean.

Who is Jesus?

The lowest person in society was a slave. The lowest work of a slave was to take off his master's sandal. John said that he was not worthy to do the lowest job of the lowest person and touch the feet of Jesus. Jesus is so much greater than John.

God calls Jesus his 'own dear Son'. Just like a parent has a special love for his child, so God has a special love for his only Son, Jesus. God is very happy that Jesus has come to make people clean.

Thinking about the story

1. Have you ever felt dirty on the inside?
2. What are some of the things people do to try and make themselves clean?
3. Why is God's Spirit like a fire?
4. What does God say about Jesus?

4. Jesus Begins His Work

Matthew 4:12–17

Then Jesus heard that Herod had put John the Baptist in prison. So Jesus returned to Galilee.

But he did not stay in Nazareth. He went to live in Capernaum, which is a town on the shore of Lake Galilee. It was in the part of Israel called Zebulun and Naphtali.

This caused God's message to become true. Long ago God had said through his prophet Isaiah:

'I am speaking to you people who live in Zebulun and Naphtali.

Your part of this country is on the way to Lake Galilee.

It is across the River Jordan in the part of the country called Galilee.

Some people who are not Jews live there.

They are like people who are living in the dark.

They live in the shadow which death brings.

God will send a light to shine on them.'

Then Jesus began to speak God's message to people. He said, 'You have done many wrong things. You must turn away from them and change how you live. Do this now, because the kingdom of heaven has come very near.'

Did you know?

- Jesus grew up in Nazareth in Galilee.
- A 'Gentile' is anybody who is not Jewish.
- The 'kingdom of heaven' is not a place. We're in God's kingdom when king Jesus rules our life.

The meaning of the story

Many people are scared of the dark. People are scared to go out at night-time.

There are different kinds of darkness. There is 'physical darkness' when night comes. There is 'spiritual darkness' when people don't know God or obey him.

Jesus came to people in spiritual darkness. *Jesus brought light into the darkness of people's lives.*

Jesus preached about the 'kingdom of God'. God is the king of everyone and everything. God made his Son, Jesus, the king in his kingdom. Jesus' kingdom is not like any other kingdom because Jesus rules over the hearts and lives of men and women. Jesus told people to become a part of God's kingdom. We enter God's kingdom by following his Son, Jesus. This means that we have to obey God and stop doing those things that are wrong.

Who is Jesus?

God loves us and doesn't want us to stay in the darkness. God sent Jesus to bring light into a dark world. God wants us to live with him and be part of his family.

Jesus was a teacher. Jesus taught us how to enter God's kingdom and how to live in God's kingdom.

Thinking about the story

1. What darkness have you seen in the world?
2. Is there 'spiritual darkness' in your own life?
3. What would it mean for you to 'turn back to God'?

PART TWO: THE WORDS OF JESUS

In this book, I want you to meet and get to know the Lord Jesus. How do you get to know someone?

One way to get to know someone is to listen to what they say. Do they say good things or bad things? Do they tell the truth or tell lies?

We're going to listen to some of Jesus' words. Jesus was a wise teacher. He often taught people by telling stories. Jesus taught us about God, his kingdom, and how we can be a part of God's kingdom.

As you read some of Jesus' words, you may want to listen to more of his teaching. You can read more of the words of Jesus in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

5. The Healthy and the Sick

Mark 2:13–17

Jesus went to the shore of Lake Galilee again. A large crowd came to him, and he taught them. While Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Levi. Levi was the son of Alphaeus. His job was to take taxes from people on behalf of the government. He was sitting in his office. Jesus said to him, 'Come with me and be my disciple.' Levi stood up and he went with Jesus.

Then Jesus went to eat a meal at Levi's house. Many people followed Jesus and they ate there with him and with his disciples. Many of these were bad people and also men who took taxes on behalf of the government. Some teachers of God's Law who were Pharisees saw what was happening. They said to Jesus' disciples, 'He is eating with men who take taxes on behalf of the government and those other bad people. That is not right.'

Jesus heard what these people were saying. He said to them, 'People who are well do not need a doctor. It is people who are ill that need a doctor. Some people think that they always obey God. I did not come to help people like that. Some people know that they have done wrong things. I am asking those people to come to me for help.'

Did you know?

- Galilee was a part of Israel.
- Large crowds followed Jesus to hear his words.
- Jesus had twelve special friends called disciples.
- Jewish people hated tax collectors because they worked for the Romans and many were not honest.
- The Pharisees were a very religious group in Israel. Many of them hated Jesus.

The meaning of the story

Many different kinds of people came to meet Jesus. They heard that he invited everyone, good or bad, into God's kingdom.

One day, Jesus invited Levi to become one of his followers. This made Levi very happy, and he had a party in his house for all his friends. Jesus came. The Pharisees were angry that Jesus made friends with people like Levi. They called people like Levi 'sinners', because they did not obey God's commands.

Jesus explained that he was like a doctor. A doctor spends all his time with sick people because sick people need a doctor. Levi was spiritually sick. *He knew he was a sinner and needed Jesus to forgive him.* The Pharisees thought they were spiritually healthy and did not need Jesus. They were proud and looked down on people like Levi. They needed Jesus to change them as much as the tax collectors.

Who is Jesus?

Jesus was a king. Jesus was a prophet. Jesus was a saviour. And Jesus was a doctor. A doctor's work is to make sick people well. We can be sick physically, and we can be sick spiritually. People become spiritually sick when they sin. This is the worst sickness, because it breaks our relationship with God.

Jesus came to make us well by forgiving our sins.

Thinking about the story

1. Who needs a doctor?
2. How do you know if someone is spiritually sick?
3. Why did Levi have a party?
4. Why did Jesus go to the party?
5. Do you think the Jewish leaders were healthy or sick?

6. The Selfish Son

Luke 15:11–24

Jesus then told another story: ‘There was a man that had two sons. The younger son went to his father and said to him, “Father, please give me now my part of your things.” So, the father gave both sons the part of his things that each of them should have. After a few days, the younger son sold what his father had given to him. Then he took all the money and left home. He went on a long journey to a country far away. There, he did whatever he wanted to do and wasted all his money. After he had spent everything, there was no rain in that country. There was almost no food anywhere. So the young man had nothing to eat. He went to a man who lived in that country. He asked to work for him. So the man sent him into his fields to give food to his pigs. Nobody gave him anything to eat. He even wanted to eat the food that the pigs were eating. But he had nothing.

Then the son began to think about what he had done. He said to himself, “My father has many servants, and they have plenty of food to eat. They even have more food than they need. But I will die here because I do not have any food. So I will go to my father and tell him, ‘I have done bad things against God, and I have done bad things against you. So I am not good enough for you to call me your son any longer. Instead, please accept me as one of your servants.’”

So he went off to return to his father. But he was still a long way from the house when his father saw him. He felt very sorry for his son and he ran towards him. Then he put his arms round his son and he kissed him. “Father,” the son said, “I have done bad things against God and against you. So I am not good enough for you to call me your son.” But the father shouted to

his servants. “Hurry!” he said. “Fetch the most beautiful coat that we have. Put it on him and also put a ring on his finger. Put shoes on his feet. Fetch the young cow that we keep ready to eat on a special day. It is already fat. Kill it and prepare it. We will eat a big meal and we will be happy together. I thought that my son here was dead. But now he has returned to me and he is alive! I thought that he had left me for all time. But now he has come home.” Then they all began to be happy together.’

Did you know?

- Jesus’ little stories were called ‘parables’.
- God commands us to honour our parents. The son did not give honour to his father.
- ‘A foreign country’ is where Gentiles live, and it is unclean for Jews.
- Jews think pigs are unclean.

The meaning of the story

This is a story of a son who has no respect for his father. He broke his father’s heart.

After he wasted all the money his father gave him, he was poor, lonely, sad and very hungry. He then understood how selfish he had been. He knew that he was a sinner. He decided to go back home and tell his father that he was very sorry.

But the son knew that he had another Father. He had a Father in heaven. *When we sin against someone here on earth we also sin against God.* So, the son also told God that he was very sorry for what he had done.

What would the father do when he saw his son? Would he shut the door in his face? Would the father make him work like a slave? The

son received a wonderful surprise. The father was very happy to see his son, and he forgave him all the bad things he had done.

