

Good News for All Nations

The New Testament, Week 5

DAY 1: God's Plan for the Nations

1. God's plan to reach all peoples everywhere did not start with Jesus. Adam and Eve's sin unleashed a torrent of rebellion in every person, in every age, in every corner of the world. Our first awareness of God's plan can be found in Genesis 3.

2. Below the following verses, underline references to God wanting to bless the world, and all the people. Then **jot down** any thoughts that come to mind with each verse:

Genesis 18:17 The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, ¹⁸ seeing that Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by him?"

Psalms 67:5 Let the peoples praise thee, O God; let all the peoples praise thee!

Isaiah 49:6 He says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

Luke 19:10 "For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost."

Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."

3. This is *the* "meta-story" of human history! Human history is really "HIStory". You've been included on the receiving end! Are you involved on the giving end?

DAY 2: Jesus, for All People, Everywhere

1. After Jesus' resurrection from the dead, He announced the beginning of the church and its central mission.

Acts 1:8 "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

2. Jesus said we would be His "witnesses." A witness just relays what they know, what they have seen and heard.

3. Sometimes it's not easy sharing your faith story with others. What does Jesus promise, that will help us in that endeavor?

4. What places does Jesus mention as to where this would take place?

5. Think about your faith story. Jot down your thoughts under the headings below:

a. What was my life like **before** I came to Christ?

b. How did I come to Christ? How was I saved? What were the circumstances surrounding my conversion? What helped me to understand my need for the gospel? Forgiveness? Jesus?

c. How has my life changed since my conversion?

(1) How are my attitudes different?

(2) How is my character different?

(3) How are my values different?

DAY 3: Paul, an Apostle to the Gentiles

1. Though Christianity began in Israel, and with a few thousand Jewish people, the gospel spread like wild fire in the Gentile (non-Jewish) world.

2. Spearheading the movement was a former Jewish rabbi, Paul of Tarsus. His primary ministry was taking the gospel from the Middle East to the continent of Europe.

Romans 1:1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God--

² the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures

³ regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David,

⁴ and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

⁵ Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.

3. An apostle originally referred to someone who had seen Christ and was sent out with the gospel. Though Paul had not seen Jesus during His lifetime, Paul did see the resurrected Christ! This was life changing!

4. What was Paul's mission? (1:5)

5. What things motivated Paul in the missionary endeavor? (1:1-5)

6. Paul expanded on his mission and what motivated him. Underline what strikes you...

Romans 15:17 Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. ¹⁸ I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done-- ¹⁹ by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. ²⁰ It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. ²¹ Rather, as it is written: "Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand."

7. What things does Paul hold dear? What is of highest value to him?

8. What things do you hold dear? What is of highest value to you?

DAY 4: The Missionary Church

1. We often hear non-believers tell us, "Keep your faith to yourselves. Keep it private." Ironically, our faith is anything but private! It is meant for "public consumption!"

Matthew 4:18 As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."

2. What strikes you about the metaphor of "fishing for men?"

3. Let's unpack the fishing illustration Jesus uses.

a. Who takes the initiative to catch fish?

b. How much does a fish care about a fisherman?

c. How much thought does a fisherman use in choosing which bait to use?

d. Sometimes Christians are accused of being rude. (We sometimes use stupid bait).

Have you ever used stupid bait? How so?

e. Are fishermen always successful? Do they ever return home without fish?

4. What is *your* take away from "fishing for men?" What do you want to do? Remember?

5. Paul gives us insight into his own fishing for men. **Underline** at least one important principle in *each* verse, below...

Colossians 4:4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. ⁵ Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

6. How do you want to be a better "fisherman"?

DAY 5: All Peoples

1. John gives us a sneak preview into some of heaven's activity! A group is singing.

Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation."

a. To Whom are they singing?

b. Why are they singing to Him?

c. What was it that He accomplished?

d. Who would be affected? Look for four different "groups."

2. John gives us another sneak peek into heaven.

Revelation 7:9 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰ And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

a. How many people does he see?

b. From where did these people come?

c. What strikes you about these two pictures from heaven? Do they encourage you? Motivate you to get in the "fishing" game?

3. Prayer: Ask God to give you a greater desire and heart for lost people. Ask God to help you embrace the gospel as man's only hope. Ask Him to open doors with people, and for God to open the hearts of people around you to hear the gospel.