

Every Nation: Bless God Together



| FEATURE ARTICLE

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MANY OF YOU MAY KNOW THE BIBLE exceptionally well and may know its themes, its historical stories, and its teachings, but what you may not know is there is a continuous thread running from Genesis to Revelation tying the whole biblical narrative together. This single thread is imperative to know if we want to understand our response and our role as God's children in this world. I want to give you a quick flyover of this thread. This is by no means exhaustive, but once you see this thread you will begin to see it all over Scripture everywhere you read from here on out.

Old Testament

So, naturally, we are going to start in the beginning with Genesis. In the beginning God created everything. The heavens. The earth. He breathed out stars. He spoke, and planets and galaxies came into existence. He created everything in the world. The trees. The waters. The animals. And then He came to the pinnacle of His creation.

Look here in Genesis 1:27 and the beginning of verse 28. Read this. What does it say?

“So God created man in His own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.”

Really? Are God's first words and commands to His greatest creation, “Procreate over all the earth?” You would think He would say something more significant. . . Well, look again, because that is precisely what He does. Whom does God say He makes them in the image of?

He makes man and woman in His own image.

So what God is commanding is to spread His image over all the earth. And God blessed them to this end. God wants His image and His glory to cover the entire earth. God blessed Adam and Eve, so they could bless the whole earth, so the whole earth would bless God together. In this God is most glorified.

In fact, one could make a case for Habakkuk 2:14 to be the thesis of the Bible; it says, “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.”

This is a promise. He will do it. It will happen.

So how did Adam and Eve do? They obeyed this command and the earth was filled with the glory of the Lord, right? I wish. . .they didn't even make it out of the third chapter without messing it all up! When sin entered into the world, God's image was stained and tainted within them and they no longer could multiply God's image over all the earth perfectly. This is not good. It got so ugly, in fact, that by Noah's time, God's wrath was devastatingly poured on all men, and He started over. Started again with Noah and his family. And guess what the first thing is that God told Noah?

No joke. He said: “And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.” Genesis 9:1 The exact same command He gave to Adam and Eve.

Multiply my image over all the earth.

As God blessed Adam, he now blessed Noah, so that he could bless the whole earth, so the whole earth could bless God together. In this God is most glorified.

And that went well for a while, until the tower of Babel, when the people of the earth went completely against God's command. . .Here's what they foolishly said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.” Genesis 11: 4

This is direct opposition of God's command. God said to make HIS name great and multiply HIS image over all the earth. Now the people are saying, “Let's make a name for ourselves,” and “Let's not go throughout the whole earth.” God frustrated their plans and scattered them to the nations to continue His eternal plan.

Then we get to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3, an absolutely critical passage in understanding the thread of the Bible.

“Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’”

God blessed Abraham, so that he would not just bless his own nation, but all the families of the earth, so

God did not just rescue Israel, but ALL who trusted in Yahweh... including Egyptians.

they would all bless God together. In this God is most glorified.

And once again, this went well for a while, but then the Hebrew nation, Israel, was enslaved by the kingdom of Egypt. Yet God delivered Israel out of Egypt's hand, but here is what we often miss...

“A mixed multitude went up with them.” Exodus 12:38

God did not just rescue Israel, but ALL who trusted in Yahweh—including Egyptians.

We think the Old Testament is all about Israel, which, in a way, it is—but why? What is Israel's role? Exodus 19:5-6 has the answer.

“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”

What does it mean that Israel's role was to be a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation”? A priest's role was to go before God on behalf of the people and before the people on behalf of God. Therefore, Israel's role was to act as priest on behalf of all the nations whom God loved and was fervently pursuing!

God blessed Israel, so they would bless all of the nations, so they would all bless God together. In this God is most glorified.

But Israel didn't get it. They thought they were the special ones, chosen by God as a Holy nation, so they could reject and kill the rest of the nations. The Psalms,

the Prophets, the Old Testament are full of God's unending love for all of the nations.

He wanted the earth to be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea!

