



# NATIONS

GOPEL FOR ALL

BY DR. JOHN D. MORRISON  
DR. TYLER SMILEY, SENIOR PASTOR

 Lakewood  
PRESS



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Gospel for All Nations  
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Designed by Joy Willis  
Special thanks to Benji Lavender for his help in putting this study together.

# LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

If someone asked you to summarize the Bible in one sentence, what would you say?

As it turns out, there is a passage in the Bible that captures concisely for us a basic framework for reading and understanding all of Scripture. It is in Luke 24, specifically verses 46–47. In this text, Luke recounts that Jesus, after his resurrection from the grave, appeared to his disciples in Jerusalem and explained to them what he had already explained to the two disciples on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–35). The text says that Jesus, “opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,” and then he taught them saying:

<sup>46</sup>...thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, <sup>47</sup>and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (Luke 24:46–47).

There are 2 key parts of Jesus’s concise explanation of all of Scripture:

First, all of Scripture centers around the person and work of Jesus Christ. Jesus, having been sent by God to be the Savior of his people, suffered and died on a cross, and on the third day rose from the dead, and therefore forgiveness of sin is found in his name.

The second part provides the directive based on the truth of the first part. Since Jesus is this Christ, then the message of who he is and what he has done “should be proclaimed... to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem.”

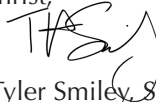
As Christians, we are (by God’s grace) very clear on the first part. Jesus is at the center of our faith, just as he is at the center of all

Scripture. We talk of this often at Lakewood, exhorting each other to “stand for Jesus” and not to “back up on Jesus.” However, it is the second part of Jesus’s explanation that we might think of as something important but perhaps not think of as also central to the message of Scripture. In other words, in giving a one-sentence answer to the question, “What is the Bible all about?” a Christian might rightly say that it is “all about Jesus,” but then he or she might forget to include the part about “telling all people.” For Jesus, these two go hand-in-hand. Christopher Wright explained like this: “[Jesus] claims that the mission of preaching repentance and forgiveness to the nations in his name is ‘what is written’” (Wright, *The Mission of God*, 30).

Over the course of the next 8 weeks our goal is, as John Morrison writes, “to take you through Scripture to show God’s heart for the nations.” Nations, in Scripture, refers to all peoples and groups of peoples in all the world. So this means our goal for these 8 weeks is to read from various parts of the Bible and see the same summary message that Jesus told his disciples days after his was raised from the dead. In plain language, and in one-sentence, Jesus explained this central message of the Bible: Jesus Christ suffered and died, according to the Scriptures, was raised on the third day, and we should tell everyone.

I pray you will join us on this journey of reading through Scripture, and that through it the Lord would open our eyes to see his gospel clearly, and cause our hearts to burn with a desire to believe and tell it to all the nations.

In Christ,



Dr. Tyler Smiley, Senior Pastor

# CREATION & FALL

**T**his Bible study has been put together with two main goals in mind. First, these eight weeks will take you through Scripture to show God's heart for the nations. From before the beginning of this world, God has had a plan to create for himself a people for his own possession, and the Bible makes clear that this will be a new people comprised of those from every tribe, tongue, and nation. Second, this study is meant to challenge those who are trusting in Christ to live on mission for him. Over the course of this study, you will memorize John 20:21, "Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.'" The challenge comes in living out this commission as those sent by Jesus to declare and to display his gospel.

We start this week in the beginning, in the book of Genesis. From the creation account, we are reminded that our God is over all. He is the creator and ruler of all the universe. He is the creator, and we are his creatures. He made us in his image to know him, to be loved by him, and to reflect his glory.

Yet, sin entered this world through human disobedience. This rejection of God has ruptured our relationship with him and marred all of creation. As Genesis progresses, it becomes clear that our sin wreaks havoc on individuals, families, communities, and even the world itself. From Genesis 3-11, sin spirals out of control, unleashing death and destruction in its wake.

Despite the devastating effects of sin, we see God's grace. God does not abandon his people. We see his compassion in the great flood of Noah's day, when God's heart breaks over the pain and violence in the world. We see God grieved by the idolatry at the tower of Babel as his own image bearers worship their strength and ingenuity rather than God.

Even before Babel, even before the Flood, we see God's grace in response to sin. God makes a promise right after Adam and Eve reject him. In cursing the serpent, the Lord himself promises: "I will put enmity

## LIVE ON MISSION

One way we join in God's global mission is through prayer. Paul encourages the church in Rome, "I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf" (Rom 15:30). Each week, this study will highlight some of our missionary and church planting partners. Commit to pray for them each day of this study.

between you and the woman between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” (Gen 3:15). The story of the Bible is the story of one born of a woman who will crush the head of God’s enemy. Here, right after humans reject God and plunge headlong into sin, God gives a glimpse of hope. This hope will come to fulfillment when the Father will send his Son in the power of the Spirit for us and for our salvation. This is the gospel, the good news, for all nations.

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## **& read & observe**

For each weekday, read the corresponding passages and write at least one observation from the reading below.