Who is Jesus?

Jesus is God's Son, and in this story he shows us what his Heavenly Father is like. God loves us. God wants to forgive our sins and bring us into his family. We become a part of God's family by saying sorry to God and the people we have sinned against. We can be sure that God will forgive us when we say we are sorry, because he loves us.

Thinking about the story

1. Why did the son ask for his share of the property?
2. Why did the father give his son his share of the property?
3. What did the son do with all this money?
4. Why did the son go home?
5. Why did the father take his son back again?
6. Why did the father have a party?

7. The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Luke 18:9–14

Jesus told a story to teach other people. These people thought that they were very good in front of God. They thought that they were much better than other people.

Jesus said, ‘One day, two men went into God’s Great House to pray. One man was a Pharisee. The other man took taxes on behalf of the government. The Pharisee stood there by himself. He prayed like this: “Thank you, God, that I am different from all these other people. They are bad people. They rob other people. They have sex with women that are not their wife. Thank you, God, that I am not like this man who takes taxes on behalf of the government. I stop eating on two days of each week. I give to you one tenth of all the things and money that I receive.”

But the other man stood far away. He would not even look up towards heaven. He was hitting his body with his hands to show how sorry he was. He prayed like this: “Please, God, be kind to me. I have done many bad things.”

Jesus went on to say, ‘Let me tell you about these men when they left there. The man that took taxes on behalf of the government was now right with God. But the Pharisee had not made anything right with God. Some people lift themselves up to be important. They say that they are better than other people. But God will bring all of them down low. Other people know that they are not better than others. God will lift those people up to a good place.’

Did you know?

- The temple was in Jerusalem. It was the main place of worship for Jews.
- Sometimes Jews had to fast (not eat food).
- Jews had to give one-tenth of their income to the poor.

The meaning of the story

Here's another story that Jesus told to teach people about God's kingdom and how to enter it. The prayers of the two men were very different. The Pharisee's prayer showed that he was proud and thought he was better than other people. He despised the tax collector. Which do you think is more important to God? Not to eat food for two days or to treat other people with respect and kindness? I am sure he thought God was his friend. He is going to receive a very big shock.

The tax collector knew he had done many bad things. He knew that God was not happy with how he had lived. So, he confessed that he was a sinner. He was a humble man. I am sure he thought God did not want to be his friend.

Jesus said that people who admit they've done wrong things and ask God to forgive them are God's friends. But people who think they are better than others will never be part of God's family.

Who is Jesus?

Jesus taught us that only people who know they have broken God's laws and say they are sorry can enter God's kingdom. These kinds of people are humble.

Humble people know they need God. Humble people treat other people with love and respect.

Thinking about the story

1. Why did the Pharisee stand by himself to pray?

2. Why did God not like the Pharisee's prayer?
3. Why did the tax collector stand far away and beat his chest?
4. How did the tax collector please God?
5. What does it mean to be humble?
6. Why is God happy with humble people?

8. The Love Command

John 15:9–14

I have loved you in the same way that the Father has loved me. Continue to live in a way that shows my love. If you obey what I have told you, you will be living in my love. In the same way, I have obeyed what my Father has told me to do. In that way, I live in his love. I want you to be completely happy, in the same way that I myself am happy. That is why I have told you these things.

This is the rule that I give to you: You must love each other, in the same way that I have loved you. A person really loves his friends if he dies on behalf of them. Nobody could love anyone more than that. And you are my friends, if you obey my message.

Did you know?

- Jesus' friends here are his twelve disciples.
- All of God's commands are summed up in the command to love.
- Jesus taught about love right before he died to show he loved his friends.

The meaning of the story

We become God's friends by saying we are sorry for the wrong things we have done. Often these wrong things hurt other people. We have not loved people as we should. But God forgives because he loves us.

What should we do next? How should we live as God's friends? Since God loves us, we should love each other. What does it mean to love one another? Jesus' own life was the example. In a few hours,

Jesus would die for his friends. He would give up his life so they could have the best life. That is love. *Love is doing for others what you would like them to do for you.*

Jesus taught his friends that when they love one another, they will be really happy. We find true happiness when we do things for other people. Jesus was happy, because he always loved and obeyed his Heavenly Father.

Who is Jesus?

God is powerful and wise and faithful and just. But above all else, God is love. Jesus is God's son. What is true about God is true about Jesus. So, Jesus is love.

Jesus was the best teacher. A good teacher lives out what he teaches. We do not listen to a teacher who says one thing and does something else. Jesus spent his life helping those in need and commanded us to love others like that. His greatest act of love was dying for us so we could live forever.

Thinking about the story

1. How many times is the word 'love' or 'loving' used in this story?
2. What is love?
3. What is true happiness?
4. How do we find true happiness?
5. Has someone ever died for you?
6. How has God shown that he loves you?

9. The Two Builders

Matthew 7:24–27

Jesus went on to say, ‘Some people listen to my message and they obey it. Those people are like a wise man who built his house on rock. Then a storm came with a lot of rain and wind. The rivers rose up high. Strong winds blew hard against that house. But the house did not fall down because the man had built it on rock. Other people listen to my message but they do not obey it. Those people are like a fool who built his house on sand. Then a storm came with a lot of rain and wind. The rivers rose up high. Strong winds blew hard against the house. That house fell down. The storm destroyed it completely.’

Did you know?

- Jesus told this story to all his friends and followers.
- This story was part of a long talk Jesus gave on a mountain.
- Jesus’ pictures about the rain and winds are about the Day of Judgment.
- On Judgment Day, God will separate those who have done good from those who have done bad.

The meaning of the story

Jesus told a story about two houses. On the outside they look the same. They may both be made of bricks. They may both have three rooms. The difference is the foundation. One house stands on rock and the other house stands on sand.

One day a terrible storm comes. After the storm is over, only one house is still standing.

Jesus told this story to help us know who is in God's kingdom. The house that is standing is 'anyone who hears and obeys these teachings of mine'. These are people like Levi, who were humble and confessed their sins. These are people who love God and love other people.

The other house is a picture of people who heard Jesus' teaching but did not obey him. These are people like the Pharisees who look down at others and do not love them.

In this story, Jesus is challenging us. Have we heard and obeyed the words of Jesus?

Who is Jesus?

Life on earth is short. But there is life after death. Jesus taught us that we can live forever with God in heaven. There we will always be very happy. Or, we can spend those years away from God. There we will always be very sad. It all depends on one thing. Did we hear and obey the words of Jesus? There is nothing more important than knowing and obeying Jesus' words.

Thinking about the story

1. What makes a person wise?
2. What makes a person foolish?
3. What is the storm in the story?
4. What teaching of Jesus have you heard in the 'Words of Jesus' section (chapters 5–9)?
5. Why is Jesus' teaching so important?
6. Which house are you?

PART THREE: THE WORKS OF JESUS

For three years, Jesus taught about God's kingdom around the towns of Israel. He invited people to enter into God's kingdom. But Jesus did not just teach *about* God's kingdom. He also showed people what life would be like in God's kingdom.

Many people live difficult lives. Many people suffer in this world. We get sick. We lose everything in an earthquake or a cyclone. In the end, we all die. Imagine a world without sickness, suffering and death.

Jesus did many miracles. Jesus healed the sick. He cast out evil spirits. He calmed a storm. He brought dead people back to life. Wherever there was pain and suffering, Jesus brought peace to people's lives.

These works showed that God had sent him. The miracles also showed what life would be like in God's future kingdom.

Now we will look at five of Jesus' miracles. They give us a picture of life in God's kingdom. They tell us something more about the Lord Jesus Christ.

10. Casting out a Demon

Mark 1:21–27

Then Jesus and those disciples went into a town called Capernaum. On the next Jewish day for rest, Jesus went into the Jews' meeting place. He began to teach the people there.

The people were very surprised at the things that Jesus taught them. When he taught them, he showed his authority. That was not like the way that the teachers of God's Law taught people. In the meeting place, there was a man who had a bad spirit. The bad spirit caused the man to shout. He said, 'Jesus from Nazareth, leave us alone! Do not kill us! I know who you are. You are the Holy One and God has sent you.'

