

Old Testament Links to God's Purposes

Theme Lesson

PREPARATION

Objective

Students will understand that God used people and events in the Old Testament to advance his purpose to be known and worshiped by people of all nations.

Outcomes

1. Students will use the concept of top line/bottom line to understand why God blesses us.
2. Students will give examples of God's advancing his purposes in Old Testament times by using the "Key Words."

Directions

1. Using scissors, cut a portion of each magazine picture away from the rest of the photograph. Choose a portion that is obscure so that as students look at the isolated piece, they will find it difficult to guess the item or scene of the whole picture.
2. On a board, draw a horizontal line across the center. Label the top portion "Top Line" and the lower half "Bottom Line."
3. Review the Theme Lesson, scripture references, and response. Consider how this lesson will apply to your unique group of students.
4. Review the "Key Word Wheel," definitions, and verses. Consider which words relate to this lesson. Suggested: "Purpose," "Power," and "People."

**PREPARATION: 10 min.****TEACHING: 25 min.**

Materials

- Bibles
- "Key Word Wheel" poster (Introduction p. 6)
- "Key Word Cards" (Introduction pp. 7-8)
- five or six large, colorful magazine pictures
- scissors
- chalkboard or dry erase board
- chalk or dry erase marker

TEACHING (CORE)

PRE-LESSON ACTIVITY: PICTURE THIS

Directions

1. Warmly welcome students to your time of discovering God's purpose together.
2. Invite students to help you with a guessing game called "Picture This." Say, *"I will show you part of a picture. Try to guess what the whole picture is."* Enjoy the process, taking several guesses for each picture. Then replace the isolated piece and show the complete picture.
3. Explain the activity. *"These fractured pictures remind us of the way in which many people read their Bibles. They read it bit by bit, but don't consider the Bible as one story. They don't understand that God is at work in each character and event, advancing his purpose to make himself known. Today's lesson will help us understand this better."*

THEME LESSON: TOP LINE AND BOTTOM LINE

Directions

1. Remind students, *"In our last lesson, we learned about God's blessing and our responsibility to pass on that blessing."*
2. Have the students find Psalm 67. Read verses 1-2 together: *"May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us, that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations."*
3. Point to the board and say, *"This passage has two parts. The 'Top Line' is the blessing or what God does for us."* Under the "Top Line" heading write, "God blesses me." Then say, *"The other part of this passage is called the 'Bottom Line:' my responsibility and God's purpose."* Under the "Bottom Line" heading write "What do I do with my blessing?" and "Why does God bless me?" Then say, *"In Psalm 67, the top line is that God extends his grace and blessing to me. The bottom line is that I will tell others about God so that God's salvation will extend out to the nations."* Ask what questions students have about this concept and clear up any confusion.
4. To reinforce the idea of top line and bottom line, read the following verses and discover the top and bottom line phrases together:
 - Psalm 67:7 –
Top line (God will bless us.)
Bottom Line (All the ends of the earth will fear him.)
 - Psalm 46:10
Top line (Be still and know that I am God.)
Bottom Line (I will be exalted among the nations.)
 - Joshua 2:10-11
Top line (God dried up the Red Sea for the Israelites.)
Bottom Line (The people in Jericho know "the Lord your God is God" in heaven and earth.)

Materials

- magazine pictures
- isolated pieces cut from each picture

Materials

- Bibles
- board labeled "Top Line" and "Bottom Line"
- chalk or dry erase marker

- 2 Chronicles 9:22-23

Top Line (God blessed Solomon with riches and wisdom.)

Bottom Line (Solomon shared godly wisdom all the kings of the earth.)

5. Wrap up your discussion by saying, *“These kinds of verses and stories are found throughout the Bible. They teach us of God’s great love and purpose for the people of earth.”*

IN CLOSING: REVIEW AND RESPONSE

Directions

1. Divide the class into two teams. Display the “Key Word Wheel” and definition cards where students can refer to them. Say, *“We know that God is advancing his purpose in Old Testament stories. We can use the ‘Key Words’ to help us see this more clearly. For example, in the story of the Red Sea that we just read about in Joshua 2, God used his power, dividing the walls of water so that the Israelites could walk through on dry land. We saw how this story traveled all the way to the city of Jericho. When the spies came to look at the city, people there knew of the great, powerful God that helped the Israelites. Now it’s your turn to think of an Old Testament story.”*
2. Give each team a turn to think of an Old Testament story. The opposing team must consider which of the “Key Words” are present in this Bible story. Students may look at the wheel and definition cards as needed.
3. Give a point to each team for every “Key Word” they recognize. Students must be able to support their idea with information from the story. The team with the most points wins.
4. Then say, *“Here is a mind-bender question. If God is so powerful, why doesn’t he just make himself known to all the peoples all by himself?”* Listen for student responses. As the discussion progresses, realize that we may not understand all of God’s reasons. But we do know that God chooses to work through people to make his name known. It is also very interesting to consider that even when God does miraculous things, people do not always choose to know, honor, or believe in God (Pharaoh is a good example of this). Many people still choose their own way.