- M GENESIS 1-2
- TU GENESIS 3-4
- W GENESIS 5-7
- TH GENESIS 8-9
- F GENESIS 10-11

## **& memorize & meditate**

**Jesus said to them again,  
“Peace be with you. As the Father  
has sent me, even so I am sending you.”**

JOHN 20:21

## PARTNER THROUGH PRAYER

Brian and Megan Moore moved from Gainesville to Berlin, Germany where they now live and work. The



Moores serve with a church planting team that aims to plant German churches who make disciples of Jesus Christ and plant more German churches. The Moores also are working to reach Syrian refugees in Berlin with the good news of Jesus Christ.

*Partner with the Moores in advancing the gospel by praying:*

- for the encouragement of their family.
- for loving relationships with Syrian refugees in Berlin and for the opening of a wide door for effective gospel work among them.
- for the planting of faithful churches in Berlin.

## END OF WEEK REFLECTION

What stood out to me about John 20:21 this week?

What did the reading this week reveal about God's heart for the nations?

Where is my heart aligned with God's heart?  
Where is it out of alignment? Why?

What step will I take in the next few days to join God in his mission locally?

What step will I take in the next few days to join God in his mission globally?



# GENESIS 1-3

## GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### OBSERVE

What do you notice in these chapters about God's relationship with creation?

According to Genesis 1:26-31, why did God create humanity? What, according to verse 1:27, makes humans different than the rest of creation?

In Genesis 3:14-21, what effects of sin do you notice in these verses? What does Genesis 3:21 reveal about God's character? What does it teach us about sin?

### INTERPRET

As the creator of all things, what authority does God exercise over creation?

How is God's work as creator connected to his work as redeemer?

Based on Genesis 3, why would God's mission in the world need to go to all people? Consider Romans 3:23.

### APPLY

What is the connection between the what is sometimes called the cultural mandate in 1:28 and God's mission in the world? In other words, how does living out Genesis 1:28 relate to living out Matthew 28:16-20?

If sin is as devastating and as far reaching as God says it is in Genesis 3 (and it is!), what does that mean about the need your family, neighbors, and community have for the gospel?

Share with you group two prayer commitments: (1) an unbeliever for whom you will pray for his or her faith and the opportunity to tell the gospel and (2) a missionary or church planter for whom you will pray for God to bless in his or her work.

# BLESSING FOR ALL NATIONS

**T**he downward spiral of sin that began in Genesis 3 culminates in Genesis 11 with God's judgment of scattering the nations across the face of the earth. Yet, as we turn to the next chapter, we find that God already has a plan to bring blessing to the nations. This plan begins with one man, Abram, and his family. God calls Abram to leave all that he knows and promises to bless him. Not only will the Lord bless Abram, but he will use Abram to be a channel of blessing to all peoples. "In you," God promises Abram, "all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen 12:3).

God's call and promise lead to obedience and worship from Abram, but as the rest of chapter 12 makes plain, Abram struggles to fully trust God. In chapter 15, Abram's doubts surface: where are these promised children? The Lord comes and reiterates his promise that his offspring will be numerous, as many as the stars in the sky, and in response Abram "believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness" (15:6). In 15:7-21, God establishes his covenant with Abram, promising that God alone will be faithful to bring about this blessing.

For all the faith of chapter 15, Abram and Sarai fail to trust God completely, and so in chapter 16 they take matters into their own hands. Yet, the Lord is faithful to his promise and comes again in chapter 17 to promise once more that Abram will have a son and will be the father of many nations. This promise will come through Isaac, who is born in chapter 21, and then chapter 22 records Abraham's great act of faith where he is willing to sacrifice Isaac, believing that God can raise him from the dead (Heb 11:17-19).

While the whole world was rebelling against him, God began to bring about his plan to bless all the families of the world. God chose Abram to be the channel of this blessing, and it would be through the line of Abraham

## LIVE ON MISSION

The Lord tells Abram, "I will bless you. . . so that you will be a blessing" (Gen 12:2). This principle continues to be reiterated throughout Scripture. God blesses so that his people will be a blessing to the world. We have received no greater blessing than knowing God by faith in Jesus Christ. Our salvation is not a gift to be hoarded and enjoyed by ourselves. Rather, the joy and love of God should flow through us to those we encounter. We have been blessed in Christ that we might share Christ with others. Pray for the Lord to open up opportunities with unbelievers you know to share the hope of the gospel with them.

that “God himself will provide the lamb” (Gen 22:8). This “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” is none other than Jesus Christ (Jn 1:29). Christ offered himself as a sacrifice on the cross, as Scripture teaches, “so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith” (Gal 3:14).

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## **&read &observe**

For each weekday, read the corresponding passages and write at least one observation from the reading below.

- M GENESIS 12
- TU GENESIS 15
- W GENESIS 17
- TH GENESIS 21
- F GENESIS 22

## **&memorize &meditate**

**Jesus said to them again,  
“Peace be with you. As the Father  
has sent me, even so I am sending you.”**

JOHN 20:21

## PARTNER THROUGH PRAYER

Saul Perez is the pastor of Cristo es el Camino in Guatemala City, Guatemala.

