

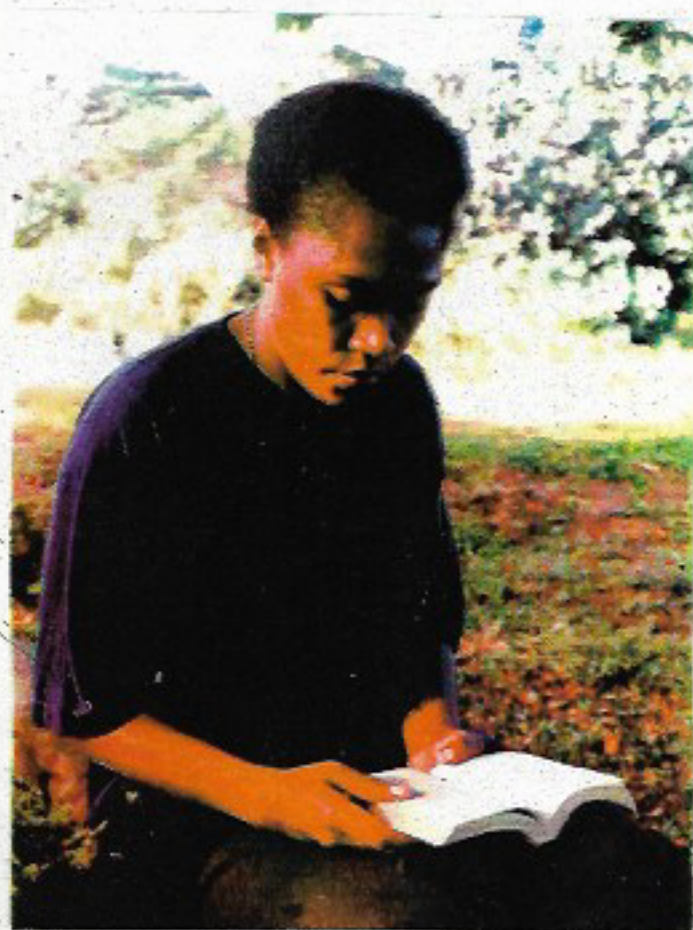
**Grade 9 Religious Education**

**BOOK 2**

**UNDERSTANDING THE  
NEW TESTAMENT**

**Thy  
Word  
is a lamp  
unto  
my feet**

**and a  
light  
unto  
my  
path**



# **Grade 9 Religious Education**

## **BOOK 2**

### **UNDERSTANDING THE NEW TESTAMENT**

This book is the second book of four books that make up the Religious Education Programme for Grade 9.



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Sr. Ehrentrude Pretzl, SSsP, Coordinator.

# CONTENTS

TOPIC 1	THE LAND OF ISRAEL
TOPIC 2	READING THE BIBLE
TOPIC 3	THE GOSPEL OF MARK
TOPIC 4	ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS
TOPIC 5	THE BOOK OF REVELATION



### Prayer before Class

O Holy Spirit of light and truth,  
 help me now as I begin this class  
 to understand what I am taught  
 to remember what I learn,  
 and to work hard to learn well.  
 Amen.

#### To the student:

Your exercise book is a companion to this book. By writing down your thoughts, sharing them with your teacher and with others, you will learn far more about yourself and God's action in your life, than by using this book by itself.

And after all, isn't this what life is for?

The great questions ... Why was I born? What is the purpose of my life?

What is the meaning of suffering? Is there a God who cares about me? ...  
 are the ones that young people want to think about.

May you discover more and more, the love of Father, Son and Spirit, their dwelling place within you, and their plan for your life and for the world, as you journey through your religion programme this year.

# Topic One

# The Land of Israel

To understand the Old Testament (usually called the Hebrew Scriptures) or the New Testament (usually called the Christian Scriptures) we need to learn about many things. One of the first things to learn about is the culture, the country, and the 'world' of the writer. We also need to learn about how any book in the Bible should be read. Then of course, because the Bible is made up of many books, we need to look at each book itself.

In the first topic of this unit then, we are going to look at Jesus' country, his culture and something of the history of Israel. In the second topic, we will look at how to read the Scriptures, and then in the next topics we will study three books from the New Testament:

St Mark's Gospel,  
the Letter to the Ephesians  
and the Book of Revelation.

enjoy!

## The Geography of Jesus' Country

Israel is a very small but a very beautiful country. Like our own country, it could be called the 'Land of the Unexpected'.

*Share with a friend one part of Papua New Guinea or Solomons you would like to visit, and explain why you would like to go there.*

*Now think about Israel. Which places would you like to visit? Choose one place and share with your friend the reason you would like to go there, and what you would do there if you went.*

*Write your thoughts in your book.*

In our country, the beating of kundus and the styles of our traditional dancing are reminders of the life of our ancestors and of 'taim bipo'. The Jewish people also had many reminders of their 'taim bipo'. When we read the New Testament we can see some of these. So our countries are similar in many ways.

You already know some things about Israel. You might be surprised to realize how much you know. Try this Quiz.

## QUIZ:

Name a mountain, a river, a town, and a sea from your own country.

Now, without looking at a Bible, name a mountain, a river, a town, and a sea that are mentioned in the gospels. *Share with your friend.*

What are the main languages spoken in PNG? What were the main languages spoken in Jesus' country? (Hint: Read Jn 19:19,20)

When we think about Jesus' parables and of other stories in the gospels, we can also learn about Jesus' land.

For example, Jesus and his disciples got into trouble with the Pharisees for picking corn on the Sabbath (Lk 6:1,2). So we know corn grew there.

We know Jesus was tempted in the desert, so part of his land was desert.

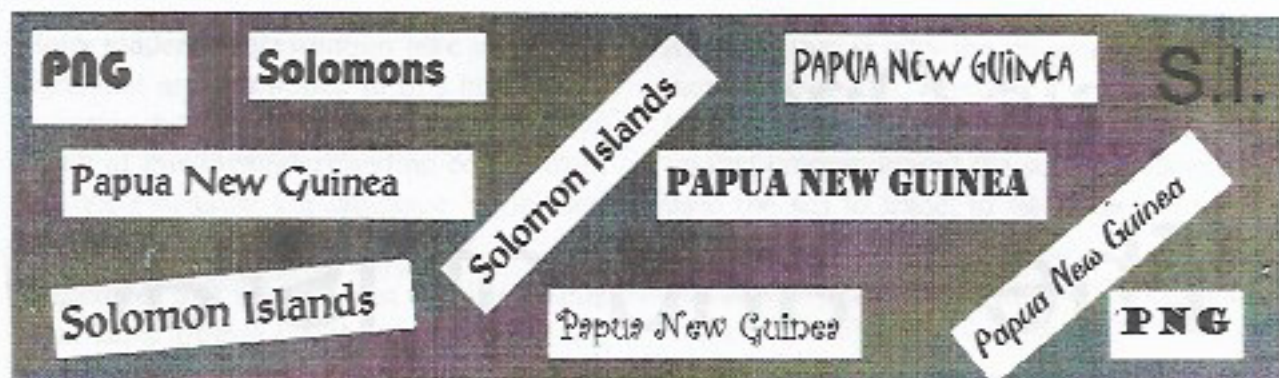
Find three other places in the gospels that give us a clue about Jesus' country.

Write them down.

Draw a star in your book if you found three more descriptions.







Papua New Guinea's name originates with the European explorers who came here. An early Spanish explorer named one part of our country 'Papua' because of the curly hair of the people. Another called the large island 'New Guinea' because our people reminded him of the people of Guinea in Africa.

Solomons has a really interesting story about its name. When the explorer Mendana came to these islands, the crew sailed up a river near Honiara. Here they found gold, and they believed that this was the place where King Solomon got his gold to build the great temple in Jerusalem. So the islands were called Solomon's Islands.

Other nations are named by their location or are named after famous people.

Australia simply means *south land*.

The United States of America is named after Amerigo Vespucci, a map maker who charted the coast of their country.

Jesus lived in what is known today as the State of Israel. It was known to the Jews of his time as the Promised Land, the Land of Israel, the Land of Judah or just The Land. (Just like we say 'America', or 'USA' or 'United States').

The Romans referred to Jesus' land as Palestine: they kept the same name that the Greeks had used. The Greeks got this name because they called Palestine after the Philistines. The Jews disliked this name.

*Why do you think they disliked it?*

Copy the map on the next page into your exercise book.

### The Size of Israel

Measure the length and width of Jesus' country, using the scale on the map. See if you can find some distances you know that match the length or width of Israel.

For example, if you live at Bereina, you might say 'the width of Israel is about the distance from Port Moresby to Bereina'.

How does Israel compare in size with PNG? (Is it bigger or smaller? How many times bigger or smaller?)

Now try this Activity:

A. Copy the map on the next page

B. Using the scripture references to guide you, put the correct number next to the places on the map you have copied e.g. 1: Nazareth

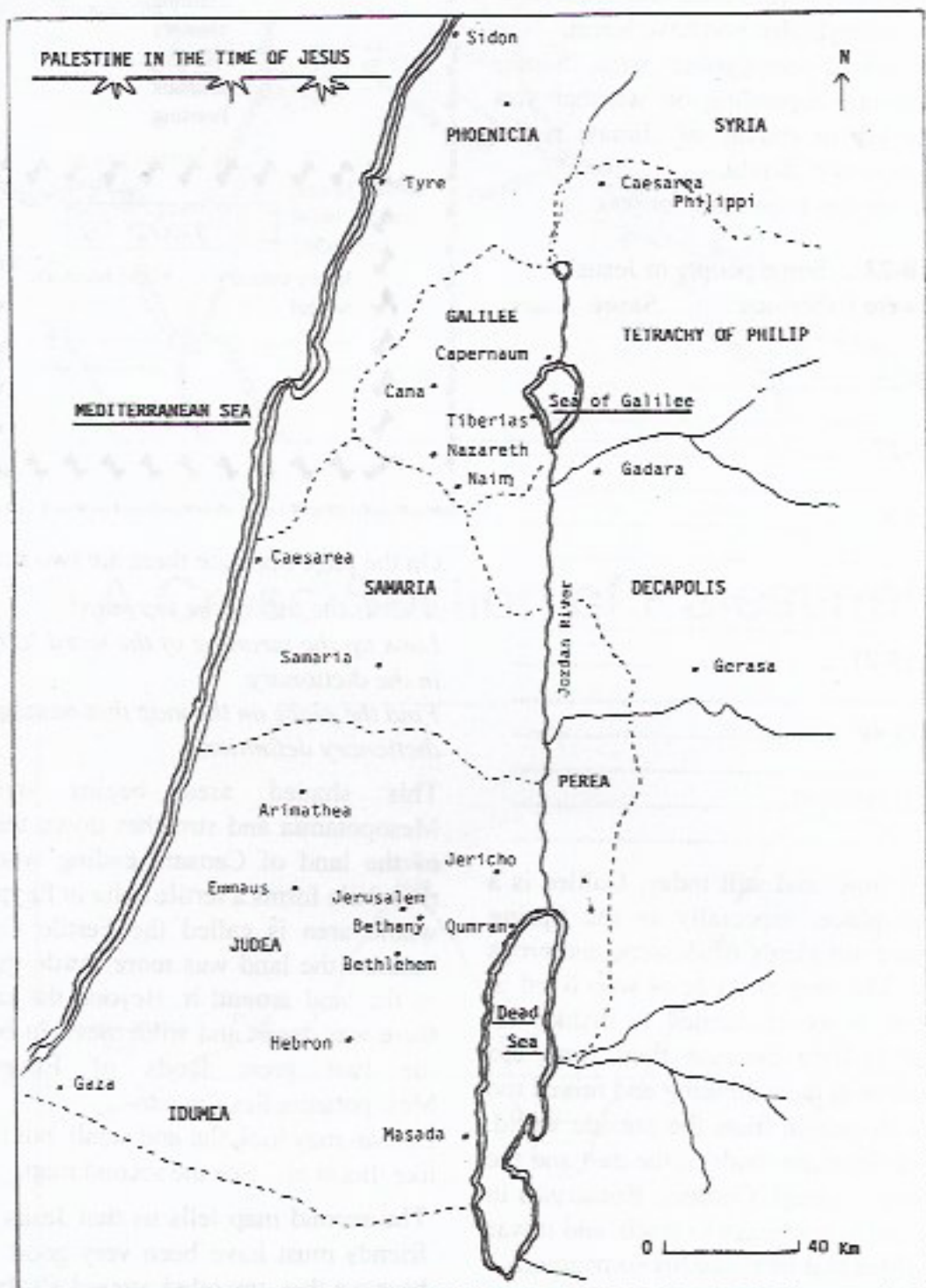
### KEY TO SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

1. Lk 2:39-40 Jesus lived here with Joseph and Mary.
2. Jn 11:1-44 The village where Jesus raised Lazarus.
3. Mt 2:1 Town where Jesus was born.
4. Jn 2:1-11 A village where Jesus performed a miracle at a wedding.
5. Lk 2:22 The capital city where the temple was located.
6. Lk 7:11-17 Name of the village where Jesus raised the widow's son.
7. Lk 24:13-35 Name of the town where two followers recognized the risen Lord.
8. Lk 19:1-10 Where Jesus ate with Zachaeus the tax collector.
9. Mt 16:13-20 The town where Peter declared that Jesus was the Messiah.
10. Mk 1:9 Where Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist.



Write a prayer thanking God for the gift of our country, mentioning some of the beautiful things in our country.

Also write a prayer thanking God for giving Jesus a country to live in, and mentioning some of the things in Jesus' country.





### Jesus' Culture and Lifestyle

Jesus' culture and lifestyle was different to ours in some ways and quite similar in others. The following passages from Matthew's gospel give many clues about the climate, food, jobs, transport, laws and customs of the people of Palestine 2000 years ago.

Read each passage. Write down in your exercise book, the reference and something about the lifestyle that you have learnt.

Next to each of your answers write (Same) or (Different), depending on whether you think the job or custom or climate is the same as ours or different.

The first one has been done for you.

