

**THE NAVY  
NEEDS YOU!  
DON'T READ  
AMERICAN HISTORY -  
MAKE IT!**



*U.S. Navy Recruiting Poster (1917)*

# 20

## America and the Great War

Woodrow Wilson expanded the Progressive reforms that had begun with Theodore Roosevelt and William H. Taft. However, the country became engulfed in the growing conflict in Europe known as The Great War. The long and difficult peace treaty negotiations were highlighted by Wilson's insistence on including a League of Nations in the treaty. This issue, however, led to the Senate's rejection of the treaty. The Balkan Peninsula, the region that provided the spark which began the Great War, has a long history of ethnic, national, and religious conflict that continues even today.

Lesson 96 - Wilson's Domestic Agenda

Lesson 97 - Trouble in Europe

Lesson 98 - America Goes "Over There"

Lesson 99 - An Imperfect Peace

Lesson 100 - Bible Study: From Every Nation, Tribe, and Tongue

## Memory Work

Memorize Micah 4:1-2 by the end of this unit.

## Books Used

The Bible

*American Voices*

*Miracle In the Hills*

## Project (choose one)

1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:

- Write a letter from an American soldier in France to his family back home, describing what it was like to fight in the Great War. See Lesson 97 and 98.
- Write an editorial about America's entry into the League of Nations as if you were writing during the heat of the debate in 1919. Take a definite stand on one side or the other of the issue. See Lesson 99.

2) Memorize Micah 4:1-5. If you choose this project, you should recite or write the verses from memory at the end of the week as you normally do your unit memory verse.

3) Create a propaganda poster for the World War I era. Choose an appropriate message (e.g., staying out of the war, encouragement to enlist, women's services in the war) and design your poster in the style of the times. See the examples in this unit or look for other examples. Make your poster about the size of a piece of posterboard.

## Literature

### **Miracle In the Hills**

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Eustace and Mary Martin Sloop were both physicians. They married in 1908 and moved to the mountains of western North Carolina to serve the people in that isolated region. The Sloops were an amazing couple. They worked to overcome the poverty, illiteracy, superstitions, and lack of health care that they found there. The Sloops were instrumental in bringing electricity, paved roads, and a hospital to the town of Crossnore. Mrs. Sloop established a weaving room that helped to rekindle interest in Appalachian crafts. In 1913 they founded Crossnore School, an institution that still exists today and is on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1951 Mrs. Sloop was named American Mother of the Year. Their son and daughter went to medical school and returned to serve the people of the region as a dentist and a physician, respectively.

*Miracle in the Hills* is Mrs. Sloop's 1953 memoir of her remarkable life, written with North Carolina journalist and author Legette Blythe. The book is full of stories of surgery performed under an apple tree, overcoming opposition to the school and other changes they brought to mountain life, and the great faith that motivated all they did. Mrs. Sloop once said, "Beyond all else, Crossnore is the product of prayer."

Mrs. Sloop died in 1962, less than a year after her husband passed away.





*1912 Campaign Poster Showing Roosevelt, Wilson, and Taft*

## Lesson 96

# Wilson's Domestic Agenda

Republicans controlled the national government for many years, but controversy over tariff rates and conservation policies cost the party much public support. In the 1910 Congressional elections, the party lost control of the House of Representatives to the Democrats for the first time in sixteen years. Theodore Roosevelt, back from an African safari, was distressed at the inconsistent pattern he saw in the Taft Administration. In 1910 Roosevelt presented a major speech in which he proposed a series of reforms he called the New Nationalism, including a graduated income tax, workmen's compensation, child labor laws, tariff reforms, and greater regulation of corporations.

### **The 1912 Election**

The Progressive wing of the Republican party became increasingly dissatisfied with Taft and looked for another standard-bearer for the 1912 election. The leading candidate was Wisconsin senator Robert M. LaFollette, who campaigned for the nomination but could not garner enough support. A number of Republicans urged Theodore Roosevelt to make another run, which he finally agreed to do.

