

Biblical Missions

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[0 : 00] If you take your Bibles tonight, turn to the book of Genesis chapter 1. And I am very grateful for the opportunity to give a little preview tonight of the semester coming up in the Bible Institute.

Grateful for the opportunity to teach that. Would love to have you come. A week from Tuesday, we'll start. We'll go for eight weeks. The time will actually be 7 to 8.30. But if you come at 6, you'll have a nice warm-up.

So 7 to 8.30. And we'll be looking at missions in the Old Testament, missions in the New Testament, some of the specific teachings of Christ, missions in Acts, the epistles, your church, and then evangelism, discipleship.

And it is interesting doing a message and then a class on biblical missions here at this church because our church is so involved in missions.

But we do want to be constantly reminded of the biblical roots for everything that we're doing. Over, you know, less than a year ago, somebody told me that I would have been a huge fan of the Dawson County High School Lady Tigers soccer team.

[1 : 09] I would have told you that I had no idea what you were even talking about. And I could promise you it would have held zero interest for me. I'm not really a huge sports person.

But this year, I got very interested in the Dawson County Lady Tigers soccer team because my daughter Darcy played on that team. Obviously, she was the best player out there.

So that was great. But I was a big fan. And we sat through multiple rainstorms on concrete. Some of you came and joined us there.

And we watched those girls play soccer. But I was interested because I had a personal stake in the success of that soccer team. And I think tonight what I hope will kind of stir some enthusiasm in us about missions is not possibly learning something that's going to be totally new, but being aware of the thing that our God is up to in this world.

And, you know, the song that was sung and really everything that should be happening in a church comes from the heart of God. And saving souls around the world is what He's up to.

[2 : 24] I have a picture I'm going to show you at the end. Don't put the picture up yet. I want to tell you a story. So if I finish and I don't tell you the story, somebody remind me. But it should be up there at the end because I got a glimpse into something God's doing from my time in Northern Ireland I'd like to tell you about at the end.

But let's take our Bibles and go to Genesis chapter 1. And we're going to begin here. But just a few things by way of introduction. So the term mission or missions or missionary is actually not found in the Bible, at least those English terms.

But then again, neither is the term the Trinity. Trinity. And so I hope that you recognize the concept of the Trinity is in the Bible. And I hope that you will see possibly after tonight that the concept of missions is certainly in the Bible.

The word mission or missions or missionary is a Latin word. I'm trying to sound smart here. So you think I have something smart to say on next Tuesday. But it's a Latin word that comes from a Greek word from which we get the word apostle.

And it just means to send. So there's a whole lot of times in the Bible that you see the word send. And that is very likely connected to the word for mission or missionary.

[3 : 40] And it's kind of a popular thing to talk about your mission. Many, many businesses and organizations will come up with a mission statement when it comes to Christian literature.

We will talk about being on mission, even being missional. This was, I think, a newish word that came out. Somebody just wanted to sell another book. So we're not talking about missional churches.

And so it's a word that's quite widely used. And of course, like most words, it doesn't always have the most precise meaning. It can be used for a lot of different things.

And sometimes under the heading of missions, a whole lot of things are done that may or may not be biblical missions. And so that's very, very important to us is that biblical missions.

I mean, imagine, you know, living your whole life for a mission, but it's the wrong mission. I remember as a, during my illustrious basketball career, I was doing my duty very faithfully, keeping the bench nice and toasty and the water bottles nice and full.

[4 : 46] And rare occasion, my coach said, Travis, get in there. And so I got in there. This was a tournament, so you kind of forgive what happens next. But we've been playing multiple games and I've been sitting there and I was like getting a little bored.

But I got in there, I found myself with a basketball and I was right under the hoop and I fired away. But like was my normal, I missed, which was good because I was shooting at the wrong hoop. So I managed to fail at the wrong things.

I guess that's a success. I'm not sure. But living your whole life, shooting at the wrong goal, aiming for the wrong target. And so we want to know what does the Bible say our mission ought to be?

So when it comes to biblical missions, the question we're asking is not, what kind of missions does our church have? Or what kind of missions are we familiar with? But what does the Bible say and teach about missions?

What is biblical missions? And hopefully our mission and our church's mission will and is reflecting that. So I have four points tonight. The first one is that from the beginning, God has wanted the whole world to be filled with people who worship Him.