**Mt. 4: 18-22** .. Some people in Jesus' country were fishermen : .....Same .....

**Mt 4:23-25** .....

**Mt 8:23-27** .....

**Mt. 12:1-8** .....

**Mt. 13:1-9** .....

**Mt. 14:13-21** .....

**Mt 21:33-46** .....

**Mt. 22:1-11** .....

In Jesus' time, and still today, Galilee is a beautiful place, especially in the Spring when there are plenty of flowers, and crops of grain. The very strict Jews who lived in Jerusalem, however, tended to dislike the Jews of Galilee because they were too independent in their thinking and mixed too easily with people from the outside world. (Some of the main roads to the east and the north, went through Galilee). But it was in Galilee that Jesus began to teach, and it was from Galilee that he chose his companions.

*What lesson might there be here for us?*

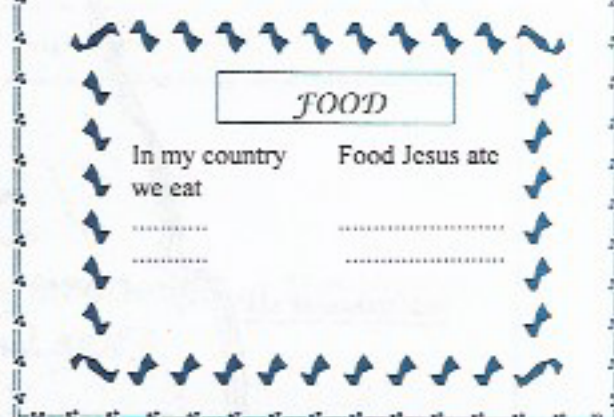
Work in groups to make some posters for your classroom.

Divide your poster into two.

If your heading is "FOOD", on one side draw some foods eaten in Jesus' country and on the other side draw some foods eaten here in your own country.

You can choose any topic for your poster, but some suggestions are:

exports  
currency  
clothing  
flowers  
flags  
animals  
housing



On the page opposite there are two maps.

*What is the title of the top map?*

*Look up the meaning of the word 'crescent' in the dictionary.*

*Find the place on the map that matches your dictionary definition.*

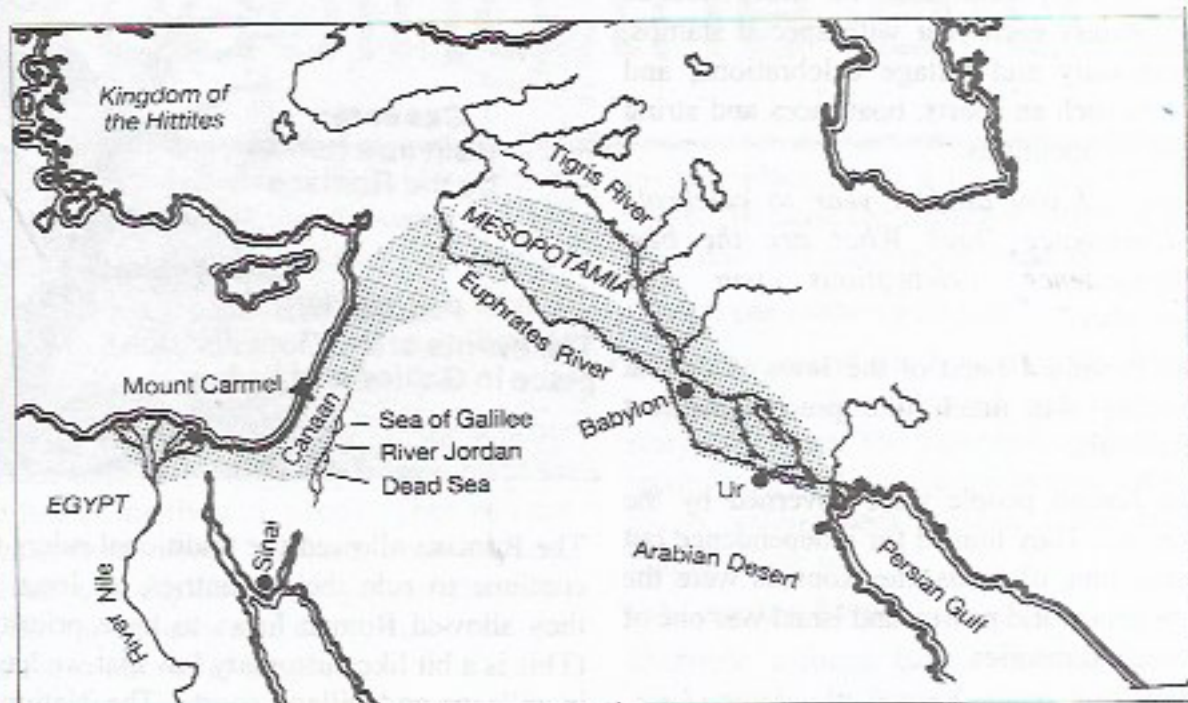
This shaded area begins over in Mesopotamia and stretches down the coast of the land of Canaan, ending where the river Nile forms a fertile delta in Egypt. This whole area is called the Fertile Crescent because the land was more fertile than any of the land around it. Beyond the crescent there was desert and wilderness. In between the two great lands of Egypt and Mesopotamia lies Canaan.

Canaan may look flat and small but it is not like this at all. See the second map.

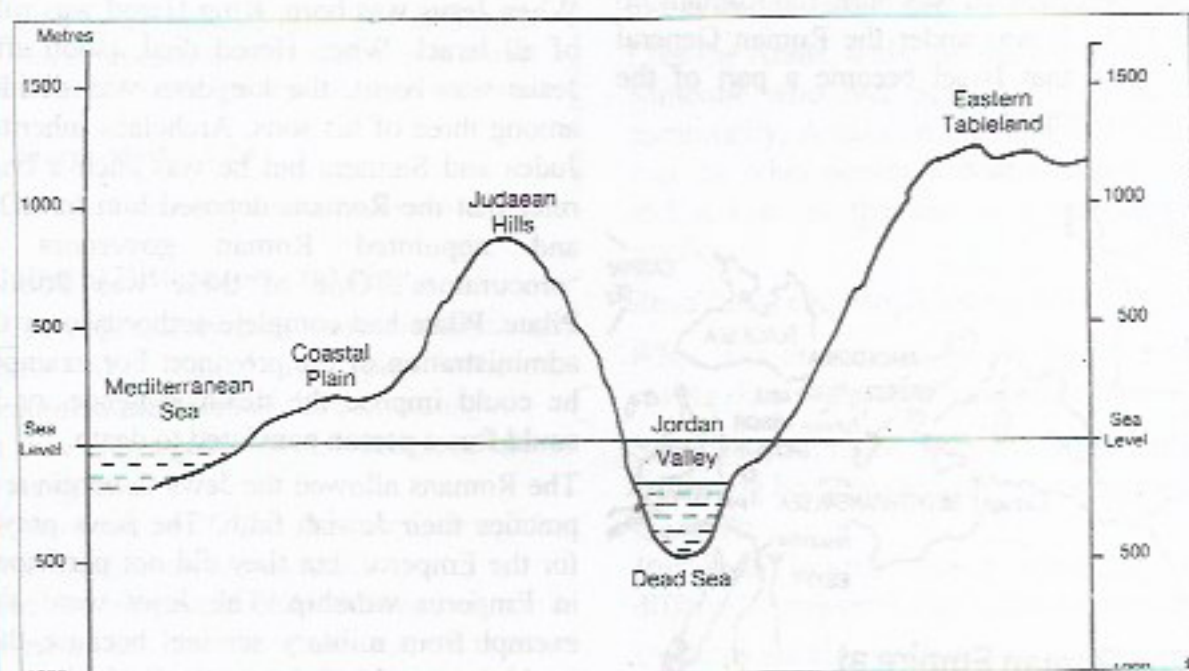
The second map tells us that Jesus and his friends must have been very good walkers because they travelled around all the towns and villages of their country.



# The Fertile Crescent



## A Cross-Section of Palestine





## Israel's Political History

Israel's political history includes times when it was independent, and times when it was under the rule of other nations.

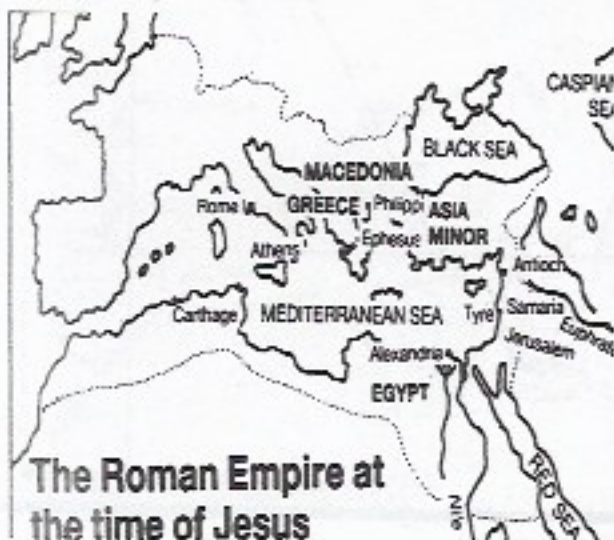
Our country celebrates its independence anniversary each year with special stamps, community and village celebrations, and events such as sports, boat races and string band competitions.

*What did you do last year to celebrate Independence Day? What are the best Independence celebrations you can remember?*

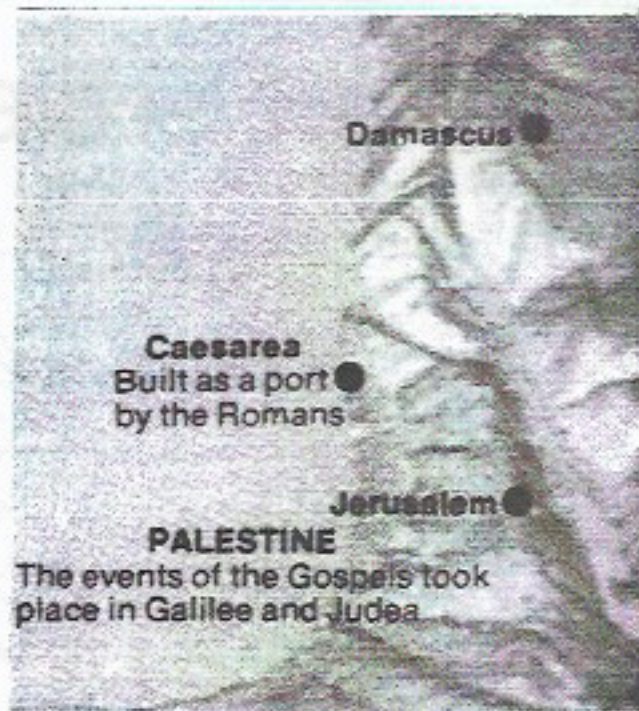
The Promised Land of the Jews of the 1st Century was much like pre-independent Melanesia.

The Jewish people were governed by the Romans. They longed for independence but at the time of Jesus, the Romans were the strongest world power, and Israel was one of Rome's territories.

Because the land of Canaan (part of which is today called Israel) was situated between many great kingdoms, for hundreds of years armies marched through it, and at many times the country was ruled by different conquering nations - the Greeks, the Persians, the Babylonians, and about 60 years before Jesus was born, the Romans, in 63 BCE. It was under the Roman General Pompey, that Israel became a part of the Roman Empire.



**The Roman Empire at the time of Jesus**



The Romans allowed the traditional rulers to continue to rule their countries, as long as they allowed Roman Laws to have priority. (This is a bit like customary law that we have in villages and village courts. The National Court has priority, and although it has the power to change village court decisions, this power is rarely used).

The Romans looked after Defence and Foreign Affairs and the people of the occupied countries had to pay taxes to Rome.

When Jesus was born, King Herod was ruler of all Israel. When Herod died, (soon after Jesus was born), the kingdom was divided among three of his sons. Archelaus inherited Judea and Samaria but he was such a cruel ruler that the Romans deposed him in AD 6 and appointed Roman governors or 'procurators'. One of these was Pontius Pilate. Pilate had complete authority over the administration of the province. For example, he could impose the death sentence, or he could free a person convicted to death.

The Romans allowed the Jews to continue to practice their Jewish faith. The Jews prayed for the Emperor, but they did not participate in Emperor worship. The Jews were also exempt from military service, because they could not 'work' (fight) on the Sabbath.



## Topic Two

# Reading the Bible

One of the first things to understand in reading the Bible, is that the writer and his audience of that time, had their own culture. We understand about culture. When tourists come to Melanesia they are amazed by the variety of cultures among our people.

But we also know that few of the tourists understand how our culture and tradition influence the lives of people. They will not understand about payback and sorcery, about our customs e.g. our relationships with our in-laws and own family and our clans, or our belief in spirits.

To really understand us, people have to understand our culture. In the same way, if we want to understand the meaning of a Bible passage, we need to learn about the cultural background of the story, and Jewish ways of life.

Look at the following story and write down two of the cultural differences between Jewish society of the 1st Century and our own society.

Story: Mark 5:1-20

### Cultural Differences (a) Pigs

In Jewish society pigs were worthless and those who looked after pigs were not respected members of the community.

It was even against Jewish religious law to eat pig meat.

*Is there any particular food that it is against your traditional law to eat?*

The Jewish people believed that evil spirits lived at the bottom of the sea, so the evil spirits using the pigs to get a ride back home

to their place made a lot of sense to the people. Because our culture is different, this story does not make much sense to us.

*What is our custom with pigs?*

If we understand the beliefs of the Jewish people we will understand and enjoy the story a lot more. The pigs were unclean, the spirits were unclean, the spirits used the pigs to go rushing back to their home at the bottom of the sea.

### (b) Greeting People

Different cultures have different ways to greet people. In New Zealand the Maoris rub noses together. In some European countries the men kiss each other on the cheek as a sign of welcome. This is also true in some Arab countries. In Melanesia we shake hands or hug each other. Kissing is not customary public behaviour for us.

### What about Jesus' time and his culture?

Like the Arabs, a kiss on the cheek was for someone who had equal standing in the community. A kiss on the hand was a sign that the other person was of a higher rank; and a kiss on the feet was reserved for royalty.

*Read Luke, Chapter 7, verses 36-39.*

*What was the woman in the gospel really saying then when she kissed Jesus' feet?*

Some people preach that parts of our culture are wrong because they are not mentioned in the Bible.