In states that held Republican party primaries, Roosevelt won big; but Taft controlled the party

machinery and received the nomination at the convention. About 300 Roosevelt delegates accused Taft of steamrolling the convention and walked out. They reconvened six weeks later as the Progressive or Bull Moose party and nominated Roosevelt for President.

The Democrats meanwhile found their own progressive candidate in Woodrow Wilson, governor of New Jersey. Wilson was highly moralistic and idealistic, and he believed strongly that government should act for the public good. His New Freedom platform spoke out strongly against business trusts. His progressive record as governor convinced enough delegates at the convention that he was the party's best choice for president.

The campaign, which featured two clear Progressives and one at least semi-Progressive, was the high-water mark for the Progressive movement. However, in terms of politics the campaign was unusually intense. Roosevelt issued bitter attacks against his old friend Taft, and Taft eventually responded in kind. The former President was shot and wounded by a would-be assassin in Milwaukee, but he insisted on giving his speech before getting medical attention. Wilson made several speaking tours into various regions of the country.

Wilson benefited from the division within the Republicans. The New Jersey governor received only

42% of the vote, but with the Republicans split he carried forty states and received 435 electoral votes. Roosevelt finished second with 27.4% of the popular vote and 88 electoral votes, the best showing of any new third party in American history. Taft came in third with 23.2% and won only two states and eight electoral votes. Adding to the mix, Socialist Eugene Debs received just over 900,000 votes, or six percent of the total votes cast. The Democrats also won control of both houses of Congress for the first time since 1893.

Political control of Washington changed hands with Wilson's election; but the Progressive Era continued during his first term, until the country became embroiled in the Great War in Europe.

## Wilson's Background

Thomas Woodrow Wilson was born in 1856 in Staunton, Virginia, the son of a Presbyterian minister. His family moved to Georgia when he was one year old. From his childhood, Tommy was intensely dedicated to the rightness of what he believed. Wilson received a degree from the College of New Jersey (which later became Princeton). He earned a law degree from the University of Virginia; and after a brief and unsuccessful attempt at a law practice in Atlanta, he earned a Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University. His dissertation was published as a book, *Congressional Government*, in which he argued that the strict separation of powers made the

## Roosevelt and Taft

*Theodore Roosevelt maintained an active life after the 1912 campaign, even though the bullet from the assassination attempt was never removed. The photo below left shows him discussing his 1913-1914 expedition to Brazil. Injury and illness on that trip greatly affected his health. Roosevelt was eager to enlist for service in the Great War but was never called. He and Taft were able to reconcile their relationship before Roosevelt's death in 1919.*

*After his presidency, William H. Taft became a professor of constitutional law at Yale University. In 1921 President Warren G. Harding chose Taft to be chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Taft's swearing in ceremony is shown below right. Taft was better suited to be chief justice than to be President. He served well on the Court until just before his death in 1930 and garnered praise even from those who had been his political opponents. Members of the Taft family have continued in public service in Ohio and at the national level to the present day.*



## Lesson 96 - Wilson's Domestic Agenda

American government less effective than it could be. He argued for an activist executive, which is what he became.

Wilson taught at several colleges, including Princeton, and served as president of Princeton from 1902 to 1910. In that year he ran for governor of New Jersey and was elected. He did not depend on the regular state Democratic political machine but instead appealed directly to the voters. Once in office, he gained the attention of the national Democratic party and was nominated as their Progressive hope in 1912.

The United States had become a world power during the McKinley and Roosevelt administrations, but few issues involving foreign affairs arose during Taft's term. The 1912 election focused on domestic issues and the extent to which the Progressive movement could achieve its goals. In his first term, President Wilson oversaw the enactment of the greatest Progressive legislative program to date.

### Tariff Reform

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Wilson and most other Progressives believed that high tariffs gave an unfair advantage to American businesses by reducing competition and allowing higher prices. At the same time, however, tariff protection helped to insure American jobs and higher wages than workers in similar jobs received in Europe. Tariff reform was so important to Wilson that he called a special session of Congress right after he was inaugurated and took the unusual step of addressing Congress in person, something that had not been done since the days of Thomas Jefferson.

