



Lesson 4

THE GOSPEL

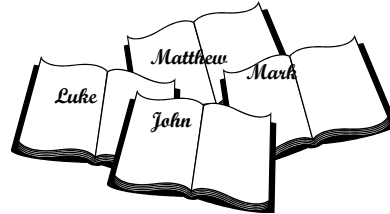
Reading **Isaiah 55**

Good News

Everyone enjoys hearing good news. And that is just what the gospel is. The word "Gospel" **means** "good news".

The first four books of the New Testament are often called the 'gospels' because of the good news they contain.

It is the good news about the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the Son of God and was born of the virgin Mary.



These are just a part of the good news!

Not only did Jesus show us the qualities of God, and how loving and kind God is, but he also showed the great power of God in the miracles he performed. But the most astonishing thing is that Jesus never sinned. Because he did not sin, he was raised from the dead. He is the only person who has been raised from the dead and has stayed alive.

This is not just good news for the Lord Jesus Christ, but it is good news for us! By his death and resurrection, Jesus has opened up a way for us sinful humans to have our sins forgiven. He has given us the hope of life after death. So the good news is that we do not have to stay in the awful mess we are in. God has provided the means for us to escape from sin and death.

But there is more!

The Lord Jesus Christ is in heaven now, but he will soon return to this earth. Revelation 1:7 looks forward to the return of Jesus:

"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. "

When he returns to this earth, Jesus Christ will set up God's kingdom here on earth. The world will then be a very different place. We are told there will be

- no more war;
- no more famine;
- no more sorrow;
- no more sin;
- no more death.

With the Lord Jesus Christ as the great world ruler, righteousness will be established and there will be peace. The earth will bring forth plenty, so that famine will be removed:

"He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it" (Isaiah 25:8).

God offers us a place in this kingdom on earth. It is a tremendous offer that He is making to us. Of course there are conditions attached, and that is why we need to read God's Word, the Bible, to find out what God wants us to do with our lives now.

The gospel was known to people in Old Testament times

We are told that the gospel was preached to Abraham! (Galatians 3:8). Because of his faith and obedience, God made promises to Abraham. He was told that he would inherit the land

of Israel **for ever**. Abraham grew old and died, without owning any of the land God had promised him.

Yet we know that God always keeps His promises. So in order to live in the land God has promised him, Abraham must be brought back from the dead. (We are told that Abraham believed in resurrection - Hebrews 11:19.) So the promise of life after death was also given to Abraham.

The land that Abraham was promised will be the centre of the future kingdom. Abraham will be raised from the dead and be in God's kingdom on earth when the Lord Jesus Christ returns. So Abraham knew about the good news of the coming kingdom and looked forward to it (Hebrews 11:10).

King David also looked forward to the time when his descendant would rule from Jerusalem.

You will learn more about God's promises to Abraham and David in later lessons.

When will the Lord Jesus Christ come back?

We do not know the date of the second coming of Jesus. But we do know, from things that are happening in the world today, that it will not be long before he comes back. For almost 2000 years the Jews had no land of their own. Now they are back in their ancient country, and in 1948 the State of Israel was set up. That was something that had to happen before the return of the Lord.

The world today is full of violence and crime, and people do just as they please, without restraint. There are wars, famines and dreadful diseases all over the world. Men are frightened of the future, just as Jesus said they would be:

"Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth" (Luke 21:26).

He went on to say that when all these things were happening, his return would be very near. You will learn more of this in later lessons.

Jesus will come back to be King of the world

Jesus told Pontius Pilate that he was born to be a King. Over his cross they wrote: 'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews'. But he will not only be king of the Jews. He will be king over the whole world. God spoke of this thousands of years ago. He said:

"He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Psalm 72:8).

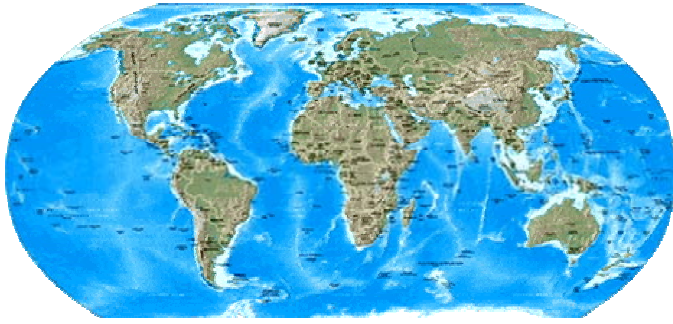
What will happen when Jesus Christ returns to this earth?

He will raise the dead and judge them. Only those who are right with God will be given eternal life and a place in that Kingdom on earth. They will then help Jesus in ruling the world.

At that time, Jerusalem will be the capital city of the world, and Jesus Christ will reign over the whole earth. It will be a time of great happiness. Jesus told his disciples to pray for this time. He said, When you pray, say:

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven . . . For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever" (Matthew 6:10-13).

After a thousand years, there will be no more sin and no more death. God will be "*all in all*" - just as He planned from the beginning.



"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea "
(Habakkuk 2:14)

The wonderful Gospel message is that we can be part of this Kingdom

How can we be given a place in God's future Kingdom on earth?

We need to recognise how sinful all men are, and to do something about it. When the apostle Paul was in Athens he said:

God...commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30)

God commands all men to repent. To repent is to stop pleasing yourself and to try to please God. We are all sinners, so we all have to repent and be baptized in water. We must try to live as Jesus said we should. To those who do this, Jesus Christ will give everlasting life when he comes back.

(You must have noticed that the Gospel is not about going to heaven-that is not Bible teaching. It is about everlasting life in the Kingdom of God on earth.)

Summary

1. The whole Bible is about the Gospel, or good news. Faithful people in Old and New Testaments understood the Gospel.
2. To save men, Jesus lived a perfect life and died willingly.
3. God raised Jesus from the dead-and a little later he ascended to heaven.
4. The Lord Jesus will return to set up God's kingdom here on earth.
5. He will raise the dead and judge them. Those accepted will be given everlasting life in his kingdom on earth.
6. If we believe the Gospel we should try and follow the example of the Lord Jesus.

Verses to read: Isaiah 45:18; Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 25:31-34; 1 Corinthians 15:28

Learn by heart: Genesis 12:1-3

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: and / will make of thee a great nation, and / will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and / will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. "