But even Jewish society itself, is very different today from that of the 1st century.

Customs are always changing.



## Language and its meaning:

Apart from differences in culture in the Bible, different peoples also use language in different ways. Some groups of people speak 'straight'. Others like to go round and round to get across what they want to say. Also language changes. Now we use words like 'high five', 'dreadlocks' and so on, that were not used 100 years ago and might be out of fashion in 100 years time. To really understand the Bible, we need to look at not just the **words** the writers use, but to try and think about what the writers **meant to say** when they used the particular words they did.

### Do many people read the Bible?

Each year there are over 2.5 million Bibles sold throughout the world.

The Bible Society sells and donates many Bibles in our country and people are still working on new 'tok ples' Bibles which are being translated and published.

Many people read and own their own Bible.

And apart from the Bible, more books have been written about Jesus than any other person in history. Many of these people quote from the Bible as they write about Jesus. It is very important then, that we understand the books of the Bible, their writing styles and what the writers intended to say by their words.

Today there are two main groups of Bible readers.

These two groups are called **Literalists** and **Contextualists**.

### Literalists:

The **Literalist** believes that because the Bible is God's word, then each sentence of the Bible is completely true. This group can be found in all Churches, but they can be found especially in the Evangelical Churches. There have been times in the life of the Christian Church (that is, past times) when most other Christians also believed that this was the way to read the Bible.

## Contextualists

The **Contextualist** also believes that the Bible is God's word.

But contextualists think about both the **text** and the **context** of the passage.

*What do we mean when we use the words Text and Context?*

Suppose we pick up the newspaper and we read the heading

*'Enga Mioks fight Mt. Hagen Eagles'*

If we take this sentence *literally*, then we say that some mioks had a fight with some eagles. We take the words, as the meaning of the sentence.

If we talk about the *context*, then we do not look just at the words. We read the whole article. We will probably find out that the story is about sports teams, not about birds, and about a game called Rugby.

*Write a sentence explaining the phrase 'Enga mioks fight Mt. Hagen eagles'.*

*Did everyone in the class have the same explanation?*

Another example: If you say a lot of things when you are very angry that you don't mean, a person who honestly wants to understand you, has to take into account not only your words (text) but also that you were angry when you said them (context).

Sometimes when words are taken 'out of context', it can result in friends fighting or some kind of trouble or problem or other misunderstanding. Sometimes it can be just funny when words are taken out of context.

*Write down and then share with a friend, a time when your words were taken 'out of context' and led to some misunderstanding. Explain what happened.*

Sometimes when this happens we talk about a 'communication breakdown'. The words we used were not enough to get our meaning across. It is very good to realize that words are only PMV's for our thoughts, ideas and emotions. Words are often inadequate, actions are much better. That is why Jesus came and lived among us, and died for us.



## MODERN BIBLE SCHOLARSHIP

Modern Bible Scholars of all Churches belong to the group that accepts context as well as the text itself.

When the leaders of the Catholic Church met for the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), they wrote a number of documents.

One document, Divine Revelation, was written as a guide to help us understand and appreciate the Bible.

A sentence in this document says:

*Seeing that God speaks through men in human fashion, it follows that the reader of sacred Scripture, if he or she wants to find out what God has wished to communicate to us, should carefully search out the meaning which the sacred writers had in mind.*

### *Divine Revelation 12*

This same document lists a number of areas that can help us find out the meaning or intentions of the writers.

Some of the areas are:

- \* What type of book is it?
- \* When was the book written?
- \* Who wrote the book?
- \* Why was the book written?
- \* What was the cultural setting of the book?
- \* What do individual words mean?
- \* How does an individual passage relate to the whole book?
- \* What did the passage mean to the original readers?
- \* What does the passage mean today?

These questions are important to think about. Sometimes conflicts occur between literalists and other people over bible passages.

One place where there is often conflict about the meaning of a passage is the story of creation, found in the book of Genesis.

*Read Genesis, Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4.*

For many people the understanding of the Genesis account of creation is literal. When the Book of Genesis says that the world was made in seven days, Literalists believe that it was, because this is what the words actually say.

A problem then comes up when scientific studies seem to suggest that maybe the earth was formed over a much longer period.

Another problem arises when the Bible seems to contradict itself.

For example, Gen 1:16 says that on the fourth day, God made the sun and the moon. But since we measure day and night by the sun, how can there have been 3 'days' before this?

Also Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 up to verse 4, says that human beings were made last, all the trees and plants were made before human beings were made.

But Chapter 2, verse 7 has God creating man and then afterwards in verses 8 and 9, God creating the garden and trees.

People who are not religious at all, or who do not believe in God, will use examples like this and say that nothing in the Bible can be true.

For us who are Contextualists, although the words themselves are important, we also want to know what did the writer mean when he put these particular words on the page? What was he trying to say about God and us?

In this case, the answer is that there are two creation stories in Genesis. These two creation stories show us in symbolic and story form, the Biblical view of what it means to be a human person and the complexities of human relationships with nature, with others and with God.

Two stories are better than one story when trying to explain something about the mystery of God and the mystery of human beings.

We may ask, but why tell a story at all?



The answer is that in order for religion to be meaningful, it needs to express itself in ways that are relevant to people. This is exactly what the authors of the two creation stories did for the people of their day. It is what Jesus did for the people of his day. It is what good teachers do for us when they want to make a lesson meaningful.

We do not live in the time of the Babylonian Exile when the first account was written, or in the time of the glory of Solomon when Bible scholars believe the second account was probably written.

Are these stories meaningful for us?



Indeed they are. God's word is ever new.

Today there is a growing awareness about human beings, their equality, their need to exist in relationship with one another and with the earth, and their responsibility towards each other.

It is exciting to discover that although we live in a different political and social environment to the ancient Hebrew people, the two creation stories contain, beneath what seems to be simple stories, the answers to some of our deepest human problems.

The first story (Gen 1:1-2:4), gives a very positive vision of God, of human beings and of the world. This is important for us as many young people are confused about their purpose and being, and youth suicide is extremely high. This account shows us that things come into being in order.

God is in serene control. The human person is a being of great dignity. Human beings are the culmination of creation and the ones chosen to act in place of God, to bear responsibility for all creation.

Man and woman are created equal.

The second story has been put purposely next to the first one, so that together they show important truths about God, about human beings, and the world as the work of God's hands. The second story reveals that human beings are moral people, with complex centres of emotion and feeling.

The first story shows God's majestic design, but it always has to be balanced by the disorder of human beings and their perilous and royal individuality. This story shows us why there is suffering in the world, why men have to work hard, why women suffer in childbirth and so on. Since God made the world good, then it must be ourselves who have spoilt it, helped along by Satan.

These stories also showed the chosen people the kind of world in which Israel was to be given her mission and why this mission was necessary in the first place.

We still need the same understanding of knowing the kind of world in which we have been given our mission and why our mission too is necessary.

#### Activities:

1. Give a speech on assembly, encouraging everyone to look after our world.
2. Make your dorm or classroom look beautiful.
3. Collect pictures of things that look ugly in our world, and suggest an improvement.
4. Explain what the word 'pollution' means and explain how it spoils God's plan. (Gen 1:31).
5. How do you feel when something precious to you has been damaged or destroyed? How do you think God feels when his creation is destroyed or spoiled?
6. Make some posters as reminders of respect: respect for other people and respect for our world.



**Activity:** Match the literary form of the part of scripture that has been quoted below with the list of literary forms at the bottom of this page.

1. From Paul, who by God's will is an apostle of Christ Jesus - To God's people in Ephesus, who are faithful in their life in union with Christ Jesus: May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

.....

2. 'A good man will receive blessings. A wicked man's words hide a violent nature.'  
'Hate stirs up trouble, but love overlooks all offences.'  
'It is foolish to speak scornfully of others. If you are sensible, you will keep quiet.'

.....

3. 'Once there was a man who went out to sow corn. As he scattered the seed in the field, some of it fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some of it fell on rocky ground, where there was little soil.'

.....

4. 'I will be true and faithful; I will show you constant love and mercy, and make you mine for ever. I will keep my promise and make you mine, and you will acknowledge me as Lord. I will say, "You are my people" and they will answer, "You are our God".'

.....

5. 'With all my heart I call you you; answer me Lord, and I will obey your commands! I call you you; save me, and I will keep your laws. Before sunrise I call to you for help; I place my hope in your promise.'

.....

6. Now the snake was the most cunning animal that the Lord God had made. The snake asked the woman, 'Did God really tell you not to eat fruit from any tree in the garden?' 'We may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden,' the woman answered, 'except the tree in the middle of it.'

.....

7. The totals of the offerings brought by the twelve leaders for the dedication of the altar were as follows: twelve silver bowls and twelve silver basins, twelve gold dishes filled with incense, twelve bulls, twelve rams and twelve one year old lambs, together with the rains offerings that go with them, twelve goats for the sin offering, twenty four bulls, sixty rams, sixty goats, sixty one year old lambs for the fellowship offerings.

.....

8. 'Go to the Lord, and you will live. If you do not go, he will sweep down like fire on the people of Israel. The fire will burn up the people of Bethel, and no one will be able to put it out. You are doomed, you that twist justice and cheat people out of their rights!'

.....

A. List    B. Sermon    C. Letter    D. Parable    E. Legend    F. Contract  
G. Proverb    H. Political Speech    I. Prayer    J. Prophecy    K. Poetry



# Topic Three

## The Gospel of Mark

Mark's Gospel is a very interesting Gospel to read and study. First of all the word 'Gospel' means 'Good News'. Mark *created* this kind of writing, his was the first Gospel written. He begins by saying 'This is the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.'

Part of the Good News that Marks shows is Jesus fighting against the evil spirits and conquering them. This is of great importance to us.

In this topic we are going to be particularly interested in what Mark is trying to tell us about Jesus. We will look for Mark's intention in writing, as well as thinking about the words and stories he uses. We do this, because we believe that this knowledge will help us come to know and love Jesus more and help us to open our hearts to his message.

### How does Mark describe Jesus?

We do not have to read Mark's gospel very long, before we see that Jesus is pictured as a man of **action** and **authority**.

**ACTION** -Jesus is shown doing something: e.g. healing

**AUTHORITY** -Jesus is speaking and teaching, and the people are listening to him.

*Copy the table below into your book and complete it.*

The very beginning of Mark also talks about John the Baptist.

At the time when the Gospel stories took place, John the Baptist was much more famous and better known than even Jesus.

All four gospels have in some way, John the Baptist introducing Jesus, and so pointing out that Jesus was important.

Reference	Title	Description
Mk 1:29	Jesus heals many people	Action
Mk 1:35	Jesus preaches in Galilee	
Mk 2:23		
Mk 4:35		
Mk 5:21		
Mk 6:6		
Mk 7:31		Action and Authority
Mk 10:13		
Mk 10:32		
Mk 14:22		



### A Journey of Faith

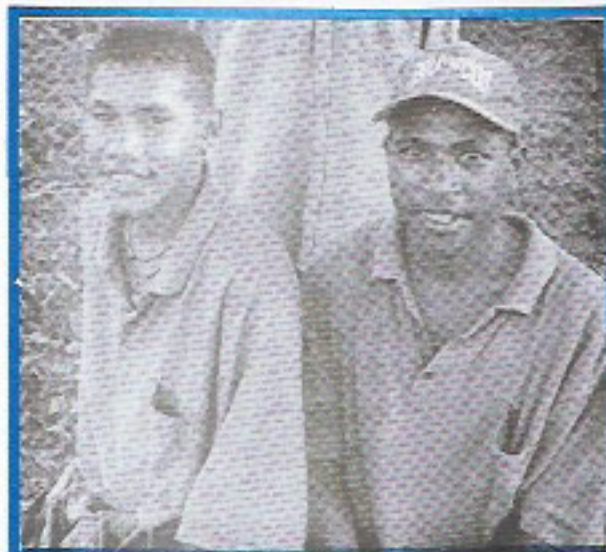
Mark carefully arranges his gospel to show the *faith journey* of the Apostles and the disciples. He did this to help his readers. Looking at the Apostles' faith journey, also helps us, on *our* faith journey. In presenting Jesus as a man of action and authority, Mark remembers the many incidents that led to the conversion of Peter and the other people mentioned in his Gospel.

Peter had to learn who Jesus was. Peter did not know that Jesus was the Messiah when they first met (Mk 1:14-19). We too, have to grow in our knowledge of Jesus.

Our reading of the gospel story is meant to help us come to the same kind of faith. Many of our ancestors accepted the Good News when missionaries came to our country over 150 years ago. They had to answer the same question that Jesus put to Peter: *Who do you say I am?*

Each of us is also on our own faith journey. We, who want to follow Jesus must accept Jesus into our lives just as each Christian has had to do in the past. To help us think about this, we are going to do an activity. In this activity, you must think and act as one of the people in the gospel.

When you have completed the activity, stop and think. What about yourself? If someone were acting as you, what would you tell them to say? *Write your thoughts in your book.*



### People Who Met Jesus

*Choose one of the New Testament people listed below. Look up the reference then read the story of that person.*

- John the Baptist Mk 1:1-12
- Andrew Mk 1:14-19
- Simon's mother-in-law Mk 1:29-34
- Paralyzed man Mk 2:1-12
- Levi Mk 2:13-17
- Man with evil spirits Mk 5:1-20
- Jairus Mk 5:21-42
- Children Mk 10:13-16
- Peter Mk 14:66-72

Once you have read the story, answer the following questions in your book.

1. How did this person and Jesus meet?
2. What happened to the person because of his or her meeting with Jesus?
3. What feelings did this person probably have towards Jesus?
4. How did this meeting influence the person's life?

Now imagine that you really are one of these people. Move around the class and talk to the different characters. Spend a few minutes talking to each person, sharing your impression of Jesus. You are to talk *as though you were that person*.

Speak about how Jesus influenced your life, and of your feelings towards him.

All your sentences will start with I.

For example: I met Jesus when ...

**B**efore we go on to study the plan of Mark's gospel, you have surely noticed when looking up references, that the numbers of the verses are often not in very sensible places. When the gospels were written there were no verse numbers or even chapters. Mark was just one continuous story.

