



ST CHRISTOPHER'S SIXTH FORM

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

(THEOLOGY, ETHICS & PHILOSOPHY)

BRIDGING UNIT



# Religious Studies (Theology, Ethics and Philosophy)

A Level Religious Studies, following the new specification of the Eduqas examination board, comprises of three distinct, but complementary components, each worth 33% of the final mark:

## A study of Christianity

This unit consists of the following four themes:

- **Theme 1:** Religious figures and sacred texts
- **Theme 2:** Religious concepts and religious life
- **Theme 3:** Significant social and historical developments in religious thought
- **Theme 4:** Religious practices that shape religious identity

All four themes are delivered within the context of the Christian religion. Any wider reading, or TV viewing about the Christian Faith will therefore be extremely useful here.

## Philosophy of Religion

The Philosophy of Religion component attempts to explore some of life's biggest questions and starts with the key and perennial question: Is there a God? If there is a God, what is God like?

In an attempt to answer these questions the course examines the philosophical arguments for God's existence through four main areas:

1. Cosmological arguments
2. Teleological arguments
3. Religious Experiences
4. Evil and suffering



These are four fascinating areas and students who have opted for Religious Studies will want to read widely around these subjects. A good starting point would be to research the Teleological and Cosmological arguments, and specifically the contributions of thinkers such as William Paley and Thomas Aquinas. The book, 'The Puzzle of God' by Peter Vardy is a very clear reading guide and will be good to use throughout the course. It can be bought through Amazon for about £8.99 (inc. packing and postage) and is well worth adding to your book collection!

If you are interested in the complexity of creation, and only have time to read one book, then you could do a lot worse than Bill Bryson's brilliant 'A short History of nearly everything.' Above all, start to live 'with your head on swivel' and notice the world around you, all of it - good and bad! Philosophical issues are great to debate in class so before you arrive, think, read and talk to others about why people suffer, where we came from, where we are going and what part God has to play in it all.

## Religion and Ethics

'Religion and Ethics' is focused on four specific areas:

1. Ethical Thought
2. Deontological Ethics
3. Teleological Ethics
4. Determinism and Free Will

Within the components students will explore the different approaches to the identification and resolution of moral issues of importance in human experience. This will enable students to look at different approaches to moral behaviour within humanity which is very relevant in today's society. A wide range of ethical theories will be studied and applied to various ethical issues such as: euthanasia, war, medical research, relationships and capital punishment.

Students may prepare for this topic by reading any of the theories mentioned above. A starting point may be becoming familiar with the concepts of scholars such as: Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, John Finnis, Joseph Fletcher, J.S Mill and Jeremy Bentham. A slightly more light-hearted approach would be for students to engage in any TV programmes relating to the above mentioned ethical issues. These may include 'Panorama', 'The Big Question' or '4Thought' or any other thought provoking program. It would also be very beneficial to look out for ethical issues in the news or to collect newspaper articles on any of the issues.

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A good website to explore can be found at Dr. William Lane Craig's website:

<https://www.reasonablefaith.org/>

You might not agree with all he says...how strong do you think his arguments are?

Have a great summer, enjoy the reading and we look forward to discussing all these exciting topics with you in September.

For further information on any aspect of this course, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Pountain at:

[c.pountain@st-christophers.org](mailto:c.pountain@st-christophers.org)

# Religious Studies (Theology, Ethics and Philosophy)

Now that you've decided to study Religious Studies at A level, you'll need to do a bit of preparation. This pack contains activities and resources to prepare you to start your A level in September. It is aimed to be used after you complete your GCSE throughout the rest of the summer term and over the summer holidays to ensure you are ready to start your course in September.

When you arrive to your first lesson in September you should bring your completed project with you. You should also bring a folder, lined paper, dividers and plastic wallets.

**This course is split into three components:**

1. Study of a Religion (Christianity)
2. Ethics
3. Philosophy

**The resources include:**

- A task for each of the three components.
- Including key words, research, podcasts, reviews, questions and videos.
- There is also some suggested tasks to complete and books you could read.