The Democratic Congress responded to Wilson's leadership by enacting the Underwood Tariff of 1913. The new law reduced rates to a fifty-year low, cutting the average rate from around 40% to 29%. To replace the lost revenue, Congress also passed an income tax, something that had been enabled by the recently ratified Sixteenth Amendment. The income tax law set rates of one to six percent on incomes over \$3,000 per year. The graduated income tax had



*Woodrow and Ellen Wilson With Their Daughters Jessie, Margaret, and Eleanor (c. 1912)*

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been a Populist and Progressive proposal for many years, on the assumption that those with higher incomes had more discretionary income and could pay a higher rate than those with less income. The immediate effect of the lower tariff rates was hard to gauge since regular trade was interrupted by the war in Europe and because the war brought about a boom in the U.S. economy with increased production of many goods related to the war effort.

### Banking Reform

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The nation operated under a banking system that had been created during the Civil War. Most observers felt the need for reform, but opinion was divided on whether the government or private bankers should have the greater amount of control. The Federal Reserve Act of 1913 was something of a compromise. It is the banking system the nation uses today. The new law divided the country into twelve Federal Reserve districts, each with a Federal Reserve Bank. The reserve banks are overseen by the Federal Reserve Board. All Federally chartered banks are members of the Federal Reserve, and state chartered banks are allowed to join if they meet certain criteria.

The Federal Reserve Board (often called the Fed) deals with member banks, not individual depositors. Federal Reserve Banks take loans made by member



## GRADUATED VS. FLAT Tax

*The graduated income tax has been the policy of the Federal government ever since the income tax was enacted in 1913. Some opponents of the graduated tax favor what they call a flat tax, which involves everyone paying the same percentage of tax regardless of income. Flat tax proponents say that it is more fair to tax everyone at the same rate, just as rich and poor alike pay the same sales tax when they make a purchase, rather than “soaking the rich” with a higher tax rate, as some put it. Most flat taxers propose protecting income up to a certain amount from any income tax as a way to help the poor.*

*Wealthier Americans, who pay higher rates but who also have more clout in Washington, have countered the graduated rate structure by influencing Congress over the years to pass a dizzying number of tax exemptions and loopholes that have made the current tax law overwhelming in size and confusing to just about anyone who pays income tax. Flat taxers want to eliminate almost all of the exemptions and special provisions in the tax code. They say that, with a flat tax, Americans could complete a tax return on a postcard. Opponents of the flat tax say that the wealthy should pay more taxes and would get most of the benefit of a flat tax. They also say that a flat*



*tax would bring in less revenue. Flat taxers answer by saying that the government doesn't need as much money as it now gets. A drastically simplified tax code would be difficult to pass in Congress because of all the special interests that have gotten protective provisions written into the tax law that they don't want to lose.*

*This November 1913 Puck cartoon shows men cutting pieces from a turkey labeled “Income Tax Litigation.” The caption reads: “Lawyers at least have plenty to be thankful for.”*

banks as collateral, in return for which they send currency to member banks, which then enables member banks to make more loans. The Fed can transfer money from one region of the country to another when it is needed and can order more or less currency when such is needed during the year (for instance, when farmers need money for spring planting and fall harvesting). The board also adjusts its discount rate, which is the interest rate it charges member banks for money, to stimulate or slow down the economy as it determines what is needed. If the board believes that more business activity is needed, it will cut the discount rate, which lowers the interest rate for customer loans. This in turn encourages more business activity (in the form of home loans and business loans, for instance).

## Antitrust Reform

The Clayton Antitrust Act of 1914 was stronger than previous antitrust legislation against monopolistic practices of business, even though enforcement was still difficult because of court rulings. The law restricted trade practices that led to monopolies; for instance, it outlawed interlocking directorates for companies capitalized for \$1 million or more. The act also removed labor unions from antitrust restrictions and said that strikes, boycotts, and picketing were legal actions. Court injunctions against strikes could be used only if persons or property were threatened. Despite these provisions, courts still frequently ruled against unions when suits were brought before them.