Materials

- “Key Word Wheel” poster (Introduction p. 6)
- “Key Word Cards” (Introduction pp. 7-8)



HEROES OF HISTORY: ASIF

Directions

1. Set the stage for this story. Say, *“The year is 2001. The place is the country of Pakistan in South Asia. In modern-day Pakistan, the majority of people follow the religion of Islam. Followers of Islam are called Muslims. While Muslims respect Jesus as a great prophet, they do not think Jesus is God’s Son or that Jesus died on the cross to provide salvation from sin. When Muslims become believers in Jesus, they are treated harshly by their own friends and family.”*
2. Introduce these vocabulary words:
Mulvi: Muslim religious leader
Landlord: in Pakistan, a city leader
3. Read the story to your group.
4. Discuss the questions together or in small groups.
5. Together, discover the important role this person had in making God’s name known in all the earth.



PREPARATION: 15 min.

TEACHING: 25 min.

Materials

- “Asif” picture (p. 5)
- “Asif Story” (pp. 6-8)
- “Asif Discussion Questions” (p. 9)
- world map or globe

Asif



How Could I Not Have an Interest?

PAKISTAN, 2001

“Asif” was carefree as he sped his motorcycle down the street of his Pakistani town. He enjoyed being noticed by the young women as he sped by. In the traditional Muslim culture of Pakistan, overt glances would have been very inappropriate, but still Asif could tell when he had been seen. He was young, and he felt powerful as he drove past, relishing the murmur of the motorcycle’s engine in his ears and the feel of the tires gripping the road. He smiled to himself and twisted the accelerator to give the bike a quick burst of speed.

Suddenly where the beautiful sky had been he saw only dirt, and where his motorcycle had raced along beneath him, it now felt like it was flying over his head. For the next few seconds all was clouds of dust and spinning. The next thing he knew he was lying on his back with his motorcycle next to him on the ground, its engine coughing and then dying. He heard the echo of the squealing tires as the car that hit him sped away. He had never even seen it.

Then he noticed the splitting pain shooting up his leg. When he looked at it, he could tell from the way his foot lay off to the wrong side that it was broken. He tried to stay calm, but panic was gripping his heart and he wanted to scream.

Before he lost his composure, though, he felt a reassuring hand upon him. A woman had come out of the crowd of passers-by and knelt beside him, laying her hand on his leg. He was calmed for the moment and surprised as she began to pray.

Through the pain, Asif heard the name of Jesus in her prayer. Despite his immediate thankfulness that someone had stopped to help, a wave of anger came over him at the mention of that name. *How can this woman pray to Jesus, a mere prophet? Doesn’t she know that I am a Muslim, a follower of Mohammed, the greatest prophet? Why isn’t she praying to Allah?*

Yet Asif was suddenly distracted from his anger by an energy he felt running through his body as she prayed. It was different from anything he had every felt before. His anger began to fade as his leg

straightened itself and the bone came back into place. Eventually he sat up and carefully examined his leg. It was completely whole.

As he stood, he noticed that there was no more pain either. He picked up his bike and walked it home.

Some time later, the same woman brought him a Bible. He never saw her again after that.

Hungry to know more about this prophet who had healed his leg, he began to read the Bible, especially the New Testament and the miracles of Jesus. Asif’s question weighed heavier: *If Jesus was truly only one of many prophets, how could he perform such amazing works?* As Asif lay on his bed, he wondered, *Who is Jesus?* I know many prophets have come to earth, but none has had the power of Jesus.

Asif was so perplexed by how a minor prophet such as Jesus could heal him two thousand years after his death that he took his questions to the *mulvi* (religious leader) at his mosque.

“Why are you talking about Jesus?” the *mulvi* sneered. “Do you have an interest in him?”

“How could I *not* have an interest?” Asif responded incredulously. “He healed me.”

The *mulvi* and others at the mosque took Asif and locked him in a room. They forced poison down his throat thinking that if he died before fully accepting Christ, he would still make it to Paradise. They left him there overnight for the poison to do its work. Asif felt sick and thought he was dying. He vomited repeatedly and threw up blood.

However, around midnight Asif found himself still barely alive and lying in the dust, caked with his own blood and vomit. The room was dark and he didn’t have the strength to get up. He didn’t know what else to do, so he prayed. He called out to Jesus and told him he wanted to see him before he died.

Before he knew what had happened, a bright light had filled the dusty room. Asif suddenly felt a little better and forced himself up to see what was causing the light. Before him stood Jesus. It was at that

ASIF STORY, CONTINUED

moment that Asif surrendered the rest of his life to the Lord, saying, “God, this life is for you; as long as I am on earth, I will work for you.”

Sometime before dawn, Asif managed to escape and made his way home.

