

# GOD'S PLAN

## *Centered in Jesus*

Genesis is the blueprint of the missionary message of the Bible.

**W**HEN GOD CREATED HUMAN beings in His image to populate the earth, He dared give them the remarkable faculty to make choices, knowing full well that within that license they could rise to their highest capacity for perfection or sink to their lowest possible degradation. The missionary message of the Bible starts at this realization. That message is embedded in the Book of Genesis. In fact, Genesis is the blueprint for the entire missionary message of the Bible. It outlines both humanity's need for redemption and God's plan for making that redemption possible.

**GENESIS 3:15.**

We know the ancient story of the Fall. We reenact it every day of our lives. The serpent taunted Eve, suggesting that she could have the

ability to distinguish between good and evil. When she opted for that holy insight, she got what she asked for. Only then did she realize her culpability. She knew she had forfeited the innocence of her native choice, the purity of selection. She no longer had freedom from guile. Hers is the responsibility for living in the lifelong tension between good and evil. The antipathy of humankind for those snakes that crawl across the ground results in the symbolic battlefield that will exist until Christ crushes evil under His heel (Rom. 16:20). The shadow of promised redemption exists within this ancient narrative of disobedience. As soon as Adam and Eve made their decision, God knew of their disobedience and set out to provide a means for them to escape the snare that had been set.

**GENESIS 12:1-3.**

Knowing that we best understand the specific rather than the general, the story rather than the theory, God outlined His plan through the stories of Genesis. He chose Abram, one particular man, to be the father of His redemptive purpose. He illustrated the sense of missionary calling with this one man's story. He chose Abram as His first missionary. He extended an invitation to this man and made him a promise. If you will go into this land, I will bless you, He said. That's the bare bones of all missionary callings. God calls and then He promises results. He gives those He calls the certainty that His missionary plan is to be enacted through their participation.



**GENESIS 22:15-18.**

God promised the maturing Abraham that if he remained faithful, then he would be the father of a nation. It was in the tension between fatherhood and the demands of calling that Abraham would be tested. Asked to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, Abraham met this greatest test with courage and faith. While God did not take his child, He did put in place the model that parents of missions-minded families have been called to follow through the years. God calls each follower to his or her missionary task and He calls parents to the willingness to prepare their children for that same task. God's call throughout Genesis always demands the assent of the heart and the hands. It is always woven with the threads of commitment and action. It may well result in a design of sacrifice, but it certainly requires each one who is called to be willing to make whatever sacrifice is demanded.

**GENESIS 26:1-5.**

When famine threatened Isaac's land, he was tempted to go for relief in the land of Egypt, but God held him back reminding him that the oath sworn to his father would be enacted through his lineage. God's

intervention in the life of Isaac is not only a part of the missionary story of the divine redemptive plan but also a reminder that some are sent and some are called to share where they are. Our personal logic can never be trusted as a single guide stone in the missionary calling. It must be ratified by God's enlarged vision for His redemptive plan in the world. The missionary message of the Bible argues for the time to be sent and the time to stay. It argues for the close communication between woman and God to determine location, motionlessness, or fluidity.