## Task 1: Study of a Religion

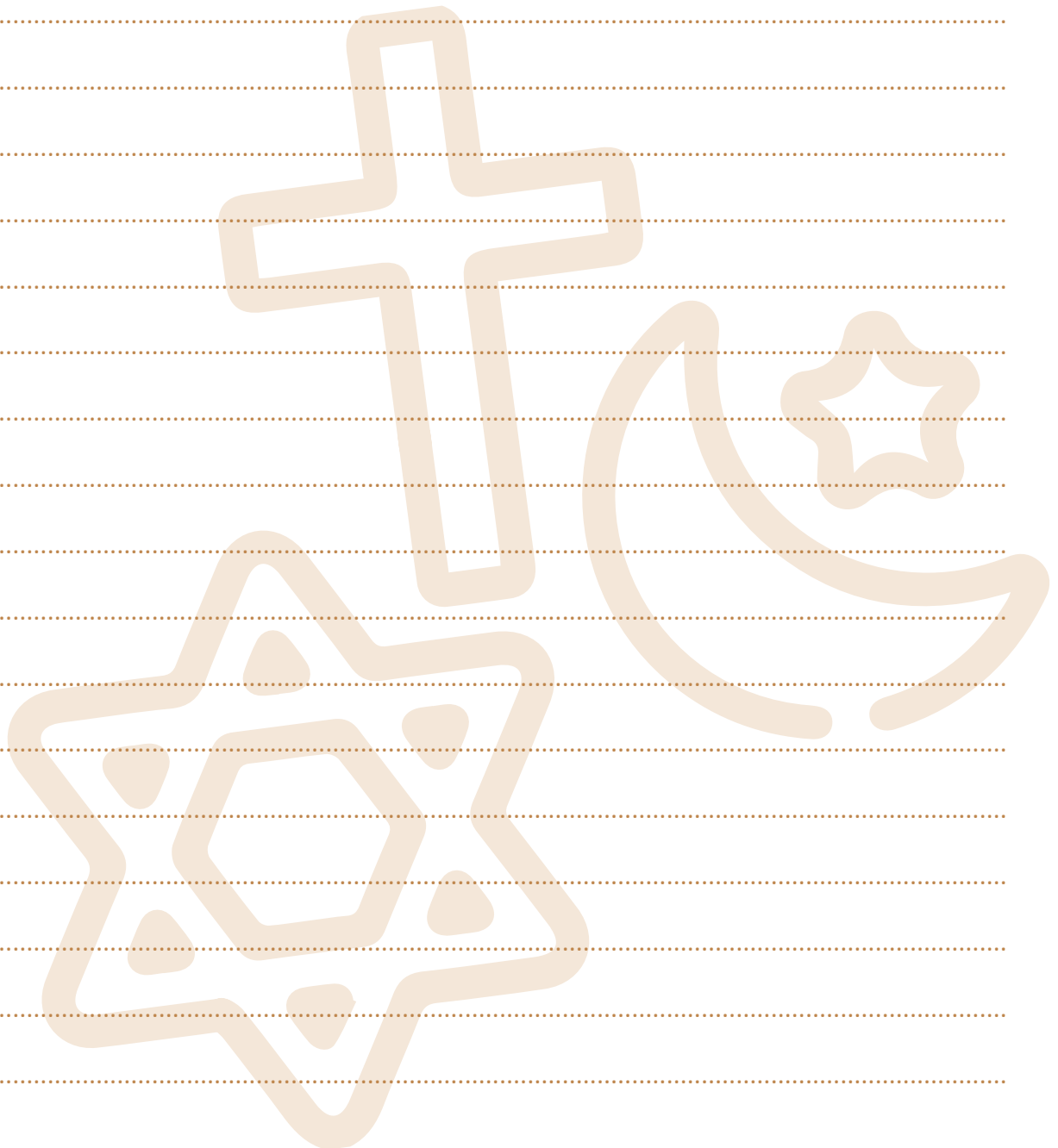
The religion we will be looking at is Christianity. This will be split into four themes; Religious Figures and Sacred Texts; Religious Concepts; Religious Life and Religious Practices. Use the internet to research the meanings of the key terms/concepts below.

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>Incarnation</b>  |  |
| <b>Resurrection</b> |  |
| <b>Atonement</b>    |  |
| <b>Salvation</b>    |  |
| <b>Original Sin</b> |  |
| <b>Omnipotent</b>   |  |
| <b>Omniscient</b>   |  |
| <b>Omnipresent</b>  |  |
| <b>The Trinity</b>  |  |

## Task 2: Ethics

Use the following website to choose a podcast that interests you. Listen to the podcast and write a review below. Think about the ethical issues that arise and arguments for and against the issue. Feel free to give your opinion!