The church is located on the edge of the city's landfill where they serve some of the most vulnerable in their community with the gospel through their elementary and middle school and through a medical clinic led by Dr. Layla, Pastor Saul's wife. Lakewood has had the privilege to partner with the Perez family and their church for almost two decades. Pastor Saul also oversees all of COR3:6's church planting efforts in Guatemala, which currently consists of seven churches in some of the most underserved areas of the country.

*Partner with Saul in advancing the gospel by praying:*

- for Saul, Dr. Layla, and the entire Perez family.
- that el Camino would continue to make disciples of Jesus Christ through the faithful teaching and preaching of God's Word.
- for the Lord to raise up more church planters and church planting teams to minister in Guatemala.



## END OF WEEK REFLECTION

What stood out to me about John 20:21 this week?

What did the reading this week reveal about God's heart for the nations?

Where is my heart aligned with God's heart?  
Where is it out of alignment? Why?

What step will I take in the next few days to join God in his mission locally?

What step will I take in the next few days to join God in his mission globally?

## **GENESIS 12:1-3**

# **GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

### **OBSERVE**

Look back at the end of chapter 11. Who was Abram? Was he making any attempt to seek the Lord? What does that reveal about the Lord's call on his life?

Compare what the Lord called Abram to leave and what blessings the Lord promised to Abram. What do you notice?

Who will the Lord bless in Abram?

### **INTERPRET**

Why would God choose Abram? Was there anything particularly impressive about him to date? Does he show himself to be particularly obedient in the next few chapters?

Read Galatians 3:7-14. What is the blessing promised to Abraham? How does it come to God's people today?

### **APPLY**

This blessing of the gospel is for all people. Consider your own heart. Are there certain prejudices you have that cause you to shy away from engaging certain people with the gospel? Are there certain people you would rather not see at your church? How does this promise to Abram undercut such sinful feelings?

Read 1 Corinthians 4:7. What have we received from God? How can a posture of humble gratitude fuel obedience to God?

If you have been blessed with faith in Christ, with whom are you actively trying to share that blessing? How can you go about this? What steps do you need to take this coming week to engage this person with the gospel?

# KING OVER ALL

In Genesis, God promised that redemption would come to the earth through the seed of the woman (3:15), and then, the promise came into sharper focus as we learned that God's plan to bless the peoples of the earth would come through Abraham (12:1-3). As the Lord's plan continues to unfold, he brings even greater clarity to his promise: the blessing will come through a son of David.

Our reading this week picks up hundreds of years after the promise to Abraham. Isaac, the single son of Abraham, has flourished into a nation. The Lord has redeemed the twelve tribes of Israel and brought them into the land he promised Abraham. They are God's people, living in God's place, but they are not experiencing the blessing of God's presence because they fail to follow his rule. Judges 21:25 captures the state of the nation: "In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes."

The Lord was to be Israel's king, but in 1 Samuel 8, they clamor for a human king like the nations around them. Samuel mourns their rejection of the Lord, but God plans to bring his good purpose through their rebellious desires. His plan begins with the anointing of Saul as king, but Saul will become like the kings of the other nations, desiring to fulfill his own will rather than obeying and honoring the Lord. By 1 Samuel 15, Saul's disobedience goes so far that the Lord rejects him as king. By the end of 1 Samuel and the beginning of 2 Samuel, Saul has been killed and David becomes king. He is a king after God's own heart, and in 2 Samuel 7, the Lord promises to establish his kingdom and his house forever: "And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever" (7:16). This is the promise of an everlasting kingdom.

## LIVE ON MISSION

God the Father sent God the Son as the new and better David to redeem his people, not as a mighty warrior but as a humble servant who gave his life as a ransom for many. Jesus tells us that just as the Father sent him, so he sends us now into the world to serve others with his love (Jn 20:21). Our King has commissioned us to go into the world as he went into the world. You do not have to wait to be sent, for if you have experienced the grace of God in Christ then you are sent. The challenge is to open your eyes to the opportunities to serve those you encounter today by displaying and declaring the good news of Jesus to them.

Jesus cites Psalm 110 to point to his identity as the new and better David (Matt 22:41-45). He is the true king over God's people. He is the one through whom blessing will come to the nations. The Father is making the nations his heritage and the ends of the earth his possession (Ps 2:8). Christ the King has come to put his enemies to death, but he conquers in the most unexpected way. He puts death to death through his own death on the cross. From that death, he has been raised and now rules and reigns over all things at the Father's right hand. Christ our risen and exalted King now offers true life to all who trust in him.

## **& read & observe**

For each weekday, read the corresponding passages and write at least one observation from the reading below.