Chapter numbers and verse numbers were added later, and now they are so well known that it would be almost impossible to change them. Lots of people know bible verses off by heart and can quote them. *Can you quote any Bible verse and its reference?*



## The Plan of Mark's Gospel

If you are going to do a written expression exam your teacher will tell you that you must ORGANIZE /PLAN your work.

Mark too, has planned his work. He has carefully arranged his gospel into four parts to help the reader identify Jesus and to help him or her understand the experience of those who knew Jesus. In reading Mark's story, we ask the same questions that Mark's readers did: Who is Jesus? and what does it mean to have faith in Jesus?

In the first half of the gospel (up to Chapter 8) there are two sections. Let us call them A and B.

### Part A

The introduction (Part A) asks the question Who is Jesus? (Mk 1:1-13)

### Part B

The second half of this first part tries to answer this question. (Mk 1:14 - 8:30).

Mark tries to get us to answer the question by telling some of the parables and miracles and stories of Jesus. Mark hopes that when we read of the great power of Jesus we will realize who he is.

### Chapter 8 is a turning point in the Gospel.

In Chapter 8 Jesus asks the disciples 'who do people say that I am?'

Then he asks the disciples, 'who do YOU say that I am?'

Peter answers: 'You are the Christ.'

After this the Gospel changes as Jesus makes his way to Jerusalem.

The second part of Mark's gospel also has two parts. We will call them C and D.

### Part C

Chapters 8-10 Jesus predicts his suffering.

Chapter 9 has the Transfiguration

Chapter 10 is the journey to Jerusalem.

Chapters 11 and 12 have 6 stories.

Chapter 13 - Jesus foretells his death.

### Part D

The last part of the second half is about Jesus' Death and Resurrection.

Chapter 14 - the Last Supper

Chapter 15 is the Passion and Death of Jesus, where the Centurion acknowledges Jesus as the Son of God.

Chapter 16 is the Resurrection.

The main theme of Mark's gospel then is to bring people to know Jesus. We, like the original readers of the Gospel, and like all other readers today, must answer the same question that Jesus put to Peter: *Who do you say that I am?* But Mark also consoles us when he reveals that we need not be surprised if our faith is only small. So often he shows that the apostles found it hard to believe.

Read Mark 1:1-13 and then answer the following questions.

1. What is the main point of the passage?
2. Mark identifies Jesus. What words does he use to describe Jesus?
3. John prepares the way for Jesus. What does John say about Jesus in verses 7 and 8?
4. Why do you think John said this?
5. The Baptism of Jesus is important to the story. Why do you think verse 11 is important?

Read Mark 1:14-20. What did Jesus preach in this passage?

Throughout the Gospel Jesus is called the Son of God and he was recognized as God's messenger. Look up the following references, then copy the quotations and references into your book.

Mk 1:24    Mk 3:11    Mk 5:7

"I know who you are - you are God's holy messenger."

"Jesus, Son of the Most High God! What do you want from me?"

"You are the Son of God."



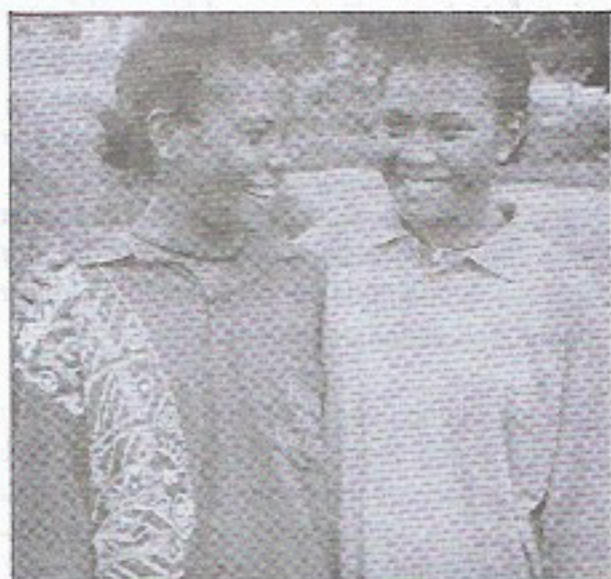
## MIRACLES AND THEIR PURPOSE

As Mark leads the reader up to Peter's declaration of faith in Chapter 8, he has a number of stories that show people at different stages of belief in Jesus.

These stories aim at revealing Jesus' identity to the reader as well as showing that the characters in the New Testament had to struggle with their faith.

The miracle stories have a special purpose - to reveal Jesus as the Messiah, and so to help us with our faith.

Think of a time when you too, had to struggle with your faith.  
Share with a friend, or write in your book.



The miracles in Mark can be classified into the following groups:

1. **Healing miracles:** Jesus heals people from some form of physical illness or disability.
2. **Nature miracles:** Jesus shows that he has power over nature.
3. **Exorcism:** Jesus expels an evil spirit from a person, place or from an object.
4. **Rising from the dead:** Jesus raises people to life.

## Types Of Miracles

Look at these references which are all from the gospel of Mark:

1:23	2:1	5:1
	6:31	7:31
1:30	3:1	5:22
	6:45	8:14
1:40	4:35	5:25
	7:24	10:46

See if you can sort them into the following four groups:

**Healing Miracles: Nature Miracles:  
Exorcisms: Risings from the Dead**

Check your answers with your friend.

## The Purpose Of The Miracles

To understand the meaning of the miracle stories it is important to see how Mark and the first Christians understood the miracles. If we do not have a clear understanding of the biblical view of miracles we might take Jesus as a magician - someone who worked tricks and whose magic was greater than those around him.

Jesus' miracles reveal God's power in different ways:

1. **Jesus' miracles show that God's power is in human history.**

Christians believe that God is the creator of the universe and that God has power over the world.

When Jesus calms the sea (4:35) or when he walks on water (6:45), he is showing that he has power over nature and is closely identified with God who made these things.

These miracles show both the witnesses *and me, the Gospel reader*, who Jesus is and where he comes from.





## 2. Jesus has power over evil.

When Jesus heals the man with an evil spirit (1:23) or when he raises Jairus' daughter (5:22), he is showing that he has power over evil and the result of evil, death. Life comes from God so death in scripture equals evil.

## 3. Jesus has power to forgive sin:

In Jesus' time physical illness was associated with sin. This is often true in our time too.

A lame person, a blind person, a leper were seen as being punished for their sins or for the sins of their ancestors.

Lepers especially had to live outside the community. When Jesus healed a paralyzed man, a deaf mute or a leper, he was re-connecting them with their community.

## 4. Miracles reveal Jesus' identity.

If God has power over nature, evil, death and if he forgives sin, then Jesus, who does the same as God, must be God's son.

*In Jesus' time, a child learnt the trade of his father and grandfather, and he would pass these skills on to his sons and grandsons. The son did the same as the father.*

*Jesus' words and actions are seen as the words and actions of God, his father.*

*It was easy for the early Christians to see this link. But today when children do not always follow their parents, this link may be more difficult to understand.*

The miracles are used to announce that Jesus is the Promised Messiah. They are also invitations for people to believe that Jesus is the Messiah and believing, to become members of the Christian community.

## A Miracle Story

The miracle stories follow a pattern that shows Jesus' reaction to those who ask for a miracle, especially his demand for FAITH. Each miracle story contains the following elements.

- An introduction
- A display of faith.
- Jesus' response to the person in need
- Result
- Reaction to the miracle

*What about our customs? What do we believe about those who are sick?*

*Do people usually think that sick people have done something that somehow has affected the community?*

*e.g. Someone might say: 'that couple have no children because they have not paid the brideprice'.*

*that girl is in trouble in school because her parents did not pay her school fees'.*

*Are these sentences true?*

*What is custom sickness?*

*Can people get sick when others are jealous of them? How?*



*Read the story of Jesus healing the paralytic (2:1-12)*

**Introduction** Mark sets the scene: Jesus returns to Capernaum and the news of his presence spreads throughout the area. Many people come to hear Jesus preaching. A group of men arrive with a crippled man wanting Jesus to heal him.

**Display of faith** Believing that Jesus would heal their friend, the men made a hole in the roof to lower him down into the room.

**Jesus' response** Seeing how much faith they had, Jesus said, "My son, your sins are forgiven". Jesus responded by granting their request.

**Result** Jesus heals the paralyzed man.

**Reaction to the Miracle** There are two different responses to the miracle shown in this passage. The first response is from the Teachers of the Law - they were angry, and say in an angry voice, "How does he dare to talk like this? This is blasphemy!" The second response shows that some of those who witnessed the miracle were "amazed and praised God."

*Activity: Choose a miracle story from one of the references on page 18, and see if you can write down the same pattern*

Introduction  
Faith  
Response  
Result  
Reaction

Mark is trying to reveal to us, the readers, the identity of Jesus. For some of those in the miracle stories, such as Peter, their faith in Jesus develops and grows. For others in the stories, they did not have faith in Jesus. Mark is using the miracle stories to develop the reader's understanding of who Jesus is, and for the reader to have faith in Jesus as Son of God.

#### Questions and Activities

1. Did the Apostles have faith in Jesus?
2. Why did Jesus perform miracles?
3. What is the purpose of the miracles?
4. Do you think that Mark shows that Jesus is the Son of God?
5. List five things that you have learnt so far from this unit.

#### Signs of the Coming of God's Kingdom

Jesus' association with the lepers, the disabled or the sick, the outcasts, shows that God cares for these people. When Jesus heals someone, Jesus is showing that God cares for the sick and the disabled.

Jesus' miracles proclaim that God's kingdom is already here and that the Kingdom of Evil (Satan) is coming to an end.

To explain what he means by the Kingdom of God, Jesus uses many parables.

#### PARABLES

Our people are great story tellers. Throughout our country, people sit around telling stories and many of the stories are retold over and over again. Some people are good story tellers and have many stories. Others are not so good at telling stories and have few stories to tell.

Listeners prefer to listen to those who are good story tellers and they will later retell the story to another group.

*Can you think of a good story to tell? Share it with the person next to you. Or name someone you know who is a good storyteller.*

At a village meeting, the community will listen to many speakers as they resolve a conflict, plan an activity, or prepare a feast. But who do the people listen to? Some of the speakers are *maus wara*.

Others *tok tru...* What they have to say speaks to the heart of the community and to each individual.



### Jésus was a good storyteller.

The Gospels show large crowds coming to listen to Jesus preach. He spoke a truth that touched something in their hearts and minds.

Mark 1:22 tells the reader that he taught with authority.

Mark also retells many of Jesus' stories, many of which are told in parable form.

In the parables, Jesus uses everyday images to give a message.

Many of the images we understand well e.g. 'a branch cut off from the vine, withers'.

We all know what happens to branches that have been cut off from the living tree or vine.

Some of the parables use images that we find a bit harder to understand because we live at a different time and in a different culture.

But even the Apostles in Chapter 4 of Mark asked Jesus to "explain the parables" (4:10). So we do not have to be too surprised about ourselves. But at least in not giving us easy answers, Jesus shows that he respects our intelligence and our ability to work some things out for ourselves.

Through the parables Jesus preaches the kingdom of God.

The kingdom was a very important idea to Jesus because he talks about it over and over.

Does Jesus preach a kingdom with a head of state, a government and a public service, with a Defence Force and special laws?

It seems not.

When we read the parables, Jesus seems to preach about a kingdom where people change their way of living so that evil is defeated and people live by God's commandments.

### The Kingdom of God

a sense of community  
respecting others

### The Kingdom of Evil

division in the community  
disrespecting others

Mark uses Jesus' parables as Jesus himself did, to show us what the kingdom of God is like. He also uses parables to point out those not ready for the kingdom. The kingdom of God must change the lives of those who accept Jesus and is just not *bilas* to impress people.

In Mark there are 17 parables. Look at the references below, and decide if they are referring to the kingdom of God or to those who are not ready for the kingdom.

Notice that the kingdom is always compared with some everyday object or item.

### Parable references

2:17	2:22	4:3	4:25	9:49	13:33
2:19	3:23	4:21	4:26	12:1	
13:36	2:21	3:27	4:21	4:30	13:28

Choose the heading from the list below to complete the table on the next page:

A family and country united  
Lamp on a lamp-stand  
Lamp under the bed  
Old wineskins  
A growing seed  
Tasteless salt  
Sower - abundant harvest  
A generous proportion  
A growing fig tree  
An alert servant  
Careless servant  
A strong man's house  
Murdering tenants  
Mustard seed





The Kingdom of God is like	Those unprepared for the Kingdom are like
2:17 Doctor healing the sick	2:21 New material on an old coat
2:19 Like a wedding feast	

If we were to make a list of characteristics of PNG society today, what values and attitudes would belong to The Kingdom of God?

And what values and attitudes would belong to the Kingdom of Evil?

Two examples have been given on page 21, add two more to the list.

### JESUS' PASSION AND DEATH

The story of the passion is a very important part of every Gospel. It was probably the first part of Jesus' story to be woven into a connected whole.

Very early the Christians found themselves confronted with the 'stumbling block' of the Cross, as St. Paul puts it. How could someone who was crucified as a criminal be our Saviour?

To answer this problem, Christians found they had to tell the story of the Cross. But then of course it was not enough to just proclaim the Cross and the Resurrection. People wanted to know more about the early life of Jesus who had died to redeem them, and had risen again.

So the Passion story had to be introduced with stories of how the Good News all began.

In Mark's case there was an added reason.

In the winter of CE 64-65 a great fire destroyed two thirds of Rome. The mad emperor Nero, who is believed to have started the fire, blamed the Christians, and a great persecution of Christians began. Among the victims of this persecution were Peter and Paul.

According to tradition it was shortly after this, that a little book appeared in Rome with the title 'the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God' (Mk 1:1). It is the book we know as the Gospel according to Saint Mark.

A full generation had passed since Jesus had died and risen, and in these years many of those who had seen the risen Lord had died, and some had been martyred. It became increasingly important that before all the eye-witnesses passed away, the story of Jesus should be preserved in writing.

Besides, the Christians were now being persecuted and had to be reminded of their Lord and his suffering, so that they would be able to stand fast in their own time of trial.

Mark's story is the best if we want to read the earliest, simplest and shortest record of how Jesus, the Son of God, lived, suffered and died for us and rose from the dead, that he might destroy the works of the devil and make us the sons and daughters of God.



