

Global Missions

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[0 : 0 0] Ah, I got it. Welcome, everyone. It's good to see you all here. Good morning. We are starting our new series on missions, and we're going to be covering a lot. Over the next two months, we're going to learn about God's call to missions.

Over all the earth. And we will see a number of things in our series. We will see that God calls us all to participate in this gospel call to all nations. And further, we will understand the biblical reason for missions. We will dwell on the history of missions in scripture and in church history.

We'll also get to know some of the missionaries among us and also some of the kinds of mission work that Trinity is doing or that Trinity supports. And then lastly, we'll also invite you all to discern your call to support missions here in New Haven and to the very ends of the earth.

I want to give you a foretaste of what we're going to be doing. So today, we're going to look at our God, and we're going to see how he's a missionary God. He's a God of missions, a God who's reaching out. We'll talk much more about that in a moment.

Next week, we'll look at our missionary model, Jesus Christ. Then we'll look at another model, Paul the Apostle, becoming all things to all people.

[1 : 4 1] And then we will take a look at some mission history, missions in the early church. There's some wonderful testimonies and stories about how God reached the nations that I hope will be encouraging for you all.

We'll then take a look at missionary practices, what missionaries do, best practices, maybe not so good practices. Then we'll move on and look at some missionaries among us. We'll hear from some folks among us here at Trinity and then missions among us, other things that Trinity is doing.

And then we'll also take a look again at missions at Trinity, a final wrap-up class for this series. And this will go through June 21st. I thought I went one more week, but there's eight of them in there. So I think that's all eight.

So June 21st, at least as we have it set out today. Today, though, we're going to begin our first class on God being a missionary God.

Today, we are going to journey through the scriptures from beginning to end, from the opening passages of Genesis straight to the final chapter of Revelation. Obviously, we'll be skipping a lot of things, but we'll cover it all.

[3 : 0 1] And our task is going to be to behold our God reaching the nations, to view him as always sending, always calling, always commissioning his servants to reach the lost.

We'll also answer some common questions like, why does God only get interested in missions in the New Testament? Sometimes you hear that question and we'll find out that that's not true, actually.

He was always interested in the nations and in missions. Or another question, why does God want to use others for this task?

Why doesn't God just do this himself? And we'll see that, well, sometimes he does just do it himself. And then there's a very good reason why he wants to use people in this gospel call.

This isn't just a random idea that he has. There's a good reason for it. Those are some of the things we'll be looking at today. Before we begin, though, let's open with a word of prayer.

[4 : 0 6] Father in heaven, we are so grateful that you are always calling. You reached out to us, Lord.

You reached out to us through your word. You reached out to us through your son, Jesus, through the apostles he sent, through the church that they founded over the whole world.

Lord, and after many generations being passed down to us. Lord, we thank you that you reached out to us. You redeemed us from our sins, from the kingdom of darkness.

You brought us into your kingdom of light to be your children, to be commissioned as your servants in your kingdom, to bear your gospel to the nations. Lord, we thank you that you loved us even when we did not love you.

And that you found in us, you refounded in us your image that had been marred from the fall. Lord, we pray that you would strengthen our understanding of your gospel call.

[5 : 16] Help us to reach the nations. Lord, we can only do this through your spirit and by your grace because we are not sufficient for these things. Lord, we are jars of clay and we carry this unsurpassable treasure that you have placed in us.

Lord, please help us. Help us to deposit this like faithful servants. Lord, make up when we stumble and when we fall that we may bring this great duty to completion.

Lord, we know you are faithful to do this. And we thank you in the name of your son, Jesus. Amen. Amen. Let's begin in the opening chapters of Genesis.

Genesis chapter 2. God's created the heavens and the earth. And this is a very famous passage.

I'm very familiar with this. Yes, yes. Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, God says.

And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created man in his own image.

[6 : 24] In the image of God, he created him. Male and female, he created them. Then the passage goes on to say, and God blessed them.

And he said, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

In these opening chapters, I want us to discern some principles. We could call them gospel principles. But there's some principles I want us to notice about God and his nature, his heart.

And about what he created when he created all things. So the first thing I want to point out is that God made us in his image.