- M 1 SAMUEL 8
- TU 1 SAMUEL 9-10
- W 1 SAMUEL 15 &  
2 SAMUEL 1
- TH 2 SAMUEL 5-6
- F 2 SAMUEL 7

## **& memorize & meditate**

**Jesus said to them again,  
"Peace be with you. As the Father  
has sent me, even so I am sending you."**

JOHN 20:21

## PARTNER THROUGH PRAYER

Steve Thiel pastors  
Christ

Proclamation  
Church in  
Hartford,  
CT. Christ  
Proclamation

was one of  
our first COR3:6  
partner churches, and over  
the last six years, the Lord has  
established this gospel work in  
the hard soil of New England.  
The gospel continues to go forth  
and transform lives through  
this church, and they are now  
exploring what it would like  
to plant and to replant more  
churches in this region.

*Partner with the Steve in  
advancing the gospel by praying:*

- with thanksgiving to our God for the work he continues to do through Christ Proclamation.
- that they would continue to reach people with the gospel and that the Lord would open the door to plant more churches. gospel work among them.
- that the Lord would lavish his grace and peace upon the Thiel family.



## END OF WEEK REFLECTION

What stood out to me about John 20:21 this week?

What did the reading this week reveal about God's heart for the nations?

Where is my heart aligned with God's heart?  
Where is it out of alignment? Why?

What step will I take in the next few days to join God in his mission locally?

What step will I take in the next few days to join God in his mission globally?



## 2 SAMUEL 7

# GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### OBSERVE

What does David want to do for the Lord? What does the Lord promise instead?

Look specifically at 7:12-16. What are the specifics of God's promise to David?

What do you notice in David's prayer of gratitude in 7:18-29?

### INTERPRET

David has a son Solomon who will sit on his throne. How are these promises to David not completely fulfilled in Solomon?

Why do we understand Jesus to be a new and better David? What passages in the New Testament support this idea?

What does it mean for Christ Jesus to be King?

### APPLY

What comfort do you find in knowing that Christ is King over all? Consider Ephesians 1:20-23.

In 1 Corinthians 15:27, Paul teaches that all things have been subjected to Christ. Since Jesus is now ruling and reigning over all things, what hope can we have?

Read Acts 2:22-36. What is one thing Christ now does for us as he sits enthroned at his Father's right hand? How can this reality fuel joy in our lives?

## HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR THE NATIONS

**W**hen Jesus cleanses the temple in Jerusalem, he quotes the prophet Isaiah, “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations” (Mk 11:17). This echoes the truth Solomon recognized at the dedication of the first temple: this was to be a place where people from across the world could come and pray to the Lord (1 Kgs 8:41). In fact, Solomon’s prayer for his people was that the Lord would sustain them so “that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is God; there is no other” (1 Kgs 8:60). God’s heart for the nations is on display in his temple.

It is the Lord’s presence that makes the temple (1 Kgs 8:10-11, 27-30). The temple was to be the connection between heaven and earth, the place where God would dwell in the midst of his people. Indeed, it was God’s desire to dwell with his people that led to his redeeming them out of the Egypt and delivering them into the promise land (Ex 29:45-46). First the tabernacle and then the temple was to be his dwelling place on earth (Ex 25:8; 40:34-38).

In the coming of Jesus Christ, God comes to dwell among his people not in a temple but in human flesh (Jn 1:14). Jesus describes his body as the new temple (Jn 2:19-22); it is in his flesh that God has come to be with his people. In taking on a complete human nature like ours, Jesus makes it possible for us to be united to him by faith. We are so united to Christ that what is true of him is now true of us.

Through this union with Christ, we, as God’s people, now share in the reality of being God’s temple (1 Cor 3:16; Eph 2:21). The church as a people are the temple of our triune God. We are the dwelling place of God on this earth. Through Christ Jesus, we are the place where God’s glorious presence connects with life on earth. No longer is the temple stationary, waiting for the nations to come. Christ Jesus now sends us into the world to be lights of God’s glorious presence where ever we go.

The mission of the church is to take God’s

### LIVE ON MISSION

We take God’s glorious presence into the world through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Often, the idea of sharing the gospel conjures up images of bad sales pitches rather than the declaration of good news. Instead of your Jesus elevator speech, look for opportunities to intersect the gospel in your everyday conversations.

Reflect on the conversations you find yourself having week after week and consider the ways you can share how Jesus makes a difference in those areas of life.

glorious presence to the ends of the earth by displaying and declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ. Then when Christ returns, “the whole earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Hab 2:14). In the age to come, there will be no temple in the new creation, “for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb” (Rev 21:22). God invites us to join in his mission of making his gospel known so “that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is God.”

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## **&read &observe**

For each weekday, read the corresponding passages and write at least one observation from the reading below.

- M 1 KINGS 8:1-21
- TU 1 KINGS 8:22-53
- W 1 KINGS 8:54-9:9
- TH JOHN 1:14; 2:13-22
- F EPHESIANS 2:11-22;  
3:14-21

## **&memorize &meditate**

Jesus said to them again,  
“Peace be with you. As the Father  
has sent me, even so I am sending you.”

