

God and the nations

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[0:01] We did have what might have been actually too ambitious a proposal that those of us who come along regularly to the church here would read through the book of the prophet Isaiah.

And if we did it at a reasonable speed, we wouldn't understand everything, but we would be getting through it. So the suggestion was if we read three chapters a day, at the end of one week we'd have read up to chapter 21.

At the end of two weeks we'd have read up to chapter 42. After three weeks we would have read up to chapter 63 and nearly finished. Well, I'd just encourage you to keep on going.

And even if you only managed half a chapter a day, just keep on going because it's a great book. And we're going to come and look at it in more detail in future.

So having read it will be a great, great help. We're going to be nibbling at the book of the prophet Isaiah. Here's my introduction. Do you think that God is a Twitter subscriber?

[1:03] Do you think that God knows what's happening on Twitter? Does he know what happens on this account and that account and on that place and this part of the world?

Good question. Do you think God keeps up with the news? Hmm, interesting. Do you think God knows and is interested in, for example, what Donald Trump says?

I'll leave this as a question for you. Do you think God knows where Afghanistan is? Do we know where Afghanistan is? Hmm.

Do you think God knows about Brexit? Do you think God knows about all the things that affect people's lives following on from that, about immigration policy, things like that?

Do you think God knows about North Korea and the people in North Korea and the threat to South Korea and the leaders in that country and the weapons they do have and don't have and the amount of food they do have and don't have?

[2:13] Do you think God is aware of things like that? Is that on his agenda? In other words, is God interested in the nations?

That's the question we're going to ask. And the answer is, and what I should now do is prolong this like they do on the great British Bake Off. And the answer is?

Yes. Well, you've got there first. Yes. The answer is yes. Our God is a great big God. And although we sometimes think of him as rather small, that does him a dishonor because God is certainly interested in the nations.

And that's what we shall see this morning, God willing, from the book of the prophet Isaiah. Now, just to explain our approach to this, the book of the prophet Isaiah is a big, big book.

It's like a big cheese with a tiny little mouse working out how to eat all of it. And what we did was we divided it up. So the end of it, that end, chapters 56 to 66, are, according to Alec Mateer, the commentator, about the anointed conqueror.

[3:23] The middle bit, click, is about the book of the servant, he says. And the first part of it is the book of the king, 1 to 39.

So we chopped that in half as well. We looked at the first half or thereabouts last time. And we're going to look at that bit, the second part of the first half, the second half of the first part, that bit anyway, chapters 12 to 39.

And I'm just going to try and give us a feel of that. That's the bit we're looking at. So my plan this morning is, A, to remind us of the context.

It's important to have the context. Some of this you will have heard before, but I think we just have to make sure we all understand this. Otherwise, we won't understand the book at all. Then I'd like to

survey chapters 12 to 39.

I'd like to draw four conclusions from that. And that's my plan, okay? What did I say I was going to do? Context, survey the chapters, and then draw four conclusions.

[4:34] Okay. Let's do the context. So it's set in history and in geography. The book opens by saying, It is the vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah, son of Amos, saw during the reigns of Isaiah, Jotham, Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

So the kingdoms then split the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom. And Isaiah is really concentrating on this southern kingdom.

There's the split. The northern kingdom, the split happened, shall we say, roughly 940 before Christ. And then the timeline goes down to about 722 before Christ.

And at that point, the northern kingdom is aborted by the Assyrian invasion. So that is Assyria, not the same as Syria.

Please don't be confused about that. During that piece of history, there were 13 kings. The southern kingdom, again, that's where the split occurred, has a longer history.

[5:46] But that history ends with the invasion by Babylon. And the bit of, in 587 BC, thereabouts. And the book of the prophet Isaiah occurs during the reigns of King Isaiah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

And there's Isaiah the prophet. And his ministry is in that sort of area. So he has quite a long ministry. And all the drama is going on of Assyria and the threat of that.

And it ends up with the conquest by Babylon. So that's the history. Is that okay with everybody?

You get the idea of the history. We're talking about ancient history.

And that's how it fits together. Let's do the geography. So that's the map of Europe. Mediterranean. So some of you will see your home country on there.

I'm going to zoom in on this bit down here, like that. And here is the geography zoomed in. That's the same map zoomed in.