He made us to be like him in his likeness, male and female, all of us. This gets at that terrible lie, that deception that the serpent first wrought on us.

[7 : 30] When the serpent tempted Eve and Adam with the temptation of being like God. When the serpent said, you'll be like God if you eat from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

When God had already made us like him, we already were that way. And the serpent tempted them with that. I'm highlighting this because what this means is that in some sense, we are sort of like God's sub-creators.

J.R. Tolkien says that in creation. We are bearing his image throughout creation. And this is a second principle where God wants us to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

So if we put these two principles together that God wants us or he desires for us, for us to fill the earth.

If we put those two principles together, it looks like God wants his image, he wants himself, his image, his likeness to be over all the earth.

[8 : 40] He wants us to spread throughout all creation. Hmm. This is going to become important for our understanding of missions and why God wants his kingdom to be over all the earth, his church.

If we keep going, we'll see some other gospel principles. In Genesis chapter 3, another very famous chapter, this is where the serpent tempts Eve and with being like God, eating from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

And after she does this and Adam is right there, he also partakes of the fruit. They both fall. This is an amazing chapter, very rich, and it pains me to skip through it so quickly.

But after God confronts them and kind of offers them the possibility of repenting, you know, he says, where are you? Where are you? Come, come out and talk to me about what happened.

And they don't, they don't want to. And they are finally faced with the ramifications of their sin. And God says to the serpent, he says, because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field.

[10 : 00] On your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. There's a lot of irony in this. Remember, the serpent tempts Adam. Adam is just the word for human, and it becomes Adam's name.

And remember, Adam came from dust. So the serpent has to kind of eat what he destroyed in this. And he says, God says, I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring

and her offspring.

He shall bruise your head. You shall bruise his heel. This friends in Genesis chapter three, verse 15 is many scholars believe the first prophecy about the coming of Jesus.

Because here we have this statement that there's going to be enmity, hostility between the serpent and between the woman, but also between her offspring and the serpent's offspring.

And her offspring will bruise the serpent's head, and the serpent shall bruise his heel. For centuries, from the very beginning, Christian theologians have seen in this a prophecy of the coming of Jesus.

[11 : 15] This word here for offspring literally means seed. And almost always in the scriptures, when we talk about the seed of humans, it's always the male who has the seed.

But here it's the woman who has the seed, which is unusual. Some people see in this a very, very hint, a whisper of the virgin birth coming.

That this seed is going to come from a woman, not a man. And that this seed is going to bruise the serpent's head, do a lot of damage to that serpent. And the serpent, he's not going, this seed is not going to be without suffering harm.

He's also going to be harmed in this, but it's his heel. It's not, it's not his head. It's almost like the seed, the seed is going to crush the head of the serpent with, with his heel.

So what do we gain from this? What kind of gospel principles do we learn from this? Well, one thing we learn right there, because right at the beginning, or earlier in the passage, that we have sinned.

[12 : 28] We have sinned. We have not fulfilled God's purpose in us of bearing his image and of being like him. We have fallen away from him, but God is promising to fix this situation.

He's going to make this whole somehow. We see whispers of it here, that yes, there's going to be all this conflict, but that serpent's head is going to be bruised.

So God is going to somehow bring, bring redemption, victory, whatever you want to call it. It's a little vague right now in Genesis three, but something is going to happen.

God is going to redeem. Somehow he's going to repair this situation. And how is he going to do it? He's going to do it through humans.

Somehow the offspring of a woman. That's how God is going to do this. Now we know he's going to do this ultimately through Jesus, who was human, who became human, who was a descendant of Adam and Eve, and Abraham, and the patriarchs, and David.

[13 : 44] But see what's going on here. How God made us in his image to be like him. His desire is for us, his image to fill the earth. But we sinned.

God steps in. He's going to redeem us, but he's going to do it in a sense through us as well. He's going to use us. Now we know the whole story here that, yes, he is going to do it through humans, but that human was going to be God incarnate coming down.

God actually was going to become human to bring this about. But we see these principles at work in missions. How God wants to use us to reach the nations.

We see this in Genesis, in the early chapters of Genesis, he wants his kingdom over all the earth. And the opening chapters of Genesis proclaim this.

