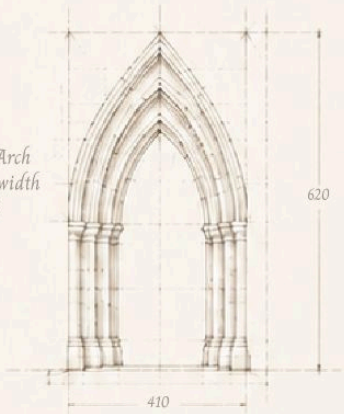
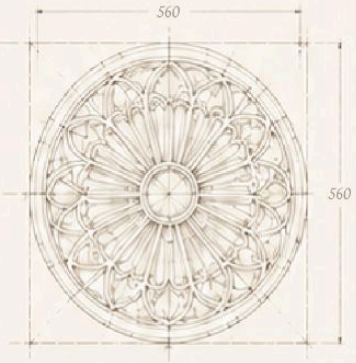
Chapter 1

The Gospel We Traded Away

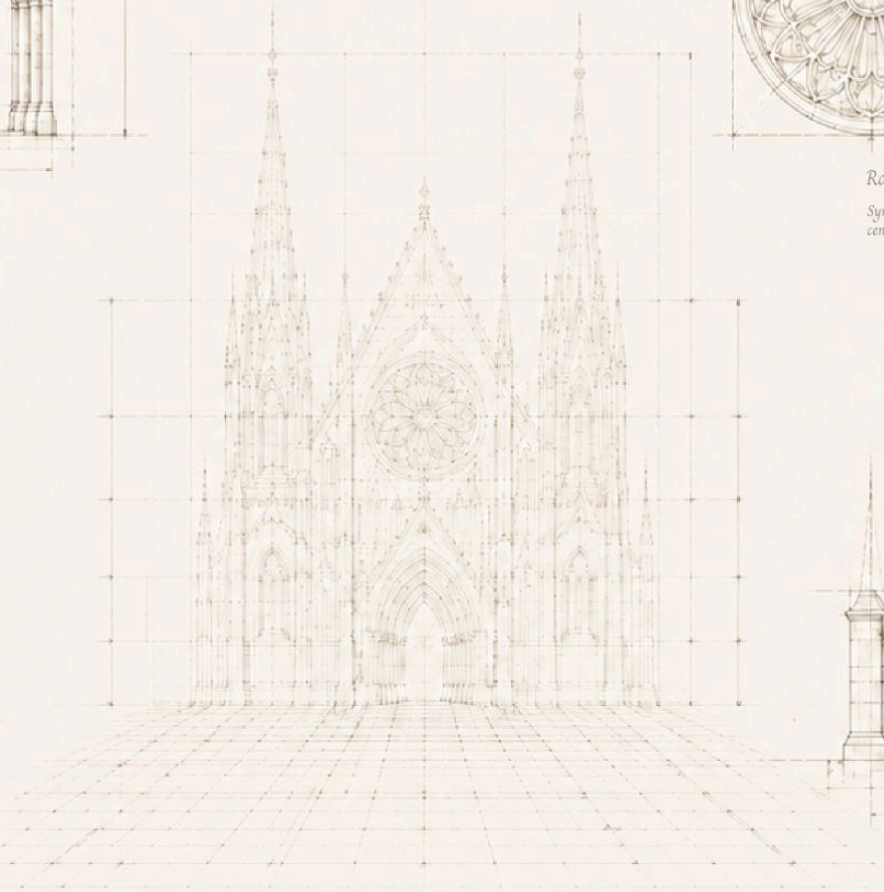


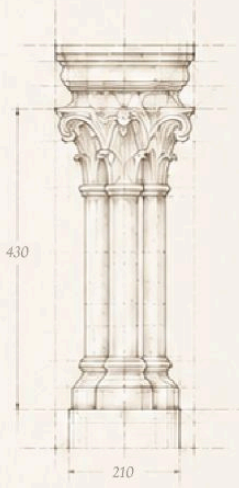
Pointed Arch
height to width
3 : 2



Rose Window

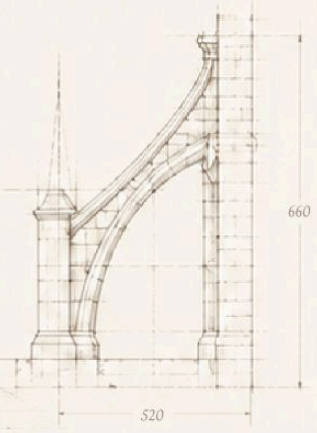
Symbol of light
center of the facade





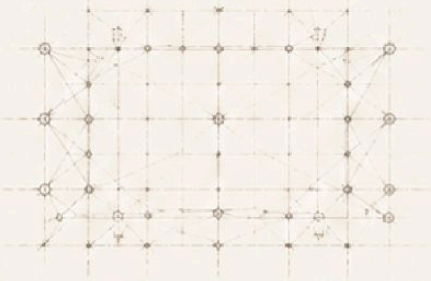
Column Detail

Verify load capacity
before dressed stone
finish



Flying Buttress

Support for the roof
and the walls



Foundation Plan
laid before the first stone

The Blueprint	
Scale 1:200	
Design Approved for Construction	

If someone asked you why Jesus came, how would you answer? For many Christians, the answer comes almost without thinking. Jesus came to save us from our sins so that we could be forgiven and spend eternity with God. That answer is wonderfully true. Without the cross there is no forgiveness. Without the resurrection there is no hope. Without God's grace none of us could ever stand before Him. Everything that follows in this book rests upon those unshakable truths.

Yet what if that answer, as beautiful as it is, is only the beginning of a much larger story? When Jesus began His public ministry, He did not begin with an explanation of forgiveness or heaven. His first recorded message was remarkably simple: "*[...] the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe in the gospel!*" (Mark 1:15b). Those words raise an important question. If Jesus came primarily to save us from our sins, why did He speak so often about the Kingdom of God? To understand why Jesus spoke so often about the Kingdom, we first need to go back to the beginning.

Before there was sin, there was purpose. Before humanity needed saving, God already knew what He had created us for. He did not create people simply so that one day they could go to heaven. He created them to know Him, walk with Him, and live under His loving rule.

Genesis opens with a world exactly as God intended it. Adam and Eve lived in close fellowship with their Creator. They did not need to earn His love because they already had it. They did not need to search for their identity because they knew they belonged to Him. They lived as His own, not as servants trying to earn their place. They were entrusted with meaningful responsibility, not as a burden to carry, but as part of the life God had designed for them. Everything in creation flourished because everything was centred on God. His authority was life-giving. Under His care, humanity experienced the freedom, purpose, and peace for which it had been created. That picture changes the way we read the rest of the Bible.

