



## BIBLICAL BASIS OF MISSIONS

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# Here I Am

### **BIBLE VERSE**

“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying: Who should I send? Who will go for Us? I said: Here I am. Send me” (Isaiah 6:8).

### **LEADER PREPARATION**

- Gather information from the Kaleo Network Web site, [www.kaleonetwork.com](http://www.kaleonetwork.com). The KALEO Network is designed for individuals who are exploring or pursuing a call from God to ministry leadership through networking, personal development, and experience. The Kaleo Network is a resource provided by the North American Mission Board (NAMB).
- Gather information from the NAMB Web site, [www.namb.net](http://www.namb.net), and the Web site for the International Mission Board (IMB), [www.imb.org](http://www.imb.org), on the processes for individuals who feel called into career missions.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The book of Isaiah is the first book of the prophets in the Old Testament. There are two topics found in Isaiah that are commonly used in Bible studies and sermons. First is the prophesy of the birth, life, and death of the Savior. Next is the amazing vision Isaiah had of God in the temple. We will be discussing the vision of God that Isaiah had.

Isaiah chapter six opens by noting that it is the year that King Uzziah died. These words are followed immediately by noting what Isaiah saw: “. . .the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, and His robe filled the temple.”

Isaiah goes on to describe the heavenly beings he saw above the throne and the praises to God they called out to one another. In the midst of the sights and sounds, Isaiah was overcome by his unholiness and cried out, confessing his sin. Isaiah’s guilt was taken away with the touch of the glowing coal to his tongue. It was then Isaiah heard the voice of the Lord. He heard His calling and immediately responded, “Here I am. Send me.”

Isaiah’s call was not to riches and fame, but to delivering God’s message to God’s people. The message warned of coming punishment if they continued their rebellious lifestyles. Yet the Jewish nation refused to listen to Isaiah and the punishment came.

It was later, when God heard His people cry for mercy, that He gave Isaiah another message to share.

The message was the promise of a Redeemer who would come and set them free. Even though Isaiah's messages often fell on deaf ears, it did not change the calling God placed on his life. Isaiah knew God said, "Go and tell," and that is what he did.

The method God used to call Isaiah to deliver His message to the people is unique to the Old Testament prophet. However, the calling to "go and tell" continues to be spoken in the hearts of believers today. Not everyone knows about Jesus. Our loving God commands those who do know to go and tell others about Him. Some Christians may never leave the towns they were born in, but they share Jesus with everyone they know. Other believers are called to give up comforts and family, to risk life, and go to remote places of the world to share Jesus with the people there.

## **TEACHING PLAN**

### **Calling**

Have someone read Isaiah 6:1-8.

Based on the background information and your own personal study, discuss what God called Isaiah to do.

In addition to calling Isaiah, God called Abraham, Moses, John, Peter, Paul, and others. He called them to change what they were doing, leave where they were, go somewhere they did not know, do things they had not done before, and trust Him with everything they had.

Today God is still calling those who will listen. His call goes out to those who will respond with abandonment to leave home and family, to travel to a land possibly filled with danger, to learn a language they do not know, to share their faith with people completely different from themselves, and to trust Him with everything they have.

The definition of a missionary as approved by the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and the International Mission Board (IMB) is, "a person who, in response to God's call and gifting, leaves his or her comfort zone and crosses cultural, geographic, or other barriers to proclaim the gospel and live out a Christian witness in obedience to the Great Commission."

Some missionaries answer the call to the inner cities of Chicago or Detroit, while others answer the call to the remote regions of South Africa or to the Mongolian countryside.

Share the following information regarding missionaries in the field:

- The North American Mission Board reports that their official missionary count exceeded 5,300 at the end of 2009.
- The International Mission Board reports that as of May 5, 2010 there were 5,344 missionaries under appointment.

Even more amazing than the number of Christians answering the call to career missions, is the work God is doing through them:

- The IMB reports that at the end of 2009 there were 506,019 overseas baptisms, 24,650 new churches, and overseas church membership of 10.7 million.