Jesus spoke to the bad spirit. 'Be quiet!' he said. 'Come out of the man!' The bad spirit caused the man to fall. It shouted loudly and then it came out of the man.

All the people were very surprised, and they said to each other, 'This is very strange. This man Jesus is teaching us something new and he speaks with authority. He can tell bad spirits what they must do, and they do it.' Immediately, people began to tell the news about Jesus. Everywhere in Galilee, they were telling other people about him.

Did you know?

- Jesus' powerful works are called 'miracles'.
- Capernaum was a town in Galilee.
- This healing took place near the beginning of Jesus' work.
- The 'Sabbath' was a Saturday, and Jews had to rest on the Sabbath.
- There is an evil being called 'Satan' or the devil. Satan is God's enemy and brings sadness and destroys people's lives.

- Just as God has his servants called angels, so Satan has his servants called evil spirits.

The meaning of the story

All over the world, people live in fear of evil spirits. Sometimes these spirits enter a person and take over their life.

One day, Jesus met a man with an evil spirit. The man spoke, but the voice was the voice of an evil spirit. The spirit had made this man's life unhappy. Evil spirits destroy life, but Jesus came to give life.

Many people did not know who Jesus was and why he had come. Here we see that the evil spirits knew who Jesus was. They knew that God had sent him, and they knew that he had come to destroy them.

Jesus spoke to the evil spirit and told him to be quiet and to leave the man. The spirit immediately obeyed the word of Jesus. We see this again and again. *Jesus only has to speak and his word is obeyed.* The man finally had peace in his life.

Who is Jesus?

Evil spirits are strong, but Jesus is stronger. Jesus does not fight a battle against evil spirits. Jesus just speaks a word. He issues a command and the evil spirits obey.

Jesus is the man who has power over all the evil powers.

Thinking about the story

1. What was the first thing Jesus did when he went into the Jewish meeting place?
2. Why were the people amazed at his teaching?
3. How did Jesus make the man clean again?
4. Have you ever known anyone with an evil spirit?
5. What power does Jesus have over evil spirits?

11. The Soldier's Servant

Luke 7:1–10

After Jesus had finished speaking to the people, he went to Capernaum. A Roman officer there had a servant that he liked very much. The servant was very ill and he was dying.

The officer heard about Jesus, so he sent some important Jews to speak to him. 'Please go to Jesus,' he said to them. 'I would like him to make my servant well. Ask him if he would come to do that.' The Jewish leaders went to Jesus. They asked him, 'Please would you do something to help this Roman officer. He loves the Jewish people. He himself built a meeting place for us.'

So, Jesus went with them. When he was not very far away from the house, the officer sent some friends to talk to him. He told them to say to Jesus, 'Sir, I do not want to be a trouble to you. I am not good enough for you to come into my house. That is why I did not come to talk to you myself. Instead, just say that my servant will get better. I know that he will then be well again. In my work, someone has authority over me. I also have authority over other soldiers. I say to one soldier, "Go!" and he goes. I say to another one, "Come!" and he comes. I say to my servant, "Do this!" and he does it.'

When Jesus heard this message from the officer, he was very surprised. He turned towards the crowd that was following him. He said to them, 'I tell you, I have not found anyone like this man in all of Israel. Nobody else believes in me as well as he does.'

The friends of the officer then returned to his house. When they arrived there, they saw that the servant was well again.

Did you know?

- The army officer was a Gentile and the most powerful man in the area.
- This army officer worshipped God.
- Jewish ‘meeting places’ were called synagogues.
- This is the only time Jesus is surprised at someone’s faith.

The meaning of the story

In this story, we see another example of the power of the word of Jesus. It is a story about an army officer. He was rich and powerful. But he knew that all his power could not save his dying servant. But he had heard about Jesus and knew that Jesus had the power to heal his servant.

The officer knew that Jesus’ word is so powerful that he only has to speak and it happens. He knew that Jesus’ word is much more powerful than his own word. From far away, Jesus commanded the servant to become well again. Immediately the man was healed. *Nobody’s word has power like the word of Jesus.*

The officer knew how helpless and weak he was. He knew he did not deserve Jesus’ kindness. More important than this, he knew how strong and loving Jesus is. Jesus wants everyone to have faith like this man.

Who is Jesus?

When God made the world, he spoke and everything was made. Jesus showed the same power. In the last story, Jesus spoke to an evil spirit and the spirit immediately obeyed Jesus’ word. In this story, Jesus spoke to the sickness in the body of the servant and the sickness immediately left him.

Jesus has the power to make sick people healthy again.

Thinking about the story

1. What did this officer know about Jesus?
2. Why did the officer send some Jewish leaders to Jesus?
3. Why did the officer send another group to Jesus?
4. What is faith?
5. What does this officer teach us about faith?

12. Stilling the Storm

Matthew 8:23–27

Then Jesus got into a boat. His disciples also went with him. Immediately a great storm began to blow across the lake. Water began to go into the boat and fill it. Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went to him and they woke him. ‘Master, save us!’ they said. ‘We are going to die here in the water!’ Jesus said to them, ‘You should not be so afraid. You should trust me more than you do!’ Then he stood up and he spoke strongly to the wind and the water. ‘Stop!’ he said. Then the wind and the water became quiet again.

The disciples were very surprised. They asked each other, ‘What kind of man is this? Even the wind and the water obey him!’

Did you know?

- This story happened on the Sea of Galilee.
- Some of Jesus’ friends were fishermen.
- They were sailing in a small wooden fishing boat.
- Jesus had been working all day teaching and healing, and he was very tired.

The meaning of the story

Jesus was in a boat with his twelve friends and a huge storm came up. The disciples had never seen a storm like this one. They were sure they were going to die. They knew they were weak and helpless. They woke up Jesus because they were afraid.

Jesus was not happy with the disciples. Why did they not trust him? They had already seen him perform many miracles. They had

seen the power of his word. *Didn't they know that if Jesus was with them, they had nothing to fear?*

Jesus stood and told the storm to be still. His word was obeyed immediately. The storm stopped and everything was calm.

The disciples had never seen power and authority like this. There is nobody like Jesus.

Jesus has power over everything that God has made.

Who is Jesus?

God made the storms and the seas. God rules the storms and the seas. Here we see Jesus doing God's work. Jesus is God's Son, and he controls the storms and the seas. All creation obeys his powerful word.

Jesus is the Lord of everything.

Thinking about the story

1. Have you ever been scared by a storm?
2. Why do you think Jesus could sleep through the storm?
3. Why was Jesus not happy with the disciples?
4. Why did the storm obey the word of Jesus?

13. Feeding Five Thousand

John 6:1–13; 35

Some time after that, Jesus went across Lake Galilee, which is also called Lake Tiberias. A large crowd of people followed him, because of the miracles that he had done. They had seen him make sick people well. Jesus went up a hill and he sat down there with his disciples. It was nearly the time for the Jewish Passover Festival.

Jesus looked up. He saw a large crowd of people who were coming towards him. He said to Philip, 'Where can we buy enough bread to feed all these people?' Jesus himself already knew what he would do. But he asked Philip this question because he wanted to know what Philip would say. Philip answered, 'A man could work for eight months to get 200 coins. But he still would not have enough money to buy bread for all these people. There would not be enough bread for each person here to have even a little piece.' Then Andrew, another one of Jesus' disciples, spoke. He was Simon Peter's brother. He said to Jesus, 'Here is a boy who has five small loaves and two fish. But that will not be nearly enough food for so many people.'

Jesus said, 'Tell the people to sit down.' There was plenty of grass in that place, so the people sat down. There were about 5,000 men in the crowd. Jesus took the loaves of bread and he thanked God for them. Then he broke the loaves into pieces. He passed them to all the people who were sitting there. Everyone had as much bread as they wanted to eat. Jesus did the same with the fish. When everyone had eaten enough food, Jesus said to his disciples, 'Do not waste anything. Pick up all the little bits of food that people have not eaten.' So the disciples picked up all the pieces. They filled 12 baskets with the bits of bread that the people had not eaten.

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Then Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread that gives life to people. Anyone who comes to me will never be hungry. Anyone who believes in me will never be thirsty.

Did you know?