We often think of Scripture primarily as the story of salvation. In reality, salvation is God's answer to a much older story. Before the Bible tells us what was lost, it first shows us what God intended. Before it reveals redemption, it reveals relationship. Before it explains why humanity needed saving, it shows us the kind of life we were created to enjoy. Only when we understand God's original design can we fully understand what was lost. Only against that backdrop can we understand what happened next.

The tragedy of Genesis 3 was not simply that Adam and Eve broke a command. The deeper problem was that they chose independence from God. Instead of trusting His wisdom, they decided to define good and evil for themselves. In doing so, they stepped away from the very life God had created them to enjoy.

That one decision changed everything.

Sin entered the world.
Trust gave way to fear.
Peace gave way to shame.
Relationships were broken.
Even creation itself felt the consequences.

But the Kingdom is more than a better way to behave. It is life under the reign of a King. Jesus does not simply give us better principles to follow; He calls us to follow Him. The story of the Bible is not simply the story of bad people doing bad things. It is the story of humanity trying to build life apart from the King who created them. Every generation has repeated the same pattern. Even today, we often prefer autonomy over surrender. We gladly ask God to bless our plans, yet hesitate to surrender them to His. We accept Jesus as Saviour, but often struggle to follow Him as King. If this is what humanity lost, one question naturally follows: What exactly did Jesus come to restore?

If humanity's deepest problem was separation from God's loving reign, then restoration must be more than forgiveness alone. It must bring people back into the life God intended from the beginning. That is why Jesus' first public announcement is so significant:

> *"[...] the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe in the gospel!"*
> (Mark 1:15b)

For many people, the word *Kingdom* sounds complicated, but the idea is surprisingly simple. The Greek word *basileia* speaks of reign, rule, and kingship—not merely a place. The Kingdom of God is wherever God's will is embraced and His reign is welcomed.

When people choose forgiveness instead of revenge, God's Kingdom becomes visible.
When honesty triumphs over deceit, God's Kingdom becomes visible.
When love overcomes selfishness, God's Kingdom becomes visible.

The Kingdom is not first and foremost a place we will one day enter. It is God's rule breaking into everyday life. It is His way replacing our way. It is His purpose being restored in people who choose to follow Him. This is why the Kingdom stood at the centre of Jesus' message. It was never a side theme. From the very beginning, it has always been at the heart of God's plan.