JOHN 20:21

## PARTNER THROUGH PRAYER

Emily is from Gainesville and now lives and works as a nurse in East Africa among an unreached



people group. She uses nursing to love those in Africa who need to hear and to see the gospel of Jesus Christ.

*Partner with Emily in advancing the gospel by praying:*

- for her encouragement in the Lord as she lives in a difficult context.
- for boldness and compassion as she shares the gospel with those around her.
- for more laborers who desire to use their professional skills in order to reach the unreached with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## END OF WEEK REFLECTION

What stood out to me about John 20:21 this week?

What did the reading this week reveal about God's heart for the nations?

Where is my heart aligned with God's heart?  
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What step will I take in the next few days to join God in his mission locally?

What step will I take in the next few days to join God in his mission globally?

## 1 KINGS 8

# GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### OBSERVE

According to Solomon in 1 Kings 8:13, what was the purpose of the temple?

How does that purpose compare with these three passages from Exodus: 25:8, 29:45-46, and 40:34-48?

Review 1 Kings 8:41-43. Was the temple only for the people of Israel?

### INTERPRET

What does God's desire to dwell among his people reveal about him?

What do the instructions in 1 Kings 8:41-43 reveal about God's heart for the nations?

Read John 1:14 and John 2:19-22. How does Jesus embody the purpose of the temple?

### APPLY

In union with Christ, the church is now the temple of God (See 1 Cor 3:16; Eph 2:21). How should these purposes of God for the first temple shape how we see our purpose as a church?

As the first temple in Jerusalem was to be a house of prayer for the nations (cf. Mk 11:17), how much more should the church, the new temple of our God, spread throughout the whole world be for the nations. What steps can you take personally to be more hospitable to internationals in your community? As a church?

How can you join in God's mission "that all the peoples of the earth may know [his] name and fear [him]" (1 Kgs 8:43)?

# THE NATIONS FLOW TO GOD

**B**eginning with creation and progressing through Scripture to the building of the temple, we have caught a glimpse over the past four weeks of God's heart for the nations. In this study's final week in the Old Testament, we turn to Isaiah, where the Lord makes plain that his plan is for the peoples of the earth to know him and to be known by him.

In Isaiah's day, God's people questioned whether or not they would survive as a nation. They saw the threats posed by great and powerful armies, and they feared that they would be overrun. Throughout this prophecy, the Lord undercuts his people's idolatrous search for security outside of himself. He challenges them to trust in him and him alone. Additionally, the Lord shows them that their understanding of his plan is too narrow. They have come to believe that God's purposes in the world end at their national borders. The Lord challenges them to see that he has a plan to make his name known among the nations.

God's blessing of Israel was never meant to be an end in and of itself. He blessed them so that they would be blessing to the world just as he promised Abraham. In Isaiah 2, the Lord gives us a vision of his plan for the nations to flow up to the mountain of the Lord. As Isaiah continues, he prophesies that it will be "a shoot from the stump of Jesse" who draws the nations to the Lord (11:1-11). This root of Jesse will be the Lord's Servant who will serve "as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (49:6). This Servant will take the Lord's justice, righteousness, judgment, and hope to all the peoples, even to the coastlands, which is how Isaiah describes those at the ends of the earth (51:1-11). Isaiah's prophecy concludes with an end times vision of the Lord's judgment upon the nations and the nations flooding to worship him (66:1-24). The New Testament makes clear that this one from Jesse's line, this Servant of the

## LIVE ON MISSION

In Isaiah 2, the nations flow to God because his Word has gone out to the nations from his people. Today, people come to God as they hear the gospel, which "is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Rom 1:16). The question is: where do I regularly interact with people who need to hear and believe this gospel? In my typical week, where do I regularly see people who do not know the Lord? Take time to pray for these people and for God to open the door for you to tell them the good news of Jesus Christ.

Lord, is none other than Jesus Christ. Jesus is the light to the nations (Lk 2:32). He is the light of the world (Jn 8:12). Jesus himself quotes the prophet Isaiah to declare that he is the one about whom Isaiah prophesied (Lk 4:16-21). The nations flow to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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## **&read &observe**

For each weekday, read the corresponding passages and write at least one observation from the reading below.

- M ISAIAH 2:1-5
- TU ISAIAH 11:1-11
- W ISAIAH 49:1-7
- TH ISAIAH 51:1-11
- F ISAIAH 66:1-24

## **&memorize &meditate**

Jesus said to them again,  
“Peace be with you. As the Father  
has sent me, even so I am sending you.”

JOHN 20:21

## PARTNER THROUGH PRAYER

Winston Miller is the pastor of Grace Life Church in Lauderhill, FL. As the church's name suggests,



Winston desires to make the grace of Jesus Christ known in the lives of his community. He and his wife Brenda grew up in Lauderhill and returned in 2020 to begin to plant Grace Life.

*Partner with Winston in advancing the gospel by praying:*

- for God to bless the Millers as they plant themselves and this church in Lauderhill.
- for the Lord to use Grace Life as a beacon of his gospel of grace in this community.
- for many to come to saving knowledge of Jesus Christ through this church.

