

# 1. Who is Jesus?



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## Is the New Testament Reliable?

Best 'copy' evidence of ANY document of that time:

Document	Years till copies	No. of copies	Differences
Herodotus	1300	8	
Tacitus	1000	20	
Caesar's Gallic War	900	10	
Livy's Roman History	900	20	
Homer's Iliad	500	643	5%
New Testament	300	5 000	0,5%

Fragments from 20–100 years after Jesus' death

Some whole books from 100–200 years

By 300 years, 5000 copies of whole New Testament,  
plus around 20 000 copies of translations



## Were the Writers Reliable?

**9 authors: fisherman, taxman, doctor, Rabbi+ex-persecutor**

Eye-witnesses or based on eye-witness accounts

**Written from AD 50–70**

Too many witnesses still alive, so lying impossible

**Accurately report other historical events etc.**

Archaeology has proved them right every time

**Non-Christian authors back up life of Jesus**

Tacitus, Lucian, Josephus, Suetonius, Pliny Jr., Thallus

Christ crucified by Pilate, rose, worshipped, Messiah?



## Was Jesus Just a Good Man?

**Jesus claimed to be God, directly and indirectly**

Can a man claim to be God and still be Good?

Need to ask what kind of man, & what evidence he gives

**What kind of man claims to be God?**

Mad: simply deluded in thinking he was God

Bad: deliberately set out to trick people

God: if he really was, then his claims are justified

**What evidence supports what he said?**

Fulfilled Old Testament prophecy

His teaching, miracles, character, and resurrection



## How Did Jesus Claim to be God?

### Indirect claims to be God

Forgave sins  
Will return to judge the world

### Teaching centred on himself: 'I am...'

The bread of life. The light of the world.  
The resurrection and the life. The only way to the Father.

### Direct claims

"Are you the Christ?" "I am"  
"Why are you stoning me?" "You claim to be God"  
Received worship: "My Lord and my God"



## What Evidence Supports His Claims?

### His fulfilment of 300 Old Testament prophecies

Ancestors, birth, crucifixion, burial, resurrection...  
Chance of just 8 major ones ever being fulfilled is 1 in 10<sup>17</sup>

### His teaching is the greatest ever

Not been improved on since, basis of Western laws

### His miracles: not just tricks or publicity stunts

Feeding, healing, raising the dead, calming storm

### His character and love are unmatched

Humble, forgiving, unselfish, ...



## Evidence: His resurrection

### Provenly dead

Didn't break legs, blood & water, crucifixion fatal

### Empty tomb

1.5 ton stone, 4–16 guards, seal; graveclothes empty

### Many appearances to followers

Women, disciples, 500 people alive when Paul wrote

### Effect on lives then and now

Sceptics & cowards believe enough to be martyred; Paul  
Greenleaf, Morrison; lives being changed



## 2. Why Did Jesus Die?



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## Why is the Cross so Important?

### A strange choice for a symbol?

Would you wear a guillotine or electric chair?

### New Testament covers the cross in detail

Gospels cover the events, letters explain the significance

### Jesus remembered for his death

How is he different from Socrates, martyrs, war heroes?

Why did he die? What did it achieve?

How did he 'Die for our sins'?



## What is Man's Greatest Need? The Problem of Sin

### The pollution of sin

"What comes out of a man is what makes him unclean:  
evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery,  
greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, folly"

We are measured by all these, and the pass mark is 100%

### The power of sin

"Everyone who sins is a slave to sin", cf. drug addiction  
Patterns of thought or behaviour are addictive too  
Often we can't break the addiction ourselves



## The Problem of Sin

### The penalty for sin

Something within us calls out for justice, not just revenge  
Not only other people's sins deserve punishment: our own do  
"The wages of sin is death": "All will be judged"

### The partition of sin

Spiritual death  $\Rightarrow$  eternal isolation from God  
God cannot allow sin into heaven  
Sin separates us from God even now



## What has God Done?

### **God loves us, and doesn't leave us in our own mess**

He himself provided the solution, and paid the bill

### **“Jesus himself bore our sins in his body on the cross; by his wounds we have been healed”**

Jesus was without sin, yet ‘became sin’ for us

### **Worst part of the cross was not the physical pain**

Spiritual agony of being cut off from his Father,  
as he carried our sins



## What are the Results?

### **New Testament makes things clear by 4 examples**

Uses everyday terms and situations to explain by analogy

#### **1. The Law Court: we are justified, our case is closed**

Justice and love: God judges us because we are guilty...

