



# THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATION OF MISSION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

## **The importance's of a biblical foundation**

The aim of this part is to show that evangelism is not an initiative of people or an additive of human philosophy to the bible. Mission is a central theme in the whole bible. We shall see that mission is not only an interference in someone else's life, but a plan of God in accordance with His word. Mission is the will of God!!! Without the bible there will be no Christian mission. John Stott gives us four reasons for Christian mission:

- The bible gives us the mandate;
- The bible gives us the message;
- The bible gives us the model;
- The bible gives us the power.

Particular the first reason is very actual and relevant in our time. Stott says our mandate is found:

- in the creation of God (because of which all human beings are responsible to him)
- in the character of God (as outgoing, loving, compassionate, not willing that any should perish, desiring that all should come to repentance)
- in the promises of God (that all nations will be blessed through Abraham's seed and will become the Messiah's inheritance)
- in the Christ of God (now exalted with universal authority, to receive universal acclaim)
- in the Spirit of God (who convicts of sin, witnesses to Christ, and impels the Church to evangelize)
- in the Church of God (which is a multinational, missionary community, under orders to evangelize until Christ returns). The biblical mandate for world evangelization cannot be escaped.

In this track we will focus on mission in the Old Testament. Some people think that the Old Testament tells us nothing about mission because the focus is mainly on Israel. But this is a misunderstanding, the theme of mission is very clear in Gods revelation and his promises to all people. It pronounces from the character of God, from His aims and from what He suspect from His people. J. Herbert Kane says:

*"The Old Testament is a missionary book because JHWH is a missionary God"*

Therefore we will focus especially on the first three mandates: the creation, the character of God and the promises of God.

## **The mandate found in the creation of God: the universal motive**

Genesis starts with a great preaching: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). This pronouncement only already forms the basic for mission. God created the universe and the whole world belongs therefore to him. A little bit further we read that he also created the human beings. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27). It

was God's intention that the human beings stand in a special relationship with him. He had been made by God, for God and to the image of God (Gen. 1:26; Jac. 3:9). It was God's intention that we would find our largest happiness in him, not in our selves or in our environment, but in God (Math. 22:37). For in him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28) and his goodness stretches out to all his creation (Math. 5:45).

Genesis 1 clearly stresses the universal message of the Old Testament. God is the creator of the whole world. He is the God of the whole earth and of all human being. The creation of human beings makes clearly understandable that Israel was not allowed to focus only on the existence of their own people. This was absolutely something unique in the O.T., it is clearly assignable (?) that all people around Israel were only focussed on the existence of their own people. All these people saw in their own existence the meaning and the aim of the creation. In the case of Israel it was the other way around. The creation was Israel's main point in the understandable of their own existence.

Israel's confinement of the rest of the people happened to bless the whole world. Therefore it's not right to see the confinement of Israel as a proof of particularism. Even in this confinement God's focus was on 'the whole world'. In the history of Israel, that begins with the calling of Abraham, the rest of the world didn't become a forgotten part of creation. On the contrary, 'through' Israel God opened a way to the rest of the world!

**The mandate found in the character of God: the soteriological motive**

Narrowly linked with the universal motive in the Old Testament is the soteriological motive. That is the motive of rescue and release. The universal God is a God of rescuing and releasing. In the Old Testament it's most clearly visible in the release of Israel from the slavery house of Egypt. The ultimate rescuing activity takes eventually place in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The theme itself however is much older. Directly in the beginning of history God shows us his activity of salvation. In Genesis 1-11 the human beings turn themselves against God three times, and each time again God is giving a way out. He stretches out his hand and speaks words of propitiation and rescuing.

*Universal sin & Universal release*

<b>Moments wit universal impact</b>	<b>3x reaction of God with universal gift of salvation</b>
The first sin	Proto-evangelicum
The flood	God's promise to Noah
The tower of Babel	The Lord chose Abraham ('in him God blessed the whole earth')

*The first crisis: the first sin*

After the first sin the community between the first people and God was broken. But God didn't give up the people. On contrary, the first missionary call sounds here in Genesis 3:9 when God called to the man "where are you?" God went to look after people. The missionary thought includes surging and finding lost people whom are separated from God by their own sin. What follows is the proto-evangelicum, the first notice of the gospel. Besides the curse of sin, God also gives a promise of salvation. This is the promise of the coming Messiah who will overcome evil.