### **Answering**

Go to either [www.imb.org](http://www.imb.org) or [www.namb.net](http://www.namb.net) and print off stories of missionaries to share with the group. Free downloadable missionary videos are also available on both Web sites. You may select a missionary based on the following criteria:

- They were born or lived in your area or in a nearby area.
- Someone in the group actually knows the missionary.
- Someone in the group has heard the missionary speak at a church event.
- The area where the missionary is serving will interest the group.
- The missionary's ministries will interest the group.

Based on the time you have to meet and the size of your group, you may want to choose several stories to share. Allow members of the group to read the stories, or you can show the videos. Allow time to discuss the things about the missionary's calling or current missions work they find amazing, interesting, and maybe even a little bizarre.

Hearing and answering God's call to the mission field is only the beginning of the journey. Both NAMB and IMB have stringent selection and approval processes individuals must go through before they are appointed to serve as Southern Baptist missionaries.

Review the NAMB and IMB Web sites and share with the group some of the processes and requirements set forth before an individual is appointed to the mission field.

### **ACTION PLAN**

#### **Going**

Perhaps someone in the group today has felt called to be a missionary. If they are comfortable sharing this with others, have the group pray for this individual and continue to pray for them as they seek to confirm their calling. If there is someone who is trying to discern if they are being called to mission service, have them contact the Kaleo Network, NAMB, or IMB where someone can help them determine what God might be calling them to do. The Kaleo Network is an excellent place to begin, as this is their purpose. Contact information can be located on the Web sites.

Choose a missionary (one in North America and one overseas) your group will support with prayers and encouragement, via letters or e-mail, over the next 12 months. You may not be able to choose a missionary by name but can choose someone based on the region or people group they are serving. Contact NAMB and IMB so they can guide you through the steps of making contact with the missionary.

Discuss the possibility of having members of the group present this lesson to the youth in the church so they can learn more about missionaries and their callings.

**LESSON BY**

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# New Testament

## **BIBLE VERSE**

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

## **LEADER PREPARATION**

- Policeman’s hat
- Fireman’s hat
- Hard hat
- Stethoscope
- Referee’s whistle
- Black-and-white striped referee’s shirt
- “Saving Pauline” video from [www.namb.net](http://www.namb.net) video gallery
- Computer (to show the video)

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Change. Most of us don’t like it. After all, change makes us uncomfortable. Our routines get upset; new habits have to be learned. But you and I know Jesus Christ today because God pushed the early church outside its own backyard and into a different, sometimes frightening, world. Before He ascended into heaven, Jesus left His followers with this mandate: “. . .all authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 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 everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18–20).

In today’s passage of Scripture, Acts 1: 8, Jesus gave the model for evangelism and missions. Evangelize in your community (your Jerusalem), your state or region (your Judea), your country or continent (your Samaria), and globally (the ends of the earth).

The New Testament church did just that—sometimes with a “nudge” from God. After Pentecost the church exploded in Jerusalem. Thousands became believers and disciples. They enjoyed close fellowship in Jerusalem, but God would not let them get too comfortable. Persecution broke out after Stephen’s martyrdom, and most of the Christians in Jerusalem scattered to other countries. They evangelized as they went, sowing the gospel seed.

God taught Peter that Gentiles could also come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ (see Acts 10). Soon the Jerusalem church was commissioning Paul and Barnabas as the first missionaries. This team set out to begin churches that reached out to both Jews and Gentiles. Because of culture differences, tensions arose and misunderstandings ensued. It is important to note, however, that the New Testament church did not let these difficulties stop them from fulfilling Christ’s Great Commission. They worked through problems and kept planting churches wherever there was a response to the gospel.

Before we leave this brief history of evangelism in the early church, let’s return to Acts 1:8. Jesus emphasized one particular region, calling it by name: Samaria. Why did Jesus call attention to this region and not others? The probable answer is that traditionally Jews and Samaritans hated each other. The Jews considered Samaritans vulgar and unclean. One would have nothing to do with the other. And yet, this is precisely whom Jesus points to as a people He wants to see come to the saving knowledge of Christ!