This continues when we get to Genesis chapter 12. So there's a lot that happens between Genesis 3, where the fall occurs, and Genesis 12, there's Noah and the ark, there's the tower of Babel.

[14 : 45] But we get to Genesis chapter 12, and this is where Abram or Abraham is introduced.

And God says, go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to a land I will show you.

And then God gives this amazing, amazing promise and prophecy. He says, I will make of you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and him who dishonors you, who I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

Right here in Genesis chapter 12, we see that God's heart is for every single family on earth. He did not gain this desire only in the New Testament.

It's right there in the Old Testament. Genesis chapter 12, through Abraham and his descendants, all families on the earth shall be blessed.

This brings us back to this gospel principle. God desires us for us to fill the earth.

[15 : 56] He wants all people and the whole earth to be like him. And here we see that played out more specifically in this blessing that's going to go to all families in the earth.

If we keep reading, we get to Genesis chapter 15. And I'll skip through a little bit of this, but Abraham gets a vision and God says, Fear not, Abraham, I am your shield. Your reward shall be very great. This can also be translated as fear not. I am your shield, your very great reward. I love that translation because it means that Abraham's reward is God. That's the reward. And Abraham is a little down because he continues to be childless. God had promised that his descendants, through his descendants, the whole earth was going to be blessed, but he doesn't have any descendants and he's getting really old. And so Abraham is doubting, he's struggling and he doesn't know what to do. And God brings him outside and he says, Look toward the heavens, number the stars if you're able to number them. [17:08] So shall your offspring. That's the same word that we saw in Genesis. So shall your seed be, your offspring be. And he believed the Lord and he counted it to him as righteousness.

Paul in Romans points this passage out, how Abraham was righteous because he trusted God and God reckoned it to him as righteousness.

God granted it to him as righteousness. But this promise of that seed that we saw, that offspring, that somehow a blessing to all people was going to come from that offspring.

We see that continuing to be brought forth through the opening chapters of Genesis with Abraham. It wasn't something that just happened with Adam and Eve and then was remembered or brought up again in Jesus.

It's something that is brought through all the scriptures. And we see this with Abraham and this promised seed that's going to come. If we keep going, we see Genesis chapter 18.

[18:14] This is also with Abraham. This is the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. I want to focus on something else though.

Instead of the sinfulness of Sodom and Gomorrah, I want to look at how God treats Abraham because how he interacts with Abraham in this passage is going to remind us of some of these gospel principles here.

So God has appeared to Abraham. He's going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. He's decided that already. And look what he says. God says, Shall I hide from Abraham what I'm about to do? Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. For I have chosen him that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.

I love, I love these verses because we see several things. We see that rearticulation of that promise about all the nations on the earth being blessed and how God is going to bring about what he promised to Abraham.

[19:39] But then we see God saying, Shall I hide what I'm going to do from Abraham? Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation. God wants Abraham to be part of his plans.

He wants to share with Abraham. He wants to share with Abraham what he's going to be doing. And That gets back to right here. God made us in his image to be like him.

To be like him. God wants us to join him in reigning over the earth in his kingdom as his as his sort of sub rulers or sub creators.

He's like a wonderful benevolent king who wants his counselors, wants his people to help him rule this this kingdom. And here we see that played out with Abraham.

I think we also see that play out with all of us where God in some sense is saying that about each one of us. I don't want to hide all this stuff. I want you to be part of this. I want you to join me in this kingdom promise in spreading my kingdom through all the earth.

[20:46] And what does that promise or that goal or purpose that God has? That purpose is for all the nations to be blessed. This promise is repeated again and again.

We see it in Genesis 22. This is another very famous story. Very important story. This is the story where Abraham is asked to sacrifice Isaac.

Very intense story. Dramatic story. There's a lot of meaning in here. After Abraham shows that he's willing to offer up his son, then God says this.

I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son. I will surely bless you and multiply your offspring. There's that word again. As the stars of heaven and the sand that is on the seashore, your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies.

And in your offspring, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed because you have obeyed my voice. That promise again of all the nations on the earth being blessed.

[21 : 54] How? Through that seed, that offspring that has been promised from Eve, now through Abraham. And that is a promise for every single person on earth.