*The second crisis: the flood*

The people were unfaithful to God again. God was bringing floodwaters on the earth and destroyed all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Only Noah and his whole family were saved. After this tragedy God gives a new begin. God gives Noah the promise that there will never be a flood like this again. More specific there was a promise for Noah's son Shem. In Genesis 9:26-27 the Lord is called "the God of Shem" who will "live in the tents of Shem". It is a promise of a special relationship between

God and the descendants of Shem. In Genesis 3:15 there was the promise of someone from the seed of Eve who will break the power of sin; now a specification of this promise takes place. God points to the line of Shem. From this line descend both Abraham, David and Jesus of Nazareth.

#### *The third crisis: the tower of Babel*

The third sin of people against God reached its expression in the construction of the tower of Babel. The people said: "We'll become famous, and we won't be scattered all over the world" (Genesis 11:4). God recognized it as an attempt of people to become their own god. The construction of the tower is "just the beginning, soon they will be able to do anything they want". As a reaction God confuses them by making them speak different languages.

But also this crisis was followed by a promise of God. This was the promise of the plural blessing of Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3. Among other things God says "Your name will become famous". This is a significant inversion of what was the aim of the people when they said "let's make our name famous". God doesn't allow that people establish themselves autonomously, but gives his rich blessings to them who live in dependence to him.

#### **The mandate found in the promises of God: the calling of Abraham**

The calling of Abraham is perhaps the most missiological passage in the Old Testament. This is the great command of the Old Testament! God said to Abraham: "Leave your country, your family, and your relatives and go to the land that I will show you". It sounds indeed as a story of a missionary. But moreover this is the story of a sender, a God who will use people to fulfill his aim. The God who has called Abraham is the same Lord who has created the heavens and the earth. With other words, we may never forget that the bible begins with the universe, not with planet earth. First after that with planet earth, not with Palestine. After that with Adam the father of the human being, not with Abraham the father of the chosen race. Because God is the creator of the universe, the earth and the whole humanity, we are never allowed to degrade him to a tribe god like Chemos, the god of the Moabites or Molech, the god of the Ammonites. Even so we cannot assume that God chose Abraham because he lost his interest in the other people. We will see that God chose one man and his family so that by them he can bless all the other families on earth.

God gives Abraham in Genesis 12:2-3 three promises:

- 1: I will make you into a great nation
- 2: I will bless you
- 3: I will make your name famous

These promises are directly followed by a reason: "You will be a blessing to others". The rich blessing of Abraham was not meant for his own glory. He receives this blessing to be a blessing to others.

For them who find it hard to see the good news in Genesis 12:1-3 it is good to show that Peter and Paul saw it very clearly like that (Gal. 4:8; Rom4:13; Acts 3:25-26).

**APPENDIX: THE THREE SERVICES OF ISRAEL**

**1) proclamation of Gods plan**

a) context: Gen 12:1-3 = mirror picture 11:1-9

11:1-9	12:1-3
1-3) human being strives towards certainty	1) Abrahams need to release certainty
4) human being strives to make their own name famous	2) God makes Abrahams name famous
9) human being destroyed	3) concentration human being in Abraham

b) initiative comes from God (Jes. 9:8)

c) reaction Abraham: radical obedience (Genesis 12:4)  
 Abraham left his house ⇔ God goes further with the world

d) Gods purpose: blessing for all (Genesis 12:2)  
 You will be a blessing for others

Blessed who blessed you } Galatians 3:16  
 Put curse on who curse you }

**seed of the woman > of Abraham > Christ: dies and give life**

John 10:10

**2) participation in priesthood (Ex. 19:3-6)**

Before Israel received their constitution, they received their identity. Their identity is based on Gods work (Exodus 19:4)