- Philip, Andrew and Simon Peter were some of Jesus' twelve disciples.
- The Passover was the most important Jewish festival.
- The five loaves were five small cakes.
- Jews and Christians give thanks to God before they have a meal.

The meaning of the story

A large crowd had been following Jesus all day, and they were hungry. Jesus told the disciples to feed these people. It seems impossible to feed so many people with so little food. In the boat on the lake, the disciples did not trust the power of Jesus. Again, they failed Jesus' test.

In the beginning, God made everything out of nothing. Here, Jesus did what God did. He made lots of food out of a small meal. At the end of the meal, everybody was happy. They had all had plenty to eat. There was food left over. If the crowd had been even bigger, there would still have been enough food for everyone.

Jesus told the crowd that he was 'the bread of life'. Without food, we will die. *But more important than our physical life is our spiritual life.* That is, our life in relationship with God. That is the life that goes on forever. Jesus gives us this life.

Who is Jesus?

Again, we see Jesus doing what only God can do. Jesus makes food to give the people life. The food he gives them is so good that they are all very happy.

Jesus was teaching the people an important lesson. We all need physical bread to stay alive. In the same way, we all need the Lord Jesus, the bread of life, to stay alive spiritually.

Jesus gives people true life that lasts forever.

Thinking about the story

1. Why was the large crowd following Jesus?
2. What was the test Jesus gave to his friends?
3. Why does John tell us that the people ate as much as they wanted? What does this tell us about Jesus?
4. What did Jesus mean when he called himself ‘the bread of life’?

14. Jesus Raises the Dead

John 11:17–27

Jesus arrived at Bethany. He discovered that they had buried Lazarus 4 days earlier. Bethany was less than two miles (about three kilometres) from Jerusalem. Many Jews had come there to visit Martha and Mary. They wanted to help Martha and Mary because their brother had died.

Martha heard the news that Jesus was coming. So, she went out to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house with the visitors. Martha said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now, I know that God will answer you. He will do whatever you ask him.’ Jesus told her, ‘Your brother will rise, to become alive again.’ Martha replied, ‘I know that he will rise, to become alive again, on the last day.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I have authority over death. I raise dead people, and I give people true life. Anyone who believes in me will live. Even if that person dies, he will continue to live. People who live because they believe in me will never die. Do you believe that?’ Martha answered, ‘Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah. You are God’s Son, the one that God promised to send into the world.’

Did you know?

- Mary, Martha and Lazarus were good friends of Jesus.
- Jesus often stayed with his friends in Bethany.
- Many Jews believed that everyone would rise from the dead at the end of time and face God’s judgment.

The meaning of the story

Jesus' friend Lazarus had died. His sister, Martha, was sad that Jesus had not been there. She knew he could have healed him. Jesus promised Martha that her brother would live again. Martha thought Jesus meant that Lazarus would rise on the last day, when everyone rises to meet God. 'No,' said Jesus. 'You will see your brother today!'

Jesus then went to the tomb where Lazarus had been buried. He called out in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out.' Immediately, Lazarus came alive again.

Our greatest fear is the fear of death. We all want to live forever. Jesus tells us, 'I am the one who raises the dead to life.' Jesus gives life to the dead by his powerful word. The same word that casts out evil spirits, brings healing, stills a storm and makes food, brings the dead back to life.

Who is Jesus?

Martha called Jesus her 'Lord'. Jesus rules everyone and everything. He is the Christ, the King in God's kingdom. And he is God's Son, who has come into the world.

Jesus raised Lazarus because he loved this family. He raised Lazarus to show he can make the dead alive again. All who trust him will live again.

Jesus is the man who has power over life and death.

Thinking about the story

1. Why did Jesus not hurry to Bethany when he heard his friend was sick?
2. What did Martha think Jesus meant when he told her Lazarus would live again?
3. What did Jesus mean when he said that Lazarus would rise again?
4. How does Jesus have the power to raise the dead?
5. Do you believe that Jesus can give you life after death?

PART FOUR: JESUS DIES AND RISES AGAIN

Jesus had a short life. He died at about the age of thirty-six. He only spent three years telling people about God's kingdom. Jesus' words and works were very important. But Jesus' most important work came at the end of his life. In fact, his death was his greatest work.

That is why we are going to spend longer on the end of Jesus' life. While he was with his followers, he told them that he would die a violent death. This was God's plan for his life. John wrote, 'God loved the people in the world so much that he gave his one and only Son on their behalf. So, as a result, everyone who believes in the Son will not die. Instead, they will live for ever with God' (John 3:16).

God gave his Son Jesus so that we could live forever. Let us see how and why God gave Jesus for us.

15. Jesus' Last Meal

Matthew 26:17, 26–29

The first day of the festival when the Jews eat flat bread arrived. Jesus' disciples came to him and they asked him, 'Where do you want us to prepare the Passover meal for you to eat?'

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While Jesus and his disciples were eating, he took a loaf of bread. He thanked God for it and then he broke the bread into pieces. He gave some of it to each of them. He said, 'Take this bread and eat it. This is my body.'

Then Jesus took a cup. He thanked God for the wine in the cup. Then he gave it to them and he said, 'All of you should drink some of this wine. This is my blood that shows God's promise. When I die, my blood will pour out of my body. In that way God will forgive many people for the wrong things that they have done. That is the promise that God makes because of my death. I tell you this. I will not drink wine again until I drink it with you in my Father's kingdom. Then it will be new wine.'

Did you know?

- Jews from all over the world went to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover.
- On the Passover, Jews remember how God saved Israel from slavery in Egypt.
- God sent his angel to punish the Egyptians. This angel 'passed over' Israel and did not punish them.
- 'Thin bread' is bread with no yeast. Israel had to leave Egypt quickly. They could not wait for the bread they had baked to rise.

The meaning of the story

Every country has their special festivals. Many countries celebrate Christmas. The Chinese celebrate Chinese New Year. The most important festival for Jewish people is 'Passover'.

One night, Jesus was celebrating Passover with his friends. This was his last meal with them before he died. He took some bread and broke it into pieces. This was a picture of how he would die for them. Just like bread, his body would be broken. He told his friends to 'eat' this bread. He meant that they should believe that his death would take away their sins.

Then he poured out some wine. The wine was a picture of his blood. In a few hours, Jesus' blood would be poured out. He told his friends to drink the wine. It meant that they were entering into an agreement with God. *If they trust in his Son, Jesus, God promised to take away their sins.*

Who is Jesus?

When Jesus was born, the angels told the shepherds that God had sent 'a saviour'. What would Jesus save us from? How would Jesus save us? At the Passover, Jesus told his friends that he would save many people from their sins. Jesus told them he would save us by dying for us. God wants us to trust Jesus to take away our sins.

Thinking about the story

1. What did Jesus mean when he called the bread his body?
2. What did Jesus mean when he called the wine his blood?
3. What does the Passover meal teach us about Jesus' death?

16. Jesus Dies on a Cross

Mark 15:33–39

At midday, the whole country became dark for three hours. At three o'clock in the afternoon, Jesus shouted loudly, 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?' That means, 'My God, my God, why have you left me alone?'

Some people who were standing near there heard him. They said to each other, 'Look! He is shouting to Elijah.'

One man ran to get a piece of cloth. He poured cheap wine on it, and he put it on the end of a stick. Then he lifted it up to Jesus so that he could drink the wine from it. The man said, 'Wait! Now we will see if Elijah comes to take him down from the cross.'

Then Jesus shouted loudly, and after that he died.

And the curtain inside God's Great House completely tore into two parts from the top down to the bottom.

The captain of the soldiers was standing there in front of Jesus. He saw how Jesus died. 'It must be true!' he said. 'This man really was the Son of God.'

Did you know?

- Hanging on a cross was a slow and painful way to die.
- Jesus spoke a language called Aramaic.
- Elijah was a famous Jewish prophet.
- The wine given to Jesus was a sour, cheap wine like vinegar.
- The curtain in the temple stopped people entering 'the holy place'.
- The army officer took part in the killing of Jesus.

The meaning of the story

After Jesus ate the Passover meal, he was arrested. The Pharisees wanted to kill Jesus because of all the things he said and did. Jesus was nailed to a cross on a hill outside Jerusalem. Many people watched him die.