Let's pause there for one moment before I switch gears. But any questions or comments before we hasten onward?

We will see. We're going to skip a lot. But this promise continues throughout Genesis.

And throughout 1 and 2 Samuel and the book of Kings and Chronicles. We see this promise with David, culminating in David and Solomon and continuing on through the kingdom of Israel.

Eventually, we see this culminating in Jesus, where Jesus is this promised seed. From all the way from Eve, through Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, all the way down through David, and straight on through, straight to Jesus.

[23 : 02] He is this promised seed through whom all the nations on earth will be blessed. We also see this foreshadowed in Genesis 22, where Abraham offers up his son.

And God is here, I think, creating a foreshadowing of what he himself was going to do when he offered up his son.

Yes? The word offspring can be singular or plural. So in Genesis, when it first referred to him, was it singular? And he promised to Eve, your offspring, and here it's plural.

And it means... That's a good question. I believe it's a singular plural. It's like the word fish, where it can mean either singular or plural.

I have to triple check that. I have to confirm that. Okay. So a P for you and a Greek. Yes. Yeah. So it can mean either.

[24 : 00] And I think the meaning goes back and forth, I think. Now Paul can turn the collective into a plural. Yeah. Seed and seeds.

But it is a collective. Yeah. So it works marvelously well for that situation, because it's kind of everything but one at once. Fish.

Is it one fish or all these fish? I don't know. Sheep, deer, you know, things like that. We have words like that in English, too. But I want to switch gears. And I want to look at, in the Old Testament, at some prophecies where the Old Testament launches to the future and sees all the ends of the earth, all the nations following after the God of Israel, the one God.

I want to share a couple of these with you. Psalm 22. All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you. This is just like that prophecy about all the families of the earth being blessed in Abraham.

And the prophets of the earth shall eat and worship before him, shall bow down all who go down to the dust, even the one who could not keep himself alive. Posterity shall serve him. It shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation.

[25 : 19] They shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn that he has done it. But the psalmist sees how, yes, this prophecy will be fulfilled.

This is Psalm 22. That's the famous prophecy of the crucifixion that Jesus quotes on the cross. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? You read it. It's like a prophecy of the crucifixion. And then it concludes with this promise of everyone coming to worship God, the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Pause and think on that for a moment. Because when this was written, Israel was just this small, tiny, insignificant little people.

And they are saying, no, everyone is going to worship our God. And we look at the world today and there are followers of the God of the Old Testament, the God of Israel in every single nation on earth.

There's more followers of this God than any other so-called God. This prophecy was, we see it being fulfilled even among us at Trinity. Here's another one.

[26 : 23] Psalm 86. There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours. All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name. Or Isaiah 2.

It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains and shall be lifted up above the hills and all the nations shall flow to it.

And many people shall come and say, come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

He shall judge between the nations. He shall decide disputes for many peoples. So beautiful. The Hebrew people of the Old Testament saw that promise of all the families of the earth being blessed and they knew that this would be fulfilled eventually.

And we ourselves have the advantage of seeing this partial fulfillment happening amongst us with so many nations on earth following the God of Israel, the God of the Old Testament.

[27 : 32] Here's a prophecy about Jesus from Isaiah chapter 42. But it involves all nations, as we will see. Behold my servant, that's Jesus, whom I uphold, my chosen in whom my soul delights.

I have put my spirit on him. He will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice or make it heard in the street.

A bruised reed he will not break and a faintly burning wick he will not quench. You get the idea that Jesus is going to be very gentle, very delicate. Even a smoldering wick, a faintly burning wick, he's not going to put out.

Even a bruised reed as he's walking through the reeds, even partially broken reeds, he's not going to completely break off. He'll be able to pass through them without damaging them. You get this image of gentleness.

And it says, He will not grow fainter, be discouraged, till he has established justice in the earth and the coastlands. Wait for his law.

[28 : 34] Thus says God the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and a spirit to those who walk in it.

I am the Lord. I have called you. This is Jesus. In righteousness, I will take you by the hand and keep you. I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations.

To open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison, those who sit in darkness. So beautiful. This prophecy of Jesus reaching the nations, which we see happening.

