

PANORAMA OF THE BIBLE
SMALL GROUP STUDY

Fellowship NORTHWEST
ARKANSAS

**© 2014, Fellowship Bible Church of Northwest Arkansas
BiLD Training Center**

*Scriptures taken from NIV unless otherwise noted THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW
INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica,
Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide*

**Curriculum may be copied and used for personal and ministry purposes,
as long as content remains unchanged.**

PANORAMA SESSION 1: PROLOGUE

GENESIS 1:1, 26-27; 3:6-7, 15

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1:1

CONNECT IN COMMUNITY

Spend a few minutes in your first small group session getting to know each other. Have each person share why they are taking Panorama of the Bible and what they are hoping to get out of the small group component.

belong

What's your favorite element of the created world? Are you an animal lover, or do you like to admire the clouds and the stars? Are you more moved by a mountain vista or a dazzling white beach? What is it about that aspect of creation that speaks to you?

grow

Read Genesis 1:1. Why do you think that the Bible tells us that God created the heavens and the earth, but doesn't tell us how? What do you think are the most important elements of the creation narrative?

Read Genesis 1:26-27. What do these verses tell you about the creation and nature of mankind?

What does it mean to be made in the image of God? How does being made in God's image affect how you feel about yourself? About other people? About God?

What is man supposed to do according to Genesis 1:26? What does that mean for mankind today? Why is important that God created humanity as male and female, both in the image of God?

Read Genesis 3:6-7. What motivated Adam and Eve to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? How are the temptations toward sin today the same as they were in the Garden? What was the result of their sin? Why is Genesis 3 such an important passage for us to understand?

Read Genesis 3:14-15. This has been called the first announcement of the Gospel. If Jesus is the offspring mentioned here and the serpent is Satan, where do you see the Gospel in these verses? How is God's grace and mercy pictured even as He delivers curses in Genesis 3?

How do these early chapters of Genesis set the stage for all that you will learn in the coming weeks of study in Panorama of the Bible?



This week, look for an opportunity to share what you are learning with someone else. It might be as simple as asking them about their weekend. If they in turn ask about yours, mention that you started a new class. Use that opportunity to talk to them about what you learned this week about creation, man, and sin. This is a natural bridge to sharing the gospel if they are interested in these topics.

CONNECT IN WORD

Day 1: God Creates - Genesis 1:1-2:3

Day 2: Man Falls - Genesis 3:1-24

Day 3: Man Kills - Genesis 4:1-16; 6:1-8

Day 4: God Judges - Genesis 6:9-9:17

Day 5: Man Builds, God Scatters - Genesis 11:1-9

PANORAMA SESSION 2: PATRIARCHS

GENESIS 12:1-3; 15:6

**For the Scriptures tell us, "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith."
Romans 4:3 (NLT)**

CONNECT IN COMMUNITY

belong

Where is "home" for you? Have you journeyed far from where you grew up (like Abraham) or have you stayed pretty close to home (like Isaac)? Have you ever sojourned in a place that wasn't your home for a period? Share with the group.

grow

Read Genesis 12:1-3. This is called the Abrahamic Covenant and it is very important in getting a fuller understanding of the whole Bible. What is a covenant? Where do we still use that word today? As a group, identify the main promises in this covenant. What is Abram's responsibility in the covenant?

What is the scope of the promises that God makes in this passage? How will these promises be fulfilled? Why are these verses so important to understanding the rest of the Bible?

What does it mean to be “blessed to be a blessing”? How could we use the blessings that God gives us today to bless others? How can we use the spiritual blessings God has given us to bless others? Do you ever get caught in the trap of “managing your blessings” rather than serving the One who blessed you? Share with the group.

Read Genesis 15:6. This is a key verse for the book of Genesis. It is quoted in the New Testament in Romans 4:3 and 4:22, and in Galatians 3:6 and James 2:23. What is the significance of this verse? What was the criteria by which Abram was declared righteous?

According to this passage (and the New Testament passages cited above) what is the relationship between faith and righteousness? How was Abram justified before God? How are we justified today? What does this tell us about how our relationship with God can be restored?