[6:55] Mediterranean, which is at Red Sea, Persian Gulf, and as follows. It's important to know that the Bible is not just a book of philosophy.

It doesn't say things like what goes around comes around. Prayer is a good idea. Things like that. It is how God acts in history. Because our God is a real God.

He touches real people's lives at real times and real places. And this book of the prophet Isaiah is worked out in real life. So Jerusalem is the place where God has his headquarters.

Egypt is the place where, well, it has two particular pieces of significance. One, it's the place that God's people were rescued from back in the time of the Exodus.

And secondly, Egypt offers help to Jerusalem when she faces the threats that she faces. And the first threat comes from Assyria.

[8:06] Their power base is Nineveh. And they are seeking to attack Jerusalem. They succeed in attacking almost up to the gates of Jerusalem.

But then, amazingly, they don't get any further. Later on, Babylon headquarters in Babylon, isn't it? Sort of further down here. And they do succeed in capturing Jerusalem. So that's the geography of that history.

Did that make sense? Happy with the geography of it? Okay. So even just thinking of the geography and the history, the God of the Bible is a God of the big picture.

He has big plans. His arm reaches very far. He's a God of the long view. It's interesting, isn't it? Our view is really quite short.

[9:06] We think about the next week. And Jesus tells us, sufficient unto the day of the troubles thereof, that God has a long view. And God is prepared to wait 70 years, hundreds of years, hundreds and hundreds of years to advance his plan.

He's prepared to take the long view. God is the God of here and now. He takes the long view. He has the big picture. But he is interested in the decisions, the problems, the issues that we face.

Even as we sit here, maybe your mind is going over some problem at the moment. This big God is enough for that too. And one of the writers correctly says, this is a God who is not too great, too big to care, but is too great to fail.

And he wants us to learn that. I have to say, speak for myself, I'm very slow at learning this. I don't know about you. But God does want us to learn that he can be trusted in every situation, in life and death.

And he can be trusted. And for the Christian, we have the additional angle on this, that this great God is my heavenly father.

[10:32] That when I speak to God as my father, that doesn't mean that he's smaller and more domesticated than he used to be. What it means is, he's still as great and as grand as he ever has been.

But I have this wonderful privilege of calling this God my father. Which is great, isn't it? It was worth coming along this morning just to be reminded of that.

Anyway, let's bite at the cheese. So that's the bit we're going to look at. If you have a Bible there, please could you open it at Isaiah chapter 13.

And we will flip through. Now some of you noble souls who have been reading through this might have found it hard work. And you think, I said I'd read through it.

I put up my hand to say I'd read through it. I have no idea what I've been reading. Well, let's see what we have been reading. Because this bit of Isaiah from chapters 13 to 39.

[11:40] Okay, 6, 9, 7. Contains speeches to or speeches about the surrounding nations.

And the speeches go round twice. They start off in chapter 13 with Babylon.

So an oracle, chapter 13, verse 1, concerning Babylon that Isaiah son of Amos saw. So that great threatening nation.

The one that was the enemy of God's city and God's people. It starts off with an oracle, a speech about Babylon.

And you flick through and you can see various names going past you. And when you get to chapter 20, you find a prophecy against Egypt and Cush.

[12:39] So we'll itemize the nations in a moment. But we've gone right the way through from Babylon to Egypt. And then when we get to chapter 21, it starts again with Babylon.

Chapter 21, a prophecy against Babylon. An oracle concerning the desert by the sea. So we're back again with Babylon. And we work our way through in chapter 35, all the way through to the coming back to the holy city.

This is about Jerusalem. And this bit says that there will be, in chapter 35, for example, it says in verse 5, Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped.

The lame will leap like a deer, the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness, streams in the desert. In verse 8, a highway will be there.

It will be called the way of holiness. And verse 10 says, They will enter Zion with singing. Everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and sorrow will overtake them.

[13:54] Sorrow and sighing will flee away. So we go right the way through this. And the end is, it's always nice to know the end of the story. It's a happy ending. That the exiles return from Babylon to Jerusalem with great triumph, wonderful singing, and God's plans are fulfilled.

So we go, so twice round, once sort of mentions a lot of local issues, and the second time round, God's agenda expands to think of cosmic issues as well, which you might have noticed if you read it through.