When it comes to evangelism, the church is to have no boundaries. There are no people groups whom Jesus does not love. The early church went everywhere it could. We must do the same.

## **TEACHING PLAN**

### **By Whose Authority?**

Display the objects you’ve gathered. Begin by asking the group to identify each object. After they have all been correctly identified ask: What do these objects have in common? (They are all symbols of authority.)

After various answers have been given (and if no one has the correct answer) say: Each of these is a symbol of authority. When a person wears one of these, and is qualified to do so, it gives the wearer responsibility over a group of people. For example, when a person wearing a police officer’s hat holds up his hand and tells you to stop your car, you’d better stop! When a firefighter wearing the proper hat tells you not to go into a building where smoke is evident, you obey! Construction personnel won’t let you into certain areas without a hard hat on. And when a man wearing scrubs and a stethoscope says he has important information for you, your heart beats a little faster and you listen intently!

Say: But it’s the referee’s uniform and whistle that are particularly interesting for us today. On the football field or the basketball court, when someone wearing the black and white shirt blows a whistle, everyone stops. Think about this: the referees are usually smaller, slower, and less gifted athletically than the players they oversee. And yet, the huge behemoths on the field and the giants on the court obey! Why? The players and coaches recognize the symbols of authority. Another way of putting it would be to say that their behavior is guided by the rules of the referee.

Now say: Let's take a look at how one man's life is guided by the authority he has chosen to follow.

Play the "Saving Pauline" video. After the video, ask this question: Why do you think Dick May and his wife befriended Pauline?

Allow time for discussion and say: Dick May and his wife went the extra mile for an ex-drug addict because they are following the mandate of their ultimate authority—Jesus Christ.

Ask: By whose authority are you living your life? If you respond by saying Jesus Christ, then I have some great news for you! He has given you and me some very clear instructions. When we follow these instructions, we fulfill our purpose and we help Christ transform the world.

### **Prepare and Obey**

Have someone read Matthew 28:18–20. Say: Here are our instructions from our commander in chief—Jesus Christ. We *must* spread the gospel throughout the world. Notice that Jesus did not place exceptions to His commands. He didn't say, "Only pastors and missionaries need to obey me." Jesus was speaking to all believers, in all times, in every geographic location. In other words, Jesus was speaking to you.

Now have someone read Acts 1:8. Say: In the Matthew passage, we have our marching orders. Acts 1:8 tells us how to accomplish the task. Evangelize in our communities (our Jerusalem), our state or region (our Judea), our country or continent (our Samaria), and globally (the ends of the earth).

Say: The fact that Jesus specifically mentions Samaria is important for us as believers. When Jesus spoke those words to His disciples, He knew that Jews and Samaritans were enemies. They hated each other. The Jews thought of Samaritans as unclean and would have nothing to do with them. By deliberately naming Samaria, Jesus commanded the church to pull down racial, ethnic, and prejudicial barriers. Today Christ wants you and me to love everyone and He wants us to try to reach every people group.

Say: There are some excellent tools available from the North American Mission Board to aid in cross-cultural evangelism efforts. At the Web site [www.namb.net](http://www.namb.net), we can find advice on how to begin and deepen relationships with other people groups. There are also several plans for planting churches in different areas. However, let's remember this rule: *The better prepared we are the easier it is to obey.*

With that in mind, here are four tips for reaching out cross-culturally:

I. Identify the person.

a. How is this person different from you?

b. How is he the same?

II. Determine the person's need.

- a. Is his need one that is common to all humans?
- b. Is his need one that is unique to his culture?
- c. Is the need one that is unique to this person?

III. Formulate a way to minister.

- a. How can you minister in this specific community?
  1. Identify with the culture.
  2. Bend over backwards. Paul said, "I become all things to all people."
  3. The person in his comfort zone is always the one responsible to make others feel comfortable.
- b. How can you minister individually?
  1. Create ways to introduce the person to your culture.
  2. Discover individual needs that can be met.
  3. Work with the language issue or discovery issue (something new to the international).