...But in his love he came as Jesus and paid the penalty

#### **2. The Marketplace: we are freed**

Selling yourself into slavery to pay off debts

Can be bought and set free: redeemed by ransom price

Jesus redeemed us, paying with his life to free us from sin



## What are the Results?

#### **3. The Temple: our sins are taken away**

Old Testament laws specified how to deal with sins:

Sacrifice of animal ‘without defect’; sins pass to animal

Jesus was perfect, took our sins on himself, and was killed

His sacrifice was once, and for all

#### **4. The Home: our relationship with God is restored**

Root and result of sin is a broken relationship with God

“God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself”

Partition has been removed



## How does this relate to me?

### **We can come back to the Father through Jesus**

Experience his forgiveness, love, and blessings now

Be free from sin's effects and presence in Heaven

### **God loves each of us individually**

Longs for a relationship with each, like a father

### **Jesus died for everyone, but also for you personally**

He would have died if you were the only person in the world!

### 3. How can I be sure of my faith?



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### Christianity is a Relationship with God

#### Love relationship

Bible talks of us as the bride marrying Christ

Our name changes, we become a whole new person

#### Father - child relationship

When we become Christians, God adopts us as children

Parents want children to be sure about their relationship



### The Word of God

**The Bible is God's word, reliable and unchanging**

Rely on facts in black and white, not feelings

**"I am with you always, even to the end of the world"**

**"I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish,  
and no one shall snatch them out of my hand"**

**"For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels,  
nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to  
come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor  
anything else in all creation, will be able to separate  
us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord"**



### The Work of Jesus

**Jesus' work on the cross gives us eternal life as a gift**

A gift can only be accepted, not earned

Our salvation depends only on Jesus, not on us

**Jesus was an acceptable and sufficient sacrifice**

He himself was perfect: without sin

He took all of our sin onto himself

He paid the full penalty for that sin

**All we have to do is accept this gift...**

...And God even gives us the grace to do that!



## The Witness of the Spirit

### **Spirit comes to live in us when we become Christians**

God's presence and guidance with us personally, always

### **Transforms us from within: fruit of the Spirit**

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness,  
faithfulness, gentleness and self-control

Transforms us in our relationships with God and others

### **Deep personal conviction that we are children of God**

Holy Spirit witnesses to our spirit

Holy Spirit is our guarantee that we're going to heaven

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## 4. How and Why Should I Read the Bible?



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## Why is the Bible so Important

### Uniquely popular

44 million sold a year: “best seller by several miles”

6.8 Bible per American household

### Uniquely powerful

Stanley Baldwin: “The Bible is a high explosive”

### Uniquely precious

Look at the response in countries where it is banned



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## A Manual for Life: God has Spoken

### All Scripture is God-breathed and useful...

Our supreme authority for belief and life

### ...For teaching and rebuking...

Tells us what to believe: what God has said about things

### ...For correcting and training in righteousness...

Tells us how to act: work, marriage, family, neighbours

### ...That we may be fully equipped

Builds us up as Christians

### Are we freer with rules or without them?



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## A Love Letter from God: God Speaks

### Brings faith to those who are not yet Christians

### Lets us talk with and hear the Jesus of the New Testament

We can ask the Bible questions, and it answers!