In the middle of the day, it became dark. God sent the darkness to show people he was punishing sin.

Then Jesus asked God why he had left him all alone. God turned away from Jesus because Jesus took all our sins onto himself. Instead of God punishing us, he punished Jesus.

The most important room in the temple was 'the Holy Place'. Only the high priest was allowed inside this room. The curtain stopped people coming to God. When Jesus died, God took this curtain away. *Now we can all come to God, because Jesus' death has taken away our sins.*

An army officer understood and believed that Jesus is God's Son.

Who is Jesus?

On the cross, Jesus died for us. He took the punishment for our sins so we could be God's friends and live with him forever. This was the greatest work that God sent Jesus to do.

We have called this book, *Meet Jesus*. When you meet Jesus, then you meet God. God wants to get to know you. We can all get to know God because Jesus has brought us to God. Jesus has brought us to God by taking our sins away on the cross.

Thinking about the story

1. Why did the sky become dark when Jesus was dying?
2. Why did God leave Jesus as he was dying on the cross?
3. What was the meaning of the curtain in the temple being torn in two?
4. How does Jesus' death on the cross make us friends with God?

17. Jesus Forgives a Dying Thief

Luke 23:32–33, 39–43

The soldiers also took two other men out of the prison. These men had done bad things. The soldiers were going to kill them and Jesus together. They took them to the place that is called ‘The Skull’. There they fixed Jesus to a cross to die. They also fixed the two bad men to crosses. One of these men was on the right side of Jesus. The other was on his left side.

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One of the bad men on a cross at the side of Jesus started to say bad things against him. He shouted, ‘You say that you are the Messiah, don’t you? Then save your own life and save our lives too!’

But the bad man on the other cross told him that he should be quiet. He said, ‘You should be more afraid of God. We will die here, as well as him. We two men have done very bad things. So, it is right that we should die. But this man has not done anything wrong.’ Then the man said to Jesus, ‘Remember me, Jesus, when you start to rule in your kingdom.’ Jesus replied, ‘I promise you, today you will be with me in paradise.’

Did you know?

- The hill on which Jesus died was called ‘The Skull’ because it looked like a human head.
- The criminals who died with Jesus were probably terrorists.
- Many people laughed at Jesus while he was dying.
- People who have obeyed God and trusted Jesus go to ‘Paradise’ after they’ve died.

The meaning of the story

Many people watched Jesus die. Some of his friends were there. Some of those who hated him, like the Pharisees, were there. Two criminals died with him. One of them insulted Jesus.

The other criminal did not laugh at Jesus. Look at the three important things this man said to Jesus.

First, he admitted he was a sinner. He knew he had broken man's laws and God's laws.

Second, he believed that Jesus was the king and saviour. *This man had lived a very bad life, but he knew that it is never too late to come to Jesus and say you are sorry.*

Third, he believed in life after death. He believed God's kingdom went on forever. He trusted Jesus to remember him and to receive him into paradise.

Although the criminal was about to die, Jesus promised him a place in God's heavenly kingdom. In this kingdom, there will be no more sin, or sickness and death, or sorrow and pain.

Who is Jesus?

On the cross, Jesus meets a man who is very close to dying. He did not need physical healing, but he needed spiritual healing. Jesus promised him that, after his death, he would live forever. We can be sure that this man entered paradise because he trusted in the promise of Jesus.

Thinking about the story

1. What does it mean to fear God?
2. Why does the first criminal not fear God?
3. Why does the second criminal believe that Jesus has a kingdom of power?
4. Is it ever too late in life to ask Jesus to be your friend?

18. Jesus Rises from the Dead

Matthew 28:1-10

After the day of rest had finished, on the first day of the week, Mary from Magdala and Mary the mother of James got up early. They went to the hole in the rock where Joseph had put the dead body of Jesus.

At that moment, the ground moved about very strongly. One of the Lord God's angels came from heaven. He went to the rock. He rolled the big stone away from the hole and then he sat on top of it. He shone brightly like lightning. His clothes were very white like snow. The soldiers who were carefully watching that place were very frightened. They suddenly fell down on the ground. Like dead men, they could not move.

Then the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus. The soldiers killed him on a cross. But he is not here. He has become alive again. That is what he said would happen. Come here. You can see the place where he was lying. Then you must go quickly to his disciples. Tell them, "Jesus is alive again, and he is going to Galilee. You must also go there and you will see him." That is the message that I have brought for you.'

So the women went away quickly from the hole in the rock. They were very frightened, but they were also very happy. They ran to tell the disciples the angel's message. At that moment, Jesus met the two women. and he said, 'Hello.' They went close to him. They held on to his feet and they worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid. Go and tell my disciples to go to Galilee. They will see me there.'

Did you know?

- Jesus died on Friday, was in the tomb on Saturday, and rose on Sunday – the third day.

- The first people to meet Jesus after he rose from the dead were women.
- The Jewish leaders had put guards by Jesus' tomb because they thought his friends might steal his body.
- Many times, Jesus had told his friends he would rise from the dead.

The meaning of the story

Early Sunday morning, some women went to the tomb where they had put the dead body of Jesus. They went to show their respects.

We saw at Jesus' birth that God sent an angel to some shepherds. The shepherds were very afraid. The angel brought good news that the saviour and king had been born. Now, after Jesus' death, God again sent an angel. Like the shepherds, the women were afraid. Again, God sent his angel to bring good news. The angel said that God had raised Jesus to life again. *Jesus had promised he would rise again, and he kept his promise.*

When the women met Jesus, they 'held on to his feet'. Jesus had a body. They did not see a ghost. They were not dreaming. Jesus was real. One day, Jesus will raise all his friends from the dead. Like Jesus, we will have bodies. Like Jesus, we will never die again.

Who is Jesus?

Jesus met the women and told them to take this good news to all his friends. Ever since then, friends of Jesus have been telling people that Jesus rose from the dead. Since Jesus rose from the dead, we can be sure that, when we die, he will raise us from the dead.

Only one man can give us life forever. That is Jesus. We should meet him and trust him.

Thinking about the story

1. What was the good news the angel brought to the women?
2. How did the women feel before they heard the good news?
3. How did the women feel after they heard the good news?
4. Why were the women both afraid and happy?
5. How can we sure that we will rise from the dead?

19. Jesus' Last Command

Matthew 28:16–20

After this, the 11 disciples went to Galilee. They went to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they arrived at the place, they saw Jesus. Then they went down on their knees and they worshipped him. But some of the disciples were not sure that it really was Jesus. Jesus went close to them and he said to them, 'God has given me authority over everyone and everything. I have all authority in heaven and in this world. So, you must go to people in every country of the world. Teach them how to become my disciples. Baptise them by the authority of God the Father, his Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything that I have taught you. You can be sure that I will be with you always. I will be with you until the end of time.'

Did you know?

- Jesus had twelve special disciples. One of them betrayed him. His name was Judas. Then he killed himself. So, now there are only eleven disciples.
- Some of Jesus disciples still doubted. They could not understand that Jesus was alive again.

The meaning of the story

Jesus had been with his friends for three years. Now the time has come for him to leave them. He must go back to his Father in heaven. He met with them and gave them one last command.

Jesus wants people everywhere to become his friends and followers. This is the work he gave his disciples to do. They must teach everyone,

everywhere, about God's kingdom. They are to baptise these new disciples. This baptism is a sign that people now belong to Jesus.

Telling others about Jesus is a big job. Jesus promised his friends that wherever they are, he will be with them. He promised to help them with this work.

We have written this little book because we want to obey Jesus' command. We want you to meet Jesus and become one of his many followers. If you become a friend of Jesus, he will be with you wherever you go.

Who is Jesus?

A king or president has power over a country. An emperor has power over an empire, which has many countries. Only one man has *all* authority. Only one man has authority over all the countries of the world. Only one man has authority over all the world *and* all of heaven. This man is God's Son, the Lord Jesus. Jesus has *all* authority.

Thinking about the story

1. What does it mean for someone to have authority?
2. What does it mean for someone to have all authority?
3. Why did God give all authority to Jesus?
4. What is a disciple?
5. How do we make disciples?