## END OF WEEK REFLECTION

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## **ISAIAH 2:1-5**

# **GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

### **OBSERVE**

Describe the word picture Isaiah gives in 2:2. What would be surprising about this image if you saw it in nature?

According to 2:3, why do the nations want to go to “the mountain of the Lord”?

What does 2:4 describe?

### **INTERPRET**

What are the “latter days” of verse 1? How would you support your answer biblically?

What does “the mountain of the house of the Lord” represent? How would you support your answer biblically? Consider what you have read recently about the house of the Lord.

In Isaiah’s day, what would have surprised God’s people about the Lord’s desire for the nations to flow to him?

### **APPLY**

Do you find yourself sharing some of the surprise that God would desire all kinds of people to come to him? Are there certain people that you might think, in the back of your mind, are beyond his reach? Why is that?

In Isaiah 2, people are going to the Lord that they might learn his ways. How are you working to make his ways and his gospel known to those you interact with regularly?

How are you praying regularly for your unbelieving neighbors and the nations? What steps can you take this week to be more consistent in this area?

# CHRIST FOR ALL

**A**t the end of the Gospel according to Luke, the resurrected Jesus declares that “repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations” (24:47). Then, he goes on to promise the Holy Spirit will come to empower his followers to fulfill this mission (24:49). Jesus’s concern for the nations does not just begin at the end of this book; rather, throughout this Gospel it is evident that he has come for all kinds of people from all over the world. He brings to fruition the Old Testament promises of one who will come to be a blessing to all peoples. He is Christ for all.

Jesus Christ came to redeem all kinds of people. He is more than Israel’s savior; he is “a light for revelation to the Gentiles” as Simeon prophesied at his dedication at the temple (2:32). He did not come for those who have it all together, but he came for the poor, the captive, the blind, and the oppressed (4:18). He came for those in need, and not just among his own people, but for all peoples. Like the prophets of old, Elijah and Elisha, Jesus’s ministry extended beyond the borders of Israel (4:25-30). He healed the Roman Centurion’s daughter (7:1-10), and, like Elijah, he raised from the dead the son of a gentile widow (7:11-17). He came for the outcasts. He was the “friend of tax collectors and sinners” (7:34), and he came to offer forgiveness to all who see their desperate need for him (7:36-50). Women, who were treated as second class citizens at this time, were elevated by Jesus and were a central part of his ministry (8:1-3).

Jesus intends for his serving of all kinds of people to be carried out through his followers. In Luke 10, he sends out 72 of his followers in pairs to continue on his mission. He sends them to serve as he himself served by declaring and displaying the good news of the kingdom. Christ challenges his followers, “The harvest is plentiful, but the

## LIVE ON MISSION

In Luke, Jesus is accused of being a glutton and a drunkard because he was frequently found eating and drinking, particularly with those of low reputation (7:34). As you turn the pages of Luke, it seems that Jesus is always sharing a meal with someone. We rightly think of Jesus’s ministry on earth as consisting of his declaring the good news in word and displaying it in deed. What we often gloss over is the context of this ministry: meals. Jesus uses hospitality as a vehicle for advancing God’s mission. How can you turn your table into a mission field? Who can you invite to share a meal with as a way of showing Christ’s love and to open the door to tell them about his love?

laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Lk 10:2).

After his resurrection, this sending becomes even more directly to the nations (24:44-49). Now, Jesus’s followers will be sent forth in the power of the Holy Spirit. They will not go alone on God’s mission but will be joined by God himself to make Christ known. Luke will demonstrate in the book of Acts what happens when the church seeks to glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

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## **& read & observe**

For each weekday, read the corresponding passages and write at least one observation from the reading below.

- M LUKE 2:22-38
- TU LUKE 4:16-30
- W LUKE 7:1-50
- TH LUKE 10:1-12
- F LUKE 24:44-49

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## **& memorize & meditate**

**Jesus said to them again,  
“Peace be with you. As the Father  
has sent me, even so I am sending you.”**

JOHN 20:21

## PARTNER THROUGH PRAYER

Tim Soots is the pastor of Trinity Anglican Church in Littleton, CO. Trinity was planted in 2015 and has grown into a self-sustaining church over the last several years. They are a faithful community of believers who seek to take the gospel to their neighbors and to the nations. One way they do this is their refugee ministry through which they befriend refugees who have recently arrived in the U.S. and seek to show them the grace of Christ.



*Partner with Tim in advancing the gospel by praying:*

- that Trinity would continue to be a faithful witness for Christ in their community.
- that the Lord would use their refugee ministry to serve those in need and to bring them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.
- that God would encourage and sustain the Soots family.

## END OF WEEK REFLECTION

What stood out to me about John 20:21 this week?

What did the reading this week reveal about God's heart for the nations?

Where is my heart aligned with God's heart? Where is it out of alignment? Why?

What step will I take in the next few days to join God in his mission locally?

What step will I take in the next few days to join God in his mission globally?

## **LUKE 24:44-49**

# **GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

### **OBSERVE**

What does Jesus teach in 24:44?