Aspects of their identity:

- a) Israel is Gods particular property (Exodus 19:5)
- b) Israel is a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6)
- c) Israel is a holy nation (Exodus 19:6)

In the N.T. these three aspects are practiced on the church (Ephesians 3)

### 3) presentation of Gods purpose

Agreement between Numbers 6 and Psalm 67

vs. 24) the <b>Lord</b> blessed ↓ <b>JHWH</b> ↓ Covenant name for Israel vs. 25) “show His mercy <b>over</b> us” Israel <b>receives</b> light vs. 27) if Aaron and his son ask me to <b>bless the Israelites</b> , I will give them my blessing	vs. 2) <b>God</b> blessed ↓ <b>Elohim</b> ↓ Creator of all nations vs. 2) “show You mercy <b>under</b> us” Israel <b>gives</b> light vs. 3) then <b>everyone</b> on earth will learn to follow you
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Genesis 12

↓  
Psalm 67:8 “God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him”



# Preparing an investigative Bible Study

**Source :**

<http://www.intervarsity.org>

**Foundational for Investigative Bible Studies:**

God wants to speak

He speaks through His Word

Without conviction on both of these points, you can't lead an investigative Bible study.

**People become Christians through Investigative Bible Studies**

Example: Singapore. In 1974, there were 160 members in the group. They began 20 investigative Bible studies. In 1975 there were 200 members and 40 investigative Bible studies. In 1976 there were 400 members and 60 investigative Bible studies. In 1977 there were 700 members and 100 investigative Bible studies. Today, there are over 2,000 members. Most of them became Christians because they met Jesus through investigative Bible studies.

God wants to speak, and He speaks through His Word!

**The Goal**

Our ultimate goal is that people come to faith in Jesus Christ. An investigative Bible study is a good place for people to find out who Jesus really is.

**The Leader**

The leader of an investigative Bible study needs to:

Believe that God has prepared some people to become Christians (John 4:35 ff.).

Trust God's Word and believe that God speaks through His Word, and that through His Word people will come to faith (Acts 8:35 ff.).

**The Group**

It's best if there are only two Christians in the Bible study group. The group is for seekers, not for Christians. If Christians are in the majority, seekers may feel under pressure and not have total freedom to ask their honest questions. A good group size is 2 Christians and 4 seekers.

## **Starting**

Pray daily, and find others to pray. Pray for yourself, your preparation, and that God will show you whom to invite.

As God brings people to mind, you might want to write a list of names, and pray for each of them. Ask God to show you which of these people to invite. If you find you have no non-Christian friends, pray to get to know some near you - in the dorm, lectures, etc.

Think about the Bible texts to use. Think about the people on your list, their needs, the questions they're asking. The texts should focus on who God is and who Jesus is, since this is the main purpose of an investigative Bible study. One of the Gospel narratives is probably best; there Jesus meets people in their need - something which people in your group can relate to.

You might choose a series such as: Who is God? What is man? Who is Jesus? Why did He come? What did He do? How does one become a Christian?

Or use a good study guide, such as *'Getting Excited about Jesus'*. These guide, and others, are available from IFES Europe & Eurasia.

Get enough Bibles in one translation. A unified translation helps the discussion focus on the text, rather than get lost in a discussion of "which translation is better?".

You may wish to photocopy the particular text which will be studied, so that the members will have a text on which they can write questions and observations, and take home with them.

Set a time for the meeting according to the best time for your friends. In the beginning, plan on meeting for only one hour per week. It's better to have your friends complain the time is too short, than to have them stay away because it's too long.

Let everyone know at the start how often you'll meet. With a set number of times for the investigative Bible studies, your friends will know they're not getting into something for years. Seekers will be more willing to come to something they know will last 5 or 6 times, or one semester.

Prepare carefully. Plan on 1 1/2 hours of preparation time for each study. Set aside this time and guard it! Pray during your preparation time that God will speak to you through the text, that you yourself will get to know Jesus better.

