



ASKING BETTER QUESTIONS -  
GRAND THEMES 17 – NATIONS &  
CALL

A thick black L-shaped frame surrounds the text. The top-left corner is a horizontal bar extending to the right, and the bottom-right corner is a vertical bar extending upwards. The text is centered within the open space of the frame.

# WELCOME TO “GRAND THEMES”

Each week we will trace a major theme through the  
whole Bible.









# Nations & Call



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# Theme gallery



					
TEMPLE	COVENANT	EXODUS	L&D	KINGDOM	ORDER & CHAOS

# Theme gallery



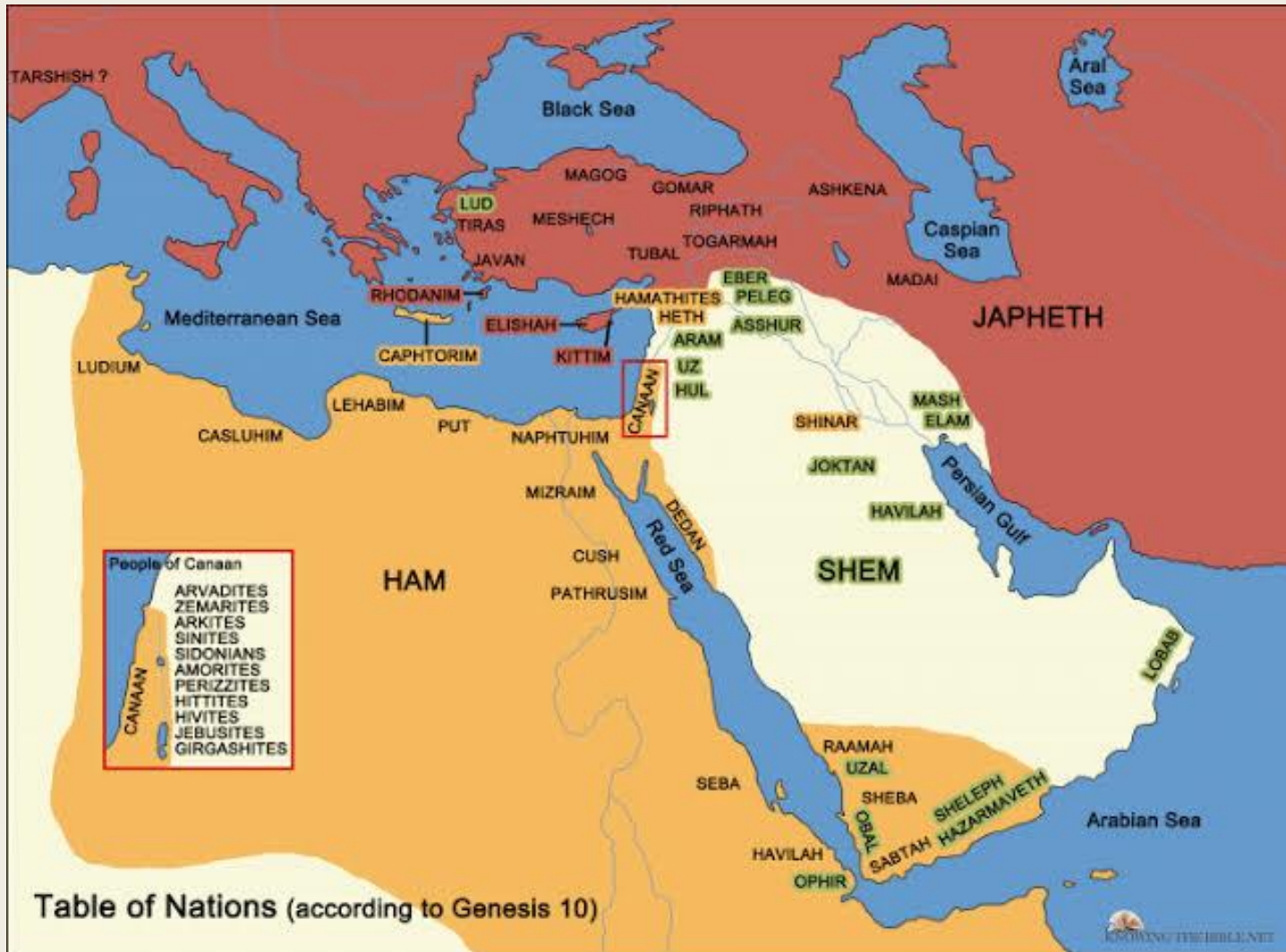
					
NATIONS & CALL					



# Genesis – promise to Abram



- (Gen 12:1-5) The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; **and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.**
- (Gen 15:5) He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars –if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.
- (Gen 18:18) Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him.
- What do we see here about what God was wanting to do in the world?



## Table of Nations (Gen 10)

- This is the account of Shem, Ham and Japheth, Noah's sons, who themselves had sons after the flood....
- "Semitic" – descended from Shem.
- Why the big genealogy?
- Telling the story





# Israel – A chosen nation



- (Ex 19:5-6) Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, “This is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself.’”
- Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, **then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession.** Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a **kingdom of priests and a holy nation.**’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”