IV. Bring the person into your world and always be sensitive to explain.

Source: [www.namb.net](http://www.namb.net), "Building Cross Cultural Relationships"

## **ACTION PLAN**

### **Find Your "Pauline"**

Say: All this may seem a little overwhelming, so let's simplify it. This week, ask God to help you find your "Pauline." Dick May and his wife were open to God using them to help others, regardless of whom the other person might be.

Ask: Are you open to God using you? Are you willing to speak to anyone for Jesus? As you pray, ask God to enlarge your capacity to love. Ask Him to give you at least one "Pauline," if not more.

Say: We often look right through the people around us. If they don't have the same skin color or speak with the same accent as us, we simply ignore them. This week, look at each person around you as a potential "Pauline." If God gives you the opportunity, begin building a relationship with them. As trust grows between you, look for the right time to share how Christ changes lives.

Say: We are under orders from Jesus Christ to go into the world as His representatives. This week, let's begin reaching out, and let's never stop our efforts until the last person in the farthest nation has heard the marvelous story of Jesus. After all, we are under orders—and the "Paulines" of the world are waiting.

**LESSON BY**

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## BIBLICAL BASIS OF MISSIONS

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# Old Testament

### **BIBLE VERSES**

“The Lord said to Abram: ‘Go out from your land, your relatives, and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, I will curse those who treat you with contempt, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you’” (Genesis 12:1-3).

### **LEADER PREPARATION**

- World map
- Map of your city or region
- Sticky notes, several packs
- Pens or pencils

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The term missions is bantered about freely within the Christian community and most Christians have an understanding of the meaning of the term. A definition that fits Christian missions is a specific task with which a person or group is charged to help fulfill the Great Commission. We understand that the mission of every Christian is to tell the world about the saving power of Jesus Christ. But do we realize how ancient our call to missions actually is?

Our call to missions actually began just after the dawn of humankind’s creation. After Adam and Eve sinned by eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, God pronounced judgment on Adam and Eve, as well as on their descendants. They were banned from the Garden of Eden. Their lives would become hard; pain promised to be a regular companion; the earth would, in many ways, become an adversary, not a friend.

What would become of humankind after sin entered the world? Cut off from the Garden of Eden and alienated from God, there seemed no hope. But in Genesis 3:15, God says this to Satan (the serpent), “I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.” In these words we find both the seed of hope and the necessity of missions.

God is saying to Satan that one day Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man, would suffer death at the hands of Satan's servants ("strike his heel"). We now know that three days later Jesus rose from the dead, conquering death, sin, and Satan forever ("strike your head"). Christ's sacrifice is the world's only hope. Someone must tell them. God has chosen His church as the vehicle by which the message is delivered.

In today's passage, we see God telling Abram (later, Abraham) that through him all the world would one day be blessed ("all the peoples of the earth"). Jesus Christ, descendant of Abraham and David, was the fulfillment of this prophecy.

None of this, of course, happened all at once. In every case, it took time. Abraham and Sarah had to be faithful for forty years while waiting for their promised son, Isaac, who could continue Abraham's lineage. Jesus Christ had to be faithful for more than thirty years, wading through people rejecting Him, lying about Him, betraying Him, cursing Him, and beating Him, not to mention killing Him. Because of their faithfulness, however, we have been given the opportunity to hear and respond to the good news of Jesus Christ.

Now God wants us to follow the examples set by Abraham and Christ. It is our turn to be faithful to God's prophecy, spoken so long ago to a man leaving his home and going to a place he'd never seen. It is our turn to tell "all the peoples of the earth" that Jesus loves them, has a plan for their lives, and that He alone can save them from sin and judgment.

Will we be faithful?