Write out questions which could be discussed in the group. The questions should focus on the text, making it living and pragmatic for our lives today. Your written questions should focus on three areas: What does it say? What does it mean? What does it mean for us today?

Invite your friends. Pray. Trust God. Tell your friends the theme; when, where and how often you'll meet; how the meeting will be run; that they don't need any knowledge of or background in the Bible, their religious background won't make a difference; the discussion will focus on the text, and any question goes.

A half hour or an hour before the meeting begins, remind your friends. Very likely, they have higher priorities in life than the investigative Bible study, and may easily forget if you don't remind them.

Begin!

## **Tips for Leading**

Briefly introduce the text in a way that makes it exciting to study this particular passage. For example, during the introduction time, you might have asked everyone what they think about people who are very wealthy. As

the Bible study time is introduced, you could say, "What would Jesus say to a man who's very wealthy? Tonight we want to read a passage in which Jesus met a rich man...." Another possible introduction would be to do a dramatization of the passage.

It's helpful to read the text aloud in various languages. If there are more than 8 members in your Bible study group, divide everyone into smaller groups (6-8 persons), each group led by a team member with prepared questions. Another possibility for discussion would be for each person to write down one question about the text on a card and turn the questions in to the leader, who then reads the questions to everyone for discussion of the passage. Or the text might be typed out, and each participant given colored pencils to mark their questions and observations directly on the page. After a time for each to study in this way, the leader could ask people to share what they have written.

The leader will need to be sensitive to the fact that students may have little or no Bible knowledge. Generally, students are interested in discovering how the Bible relates to everyday life (practically, not theoretically, and not necessarily theologically).

During the study time, let people discover for themselves what the text is saying. Don't rely on commentaries or other help materials, unless it's really necessary to understand the text. Let the Bible speak for itself! As leader, try not to answer questions. Help the group learn to discover the answers from the Bible.

It's important that people sit so they can see each other. If someone is sitting outside the circle, they feel "out of it" as well, and won't participate well.

Help the group to stay in the text. Don't jump around in the Bible, it only confuses and frustrates those not familiar with the Bible.

Help the group to stay on the point. There are many interesting things one could talk about; a fruitful discussion, however, has a goal.

You can lead the discussion through your prepared questions, but don't be tied to your questions if someone has a different question which is related to the text. Be flexible. If questions seem confusing, reword them. Create an atmosphere where anyone can ask any question, and each person can share something. Everyone's contribution has worth. Help the group to understand the main teaching of the text and possible applications for our everyday lives.

After 30-45 minutes (small groups join together again), one of the Christian team members should summarize in one or two sentences the most important points from the passage.

The above points are important if our friends are going to discover the Bible has answers for their questions which they can learn on their own. They don't need to always come to you for the answers. One doesn't need a theological education or a commentary to understand the Bible. Start and end on time. When it's time to stop, stop, even if the discussion is interesting and important. You can say, "It's time to stop. Whoever needs to go, feel free to go. If you want to stick around, feel free to stay longer." It's better for the participants to wish that there had been a longer time, than to wish that they hadn't been obligated to stay so late. The discussion can then continue after the "official" end, and is often more honest and personal during this "informal" time.

### **Follow Through**

The personal contact outside the group meeting time is absolutely critical! Don't get trapped into a "come to the meeting" mentality. Jesus says, "Go!" We need to take time for people, and meet with them in their everyday lives. This is how we show honest and true interest in them as persons.

Visit the people from your Bible study group regularly. During a visit, it's easy to mention the discussions you've had in the group. You might ask, "What have you gained from the discussions?" or "Are there questions you'd like to ask, but haven't yet?" or "I've been thinking about that question you asked during the study..."

Learn to listen! Show true interest in their interests, eat together, share a hobby, study together, share your lives together - that's love. Share your belongings: books, CD's. Feel free to borrow too - it shows your friends have something to offer you too.

Invite your friends home over break, or to a camp or weekend where they can meet others who are interested in Jesus.

