

Mission

We don't find the word 'mission' in the KJV bible. It is not a bible word.

Mission is taken to mean 'preaching the gospel of Christ where Christ is not known – being a testimony to every people, tribe and language'.

90% of missionaries today are involved in helping the developing church. Only 10% are cutting edge (Ralph Winter – Mission frontiers).

Where do we get the word 'Mission'?

It means 'purpose' or 'specific task'. God is working to a specific purpose. God is on a mission which runs through the whole bible. The whole bible contains the explanation of His mission.

In Genesis 1.1 'in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth'. I believe that this happened within the last 10,000 years. If you believe the account in the bible and trace back the genealogies you reach this conclusion. ie. God did what He said He did.

In Genesis 1.27 God made Adam and Eve in His own image, and, each day, came down to talk with them when it was cooler. He instructed them to populate the earth.

We also read that Lucifer, that great angel, came into the garden one day, and told Eve that God was withholding blessing from them. She believed this and she and Adam rebelled against God. She didn't rant and rave. You can be in wicked rebellion and be very sweet about it.

God did not respond by killing them, but cared for them and spoke of one who would come: 'He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel' he said to Lucifer in Genesis 3.14.

Time passed, and Adam's first-born Cain, through jealousy, murdered Adam's second-born Abel. At the beginning people lived for hundreds of years, the population grew, and violence and wickedness increased. From time to time God found individuals who loved him. Enoch in Genesis 4.24 was one of those who loved God.

Wickedness became so bad that God knew He had to end it, but he chose one man, Noah, a righteous man, and his family. He instructed Him to build a large boat, and when it was complete to fill it with young animals of all species.

God then precipitated massive and catastrophic earth movements, with large amounts of water being released from below, and torrential rain from the skies. The whole of the earth's surface was changed. Genesis 7.11

In Genesis 9.1 God spoke to Noah to repopulate the earth, as He had said to Adam.

In Genesis 10.27 we meet Eber and Peleg.

In Genesis 11 we learn that men congregated in Babylonia and decided to build a great city. God broke their political strength by making their language diverge. We see at least 50 different language groups spreading out to their own territories. People are defined by their shared values and their language. We call these people-groups. Genesis 10.25 'In the days of Peleg was the earth divided'.

The bible does not speak so much of political nations as people-groups. The end-time will be marked by war between people-groups: ethnic cleansing, etc. Matthew 24.7 'people-group against people-group and kingdom against kingdom'.

In Genesis 12 we find God speaking to Abram the Hebrew = Eber, 'Go out, away from your family and I will bless you and make you a blessing'. Genesis 12.3 'In you will all families of the earth be blessed'.

So far, God has given us very little detail of the way he has been working in people's lives, although He has been working. Now He starts to tell us about his dealings with Abraham, leaving a lot to the imagination, which we must use if we are to understand the bible.

We learn about Abraham's lifestyle and why He was pleasing to God. We learn that he was obedient and trusting and organised his lifestyle to be pleasing to God. We see the failure of Lot his relative, having the same opportunities. And we see God making Abraham a blessing to others.

Following the Old Testament through, there is a development of these themes in many settings, and many more indications from God that there is 'One to come' who will extend this blessing.

At the end of the Old Testament, in Malachi 3.1, we read of the coming of the anointed one, 'the messenger... he shall come'.

Coming into the New Testament, four books, we call them gospels, tell us about the Lord Jesus from different angles. From the start he was a man with a mission: 'Do you not understand that I must be about the things of my Father's house?' Luke 2.49

Jesus explained in John 6.40 'My Father's will is that everyone who sees His son and believes in Him should have eternal life.'

He also explained in John 10.16 'I have other sheep too'. Can you hear Father saying this? 'Them also I must bring... and there shall be one flock and one Shepherd.'

Previously, in John 4.35, Jesus had said 'Lift up your eyes and look around! Vast fields are ripening all around us and are now ready for the harvest.' And he sent out his followers to join in the work.

He also said in Matthew 26.13 concerning the ointment poured on him, 'Wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, this woman's deed will be remembered.' Jesus was always thinking about his mission.

Jesus explained in John 17.2, the Son has come 'to give eternal life...', the life of God, '...to each one you have given him'. John 17.22 'That they may be one, as we are.' And in John 17.18 'As you have sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world.' Responsibility for the mission is handed on by Jesus Christ to individual his followers.'

John 17.21 'That they all may be one; as you, Father, are in me, and I in you. That they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that you have sent me.' The hope of the good news – to be one with God – is bound up with the mission: that the world may believe.

God's mission/purpose is that men and women in every age in history, from every people group and language, from every situation and circumstance will confess that it is their free choice to be committed totally to Him, that they have found Him to be loving and faithful. They freely choose Him above everything else and want to be 'in Him' – to be dependent upon and to share everything with Him for ever.

So we finish with the last words of Jesus, after he had defeated Satan and death and sin on the Cross, and was about to return to Father. In Matthew 28.19-20, He finished by confirming all He had been teaching his followers: 'You go therefore, and teach all peoples, (spirit) baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you, and I will be with you always, even to the end of the age.'