I got a couple more of these. I'll move quickly. And now the Lord says, He who formed me from the womb to be his servant. This is Jesus again.

To bring Jacob, that's Israel, back to him, that Israel might be gathered to him. For I am honored in the eyes of the Lord, and my God has become my strength. God says, It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel.

[29 : 38] I will make you as a light to the nations, that my salvation shall reach to the end of the earth. God says, You know, it's too little to just reach Israel.

Through you, my servant, Jesus, I'm going to reach the nations. You will be a light to all people. It's so beautiful. Isaiah 49, Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar.

The Lord called me from the womb, from the body of my mother. He named my name. This is Jesus. He made my mouth like a sharp sword. In the shadow of his hand, he hid me.

He made me a polished arrow. In his quiver, he hid me. He said, You are my servant, Israel, in whom I am glorified. He's addressing the coastlands, all the people.

This is a prophecy of Jesus crying out to the nations. And this is not just Isaiah. Zechariah says, Zechariah 2.11, Many nations shall join themselves to the Lord in that day, and he shall be my people, and I will dwell in your midst.

[30 : 43] Or Malachi, From the rising of the sun to its setting, my name shall be great among the nations. This is Malachi 1.11. This promise of that seed in Abraham that was first mentioned in Genesis chapter 3, then in Abraham, how all families on earth are going to be blessed.

We see this promise developing and reiterated and rearticulated throughout the whole Old Testament, culminating in Jesus himself, who we will hear about next week.

So, I see this. I see the prophecies of God's heart for the nations in the early chapters of Genesis. We see this come up in the Psalms and the prophets. But if I'm honest, you kind of wonder about the other parts of the Old Testament.

What about the Old Testament law? All those laws, where are the Gentiles in those laws? Aren't they bad in those laws? Aren't you supposed to avoid them? What about those laws?

[31 : 49] It's very easy for us when we think of Old Testament laws. We think of lots and lots of them. We think of them being very rigid, very strict, very exclusive, exclusionary, limiting the Gentiles.

The Gentiles are unclean in these laws. But I want us to be careful because often our perspective on these Old Testament laws is really informed by how Jesus treats the Pharisees and their interpretation of the Old Testament law.

Even subconsciously, we often think about that, of the Old Testament laws being cruel, as being harsh, and then Jesus ushers in this new law that's better. But if we sit and read what the Old Testament law says about Gentiles and about foreigners, it's extraordinary.

Here's Exodus 12. This is right when the Old Testament law is coming out. If a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised. Then he may come near and keep it. He shall be as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it. There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you.

[33 : 03] This promise is shocking. It's amazing that if there is a stranger who wants to worship the God of Israel, then they can.

They have to follow the law just like the Jews. But Exodus 12, verse 48 says, they shall be as a native of the land. They shall be as a Jew.

There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger. Leviticus 24, you shall have the same rule for the sojourner and for the native, for I am the Lord your God.

One rule. If there is a Gentile who wants to follow the God of Israel and is willing to follow this Jewish law, then they're considered to be Jewish.

Numbers 15, for the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you, a statute forever throughout your generations.

[34 : 03] You and the sojourner shall be alike before the Lord. One law and one rule shall be for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you.

Isn't that beautiful? The most powerful passage is Deuteronomy 29. The background for this is Moses has led the people right up to the gates of the promised land and he is giving his sort of valedictory address, his farewell address.

He knows that God is going to take him home to be with him momentarily in a few days and Moses re-articulates the law and he says, you are standing today all of you before the Lord your God, the heads of your tribes, your elders and your officers, all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives and the sojourner who is in your camp from the one who chops your wood to the one who draws your water so that you may enter into the sworn covenant of the Lord your God which the Lord your God is making with you today that he may establish you as his people and that he may be your God as he promised and as he swore to your fathers to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob it is not with you alone that I am making this sworn covenant but with whoever is standing here with us today before the Lord our God and with whoever is not here with us today.

Here he names everyone elders, tribes, officers, men, the children, the wives and the sojourner who is with the camp every sojourner from the one who chops wood to the one who draws water they are entering into this covenant of the Lord your God that he may establish you as his people.

The sojourner is becoming part of the people of God and why? It's about that promise what he promised to Abraham about all families on earth being blessed about that that offspring that seed coming down and blessing all people.