20. Jesus is Taken to Heaven

Acts 1:8–11

But the Holy Spirit will come to you, and he will give you power. The Holy Spirit will make your spirit strong. Then you will tell other people everywhere in the world about me. You will do that in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria and in places far away.’

When Jesus had finished speaking to his apostles, God took him up to heaven. The apostles watched Jesus while he went up. Then a cloud hid him and they could not see him any more.

The apostles were still looking carefully up into the sky when suddenly two men appeared. They were wearing white clothes and they stood near the apostles.

The men said to the apostles, ‘You men from Galilee, you should not still be standing here and looking up into the sky. God has taken Jesus into heaven. You saw the way that Jesus went up to heaven. One day, he himself will return in the same way.’

Did you know?

- Luke wrote two books. One is about Jesus. The other book is the story of how the disciples obeyed Jesus’ last command. This book is called ‘The Acts of the Apostles’.
- The Holy Spirit has been given to all of Jesus’ friends.
- The two men in white clothes were angels.

The meaning of the story

Jesus told his disciples to go everywhere and tell people about him. He promised he would be with them while they did this work. Here he told them he would be with them by his Spirit. The Spirit is Jesus’

presence with his people. After he has returned to heaven, Jesus will send his Spirit to all his friends.

Jesus then returned to his Heavenly Father. We have seen that God sent angels to tell the good news about Jesus. They announced his birth. They announced he was risen from the dead. Here they announced that Jesus will come back again.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Most people did not know that God's king had been born. That was his first coming. *At his second coming, everyone will see him. Everyone will know he is the king.* Christians look forward to Jesus' second coming.

Who is Jesus?

Jesus is the king who is coming back again. When Jesus comes back, he will judge every man and woman for all the things they have ever done. Everyone who has not obeyed God and has not trusted in Jesus will never enter into God's kingdom. Everyone who has met Jesus and become his friend and follower will live with God forever. Meet Jesus today, so you can be with him forever.

Thinking about the story

1. Where is Jesus now?
2. Who is the Holy Spirit?
3. What will the Holy Spirit help Jesus' friends to do?
4. What is Judgment Day?
5. What does it mean to trust in Jesus?

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Believing in Jesus

John 20:30–31

Jesus did many other miracles while the disciples were with him. I have not written about all of them in this book. But I have written about these things, so that you will be able to believe the truth. You will believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. Because you believe in him, you will have true life.

We have just begun to learn about Jesus. He taught many things. He did many miracles.

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wrote their stories because they wanted you to meet Jesus. We have written this book because we want you to meet Jesus.

How do you meet Jesus? The first three letters of the English alphabet, A, B and C, will help you remember what to do: Admit, Believe and Commit.

First, *admit* you have sinned. Tell God how sorry you are for all the bad things you have done. You have not loved God as you should. You have not always treated other people with love, kindness and respect. Say you are sorry to God and ask him to forgive you.

Second, *believe* that Jesus has taken your sins away when he died on the cross. We deserve to die for our sins, but Jesus took our place. Jesus rose from the dead so that one day we will rise from the dead and live with him in paradise. Tell Jesus, ‘I believe you died and rose again for me.’

Third, *commit* your life to following and obeying Jesus. Become his friend and stay with him always.

If you would like to meet Jesus and become his friend, then say this prayer:

Dear God, I am sorry for all the bad things I have done.

Please forgive me.

Thank you that your Son died on the cross for me.

I promise to love and serve you for the rest of my life.

Amen.

GLOSSARY

A

Abraham	The first ancestor of the Jewish nation, and of other nations. The father of Isaac and the grandfather of Jacob. God loved Abraham because he had faith.
ancestor	A person who lived many years ago and from whom the families of your father or mother have come.
apostle	Someone that God sends to tell people his message and to teach them. Especially one of the twelve men that Jesus chose to work with him when he was alive. After Jesus died, other people became apostles.
Aramaic	A language that Jesus spoke.
authorities	People who have the power or the right to give orders. Kings and other rulers.
angels	Servants of God who live with him in his home called Heaven.

B

baptism	When Christians use water to baptize someone.
baptise	(1) To put a person into water, or to put water on a person. Before Jesus came, this showed that the person wanted to obey God. Now it is the way to show that we belong to Christ and his church. It shows that we have new life with God, because Jesus has died for us. He has also risen from death. (2) When the Holy Spirit comes into a person when they believe in Christ.
Baptist	John was called 'John the Baptist' because he baptized many people. This was to prepare the way for Jesus. See also baptism and baptise.
before	In front of.
being	A person or animal that is alive.
believe	To be sure that something is true. To 'believe in' someone is to be sure that they are good, and that what they say is true.
belong to	(1) If something belongs to you, it is yours. And you own it. (2) To belong to a group means to be a member of it.
belongs	What belongs to people is their own.

betray	To give information about a person or a nation to an enemy.
break	(1) To damage or spoil something. (2) If you break the law, then you do not obey it.
brick	People make bricks to build houses with them. They use clay, which is a type of earth that is soft and sticky when it is wet. They bake the clay so that it becomes very hard.
broken	The past part of the verb to 'break'.
brother	(1) A name that a Jew sometimes called another Jew. A name that a Christian may call another Christian. (2) Your brother is a man or a boy who has the same parents as you.

C

Caesar	The most important Roman ruler. He lived in the city called Rome.
call	If God calls someone, he speaks to them. And he asks them to do something for him.
celebrate	To have a very happy time; to have a happy party, sometimes because you are remembering something.
chief	Most important.
Christ	A name for Jesus in the Greek language that means the same as Messiah in the Hebrew language. It means that God chose him as a special king. Messiah was the Jews' word for the king that God would send to save them.
Christian	A person who believes in Jesus Christ. He or she agrees with the message that Jesus taught.
Christianity	What people teach and believe about Jesus. See Christian, church.
church	A group of Christians who meet together in a certain place. It can also mean the group of all Christians in the whole world and through all times. In the Bible, a church is not a building but a group of people who believe in Jesus Christ.
clean	(1) Not dirty. (2) Something that is right for God to use, holy.
command	(1) To tell a person what they must do. (2) A rule that says what you must do. There were ten special commands that God gave to Moses on Sinai mountain. You can read these rules in Exodus 20:1–17 and Deuteronomy 5:6–21.
commandment	A command that God gave. The Ten Commandments were the

	ten important rules that God gave to Moses on Sinai mountain. You can read these rules in Deuteronomy 5:6–21.
confess	If you confess to something, you say that it is true.
creation	(1) The act of God when he created the world and everything that there is. (2) Everything that God has made.
criminal	Someone who has broken the rules of a country.
cross	Two pieces of wood that people have fixed together. The Romans fixed a person to a cross to die as a punishment. Jesus died in this way. The cross is now the sign of the church of Christ. To carry your cross means not to think about yourself first. It means to put Jesus and other people first in your life.

D

darkness	When there is no light. People 'live in darkness' if their behaviour is evil.
David	A man who served God. He was a king of the Jews. David wrote part of the Bible.
demon	A bad spirit. Demons work for Satan, who is the chief devil.
descendant	A child, grandchild, and any future child born to them.
disciple	Someone who follows a leader or teacher and learns from him. Jesus had many disciples and he taught them. The apostles were twelve special disciples of Jesus.
doubt	A feeling that someone has when they are not sure. They are not sure if something is true or possible. It is the opposite of trust.
dove	A grey or white bird that is gentle. Sometimes in the Bible a dove may mean the Holy Spirit.

