Session One

God promises the world we all want

1. Imagine the world you’d like to leave to your grandchildren. What would that world be like?

Everybody’s idea of a perfect world is different. Some people would play football all the time. Other people would ban it. But when we think seriously there are common themes to our dreams.

There is a world we all want. It’s a world without poverty, without pollution. It’s a place where we don’t grow old or lose the ones we love. It’s a place where we look after each other and don’t hurt others. The Christian message is called gospel, which means ‘good news’. The good news of the gospel is that there is such a world.

BIBLE READING: Revelation, chapter 21, verses 1-5

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And there was no longer any sea. I also saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride made beautiful for her husband.

Then I heard a loud voice from the throne:

Look! God’s home is with humankind, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will exist no longer; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the things that used to be have passed away.

Then the one seated on the throne said, “Look! I am making everything new.” He also said, “Write, because these words are faithful and true.”

2. What is this new world like?

3. What surprises you about this new world?

This description uses picture language. The sea represents danger, so no sea = safety. Jerusalem is God’s special place. The bride is a picture of God’s special relationship with his people. So here God is promising that people will know him and enjoy peace in his new world.

It might seem strange that God would be needed for the perfect world. But the way the gospel tells it, he’s actually at the centre of the picture.

BIBLE READING: Revelation, chapter 22, verses 1-6

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. It flowed down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its
fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse.

The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shine on them. And they will reign for ever and ever.

The angel said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord God who inspires the prophets sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place.”

4. What is this new world like?

6. What assurance does the writer give at the end of each of these passages we have read?

This new world sounds too good to be true. But next session we will see there is good reason to believe God’s promise. There was a time in history when people got a taste of the world we all want…

5. What surprises you about this new world?

The Lamb here is picture language for Jesus, God’s son. At the moment most people do not live with God’s son at the centre of their lives. But God promises a new world, where he is at the centre. Then God’s son will make the world we all want.