Be ready to share the Gospel. Consider what Jesus means for your life personally, how you became a child of God, and be ready to share this with your friends. When you note that one of your friends seems far enough, encourage him to trust Christ. Be ready to help him become a Christian.

**Book tip:**

M. Haizmann. 2005. *Getting excited about Jesus, Preparing and running Evangelistic Bible Studies* Marburg (Germany): IFES Europe & Eurasia



# *Adventures in Missing the Point*

*Brian McLaren and Tony  
Campolo*

## **Chapter 1 Salvation**

“To Paul, the point of being Christ's follower was not just to help people be absolutely certain they were going to heaven after they died. Paul's goal was to help them become fully formed, mature in Christ, here and now- to experience the glorious realities of being in Christ and experiencing Christ in themselves.” (20)

“Salvation doesn't mean slitting Roman throats and getting power. Salvation means being liberated from the cycle of violence, liberated from the need to be in power. God wants to save you from your present life of hatred and fear, and instead reconnect you with God's original plan for the descendents of Abraham. Even as an oppressed people, you can be a blessing. Instead of slitting a Roman soldier's throat, carry his pack for him. Instead of cursing him, pray for him. I am here to save you from the whole system of insult and revenge – not by giving you political victory (as you wish I would), and not by telling you to give up on the is life and instead focus on salvation from hell after this life (as some people are going to do in my name) – but by giving you permission to start your participation in God's mission right now, right where you are, even as an oppressed people. The opportunity to start living in this new and better way is available to you right now: the kingdom of God is at hand! (25)

Salvation means being rescued from fruitless ways of life here and now, to share in God's saving love for all creation, in an adventure called the kingdom of God (25).

The salvation that Christ offers involved becoming new persons who live out love and justice in the world. (28)

## **The Kingdom of God**

God's kingdom is a new society that Jesus wants to create in this world- within human history, not after the Second Coming or a future apocalypse or anything else. But right now. (43)

## **Evangelism (Art of asking questions)**

... There are apologetic questions, and they tend to fall in 5 broad categories.

1. Questions about the existence of God
  - a. Can the universe with all its mystery order, complexity, life and wonder- including the expansive world of human experience and values – be explained satisfactorily by mechanistic time plus chance plus nothing?
  - b. Now that science generally agrees hat there is a genesis point – such a the Big Bang – does it make more sense than ever to believe that there is a creator?
  - c. If there is no God, is it possible to imagine any real basis for values like justice, compassion, beauty, goodness, and truth?
  - d. Are the spiritual longings of humanity merely an evolutionary fluke, or could the longings themselves be evidence for a spiritual dimension to reality i.e. God?

- e. Can the problem of evil be solved satisfactorily if there is no God?
  - f. To questions about the multiplicity of religions: what is the realistic alternative? What else might one expect, given human curiosity and spiritual hunger, combined with our limitations and mixed motives?
2. Questions about how God reveals himself
    - a. Effective responses to these kinds of questions treat the Bible less as a catalogue of inspired abstractions, and more as a record of people who had authentic spiritual experiences with God.
  3. Questions about the behaviour of religious people
    - a. First we must acknowledge and possibly apologize for the way many Christians (including ourselves) have behaved.
    - b. Then ask people what alternative there might be.
    - c. Is it realistic that God make everyone instantly perfect upon their conversion, to protect his reputation from their inevitable failures?
  4. Questions about specific Christian beliefs and practices
    - a. Take advantage of the diversity of opinion among Christians
    - b. Hell: Christians have three different approaches to the subject of hell
    - c. Deity of Christ: Christians in the first centuries of the faith struggled to articulately and accurately describe Jesus' identity, because he didn't fit easily in any existing categories.
    - d. Trinity: the trinity is an attempt to protect us from making false statements about God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit; the doctrine is far from a mathematical question that in any way defines the being of God.
    - e. (These kinds of responses appeal to individuals who are turned off not by Christian doctrine, but by the glib and easy way in which many Christians articulate it – as if there were no difficulties, no controversies, no mysteries.
  5. Practical questions about how to know God
    - a. Usually reacting to inaccurate or unbalanced sermons or books or careless preachers. It can help to ask them what they're afraid of, or what they want to avoid.