According to Jesus in 24:46, where is it written that he would suffer, die, and rise again?

What does Jesus explain to his disciples in 24:47?

### **INTERPRET**

What is the connection between verse 47 and verses 48-49?

What is the promise he refers to in 24:49? When is this promise fulfilled?

Why is it important for our understanding of God's mission to grasp the truth Jesus teaches about the Old Testament pointing to his work and the spread of the gospel?

### **APPLY**

How is God calling you to be a witness to Christ Jesus?

According to 24:47, what message are you to proclaim as a witness to Jesus?

Why is the Holy Spirit (24:49) essential to your being a witness? How does the Spirit help you witness to Christ?

# GOSPEL FOR ALL

**T**he good news of Jesus Christ is for all people. The books of Acts shows the spread of the gospel through the world as God's people work to make Christ known in the power of the Holy Spirit. Acts begins with the resurrected Christ commissioning his followers: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (1:8). Through the Spirit, Jesus's followers make him known locally, regionally, and globally. The book closes with Paul in Rome, the capital of first-century Gentile life, "proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance" (28:31).

From the call in the first chapter to its being fulfilled in the last, Acts shows Christ's church living on mission and taking the gospel to all people. In Acts 2, the promised Holy Spirit is sent by Jesus to empower his people to take his gospel to all. The power of the Spirit to bring the gospel to bear on all people is on full display at Pentecost as people from around the world hear the gospel proclaimed in their own languages (2:5-12). The promise of the gospel, Peter preaches, "is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself" (2:39). The gospel is for all.

In Acts 8, the Lord uses even the evil of persecution and the killing of Christian to bring about the spread of the gospel. As Christians are scattered from Jerusalem, they take the news of Jesus with them. Peter himself has a dramatic experience in Acts 10 where God calls him to take the gospel to the Gentiles. He comes to recognize and to proclaim about Christ: "To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name" (10:43). The church at Antioch demonstrates the

## LIVE ON MISSION

In the first century, persecution scattered early Christians around the world, and as they went, they took the gospel with them. They became neighbors with the nations. Today, whether for economic or political hardships, many from around the world have made their way to our communities. The nations have become our neighbors. As we are called to make Christ known among all peoples, we must open our eyes to the reality that many—even many from around the world—who do not know Jesus, live right down the street from us. How is the Lord calling you to take the love of Christ to your neighbors from around the world?

multiplying effect that new churches were having in the first century. A new church forms as believers scatter from Jerusalem and share the gospel (11:20-21). When the church in Jerusalem hears, they send Barnabas to equip this church, and he, in turns gets Paul to help him (11:22-26). For a year, they invest in this church, and then the Spirit leads the church to set apart Barnabas and Paul for more mission work, and so they are sent to Cyprus to continue to spread the gospel (13:1-12). This pattern continues as the gospel makes its way around the Mediterranean world in the first few decades after Christ's resurrection.

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## **&read &observe**

For each weekday, read the corresponding passages and write at least one observation from the reading below.

- M ACTS 1:1-11
- TU ACTS 2:1-47
- W ACTS 8:1-40
- TH ACTS 10:1-48
- F ACTS 11:19-30;  
13:1-12

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## **&memorize &meditate**

**Jesus said to them again,  
“Peace be with you. As the Father  
has sent me, even so I am sending you.”**

JOHN 20:21

## PARTNER THROUGH PRAYER

Davis Lacey is the pastor of Autumn Ridge Community Church in Ellijay, GA. Davis served at Lakewood as a Pastoral Resident from 2017-18, and then he was sent out from Lakewood to his hometown to plant in 2019. Since their launch, Autumn Ridge has steadily grown as they prioritize the faithful proclamation of God's Word, gospel community, and biblical worship.



*Partner with Davis in advancing the gospel by praying:*

- thanks to God for the several people he has brought to saving faith through the ministry of this church since its launch.
- for continued wisdom, love, and grace as Davis and the church's pastors and elders navigate the best ways to minister during this season.
- that God would lavish his grace and peace upon the Lacey family.

## END OF WEEK REFLECTION

What stood out to me about John 20:21 this week?

What did the reading this week reveal about God's heart for the nations?

Where is my heart aligned with God's heart?  
Where is it out of alignment? Why?

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What step will I take in the next few days to join God in his mission globally?



## **ACTS10**

# **GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

### **OBSERVE**

In Acts 10, why was Peter hesitant to go to Cornelius?

What does God do to get Peter to the point where he will go and dine with Cornelius?

What truths about God does Peter announce in 10:34-35, 43?

### **INTERPRET**

Luke records this incident between Peter and Cornelius and then records Peter reporting it to the church. Why was this such a significant event in the life of the early church?

Compare 10:43 with Peter's message in Jerusalem in Acts 2:21, 38. What did Jewish background believers do to receive the gospel? Gentile background believers?

Why are the truths in this passage such good news for us as believers today on the other side of the world?