[5 : 54] So we're kind of going to take a little bit of a bird's eye view of some of the themes in Scripture. And one of those is that from the very beginning, God has wanted the whole world to be filled with people who worship Him.

Let's look in our Bibles. Genesis chapter 1, verse 1. In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth, and the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the water. So in the beginning, there's God. And in the beginning, God is active, and He is moving.

And that is really the common theme through what the Bible teaches, is that God is on the move. And that God is active, and God is at work, and God is doing things, and God is allowing nations, and God is allowing churches and individuals to get involved in that.

But the big message of the Bible is that God is doing a work, and God is on the move. And so we see here in chapter 1, He's giving light and order and water, land, food, the planets.

[7 : 09] You know the story, but He creates all the living creatures. He creates man, who He makes in His image. He gives them dominion. And if you notice down in verses 28, God blessed them, and God said, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it.

And so one of the early commands to mankind is that man would fill the earth. That they would fill the earth, and of course, as they filled the earth, they would fill the earth, and God's desire, of course, was that they would then praise and worship Him everywhere they went.

So from God's perspective, He created this world. He created it beautiful. He filled it. And then He created mankind with the knowledge of God. And then He said, I want you to go everywhere.

Just fill it all up. Because I want everywhere there to be people that know me and are going to worship me. At the end of the six days, the earth, the sky, and the seas are filled with incredible diversity of life, all fashioned by the creative hands of God, all reflecting His glory in some way, all under the ruling hands of God, or of man, God's special creation.

And as the angel said in Isaiah chapter 6, the whole earth was full of His glory. Not only was the earth at this time filled with God's glory, but man was closely acquainted with God's person.

[8 : 39] In Genesis chapter 3, verse 8, God comes personally to Adam, and it seems this is a custom, walking with man in the cool of the day. So God's plan was that this earth would be a place that would be filled with people, and there would be people that would know and worship God.

That was just His, that was His story. And you might think, well, that doesn't, that's not relevant to me. But just like the Dawson County High School girls soccer team wasn't on my radar, when I got close and got involved, I got into it.

And I want to encourage you that if this is what God wanted from the beginning, that this is something that we would get a hold of, because I hope God's personal to us, and that we would say, if that's what God wants, that's what I want.

How many of you have been on a mission trip before? You've been to another country. Some of you have been to Alabama mission trip there. No, I'm just joking. My in-laws are in Alabama, so I got to be careful.

You go to a mission trip. Or perhaps you've been somewhere where it's very clear God is not worshiped. A place without the worship of God is a dark place.

[9 : 54] And our heart's desire ought to be that His name would be known and worshiped in all places around the earth. So this is what God is doing. But Genesis chapter 3, then, we find really the big cause for missions.

And if you're looking for a good book, besides the Bible, on this topic, Biblical Theology of Missions by George Peters, but he, in his book, he makes a real big case for why are we into missions.

And he says the reason missions ought to be a big deal is because of sin. Sin is the reason we need missions because the knowledge of God was there, but then when man sinned against God and went against that knowledge, someone had to reintroduce that knowledge to sinners.

And so in Genesis chapter 3, you find the fall. And we find that man is rebelling against God. And we find that all sorts of problems come, but immediately God springs into action in this chapter.

And you may be aware of this, but just look at a couple things we see God doing. In verse 8, after they sin, the Bible says that the voice of God comes walking.

[11 : 04] God comes walking, and then God calls out in verse 9, and He says, where art thou? He recognizes how terrible the thing is that they've done, as they make excuses.

And He says, verse 13, He says, what is this that thou hast done? But then in verse number 15, which is a very important verse in the Bible, He makes a promise.

And He says, I'll put enmity between thee, speaking to the serpent, between thee, the serpent, and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. He says, it, the seed of the woman, will bruise your head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Now, in hindsight, we look at that, and we're like, oh, that's Jesus. It probably wasn't maybe quite as clear at that time, but this is a great verse, because God here sees man, He sinned, He disobeyed the one command that He was given, and yet He springs into action, He goes looking for mankind, and He immediately comes up with a promise and a plan that from the woman, that the seed of the woman, from the woman would come someone who would be the deliverer, and this deliverer's heel would get bruised, but in the process, the head of the serpent would be crushed.

You'd much rather your heel be bruised than your head be bruised. And the Lord Jesus Christ was the one that would come through the woman, and He would have His heel bruised on the cross, but He would smash the head of the serpent in the process.