# Israel to be set apart from the nations



- (Lev 20:23-24) You must not live according to the customs of the nations I am going to drive out before you. Because they did all these things, I abhorred them. But I said to you, “You will possess their land; I will give it to you as an inheritance, a land flowing with milk and honey.” I am the LORD your God, **who has set you apart from the nations.**
- Talmud: milk flows from the goats’ (udders), and honey flows from the figs.” ([Ketubot 111b](#))
- Ideas of abundance and sweetness (no longer bitter).
- Chosen, but with covenant responsibility.



# Deut 4:25-31

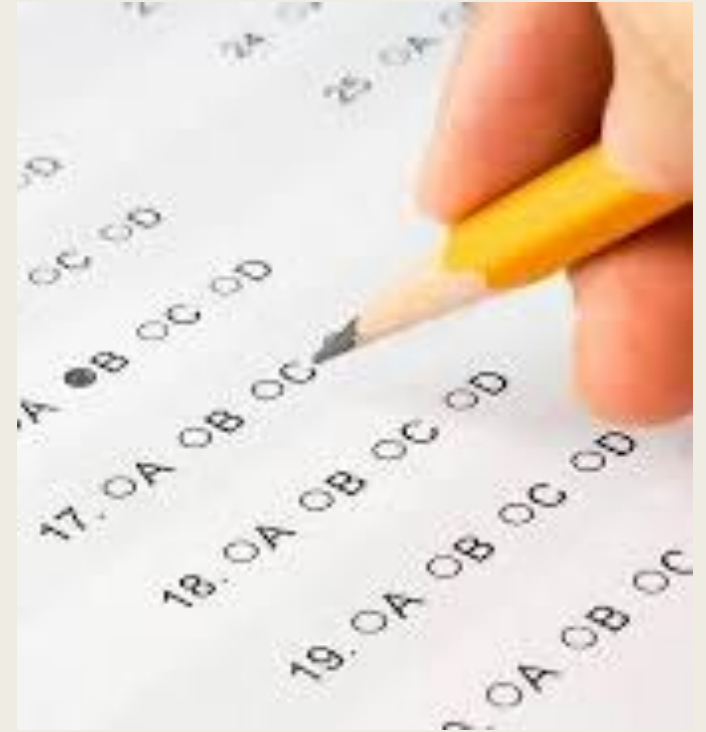


- After you have had children and grandchildren and have lived in the land a long time—if you then become corrupt and make any kind of idol, doing evil in the eyes of the LORD your God and arousing his anger, I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you this day that you will quickly perish from the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess.
- You will not live there long but will certainly be destroyed. The LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and only a few of you will survive **among the nations** to which the LORD will drive you. There you will worship man-made gods of wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or eat or smell.
- **But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul.** When you are in distress and all these things have happened to you, then in later days you will return to the LORD your God and obey him.
- For the LORD your God is a merciful God; he will not abandon or destroy you or forget the covenant with your ancestors, which he confirmed to them by oath.
- Storyline of Israel for centuries.
- What is the context here of “seeking God with all your heart?” Any new understanding?
- How does God’s covenant with Israel play out here?