### **APPLY**

God shows no partiality (10:34), but in our sinfulness we are prone to show partiality (See James 2:1-7). Where do you show partiality? What does repentance of your sin of partiality look like this week?

What biblical truths help you remember to fight the sin of partiality?

Peter reminds us, "Everyone who believes in [Jesus] receives forgiveness of sins through his name" (10:43). Read Romans 10:14-17. To whom is God calling you to take this good news of Jesus? What steps will you take this week to engage this person or these people with the gospel?

# HOPE FOR ALL

**W**hat God promised in the Old Testament, he confirms that he will bring to fulfillment in the New. The promise of blessing to the nations has come through Jesus Christ, and in the book of Revelation, Christ himself promises us that this blessing will indeed come to all who trust in him.

Revelation was written first to the early church as they faced the threat of persecution and the pressure to succumb to the ways of the surrounding world. John writes to encourage and strengthen the church with the truth that Christ Jesus reigns over all and that he will one day return and make all things new. Part of this encouragement is the global and even cosmic scope of God's plan. The gospel of Jesus Christ brings hope to all who trust in him.

From the outset, it is good to remember that God gave us Revelation not to spark debates about the future but to hear and to obey now (1:3). John begins by reminding us that our God is over all time, and Christ himself is the "ruler of the kings of the earth" (1:4). He is the one who "every eye will see. . . and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him" (1:7). Christ's work is a global work.

John's vision takes us to the throne room of heaven where God is worshipped because "you created all things and by your will they existed and were created" (4:11). God is the creator and sustainer of all things. The scene in heaven continues as God and Christ are worshipped for redeeming people from "every tribe and language and people and nation" (1:9). Through the blood of Christ, people from around the world have become who Israel was supposed to be (1:10; cf. Ex 19:6). This hope for all who believe is secured by the blood of Christ. His sacrifice is effective. He redeems all those for whom he died.

Revelation 7 begins with John hearing the

## LIVE ON MISSION

God's plan is for people from around the world to hear and to believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ. As followers of Christ, we are all sent into the world each day to display and to declare his gospel. In our homes, schools, jobs, and communities, we are his witnesses. Christ also calls and sends some to leave what is familiar to make him known in a new place. Take time this week to pray and to consider how God is calling you to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Is God calling you home to tell about his mercy? (Mk 5:19). Or perhaps, he is calling you to go where Christ has not yet been named (Rom 15:20). Pray for wisdom, faith, and courage to obey.

number of God's people, and it is a complete and perfected people represented by the symbolic number 144,000. This is all of God's people, and then John sees what he heard and this totality of God's people is "a great multitude that no one could number from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages" (7:9). This gospel brings hope to the world.

As Revelation concludes, John again emphasizes the global scope of Christ's mission. He will make all things new (21:5), and he will bring healing to the nations (22:2). God's plan is to unite all things through Christ Jesus and to make all things new in him and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **& read & observe**

For each weekday, read the corresponding passages and write at least one observation from the reading below.

- M REVELATION 1:1-8
- TU REVELATION 4:1-11
- W REVELATION 5:1-14
- TH REVELATION 7:1-17
- F REVELATION 21:1-22:21

## **& memorize & meditate**

**Jesus said to them again,  
"Peace be with you. As the Father  
has sent me, even so I am sending you."**

JOHN 20:21

## PARTNER THROUGH PRAYER

Our team going to Central Asia is getting close to their departure dates. They hope to receive visas and depart over the next few weeks. The team is comprised of 9 adults and 11 children from Lakewood who have been preparing for about two years to take the gospel to the Uyghur for the glory and praise of God.



*Partner with our Central Asia Team in advancing the gospel by praying:*

- that the Lord would grant the team visas to allow them to go.
- for the unity and encouragement of the team as they prepare and wait.
- for the salvation of the Uyghur.
- for the encouragement of the team's families at home.

## END OF WEEK REFLECTION

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## **REVELATION 5**

# **GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

### **OBSERVE**

To whom are the 24 elders and four living creatures singing praise in verses 9-12?

According to these verses, why are they praising him?

In verse 13, who joins in the worship?

### **INTERPRET**

How did Jesus ransom people by his blood? What does the idea of ransom convey?

Why is it significant that Jesus ransomed people “from every tribe and language and people and nation” (5:9). What does that teach us about him and his work?

Look at verse 13. How is the worship of him who sits on the throne connected with the worship of the Lamb?

### **APPLY**

What does this scene teach us about the nature of our worship today?

How well does your church reflect this vision of God’s Kingdom?

Think back to Luke 24 from week 6. How does God plan to bring about this scene? How is God calling you to join in his mission to take this good news of Jesus Christ to people from every tribe, language, people, and nation? What is the next right step for you?





**The Bible unfolds God's plan "to purify for himself a people for his own possession" (Titus 2:14). As we read from Genesis to Revelation, we learn that God's plan is for his people to be made up of those from "every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rev 5:9). He has a plan to bless the nations, and this blessing comes through Jesus Christ. The good news of God's redeeming work in Christ is for all who believe in him. The gospel is for all nations.**



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