[12 : 43] And so immediately we see that the first sin, God introduces a plan and a promise. So this is, and I really hate to liken it back to the illustration of the game, but this is the thing that God is up to.

And if we love God, and we're connected with what He's doing, then we're thinking, this is great. It's exciting to think about what God is up to. And it's really just a matter of us getting very excited about what He's up to and wanting to be a part of that.

And so now He's got this plan that He's revealed that it's going to be through the woman. Just a couple other quick things from this. We go down and we notice that Adam then names his wife.

In verse number 20, Adam now calls his wife Eve. Now, He calls her Eve because she was the mother of all living, which is quite ironic because she was kind of part of the problem.

I mean, we know that Adam would not have sinned if it hadn't been for the woman. Well, I don't know if that's quite theologically correct. We know that, you know, but she wasn't entirely innocent.

[13 : 57] We'll just put it right there. My wife is in the nursery, so I can have a lot of liberty. Yeah. But Adam turns around and says to his wife, you're not the mother of all dying, the one that, you know, partially is responsible.

You're now the mother of all living because God has given him this great promise. Of course, God then takes an animal and kills the animal and makes coats of skins. And of course, this is a picture of sacrifice.

And then even when God drives him from the garden at the end of the chapter, in a sense, God is gracious because he doesn't want man to be able to eat of the tree of life and live forever in that fallen nature.

He, when sin runs its natural course and man's body dies, there's the resurrection and the ability to have this glorified body. So God is just so gracious here in this chapter.

Chapter 4 of Genesis opens with them hoping for a child that's from the Lord. She calls him Cain and she says, I've gotten a man from the Lord.

[15 : 01] I really think she's possibly thinking this could be the one that God's promised. But the chapter develops the role of sacrifice. It also develops the escalation of sin.

Chapter 6 and 7, 1,500 years on from creation, man's doing basically, the only thing he can think of to do is evil. And so God is about to destroy the earth.

And then the Bible says in Genesis chapter 6 and verse number 8, that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. And so God creates an ark.

And that ark was available for everyone to come in and to be saved. After the flood, 40 days and 40 nights of judgment and rain upon the earth, the waters begin to subside and a new day dawns.

And God once again sends Noah out with his family in Genesis chapter 9 and says, Be fruitful, multiply. And once again, he says, Replenish or fill the earth.

[16 : 06] And be fruitful, multiply. Bring forth abundantly. God again wants the whole earth filled. Genesis chapter 11 is the tower of Babel.

And the people there, contrary to God's command, say we are going to make a tower and a city and a name lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

And so God confounds their language, scatters them upon the face of the earth. So what we've learned from about 2,000 years of human history is that sin is an insidious disease that takes humanity into a downward spiral.

And despite God's attempts at saving mankind, man is so prone to sin. And the situation is not getting any better.

So let's take our Bibles and go to Genesis chapter 12. There's a humongous shift between Genesis chapter 11 and Genesis chapter 12. And in Genesis chapter 12, we read verse 1.

[17 : 16] Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house unto a land that I will show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing.

And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee, and in thee all families of the earth be blessed. So we saw, first of all, that from the beginning God has wanted the whole world to be filled with people who worship him.

And now we're going to see our second point, is that when mankind repeatedly descended into spiritual darkness, God created Israel to shine the light of God to the whole world.

So it's the same, it's really the same mission, it's the same goal, but God is going about it in a different way, and he is now using, in a sense, a nation to be his mediators, or to be his messengers, to be his witnesses.

And it begins with Abram. And so here God calls Abraham out, and he's going to bless Abraham, he's going to make him great. He says he'll be a blessing.

[18 : 28] But notice the end of verse number three. It's God says to Abram, in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. This is very important for understanding the nation of Israel, because you might think, well, why Israel?

You know, what's all the talk about Israel, and why all this emphasis on Israel? The emphasis on Israel is what is given purely for the fact of God wants the whole world to be saved.

He wants the whole world to know him and to worship him. And when mankind would not respond to natural revelation in creation, and in their conscience, God sent a nation, God created a nation, and that nation would be a light on this earth.

It would be a city on a hill. And people would, the idea was that as God blessed Israel, and as Israel followed God's laws, which were very, very different from the nations around them, and actually very, very wise from many different standpoints, people would look at them, and they would see the light from Israel, and they would think, why are they so different?