In Panorama Movement #1 we looked at the Gospel in Genesis 3:15. Where do you see the Gospel in Genesis 12:1-3 or 15:6? Why are these 4,000 year-old events still vitally important for us today?

R3

This week, look for a place where God has blessed you so that you can bless someone else. Maybe God is calling you to share some of your material wealth, or maybe He wants you to share the treasure of knowing Christ with someone in your sphere of influence. Go to the Lord in prayer and ask Him where He would have you bless someone that you will encounter this week.

CONNECT IN WORD

Day 1: Abraham's Faith - Genesis 12:1-3; Acts 7:2-7;
Hebrews 11:8-16

Day 2: A Great Nation - Genesis 26:2-5; Deuteronomy 26:5;
1 Kings 3:6-8

Day 3: A Great Blessing - Genesis 22:16-18; Acts 3:22-25;
Hebrews 6:13-18

Day 4: Righteousness by Faith (1) - Genesis 15:6;
Romans 4:1-12

Day 5: Righteousness by Faith (2) - Romans 4:13-25;
Galatians 3:5-14

PANORAMA SESSION 3: REDEMPTION AND WANDERINGS

EXODUS 2:23-25

God listened to their groanings. God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. ²⁵ God saw what was going on with Israel. God understood.
Exodus 2:24-25 (The Message)

CONNECT IN COMMUNITY

belong

Have you ever felt trapped in a situation and sought out someone that you thought understood you and your needs, only to find out they did not? Or, conversely, you felt that no one could understand your situation or issue, but they did? What was your reaction to either or both of those situations?

grow

Read Exodus 2:23-25. What are the key words that you notice? What do we know about the Israelites' situation in Egypt (read Exodus 1:1-14)? Did it seem hopeless?

Referring back to the “Belong” question above, when you felt trapped or stuck in a bad situation, did it seem endless? Was it a month, a year, or even several years? The Israelites had been in bondage to the Egyptians for 400 years! Despite their enslavement, what happened to the Israelites (re-read Exodus 1:6-7, 12-13)? Do you struggle with God’s timetable as it relates to your “suffering?” What does James 1:2-4 say about suffering?

Like the Israelites, Christians are in a covenant relationship with God although our covenant is the New Covenant through Christ. What has God promised to those who belong to Him (read Deuteronomy 31:6; Ps. 57:1)? God continued to bless the Israelites during their bondage in Egypt and He can do the same for us.

Read Isaiah 40:29-31. What else does God promise?

Our bondage is not to a nation, but we may be in bondage to sin. What is keeping you down or holding you back? What is the key to breaking free (read Romans 6:15-23)?

Read the Exodus 2:23-25 passage from The Message.

Many years later the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned under their slavery and cried out. Their cries for relief from their hard labor ascended to God: ²⁴God listened to their groanings. God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.²⁵ God saw what was going on with Israel. God understood.

What does this say about God? How does this relate to our relationship with Him?

R3

Many people today feel they are in bondage. Trapped in a marriage that is not working, trapped in a dead end job, or trapped by seemingly insurmountable debt. If that describes you or your situation, turn to God and ask for deliverance. Seek out a pastor, community group leader, counselor, or financial advisor. As Christians filled with the Holy Spirit, we are no longer slaves to sin, but slaves to righteousness. (Romans 6:15-23).

CONNECT IN WORD

Day 1: God Hears - Exodus 2:23a; 1 John 5:14;
Exodus 16:11-12

Day 2: God Remembers - Genesis 19:29; Exodus 2:24;
Psalm 98:2-3; Numbers 10:8-9

Day 3: God Sees - Exodus 2:25a; Jonah 3:9-10

Day 4: God Knows - Luke 16:14-15; Romans 8:27

Day 5: God Understands - Exodus 2:25; 1 Chronicles 28:8-9;
John 11:34-36; 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

PANORAMA SESSION 4: CONQUEST

JOSHUA 1:1-9

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.
Joshua 1:9 (NIV)

CONNECT IN COMMUNITY

belong

Have you experienced a time in life when you knew you were at a crossroads? When you felt that the time you were entering was going to be pivotal for you, your family, or others? Share with the group about that time.

grow

Read Joshua 1:1-9. What is the assignment that God gives to Joshua? As you look at the whole passage, what role does God want to accomplish through Joshua and the Israelites? What is God's role in achieving that goal?