And the last three chapters, 36 to 39, put that into practice in the most intense crisis where the Assyrian army is right up at the door.

They send the field commander to say to King Hezekiah, We've got you. We're a bigger army than you are. We've mown down all the other countries.

We're going to mow you down. What on earth do you think you're trusting in if you resist us? That's a very good question for Hezekiah. Because the only thing that he can trust in is the promises of God.

[15:18] And we'll perhaps look at that a little bit more this evening. But he, it comes down to the nitty gritty. Will he trust God in this crisis situation?

Okay, we have a great big God. He knows about the nations. He knows about history. And he's brought us to this particular crunch point at this particular time. What will happen? And by God's grace, Hezekiah has the faith to put his trust in the Lord.

And he goes and prays to the Lord. There's a wonderful prayer in chapter 37, verse 14. Seeing as we're here, we might as well read it.

Isaiah chapter 37, verse 14. This is what Hezekiah says. Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it.

Then he went up to the temple of the Lord and spread it out before the Lord. And Hezekiah prayed to the Lord. O Lord Almighty, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth.

[16:35] You have made heaven and earth. Give ear, O Lord, and hear. Open your eyes, O Lord, and see. Listen to all the words Sennacherib has sent to insult the living God.

It is true, O Lord, that the Assyrian kings have laid waste all these peoples and their lands. They have thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them. For they were not gods, but only wood and stone fashioned by human hands.

Now, O Lord, our God, deliver us from His hand so that all the kingdoms on earth may know that you alone, O Lord, are God.

It's a real prayer, isn't it? And he really appeals to God in that prayer. In desperation, in trust, calling upon God as to who He really is, to show that He really is that.

And God answers his prayer. I reckon that's not a million miles from situations that most of us will face either in the past week or the coming week.

[17:51] There will be something where there is a burden on your shoulders, there is an issue that gets to you. And we have a great big God.

And why don't we bring our concerns to God like Hezekiah does and put faith into practice and trust and see what God will do.

And that's what's happening here, isn't it? It's about faith. It's a book that invites us to have faith in a great big God. Okay.

Now the chapters that we've been looking at as we survey them, I don't know why I put an A in survey. That's not right, is it? They're a bit obscure, I think. You might have found them obscure. You might find them a bit remote. Some of it is unhappy stuff. It's about judgment. But let's not be put off.

[18:54] Surely God is saying something vitally important if he's spent so many words saying it. Let's continue our survey. Let's think of the geography then, the nations.

So let's put them in on this map now. Taking them in the order that the chapters mention them in, we have Babylon, the final enemy.

So this is going, this is based up here, but it's going to sweep down everywhere and envelop everything. We have Assyria, the present enemy. So they didn't get so far based up there, but they're sweeping down that way.

Shall we follow it through? Let's go back to chapter, wherever we were, chapter 13. So in chapter 14, we have Assyria.

That's chapter 14, verse 24. And then in chapter 14, verse 28, we have the Philistines, Philistia, which I think on the map go there, along the coast.

[20:05] Then in chapter 15, we have Moab. Yes? Chapter 15, a prophecy against Moab. And Moab, I think, is around there.

And then chapter 17, we have Damascus. So Damascus, Syria. So I've put them on the map up there.

Chapter 18, which Assema read to us, is about Cush, which I think is about there. Chapter 19 is about Egypt.

So I'm going to say that's about there. Egypt is a useless help to God's people. And then we go to Egypt and Cush, verse chapter 20.

Chapter 21 takes us back to Babylon again. 21, verse 11, is Edom.

[21:08] Now, I put Edom there. and chapter 21, verse 13, Arabia. So I put that there.

And then we go back to Jerusalem. No? There's Tyre. Where's Tyre gone? No, I've put Tyre, chapter 23. Does anybody know anything about Tyre?

What was Tyre famous for, apart from putting on wheels? Yes? I didn't know about Tyre and Sidon. It was a very, very similar place when Jesus was there. Yeah, Jesus, the same place was there many, many centuries later when, yeah, Tyre and Sidon.

Yep. Yep. Thank you very much. At this point in history? It was a great naval port. They did all the trading. So they're very rich and very influential.