# Judges – Nations as a test



- (Jud 20:2) Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel and said, “**Because this nation has violated the covenant** I ordained for their ancestors and has not listened to me, I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations Joshua left when he died. I will use them to **test** Israel and see whether they will keep the way of the LORD and walk in it as their ancestors did.” The LORD had allowed those nations to remain; he did not drive them out at once by giving them into the hands of Joshua.
- Thinking about the difference in testing times of being with God or being far from God....





# We want to be like the other nations



- (1 Sam 8:4) So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. They said to him, “You are old, and your sons do not follow your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as **all the other nations have.**”
- (1 Sam 8:19) But the people refused to listen to Samuel. “No!” they said. “We want a king over us. **Then we will be like all the other nations,** with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles.”
- (1 Sam 8:21-22) When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the LORD. The LORD answered, “Listen to them and give them a king.”
- People’s motivation not coming from faith, but God did want a king – but a different kind of king ultimately. Most kings of Israel and Judah were not godly.

# Relationship with the Nations



- Israel to be distinct from the nations and not follow their practices.
- God rescues Israel from Egypt and judges them.
- Conquest of land of Israel displaced the Canaanites.
- Israel wanted to be like the other nations: Give us a king! (1 Sam 8:5)
- Time of the kings – Israel/Judah expand, military conquests.
- Yet, Israel fell into idolatry picked up from the surrounding nations.
- God used Assyria to judge Israel (Isa 7)
- But God will in turn judge Assyria at the hands of Babylon, and in turn by the Medes.
- Yet, hope for the nations – Isa 61



# What was Israel supposed to do



- (Isaiah 2:1-4) This is what Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem: In the last days the **mountain of the LORD's temple** will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted 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 temple 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. He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.
- Unpack this picture – what do you see?
- God's people living out God's kingdom ways bring blessing to the whole world.





# Call of Isaiah

- (Isa 6:5-10) "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty." Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."
- Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

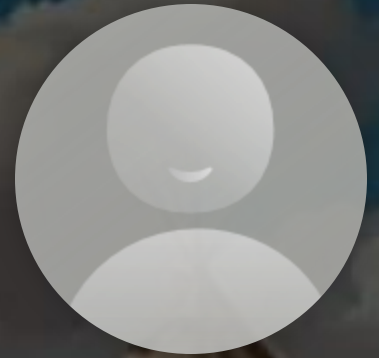
# Call of Isaiah



- He said, “Go and tell this people:” “Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving. Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn and be healed.
- What’s the task?
- How does God operate to get things done in the world?
- How do you understand this?
- Who did Jesus quote this passage to?
- How did that effect Jesus’ teaching style?
- What is God looking for?



# Banner for the nations



- (Isa 11: 10-12) In that day the **Root of Jesse** will stand as **a banner for the peoples**; the **nations will rally to him**, and his resting place will be glorious. In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the surviving remnant of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the Mediterranean. **He will raise a banner for the nations** and **gather the exiles of Israel**; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth.
- What does Root of Jesse refer to? Who was Jesse?
- What is the function of a banner?
- What is the overall picture here?

# Light to the Gentiles



- (Isa 49) Listen to me, you islands; hear this, you distant nations:
- Before I was born the LORD called me; from my mother's womb he has spoken my name. He made my mouth like a sharpened sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me into a polished arrow and concealed me in his quiver. He said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendor."
- (Isa 49:5-6) And now the LORD says—he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself, for I am honored in the eyes of the Lord and my God has been my strength —he says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I **will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.**"
- What is God concerned about and what does he need?
- Isaiah 8th C BC.

# Hebrew Bible – “Nations”



- Ruth > from Moab
- Jonah > preached to Nineveh
- Nahum > preached to Nineveh
- Obadiah > preached to Edom
- Isaiah > hope for the nations



# Reflection



- Does this part of the story fill in any blanks for you?
- How do relate to the idea of Israel being a blessing to the nations?
- Anything else that has impacted you today from our discussion?



NEXT TIME...NATION &  
CALL II