

The Old Testament Basis for Evangelism and Missions

By Dietmar Schulze

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

In what ways is Abraham a good example for missionaries today? Write down four or five ways. Prepare to share your answers with the group.

Assignment Two

Psalms 2; 33; 46; 49; 57; 66; 67; 72; 96; 98; 100; 105; 117; and 145 have a missional orientation. Choose three of them and write down what each says and implies about mission. Prepare to share your answers with the group.

Assignment Three

In what ways is Jonah not a good example for missionaries and evangelists today? Write down four or five ways. Prepare to share your answers with the group.

Scripture to Memorize

“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” Habakkuk 2:14

Session Goal

Consistent with God’s Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will have knowledge of Old Testament foundations for mission and evangelism today.

Dietmar Schulze is adjunct professor of Missions and World Christian Studies at Southwestern Seminary, teaching mostly online classes. He also teaches at Bibelseminar Bonn, Germany, where he currently lives. He is married to Désiré.

Dietmar was born and raised in a Christian home. At the age of twelve, he received the assurance of his salvation and was baptized. He became a follower of Jesus Christ, a born-again Christian, and a fourth-generation Baptist.

When he was sixteen, he survived three life-endangering situations in one week. This experience made him curious about God’s plan for his life. In a military training camp, on his twentieth birthday, he received the call to vocational ministry. After his theological studies, Dietmar worked ten years as a pastor in two Baptist churches. He has been teaching in a seminary since 2007.

Website: <http://www.bsb-online.de/index.php/de/startseite-de/das-team/dozenten/dr-dietmar-schulze>

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

One of your new neighbors is a Muslim. One day you have the chance to meet up with him for coffee and talk about each other's beliefs. When he tells you that Muslims honor Ibrahim (Abraham), then it is up to you to explain to him about the importance of Abraham for Christians. What would you tell him? How could the life of Abraham provide an opportunity to present the gospel?

Read Genesis 12:1-3 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Verse 1. Go forth from your country. God called Abram to leave his home. Abram was 75 years old (Genesis 12:4) when he began his journey. He could have been your great grandfather. Abram left many possessions and many things which were important to him. His obedience to follow God's call made him an example for Jews, Muslims, and Christians. He traveled about 1,500 miles without the comfort of today's transportation.

Jesus Christ similarly calls men and women to leave everything behind and follow Him (see Matthew 10:37-39; Philippians 3:8). Abraham showed that same spirit as he responded to God's call because of his faith. "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going." (Hebrews 11:8).

Discussion Question

To be on mission for Christ today, what are some things disciples might have to leave behind?

Verse 2: And I will make . . . bless . . . make. God made three promises to Abraham, all with the same purpose. God promised to make Abraham a great nation. He promised to bless him and give Abraham a great name.

Did Abram contribute any abilities to the fulfillment of those promises?

1. First, how could two senior adults without children become the first generation of a great nation? That was impossible.
2. Second, how could Abram be blessed financially when he left his property at home and became an immigrant?
3. Third, how could Abram hope to receive a great name in a country where he was a stranger?

From Abraham we learn that mission is possible even if it seems to be a "mission impossible." Abram was an example of faith. He did receive all that God promised Him because God always is faithful.

Verse 3. all the families of the earth shall be blessed. God blessed Abraham, but His ultimate intent was universal. Today, God does not bless individual disciples for their benefit only. We should share God's blessings so others can experience God's grace. That is an important principle of missions and evangelism. We do not keep the good news to ourselves.

Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now share a report.

Discussion Questions

God promised Abraham that future believers would be blessed through him. How are the members of our group being blessed through Abraham today?

Mission in the Book of Psalms

Read Psalm 96:1-13 out loud.

Studying the Passage

The ultimate goal of missions is to multiply worshippers around the eternal throne for the glory of God. This psalm calls for the worship of our glorious God to spread to all the peoples of the world.

The psalm proclaims these particular messages:

Verses 1-2a: A call to the world to worship God

Verses 2b-3: A call to proclaim the glory of God among the nations

Verses 4-6: A proclamation that only God is the Creator and all other gods are idols

Verses 7-9: A call to the entire world to worship God

Verse 10-13: A call to worship and proclaim the reign of God and His coming judgment

Assignment Two Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now share a report.

On Your Own

Use your imagination. In the space below, answer these questions: What ways might Jesus call you to join Him on mission while you are a teenager? While you are a young adult? While you are a middle-aged adult?

Jonah

Read Jonah 1:1-3; 3:4-5; and 4:1 out loud.

Studying the Passage

The book of Jonah is about a prophet who angrily resented the fact that God loves and cares for bad people. The book does not say that God cares for bad people because they are bad, but because they are human. People are important to God even when they don't seek Him. God sends messengers to tell people that God loves them. Jonah was such a messenger. Unlike God, however, he did not care about the people.

Jonah 1:3. But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. Jonah was called to go to Nineveh (Mosul in modern-day Iraq), which was in the east. Instead, he went westward to the Mediterranean.

Jonah 3:4. Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. That was a short sermon: The end is near. The people had 40 days before doomsday. The Bible does not tell us if Jonah gave any advice regarding what the people should do. It is one thing to announce judgment, but it is another to show the way of salvation. Somehow the people of Nineveh figured out what to do.

Jonah 3:5. And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them. This was what Jonah was afraid would happen.

Jonah 4:1. But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. God graciously had rescued Jonah from inside a big fish, but even that did not improve Jonah's attitude. He hated the people of Nineveh. When he saw the people repent of their sin, he was angry that they would no longer face immediate judgment.

Assignment Three Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now share a report.

Discussion Question

Share your feelings when it comes to the impending judgment facing other people. Do you care if other people go to hell? Has this been a motivation for you to proclaim the good news of the gospel?

On Your Own

In the space below, complete this thought: Jesus, as Your disciple I know You are calling me to join You in Your worldwide mission to multiply worshippers before the throne. It is the desire of my heart to respond to that invitation by . . .

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the Real-Life Scenario near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Prayer

7 minutes

At Home: Nail It Down

Abraham

God called Abram to leave his home. Abram left behind much of what was important to him. This obedience to follow God's call made him an example for believers. Jesus Christ similarly calls men and women to leave everything behind and follow Him (see Matthew 10:37-39; and Philippians 3:8). Do you need to leave anything behind to follow Christ?

God gave three promises to Abraham: God would make Abraham a great nation, would bless him and would give Him a great name. From Abraham we learn that God's mission is possible even if it seems impossible. Abraham was an example of faith, and God gave Abraham all He had promised him.

God promised Abraham that through him all the families of the earth would be blessed. Today we share God's blessings so others can experience His grace. That is an important principle of missions and evangelism. We do not keep the good news for ourselves.

The Book of Psalms

In Psalm 96:1-13 we read that mission and worship are connected. Worldwide, we worship and proclaim God the Creator, King, Judge and Savior. We "tell of His salvation from day to day" (Psalm 96:2).

Jonah

The book of Jonah is about a prophet who angrily resented the fact that God loves and cares for bad people. God cares for all people, even when they don't seek Him. God sends messengers to tell people that God loves them and desires a relationship with them. Jonah was such a messenger. In contrast to God, Jonah did not care about the people. Do you care?

Follow up Question

What can we learn from the Old Testament about evangelism and living on mission?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.