### **Post-modern type questions.**

1. In the recent past we argued about evolution versus faith. In the emerging culture, we may say, "Let's assume evolution is true, or partially true. Is it possible that evolution itself could be a creation of God, a process which God would create in order to create new life forms?"
2. In the recent past we generally began our apologetic by arguing for the Bible's authority, then used the Bible to prove our other points. In the future we'll present the Bible less like evidence in a court case and more like works of art in an art gallery. The Bible will become valuable not for what it proves, but for what it reveals.
3. In the recent past we attempted to explain how evil and suffering can exist in a world created by a good and all-powerful God. In the future we'll return the question to the questioner, maybe something like this: "If you don't believe in God, then how do you explain evil and suffering – and what meaning or hope can you find in all the injustice? Or "You're right: evil is intolerable. It shouldn't exist. There's no good reason for it, nor can there be. Which is exactly why Christians dedicate ourselves to overcoming it with good".
4. In the recent past we talked a lot about absolute truth, attempting to prove abstract propositions about God. In the emerging culture, however, we will be much more interested in embodied truth (for instance, how Jesus demonstrated God's mercy), and we will want to convey real-life stories about God – stories from our lives as well as from the Bible.
5. In the recent past we assumed people would come to faith in a linear way, moving along a predictable path, as isolated individuals. In the future we'll expect people to spiral in on faith, to approach it from many angles at once, and discover it in community rather than individually. We may well see the process of coming to faith as a wonderful integration of intellect and emotion, experience and reflection, privacy and community, mystery and clarity.

To be a good apologist today you need to offer both standard and innovative responses to common questions.

Word deed and example: it's important to keep these three integrated.

I've wondered how my spiritually seeking friends would advise me about my apologetics – what those who are not yet Christians would say would be more helpful to them. I think they'd say something like this:

1. Build a relationship. People are seldom looking for an answer; they are looking for a mentor. You ask questions and you listen to their answers. You share your own experiences and demonstrate genuine love and concern. You may find this question helpful: *Why is that question important to you?*
2. Don't offer a cheap or easy answer for a deep, complex question.
3. Feel free to say you don't know.
4. Rely on the power of your stories. Tell your stories, tell biblical stories... shared experiences are really important.
5. Keep the conversation going.
6. Encourage your friend to exercise whatever faith they have. For example, I often say something like this to people: "If you were about to enter a dark room, and wanted to find out if anyone was there, you'd call out, 'hey, is anybody there?'" I think you can do the same with God.
7. If some questions are beyond you, then introduce your friend to others who can understand, relate, and help.
8. Don't assume there's only one right way to answer a question.
9. Be sensitive to God's spirit at work in the situation.
10. Don't pressure or rush anyone to believe.
11. Always be respectful and gentle with spiritual questioners.

### **Social Action**

Over the past few decades, evangelicals have increasingly talked about a holistic gospel that incorporates in its salvation story a Jesus who came into the world to minister to all needs of a hurting humanity – physical and social needs as well as spiritual needs" (103)

### **The Dilemma of State Church Structures in Europe Knud Jorgensen**

"... The reformation and pietism have reduced the gospel to a matter of salvation for the individual".

"The benefits of salvation are separated from the reason for which we received God's grace in Christ: to empower us as God's people to become Christ's witnesses. This fundamental dichotomy between the benefits of the gospel and the mission of the gospel constitutes the most profound reductionism of the gospel".

"A missional church is where the people of God – in following Christ – participate in God's mission through being, word and deed in their daily lives."

"... The symbols of the missional Church are the way, discipleship, wholeness and everyday life."

"...The custodians of the missional Church – lay people who dynamically live out their faith in everyday situations".

"A missional Church should emphasize meditation, spirituality, presence, genuineness and lifestyle.... We should become personal carriers of the spiritual reality the world longs for."