2. God Sent His Servants
   a. The Book of Jonah. Though Jonah was a reluctant missionary, his divine detour made possible the redemption of a great and wicked city. The restoration of Nineveh was only accomplished by the intervention of God's hand.
   b. The Prophets. (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, 8:1, 8:26, 10:17-29, 13:1-3). Even in the first presentations of the Gospel, we see the order of the sons of Noah or the main categories of the nations. In the book of Acts, we are told that on the day of Pentecost Peter stood up and said, *"Ye men of Israel,"* and addressed the Gospel to them (to the Semitic people). Then in the next section we find Philip called to leave a revival in Samaria and go down to preach to a single individual in the desert, who is a Hamite, an Ethiopian, the treasurer of Ethiopia. Then, we see Peter being sent to the Japhethites, preaching the Gospel to Cornelius, a centurion of Rome.

III. The Scattering of the Nations Provides a Holy **RECOGNITION** of God

In studying the word "scatter" or "scattered," there is a common conclusion that surfaces, that they might know him. God scattered the nations with a greater purpose in mind, that the world would have a holy recognition of Him. In Ezekiel 34 alone, the word "scattered" is mentioned six times. As the chapter comes to a close, it is obvious that God is restoring Israel, and in doing so, people will know that, *"I the LORD their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord GOD." Ezekiel 29:12-13 again uses the word "scatter."* In verse 21 we see the end goal and focus of the scattering, *"...and they shall know that I am the LORD."* Chapter 30:23, 26 relates that God will scatter the Egyptians for the stated purpose in verse 26, *"...and they shall know that I am the LORD."*

As we contemplate the daunting assignment to reach all nations, we are tempted to be overwhelmed. However, in Isaiah 40, the might of God is depicted in comparisons to which we finite humans can relate, using tangible substances such as oceans, dust, mountains, and hills. Note verse 15, *"Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance…"* This matter of the nations is God's project and we are able to rest in His capable hands in quiet obedience. In Acts 2, we find God overcoming the language barrier with great ease. What man could not do, God did. God confounded the languages at the Tower of Babel probably for several reasons, but regardless of the reason, the ultimate goal was that every tribe, tongue, people, and nation would worship the One True Living God. Revelation 5:9 confirms that this will happen.

Taking the Gospel to the Unreached ensures more glory to His name. It should not be the motive of obedience to the Great Commission alone that draws us to the nations, but rather a delighting in what brings God pleasure. Making God famous among the scattered nations should be the first and final goal of missions. While millions of people remain unreached, having no Bible in their own language, and not one Gospel-preaching church among them, we must ask ourselves, **"What are we going to do to reach the nations today?"**

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NATIONAL BIBLE PUBLISHING MONTH

ADULT TEACHER GUIDE | **LESSON 3**

The Scattering of the Nations

THE SCATTERING OF THE NATIONS

LESSON THREE DEFINITIONS

Confound – to perplex or amaze, especially by a sudden disturbance or surprise; bewilder; confuse
Mission – a special and important task
Restoration – a return of something to a former, original, normal, or unimpaired condition.
Scattering – distributing, dispersing, or separating.
Shem, Ham, and Japeth – Noah's sons who were commanded to spread out, to scatter to other places in the world
Unreached People Groups – people groups/nations who are still waiting for the good news of the Gospel; they are less than 2% evangelized.

REVIEW

In the previous lessons, we have discovered that the worship of God by all creation is the ultimate goal of missions. His greatest desire is to be worshipped by all peoples (people groups/nations) of the world. We learned about a future act of true international worship in Revelation 5:9 and the biblical definition of the word nations. We observed the selection of Abraham along with a people for His name and God's divine design to bless the nations through the nation of Israel. Finally, we learned of the sin of the nations in not heeding God's command to scatter and the awful progression of sin stemming from a neglect of God's Word affecting ourselves and others. We were reminded of the sin of pride and wicked imaginations which today manifests itself in many forms of modern idolatry.

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this lesson is on God's scattering of the nations. In order to best study this historical and pivotal event, we must first discuss the confounding of language. There are some foundational truths that must be realized about God confounding the languages in order to have a better understanding of the nations.

Lesson Three – The Scattering of the Nations

I. The Biblical Account Provides an Accurate **RECORD** for History.
Did the confounding of the languages and scattering of the people really happen? The answer is, "YES!" This event really did happen. For a Christian who has had a Bible all his life and has placed full faith and trust in it, the question seems silly; however, for the lost humanistic society, this story is hard for them to swallow. Carbon dating, fossils, and evolutionary theories are the modern gauges in which "truth" is measured. The scale of human reasoning and logic outweighs the intervention of a supernatural one-time intervention by a Holy God. Though there is a common consensus among historians of a division of languages and resulting migration, it is nevertheless attributed to long spans of time, having neither a defined plan nor an intelligent process.