In your life, what is the relationship between your effort and God's empowerment? Read I Corinthians 15:10 and Colossians 1:29 to see how Paul understands their relationship. What is God's assignment for you as a New Testament believer? Compare your role and God's role in fulfilling the New Testament assignment you mentioned.

What is God's promise to Joshua and Israel as they walk in obedience? (See particularly verses 5 & 9) Maybe you've felt like you have recently been wandering and defeated. What is God calling you to? What is His promise to you?

God did not ask Joshua to be more skilled in battle, to devise the best plans, to get better weapons for battle, or to recruit a more powerful army. What did he ask Joshua to do? (See verses 6, 7, and 9)

The Lord knew that the main thing Joshua would have to do is fight fear with courage. Joshua would just have to put one foot in front of the next and walk where God was leading. Retreating in fear is natural; walking in faith is supernatural. What is a circumstance in your life that you are fearful about? How can you be strong and courageous to walk in faith in the direction that God has called you?

There are 3 verbs the Lord uses in verses 7-8 in relation to God's Word. What were the 3 things the Israelites were to do with God's Word? How about you? Do you regularly engage in God's Word? Are you hungry for it? Do you believe it is essential for daily life? Share about your experience with reading, studying, memorizing, listening to and meditating on God's Word.

In Joshua 1:9, God tells Joshua and the Israelites not to be discouraged or scared. Why should they not fear? If God is with us, who can be against us? When in your life have you experienced a sense of God's presence when faced with a major challenge?

R3

Write 3 "I will..." statements based on what God impressed upon you through these verses. Most people don't need just more knowledge, but more obedience and application of the truth they already know. How will you walk in faith rather than fear? How will you remember God's presence in the midst of fear? How will you get God's Word into your heart and obey it more? How will you trust in God rather than feelings, circumstances, or cultural trends this week?

CONNECT IN WORD

Day 1: The assignment - Matt. 28:18-20

Day 2: The promise - Acts 1:8

Day 3: The necessary attribute - Romans 1:16; II Tim. 1:7

Day 4: The training - John 14:21

Day 5: The promise AGAIN - Revelation 12:10-12

PANORAMA SESSION 5: APOSTASY

JUDGES 2:16-19

In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Judges 21:25 (NASB)

CONNECT IN COMMUNITY

belong

Have you ever been stuck in a rut or a bad routine? What did it take to get you out of that situation? Why do you think it is so hard to break a bad habit?

grow

Read Judges 2:16-19. Judges 2:8 tells us that Joshua died at age 110. What do you think the national mood of Israel was like when Joshua died? How does this relate to what we read in Judges 2:16-19?

In this short section of scripture what do we see as the struggle for the nation of Israel? What result occurs from Israel's choices?

This passage compares Israel's idolatry to committing adultery against God (2:17). Why do you think such a graphic metaphor is used for this idolatry? Do we still struggle with idols today? (Review Ephesians 5:5)

In these seasons of struggle or sin, what happens in order for deliverance to take place? Who is responsible for that deliverance?

What responsibility did the nation of Israel have before the Lord took action? What are some of the characteristics of God that we see in this passage?

In the space provided, illustrate the pattern or cycle that we see in this passage of scripture. Share your thoughts with the group.

Read Judges 3:7-11 and see if you can identify the different phases of the Sin Cycle in the story of Othneil.

R3

Take a moment to personalize this "Sin Cycle." Are there any areas in your own life that you are stuck in a "sin" rut? What actions do you need to take to be back at peace with the Lord? Prayerfully confess your sin to the Lord and ask Him to deliver you from this oppression. Also, confide in a close friend and pray that the Holy Spirit will work through him or her to help you stay accountable and maintain integrity in your walk.