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/brand/p02nrsmh>



# Religious Studies (Theology, Ethics and Philosophy)

## Task 3: Philosophy

The first topic you will study in Philosophy is The Cosmological Argument. You should watch the videos below and answer the questions that follow:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyiNbjlqcJo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLKwImYuEKU>

1. What does the argument set out to prove?

.....

2. What does a posteriori mean?

.....

3. 3. What does inductive mean?

.....

4. What conclusion does it want us to accept?

.....

5. 5. What does cosmos mean?

.....

6. 6. What is the argument based on and what does it mean?

.....

7. 7. What is the first cause? What three characteristics must it have?

.....

8. Who came up with the cosmological argument? What was his 'job'?

.....

9. What are Aquinas' Five Ways?

a. ....

b. ....

c. ....

d. ....

e. ....

10. What is the cosmological argument?

.....

.....

.....

11. What is the BIG problem with the argument?

.....

12. What is the Kalam Cosmological Argument?

.....

.....

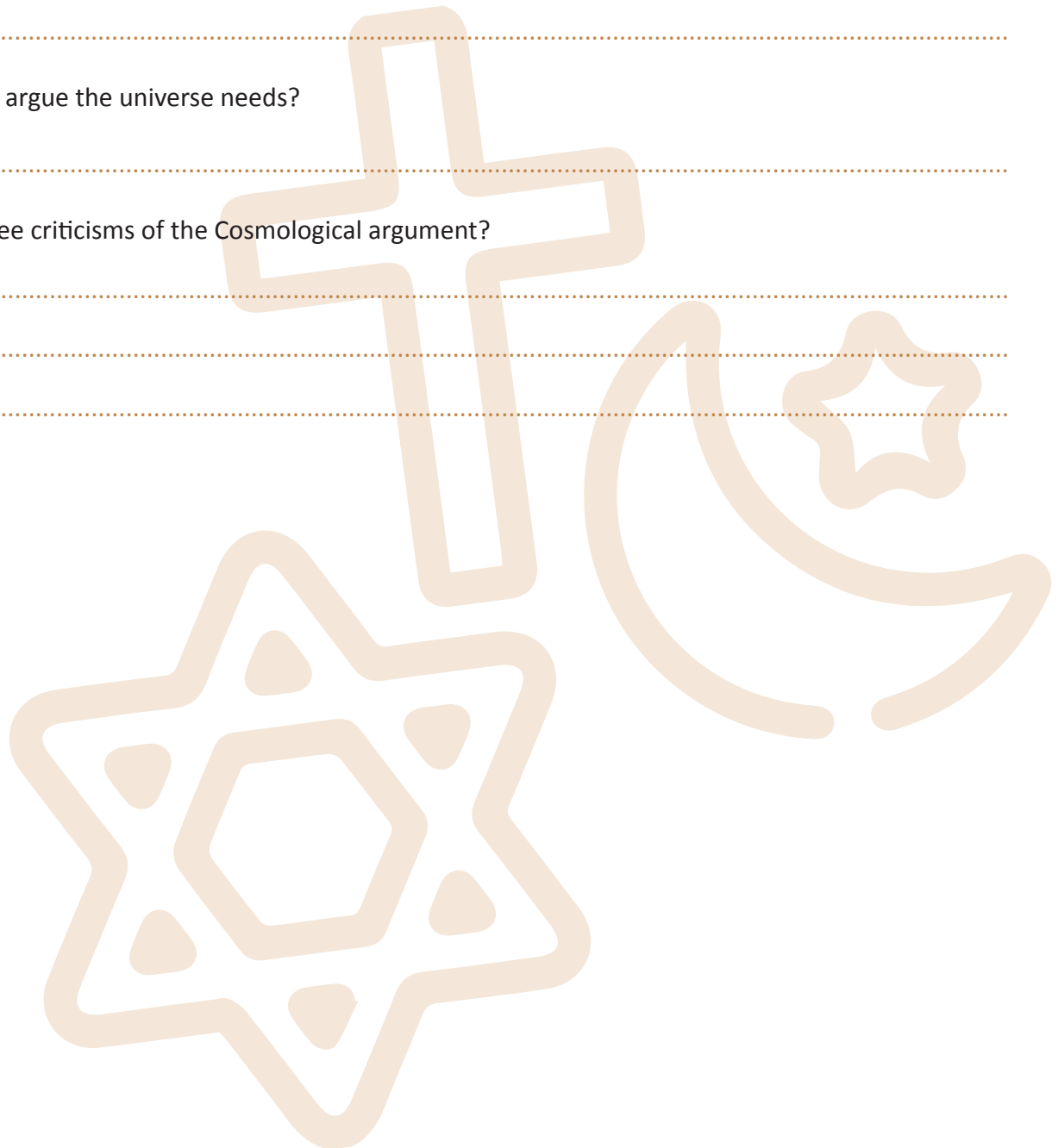
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13. What Leibniz argue the universe needs?