Remember that at the beginning of our study of Mark, we said that we were all on our own faith journey. The Apostles had to work out who Jesus was for themselves, and they often made mistakes. Each of us has to answer the question 'Who do you say that I am?'

Mark shows us Jesus as a man of action and authority. He shows us Jesus, able to work miracles, and revealing himself as one sent by God. Mark shows us Jesus, announcing that the kingdom of God is already here amongst us.

Lastly, in the story of the Passion of Jesus, at the very climax when Jesus dies on the Cross, Mark has the Centurion give the answer to the question: *Who is Jesus?*

Read Mark 15:39.

*What is the answer?*

Notice that the person giving the answer is a Roman, and a pagan.

If this person could recognize Jesus, then surely we too, can recognize who Jesus is.



### Activities

1. Read Chapters 14 and 15.

Write down the names of all the different people mentioned.

Think about these people.

Choose one and *write down* two questions that you would like to ask this person. Share with a friend.

2. Visit your school or parish church.

In some churches you will find pictures that are called 'Stations of the Cross'. These tell us something that happened to Jesus from his trial until his burial. They are made up of stories from all 4 gospels. Match as many stations as you can with references from St. Mark's Gospel, Ch 15. (See the next page).

3. Jesus' life and death show us that the life of God is one of love, peace, justice and freedom. This life is what is called the kingdom of God.

Write down a time when you have recognized the kingdom of God in your own life.

4. The world we live in is sinful. Sometimes when we look at all the bad things that happen, we feel hopeless and powerless to do anything about the evil around us. Then we can remember what Jesus has done for us.

By his life, death and resurrection, Jesus overcame hatred and sin. Nothing can keep us from the love of God except our own choice.

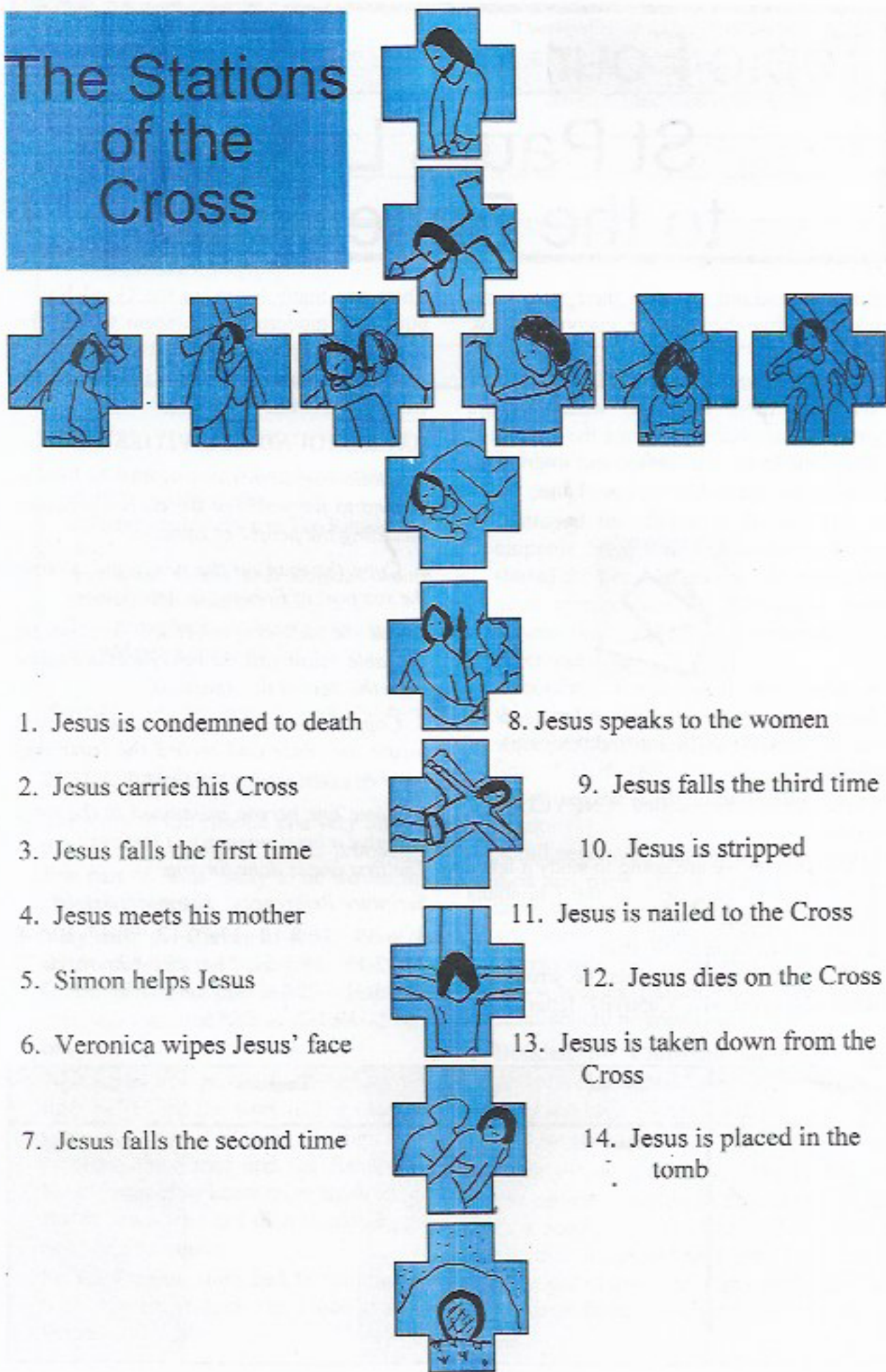
Write down the fourth Eucharistic Acclamation and decorate it with a border.

5. Imagine you are in your favourite place where you like to go and reflect. This time Jesus is there to greet you. What do you talk to him about? What do you answer when he says: *Do you love me? Do you believe?* If you had to put yourself on a scale between one and ten in regard to your faith in Jesus, where would you be?

Draw the scale and mark it.



# The Stations of the Cross



1. Jesus is condemned to death

2. Jesus carries his Cross

3. Jesus falls the first time

4. Jesus meets his mother

5. Simon helps Jesus

6. Veronica wipes Jesus' face

7. Jesus falls the second time

8. Jesus speaks to the women

9. Jesus falls the third time

10. Jesus is stripped

11. Jesus is nailed to the Cross

12. Jesus dies on the Cross

13. Jesus is taken down from the Cross

14. Jesus is placed in the tomb

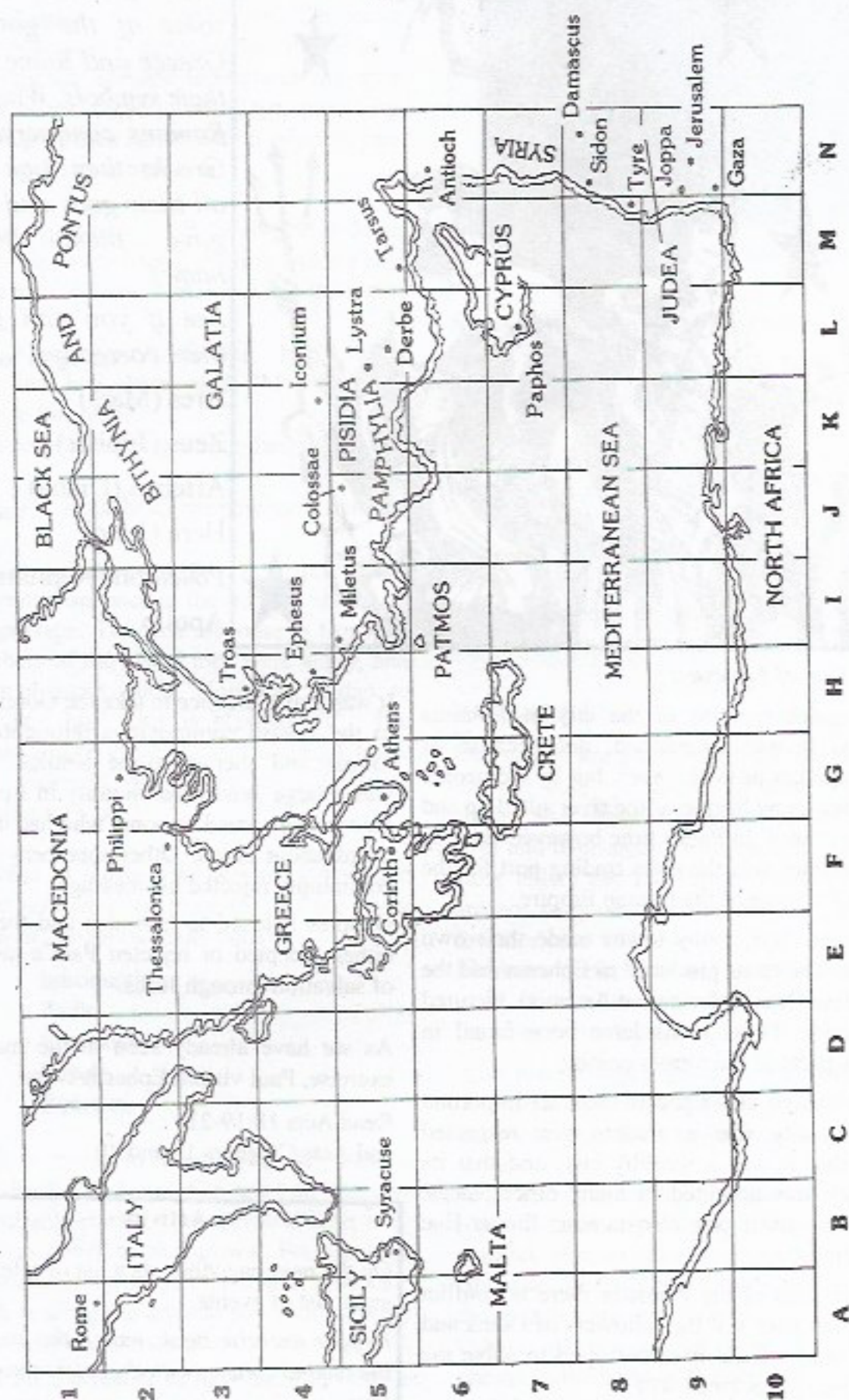






## Map Study

World of the Early Church







*This picture shows some of the gods of Greece and Rome, with their symbols. When the Romans conquered the Greeks they took over all their gods and often gave them Roman names.*

*See if you can guess them correctly:*

Ares (Mars)

Zeus (Jupiter)

Artemis (Diana)

Hera (Juno)

Poseidon (Neptune)

Apollo

### ***The City of Ephesus:***

Not much remains of the city of Ephesus today. It was abandoned, not because of earthquakes or tidal waves, but by the people moving away from it as the river silted up and trade ceased. In Paul's time however, the city of Ephesus was the main trading port for the Asia Province of the Roman Empire.

In those days, many towns made their own coins. The coins produced in Ephesus had the goddess Diana (also called Artemis) pictured on them. These coins have been found in many parts of the former empire.

This shows that Ephesus was an important trading city; that its traders were respected and that it was a wealthy city, and that its money was accepted in many other places. The city itself was also famous for its fine buildings.

In the Acts of the Apostles there is conflict between Paul and the followers of Diana and a Roman official is called upon to solve the conflict. (Acts 19:21-41).

It was Paul's practice to take the Good News to the Jewish communities throughout the Empire and then go to the gentiles. There was a large Jewish community in Ephesus. He was welcomed by some who had already heard about Jesus. Other members of the community rejected his message.

Gentiles listened to him also and they too, either accepted or rejected Paul's message of salvation through Jesus.

As we have already seen in the mapping exercise, Paul visited Ephesus twice.

Read Acts 18:19-21,  
and Acts Chapters 19 and 20.

### **Activity**

On the next page there is a list of references and a list of events.

*In your exercise book, match the events in the second column with the references in the first.*



## Reference

## Events

- |          |                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 18:19-21 | * Paul calls at Ephesus and promises to return. He left Priscilla and Aquila there.                                                                           |
| 18:24-28 | * Paul leaves Ephesus                                                                                                                                         |
| 19:1     | * Paul teaches about Baptism and he baptizes a small group.                                                                                                   |
| 19:3-7   | * Paul preaches in the Jewish synagogue.                                                                                                                      |
| 19:8     | * Many of those who believe in Diana and practice magic, tried to stop Paul.                                                                                  |
| 19:9-10  | * God performs miracles through Paul.                                                                                                                         |
| 19:11-12 | * Some of the Jews tried to perform miracles in Jesus' name but the evil spirits would not recognize them.                                                    |
| 19:13-17 |                                                                                                                                                               |
| 19:18    | * Paul arrives in Ephesus and finds many who believe in Jesus, but have not received the Holy Spirit.                                                         |
| 19:19-20 |                                                                                                                                                               |
| 19:21-22 | * Many accept Paul's message, both Jews and Gentiles.                                                                                                         |
| 19:23-41 | * Apollos preached the life of Jesus, but did not baptize them in the Spirit. Priscilla and Aquila explain the Christian message.                             |
| 20:1     |                                                                                                                                                               |
| 20:17    | * Paul prepares to leave Ephesus.                                                                                                                             |
| 20:18-36 | * Demetrius and his fellow statue makers cause trouble for Paul and his companions. There is a riot in the city that has to be controlled by a city official. |
|          | * Paul sails to Miletus on his way to Jerusalem. He asks the church leaders of Ephesus to meet him there.                                                     |
|          | * Paul recalls his ministry in Ephesus, he hands the responsibility of the Church to the elders and warns them of approaching problems.                       |
|          | * Some of the Jews reject Paul's message and force him to hold discussions in the public lecture hall of Tyrannus.                                            |





## THE STRUCTURE OF EPHESIANS:

Just as the Gospel of Mark was organized into sections, so too a clear pattern can be seen in the letter to the Ephesians.

The letter has two parts.

Part 1 is about the Mystery of Salvation (Chapters 1, 2 and 3) and Part 2 is about Christian Living (Chapters 4, 5 and 6).

### What is meant by the *Mystery of Salvation*?

By this expression, Paul means three things:

- 'Even before creation', God chose to make us his children.
- Now, through Christ and his Church we enjoy the blessings of salvation.
- At Christ's second coming, everything in heaven and on earth will be set up again in Him.