CONNECT IN WORD

Day 1: God's Command for Israel - Deut. 7:1-6

Day 2: Israel Fails to Follow - Judges 1:19-33

Day 3: God's Curses for Disobedience - Deut. 28:15-68

Day 3: Sin Cycle of Israel - Judges 2:16-19

Day 4: Sin Cycle Example - Judges 3:12-30

PANORAMA SESSION 6: KINGSHIP – UNITED MONARCHY

2 SAMUEL 7:1-17

And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.

2 Samuel 2:16 (ESV)

belong

Think of a promise that someone has made to you in the past. Did they keep it? If so, do you think they will continue to keep it? If not, why did they break it? How does your confidence in that person affect your assurance of that promise?

grow

Read 2 Samuel 7:1-17. In this passage, we see a promise or covenant that God made with David. How are God's promises different from the promises of men?

Who did God choose to speak to in this passage? Why him?

Does God want David to build Him a "house" to dwell in? Why or why not?

Instead of asking David to build Him a house, what does God say He will do instead? (There are many in verses 9-16, just name a few.) Which of these stand out to you the most?

In verses 14 and 15, what aspects of a Father do we see God promise to David? What do these promises mean to you?

We see the Lord declare in verse 16 that “Your throne shall be established forever.” What is God telling David?

If you had to sum up the Lord’s covenant with David (also known as the Davidic Covenant) in only 1-2 sentences, what would you say?

What are some promises from other parts of scripture that you have seen God use in your own life?

In verse 8, the Lord describes the change that He has brought to David. The scripture says that He “took him from the pasture in order that he be a prince.” What has God brought you out of in life and what do you think He has in store for you?

R3

This week, take time to remember the promises of God and all that He has brought you through in life. Take time each morning to spend with Jesus, abiding in order to bear fruit through confidence in His ability to keep His promises. Take time to encourage a friend with the promises of God from His Word.

CONNECT IN WORD

Day 1: Promise: His Grace is Sufficient - 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Day 2: Promise: God is Faithful Through Temptation -
1 Corinthians 10:6-13

Day 3: Promise: Victory Over Death - 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

Day 4: Promise: Salvation for Those who Believe -
Mark 16:12-16

Day 5: Promise: Rest in Him - Matthew 11:25-30

PANORAMA SESSION 7: KINGSHIP – DIVIDED MONARCHY

1 KINGS 11:40-12:20

So now the LORD said to him, "Since you have not kept my covenant and have disobeyed my decrees, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your servants. But for the sake of your father, David, I will not do this while you are still alive. I will take the kingdom away from your son. And even so, I will not take away the entire kingdom; I will let him be king of one tribe, for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, my chosen city."

1 Kings 11:11-13 (NLT)

CONNECT IN COMMUNITY

belong

We have all made BIG decisions that have greatly impacted our life and future. Decisions like what relationships to pursue, what church to be involved in, or where we will live and work. Have you ever had to make a BIG decision that greatly affected others; a decision that may have had a long-lasting impact affecting the future quality of their lives and families?

grow

Read 1 Kings 11:40-12:1. What do you know or recall about the people in this story? (King Solomon, Rehoboam and Jeroboam.)

Jeroboam was a very bright young man that Solomon appointed to an important role in his government. He was a rising star in Solomon's government until a prophecy from Ahijah, a prophet of God, began to circulate. The prophecy was that God would one day rip the Kingdom of Israel apart and Jeroboam would be the leader of a separate northern kingdom consisting of 10 of the 11 tribes of Israel. How do you think that made King Solomon feel? How did Solomon react in verse 40? Where was Jeroboam when Solomon died?

Read I Kings 12:1-11. What was Jeroboam and the people's request of the new King Rehoboam? What was Rehoboam's immediate response? Who are the two groups of men Rehoboam seeks counsel from? How are the two groups alike? How are they different? What advice does each group give?

Read 1 Kings 12:12-15. After three days Jeroboam and all the people come back. What is Rehoboam's BIG decision? What can we observe about Rehoboam's attitude from verses 13 and 14 about this BIG decision?