.....

14. What are three criticisms of the Cosmological argument?

- a. ....
- b. ....
- c. ....



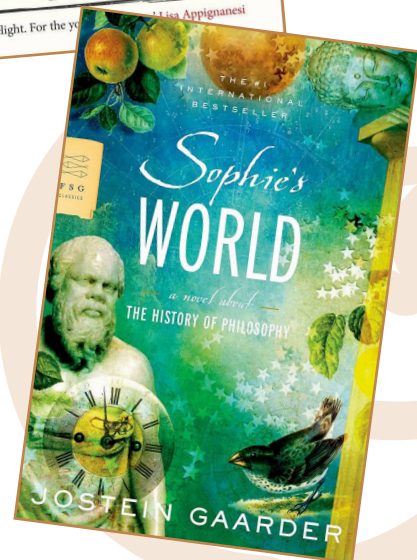
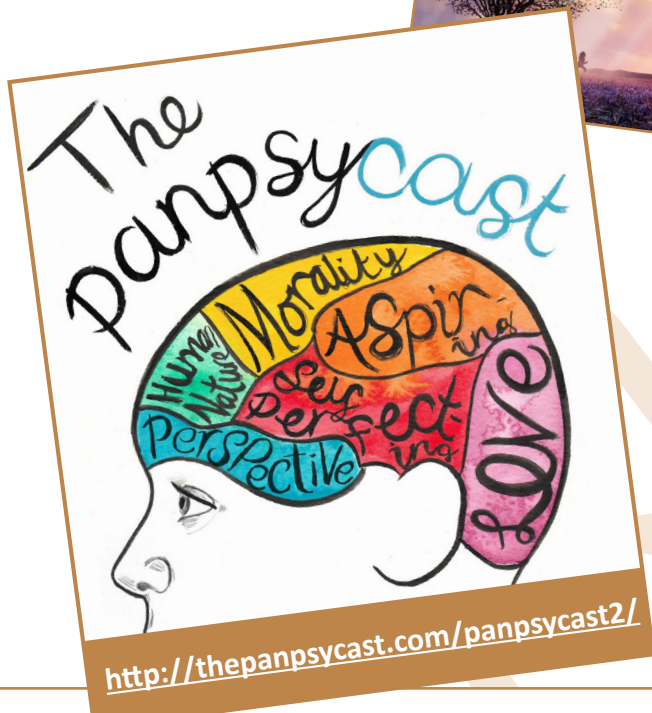
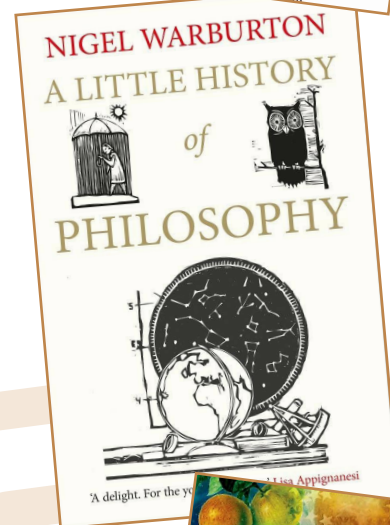
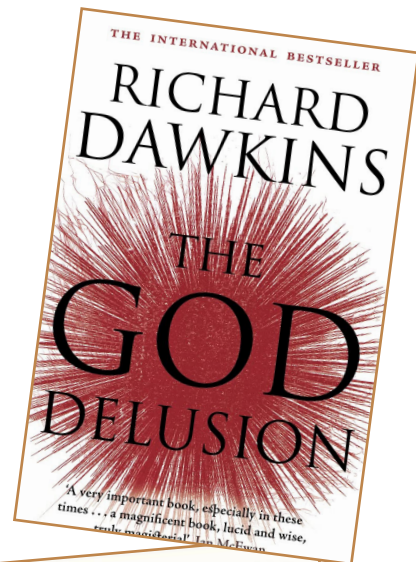
# Religious Studies (Theology, Ethics and Philosophy)