[36 : 13] So we see this in the law. God's heart for Gentiles are in the law. If they were willing to follow the law like all the Hebrews the descendants of Abraham Isaac and Jacob had to do as well then they were considered to be as a native of the land if they were willing to follow that law.

There's another aspect I want to also highlight about God's mission in the Old Testament and this is you've got to read between the lines a little bit here but it's very easy for us when we think about ancient history to have a very kind of flat view of it like there's Abraham there's Isaac there's Jacob the law comes there's all these laws and then eventually Jesus comes but if you pause and you think but what was it really like for individuals back then when they were living in ancient Israel in the times of the patriarchs or the times of the kings or the judges what was it really like for them as worshippers of the God of Israel imagine they're out most of them are farmers they're with their crops or their flocks and what are they doing they're bumping into their neighbors all the time they're

seeing them who are their neighbors well especially the ones who lived on the periphery of Israel they're Gentiles they're seeing Gentiles they're seeing non-Jews they're seeing people worshipping worshipping other gods and if we read the law

God's heart for the Gentile in the law if we see God's heart for the nations in the opening chapters of Genesis I think it's a very fair bet that a lot of those faithful Jews back then would have been evangelizing their neighbors they would have been telling them about the God of Israel and we see this in Psalm 47 where the psalmist says clap your hands all peoples shout to God with loud songs of joy where there's this call to the nations come and worship the God of all peoples or this Psalm 66 shout for joy to God all the earth sing the glory of his name give to him glorious praise say to God how awesome are your deeds so great is your power that your enemies come cringing to you all the earth worships you and sings praises to you they sing praises to your name come and see what God has done he is awesome in his deeds toward the children of man bless our God oh peoples let the sound of his praise be heard and then here's my favorite part verse 16 come and hear all you who fear

God and I will tell what he has done for my soul there's this like they're sharing this news it's the book of Hebrews talks about how the gospel was preached to the patriarchs just like how it was preached to us now this gospel was not as specific it didn't have the name Jesus in this gospel but that gospel of trust God trust God like how Abraham trusted God and it was credited to him as righteousness that broader gospel was there in the Old Testament and we can be sure that the Jews in the Old Testament were sharing this message with their neighbors in fact we know they kind of were because we have examples in the Old Testament of non-Jews following the God of Israel these are people like Ruth there's a whole book in the Bible devoted to Ruth about how she did not want to follow her own gods she wanted to follow the God of Israel and she was honored with an entire book of scripture devoted to her faithfulness and she becomes part of David's lineage and therefore part of

Jesus's lineage as well we see this with Rahab the prostitute in Jericho a Canaanite who wants to follow the God of Israel and she also becomes part of the lineage of David and also of Jesus and that's not just an honor remember the entire promise is about this seed from Abraham being passed down through David to Jesus they are part of that they are part of that family tree fulfilling that promise to Abraham to bless all peoples it's extraordinary we have other examples Jethro Moses' father-in-law was a Gentile but yet a follower of the God of Israel there's that mysterious Melchizedek figure who is this guy is he you know there's a fair interpretation that maybe he was actually sort of like Jesus like the angel of the Lord sometimes is thought of as a theophany and a pre-appearance of Jesus there's other theories that he was just an ancient king who knew the God of Israel we have other examples as well if you read

[41 : 31] Proverbs chapter 31 there is this king King Lemuel who chapter 31 is devoted to his Proverbs that he learned from his mother we don't know who King Lemuel was there was no king in Israel named King Lemuel he seems to be a Gentile king who was a follower of the God of Israel Job is another example where Job is often thought of we can't be totally sure but thought of as a non-Jew who is a follower of the God of Israel we don't know that for sure but he's often thought of that way so we see examples of Gentiles coming to know the God of Israel in the Old Testament and some of them are not simple side stories some of them are very much features of the text we also see this in Exodus when the people leave Egypt and it says several times and a mixed multitude was with them from the Egyptians or from the surrounding nations who were going with them into this promised land okay

