**CHBC Core Seminar – Why Missions? A Biblical Theology**

**March 10, 2012**

Instructional Objective: Lord willing, students will hear and understand the basis for missions rooted in the central reality of God’s redemptive mission throughout history.

Framework: History, literature, theology

Main Theme: “God blessing the nations through Christ” …

Illustration of Cross on a Hill: all of history is under the cross, moving toward greater clarity.

**Introduction:**

Last week we talked about the fuel for missions and considered what God’s motivation and our motivation – God’s glory. Today we want to think about how important the idea of “missions” is to God’s plan to exalt his own glory. There are many things that bring God glory – gospel preaching, our vocational work, our families, an orderly garden. Where does the idea of “missions” fit into the hierarchy of God’s plan to bring himself glory in his creation. Is it minor, is it significant, is it central? Is it a limited, partial New Testament idea or is it part of the basic, central theme of the whole Bible?

To trace that we want to pursue something that folks have sometimes referred to as “Biblical Theology.” What is Biblical Theology? Simply put, it’s tracing a theme or idea through all of Scripture, rather than asking systematically what the bible says specifically about a given topic. In the end, to be quite honest, they both end up looking pretty similar to me. Still, it’s useful to trace themes in this way, progressively, and that’s what we want to do for the rest of our time this morning. And the theme that we want to trace is fundamental…what is God doing in his world? What is the mission of God?

So what is God’s “mission?” – That is what we hope to trace out this morning. What does God tell us is his great work revealed throughout the pages in the Bible.

Basic Biblical Framework:

1. The Bible has the whole world in view as God’s possession
   1. Genesis 1:1 – “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”
   2. Psalm 24 – “The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;”
   3. Acts 17:26 – “From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.”
2. The Bible presents God as the only true and global deity
   1. Jer. 10:10a – “But the LORD is the true God;   
             he is the living God, the eternal King.”
   2. Duet. 4:39 – “Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other.”
3. God’s people called out from among the nations for God’s blessing and glory among nations
   1. Gen 12:3 – “I will bless those who bless you,   
             and whoever curses you I will curse;   
             and all peoples on earth   
             will be blessed through you."
   2. Isaiah 37:20 - Now, O LORD our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all kingdoms on earth may know that you alone, O LORD, are God.

Old Testament:

1. Genesis
   1. Gen. 3:15 – Proto gospel
   2. Gen 12:3 – “all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”
   3. Abrahamic covenant as the framework for God’s dealing with humanity for the rest of biblical history. (worked out in Gal. 3:16 – Jesus as the seed)
2. Exodus
   1. **The role of covenant and missions (read quote - Bavinck p. 14)**
   2. Ingathering of Rahab and Ruth…a foretaste.
3. Prophets and the concern for the nations in the last days
   1. Isaiah 2: 2-3 - In the last days   
             the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established   
             as chief among the mountains;   
             it will be raised above the hills,   
             and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say,   
             "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,   
             to the house of the God of Jacob.   
             He will teach us his ways,   
             so that we may walk in his paths."   
             The law will go out from Zion,   
             the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
   2. Isaiah 19:23-25 - 23 In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrians will go to Egypt and the Egyptians to Assyria. The Egyptians and Assyrians will worship together. 24 In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing on the earth. 25 The LORD Almighty will bless them, saying, "Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance."
   3. Zech 8:23 - This is what the LORD Almighty says: "In those days ten men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, 'Let us go with you, because we have heard [Immanuel] that God is with you.' "
4. Psalms
   1. Psalm 68:31 - Envoys will come from Egypt; Cush will submit herself to God. Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth, sing praise to the Lord,
   2. Psalm 45:17 - I will perpetuate your memory through all generations;   
             therefore the nations will praise you for ever and ever.
   3. Psalm 67:1-3 - May God be gracious to us and bless us   
             and make his face shine upon us,   
             that your ways may be known on earth,   
             your salvation among all nations. May the peoples praise you, O God;   
             may all the peoples praise you.