In Part 2, Paul goes on to speak about Christian living in the light of these three great thoughts.

*The quote below is from Ephesians. In which section do you think you will find it - in the first 3 chapters or the last 3 chapters?*

Do not use harmful words, but only helpful words, the kind that build up and provide what is needed, so that what you say will do good to those who hear you.

Let us now study the letter according to the two parts we have mentioned.

## PART 1

### THE MYSTERY OF SALVATION

#### A. Read Eph 1:1-2.

Who does St. Paul say he is?

In ancient times, it was the custom for the writer to introduce himself at the beginning of his letter and to greet his readers.

*What do you usually write at the beginning of your letters?*

*Write the first sentence of a typical letter you might write to a friend. Compare with the person you sit next to.*

*Copy verses 1 and 2 of Ephesians. Do you have any parts the same?*

Hagita High School  
PO Box 113  
ALOTAU

Dear Jane,

Before we go on let us  
thank our heavenly Father  
for his great care upon us.  
Amen.

Nothing much to say but  
just wanting to know how you  
are going on the other side  
over there.

Yesterday we had tests and

#### B. Now read Eph 1:3-14.

What are the spiritual blessings in Christ that St. Paul thanks God for?

#### Read Paul's prayer: Eph 1:15-23.

Take notice of what he asks for when he prays for the Ephesians.

Write a prayer for your own Christian community.





**D. Read Eph. 2:1-10**

What does 'spiritually dead' mean?  
Learn verses 4 and 5 off by heart.

**E. In the early Church there were two groups,**

1. converts from Judaism  
(Jewish Christians)
2. converts from other nations  
(Gentile Christians)

These two groups wanted to stay separate and this worried St. Paul.

He understood clearly that redemption was for everyone and that through Christ, everyone is a member of God's family.

Read the rest of Chapter 2 and you will see how strongly Paul is stressing that God has put an end to all division in the human family.

Read Eph 2:11-22 again, more carefully.

Write out and learn verse 18.

Find and write some words of a hymn that thanks God for the gift of faith.

St. Paul loved to call himself 'an apostle of Jesus Christ' and he often told people about his conversion, about the day he met Jesus on the road to Damascus, and how God set him apart 'to make his name known to Gentiles and Kings and to the people of Israel.'

**F. Read Eph 3:1-13.**

What did St. Paul think was his greatest privilege?

What was the 'secret plan' that was made known to Paul?

In Chapter 1 we heard Paul praying for his people. Now in verse 13 he tells them not to be upset because he is suffering in prison for them.

St. Paul teaches us that we can help people to grow in the knowledge of God **BY PRAYING AND BY SUFFERING** for them.

**Read Eph 3:14-21.**

This passage is a prayer. It is a continuation of St. Paul's prayer in Chapter 1.

*Do we usually consider suffering as a blessing? Do you pray mainly for yourself or others? Do you ever offer your suffering to Jesus, for him to use for others?*

**ART 2**

The second half of St. Paul's *Letter to the Ephesians* is about Christian living.

Paul says that through his saving work in Christ, God has made us one people.

But it is easy to break the unity that God wants.

St. Paul says that the way to keep unity and peace and to grow spiritually, is

- ♦ to practise goodness in everyday life
- ♦ and for each person to use the gifts God has given them for the good of the Christian community.

**A. Read Eph 4:1-16.**

What virtues does St. Paul say we must practice if we are to have unity and peace among us?

Verse 11 in Chapter 4 is very important because it tells us that there are special vocations, that is **calls to service**, in the Church and that they *come from God* for the good of the whole Church, **in order to build up the body of Christ**.





### Some Special Vocations (or Ministries) in the early Church

St. Paul mentions:

**Apostles** .. all those who give themselves to the work of the Church and visit the different communities

**Prophets** .. all those who receive the grace to encourage, guide and strengthen Christian communities

**Evangelists** .. those who preach the good news under the apostles

**Pastors** .. those who organize and instruct local Christians communities

**Teachers** .. those who help teach about faith

Some words we use today for the same ministries are: bishops, priests, catechists, teachers, prayer leaders.

These people have special vocations.

No one receives a vocation for himself or herself only.

Paul says that vocations are gifts from God to the Church. The reason they exist is for building up the Body of Christ.

*Write a letter to one of your teachers, encouraging him or her to persevere in their special ministry.*

To be called by God is a special grace or privilege for the individual, but we must never forget that the call is for the benefit of others.

Sometimes Christians look only at special vocations and do not realize that their call from God to be a Christian is the greatest of all vocations. And it also is for others.

The call to Baptism,  
the call to live in the Light,  
is God's greatest gift to us.  
With this privilege of being  
called into God's family  
goes the responsibility  
of being  
'like a light for the world'.

Our call  
to live the Christian life  
is for others,  
just as 'special' vocations  
are for others.



### B. Read Eph 4:15-5:5

In Baptism we are born into a new life in Christ. Those who have been made holy by Baptism cannot be careless about the way they live.

They must be strict with themselves and speak and act in a way that is fitting for life in the kingdom of God.

*Make up an examination of conscience for this passage, or a penitential rite.*

The passage we have just read is about individual behaviour but the next is about social behaviour.

God's people as a whole have been called out of darkness. They know what is good and true.

People who belong to the light need not get caught up in foolish talk and worthless things.

### C. Read Eph 5:6-6:9

Complete:

**EVERY HUSBAND MUST...**  
**EVERY WIFE MUST ...**  
**CHILDREN MUST ...**  
**PARENTS MUST ....**



Paul says that living the Christian life is like fighting a war.

You need protection and something to fight with.

In the next part of chapter 6 we find that God has given us plenty of protection and ammunition for the fight.

### D. Read Eph 6:10-20

Who is our enemy?

Where does our strength come from?

What armour (protection) does God give us?

Belt .....

Breastplate .....

Shoes .....

Shield .....

Sword .....

Helmet .....



Much  
Prayer

Much  
Power

Little  
Prayer

Little  
Power

No  
Prayer

No  
Power

To conclude our study of Ephesians we will look at what Paul says about PRAYER in this letter.

Firstly, Paul makes it clear that Christians should be people of prayer.

He says they have no hope of living the Christian life without prayer.

During this letter Paul prayed many times. We also see that he makes a strong appeal to the people to pray.

*Read Chapter 6, verses 18-20.*

*Copy these verses into your book.*

*St Paul teaches us in these verses to*

- ♦ ask God's help in prayer
- ♦ pray always
- ♦ keep on praying; never give up
- ♦ pray for special intentions

*Now read Ephesians 1:15-18  
and Ephesians 3:14-20*

We can add to what we have already said, that St. Paul also teaches us to:

- ♦ thank God in prayer
- ♦ ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit
- ♦ adore God in prayer
- ♦ ask Christ to make his home with us
- ♦ ask for an understanding of God's love

*Some of Paul's prayers are very beautiful.*

*Copy two or three sentences that you really like.*

*Put a border around your prayer.*

Seven days  
without prayer  
makes  
one weak

### Summary:

St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians has a very simple plan.

It has a greeting, 3 chapters of doctrine, 3 chapters of ethical behaviour, and a conclusion.

### Doctrine:

- There is one God and Father of us all
- The Gospel is the Good News of God's plan, to reconcile us to himself and to one another, through Christ
- It is through the Church that God's plan is now being realized.

### Behaviour:

- By use of our gifts we build up the Body of Christ
- We must give up our old behaviour
- We are to build Christian homes which are like small churches
- In the struggle facing us we must put on the spiritual armour which God supplies.

**Activity:** *If the bishop of your diocese was to write a letter this year to your school community, what would the bishop say to you?*

*Think of some ideas and share them with your class. Then write the letter. Include some doctrine that you think he might stress, and some behaviour that he might emphasize.*

*Don't forget the introduction and conclusion.*

*Perhaps you might invite your Bishop to write a letter to your class and then you can compare it with your own.*



# Topic Five

## The Book of Revelation

**P**erhaps you have heard some of these things about the book of Revelation

**Joe:** *It's a scary book*

**Mary:** *It says about the end of the world*

**Abia:** *People compare the Pope to the beast*

**Francesca:** *It has the numbers 666*

**Have you heard any comments like this?**

*The fact is that this book is **GOOD NEWS**.*

*Chapter 1, verse 3 tells us 'happy is the one who reads this book'*

*So let us begin our study with a happy and an interested heart!*

To study this book properly, we need to understand the kind of writing that it is. There are many kinds of writing.

If we read a news item in the newspaper, we know that the events we are reading about happened somewhere, a short time ago.

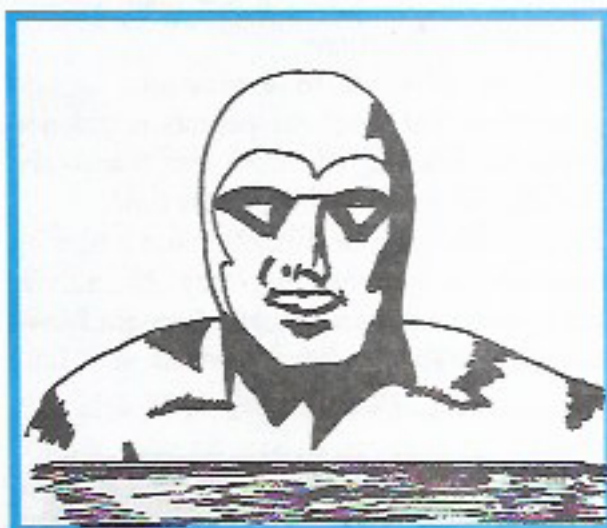
When we read "Letters to the Editor" we know that the letter is only one person's opinion, and it could be wrong.

If we listen to a story told by our very little brother or sister, we know that most of it is probably made up, it is the result of their imagination.

We read comic strips and comic books and we also know that most of these stories did not actually happen.

They do teach us something however, about good and evil.

*Does anyone read PHANTOM comics?*



*Who is the Phantom?*

*What usually happens to the bad guys in these stories?*

*Does the Phantom ever get beaten?*

Legends are another kind of writing.

When we read legends we know that the actual happenings might not be true but these legends tell us about our people and how they came to live in this land.

A teacher might use a true story, or a legend or a poem or a made-up story to teach a very important lesson. Students understand some truth about something through the story the teacher tells, and indeed storytelling is a very good way to teach.

It was the way Jesus himself used. And it is the way we like to learn.



We know of course that not all stories are true, but that they can be used to teach us something. It is up to us to judge different kinds of writing to know whether the writing is:

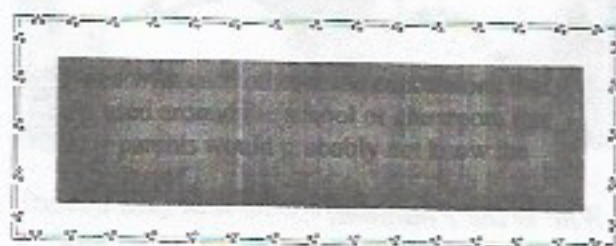
- news that actually happened,
- someone's opinion,
- a made-up story,
- a legend, a poem,
- or writing just to give us pleasure.

These different kinds of writings are called 'literary forms'.

It is very important to understand the different literary forms if we read writing from other generations.

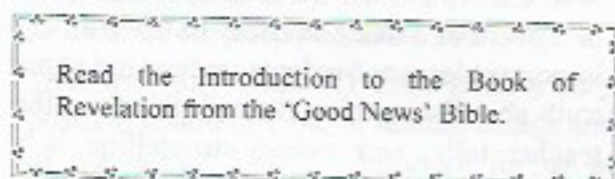
We have all kinds of expressions in our generation that even our parents might not know the meaning of, much less somebody reading our words in 2000 years time.

People who write Graffiti often use letters or numbers or symbols that they themselves know, and perhaps a few others might know but not everybody. *Why?*



People studying the Bible must learn the different literary forms used in writing the Scriptures. If they do not, then they will not be able to understand these writings.

They will not know what is important and what is not. They will not be able to understand the message that is offered to them. This is especially true of the Book of Revelation.



We know from this Introduction, that the Book of Revelation was written for the first Christians during a time of persecution.

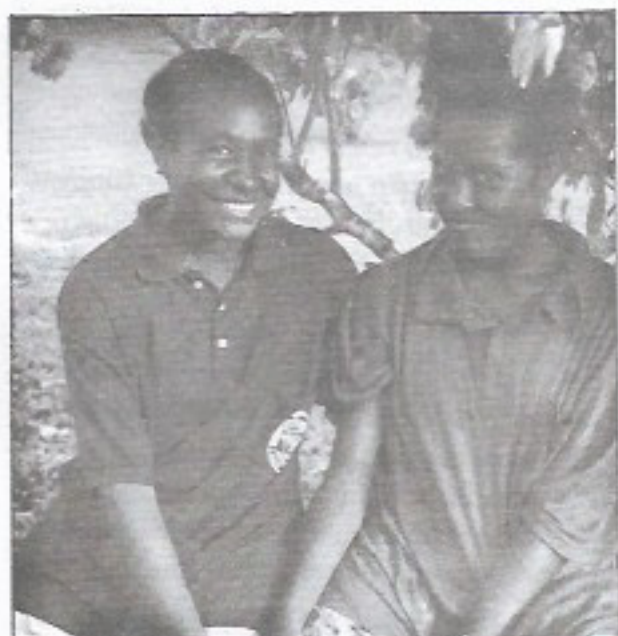
The Roman Emperor was responsible for the persecution and his headquarters were in Rome. So in this book, Rome is often portrayed as an evil place.

Because Catholics are sometimes called 'Roman Catholics', some people believe that Catholic people are evil also. This is just one of the many misunderstandings that come from this book.

Of course, Rome itself, the city, cannot be evil. As Jesus himself said, evil comes from people's hearts.

In fact, because so many people were martyred there, Rome today is considered a holy place. Even St. Peter was put to death there and is buried there. Many people visit Rome just because of the Martyrs.

As well as being written for the first Christians, to encourage them to remain faithful during a time of persecution, the book of Revelation is for us too. It has a message for every Christian.



