



God's son blesses the nations

Aim: to encourage a personal response from today's disciples to Christ's commission, which includes all nations in its scope.

Bible focus: Matthew 28:17-20

Additional: Ps 67:1-7, Ps 72:17-19, Ps 98:2-3, Lk 2:29-32, Lk 14:18-24, Jn 3:16, Jn 10:16, Jn 14:6, Jn 20:21, Acts 4:12, Rom 3:26, Rom 5:9-11, Phil 2:5+,

[It may help to explain at the outset that two key words used here are opposites; 'inclusive' means 'things taken together'; 'exclusive' means 'something on its own'.]

Be selective about which Bible references you explain; they are given as further study helps.

A worksheet is included to hand out and use as you wish.

His inclusive coming (reading: Psalm 98:2-3)

- Israel as a nation was the Servant of God. God's inclusive purpose was revealed through the prophets. But Israel became rebellious, proud and exclusive (Acts 7:52-3)
- Despite the response of Jews or Gentiles, God's son Jesus comes to bless all the nations
- Note the progression:
 - The promise: the Abrahamic covenant
 - The people: Israel
 - The person: His son [Jn 3:16]
- This is anticipated in OT (Ps 67:1-7) inclusive of other nations (Ps 72:17-19)
 - His birth: (Lk 2:29-32)
 - His ministry: exclusiveness condemned, inclusiveness commended (Lk 14:18-24; Jn 10:16)
 - His example: his servant spirit in our partnership with others (Jn 20:21; Phil 2:5+)
- All who become like Jesus will be passionate about world mission

His inclusive cross

- The purpose is not exclusive to Israel, but inclusive of all people who believe (Rom 5:9-11)

In the cross of Jesus we see:

- victory over death and fear which brings living and real hope
- forgiveness of sin, personal answer to wrath & guilt
- the love of God, the only answer in a lonely world

His inclusive commission

- The declaration of authority (Mt 28 v18, etc *all authority is given to me...*)
- The actual commission (v19 *Therefore go*)
- The goal: to *make disciples* (v17)
- The method: *baptising and teaching* (v 19-20)
- The promise: *Surely I am with you...* (v 20)

His exclusive name

- The Christian attitude to other religions (Acts 4:12). The church contains several cultures but not several faiths (cultural pluralism not religious pluralism)
- Nowadays there are two popular challenges to the need for mission & evangelism:
 - is Christ the only way of salvation? The Bible answers yes! (Jn 14:6)
 - is conscious faith in Christ necessary for salvation? The Bible answers yes! (Rom 3:26)
- There is **some** truth in all religions, but no **saving** truth in any other religion!

What does this mean to us today? If we are followers of Jesus then we shall want to do what he tells us. He gave the commission to his disciples because they were the first representatives of the whole church in every age. Although they were Jews it was clearly a call to go to all the other nations. Only then can God's son bless these nations.

This commission includes the people of the nation we belong to and all the other nations as well. **It calls for a personal response from us.**

What is Jesus asking us to do to take his good news to others?

God's MAP, Bible Session 3

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Worksheet: Please tick the box which you think is the right answer

Take care – in some cases more than one answer may be right!

1. In the OT God promised to send a Saviour

- a) Only for those who were born Jews
- b) For Jews and others who adopted the Jewish religion
- c) For Jews and for all other people who trust in Jesus

2. During Jesus' life on earth he

- a) Never met anyone who was not a Jew
- b) Condemned the narrowness of the Jewish people
- c) Taught that Jews are so special to God that they do not need a Saviour

3. Those who benefit from the Cross of Jesus are

- a) All the Jews, whether or not they trust Jesus
- b) All the believers who repent and trust Jesus
- c) All the people of the world, whether or not they trust Jesus

4. The Christian attitude to other religions is

- a) They are all different roads to the same God
- b) The confidence they give is false, only Jesus give eternal hope
- c) If people sincerely believe their own religion they will be saved

5. Jesus had authority to give his special commission

- a) Because he was concerned for all nations
- b) Because only those who receive his teaching can be true disciples
- c) Because his disciples need his presence with them to fulfil their task