## **TEACHING PLAN**

### **Where in the World?**

Begin by passing out the sticky notes, giving four or five to each person. When everyone has arrived, point to the world map and then ask each person to write down on a sticky note the name of a missionary they know personally. Use a different note for each missionary. This can be a missionary working with state missions, the North American Mission Board, or the International Mission Board. Have enough to hand out as many as are needed.

After all have finished writing say: "The Southern Baptist Convention has the largest missions force in the world. Our goal as a denomination is to tell the whole world about the saving power of Jesus Christ."

Then say: "Take the sticky notes you have written on and place each note on the map where the missionary is serving. If you're not sure where a missionary is serving, place that note at the top of the map."

Allow everyone to come forward and place their notes at the appropriate places on the map. When they've finished say: "These notes represent a small fraction of the missionaries serving our Lord every day. According to the North American Mission Board, more than 5,000 men and women serve

in the United States and Canada. Around the world, International Mission Board missionaries also number more than 5,000.”

Now display your city or regional map. Ask each person to name Southern Baptist churches in the area. As they are named, have someone write the name down on a note and place it in the appropriate area on the map.

After both maps have been covered with sticky notes, move on to the next section of the lesson.

### **Four-Thousand-Year-Old Link Discovered!**

Begin by asking: “What do the modern cities of New York, Houston, and Los Angeles have in common with a village of mud huts in the Amazon forest? What might the metropolis of Singapore and the mountainous rural areas of Mexico have in common? What about the Middle East, the Caribbean, ancient China, and the narrow, winding streets in Paris—is there a unifying common denominator?”

The answer lies in a 4,000-year-old link. It is overlooked by most of the world and ignored by many, but this ancient link nevertheless plays an important role in the modern world. Southern Baptists believe this link is the hope of the world.

We see the link in today’s passage of Scripture. Read Genesis 12:1–3. Explain that God commanded Abram to leave Ur of the Chaldeans and go to Canaan, a place Abram had never seen.

Say: “Don’t miss this promise from God to Abram: “All the peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” This promise is the link that holds the world together. Whether in Europe, Asia, North America, South America, in a mud hut or a gleaming metropolis, everyone everywhere has the same need. When Adam and Eve sinned, that sin principle passed to all humankind. In other words, we all need outside help for our sins. We know Jesus Christ provides that help. But did you know that God has commanded you and me to share that knowledge with a lost world?”

God’s prophecy to Abraham about all people being blessed through him links all nations, language groups, and peoples to the possibility of discovering Jesus Christ and being saved for eternity! But how will everyone everywhere hear this good news? That’s where you and I come into the picture.

Say: “If we’re not careful, we will become so focused on our daily lives, our own needs, and our circle of friends that we will ignore most of the outside world. That’s why God reminds us, beginning over 4,000 years ago, that our responsibility is to nothing less than the entire world!”

Abraham was faithful to God as was his son, Isaac. Because of their faithfulness, as well as the faithfulness of others, eventually Jesus Christ, part of Abraham’s lineage, was born. Christ was faithful to His heavenly Father in allowing Himself to be crucified for you, me, and the whole world. Now it’s time for us to be faithful. Let’s not break the ancient, precious, God-given link offered to all people on this planet.

## **ACTION PLAN**

### **Posts and Prayers**

Say: “One way we can have a global awareness is by focusing on those outside our neighborhoods and circles of friends. We don’t want to miss out on helping win this world to Christ.”

Point to the maps. Say: “Take a couple of these notes home with you. Keep them where you can see them easily and pray for the missionaries during this next week. If you have time, look up facts about where these missionaries live and work. Check out the Web sites [www.imb.org](http://www.imb.org) and [www.namb.net](http://www.namb.net) to discover how to better pray for our missionaries.”

If there are blank areas on your local map, point to them and say: “Notice there are some blank areas on our local map. Let’s pray that God would reach those areas for Him. Let’s also ask God to show us if it’s His will for us to be the ones who try to reach the people in those areas for Jesus.”

The 4,000-year-old link of missions has been handed to us. Let’s keep it strong and growing!

## **LESSON BY**

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