

The Journey

The Story of the Bible: Lesson 3 Outline

One Sentence Summary: God's heart for the nations is evident in the Old Testament and reveals the Top line and Bottom line.

A. Outline

a. Introduction

- i. The last lesson states that God's heart for all nations began in Genesis chapter 12 with His promise to Abraham. This is the beginning of a Great Commission Theme that forms the story of the Bible.
- ii. Today's lesson will look more at the details of that covenant.

b. Body

- i. The Upper Level or the Top Line is defined as this: blessings that God gives to individuals that they enjoy for themselves and share with other people of their own ethnic group.
 1. This includes money, time, gifts, talents, peace, the fear of the Lord, any kind of blessing from the Lord. Moreover, they can share it with those who are like them, eat like them, etc.
- ii. The Lower Level or Bottom Line would then be defined as whenever a blessed individual reaches out to a person (or people) of another group, or culture. It then becomes a Lower Level or Bottom Line blessing.
 1. When a believer reaches out to an international student and spends time with them, or has them for dinner, or goes overseas to share the gospel this demonstrates the bottom line responsibility.
- iii. Upper Level Blessings yield Lower Level Responsibilities.
- iv. Examples from scriptures
 1. Look at Leviticus chapter 23, verse 22:
'When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God.'" God is blessing the Israelites with a harvest (that is the Upper Level.) and He is having them be a blessing to the aliens (people from other nations or cultures) by leaving them the leftovers from the crops. That is the lower level. This is an example of God being concerned for non-Israelites, early in the Old Testament.
 2. The Promised Land (P.L.) is a land flowing with Milk and Honey and it refers to the upper level of the covenant. Whenever we see the upper level of the covenant, we should expect to see the lower level of the covenant. Generally, it seems that God loved the Israelites more than the other people and He told them to go into the land and kick all of the other "ites" out of there and then they could settle there and be His people. The Promise Land is in the middle of the great trade area, so travelers would meet the Israelites and they would have a chance to tell them about God. Therefore, they were sharing the names of God, which represents

the very character of God, which would make God so famous that Gentiles would have trusted in Him. The P.L. was strategically located in the center of the nations referencing the lower level of the covenant.

3. Ezekiel 5:5, “This is what the Sovereign Lord says” This is Jerusalem, which I have set in the center of the nations, with countries all around her.
4. Psalm 67: May God be gracious to us, bless us, and make His face shine upon us, that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations. God wants to bless us so we can turn around and be a blessing to others around us that are not like us.
 - a. For ex. – help finance short term workers, help support long term missionaries, we are to go ourselves...either short term or long term, we are to be reaching out to the internationals that God has brought to our back yards by having them over for dinner, loving them and laughing with them.. letting them see our lives.
 - b. It is one story with our Lord clearly concerned and reaching the nations in the Old Testament.
5. We can see God’s heart for all nations at the dedication of the Temple in the O.T.
 - a. The temple was built by Solomon and it was great joy blessing for the people of Israel because now. It would a where God’s presence on earth could abide and the Jews could see it. This represents the Upper Level of the covenant.
 - b. I Kings 8:37 NIV When famine or plague comes to the land, or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers, or when an enemy besieges them in any of their cities, whatever disaster or disease may come, and when a prayer or plea is made by any of your people Israel- each one aware of the afflictions of his own heart, and spreading out his hands toward this temple (top line prayer.) "As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your name- 42 for men will hear of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm —when he comes and prays toward this temple, then hears from heaven, your dwelling place, and does whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you. God had a large Gentile court created in the temple. And because of that, Gentiles would want to come and pray to this foreign God to see if the God of the Israelites could answer their prayers. Solomon dedicated the Temple in light of both the Top line and the Bottom line.

6. Jeremiah 4:1-2 Shows us that Judah would repent of their idolatry and walk with God, other nations will see it and say, God is blessing you so much, I want to know your God. Even our act of repenting which is an upper level blessing is going to bless other nations.
7. Daniel 3:28 Shadrack, Messach and Abednego refuse to bow down to worship the statute of Nebuchadnezzar. He is so impressed by how God saved them that he issued a decree that all nations should worship their God. The upper level was God's blessing to the three in taking care of them in the fire. The lower level was having the king turn around and evangelize the world through his decree.
8. God was using both Jews and Gentiles to reach the nations. Throughout the entire Old Testament, God has been consistently reaching out to the nations.
9. Right after the nations are created in the tower of Babel, God wastes no time in making a commitment to reach out to them. The promise to Abram chronologically comes right after the creation of the nations.

c. Conclusion

- i. The Bible is one book, with one introduction, one story and one conclusion.
- ii. God's heart to reach all nations is rampant throughout the entire word of God.
- iii. He has blessed us for a purpose. He wants us to turn around and bless the nations.