



Booklet 3

THE JESUS CONNECTION

Christianity, biculturalism and Aotearoa-New Zealand

OPENING QUESTIONS:

- Have you ever been given incorrect travel instructions, and ended up lost? What happened?
- Have you ever tried to cook something – but got the recipe really wrong? What happened?
- How important is it in life that we work out what is true about our existence and what is expected of us – as compared to just accepting anything?

Today we are discussing our way through the third *Hope For All* booklet, titled **THE JESUS CONNECTION**. HopeProject.co.nz/ebooks or request free copies: admin@alltogether.co.nz

FROM OUR HISTORY [REVISION OF CONTENT IN HOPE FOR ALL – THE JESUS CONNECTION]

- What 'heroes' from our nation's history are mentioned? What is something interesting about them each? (Note stories on pg2-3, and also Heni te Kiri Karamu on pg10)
- Have someone read out each point on the timeline near the end of the booklet. How would you summarise the different periods of our nation's early history? (Consider the pre-Treaty missionary and trader era, the Treaty, the settlers and betrayal, the restoration)

HOW DOES JESUS STAND OUT? [REVISION OF HOPE FOR ALL - THE JESUS CONNECTION BOOKLET]

- How do the claims of Jesus Christ 'stand out' as different from those of other religious leaders?
- What was the significance of his miracles – and did the sceptics of Jesus accept that the miracles happen? *
- How did Jesus teachings and example stand out as truly unique?
- In what ways is the power of faith in Christ to change lives amazing? (Consider the stories of Henare Taratoa, Heni te Kiri Karamu, Jamie Allen and Nancy Wu).
- Why is Jesus' resurrection so important to the Christian faith?
- What evidences do various scholars including those not believing in Jesus see in the resurrection?

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FROM THE BIBLE

- What is 'repentance',** and why is it vital to knowing God? MARK 1:4 – John the Baptist; LUKE 13:3 – Jesus; MARK 6:7-12 – the Disciples; ACTS 2:38 – Peter and the early Church.
- Are there 'other ways' to know God apart from through Jesus Christ? ACTS 4:12; JOHN 14:6; 1 TIMOTHY 2:5 (Why can't faith in another religion save us from the consequence of our wrongs?***)
- Why was it necessary for Jesus to come and die? JOHN 1:29; JOHN 3:16;
- Was God's plan of redemption an 'after thought' once man rebelled against Him?
 - REVELATION 13:8 (in a context of talking about the end of this current period of history it is noted that Jesus was 'slain from the creation of the world' – confirming this was always the plan)) ISAIAH 53 (one of many prophecies of Jesus – showing his coming was planned);
 - GENESIS 3:15 (from the time of the first sin – a reference to a specific descendant who would un-do the damage resulting from giving in to the Devil's temptations)****

REGARDING 'JESUS – THE KEY TO LIFE'? [REVISION OF THE HOPE FOR ALL BOOKLET]

- What are the three main options we have for how we interpret our existence in this world? (Pg21 – accident of chance, product of an distant and unloving God, or product of a loving and knowable God).
- If being a follower of Jesus Christ isn't keeping a set of rules, what is it?
- What is the key thing that separates us from God?
- List various things God offers us – if we turn to him?

APPLICATION:

Read out loud the series summary about the Christian hope – inside the back cover.

- Does the logic of this make sense?
- As your conclusion - what do you make of Jesus?

Footnotes

* They did. What they had to deny however was the resurrection – because if that happened, Jesus would be who he claimed.

** To repent means to turn. We turn from living life our way to living it God's way.

*** Because God has made a way for our forgiveness. We need to choose that way – not something else someone came up with. It is God who is offering the key to this door. He has revealed himself to us in Jesus!

**** A more difficult, but profound passage is Genesis 22. The Bible is clear God would never expect human sacrifice – yet on this occasion something 'out of character' happens. God stops Abraham before anything happens. The point? God led Abraham to walk a few days to a specific place – Mount Moriah. A few thousand years later Jesus was led up that same hill just as Isaac was. Jesus carried the cross he would die on – just as Isaac carried the wood. The difference – God did not stop the death of Jesus, because it was the plan. Abraham is God's first chosen man. God shows us at this beginning point (of his *intervening* in our history to put things right - commonly called 'redemption history') that he *already had a specific plan in mind!*

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