A. Seen through the **SCRIPTURES**
Apart from God's Word, man has no clue about his ethnic or linguistic origins. It can be amusing to pick up one of many secular writings and read man's struggle to explain and defend his theories and hypotheses that ultimately puzzle those brilliant men of science, yet a young child can pick up God's Word and read the answer and declare it with confidence. The following are certainties we know about the scattering of the nations:
1. Only True Source. The Bible is the only true source for the historic information about the scattering of the nations and the confounding of language.
2. Only One Second. In Genesis 11:9 we find, "*the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth.*" It was not a slow progression but an instantaneous event.
3. Only Given Spot. The land of Shinar is the exact place where God confounded the language and scattered the nations. In verse 9 the Scriptures say, *"So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence."* This event happened at a specific place.

B. Seen Through the **FOOTPRINTS OF MAN**
When Noah and his family stepped out of the Ark, they were the only people on Earth. It fell to Noah's three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their wives, to repopulate the Earth. In Genesis 10, God preserves the genealogies of these three brothers for all the world to see. This list of people gives us a clear record of the original 70 people groups that God scattered upon the earth. As the descendants of Noah dispersed to different lands and established the various nations of the ancient world, they left their footprints in three distinct ways.
1. Their **NAMES**. First, these people groups in various areas often called themselves by the name of a common ancestor. In patriarchal societies, the names of prominent male members were in essence guaranteed at least a mental posterity by the entire "tribe" adopting the name of a famous forefather.
2. Their **LANDS**. Second, they sometimes named their lands, rivers, and cities after a common ancestor. To this day, many regions, cities, and geographical landmarks bear the name of the first families to populate an area. These are definite clues to the first inhabitants of ancient civilizations.
3. Their **ALTARS**. Thirdly, they practiced ancestor worship and left their altars to tell the sad tale of depravity and the innate need to worship and sacrice. Altars were a huge part of religious life; perhaps their use originated in a synchronized twisted take on worship. These marks offer a vivid picture of the ancient people who used them. By tracing back these three historical footprints, it leads us directly to the accurate record found in Scripture. As the Bible details ***how*** the scattering of the nations occurred, we might wonder if it also explains ***why*** it occurred. As we study further, we will learn that ultimately God's design in the scattering of the nations is restoration.

II. The Scattering Process Positions Man for **RESTORATION**
Scripture clearly declares God's love for all men and that He desires to restore man in fellowship with Him, but what are the means in which He has accomplished that goal?

A. God Restores Fellowship by Scattering the **NATIONS** (Ezekiel 36:23-38).
Throughout Scripture, God uses the method of scattering for the purpose of restoration. God destroyed the earth as a result of man's sin by a catastrophic flood. Shortly after making the promise with Noah that He would not destroy the earth again with a flood, we find man back to his perverse ways. Instead of pronouncing a death sentence on the people, **God, in His mercy, provides a way that would restore them by His Grace.** God confounded the languages and scattered them abroad so that one day He could restore them to Himself.

When nations (especially Israel) fell into wicked idolatry, God judged them for their sins. Although God's judgment was swift and hard, He always did two things: He left a remnant and He scattered the people. He did this with future gracious restoration in mind. The following verses demonstrate God's mercy in scattering and allowing a remnant to remain:

Psalm 59:11; Ezekiel 6:8, 11:16, 20:23-41, 28:25, 30:26, 34:30, 36:23-38; Matthew 9:36; Mark 14:27; John 11:52; Acts 8:1-4, 11:19; James 1:1; I Peter 1:1

B. God Restores Fellowship by Scattering His **WORD** (The Seed)
The following verses reveal that God desires His Word to be sown, scattered, broadcast, preached, proclaimed, printed, and published:

Psalm 126:5-6; Mark 4; Acts 2; Colossians 4:16-17; I Thessalonians 2:4; 2 Timothy 3:14- 4:2; I John 1:1-5

The scattering of God's Word is also clearly represented in the audience of the Gospels. There are distinct groups addressed, which by God's sovereign pen even find their origins in the scattering of the nations. A good writer first determines his audience before commencing any writing project. Specifics about the target group have everything to do with the type and level of vocabulary, the use of meaningful illustrations, and the general tone of the text. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are known as the Synoptic Gospels. They are indeed very similar to one another, but quite different from the Gospel of John. However, though they resemble each other, these three Gospels represent very different approaches, particularly in their target audience. It is interesting to note that the scattering of the nations becomes the underlying tone of each text.
- The Gospel of Matthew is directed at the Semitic people, those concerned with religion. It is of a surety for the Jews, the descendants of Shem.
- The Gospel of Mark is clearly the Gospel of the servant, or the servants of mankind, as were the descendants of Ham. The Hamitic people were responsible for exploration, mathematics, machinery, and for the building of some of the greatest ancient civilizations.
- The intellectual tone of The Gospel of Luke is directed at the thinkers. It is clearly aimed at the Greeks, the descendants of Japheth.

C. God Restores Fellowship by Scattering His **SERVANTS**
1. God Sent His Son (Isaiah 53, John 3:16, John 17:3, 21)
When God sent His own Son to earth, He did so with a final redemptive goal. Ultimately, Jesus was sent from His heavenly abode as the solution for a perfect sacrifice. Restoration was made possible ONLY by Christ's willingness to be sent to a people in need of a Redeemer. When God's divine plan is to send a servant on a mission, the spiritual results are incalculable.