### Brings joy and peace, even in a crisis

E.g. Psalm 23, Psalm 91

### A defence against spiritual attack

The only defence Jesus used when the devil tempted him

### Can change even the most hardened heart

Sharper than a double-edged sword



## How to Hear God Speak through the Bible

### **Time is our most valuable possession**

Spend a little wisely and regularly

### **Ask God to speak to you and help you understand**

### **Three steps to reading a passage:**

#### **1. What does it say?**

#### **2. What does it mean?**

What did it mean to the writer and first hearers?

#### **3. How does it apply to me?**

my family, my work, my neighbours, the society I live in?



## What will be the Results of Listening?

### **We shall produce fruit**

In our lives, affecting the lives of those around us

### **We will have the strength to persevere as Christians**

We won't dry up or have our fire go out

If we have deep roots in the word, we can stand storms

### **We will prosper in whatever we do**

In ways more important than material wealth: relationship  
with God, with others, with ourselves

## 5. Why and How Do I Pray?



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## What is Prayer?

**A relationship rather than a ritual**

**To your Father**

‘Abba’: Daddy

But also ‘in Heaven’, so all-powerful

**Through the Son**

‘Whatever you ask in my name’

Jesus accepts and ‘signs’ our prayers, so they have his authority

**By one Spirit**

“We do not know what to pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes”



## Why Pray?

**To develop our relationship with God**

We learn to relate to him as we talk to him

**Jesus prayed, and taught us to**

**Prayer changes things!**

God listens to our requests and changes situations

Cynics explain results as coincidences...

...I like prayer because it causes so many nice “coincidences”

**“You do not have, because you do not ask!”**

What have we got to lose?



## Does God Always Answer Prayer?

**Unbelievers: never promised, but may answer**

**Believers:**

“If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us”

“Your sins have separated you ... so he will not hear”

“If our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence...  
...and receive because we obey his commands”

“You do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives”

God only promises “good gifts”, nothing dangerous

**We can be grateful God doesn’t answer all our prayers**

No parent lets their child do/have everything they think they want!



## How Should We Pray?

### **ACTS**

Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication (requests)

### **Lord's Prayer**

Our Father in heaven

Hallowed be your name

Your kingdom come

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven

Give us today our daily bread

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one



## When Should We Pray?

### **Always!**

On the way to work, at a coffee break, in bed...

### **When necessary**

When something goes right or wrong, someone needs help...

### **Set aside a special time for private prayer**

Jesus 'went off to a solitary place' in the morning

Need time and right environment and attitude to concentrate

### **With others too**

"If two or three of you agree, it will be done by my Father"



## What Will Be the Results?

### **We learn to know God better**

And that makes our prayers more accurate and effective

### **Seeing prayer answered strengthens our faith**

And that strengthens our prayers!

### **We cause good things to happen!**

Bringing in God's kingdom

### **Satan laughs at our words,**

**mocks at our toil,**

**but trembles when we pray**

## 6. How Can I Resist Evil?



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## Why Should We Believe in the Devil?

### **The Bible does, and Jesus does**

Hard not to believe when you're having a conversation!

### **Christians throughout the centuries have**

We only notice the devil when he's active...

...and he only needs to act when we want to stop sinning

### **Common sense confirms it**

God is good, so without a devil where does evil come from?

### **But let's not overdo it!**

Just as bad to concentrate too much as too little



## What Are the Devil's Tactics?

### **AIM: To Destroy Every Human Being**

Make us follow a path that leads to destruction

### **Makes us doubt**

"Did God *really* say...?" "If you are the Son of God..."

### **Concentrates on prohibitions**

No drink, no sex, no fun

### **Denies the penalty of sin**

"You will not surely die"

### **Accuses: makes us feel guilty**

Tells us we're a failure... so no problem if we fail a bit more



## What Is Our Position?

### **God has rescued us from Satan's kingdom**

The devil is no longer our boss!