I want to though speak about God being a missionary God God having a heart for the nations in the Old Testament with one final example and this is the example of the prophet Jonah so we see examples of God's call to the nations his heart for the nations his promise for the nations we see examples of Gentiles coming to know the God of Israel we see provision for this given in the law of Moses but we haven't yet seen an actual missionary to the nations yet in the Old Testament but we do have this in Jonah the entire book of Jonah can be read as a missionary commissioned to reach the nations to give a brief overview before I wrap up of the book of Jonah the empire of the Assyrians arguably the first empire on earth certainly one of the early ones they come to power they conquer the northern tribes of Israel and they do horrific things they enslave ten of the tribes of Israel they destroy them they deport them they murder they pillage they rape they do all sorts of horrible horrible things

Nineveh the capital of the Assyrian empire is called the city of blood because of how bloodthirsty they were what the Assyrians did I won't even I won't even go into further detail it was so horrible and they were pagans they were worshipping false gods they were they were destroying God's people in fact in some sense they were working to destroy that seed that had been promised from Abraham and God appears to Jonah and he says Jonah I want you to go preach to Nineveh this is like a death sentence for Jonah he's supposed to show up at this city and preach repentance and he says you gotta go preach repentance to this city and Jonah doesn't want to do it and he runs away we know this story he keeps running from God and God sends the sea beast to swallow Jonah there's a lot of fascinating theological reflection where Jonah has this prayer where he's in Sheol and he's in the belly of this sea beast and eventually Jonah spit up and he is sent to Nineveh he's like fine I'll go and he goes to Nineveh and he preaches to these people about how judgment is coming to this city and what shocking thing happens the people repent they actually repent and they turn away from their sins and Jonah is not happy about it he's angry he says

God I knew you were going to do this that you were going to relent I didn't want to go talk to these people because imagine what Jonah's thinking he's thinking either I show up and it doesn't work and I get killed or I show up and it works and these people avoid judgment I don't want to go it's a lose-lose for me and so then Jonah leaves and he sits down he's still in view of the city he sets up pitches a tent he's in the heat of the day he wants to see what's going to happen to this city he's still hoping maybe judgment will come maybe I can watch it be destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah or something like that I'm reading between the lines here but that's the sense you get and then God appoints a plant to grow to shade Jonah Jonah likes the plant and then God appoints a worm to eat the plant away and it dies Jonah's really upset about this he's depressed he just wants to die and God says you know you're so upset about this plant but he says should I not pity

Nineveh that great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left and also much cattle shouldn't I have mercy on them you were sad for the plant that died why aren't you sad for the city of Nineveh when 120,000 people were going to die that's how the book of Jonah ends and you see here number one God's call his care to the nations even a wicked wicked people like the Assyrians he sends Jonah to preach repentance to these people and we also see that the missionary Jonah was also a mission field himself that God was still shaping Jonah to be like God to love his enemies he was still renewing that image in Jonah as well this lays a foundation for us viewing God as a missionary God where he has these promises from the very beginning of scripture they're carried throughout about his heart for the nations but he wants to involve us in some sense

[47 : 32] God does do it himself he comes down in the person of Jesus he literally becomes human but he also wants us to be part of this gospel call to the nations but in becoming part of that call we also are still a mission field ourselves we're always needing to draw closer to God Jonah was preaching repentance and he still needed to repent himself and to grow in his knowledge of God in Genesis language to grow being like the likeness of God or the image of God we've got a few minutes left let's pause there next week we'll be talking about Jesus and what Jesus does as our as God on earth and then we'll be talking about the apostle Paul and we'll go from there but any comments or questions before we conclude I so appreciated all your illustrations of mission work and I'll just add from one of the greatest ministers

Daniel being a witness King Nebuchadnezzar you're right or the little servant girl who ends up in Naaman's household who tells Naaman the prophet of the Lord and then Naaman becomes a believer that's so beautiful yes thank you yes you're exactly right yes I personally believe that God is a good minister Amen Amen and that he helped and that he helped Abraham sacrificing Isaac even though he didn't kill Isaac yeah Amen Sammy thank you Josh so a lot of what you touched on sort of I don't know a lot of what you touched on is sort of addressing this but still like how do we address the objection of the kind of particularity of choosing one family to then you know slowly over time influence the whole world bless the whole world you've already sort of like poked a lot of holes in that talking about you know the Hebrews and the neighbors and even sending out whole testimony but like what immediately comes to mind for me is well he sent Jesus to a very particular time and place and then