And why are they so blessed? What is it that makes them different? And if Israel was doing right, it would not have taken very long at all for someone to have said, well, that's because of their God.

[20 : 01] And so God created this nation as a light to shine the light to the world. Wasn't that a beautiful thing that God did? Again, this is God's story.

This is God's mission. This is what God is up to. And so He wants the whole world to know Him, and then He graciously gives a nation to the world.

Go to Exodus chapter 19, and let's look at the first couple verses. Exodus chapter 19, let's look at the first couple verses here. So now they've come out of Israel, or sorry, out of Egypt, and the Bible says, in the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai.

And they were departed from Rephidim and were come to the desert of Sinai, had pitched in the wilderness, and there Israel camped before the mount. And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountains, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob and tell the children of Israel, You have seen what I did unto the Egyptians and how I bear you on eagles' wings and brought you unto myself.

Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me. Above all people, for all the earth is mine, ye shall be unto me, notice this, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

[21 : 25] These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. Notice he says a kingdom of priests. A kingdom of priests. A priest's job was to represent people to God.

And in a sense, Israel was to be the priest for the whole world and to represent the whole world before God and to make sure the whole world knew about God.

That was the reason they were called. That was the reason they were chosen, was to serve God in that way. Let's take our Bibles and go to Isaiah chapter 49.

Unfortunately, Israel really was not very successful in this regard. They were chosen by God to serve God, but they became blind and deaf to the Lord and rebelled against God.

In Isaiah, there's a whole lot in there that talks about how they were his witnesses, they were his servants. And then what happens in the book of Isaiah is even though Israel was chosen as God's servant, as God's witnesses, God introduces another servant on the scene.

[22 : 39] And that servant is the Lord Jesus Christ or the Messiah here. And notice in Isaiah chapter 49 verse 1, God says, Listen, O isles, unto me and hearken ye people from afar.

Whenever you see that type of language, the isles, the people, it's God saying, I love everybody. I don't want everybody to know about me. So he's got a message for the whole world.

It's, a lot of it was funneled through Israel, but it was always intended to be for everybody. And he says, The Lord hath called me from the womb, from the bowels of my mother he hath made mention of my name, and he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword.

In the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, he had made me a polished shaft, and his quiver hath he hid me, and said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.

Then I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for naught, and in vain. Yet surely my judgment is with the Lord and my work with my God. And now saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant. Notice this.

[23 : 44] To bring Jacob again to him, though Israel be not gathered. This was written at a time when Israel was being divided and carried away into captivity, and God says he's going to bring them back.

He says, Yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob to restore the preserved of Israel, and I will also give thee, notice this, a light to the Gentiles that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth.

Isaiah chapter 53, of course we know, is the great writing about Christ and his sufferings, the Messiah and his sufferings.

Isaiah chapter 60 talks about God wanting the light to shine to the whole earth. So the whole point of Israel was, I'm going to do even more to give the gospel and to give the knowledge of God to the nations, so I'm going to create a city on a hill.

I'm going to create something that you can look to and you can see visibly and learn about God. The third point we have tonight is that when Israel failed as God's witnesses, God created the church to carry the gospel to the whole world.

[25 : 07] In the Old Testament, the coming of the Messiah is seen as something that will deal with Israel's sin fulfill God's promises to Abraham and his descendants and set up God's kingdom on earth.

So the coming of the Messiah in the Old Testament, you don't really, the cross is there and the resurrection is there, but it's not very explicit. It's a little bit hard to see just from the Old Testament.

Even the prophets, when they wrote about it, struggled to see the whole understanding. The disciples, if you remember, at times when Jesus mentioned the cross, they rebuked Jesus because it just wasn't maybe as clear as we might see it today.

But the death, burial, and resurrection of the Messiah is something that was a mystery. It was revealed in the New Testament and it makes sense of Old Testament prophecy to talk about the Messiah's suffering.

So you read Isaiah, for example, and you see the servant suffering, then you see the servant reigning. You kind of think, how is that possible? And we now know that's because when the Messiah comes, it's going to be the first time to suffer and then the second time to reign.

[26 : 20] But that was, that was, you know, not fully developed in the Old Testament. Let's take our Bibles and go to Ephesians chapter 2. Ephesians chapter 2. So the church comes on the scene and the church is made up of believing Jew and believing Gentile.