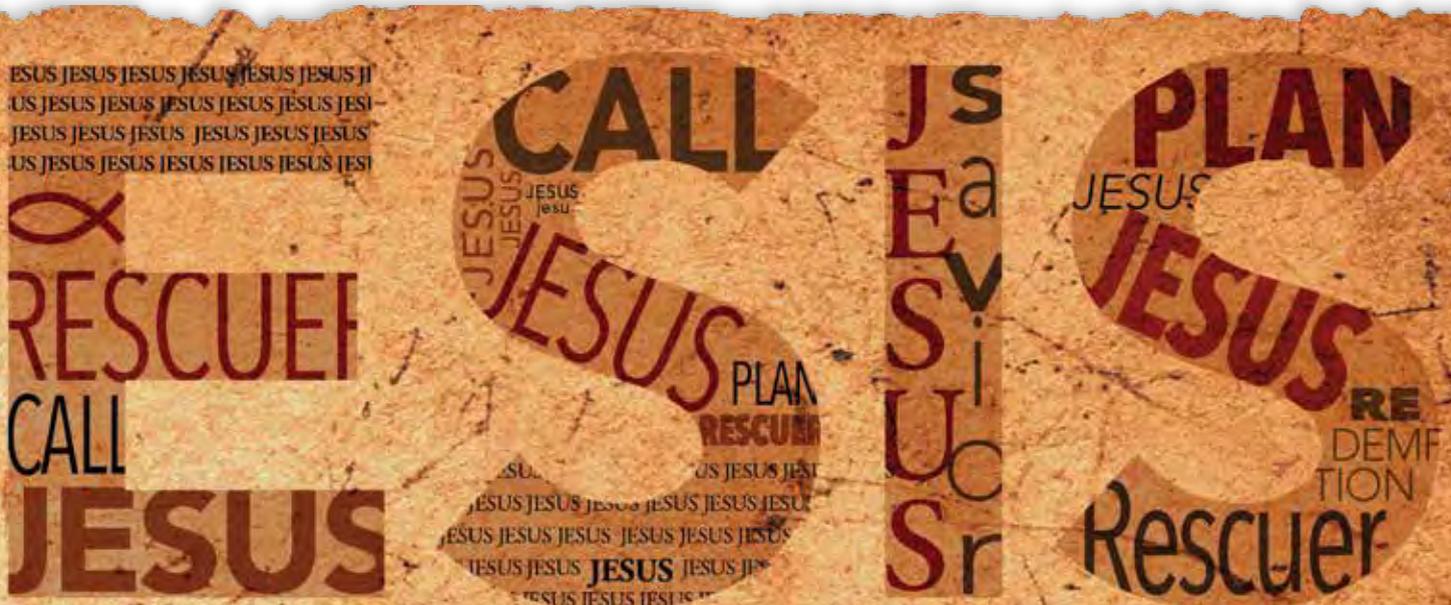
**GENESIS 28:12-17.**

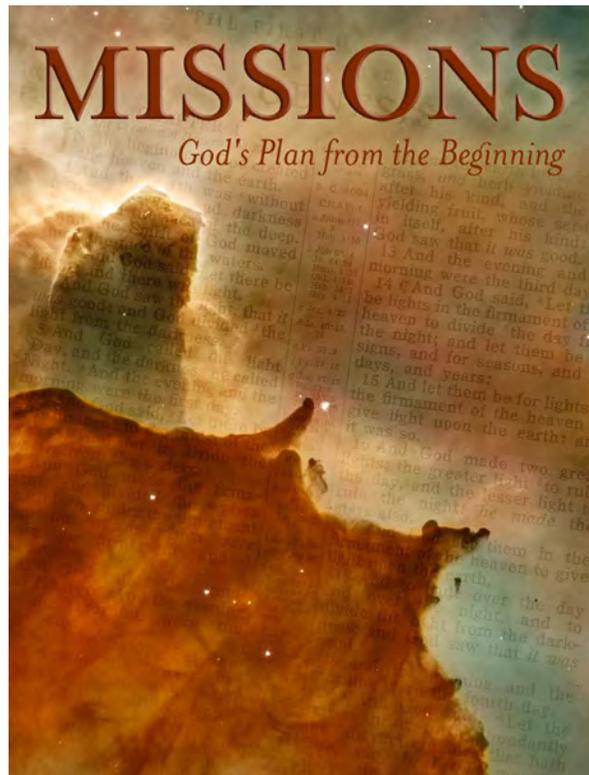
En route to seek a wife, Jacob, the blessed son of Isaac, had a strange dream of a stairway with angels going up and down. The Lord at the top spoke to Jacob reminding him that he was to carry on the promise that was made to grandfather Abraham. His descendants would spread in four directions to populate the earth. This promise given to Abraham was not to be limited to space and time, to region or tribe, but to be extended to all people. It is the north and south, the east and west, of destination that the fullness of God's missionary plan is realized.

**Relating the Message to Christians Today**

The missionary message of Genesis provides guidelines to Christians for evaluating our commitment to missions and missions education. Missions leaders must accept their own flawed leadership. At best, we are only human and will succeed or fail on an imperfect continuum. Secondly, above all else we must be willing to step out of our own level of security to enter areas that seem alien to us. Being a missions leader or supporter is a vulnerable experience of interaction in the lives of others. One can never know how God may use us to call out children or adults to participate in missions at all levels. In fact, we never know what sacrifice we may be called to make. Our responsibility is to teach the skills of discernment that enable those we lead or come alongside us to know when God is calling them to go and when He is calling them to stay. Above all else, our responsibility is to place the spiritual needs of the world before our church, family, and friends. **M**

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