Read 1 Kings 12:16-20. How did the people react to Rehoboam's actions and attitude? Because of the people's reaction, Rehoboam had to leave town in a rush. The Kingdom eventually splits, Israel in the north with Jeroboam as king and Judah in the south with Rehoboam as king. How did things eventually work out for Rehoboam? Would the results have been better for Rehoboam if his BIG decision would have been different?

Read Proverbs 12:15. At some point in the future, just like Rehoboam, each of us will be at a place in life where we will need to make a BIG decision. What can we learn from Rehoboam's BIG decision that could help us? How does the proverb you just read fit Rehoboam's situation? What patterns or habits should be present in our life that would help prepare us for a BIG decision?



Every day we make decisions, some large, others small. As you make decisions, pray and ask the Lord to guide you. Developing the habit of making decisions in light of God's will on the smaller things will make it easier to listen to Him when you have to make a big decision.

CONNECT IN WORD

Day 1: Solomon's Disobedience - I Kings 11:1-5

Day 2: Yahweh's Anger - 1 Kings 11:9-13

Day 3: Previous animosities among tribes - 2 Samuel 19:40-43

Day 4: Differences in the Upright and the Wicked -
Proverbs 12:1-28

Day 5: The Kingdom Divided - I Kings 12:21-33

PANORAMA SESSION 8: EXILE

2 KINGS 17:1-23

The exile came about because of sin: The children of Israel sinned against GOD, their God, who had delivered them from Egypt and the brutal oppression of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 2 Kings 17:7 (The Message)

CONNECT IN COMMUNITY

belong

What is a secret that you kept (or tried to keep) from your parents when you were a child? What is one important lesson about following God that you have learned which you definitely want to pass along to the next generation?

grow

To set up Movement #8, we must first review the instructions and warnings given to the Israelites prior to the establishment of judges and kings. First, look at Moses' final address to God's people prior to his death and their entry into the Promised Land. Read Deuteronomy 30:15-18. Next, read Joshua's warnings at the end of his life. Read Joshua 23:6-13. What key warnings did both of these leaders emphasize?

Read 2 Kings 17:1-6. This section sets the stage. It is the beginning of the end for the Israelites as God brings forth the promised wrath for disobedience. What did Hoshea do as King to trigger God's anger? (for more on God's warning about alliances with pagan rulers, see Deuteronomy 7:2)

Read 2 Kings 17:7-12. What are the charges against the Israelites? What made these things so wrong in God's eyes? For a sampling of God's warnings against these sins, turn to the following excerpts: Deuteronomy 5:29, Leviticus 20:23, Deuteronomy 12:2-4.

Read 2 Kings 17:13-23. Why do you think God punishes these particular sins so severely? What did it mean for the Israelites to worship other gods and idols? What significance or application can this have for us today?

How does God deal with Christians who continue to live with repeated sins, pursuing dependence on something besides Him, and not walking in His ways? Does God "exile" Christians for ongoing sin against Him? What does that look like in our day? If it happens, what is God's purpose in such discipline?

R3

Write three "I will..." application statements based on what God impressed upon you through this passage. How can we learn from the tragedy of others who failed to obey God and heed his warnings? How will you walk with Him as a result of knowing that His patience has limits?

CONNECT IN WORD

Day 1: You Shall Be Holy - Leviticus 20:22-27

Day 2: Blessings for Obedience - Deuteronomy 28:1-14

Day 3: Curses for Disobedience - Deuteronomy 28:15-68

Day 4: Prophetic Fulfillment - Deuteronomy 30:11-20

Day 5: Charge to Israel - Joshua 23:6-16

PANORAMA SESSION 9: RETURN FROM EXILE AND 400 SILENT YEARS

JEREMIAH 29:10-14

"I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile."

Jeremiah 29:14 (NIV)

CONNECT IN COMMUNITY

belong

Share about a time when you had to make a decision based on the promise of someone else. How did you feel during the decision-making process? How did you know you could trust the person who made the promise? Share about a time when you had to keep a promise even though it was difficult.

grow

Read Jeremiah 29:10-14. Who is this written to? How are we to interpret this today as a Gentile?