The prophet Isaiah made this point loud and clear when he said in Isaiah 56:3-8:

Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD say, “The LORD will surely separate me from his people;” and let not the eunuch say, “Behold, I am a dry tree.” For thus says the LORD: “To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.

“And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant—these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.”

The Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, declares, “I will gather yet others to him besides those already gathered.”

Out of God's rich mercy and abundant love, He blessed Adam. He blessed Noah. He blessed Abraham, He blessed Israel, so that every nation and family on earth would be blessed, so all nations would bless God's name. In this God is most glorified.



The thread of the Bible is understanding: God has blessed His people, so they may bless all the families of the earth, of every nation, so we can all one day bless God together!

Are you beginning to see it? Think of it as a triangle.

New Testament

So remember, God's image even at this point is still stained. As His image is spreading over the whole earth, His people are only temporarily covered by imperfect blood sacrifices to cover their sins...waiting for the fullness of time, for the perfect sacrifice.

At the fullness of time, Jesus came—the Word, God in the flesh—and by becoming a perfect, sinless sacrifice for sins, He restored our relationship with the Father that Adam enjoyed in the beginning. He destroyed death, Satan, and sin forever. God never gave up. He never dismissed for good our shortcomings. He kept coming. Kept giving mercy. Violently loved through our continual disobedience.

God, in ultimate fashion, bankrupted Heaven by giving His one and only Son—His most treasured possession—to win His children back, to destroy the enemy, and to receive matchless glory! As He did this, God's image in mankind was restored in His people who trusted in Him, being filled with His very Spirit.

Now here is what is amazing: Guess what Jesus' command to

His people was after His image was restored?

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’” (Matthew 28:18-20)

Did you catch that? Do you see it?!

As He restored His image, He tells His people to multiply HIS IMAGE IN ALL THE NATIONS. This is the exact command given from the very beginning.

So now, God has blessed His church, to bless all the nations, so all nations would bless God together. In this God is most glorified.

So, multiplying the image of God is exactly what his disciples —Peter, Paul and the rest of them until present day—did. Even as Paul told Timothy in his second letter to him, “And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

It gets better. God says to his church, just like he said to Israel, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation...”.

We are not on earth to simply “be happy” that we are the chosen nation of God, His chosen church. This was Israel’s common misunderstanding. We are His chosen people, His priests, because we are called to go before God on behalf of all the nations and before the nations on behalf of God!

God blessed Adam. He blessed Noah. He blessed Abraham. He blessed Israel. He blessed His church. And now He has blessed YOU, so that you will bless all the nations, so all nations will bless God together! In this God is most glorified.

So here we are today with the same command. We have an opportunity to respond to the Father’s radical love and glory. We have an opportunity to stand together as the church, to unite, to take His glorious message of salvation to all the nations. We are identified fully with Jesus, filled with His Spirit, carriers of His image, ambassadors from a better country, to bless the nations so that all of us, every tongue, tribe, and nation can worship, bless, and glorify Jesus forever! We get to partner with our Father, listen to Him, obey Him, and watch Him move with power over all the earth!

As my friend Todd Ahrend, founder of the Traveling Team, famously says, “It’s time to put our YES on the table.” We are all carrying a “yes” in our hands. Will we hold it to ourselves or will we with white hot love for our Good Savior put our “yes” on the table and run with boldness and perseverance for the rest of our race? Let’s hasten the day of Jesus Christ!

Let’s finish this way.

If this is true, then this thread will run all the way into Revelation, right?

Let’s look in Revelation 7:9-12, a beautiful picture into the future that God has revealed to John:

“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation,

from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

God Will do it. He has promised He will.

The fulfillment of Habakkuk 2:14 and all of God’s promises are seen here. God blessed His people, and they blessed the whole world, so we could all bless God together.

This is the Story of His Glory. Will we be a part of His story or try to write our own narrative and try to make our own name great?

The thread of the Bible is understanding that God has blessed His people, so they may bless all the families of the earth, of every nation, so we can all one day bless God together! Are you willing to be a part of His Story? Are you ready to join His vision?

In this God is most glorified. 