IV. The **DISTINCTION** of one Nation (Genesis 12:1-3)-From Abraham to Joshua, God Births a Nation. They did not worship God.

A. A **DEFINING PROMISE:** Abraham was given the promise of lineage.

1. "I will make thee a great nation" (Verse 2).
   a. Abraham was given the promise of Land: "Unto thy seed have I given this land." Genesis 15:18-21.
   b. Jacob was given the promise of Lineage: Genesis 35:9-15.
   c. Moses was given the Law: Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 10.
   d. Joshua was given the Land - Joshua 1:1-9.
2. "I will bless thee and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing" (Verse 2).
3. "I will bless them that bless thee and curse them that curse thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth by blessed" (Verse 3).

B. **A DIVINE PURPOSE** " .. .in thee shall all families (nations, clans, ethnos) of the earth be blessed" (Verse 3).

1. God blessed Abraham to be a blessing. He, in turn, has blessed us to be a blessing.
2. God desires that "all families" (ethnos, people groups) acknowledge Him and bow before Him (Verses 3-4).
3. The promise given to Abraham gives the mission of the church a people group focus.

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NATIONAL BIBLE PUBLISHING MONTH

ADULT TEACHER GUIDE | **LESSON 1**

THE STRUCTURE OF THE NATIONS

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LESSON ONE DEFINITIONS

Collaborate – to work with another or others on a joint project
Commune – to be in intimate communication or rapport
Diverse – different or various kinds of something
Embrace – to accept gladly and willingly
Ethnos – Greek word meaning groups of people, families, tribes, or clans
Lineage – direct descent from a particular ancestor; ancestry.
Nation – a group of people having a common language, lineage, laws, and living in the same place

INTRODUCTION

God desires our worship; He deserves our worship; He demands our worship; and best of all, He delights in our worship. Isn't that what it's all about? Creation worshipping the Creator. God gives us a glimpse of this in Revelation 5:9. He allows us to view a divine snapshot of who will be gathered around His throne worshipping. This peek reveals a rather colorful and varied redeemed group *"from every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."*

These lessons will take us from the structuring of the very first nations to God's plan for all the nations. We will see how God selected Abraham to be His means of bringing the Gospel blessing to all the world. God chose a people for His name (Israel) and in blessing them, they in turn, blessed all nations.
What do you think of when you hear the word "nations?" Most of us envision geopolitical boundaries on a brightly colored map. These lessons give us a proper view of the word "nations" in the Bible and how that understanding this term allows us to see God's plan in accomplishing worship as the end goal as it is seen in Revelation 5:9. Our natural reaction is to shrink back at the enormity of the task, seeing a host of hurdles and obstacles. However, God, Himself, has no problem in accomplishing the task. It is His project and His desire to be worshipped by all nations. The might of our God in respect to the nations is clearly depicted in Isaiah 40:15, "The nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: ... " How wonderful to know that the "obstacles" of language, distance, culture, even false religions are as dust in God's hands! May these lessons challenge us to see a multi-colored quilt of ethnic peoples all praising God in various tongues and giving Him glory in unified diversity!

Lesson One – The Sin of the Nations (Genesis 11)

The framework for every nation begins in Genesis 10: 1, *"Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood."* This verse sets the stage for the emerging nations to come and is an overview of the next few chapters. Previous Scripture revealed the creation of man, but now God gives us an insight as to the origin of the nations. After weeding though all of the names mentioned, we finally come to verse 32, *"These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood."*

I. The DEFINITION of a Nation
- When the Bible uses the word nation, to what is God referring?
- Is a nation, in God's eyes, made up by political boundaries?
- Is it the dividing lines on a map that make a group of people a nation or is there more?

NOTE: The Greek root word for Nations is "Ethnos" which means "people groups:' God states it this way:
- *"By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations."* Genesis 10:5
- *"These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations."* Genesis 10:20
- *"These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations."* Genesis 10:31
- *". .. out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;"* Revelation 5:9.

Four conditions define a nation/people group:
1. **LINEAGE** – Seed, family line, tribe. A nation is a people group having a common ancestry; descendants in a line from a common progenitor.
2. **LANGUAGE** – signs, sounds, speech. A nation consists of a group of people in which ideas and thoughts are communicated freely and unhindered.
3. **LAWS** – ordinances, commands, government, rules. A nation is a group of people who are united by common rules of conduct and laws that govern their society.
4. **LAND** – territory, border. A nation is a group of people that live in a common region, territory, or border.

"Any group of people recognizing themselves as having a common language, having common laws (written or unwritten), living on a de.fined area of land are a nation in the Biblical sense of the word." (Biblical Bible Translation, 3rd edition. Turner, Charles)

NOTE: A nation can be found within another nation. It's best to think of faces, not maps when we hear the word nation. The Navajo Nation is in the United States, the Kurds of Eastern Europe have lived in many places. Often, entire nations are in captivity or displaced because of wars or famines. The "Nation" of Israel was still a "nation" even when living in Babylon or Egypt. The country of Nepal has 341 known people groups/nations. The country of India is home to a staggering 3,237 people groups/nations.

II. The **DESIGN** of a Nation
Though all people groups/nations are different and unique, they each have unifying characteristics which draw them together.

A. Designed with an Aptitude to **COMMUNICATE**. Communication leads to community, a mutual ownership of values, ideals, and understanding. Everyone is born with the need to communicate. Ideally, communication among the nations should be used to foster a common love and resulting worship for the one true God.
B. Designed with an Aspiration to **COLLABORATE**. The ability for nations to have unity in order to achieve success and accomplishment is important. Our interdependence should be viewed as a blessing from God and an opportunity to share our gifts.
C. Designed with an Appetite to **COMMUNE**. Man was created with an innate desire to worship. That desire is so strong that in the absence of truth, mankind creates worship, serving nature, idols of stone, wood, metal, and earth. In the deepest pockets of darkness on earth, mankind seeks to worship, building altars, offering sacrifice, and in their crudeness, attempting to appease the object of their worship. The nations are seeking worship, most in the absence of truth. The mishandling of worship is wherein the seedbed of all false religions lie.

III. The **DIVERSITY** of the Nations
Diversity is God's pleasure. We might say that diversity is a great thing, but the more important fact is that it is a God thing. Even among our own nations and families, we have distinct likes and dislikes. We have favorite colors and foods and hobbies. Since we know that God created all things for His pleasure (Revelation 4:11), we know that His divine purpose and pleasure do not fall short in the diversity of the nations.

A. Diversity of the Nations is INTENTIONAL and ETERNAL.
   1. He made the nations (people groups) and He set them in their place.
   2. This diversity is clearly apparent before God's throne in Revelation 5:9.
   3. The focus of the missionary task is not a response to an accident.
B. Diversity of the Nations MAGNIFIES the glory of God.
   1. Psalm 96:3-4 - United diversity is beautiful to God as it focuses all praise on Him.
   2. God's fame increases in proportion to the diversity of the people who recognize His beauty. A rare piece of art only becomes more valued and prized as it is taken worldwide on an exhibition. The more diverse the people who value it, the more precious it becomes. The exhibition of the fame of God increases in value as He is worshipped among ALL the nations.
   3. The diversity of the people groups who give up their false gods and tear down their idols to follow the true God makes God's greatness more visible.
   4. Acts 17:26 - A focus on diversity undercuts ethnic pride. Humility gives God all the glory.