E

Egypt	A country in Africa. Pharaohs were the kings of Egypt. The Israelites were slaves in Egypt before the exodus.
Egyptian	(1) Someone who comes from Egypt. (2) Something belonging to Egypt.
Elijah	A prophet in the Old Testament.
emperor	The male ruler of an empire. In the Old Testament, there were emperors in Babylon, and emperors of the Medes and Persians. In the New Testament, emperors ruled the Roman empire.
empire	A group of countries. The ruler of one of the countries that is in

	the group is the emperor. They rule over every country that is in the group.
enemy	(1) Somebody who fights against you in a war. (2) Somebody who wants to hurt you or attack you.
exile	Someone who has to leave their own land, often for a long time. Enemies may force the people of a nation to leave their homes. Then they are exiles, and they live 'in exile.' The period until they return home is called 'the exile.' The Jews were in exile in Babylon at the time of the prophet, Daniel.
exodus	When a large number of people go away from a place. It refers to the time when God brought the people of Israel out of Egypt.
evil	Very bad. Wicked. There is no good in it.
F	
faith	To believe in someone or something. Christian faith is when we believe in God and in Jesus, his Son. See Hebrews 11:1–3.
faithful	Loyal to someone or something. Standing firm and not moving from what you think is true.
fall	When someone comes down or goes down, in body or in spirit.
family	The word 'family' includes father, mother and children. Also, it includes grandparents and those who have been born before. The 'family of King David' means everyone who was born in Israel's royal family. David was the second king of Israel, and God appointed him to be Israel's ruler. Jesus belonged to the family of David.
fast	If you fast, you do not eat any food for a time. A fast is a time when people do not eat. This might be in order to show respect to God. Perhaps they want to pray like Jesus prayed in Matthew 4:1–2. Or people might not eat because they are very sad. Or they might not eat to show God that they are sorry for their bad deeds.
father	Somebody that you obey as you would obey your own father.
fear	(1) To be afraid of someone, or to be afraid that something bad might happen. (2) To show someone that you think that they are good and great.
festival	A special day or days when people are happy because they remember something good. It is also called a feast. There were several Jewish festivals every year.

Glossary

fisherman	Someone who catches fish. Many of Jesus' disciples were fishermen. They included Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John.
foolish	To act like a fool.
for ever	Always, so that there is no end.
forgive	To stop being angry with another person who has done bad things. If we trust in Jesus and his death on the cross, God forgives us. He will not punish us for the wrong things that we have done.
foundation	The base of a building. The strong part in the ground on which people build houses. The foundation needs to be strong or the building will fall down. See Matthew 7:24–27.
frankincense	A powder with a sweet smell.

G

Gentile	A person who is not a Jew.
give birth	When a woman gives birth, she has a baby.
God of Truth	God who always says what is true.
God's Law	The rules that God gave. These include the Ten Commandments (important rules) that God gave to Moses on Sinai mountain. You can read these rules in Deuteronomy 5:6–21.
Good News	The gospel. The message that Jesus came to save us.
Greek	(1) A person who comes from the land of Greece. At the time of Jesus, Greek people lived in many places that were outside Greece. (2) The language in which the authors wrote the New Testament.

H

heal	To make someone well. To cure them.
healing	(1) Making well. (2) An act that cures or heals. Jesus cured many people by God's power. And these miracles are called healings.
healthy	Having good health.
heaven	God's home. It is a place beyond the earth where God and Jesus Christ live.
heavenly	About heaven.
heart	(1) A part of the body. (2) The place deep inside a person where they feel things. For example, they may feel happy or sad, or brave or afraid.

Hebrew	(1) The language that the Jews spoke. They used Hebrew when they wrote the Old Testament. (2) A Hebrew is one of God's people who lived in Israel. Sometimes they are called Jews, or Israelites. (3) 'Hebrews' is the name of a book in the New Testament.
held	Past tense of hold; fasten your hand on something.
holy	(1) Describes God. He is completely different to all other people and things. He is completely good and pure and perfect. He has no sin. (2) Also describes the people and things that are special because they belong to God. God has made them clean.
Holy One	A name for God. It is also a name for Jesus, the Messiah, who is God's special person.
Holy Spirit	God's Spirit whom Jesus sent to help people. Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit who helps us. The Holy Spirit is God, and is equal with God the Father and God the Son. The Holy Spirit comes to give people the power to do what God wants.
honest	Sometimes it means someone who speaks only true words; but sometimes it means someone who is fair; honest people do not rob other people.
honour	If you honour someone, you think that they are very good. And you say that they are very good. You give special praise to them and you respect them.
hope	To want something to happen in the future. To want something to be true. To look towards something that God has promised. And you think that it will happen.
huge	Very, very large.
human	What people are like. Not angels, or animals, or other things that are alive.
humble	Not proud. A humble person thinks that he or she is not very important.
I	
in front	At the front of us.
in need	People are in need when they have needs.
incense	Something that gives a sweet smell when it burns. The Jews used it to show their love to God in the temple in Jerusalem.

insult	If you insult someone, you say bad things against them. You say that they are not a good person.
Isaac	Abraham and Sarah's son. See Jews.
Israel	God changed the name of Jacob to Israel (Genesis 35). The twelve sons of Jacob were the ancestors of the nation of Israel. Israel was the group of people that God chose. The land that God promised to them was the land of Israel. The children of Israel are Jews or Israelites. After King Solomon died, the country of Israel became two nations. The nation in the north was called Israel. The nation in the south was called Judah.
Israelite	A person from Israel. People who speak Hebrew. The people who are Jews and who live in Israel.
Israelites	Descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the people who lived in Israel; or, sometimes, the people that lived in the north part of Israel.

J

Jacob	Abraham's grandson. He was Isaac's son and Esau's brother. God changed Jacob's name to Israel. The twelve tribes of Israel came from Jacob's twelve sons.
Jerusalem	The capital city of Israel and Judah. The temple of God was in Jerusalem.
Jesus	God told Joseph and Mary to give this name to his Son. Jesus is a Greek name that means 'The Lord saves'. The Hebrew form of the name is Joshua.
Jew	A descendant of Judah, who was a son of Jacob (Israel) and ancestor of one of the Israelite tribes. They began to be called Jews after the exile in Babylon. The religion of the Jews is called Judaism.
Jewish	A word that describes a Jew or anything that belongs to Jews and their way of life.
Jews	People that are born from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (their children, grandchildren and so on).
Judea	The Greek and Roman name for the country where the Jewish people lived.
judge	(1) To think and decide about something. To form an opinion about something. To decide whether something is good or bad. To say who is right and who is wrong. (2) A person who has

authority to decide who is right or wrong. A judge says whether someone is good or bad. (3) The ‘judges’ were leaders of Israel who tried to rule the people as God directed them.

judgement (1) When God says what is right or wrong. When God tells people if they are good or bad. See also judge. (2) When someone says if another person is right or wrong.

K

kindness What you show people when you are kind to them.

kingdom A place or a country where a king rules.

kingdom of God The kingdom of God shows how God rules his people. He is the king of all Christians, and all Christians are in his kingdom. Jesus spoke a lot about the kingdom of God and what it is like.

L

laugh at Laugh against someone to cause them to feel bad.

Law The rules that God gave to the Jews in the Old Testament of the Bible. ‘The Law’ was the name that the Jews gave to the first five books of the Bible. But sometimes ‘The Law’ meant the whole of the Old Testament.

laws The rules that God gave to his people, most importantly those in the Old Testament; or, the rules that a government makes.

lies Words that are not true; the speaker knows that they are not true.

life Someone or something that is alive has life; sometimes it means to know God and to live with him after we die.

like Another word for ‘as’.

listen The Hebrew word for listen means ‘hear and obey’.

look To seem to be. If someone looks happy, they seem to be happy.

Lord, lord The word ‘lord’ means master; ‘Lord’ is a name for God.

loyal Describes someone who always gives support to their friend or to a leader.

M

myrrh A sticky substance that comes from some trees. It has a strong, sweet smell. People used it as a perfume or medicine. And people put it on dead bodies before they buried them.

Messiah A Hebrew word that means ‘anointed person.’ In the Greek

language, the word is 'Christ.' Jesus Christ means Jesus the Messiah. It means the person whom God would send to save his people and to rule them. God promised the Jewish people that the Messiah would come to rescue them and be their king. Jesus is the Messiah that God promised to send.

miracle A great and wonderful thing that only God can do. A wonderful work that shows God's power. God uses miracles to show his truth.

Moses A great leader of the Israelites, who gave God's rules to the people.

N

nail A short piece of metal that has a sharp point at one end. People hit nails into pieces of wood to hold them together.

nation A large group of people who belong to the same country. They have the same ruler or king. They usually speak the same language.

Nazareth The town in Galilee where Jesus lived when he was a boy.

New Testament The last part of the Bible. There are twenty-seven books in the New Testament. The writers wrote them after Jesus lived on earth. The New Testament describes Jesus' life and the things that he taught. Also, it is about the church and about the beliefs and the lives of Christians.