I don't know I've had all kinds of thoughts too about like thinking back to Genesis right the profundity of our separation of sin and like sometimes I think of Cain and Abel am I my brother's keeper it's like yes yes you are exactly you know like Abraham tried to take care of what and say like no you need

to walk in the ways of the Lord but like divergent separated so in some ways I feel like there's there's been a failure if people take issue with you know oh why why is God so in some sense like we we dropped the ball very early on and not you know being good enough evangelist to our neighbors and our family but at the same time it's like the profundity of our separation requires incarnation but it's still tough because it's like what about

North and South America like the Mormons have this whole like solution Jesus went over there right yeah there is you're right there's the particularity so I will say this when we think about this is the question of what about the people who've never heard the gospel they're still around in this world I mean you can still find people groups in Papua New Guinea and deep in rainforests and things like that what about them the foundation we always need to remember when we think about that is we're talking about the same God who sent Jonah to Nineveh we can trust him with these questions scripture does not provide absolute clear answers for things like this what it does say is we can trust him this is a God who loved his enemies even horrific nations like the Assyrians and had a heart for them another thing to remember is that we never want to take the Old Testament and think that is 100% of what everybody knew about God back in 1000 BC or 2000

BC because scripture actually tells us there will be lines like well if you want to know more go read this book we don't have that book anymore and so they obviously have more knowledge than at that time we see this when shortly before and after Noah it will be like then men began to call on the name of the Lord well how did that happen we don't know yeah so what we do know is God wants us to spread his gospel to the nations God I hope it's become clear is totally capable of stepping in and sending angels or sending prophets or doing miraculous things when he wants to and he does do that but he wants to use us so we can hang our trust on those two ideas that we can trust God with this and we do know that people knew more than we know back then we know other things now but you know there were all sorts of prophets in the

[53 : 23] Old Testament that never wrote anything down and we don't know where they went or what they did or what they were saying so just keep that in mind and trust in God on those issues and there are in the history of missions I don't know if we'll you know there are remarkable stories where we show up to a people group and we're like oh there were people here before how did that happen I mean that's happened more than once where people will show up in a faraway land only to find out missionaries had been there hundreds of years before so we never know Barry you had was that your hand yeah I was coming to this meeting I was thinking well we're starting at Genesis and I thought I thought there was the missions I thought that was a great place to start so thank you for starting there I thought that was great number two I love I never thought about Jonah being a missionary and the thought of what you shared that even missionaries is a mission and then what Matt said about

Daniel and then God bringing Daniel to Babylon it's like people who come here to Yale Yale is their Babylon God is calling people here and going off that Daniel reference you gotta read between the lines but Daniel is in Babylon this is where the Magi are trained and 600 years later these Magi show up because they've heard this prophecy of this coming Messiah we know there were tons and tons of Jews in Babylon even at that point and afterwards for hundreds of years so we have no idea what was going on in Babylon in terms of pre-Jesus evangelization if we want to call it that but something was going on and there are plausible scenarios where these Babylonians knew about this God of Israel some of them were converting becoming Jews who knows where these Magi got their idea of this star indicating this coming ruler but you can potentially index that back to people like

Daniel who were witnesses in Babylon friends service starts in just a few minutes so let me close those in prayer father we thank you for your scripture witness to us we thank you for your words in the opening chapters of Genesis and carried on through the many generations the thousands of years up to our present day lord we ask that you would help us to continue to fulfill your gospel call to let your spiritual kingdom reign over all the earth help us to call all nations to you lord help us to share your gospel to be witnesses like so many of those Hebrew people of old we know were and we don't know many of their names but we know lord that they served you in your kingdom help us to be like them lord we know our hearts are also mission fields reform us shape us renew us to be like you lord we know we are all Jonah's here we are called to preach your gospel but lord our heart is not always right before you make it right before you in the name of

Jesus wash us clean by your grace lord bless the service and the congregation that is about to gather help us to hear your words and to rejoice in worshiping you the king of kings and lord of lords we pray all this in the mighty name of Jesus amen thanks so much folks