

# Basic Christianity

*Five weeks exploring the foundations of the faith*



*Rooted: Sunday, 7-8pm, 14 April – 12 May 2024*

*Teaching, then Q&A.*

*All welcome. All questions welcome!*

# Basic Christianity



- Five weeks to explore the foundations
- A suggestion to read a gospel along the way

# Five big questions:



1. *How can we know about God?*
  - *Revelation: God speaks to humanity in Jesus, and in his Word.*
2. *When did it all start?*
  - *Roots: God made us to know him.*
3. *Why did it go wrong?*
  - *Rebellion: we did it our way, otherwise known as sin.*
4. *Who will save us?*
  - *Rescue: God sends Jesus to be our Saviour.*
5. *What does the future hold?*
  - *Renewal or ruin? Heaven and hell are coming.*

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**Revelation**  
(week 1)

**Rebellion**  
(week 3)



**Ruin**

**Roots**  
(week 2)

**Rescue**  
(week 4)

**Renewal**  
(week 5)



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# When did it all start?



- Science vs. religion: a red herring?
  - *Maybe: science probes the mechanics of how the world (and we) came into being – the how.*
  - *The Bible is primarily concerned with who and why – but is far from silent on the how.*
- ‘In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.’
  - *The start of the Bible – and Christian faith:*
    - *‘By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.’ (Hebrews 11.3, ESV)*



# “In the beginning God created ...”



- **Roots:** God made us and everything else.
  - *He made everything for his own glory.*
  - *He made a good and peaceful world for us to enjoy and explore.*
  - *The earth is his – and so are we.*
  - *He has made us in his own image.*
  - *He designed us to seek him.*
  - *Everything was made by and for Jesus Christ ...*
  - *... who enters his creation to reconcile us to our Maker.*

# He made it, and us, for his glory.



- This is the song of heaven ...
  - *“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.” (Revelation 4.11)*
- ... and of all creation:
  - *“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.” (Psalm 19.1)*
  - *“How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.” (Psalm 104.24)*



# A good and peaceful world ...



- He made a good world:
  - *“God said ... And it was so. ... And God saw that it was good.”*  
*(Genesis 1 repeatedly)*
  - *The orderly nature of God’s world enables scientific study.*
- He made a peaceful world:
  - *“God blessed the seventh day and made it holy.”* (Genesis 2.3)
  - *The story of the Bible is God bringing us (back) to share his rest:*
    - *Jesus said, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”* (Matthew 11.28)

# ... for us to enjoy and explore.



- He made it for our blessing:
  - “... *the living God ... has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.*” (Acts 14.17)
  - “*For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving ...*” (1 Timothy 4.4)
  - “*He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate – bringing forth food from the earth: wine that gladdens the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread that sustains his heart.*” (Ps 104.14-15)

# ... for us to enjoy and explore.



- He encourages our exploration:
  - *Solomon “described plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also taught about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. Men of all nations came to listen to Solomon’s wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.” (1 Kings 4.33-34)*
  - *“... fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over ... every living creature.” (Genesis 1.28)*

# The earth is his – and so are we.



- He has the owner's rights:
  - *“The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.” (Psalm 24.1-2)*
- We owe him our reverent fear:
  - *“By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth. ... Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the people of the world revere him. For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.” (Psalm 33.6, 8-9)*

# The earth is his – and so are we.



- This is not optional!
  - *“Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker, to him who is but a potsherd among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, ‘What are you making?’ ... It is I who made the earth and created mankind upon it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshalled their starry hosts.” (Isa. 45.9, 12)*
- Hold that thought!
  - *Next week, we explore our failure to listen to God’s warning.*
  - *The week after, we hear God’s plan to rescue and redeem us.*

# He made us in his image.



- Made to reflect the Creator:
  - *“God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1.27)*
- Therefore, all human life is sacred ...
  - *Our worth is not gradual or conditional: all people have value and dignity by virtue of being created in God’s image.*
- ... because every life is a reflection of the Maker:
  - *“Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.” (Genesis 9.6)*

# He made us in his image.



- But how do we ‘reflect’ our Creator?
  - *Our capacity for ‘relationship’*
    - *We are “persons” – because God is a “person”: “let us make man ...”*
    - *As his “image”, we are made to know him.*
    - *As “male and female”, we are made know each other.*
  - *Our calling to ‘rule’*
    - *We are to be like God in ruling the world under his authority:*
      - *“God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’” (Genesis 1.28)*

# He designed us to seek him



- The Creator designed us to seek and find him:
  - *“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth ... he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth ... God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’” (Acts 17.24a, 25b, 26a, 27-28a)*
- We could leave it there ...



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- The gospel is that God came to seek and find *us*:
  - *“the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”* (Lk. 19.10)

# Everything was made by and for Jesus Christ ...



- Paul says of Christ:
  - *“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”*  
(Colossians 1.15-17)
- John says of the “Word”:
  - *“Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”* (John 1.3)

... who enters his creation to reconcile us to our Maker.



- Paul goes on to say:

- *“For God was pleased to have all his fulness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.” (Colossians 1.19-20)*

- And John goes on to say:

- *“... to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God ...” (John 1.12)*

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