What “plan” does God have for His people in this passage? What does it mean to seek God “with all your heart”? What is God’s plan for ending the exile? Why does God say He is going to do this?

If God has a perfect record of keeping His promises, why do you think we hesitate to trust Him at times? Why is it important that God can be trusted to fulfill His promises? Why is it important for God to bring the Israelites back to the land?

Who are the three key men and their corresponding tasks in this Panorama movement?

Why is the rebuilding of the temple important? The wall?
The people?

Read Ezra 7:6-10. Ezra recovered the Word of God for the people. How does the Word of God build up a people?

For the returning Jews, experiencing God's restoration was predicated on repentance. How have you seen this in a specific manner in your own walk with God?

Have you ever seen God work something good out of a bad situation in your own life (such as Jeremiah 10:11-14 describes)? Share with the group what that was like. Do you think you could have learned that lesson any other way?



Who do you know that has drifted away from the Lord and needs to return to Him with all of their heart? How can you be an encouragement to them this week? Who can you share the timeline with this week?

CONNECT IN WORD

Day 1: God's faithfulness - Jeremiah 29:10-14

Day 2: A place to worship - Ezra 1:1-4

Day 3: Ezra's task - Ezra 7:6-10

Day 4: Jewish repentance - Ezra 10:1-12

Day 5: Nehemiah's prayer of confession - Nehemiah 1:4-11

PANORAMA SESSION 10: LIFE OF CHRIST

MARK 10:32-45

**Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.
Mark 10:44b-45 (NLT)**

CONNECT IN COMMUNITY

belong

Who is the best leader that you know of? It might have been a coach, a boss, or a political leader. What made them a great leader? What did you learn from that person that you have tried to implement in your own life and leadership?

grow

Read Mark 10:32-34. What emotions does Mark describe among the followers of Christ? Have you felt these emotions in your Christian experience? How do you think the disciples felt as Jesus described what was about to happen to Him? What can you observe about Jesus in these verses?

Read Mark 10:35-41. What were James and John really asking for? What are the cup and the baptism that Jesus talks about in verses 38-40? Do we ever ask for something from the Lord without realizing what we are really asking for?

Why do you think the other disciples were indignant at the request of James and John? What does this tell you about human nature? How do you feel knowing that the men who walked with Jesus while He was on the earth struggled with these things?

Read Mark 10:42-45. How does Jesus characterize greatness? What does Jesus say is to characterize a Christian leader? How did Jesus model the type of leadership He was describing in this passage? What does it mean to be a "servant-leader"?

What does Jesus mean when He says He will "give His life as a ransom for many" in verse 45? How is this the ultimate act of service?

What can you say about the life of Christ from this passage?
What themes of the gospels are reflected in Mark 10:32-45?
Take a moment to review 1 Corinthians 15:1-7. This is the Gospel message. Spend the end of your group time sharing how you came to know Christ and how you have seen the Gospel at work in your own life.

R3

Jesus said He didn't come to be served but to serve. Where could you or your group serve this week? Consider finding an opportunity to serve in your community in Jesus' name. Your Community Pastor can help you find a good place to serve someone just as Jesus served.

CONNECT IN WORD

Day 1: Preparation and Miracles - Mark 1:1-3:31

Day 2: Parables and Wonders - Mark 4:1-6:56

Day 3: Traditions and Signs - Mark 7:1-10:45

Day 4: Teaching and Prophecy - Mark 10:46-14:11

Day 5: Passover and Resurrection - Mark 14:12-16:20

PANORAMA SESSION 11: CHURCH AGE

ACTS 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

Acts 1:8 (ESV)

CONNECT IN COMMUNITY

belong

Imagine that you are in the final hour of your life and are saying farewell to your loved ones or others who look to you for guidance. Knowing that you will never see them again, what would be the key point of your final message to them?

grow

Read Acts 1:1-9 aloud, changing readers at the conclusion of each sentence.