### **We can act with Jesus' authority**

We are on God's side, and we fight with his power

### **Jesus has nullified the devil's tactics**

Proved he is faithful

Given us freedom

Given us the Bible and his Spirit to know right from wrong

Taken our guilt away



## How Do We Defend Ourselves?

**Belt of truth** — foundation of understanding Christian teaching

**Breastplate of righteousness** — *God's* righteousness

**Boots of the gospel** — readiness to tell others

**Shield of faith** — opposite of cynicism & scepticism

**Helmet of salvation** — knowledge of being saved from sin

**Sword of the Spirit** — the word of God

Jesus refuted each temptation by quoting from the Bible

**We need ALL of these!**



## How Do We Attack?

“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world:  
on the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds”

### Pray

Satan trembles when he sees the weakest Christian on his knees

Be bold but wary, and keep centred on Jesus

### Act

Not in our own strength but God's

Prayer is always present even in action

Heal the sick, cast out demons, bind up the broken-hearted

**Prevent Satan from working, stop him, undo the damage**

## 7. How Does God Guide Us?



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## God Has a Plan for Our Lives

**God loves us and wants the very best for our lives**

“Plans to prosper you and not to harm you,  
plans to give you hope and a future”

**Hmm, yes, I could do with a bit of help!**

Or aren't you worried you'll make a mistake at some point?

**To know the plan, we have to ask him!**

“Woe to those who carry out plans...without consulting me”

**“Commit your way to the Lord, trust in him and he will act”**

“He guides the humble”



## The Bible

**God's general will for all people, places, times, circumstances**

**Saves a lot of messing around**

If the answer's already there, we don't need to ask!

**Our most certain source of guidance**

We can be sure God's behind the message

We can be sure of the content of the message

**We need a broad and deep understanding**

One verse can't contain the whole will of God on an  
important topic



## The Spirit

**Learn to recognise his voice**

Need to listen, check, follow and evaluate

**Speaks to us as we pray**

We need to shut up for a second and let him get a word  
in!

Can be words, a feeling, a picture etc.

**Sometimes gives us a strong desire to do something**

God can change our will, because we surrendered it to him

**Sometimes guides in more unusual ways!**

Physical voice, angels, writing on wall, wet sheepskin...



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## Common Sense

**“Do not be like the horse or mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle”**

God gave us our intelligence to be used to his glory

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## Other Christians

**“Make plans by seeking advice”**

**Learn from more mature Christians**

Submit to those in authority over you (but God stays first!)

Don't just look for someone to say yes!



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## Circumstantial Signs

**God does surprising things to get our attention**

But not every coincidence is a direct divine command!

**Don't search for them, but be ready to spot them**

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## Don't be in a hurry

**Sometimes we hear right, but want things too soon**

Try to bring them about with our own strength

Abraham, Jacob, Mary etc. waited decades

**God can hold the door open for a bit...**

And the lift will wait for us!

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## 8. Why and How Should We Tell Others?



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### Why Should We Tell Others?

**We only know because we were told!**

**Jesus tells us to**

All power... is given to me. **Therefore** go and make disciples

**People desperately need good news**

Would you keep the cure to AIDS to yourself?

**We have a need to pass on good news**

Not sharing it makes it become less important to us too



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### Problems with Telling Others

**We can be insensitive**

Stuff it down their throats!

**We can be oversensitive**

The devil makes us ashamed of our faith and scared to tell

**Need to realise that telling arises out of our relationship**

With them and with God

Should be natural

**Presence, persuasion, proclamation, power and prayer**

A praiseworthy pentuplet of promising practical principles



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### Presence: Salt and Light

**In the world but not of the world**

Salt's no use until it's in the food...