It says to us that there will be times of testing and suffering, but persevere, good will triumph in the end.

To study this book we need to know its literary style, and it is necessary to ask the same questions we have already been thinking about for other books.



*The name given to the style of writing in the book of Revelation is apocalyptic.*

Some Science Fiction movies have a similar style. Some famous science fiction movies from the past are the Star War movies and the Star Trek movies.

Star Wars was set in the future and based around the conflict between good and evil. Luke Skywalker was the hero. With his sister, Princess Leia and her companions, he led their forces against the evil 'Darth Vader'.

Star Wars contained many elements of what is known in biblical literature as apocalyptic for example:

- there was the use of colour to show who are the "goodies" and "baddies".
- there was conflict between good and evil
- with the final victory going to the "goodies".

The Book of Revelation belongs to this literary style.

### What do we mean by literary style?

First of all, the word 'style' is a word we understand in PNG.

We have many expressions using the word 'style'.

*Share with the person next to you, some ways in which we use the word 'style'*

- ◊ What is your favourite style of writing?
- ◊ What is your favourite hair style?
- ◊ What are 'style' clothes?



### Literary Styles

Each literary style has a number of characteristics that make it different to the other styles. Different styles of writing are used for different purposes. If we want to say something clearly, and without confusion; for example, ordering some timber from the hardware store, we do not use poetry!

*Apocalyptic writing was used, especially to address "crisis" situations. The "crisis" situation of Revelation is the persecution of the early Church. Revelation presents this crisis as a preview of the battle between God and Satan which will bring the world's end and the completion of God's kingdom.*

*This writing is found in a time of danger, hardship and injustice from leaders. Because the leaders are the ones oppressing the people, the writing has to be in 'code'.*

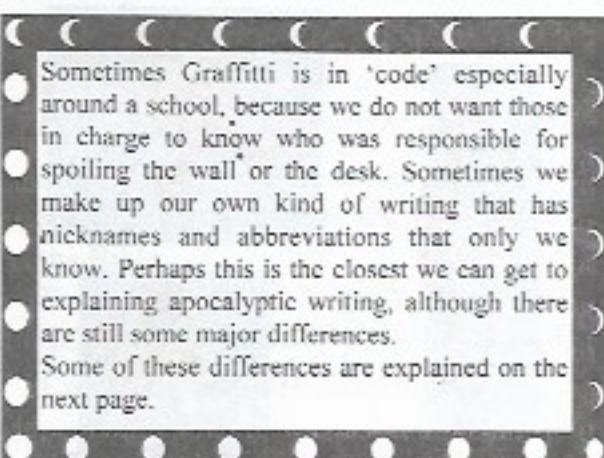
Readers today are not used to the apocalyptic style; it is very different from the type of literature we usually read in newspapers, story books, comics and magazines.

But between 200 BCE and 200 CE the apocalyptic style was a popular form of literature in Israel. The Bible contains two examples of this literary style, the Book of Revelation in the New Testament and the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament.

*Read the book of Daniel, Chapter 7.*

*Now read some verses from Chapter 13 of the Book of Revelation.*

*Can you notice any similarities?*



Sometimes Graffiti is in 'code' especially around a school, because we do not want those in charge to know who was responsible for spoiling the wall or the desk. Sometimes we make up our own kind of writing that has nicknames and abbreviations that only we know. Perhaps this is the closest we can get to explaining apocalyptic writing, although there are still some major differences. Some of these differences are explained on the next page.



## Apocalyptic literature

Revelation is the English translation of the Greek word - apocalypse, which means to uncover or to reveal a hidden message.

Readers are to discover the hidden message in the symbolic and imaginary language used.

Apocalyptic writing has these characteristics which give it its particular style.

- \* It is written during a time of crisis.
- \* There is the use of symbols and symbolic language to predict the defeat of the oppressor (evil). The symbols hide the true message from the oppressor and can be de-coded by those who have remained faithful.
- \* There is a belief that God will intervene in human history and defeat the oppressor.
- \* The whole of the universe is involved in the conflict, the faithful and the unfaithful. In the Book of Revelation this was the community of those faithful to God and the community opposed to them, i.e. the Christian Community and the Roman Empire
- \* God is in control and God uses supernatural beings to defeat the enemies of heaven.
- \* Those who remain faithful to God in the time of turmoil will be rewarded and those who turn away will be punished.
- \* The story repeats itself a number of times.

### Activities

- \* 1. What does the word apocalyptic mean?
- \* 2. Why are readers today unfamiliar with this writing style?
- \* 3. List the characteristics of apocalyptic writing that were mentioned in the Introduction to Revelation from the Good News Bible.

### The Symbols Used In Revelation

The Book of Revelation has a simple message:

*God controls history and the outcome of events, not the present evil rulers or the forces of evil.*

This message is hidden in symbols and in imaginative writing that the reader must decode. The symbols are part of the writing 'style'. They are not meant to be taken out of the whole context of the book.





Symbols used in the book of Revelation are mainly **numbers, colours and figures**.

Readers in the first and second centuries CE knew the code to find the hidden message, but readers today do not know the code to de-code (decipher) all the symbols.

Some of the symbols however, are not hard to know.

*Read the following passages from the Book of Revelation and try to match the symbols with their meanings in the table below:*

**Rev 1:4** From John to the **seven** churches in the province of Asia

**Rev 4:5** From the **throne** came flashes of lightning, and **peals of thunder**

**Rev 5:6** Then I saw a **Lamb** standing in the centre of the throne, surrounded by **four living creatures** and the **elders**. The **Lamb** appeared to have been killed. It had **seven horns** and **seven eyes** which are the seven spirits of God....

**Rev 7:4** The number of those who were marked with God's seal on their foreheads was 144 000.

*Some of the other symbols that can be found in the Book of Revelation are:*

<b>Six</b>	imperfect - one short of seven
<b>666</b>	very imperfect, consistently falls short of seven
<b>3 1/2</b>	half of seven and also imperfection
<b>Black</b>	represents death, unfaithfulness
<b>Red</b>	means violence, killing, the blood of martyrs (witnesses)
<b>White</b>	purity and victory - Christ
<b>Gold</b>	God
<b>Babylon</b>	Rome - Babylon persecuted the Jews in the Old Testament and Rome is the new persecutor.
<b>Harlot</b>	Rome - Emperor worship
<b>Fornicator</b>	Anyone who worships the Emperor of Rome
<b>Dragon</b>	Evil
<b>Beast</b>	Evil - Emperors Nero, Domitian
<b>Four Horses</b>	White - conquering power Red - war Black - famine Pale coloured - death

Symbol	Meaning
1. seven	A. Power
2. throne	B. The new Israel from every race, language: 12 tribes of Israel x 12 Apostles x 1000 (a incalculable number)
3. peals of thunder	C. Jesus Christ
4. Lamb	D. Knowledge
5. four living creatures	E. The divine number - wholeness and perfection
6. elders	F. God's seat of power
7. horns	G. God communicating with those who are listening
8. eyes	H. Those who have remained faithful to God
9. 144 000	I. Creatures from all over the world



### THE HISTORICAL SETTING

Scripture scholars have different opinions about when the Book of Revelation was written. Most suggest that it was written in the 90's CE.

The Christian Community during this period was being attacked, persecuted and martyred by the forces of the Roman Empire.

At first Rome tolerated Christianity as another Jewish sect (group). It gave to the Christians the same rights granted to the Jews throughout the Empire, for example, they were free from doing military service in the army. This was mainly because they could not work (fight) on the Sabbath.

As Christianity and Judaism became two distinct groups, Rome began to see things differently. Rome's major complaint against the Christians was their lack of patriotism. Christians refused to worship the emperor as a god. Roman citizens believed that their emperor was a god and it was because of their worship of him and their many other gods, that they were so successful in war and able to conquer other nations.

Most persecutions of the first two centuries were brief and limited to certain areas. For example, the historian Tacitus tells the story of Nero's persecution of the Christians in 64 CE.

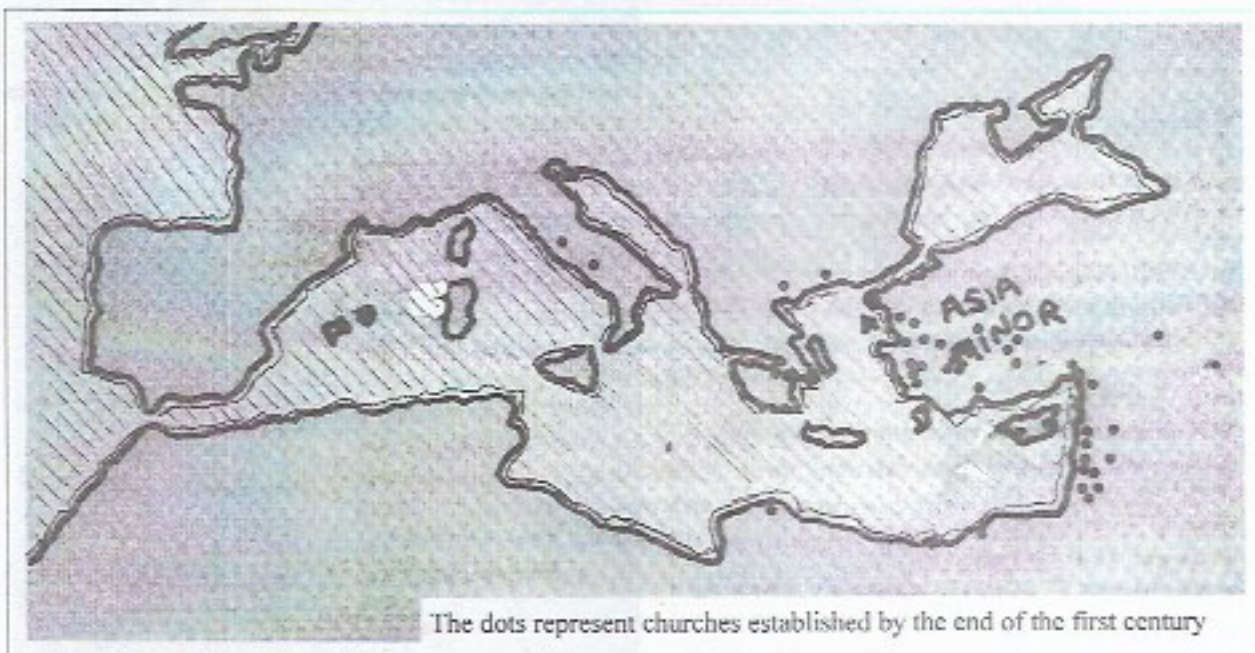
Tacitus shared the common negative ideas about the Christians and did not support them, but he reports that Nero falsely blamed the Christians for starting a fire that destroyed parts of the city of Rome.

Nero tortured and crucified Christians and burned their bodies as a spectacle for the citizens of Rome. Christian tradition holds that both Peter and Paul died in Rome at this time.

The worst persecutions of the first century however, took place under the Emperor Domitian (81-96) who required his subjects to worship him as a god. The Christians who refused to worship him were executed. It is thought that the Book of Revelation tells the story of this period of time; of how the Roman authorities hunted the Christians in the seven Churches of Asia Minor. Clement, leader of the Church of Rome, also wrote of the persecutions in Rome during the 90's.

It is in this atmosphere of persecution that the Book of Revelation was written, to encourage Christians to remain faithful to God, especially those in the Churches of Asia Minor.

*Activity: Many countries have changed their boundaries over the centuries. Look at the map below. What country is Asia Minor known as today?*



The dots represent churches established by the end of the first century



## AN OVERVIEW OF REVELATION

When writing an essay or a story your teacher probably tells you that it must have an introduction, a middle and a conclusion.

The Book of Revelation has a pattern but it is not very clear, not as clear as the pattern in Ephesians or Mark, that we have just studied.

One person compared this book to a tunnel - with light at the beginning, and light at the end. In the middle they said, there is 'a long stretch of darkness through which strange objects thunder past, making us bewildered and surprised'.

This is a rather good description, and many people's first reaction to this book.

The first part, (the light at the beginning of the tunnel) with the letters to the seven churches in the first 3 chapters make some sense.

We can also feel excited about the vision of the New Jerusalem in the last two chapters (the light at the end of the tunnel).

*Look at these last 2 chapters and copy a paragraph that you like.*

But that 'long stretch of darkness in between' ... what on earth is it all about?

If we look at just the words, we know already it is about a throne and a scroll, seals, trumpets, four horsemen, a beast, the number 666, and a scarlet women, with a 1000 year reign for God's saints and a lake of fire for the devil!

But what else is it about? What message was the writer trying to give us in using all these symbols and writing as he did?

The true answer is of course that the Book of Revelation is about the judgment and victory of God, and of those who are faithful to him.

Let us begin our study, with the light at the start of the tunnel.

The Introduction to the Book of Revelation has a general introduction to the book, which contains an invitation to the reader, a greeting to the seven Churches and a brief biography of the author, who was "patiently enduring the suffering that comes to those who belong to the kingdom" that is, he was being persecuted.

This is followed by a description of Jesus the Christ.

*Find this description and copy it into your books.*

### The Seven Churches

The seven Churches of Asia Minor represent the whole Church as it was during the time of the persecution.

The author of Revelation is writing to each Church picking out an area that they are doing well in and an area that needs to improve.

Each Church is challenged to become a better Christian community.

### ACTIVITY

Read Chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation.

Look at the map on the next page.

Locate on the map, the towns listed in the first column of the chart above the map.

Now go to your Good News Bible and find the reference to each of these towns.

Copy the map into your books.