Notes: Comments on Inter-testamental Judaism (not our concern since we are looking for Biblical theology)

New Testament:

1. Gospels
   1. Luke 2:29-32 - "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,   
            you now dismiss[[a](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%202:29-32&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24995a#fen-NIV-24995a)] your servant in peace.   
       30For my eyes have seen your salvation,   
          31which you have prepared in the sight of all people,   
       32a light for revelation to the Gentiles   
            and for glory to your people Israel."
   2. Matt 24:14 - And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.
   3. Matt 28:18-20 = Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in[[a](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=matt%2028:18-20&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24212a#fen-NIV-24212a)] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
2. Acts
   1. Acts 2:33 - 5Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. 7Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? 8Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? 9Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs-we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" 12Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"…(Peter preached the gospel)… 41Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.
   2. Success of God – Israel had accomplished it’s purpose to draw in the nations so they could hear of the Messiah. Despite their sin, in God’s power, the nation of Israel was a smashing, perfect success. God never needs plan B. It always works out according to his plan.
3. Epistles
   1. 2 Cor 5:18-19 - 18All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. (We are reconciled for a purpose…to be his missionaries)
   2. Romans 10:14-15 - 14How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”
4. Revelation
   1. Revelation 7:9-10 - 9After 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. 10And they cried out in a loud voice:   
         "Salvation belongs to our God,   
         who sits on the throne,   
         and to the Lamb."

So what is the mission of God? What is God doing in the world and it’s history?

Andreas Kostenberger/Peter O’Brian – “That his salvation would reach the utter ends of the earth: that is, his gracious movement in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to rescue a desperately needy world that is in rebellion against him and stands under his righteous judgment.”

Jonathan Edwards - “The creation of the world seems to have been especially for this end, **that the eternal Son of God might obtain a spouse towards whom he might fully** exercise the infinite benevolence of his nature, and to whom he might, as it were, open and pour forth all that immense fountain of condescension, love, and grace that was in his heart, and that in this way God might be glorified.”

J.H. Bavink – “Missions is the great work of Jesus Christ, through which after his completed work as mediator, he draws all peoples to his salvation and makes them to partake of the gifts which he has obtained for them.”

**Missionary Implications:**

Jesus incarnate or Paul the disciple our example in missions –

* Importance of thinking about incarnational and representational issues
* Jesus’ work was largerly unique – our example, not missionary model
* Paul, and other disciples, are example of fallen humans living implications of Jesus’ finish work – the gospel.
* Important because we can skip over much of NT if we misunderstand this.

The mission is to all the peoples God might save –

* We’ve seen that the mission is pretty much trans-everything (trans-ethnic, trans-linguistic, trans-national, trans-economic, etc.) – it is a global mission
* We need to have a similar, expansive concern to advance that mission.

God is Sovereign in all things, including missions–

* This is not a desperate enterprise, it is God’s central work – and he will see it done. Not a risky enterprise in the larger sense.
* God has made specific promises, not about our work but about his.
* We work from a vision of the end…all the elect, from all nations, nothing less.

The centrality and limits of the local church –

* The mission of God is not necessarily the same as the mission of the local church, as said earlier.
* God has given specific tasks to the local church. – high, holy, specific.
* The local church is not to do all that Christians do (raise children, earn a living, love spouses, etc.)
* The local church is to steward the gospel and spread the fame of Christ.

Missions: a central concern of all Christians –

* Not a concern for a special interest group in the church
* Mission is central to the work of every local church, and thus every member
* Not all the same, but all similarly concerned
* Normal part of what it means to love God and his work in the world

This is the bible’s vision of the end of all things. Our mission is escatalogical, meaning it concerns the end of all things, the end vision of God is a missionary vision. The prophet Isaiah saw a glimpse of that end vision

Isaiah 66:18 – 24

18 "And I, because of their actions and their imaginations, am about to come [[a](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=isaiah%2066:18-24&version=NIV#fen-NIV-18941a#fen-NIV-18941a)] and gather all nations and tongues, and they will come and see my glory.

19 "I will set a sign among them, and I will send some of those who survive to the nations—to Tarshish, to the Libyans [[b](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=isaiah%2066:18-24&version=NIV#fen-NIV-18942b#fen-NIV-18942b)] and Lydians (famous as archers), to Tubal and Greece, and to the distant islands that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory. They will proclaim my glory among the nations. 20 And they will bring all your brothers, from all the nations, to my holy mountain in Jerusalem as an offering to the LORD -on horses, in chariots and wagons, and on mules and camels," says the LORD. "They will bring them, as the Israelites bring their grain offerings, to the temple of the LORD in ceremonially clean vessels. 21 And I will select some of them also to be priests and Levites," says the LORD.

*22 "As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me," declares the LORD, "so will your name and descendants endure. 23 From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me," says the LORD.*