So it's like, if you want to compare it with something powerful and influential commercially now, you might say Silicon Valley, you might say Microsoft or Apple or Amazon or Google.

[22:18] Big, commercial, powerful place. That was Tyre. Then in chapter 28 he mentions the northern kingdom, calls it Ephraim.

Did I click something? Yes, I did. And then he finally goes back home to Jerusalem, which is in chapter 29 and onwards. So there's the map.

There's the little people that God is prophesying to and there they're surrounded by these other countries, Egypt, Kush, Arabia, Babylon, Assyria. Interesting to see it like that.

they're surrounded and God knows where they are. God knows the pressure from this and the pressure from that and the threat of this and the temptation for that.

And God says, even though you're surrounded, I'm with you. Now, I don't know whether you ever feel in your life you're surrounded by pressures from this and pressures from that.

[23:24] and you wonder perhaps sometimes whether God knows all these pressures as they come from perhaps this piece of legislation or that economic force or whatever it is.

It was interesting in those days God knew exactly the pressure people were under and spoke into that situation. I don't think God has changed. I think God knows the pressures that we're under. You know, the things that surround us. He knows those things. I think we should take comfort from that. So that's my survey of the chapters and I'm not going to go into any more detail than that but I'm going to draw oh, I didn't put the redeemed coming home.

Let's put the redeemed coming home. There they are. The redeemed actually come home. Chapter 35. So let's do some conclusions. I've got four conclusions to draw just from what we've seen. So number one, God knows nations. Let me just see what I've done. Yeah, God knows nations. God knows nations.

[24:36] He knows what's happening. We so often think God doesn't know but he does know. He knows nations.

nations. So we're not simply individuals. We are bundled up with other people of our nation. So in the UK if we voted for Brexit we all Brexit because we're all bound up with that together.

We're bundled up together as nations. we can affect other people with whom we are bundled up. So we have a community by virtue of being a nation.

Now what is a nation? That's a little bit more of a difficult question which I will skip over. but let's look at 15 chapter 15 verse 5 A 5 B and chapter 15 I'm sure I meant 5 5 B and 5 A yes.

Look at this prophecy about Moab. It says they go up the way to Luhith weeping as they go on the road to Horonaim they lament their destruction.

[26:05] Now do you know where Luhith is? Because I don't. Do you know where Horonaim is? I don't. But God does. And God sees them weeping on the road up to Horonaim.

I think that's significant. It's not just like we know the news oh there's trouble over there somewhere. Not quite sure where it is and we'll probably forget about it next week.

But God says I can see them walking that road. I can see their tears. I think there's comfort in knowing that God knows what's going on so so in such detail.

And it says in the first part of the verse my heart cries out over Moab which is a very bold thing to say that God is saying not only I see it yeah well that's happening yes but God says I care about that.

My heart cries out over that. It's a great comfort to us that the God who holds all things in his hands cares.

[27:19] we have a saviour who wept over Jerusalem don't we? He saw these people they were hard they were contrary they were to say the least obnoxious but there was in the heart of Jesus to weep over Jerusalem and God knows the nations and he cares about the nations.

He knows about Donald Trump he knows about the bedroom tax he knows about child care provision he knows about the southern rail industrial relations problems he knows about Brexit he knows about NHF staffing shortages he knows about the gig economy he knows about student debt he knows about deadlines he knows about your family he knows about your medical issues he knows all of those things and I think that's a great encouragement he knows he knows better than anybody else does and Isaiah would say to the people of God as he does in chapter 40 that this great God brings out the stars and knows them by name and he says to God's people why do you complain oh Israel my way is hidden from the

Lord my cause is disregarded by my God why do you say that that's so silly that's so short sighted get yourself together have a little talk with yourself in the quietness perhaps with your Bible open and ready to pray do you really think God doesn't know why do you let yourself think that he does know cast your burdens on the Lord who knows the nations the very hairs on your head are numbered that's how great God is number two number one was God knows the nations number two God uses the nations as agents of his sovereign purpose now I'm using the word sovereign there in a technical sense sovereign means to rule but when Christians use it they mean