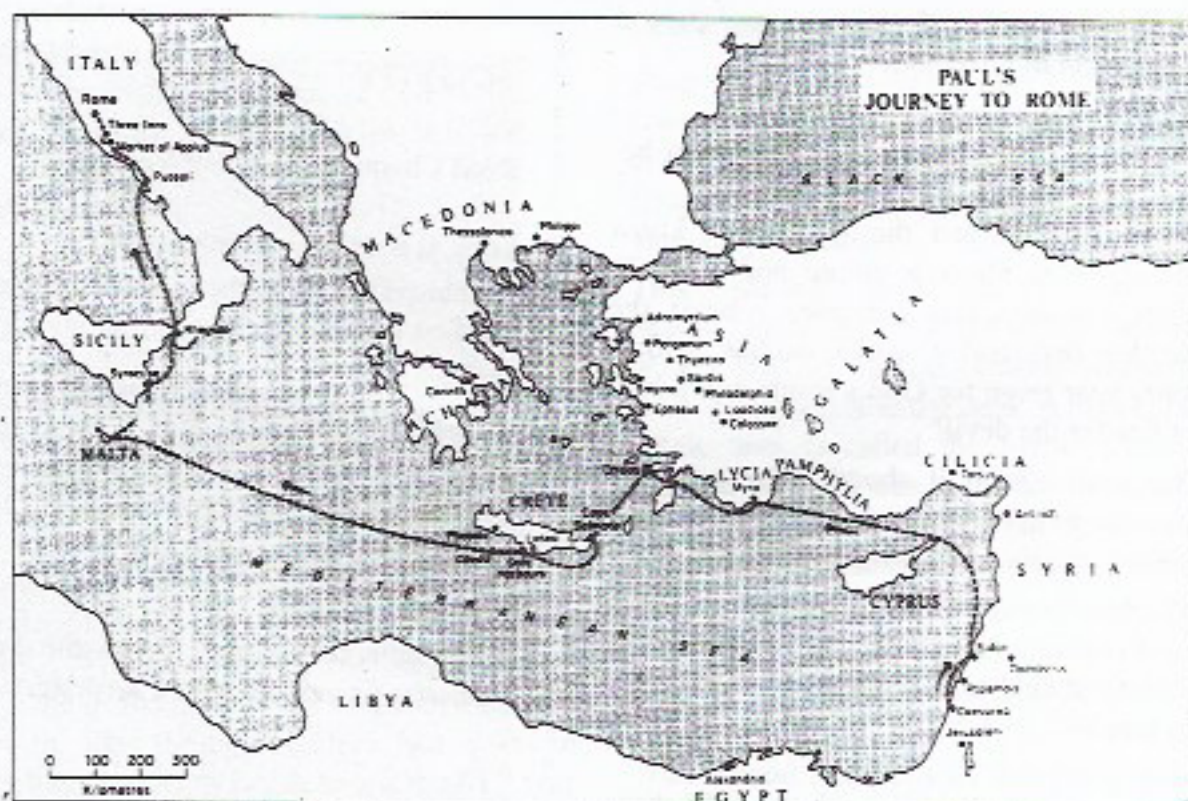
Also copy the table.

In the table, next to each town write the reference from the Book of Revelation.



TOWN	REFERENCE
1. Ephesus	Rev
2. Smyra	Rev
3 Pergamum	Rev
4. Thyatira	Rev
5. Sardis	Rev
6. Philadelphia	Rev
7. Laodicea	Rev

**Map showing the churches mentioned in Revelation  
Chapters 2 and 3**





The letter to the seven Churches follows a simple pattern:

1. Introduction - "To the angel of the Church at ....."
2. Positive Comment- "I know ....."
3. Negative Comment - "This is what I have against you....."
4. Ending - "If you have ears listen....."

Example:

#### The Message to Ephesus (Rev 2:1-7)

*Positive comment:* The author praises them for remaining faithful to God.

*Negative comment:* There are some in the community who are not as faithful as they once were. They are listening to false prophets.

*Choose another of the Churches in Asia Minor and list the positive and negative comments.*

The main theme of the Book of Revelation can be summed up in Rev 2:8-10.

Read this passage and fill in the blank spaces.

*This is a message from the one ..... who died and lived again.*

*The devil will put you to the test by .....*

*Be faithful to me ..... and I will give you ..... as your prize of victory.*

#### First part of the Dark Tunnel:

##### Rev. 4-8

The chapters 4-8 are part of the 'dark tunnel' and many people misunderstand this section and the meaning of the symbols used.

Some of the easier symbolism has been explained already.

Some more is given below:

1. **The Scroll:** Stands for the history of the world
2. **White Horseman - crown:** Stands for Jesus who is victorious.
3. **Red Horseman - sword:** Suggests conflict
4. **Black Horseman - scales:** Suggests judgement
5. **Pale coloured Horseman:** Death and Hell (the fate of those who reject Christ)

#### THE CONFLICT VISIONS:

##### Rev. 9-19

The author of Revelation is encouraging the reader to remain faithful to God during a time of persecution.

Central to this middle part of Revelation is what will happen to those who have remained faithful and to those who have rejected God.

The conflict between the Christians and the Roman Empire is like the battle that continually goes on in the world between good and evil.

**BUT it is very important to remember that these battles are not specific battles and they do not predict the end of the world.**



Many readers of Revelation take individual signs that are mentioned in this book as an indicator that the end of time has come. Much of this misunderstanding comes from not understanding the language 'style' and the message of Revelation.

Remember that we said that the title of this book came from a Greek word and that the meaning of this Greek word was

'to uncover' or 'to reveal'.

So the very title of the book tells us that our job is uncovering the meaning of words to find the true meaning underneath.

Let us look at the first 4 verses of Chapter 13 as an examples of the kind of uncovering we have to do in this section of Revelation.

### **Chapter 13 (Good News Bible)**

1. Then I saw the beast coming up out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads on each of the horns there was a crown, and on each of its heads there was a name that was insulting to God.

2. The beast looked like a leopard, with feet like a bear and a mouth like a lion. The dragon gave the beast his own power, his throne, and vast authority.

3. One of the heads of the beast seemed to be fatally wounded, but the wound had healed. The whole earth was amazed and followed the beast.

4. Everyone worshipped the dragon because he had given his authority to the beast. They worshipped the beast also, saying "Who is like the beast? Who can fight against it?"

### *The Historical/Symbolic Meaning*

#### **Verse 1**

Beast - refers to the Roman Empire, which symbolizes evil.

Sea - for the Jewish people, the bottom of the sea was the place where the evil spirits

lived, so that is why the dragon came from there. Also, the Romans controlled the Mediterranean Sea and had established a trading empire around the sea. The Romans used the sea to trade, to travel and to send their army around the empire.

Ten Horns - makes reference to the Empires in the Book of Daniel - see verse 2.

Seven Heads - refers to the seven hills of Rome on which the city was built.

#### **Verse 2**

Beast - in this verse comparison is made with the description of Empires that controlled Israel in the Book of Daniel.

Leopard	= Persia
Bear	= Medea
Lion	= Babylon
Ten Horns	= Greece

The authority of the Empire (dragon) is personalized/symbolized by the Emperor - beast. The new beast is like the beast from the past. The beast remains, even though it may have another name.

#### **Verse 3**

Fatally wounded - the reference to the beast that had been fatally wounded probably refers to Nero, who was assassinated by his bodyguards. Nero claimed that he would be reborn. The Emperor Domitian (85 - 96 CE) claimed that he was Nero reborn - the healed wound.

Followed the beast - Emperor worship was common practice at this time.

#### **Verse 4**

"Who is like the beast? Who can fight against it?" -

The question is a riddle/joke.

In Rev. 12:7, Michael leads the angels in the battle against the dragon.

*Find a prayer to St. Michael the Archangel and copy it into your book.*



We could fill many pages talking about the meaning of each verse.

The explanations of verses given in the last two pages are the kind of thing you can find if you read a Bible Commentary.

You may be able to find a Bible Commentary in your school library.

The most important thing to know about the Book of Revelation is that it is Good News! It is good news for those who stay faithful to Jesus.

Through your study of this book, and all the books of the New Testament, we hope you come to an increased understanding of God's word, and also find hope and love through faith in God, who made possible the message of the Good News for all people.



## OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

This optional activity is on Chapter 13 of Revelation, which is perhaps the Chapter that causes the most confusion from this interesting book.

It is the chapter that talks about the beast and the number 666.

You may like to complete the activity below if you are feeling confused or if you just want to know more about this chapter.

\* \* \* \* \*

Read Chapter 13 twice. Then copy out the questions below, filling in the answers as you go. For some parts, you will have to refer to other chapters.



1. About whom does chapter 13 speak?  
.....
2. Who is the dragon? (see chapter 12:9)  
.....
3. What does the dragon do, according to 12:17? .....
4. How does the dragon fight against the Christians?  
The dragon uses ..... to fight against the Christians.
5. Which verse in Ch. 13 tells us that the first beast is in the service of Satan?  
Copy this verse.
6. The second beast is in the service of the first beast.  
Which verse tells us that?  
Copy this verse.







**1. Read verses 1 and 2 of Chapter 13.**

In these verses, John uses a picture from Daniel 7:3-7.

Read these verses from Daniel.

Copy them into your book.

**Background:** The four beasts that Daniel sees, stand for the great empires which had been enemies of the chosen people. These were the empires of Babylon, of the Medes, of Persia and the empire of the Greek King, Alexander the Great.

**2. Why did Daniel describe these empires as beasts? (Think of how wild beasts behave).**

**3. Complete the missing words:**

In the Book of Revelation, John sees one beast which looks like all those 4 beasts in Daniel. Since those four beasts in Daniel stand for four empires, the one beast in John stands for one .....

The one beast has the marks of all the four beasts in Daniel, which means it is as evil and cruel as all the four beasts put together. So this one ..... about which John speaks is as evil and cruel as all the four empires together, which Daniel spoke about. Which empire do you think John speaks about? Remember that the beast is in the service of Satan who wants to fight the Christians. (Which empire threatened John and his fellow Christians?)

The ..... So the first beast stands for the ..... through which the ..... wants to fight the Christians.



**Complete:**

**1. The beast has ten horns and seven heads. Who else has seven heads and ten horns?**

(Ch 12:3): The .....

So the beast, or the Roman Empire, looks like the ..... and that is .....

**2. The seven heads and ten horns have yet another meaning. Look at Rev 17:9-12.**

In those verses we read that they stand for ..... or Emperors.

**Background:** A famous Bible scholar, William Barclay, says that the seven heads and ten horns stand for the rulers and the emperors of Rome. Since Augustus, the first Roman Emperor, there had been seven emperors: Tiberius, 14-37; Caligula, 37-41; Claudius, 41-54; Nero, 55-68; Vespasian, 69-79; Titus, 79-81; Domitian, 81-96.

These seven emperors are the seven heads of the beast.

The beast also had 10 horns. Why 10 and not 7?

This is because after the death of Nero there was a time of complete chaos. In a year and a half, three different men briefly took power. These men were Galba, Otho and Vitellius. They are not included in John's list of the seven heads as they did not really rule properly, but they are included in his list of 10 horns.

**3. The fact that the horns stand for kings or emperors becomes clear from some words of Chapter 13:1.**

Copy these words.

**4. This verse also says 'on each of its heads there was a name that was insulting to God'. John says this because the emperors had themselves called 'divine' or 'god' or 'Saviour of the world'.**

When a man calls himself by such a name, he ..... God.

'Son of God', 'Saviour of the world' are names we use for Jesus.

When an emperor calls himself by these names, then he competes against .....





1. What is said about one of the heads in verse 3? Copy out these words.

They tell us that one of these seven emperors had ..... but then he had come back to ..... again.

**Background:** There was a story told in John's time that Nero had come back to life again, because the Emperor Domitian was as bad as Nero had been.

2. Now what is meant by the second beast? From verse 12 we know that the second beast is in the service of .....

This means that it was in the service of the Roman Empire and its ..... whose name at the time of John was .....

What did the second beast force the people who live on earth to do? Copy these words.

3. The second beast is someone then, who forced the people to ..... the Emperor.

We already know that in the city of Ephesus he had a huge temple built in his honour and he had people put a statue of himself into this temple. Which verse speaks about this statue? .....



1. Read verses 16-17. These verses speak about the mark of the beast, that is the beast's name which was placed on the peoples' right hands or foreheads.

In order to understand these verses, we need to know the customs of the time.

The background in the next column gives us the customs.

### Background:

A. Sometimes soldiers branded themselves with the name of their general, if they really liked him. If the mark is connected with this custom, it means that those who had this mark of the beast really ..... the beast.

B. Another custom was that all the coins had the head and the name of the Emperor stamped on them, to show that all money was his property. If the mark of the best is connected with this custom, it means that those who have the mark of the beast are the ..... of the beast.

C. A last custom was that when a person had burned incense to the Emperor, he was given a certificate to say that he had done so. The mark of the beast may be the certificate of worship.

This is probably the mark on your body that John talks about in the Book of Revelation, that is, having a certificate to say that you have worshiped the Emperor.

### 2. Fill in the missing words:

People received a certificate to show that they had ..... the ..... This 'beast' whom the people where forced to ..... was the .....

When John wrote his book, the name of the Roman Emperor was .....

3. Verse 17 says that the mark was either the beast's ..... or the ..... that stands for the name.

Verse 18 says that the number was 666.

We already know the beast's name.

It is .....

The number 666 which stands for the name, then also means the Emperor .....

Conclusion: The number 666 stands for .....



The title of this term's work has been 'Understanding the New Testament'.

Of course we already understood something about the New Testament, so this work has not been completely new. However, do not think that now your understanding is finished. Instead, think of it as just beginning. You can visit these books and all the others, again and again, and you will never stop discovering things about them.

This is because the Father is a talkative God. He wants to speak to us. He especially speaks to us in the Scriptures. The Father made us talkative too, and he wants us to talk to him. He also wants to speak his loving and kind Word to others, through us.

Pope John Paul wrote in one of his encyclicals - *Redemptoris missio*, that 'the people who have not yet received an initial proclamation of Jesus, make up the majority of the people on earth'. (RM 40).

He said that the mission of proclaiming Christ to the nations is still in its infancy, and that he believed the third millenium would bring the dawn of a new evangelization.

His words to young people on August 15, 1993 are still spoken to our generation today.....

*Don't be afraid to go out on the streets  
and into public places,  
like the first apostles  
who preached Christ  
and the Good News of salvation  
in the centres of the cities, towns and villages.  
This is not a time to be ashamed of the Gospel.  
It is a time to preach it from the rooftops.  
It is you who must go out into the byroads  
and invite everyone you meet  
to the banquet  
which God has prepared for his people.  
The Gospel must not be kept  
hidden away in private.  
It has to be put on a lamp-stand,  
so that people may see its light  
and give praise to our heavenly Father.*



