

The Watford Word

www.watfordchurchofchrist.org

What's on

Sunday 09 April - service, 10:30AM. *Easter Sunday.*

The men and women at the cross and the tomb.

Wed 12th, or any date agreed by the women, meet in person to discuss hermeneutics further

Sunday 16 April - service, 10:30AM. *Adam & Eve.*

Wed 19th - men meet in person to discuss hermeneutics further

Sunday 23 April - service, 10:30AM. *Deborah and Barak.*

Sunday 30 April - service, 10:30AM. *Mordecai and Esther.*

Sunday 07 May - service, 10:30AM. *Ruth & Boaz.*

Sunday 14 May - service, 10:30AM. *Jesus and the women who supported his work.*

Sunday 21 May - service, 10:30AM. *Jesus and the Samaritan woman.*

Sunday 28 May - service, 10:30AM. *Jesus and Mary & Martha.*

Easter

What does Easter mean to you? Speaking personally, as a child it meant eggs coloured with food colouring served in a special egg cup for breakfast, and a chocolate Easter egg from my grandparents (only to be eaten after supper!). Where does the celebration come from? We do not know exactly when and where the first Easter celebration was held. Jesus did not instruct us to do anything on Easter Sunday, nor is there any record in the Scriptures of such an event.

One possible theory as to why it began is that some Jewish Christians were trying to decide whether to celebrate Passover or not. If they could put Passover together with the death and resurrection of Jesus it would make life simple.

The Quartodeciman custom of celebrating Easter beginning on the evening following the 14th day apparently began relatively early in Christian history and persisted at least into the fifth century C.E.¹ The alternate view—that Easter must be on a Sunday, regardless of the day on which the Jewish Passover falls—ultimately prevailed.²

Baptism

Baptism in the New Testament and early church was administered with scant delay. By the 3rd century it was typical for someone to study the faith for three years before being immersed. The norm was to baptise people on Easter Sunday after fasting (Lent). Instead of a response to grace, Baptism was now a reward for good behaviour! In order to be accepted for baptism you had to have references.

Early Focus

The initial focus of the Easter celebration was the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, even more than the resurrection. It was felt that the death of Christ on the cross was more significant since that had to happen before the resurrection could become a reality.

The key text for this focus is, “Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.” (1 Corinthians 5:7 NIV11)

Why focus on Christ's death and not his resurrection? It sounds counter-intuitive, especially when we consider that congregational worship was on Sundays - resurrection day.

¹ People who followed this custom were called Quartodecimans

² Taken from, Was Jesus' Last Supper a Seder? by Jonathan Klawans

Easter Weekend

It was not until the fourth century that something that might approximate our Easter weekend developed. The church in Alexandria combined a celebration of the death of the lamb of God and the resurrection of our Lord. The church in Egypt & Syria developed a three-day celebration of transition from life to death (called a 'triduum').

'Good Friday' and Easter Sunday became a special time of soberness and celebration that has continued to the present time. Today we say, together with countless Christians over 100's of years, "Christ is risen - He is risen indeed!"

Men and Women in Christ

A Divine Harmony

I am excited to announce that we are starting a new teaching series exploring the stories of men and women in the Bible. Through this series, we will delve into the lives, roles, and contributions of these Biblical figures and examine the relationships between men and women as portrayed in the Scriptures.

For too long and too often, men and women have been pitted against one another. Differences exist, but they can be creative and mutually beneficial. When the gifts that men and women bring to the kingdom of God are harmoniously harnessed, they reveal the heart of God to the world. After all, when men and women were created, they fully expressed God's image.

"Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:26-28 NIV11)

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Men and women, working together, have a God-given purpose to fulfil.

Throughout the series, we will explore a wide range of topics, including leadership, family dynamics, cultural contexts, and gender roles. We will examine the lives of both well-known figures and lesser-known characters, and consider how their stories can inspire and inform our own lives.

As we explore these topics, I hope that we will gain new insights into the nature of God, the complexities of human relationships, and the power of faith and redemption. My hope is that this series will help us to better understand and appreciate the rich diversity of experiences and perspectives represented in the Bible.

I encourage you to join us in this journey of exploration and discovery. Whether you are a long-time member of our congregation or new to the community, there will be something for everyone in this series. I look forward to learning and growing together as we explore the stories of men and women in the Bible.

Malcolm

AIM UK&I

The Old Testament Survey module took place recently. If you missed it, but would like to join in and watch the recordings, please speak to me or email courses@aimukandireland.com. The website www.aimukandireland.com contains more information.

Watford Media

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCj9Qa8D9zumJZdoAtARDUww>

Podcast: <https://www.podbean.com/pu/pbblog-aiinq-1aef90>

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