God rules in such a way that nothing else can get in the way of his rule nothing can stop him doing his plans nothing can thwart his plans and that's the way I'm using the word sovereign here he uses the nations as agents of his sovereign purpose would you like to turn to chapter 10 which I know is not strictly within the limits that we were looking at for today but it's there chapter 10 and there's a section there about Assyria now you will have understood that Assyria was the nation that came and invaded the northern kingdom obliterated them didn't invade the southern kingdom invaded the northern kingdom and God says of Assyria in chapter 10 verse 5 woe to the Assyrian the rod of my anger that's interesting because the

Assyrians thought well we've got a military purpose we've got a strategy we'll do this we'll advance that way but God says yes I know you're thinking that but I'm using you as a rod of my anger in fact you're like the stick in my hand to do what I want says God and chapter 10 has a whole lot to say about that it says in verse 6 I send him against an ungodly nation I dispatch him against a people who anger me God is doing his purposes through Assyria and the Assyrians don't think that at all verse 13 they think by the strength of my hand I've done this by my wisdom because I have understanding I've done all this stuff but God says you're so stupid aren't you you think that but actually it was me all the time you're the axe

[32:12] I'm the person who's wielding the axe verse 15 and God says and I used you but that doesn't mean that you were excused for the cruelty and the pride and the atrocious way you used your power his sovereignty did not remove their responsibility he uses the nations but he also holds them blame worthy nowadays Christians don't have their own geographical nation we're scattered abroad in various different places but God still uses the nations and in particular whichever nation that we happen to be in in Romans 13 Paul talks about the the Roman government under which he found himself and in

Romans 13 verse 4 he talks about the instituted governing authorities and said he is God's servant to do you good if you do wrong be afraid for he does not bear the sword for nothing he is God's servant an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrong doer therefore it is necessary to submit to the authorities not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience and this is why you pay taxes he says for the authorities are God's servants who give their full time to governing give everyone what you owe him if you owe taxes pay taxes if revenue pay revenue if respect then respect if honour then honour so he says still now the nations are God's agents he says they're God's servants God's deacons actually is the word that he used and because it's important in whatever nation we find ourselves to be respectful and obedient to the ruling authorities Christians are meant to be model citizens we don't sort of go away in a little Christian bubble and ignore the state we're supposed to be involved in the affairs of the state to be respectful and to play the part that citizens ought to play if we're paying tax we should pay tax and so on and so on so

we're not to try and escape the system we're not to try and abuse the system and we're supposed to keep within the laws of the system so things like Christians are not to be using illegal substances for example number two God uses the nations number three God judges the nations so we've already seen what God says to Assyria so let's again work our way through we started in chapter 10 and that's where it talks about

Assyria God judges Babylon for example chapter 14 verses 12 to 15 he speaks to Babylon what is the characteristic sin of Babylon well we're told here about the extreme pride of this kingdom Isaiah 14 verse 12 how you have fallen from heaven oh morning star son of the dawn you who have been cast down to the earth you who once laid low nations you said in your heart I will ascend to heaven I will raise my throne above the stars of God I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly on the utmost heights of the sacred!

mountain I will ascend above the tops of the to the depths of the pit and the judgment on Babylon is a judgment on the way that kingdom thinks of itself as being like God we ascend on high we what does he say I make myself like the most high and God says I'm not having that I know that's that's sometimes in the national consciousness to say we are God there are even now I think it would not be unfair to say the leader of North Korea thinks that his people should worship him as a God and love him as a God who can do no wrong above whom there is no one else and when politicians start thinking there's no one above me then it's all going terribly wrong the politicians aren't always to realize we're limited there's a higher power than us many nations have gone in for that and [37:27] God by policy brings them down he indicts the nations he criticizes the nations for their idolatry so for example chapter 17 verse 8 says that in that day men will look to their maker and turn their eyes to the holy one of Israel they will not look to their altars the work of their hands they will have no regard for the asherah poles!

the incense altars their fingers have made so they've made up their own religion and you might say well that's very out of date because in western societies people don't have altars and they don't have asherah poles and incense altars well not like that they don't but your god is whatever gives you meaning and guidance and what you worship as the largest thing in your life sun worship but in our western society we've got loads of things that take that important position sometimes science can be abused to say we can supply the answers for everything sometimes equalities can be abused and say we govern all thought the equalities agenda and these things are becoming like idols well Egypt has wisdom that omits