...But it's totally useless if it loses its saltiness

**Salt preserves good things, light purifies out bad things**

Salt also adds zip and life

Light also reveals the good that was already there but hidden

**We're called to be good anyway**

But not just for the sake of impressing men



## Persuasion: Reasoning and Explaining

### **Salt and light are good but not sufficient**

Improve their environment, draw attention to the difference  
But alone cannot actually change the bland and dark things

### **People often know very little about Christianity**

Disjointed facts, traditions, distortions  
Need to correct misunderstandings and present coherent whole

### **Use all of our resources, train ourselves**

Our own intelligence, the Bible, analogies  
Can't learn by rote: need to meet the hearer's needs

### **Don't get stuck in human wisdom and foolish arguments!**



## Proclamation: Letting Others Know

### **Works together with persuasion**

Telling rather than answering

### **Many different methods and situations**

Large audience: Christian media, missions  
Medium audience: Guest services, talks  
Individually: personal testimony, booklets, frameworks

### **We can work on any and all levels**

Can invite people to others' work on other levels

### **Must be prepared for success!**

God won't make new children without a nurturing environment



## Power: Letting Others See

### **God's power demonstrates the truth of his word**

Always a purpose, not just empty show of strength

### **Gospel is more than just words, beliefs, spirituality**

Brings the message down to earth

### **Not all gifts of the Spirit are appropriate to unbelievers**

E.g. speaking in tongues will just make them think we're mad!  
Healing, prophecy, words of knowledge and wisdom better



## Prayer: Fighting on the Other Front

### **Telling others has a spiritual side as well as physical**

Need to overcome spiritual resistance in them, by devil, in us

### **Our efforts only bear good fruit with prayer**

But we can't *just* pray:  
Jesus didn't say 'pray for all to become disciples', but 'make'!

### **Prayer requires perseverance**

Few become Christians with someone praying for a week

### **Prayer is necessary for results**

Few become Christians without someone praying for a week!

## 9. Does God Heal Today?



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## Healing in the Bible

### Old Testament: occasional, often prophet

God's promise: 'I am the LORD who heals you'

Naaman: leprosy (2 Kings 5)

Shunnamite's son: raised from dead (2 Kings 4)

Abimelech: God removed penalty (Genesis 20)

### New Testament: frequent, by all Christians

Jesus heals, commissions 12, 72, all Christians to heal

Sick, diseases & pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics

Lazarus: raised from dead (John 11)

Peter, Philip, Paul, Barnabas (lame, fever, dysentery, raising)



## Healing in Church History

### Christians drive out demons, heal sick, raise dead

Justin Martyr (100-160)

Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons (130-200)

Origen (185-254)

Augustine of Hippo (354-430) (blind, cancer, paralysis)

### Right up to present day

Evan Roberts (1904)

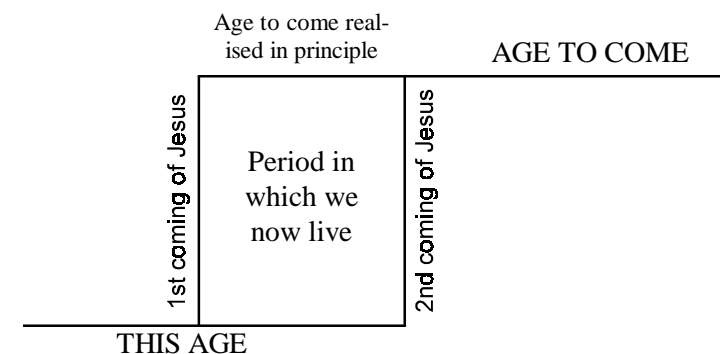
Korean revival (1907), China (1932), Madras (1940)

Indonesia (1960, 1972), Borneo (1973)



## Healing: What and Why?

### We live in the overlap between two ages & kingdoms:





## Healing Today in Jyväskylä

### **Antti Kärjä**

Blood pressure 80–90 with medication, now <68 without  
Hearing damage (industrial disease) repaired

### **Esa Mäkinen**

Fibromyalgia (pain in joints): incurable  
Continuous heavy doses of prescription painkillers  
4-6 months / year sick leave, applied for disability pension  
Completely healed, no need for painkillers

### **Many others: physical, spiritual, emotional**

Especially inner healing, where medical science knows little



## Practical Tips on Healing

### **What is the problem?**

Don't spend long on this!