When he tried to tell his parents of his experience the next morning, they were not impressed. “You are a Muslim,” his parents told him. “If you accept Jesus, you must leave this house.”

So Asif had no choice. He took his Bible and left. He went to a larger city where he met a pastor at a Christian bookstore. The pastor discipled Asif and later baptized him. From the first moments of his newfound faith, Asif felt a strong desire to share who Jesus was and what he had done for him with those around him, regardless of their religious backgrounds. Because of this, his troubles with the police and city leaders began almost immediately.

“A landlord [city leader] came to me and said, ‘Where are you going? And why are you preaching this “gospel”? These are Muslim people. Why are they accepting Jesus?’”

Seeing that Asif was undeterred, this landlord and some other Muslims took him and beat him with heavy sugarcane stalks. They stomped on his leg and broke it again. As they pounded his body, they shouted, “You dog! You low-class scum! Why did you come here and make our people Christians?” They ordered Asif to leave the city immediately.

Despite their further threats, he refused.

As they were beating him, he prayed for them, “Please, God, change their minds and their hearts.” Then he cried out to God to help him and give him strength.

Many weeks later, after Asif had recovered from his injuries, the landlords and the police closed down a meeting where Asif was sharing about Jesus again. Asif was taken to the police station, where he was severely beaten.

When Asif was asked how he could endure this and not be discouraged, he quoted Philippians 1:29 (NAS), “For to you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.”

Asif continues to evangelize whenever and wherever he has the opportunity.

Note: *In the largest sense of the word, a revolutionary changes his country or culture; but in a smaller sense, what changes the individual from a bystander to a revolutionary?*

In the best of cases, a worldly revolutionary fights for an ideal such as freedom or independence. The revolutionary takes up arms to eliminate the oppressors and to spread privilege among all the classes. When revolutionaries are convinced of the truth that a better life is possible for all under another government or system, then they are willing to fight to the death to make that government or system possible.

Yet a true revolutionary revolts even against this system of revolution. As Christ refused to free himself from the cross, throwing himself totally into the will of his father and placing his life in the hands of Pilate and Herod, Christian revolutionaries’ main wars are within themselves — between walking in their own will or in Christ’s will. Whereas a worldly revolutionary strikes out vengefully hoping to realize his own truth for all, a Christian revolutionary strikes out with the love of God to open the eyes of the oppressors to help them choose truth for themselves.

Thus Christians become true revolutionaries when they realize there is only one Truth (Jesus) worth fighting for, and that Truth is the only thing able to truly set people free. They would rather die than deny that Truth, but even more they are willing to forsake comfort for the privilege of living for that Truth and representing it to their world.

Thus a woman walks from the crowd of bystanders and is willing to risk embarrassment (in countries such as Pakistan, even imprisonment) by praying in the name of Jesus for the healing of an enemy. Thus a man riding down the street living only for his own desires becomes a revolutionary when he encounters the Truth. The pain of a broken leg as the result of a senseless accident is unbearable, but the pain of a broken leg at the hands of enemies who need to know the Truth is inconsequential. Somehow knowing the Truth makes nothing else seem to matter.

ASIF STORY, CONTINUED

Our Lord Christ has surnamed himself Truth, not Custom.

~ Tertullian, C. A.D. 150-229

Christian who wrote bravely in defense of Christianity and the martyrs during the fourth and fifth Roman persecutions. Some believe he died a martyr himself.

ASIF – HOW COULD I NOT HAVE AN INTEREST?

Let's Talk About It

In the book of Genesis in the Old Testament, we read that Abraham was the father of both Ishmael and Isaac. History tells us that Ishmael's descendants became the Muslim people while Isaac's descendants became the Israelites. Just as there was tension between Ishmael and Isaac in the Old Testament days, this conflict has continued down from generation to generation into our present day. Thus, when you read the story of Asif, a Muslim, you may be able to understand why he disliked hearing the name of Jesus who was and Israelite AND a mere prophet!

1. What happened to Asif after his accident that caused him to think differently about Jesus?

A woman came out of the crowd and prayed over Asif asking Jesus to heal him. Asif's anger faded as he felt an "energy" running through his body that he had never felt before. Jesus, a mere prophet in Asif's thinking, had healed him! This Jesus was no ordinary prophet. Asif had to find out more about this Jesus! The woman from the crowd had given Asif a Bible; so began his search to find out more about Jesus!

2. God chose to reveal himself to Asif by healing him. Why?

God had a job for Asif to do and wanted to show other Muslims the truth about himself through the changed life of Asif.

3. Asif was beaten several times and left for dead on other occasions. What was his crime?

Preaching the truth of Jesus Christ and shedding God's light in the darkness!

4. Asif continues to preach the good news of Jesus Christ wherever he goes. He has been beaten, but not discouraged. Read Paul's words in Philippians 3:8-11.

What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own ... But that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

What does this passage mean to you in this present day. In what ways have you "suffered for Christ?"

Answers will vary.