God and we won't stop on that we'll say that God judges the nations now Adam our pianist is not here he would know what Star Trek NG meant but maybe it's just me and him anybody else know what Aaron that's right Star Trek Star Trek Next Generation so it's Adam and me Aaron and it was a TV program science fiction program and they would come to other planets in this spaceship and their philosophical position was that all cultures are equally good you can't criticize any of them and you can't interfere with any of them but the Bible is a little different to that the Bible says that all cultures are sinful people they all need redeeming each has its own characteristic sins so in the New Testament Paul says all Cretans are liars so there's a particular sin in that culture each culture has its own particular sins to varying degrees there's been in the news about white supremacists who presumably agree that white supremacy is the right thing that those people are supreme over all others and can look down on them without realizing that their culture too stands under the judgment of God all cultures need redeeming we should beware of the sins of our culture worldliness is whatever it is in our culture that makes godliness seem odd and sin seem normal and we're surrounded by worldliness in that sense in gratitude and gratitude to a

God who's made us irreverence to God the sexual confusion that's around we're to be aware of the sins of our culture and we can learn from Isaiah that every culture every ethnicity must humble itself to receive forgiveness and redemption through Jesus there's no culture that does not need that God judges the nations and number four God will not stop until he has brought the nations to the king in the heavenly city the king who rules in Zion not all but most of those prophecies even the one that our summit read to us in chapter 18 which was pretty obscure ends up with God bringing representatives people some of that nation to the king who is the son of

[42:15] David who reigns in Zion there's an exception I don't think there is a single place where God says anything redeeming about Babylon she is the city doomed to destruction and this is the end for every city and

culture that insists to the end on opposing God someone insists to the end on opposing God there is no redemption for them the book of Revelation takes this theme of the city of Babylon and the people of God rejoice over the defeat of Babylon and they say hallelujah the smoke from her goes up forever and ever that city that sets itself against God is doomed to destruction that's the mindset and the culture and the group that we all need to be rescued from when on the day of

Pentecost Peter when he was baptizing people said save yourselves from this corrupt! generation and that's what we need to be we need to be saved from the corrupt culture the Babylon that we might be in but if you go through the other references and we won't do them in detail but they're there on the screen Philistia they were offered refuge in Zion Moab were offered refuge through the son of David the Cushites bring gifts to Mount Zion the place of the Lord Almighty if you look into chapter 19 it says there's an altar to the Lord in the heart of Egypt and there's a highway between Egypt and Assyria all these different nations God is saying I will not stop until I have brought people to myself from all these different nations and

I think it is worth looking at chapter 25 verses 6 to 9 please would you do that if you're still with me and even if you're not chapter 25 verses 6 to 9 this is part of a long speech in which God is saying what he will do for the nations at the very end of things and listen to these wonderful promises chapter 25 verse 6 and onwards on this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples a banquet of aged wine the best of meats the finest of wines on this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples the sheet that covers all nations he will swallow up death forever the sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears!

from all faces that's the promise of God for the nations he won't stop until he's done that and that's what he's doing now the fact that we have people from so many different nations here even this morning shows us what God is doing he will have people from Korea he will have people from Italy I always get into trouble trying to think from Ukraine from Japan from Singapore he will have people come to him from all these nations and who's the him that they come to because in Isaiah it's the king the king who reigns in Zion and who is this king the amazing startling answer of the New Testament is it's Jesus of Nazareth that sort of itinerary preacher who never sat on a royal throne in this world who never had a palace in this world that he was the king and the place where he was most the king was on the cross it even was written above him wasn't it the king of the Jews it wasn't meant reverently but it was true he's the king that gathers everybody together when the blind man said Jesus son of David have mercy on me he saw more clearly than thousands of other people who had their sight so there is a great invitation to all nations to come to Jesus I hope you don't think that Christianity is just a religion for western people of a certain class and age group certainly not that it's for all nations all people all cultures come to Jesus and thank you Roger for leading us in prayer for cross cultural mission because that's the game we're in that's the project we're in as Christians we're involved in God's calling all across the world and we have a great hope to look forward to because God will only stop this plan when it gets to the end point when every there are people in heaven of every tribe and tongue and nation and we're all brought together to the heavenly city to be with him forever and that's the great vision we have ahead of us and as we close we're going to sing about that in number 506