

13. THE LOST

—God's Heart for the Nations

The Bible is ultimately a story about God. He is Creator. We are creatures, the people of His creation who fell from His favor. If we trace God's plan of redemption throughout the pages of scripture, we see from Genesis to Revelation that God cares for every family, tribe, tongue and nation. God is a missionary God who with lovingkindness draws people to Himself. (Jeremiah 31:3). He does it by using people like us. He commissions us as co-workers to enter into His work. (1 Corinthians 3:9)

Evangelism should never be some kind of painful obligation, but rather should be approached as a sacrament, a sacred trust filled with the presence of God. We develop a heart for all people: for the lost, for the outsider, for the broken, for the wayward - because that is God's heart. He is the euphoric father who runs to embrace his prodigal son. It is breathtaking to trace His love for the nations - for all people.

What do we learn about God's heart for the nations - for all people - from the following passages:

Genesis 22:15-18

Psalms 2:8

Psalms 22:27

Psalms 67

Isaiah 42:1-6

Isaiah 61:1-4

Daniel 7:14

Habakkuk 2:14

Matthew 24:14

Colossians 1:27-29

2 Peter 3:9

Revelation 7:9

Nations, Peoples & Tongues

Nations: Currently (as of 2022), the United Nations recognizes 197 nations, including 193 member states, 2 Observers (the Vatican and Palestine), and Taiwan and Kosovo as self-governed territories. Additionally there are 67 principalities and territories like Puerto Rico, Guam, Greenland, Northern Ireland.

Peoples: Ethnologists recognize approximately 16,000 people groups in the world, including the 574 indigenous tribes in the US, the Roma of Central Europe, the Uighurs in China/Central Asia, and the 312 tribes of Papua New Guinea.

The world's population is approximately 7.8 billion, 2.3 billion of whom identify as Christian.

Languages: There are approximately 6500 unique languages spoken in the world today, with many thousands of dialects.

How do we see Jesus' heart for all people displayed in these episodes?

Mark 7:24-30

Luke 7:1-10

Luke 8:26-39

Luke 8:43-48

John 4:7-9

APPLICATION: 1. What is your reaction to God's heart for the nations - for all people? Do you find it overwhelming, breathtaking, paralyzing, captivating? Describe. 2. What is your experience sharing Christ with non-believers? Describe your positive experiences, your negative ones and any obstacles you face. Who are the specific non-believers you are praying for? 3. Are there a few prayer partners who can join you regularly to pray for opportunities to share Christ with others? Similarly are there ways you can join in prayer with others for the nations of the world?