### **Why does the person have this condition?**

Ask the person, pray for God to tell you

### **How do I pray?**

Simply! Invite Jesus to heal; may use oil, lay on hands  
Ask how they are feeling; pray until you feel it's right to stop

### **What next?**

Reassurance of God's love; pray again another time if necessary



## Inner Healing

### **Healing of emotions, psyche, past hurts**

Complementary to physical healing

### **Let Holy Spirit guide you and the person to the problem**

Often takes time: keep God-centred not problem-centred  
Don't try to be an amateur psychiatrist!

### **Forgiveness is often important**

Forgiving others for the hurt they caused  
Forgiving self, accepting God's forgiveness

### **Bind Satan, break bonds he has placed, let Holy Spirit fill**

Seal God's work; bless; pray for going forward

## 10. What About the Church?



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## Importance of the Church

**Becoming a Christian is a personal matter**

Being a Christian isn't!

**Images of church stress its group nature**

Army, people, family, body with different parts

**People in church even out our own ups and downs**

Like investing in shares: a broad portfolio

**People are the most important parts of churches**

Rules, administration, traditions, boundaries less so

**Our age's individualism shows in how we relate to church**



## The People of God

**Church (ekklesia) means 'gathering of people'**

How to know who is in? Attendance; baptism; register; belief?

**Global: One in three is a Christian: 1,700,000,000**

Growth in Third World rapid: 80% of Kenyans are Christians

West has growth in evangelicalism, decline in nominalism

**Regional: denominations, missions, celebrations (cf. OT)**

**Local: churches; preaching, community**

**Group: 2–12 people, cell**

Relationships, personal growth, confidentiality, accountability



## The Family of God

**All God's children, therefore brothers and sisters**

Family membership is a fact, not a choice

**Unity: 'That they may be one'**

Necessary: unity; Questionable: liberty; All: love

Seek unity on all levels: global, regional, local, group

Action brings more unity than talk

**Fellowship (koinonia): sharing e.g. in marriage**

God has deliberately made us dependent on others

You can't be married alone or a Christian alone!



## The Body of Christ

**Each is different, each is necessary, all are of equal value**

Unity not uniformity, equity not equality

**Inferiority: 'I have nothing to offer'**

Selfish — not prepared to share

Envy — want others' gifts, childish ("I'm not playing unless...")

**Superiority: 'You need me (and I don't need you)'**

Totally false — body can survive without an eye, not vice versa

Inefficient — waste energy on tasks others could do

**Teamwork: the costly but effective solution**

"If one suffers, all suffer; if one is honoured, all rejoice"



## A Holy Temple

**We are a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit**

Living stones

**Temple in Old Testament...**

Central to worship: place to meet God

Priests go-between for man and God

Built over hundreds of years

**...and New**

Need people not place

We are all priests

Under construction!

**Sacrifice system fulfilled in Christ**

Content already handled once and for all on the cross

Ritual replaced by communion 'in remembrance of him'



## The Bride of Christ

**OT: God is the husband, Israel the wife**

Wife often seen as adulterous!

**NT: Christ is the bridegroom, the church the bride**

Marriage happens at the second coming of Christ

Christ has made us pure, is making us beautiful

Our part is to be faithful, open to his changing work in us

**Bride is the new Jerusalem in Revelation**

Links bride and temple metaphors

Only those written in the Lamb's book of life can enter

Answers our question about how to know who is in!



## Changing Churches

**Early churches were each their own denomination**

But apostles swapped freely between them

**Changing church happens on many different levels**

Denomination, congregation, group

**Free transfer is largely good, but not to excess**

+ Can help highlight oddities of doctrine & practice

+ Keeps church from stagnation, introversion

– Too much kills continuity, causes shallowness, thrill-seeking

**We are called to be separate from evil**

But together with many different kinds of good