And it was, it was a mystery. So if we could read beginning in verse number 11, he says, sorry, not verse number 11.

If we can go to verse number one. For this cause I, Paul, actually 2.11, yeah, sorry, I was in 3.11. I was like, it's not making any sense. 2.11, wherefore remember that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands.

That at that time ye were without Christ being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise having no hope and without God in this world.

But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were afar off were made nigh by the blood of our Christ. For he is our peace who hath made both one and hath broken down the middle wall partition between us having abolished in his flesh the enmity even the law of commandments contained in ordinances for to make in himself a twain one new man so he's not replacing the old but a brand new man the church so making peace and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross.

[27 : 58] God creates the world God has a plan through creation and conscience to reveal himself to the world man it should have been enough Romans says that with creation and conscience we're without excuse and God repeatedly reveals himself man repeatedly rebels against God and so God brings Israel on the scene and this incredible nation that he creates with all of its laws but the nation fails and it's temporarily set aside and you think what is God going to do now they crucified their Messiah and God's like I've got a mystery I've got a I've got a whole other thing going on here that you didn't even really know about in the Old Testament and it's called the church and it's going to be it's not new Israel it's a new it's a totally new thing it's made of believing Jews and believing Gentiles I never saw this

I never could have I still got a plan for Israel because I made him a lot of promises but he's like I've got creation conscience Israel now I've got the church God is showing off his glory and his grandeur and we ought to be on the sidelines and we ought to be thinking I want to be a part of this it's we've all heard most of this before but this is the work that he's doing this is the plan that he has so if we go down to chapter 3 we'll try to wrap up here but chapter 3 notice he goes Paul goes on and he says for this cause I Paul the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles if you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which has given me to you word how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery as I wrote it for in few words whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and the prophets by the spirit that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel whereof I was made a minister according to the gift of grace given unto me by the effectual working of his power unto me who am less than the least of all saints is his grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God who created all things by Jesus Christ to the intent that now unto their principalities and powers and heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God according to the eternal purpose which ye purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord

Paul's like you never saw this one coming and he's got a whole nother plan that's happening and we don't have time to go into all that but that's really where the church comes into the picture and the church is then sent out with the gospel to share the gospel with the world and then the end result what is the end result of all that God has done and is doing in our world the end result is that it's through Christ and it's to the glory of God and let's just look at Ephesians chapter number one Ephesians chapter number one how many of you have ever heard of the millennium the millennial reign of Christ the thousand year reign of Christ and the millennium is you know we think about heaven we sing a lot about heaven but before heaven is a thousand years of Christ ruling and reigning on this earth it's sometimes called the day of the Lord or the day of the Lord is a term that includes that period it's like there's been a day of man there's been a day when man has done his thing but now there's the day of the Lord and in Ephesians chapter one if we just go down it says in verse 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ both which are in heaven and which are on earth even in him we don't have time to go into it

I was there sort of choked up because he was just talking about all the different things he'd been through because of the troubles he said a whole lot of people there in the city to cope were just put on by the doctors put on medication but Dennis got a gospel tract just a couple years ago and he went to his priest and he said is it okay if I go do these Bible studies and the priest said you can go you just got to come to mass and he said okay so he started coming to Bible studies but God really began to work through Dennis' life through the Bible studies and he was so excited about what he was learning and he was so excited I had a group of I would say a group of Americans but I guess I was one of the Americans they had a group with me and and he is talking to them and he was like eating pizza at the time and he's like spraying pizza bits everywhere because he was so excited about and they're kind of like what is happening we don't understand this man but I was like nearly in tears because that

Lord God in heaven God we just we praise and magnify you Lord we we stand in awe at your plan we stand in awe at your work Lord you you were there before any of us ever were you created everything and you created it in a way that it's undeniable that you exist and Lord you created Israel you created the church and Lord you have done all of this for your honor for your glory Lord I pray you'll help each and every one of us to have a renewed enthusiasm about missions Lord not just because maybe we give not just because we know a missionary but because we know you and because we know that you're a God who is on mission you're a God who is working and Lord help us to be excited about what you're excited about to want to get involved in what you're involved in and thank you God that you allow us to do that please use us God even more in your work and we ask these things in Jesus name

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