## Glossary

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Religion</b>             | A particular system of faith and worship.  |
| <b>Belief</b>               | An acceptance that something exists or is true, especially one without proof.  |
| <b>Faith</b>                | A belief in something or somebody. In terms of religious faith can also imply an attitude of trust or assent to unproved assertions.   |
| <b>Secular</b>              | Not connected with religious or spiritual matters.   |
| <b>Philosophy</b>           | The study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence.  |
| <b>Atheist</b>              | A person who disbelieves or lacks belief in the existence of God or gods.  |
| <b>Theist</b>               | A person who believes in the existence of a god or gods, specifically of a creator who intervenes in the universe.   |
| <b>Agnostic</b>             | A person who believes that nothing is known or can be known of the existence or nature of God.   |
| <b>Reason</b>               | The use of logic to come to a conclusion.  |
| <b>Free will</b>            | The ability to act at one's own discretion. This results in having moral responsibility for our free choices.  |
| <b>Religious Experience</b> | A personal experience of the divine.   |
| <b>Natural Evil</b>         | Cause of suffering within the natural world including disaster, disease, decay and death. Sometimes referred to as suffering, this is evil which is not the consequence of specific human action and humans generally have little or no control over it. |
| <b>Moral Evil</b>           | Intentional human action (commission) or inaction (omission) that results in suffering, eg murder.   |
| <b>Ethics</b>               | This term comes from the Greek word ethikos, which in its root form (ethos) means custom or habit. It refers to a branch of moral philosophy that aims to determine the meaning of right and wrong, and subsequently the correct way to act.             |
| <b>Absolute Morality</b>    | Absolute morality is when a person has a principle such as 'it is wrong to kill' and never alters it. They apply this principle or moral standard to all situations, no matter what the context or circumstance.   |
| <b>Relative Morality</b>    | Relative morality is when a person holds a moral principle but is prepared to adapt or adjust it in certain situations. This person might believe that, if it reduces suffering in the future, killing in war might be necessary.                        |
| <b>Moral Responsibility</b> | To be morally responsible requires freedom of choice. It is the status of morally deserving praise, blame, reward, or punishment for an act or omission, in accordance with moral obligations.   |



Suggested books to read, films to watch,  
podcasts to listen to and games to play...



PHILOSOPHY EXPERIMENTS

<http://www.philosophyexperiments.com/>

# Religious Studies (Theology, Ethics and Philosophy)

## Suggested General Internet resources and radio/TV programmes


| Link  | Description   |
|---|---|
| <a href="http://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/religious-studies/as-a-level/">http://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/religious-studies/as-a-level/</a> | Exam board website. Useful for specifications and past papers.  |
| <a href="https://philosophymonster.weebly.com/">https://philosophymonster.weebly.com/</a>   | Regularly updated with materials to help with our A Level course.   |
| <a href="http://thesagetrain.co.uk/">http://thesagetrain.co.uk/</a>   | Website to go with the book The Sage train. Has useful information on the philosophers included in the book.  |
| <a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtOLJI-WPWAcxFa37iQOUtOA">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtOLJI-WPWAcxFa37iQOUtOA</a>                       | MrMcMillanREvis YouTube channel for A Level RS. Mostly useful for Philosophy. This may not be for our exam board – so use with your specification to check that you are learning relevant material.   |
| <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qykl">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qykl</a>   | In our Time is a Radio 4 programme which looks at influential ideas and people. It often takes complex ideas and makes them easy to understand. As well as watching out for new episodes the archives are useful. There is a religion section and philosophy section. |
| <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09v6xx3">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09v6xx3</a>   | The Moral maze is particularly useful for Ethics and Theme 3 Christianity. Each week a panel discusses an ethical issue. The archives are full of useful episodes.  |
| <a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006s6p6/episodes/player">https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006s6p6/episodes/player</a>                       | Beyond Belief is radio 4's weekly programme that looks at faith in the modern world, probably most useful for the Christianity side of the course.  |
| <a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/b007zpll?suggid=b007zpll">https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/b007zpll?suggid=b007zpll</a>           | The Big Questions is on every Sunday morning, an audience discuss moral issues. Mostly relevant to Ethics and Christianity Theme 3.   |





**“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord,  
“plans to prosper you and not to harm you,  
plans to give you hope and a future.”**

**Jeremiah 29:11**

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