FOUNDATIONS FOR FAITH
1. Who is God?
2. Who are We?
3. God in the Flesh
4. The Death that Changes Lives
5. Living the New Life
STUDY 1 WHO IS GOD?

Read Genesis 1:1-2:3
1. List the activities of God mentioned in this passage?

2. The many words and phrases repeated throughout the passage create an obvious sense of structure and pattern.
   a. What are some of these words or phrases?
   b. The author does not tell us much about how God ‘created’ since this is not his focus. What does he tell us about this however? (See verses 3, 6, 9 etc and compare with Psalm 33:6.)

3. God’s words will become a central theme in the Bible. What can you find out about how God has revealed himself to people?
   a. Hebrews 1:1-2
   b. James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23

The God of the Bible is a speaking God. He creates and interacts with His world by speaking. Without God’s words we would know little about Him. It is a striking truth and an overwhelming kindness that the kingly Creator should initiate communication with us by making himself known through His words.
4. Just as we can know something about a tradesman from his handiwork, we can know something about God from His Creation.
   a. What ideas in the passage suggest God’s care for the world He has made?

5. Human beings are unique amongst all created beings.
   a. How is this suggested by Genesis 1 (see verses 26-31)?
   b. Try to draw a diagram showing the relationship between human beings, God and the rest of Creation.

6. Through His words in the Bible, God has given us knowledge of the real purpose of life! We have been made by God, for God!
   a. For what purpose do you think most people think they exist?
   b. In what concrete ways do you think the Bible’s truth should impact on the way you live?
   c. What is one thing you could do to put this truth into practice?
Read Genesis 2:4-25
We saw last week that God is an orderly Creator. It is therefore no surprise that what He made perfectly reflected this character. God established an “order” in creation. It is illustrated by the diagram below:

1. Human beings are unique among all created beings. How is this truth shown in:
   a. Genesis 1:26-28?
   b. Genesis 2:4-14?
   c. Genesis 2:15-25?
2. Consider the following verses. How do they show that God made mankind for relationship with himself (1:26, 2:7, 2:8, 15, 2:16, 17, 3:8)?

**Read Genesis 3:1-13**

3. How did the serpent tempt the woman to disobey God (verses 1-5)?

4. Consider the responses to Adam and Eve's sin:
   a. God's response?

   b. Adam and Eve's response?

5. This is a crucial turning point in the Bible's account of life. List the results of human sin.
   a. Genesis 3:8-10
   b. Genesis 3:15
   c. Genesis 3:16
   d. Genesis 3:17-19
   e. Genesis 3:23
6. Consider the following verses. What do they teach about sin and where it comes from?
   a. Romans 1:18
   b. Romans 3:10, 23
   c. Mark 7:20-23

7. If you were God, what would you need to do to solve the problem of sin?
8. Answer briefly. As a human being, what can you do to solve the problem of sin?

9. There is hope that God will solve our sin problem. What hope do you have?
Study 3  God in the Flesh

Read John 1:1-5

1. The subject of these verses is one whom John calls the “Word”. What can you find out about the “Word” in:
   a. Verses 1-5?
   b. Verse 9 cf Verse 5?
   c. Verse 14?

2. In verse 14, what statements reveal that the “Word” refers to Jesus? List other evidence in the passage that confirms this?

3. Two titles are used by this author to refer to Jesus. Why do you think he calls Jesus the Word? (See 1:18.)

Jesus is God the Son. He came into our world in the most striking way, taking on flesh that He might be perfectly equipped to make God known. In so doing, He embodies God’s message to human beings. It is a message of both danger and rescue.

4. John also calls Jesus “the light”. He shines in the darkness, yet the darkness has not understood. In what respect is our world in the “dark” (See Ephesians 2:1-3; John 3:19-21; Romans 8:7)?
5. Jesus’ mission is one of rescue. How is this rescue described in verses 12, 13?

6. Although it is sometimes said that all human beings are “God’s children” what is actually true of God’s children according to verses 12, 13?

7. Consider John 12:44-46. What does it teach about how people can come out of the darkness?

8. In an extra-ordinary manner, Jesus was both God and Man. How do the following verses show Jesus to be fully man?
   a. 1 Cor 15:21, 22
   b. Hebrews 2:14, 17

9. Someone once said that Jesus puts a human face on God. He came to make God known to a world in the dark. What can we learn about God from Jesus?

10. If you belong to Christ it is because Jesus has given you the ‘right’ to be a child of God (verse 12). What reaction does this produce in you?
In our world today, there are some who worship an array of heavenly intermediaries … angels, saints, spirit guides, mediators of various kinds. In the first century it was not much different. The author of this letter is about to tell us why this is so foolish!

**Read Hebrews 2:5-9**

1. The Bible claims that the death of Jesus is the central event in history, while others consider it the futile death of a martyr. According to the following verses, what has been achieved by the crucifixion of Jesus?
   a. Hebrews 2:9
   b. Hebrews 2:10
   c. Hebrews 2:14
   d. Hebrews 2:17
   e. Hebrews 2:18

2. According to this passage, why did Jesus choose to become a man of flesh and blood?
   a. Hebrews 2:14-17
b. Hebrews 2:18

The Bible describes Jesus’ death as the death of a “substitute”. We hear of substitutes in various contexts. You can probably list several. In a sporting context for example, it is important that the substitute be appropriately qualified. It is worth considering the requirements of a good substitute.

3. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus is at work restoring a world damaged by sin. What can you learn about the future of those who belong to Jesus from:
   a. Hebrews 2: 9-11
   b. Revelation 21:3,4

4. Consider the diagram above. The entire created world has not yet been restored. Where has God begun this work however (2 Corinthians 5:17)?
5. This side of heaven, Christians are people caught between two worlds. While they are being renewed, the world they live in continues in corruption.
   a. In what ways do you notice this tension?

   b. How might you be tempted to minimise it?

   c. Do you think this tension will go away in time?

6. What things help you persevere in living the life of “Christian tension”? 
What happens when a person becomes a Christian? There is a radical change which the Bible explains using many different images. We have been translated from one kingdom to another; from one age to another; we have been reborn and recreated. A change so vast leaves us asking the critical question: How then should we live the new life?

**Read Colossians 3:1-14**

1. There are a number of commands given to the new believers who first read this passage. List some of those that stand out to you.

A Christian life lived with an emphasis merely on a list of commands will be distorted, joyless and ultimately destructive. We need to see the reasons behind God’s commands… Commands which are not onerous but are given that we might enjoy the new life to which we have been called and please our heavenly Father in living it!

2. In Colossians 3:1-4, what three reasons are given for why Christians should take action to live the new life?
   a. Verse 1
   b. Verse 3
3. In a remarkable way, the Christian's life has been linked to that of Jesus. In light of these truths what action should we now take (v's 1-4)?

4. New thinking is crucial to living the new life God gives. What do the following verses teach about this?
   a. Romans 12:2
   b. Romans 13:11, 12

**Read Colossians 3:5-14**

5. Give a summary answer only. If we are to live the new life, what two-fold action will we need to take?

6. What motivations to action do the following verses contain?
   a. Verses 5-11
   b. Verses 12-14
7. Those who belong to Christ have died and been raised with Him. Is this true of you?

8. What will help you to more consistently “set your heart and mind” on the things of heaven?

9. As you consider what Paul says about living the new life:
   a. Is there something you need to put off?

   b. Is there something you need to become?

   c. Are there things for which you are grateful?