O

offer To burn something on God's special table as a gift to him; or, sometimes priests or other people ate the food but it was really a gift to God.

Old Testament The first part of the Bible, which the writers wrote before the life of Jesus. Another name for the Old Testament was the Scriptures. The people had only this part of the Bible during Jesus' life on earth.

order To tell someone firmly what they must do. An order is an instruction or command.

P

parable A short story that has a special meaning. Jesus told many parables to explain the things that he taught. They were stories that had a second meaning. Sometimes it was a secret meaning.

paradise	Another name for heaven. The place of God.
Passover	An important holy festival for the Jews. It is a time to remember that they were slaves in the land of Egypt. But God rescued them, with Moses as their leader. It was the name of the meal that the Jews ate at the time when they left Egypt. You can read about this in Exodus 12. Every year Jewish people eat the Passover meal to remember that God rescued them.
peace	(1) When people are not fighting each other. (2) When there is no trouble in our minds. We are not afraid or angry. We are friends with God and with other people. (3) 'Peace be with you!' was a way of saying 'hello'.
perfect	Describes something that is completely good. There is nothing wrong with it.
Persians	People who came from a country that is called Iran now.
Pharisee	The Pharisees were a group of Jews who went to a special school to learn God's Laws. They thought that they obeyed all of God's rules. But they added many of their own rules.
plan	An idea about what you want to do; or what someone has decided to do.
please	(1) If something pleases you, it makes you feel happy. (2) A polite addition to a request.
praise	(1) To say that somebody or something is good or great. (2) To tell God how great and good he is. We can praise God when we are praying to him. And we can praise him when we sing to him. See also worship. (3) Words that say how great someone is.
pray	To talk with God, to thank him. To ask God for help for ourselves and for other people. To say sorry to God for the bad things that we think. Or the bad things that we do.
prayer	The words that we say when we talk to God
priests	Men that God chose to do a special work for him. They worked in the temple.
prophet	A special servant of God who hears God's words, and tells them to other people. A prophet says what God thinks and what God will do. Sometimes a prophet can say what will happen in the future.
property	Everything that a person owns.
proud	(1) How someone feels when he or she has done something

	well. (2) When someone thinks that they are is better than other people. Proud people think that they are very important.
punish	To hurt someone or to cause trouble for them because they have done wrong things. This may teach them not to do wrong things again.
punishment	People receive a punishment when they have done wrong things.
pure	(1) Holy, innocent, clean. (2) Contains only one material.
R	
religion	The belief in God, or in false gods. The rules and traditions about God and about our behaviour. Something that people do as part of the worship of God.
rescue	To save someone from danger.
respect	To think that another person is important. If you respect someone, you always do what is proper and good for them.
Rome	A big city in Italy. Rome was the important city in the world at the time of Jesus. It was a powerful city and it had a strong army. Its soldiers fought and defeated many countries. In these countries, the Romans made the people obey the laws of Rome. They made them pay taxes to Rome. The people could not rule themselves in the countries that the Romans had defeated.
Roman:	(1) A person who comes from Rome. (2) Anything that belongs to Rome. (3) Romans is the name of one of the books in the New Testament. It is the letter from Paul to the church in Rome.
royal	A word that describes a king.
S	
Sabbath	The Sabbath was the seventh day of the week. It was special to the Jews. It was a day on which the people must rest from work (Exodus 20:8–11).
sacrifice	(1) To sacrifice something that is valuable or important means to give it away for someone, or for God. To sacrifice an animal means to kill it as an offering to God (or to false gods). (2) Something that is important to you that you give to someone else for a special reason. God told the Israelites to make sacrifices to him. Usually it was a special animal that the priests killed. And then they burned it on the altar.
sadness	To feel very sad.

sandal	A light shoe that has a piece of leather or wood that goes under the foot. Narrow pieces of leather or cloth go over the foot and round the ankle.
Satan	The Devil. The chief of the bad spirits. Satan is the enemy of God, and the enemy of God's people.
save	(1) To rescue someone. To help to keep someone safe. (2) To rescue someone from sin and from the result of sin.
Saviour	Jesus is the Saviour, the person who saves us. He rescues us from evil things. He will bring us back to God from the bad things that we have done. And from the bad things that we have said or thought.
servant	A person whose job is to serve his or her master. A slave. Or, a person who works for God.
serve	To work for a master, or God. To help other people.
share	(1) To receive (or give) part of something. (2) To join with other people and receive something.
shepherd	A person who looks after sheep. A sheep farmer. Sometimes the Bible uses the word shepherd to describe someone who looks after people. See Psalm 23:1 and Zechariah 11:15-16. Often a church leader is called a 'pastor'. The word 'pastor' means shepherd.
sign	(1) A sign shows the right way to go. (2) In the Bible, a sign may be a miracle that shows something about God.
sin	(1) Any wrong thing that we do when we do not obey God. Or it may be something that we do not do when we should do it. (2) To sin is to live in a way that does not make God happy. We sin when we do not obey God.
sinner	A person who does not obey God. Someone who does bad things against God and against other people. Also, a person who says or thinks bad things is a sinner.
sister	(1) Your sister is a woman who has the same parents as you. (2) The word sister may mean another woman who is a Christian.
skull	The large round bone that is in the head. It gives the shape to the head. The brain is inside the skull.
slave	A slave belongs to someone else and must obey that person. People could buy slaves, and sell them.
son	Often means grandson, and so on.

sour	Opposite of sweet; not nice when you taste it.
spirit	(1) The part of a person that is alive, but which we cannot see. The part of a person that will be alive for ever, even after their body dies. (2) Beings that belong outside our world. There are good spirits, that usually are called angels. Also there are bad spirits that work with the Devil. They are sometimes called demons. See also Holy Spirit.
spiritual	Describes things that belong to our spirits rather than our bodies. Things that belong to God's home in heaven.
steal	To take something that is not yours.
suddenly	When something happens quickly and it surprises us.
suffer	When we are hurting inside.
suffering	Feeling a lot of pain; hurting badly.
synagogue	A building where Jews meet and pray to God. They also read the Scriptures in the synagogue.

T

tax	Money that people must pay to the government.
Temple	The special building in Jerusalem where the Jews offered their sacrifices to God. King Solomon built the first Temple. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed it. The Jews rebuilt it (Ezra 6). King Herod built the third Temple that existed at the time of Jesus. The Romans destroyed the third Temple in the year AD 70.
tomb	A grave. A place for a dead body.
tax collector	The person who collected the taxes from the people, for the government. In the Gospels, tax collectors took money from the Jews. Then the tax collectors paid this money to the Romans. Many tax collectors were not honest. They took more money than the law allowed them to take. So the people hated these tax-collectors.
terrible	Very, very bad.
terror	What you feel when you are very much afraid.
terrorist	A person who uses terror to oppose the people who have authority.
test	(1) To try to see if something works. (2) To find out what someone can do. To give an exam to somebody. (3) A test is like an exam. It is to show how good, or how clever someone is.

the poor	The people that are poor, weak, ill or have no help.
thirst, thirsty	(1) If you are thirsty, you feel a need to drink something. (2) If you thirst for something, you want it very much.
tradition	A custom or belief that has not changed for a long time.
tribe	A family group that has the same ancestors. They speak the same language. The 12 tribes of Israel are the families that came from the 12 sons of Jacob.
trust	(1) To believe that someone is good, and will do what is right. (2) To believe something because you are sure that it is true. See faith.
truth	Something that is true and right.
U	
unclean	(1) Dirty. (2) When something was not right to use because God did not accept it. The Law of Moses told the Israelites which things would make them unclean.
V	
vinegar	Sour wine. Roman soldiers often drank vinegar.
voice	The sound that somebody makes with the mouth.
W	
watch	To look in a careful way.
wine	A drink that people make from grapes. It has alcohol in it.
wise	A wise person has learned to know what is good and right.
wonderful	Something or someone so good that you think, 'That is great!'
wooden	Something that someone has made from wood.
worship	To praise God and to show that we love him. To say that God is great. Often we worship God together with other people, with prayers and songs.
Y	
yeast	People put yeast into flour and water (dough) when they make bread. The yeast makes the dough rise before they bake it.