Why do you think Jesus chose these words for His last earthly statement? What other words of wisdom or advice might have been fitting “last words” in light of His other teachings?

Ten days later, as people from all parts of the world gathered in Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost, a strange thing happened. Read Acts 2:1-12.

Why do you think God chose this day to give His Holy Spirit? What connects “being filled” with the Holy Spirit and “bearing witness” to Jesus?

In the verses that follow (Acts 2:14-40), Peter addresses the crowd, testifying about Jesus and pleading with them to repent, be baptized, and receive the Holy Spirit. According to Acts 2:41, three thousand were added to their number, and “the church” was birthed!

Read Acts 2:42-47. Name the actions that characterized the Acts 2 church. Discuss which of these actions you are currently engaged in with other believers. Is there an action that your community group has neglected but that you’d want to engage in? (In other words, how would you like to see your community group become more like this early church?)

Pray together for the Holy Spirit to empower your group to become “the church” and the witnesses that Jesus calls you to be.

R3

Ask each member of your group to share the name of someone they'd like to see come to Christ, so that group members can pray for these individuals. At the next meeting, report to the group about how God empowered you to engage with the person you're praying for. (Remember Acts 1:8 says "you will be my witnesses", not "you might be my witnesses"!)

CONNECT IN WORD

Day 1: You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you - John 14:16-18, 26-27; 15:26; 16:5-14

Day 2: You will be my witnesses - 1 Peter 2:9-12; 3:8-15

Day 3: You will be my body - 1 Cor. 12:12-27

Day 4: The outcome of living for Him - 1 Peter 4:1-4, 7-11

Day 5: Life as His church - 1 Peter 5:6-11

PANORAMA SESSION 12: FINAL CONSUMMATION

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18 AND
REVELATION 20:11 - 21:8; 22:1-5

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (NASB95)

CONNECT IN COMMUNITY

belong

What is something that as a child you looked forward to with great anticipation? Tell about how you felt as you looked forward to it and how this affected your thoughts and plans for the days leading up to it.



The 1 Thessalonians 4 passage begins with wanting to “inform” the church about those who have “fallen asleep”. The focus is to encourage Christians who are living by explaining what will happen to those who precede them in death before Jesus’ return. “Fallen asleep” is a way of saying “died” that is used several times in Scripture.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Why do you think Paul would not have wanted these “brothers in Christ” (Christians) at Thessalonica to be “uninformed” about what happens to Christians when they die?

What do you already know about these Thessalonian Christians and their faithfulness? (See 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7) If they were untaught about Christ’s return and the resurrection of His followers, how do you suppose they would have felt about their closest friends and family members who might die for their faith? How might Paul’s words in this passage encourage them?

How do these words encourage you today? How should a better understanding of death affect the way that we live?

Read Revelation 20:11-21:8. This passage describes the end of the earth, the final judgment of non-believers, and the new heaven and new earth. Who will reside in the Holy City described in Revelation 21? What does it mean for God to make all things new? How does this make you feel about the losses and disappointments you experience in life?

In what way does this passage make you want to change the way you live? How does it affect your passion for evangelism and for worship? Share with the group.

Read Revelation 22:1-5. What does it mean to you to know that the curse will be wiped away and that all of the effects of sin will one day be removed? What do you imagine it will be like to see Jesus face to face? What do you feel when you think about that moment? Excitement? Fear? Other?

R3

At the end of the first passage in 1 Thessalonians 4:18, Paul instructs believers to “encourage each other with these words.” What are some practical ways in which we can do this? What will you commit to do in the coming week to remind yourself of these lessons and to encourage each other?

CONNECT IN WORD

Day 1: In the Twinkling of an Eye – 1 Corinthians 15:51-58

Day 2: Like a Thief in the Night – 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Day 3: Multitudes Who Sleep in the Dust of the Earth Will
Awake – Daniel 12:1-3

Day 4: But Our Citizenship Is in Heaven – Philippians 3:20-21

Day 5: In My Father's House Are Many Rooms – John 14:1-3