Congress also created the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), which oversees the activities of companies involved in interstate trade. Companies have to submit annual reports to the FTC, and the commission is empowered to investigate business activities and to order companies to stop certain business practices such as the mislabeling of products. Both the FTC and a company it investigates can appeal an issue to the courts.

### Other Legislation

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The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 provided Federal aid to rural education by funding demonstration agents who showed farmers improved techniques in agriculture. The program was administered by land grant universities. The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 provided money for vocational education in public high schools.

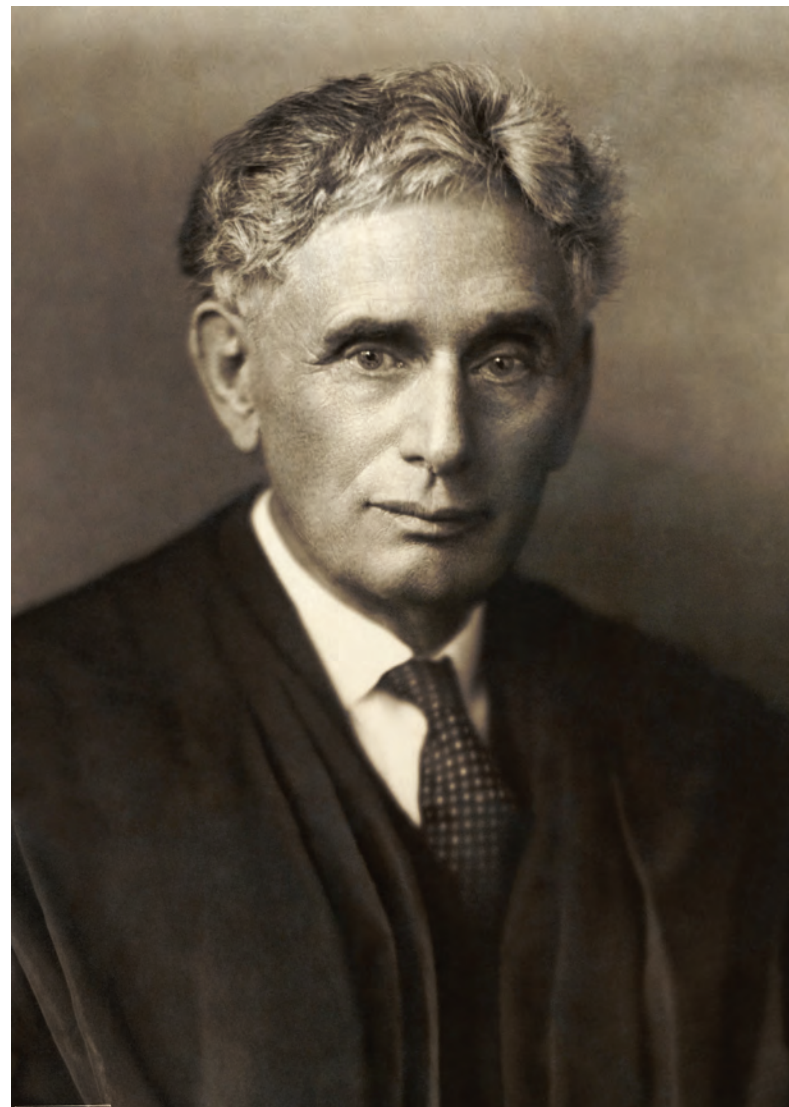
The Federal Farm Loan Act of 1916 made it easier for farmers to borrow money. The Adamson Act of the same year provided for railroad workers to receive the same pay for an eight-hour workday that they had been getting in a ten-hour day. The immediate impetus for this law was a threatened rail strike that would have been devastating to the country's preparation for possible involvement in the war in Europe. Congress also authorized Federal aid for highway construction, reversing the Jacksonian tradition of the national government not funding internal improvements. Renewal of the program in 1921 led to the numbered system of U.S. highways that we still use today.

President Wilson at first opposed a child labor reform bill because he believed it to be a matter for state regulation. Congress did eventually pass and the President did sign a law outlawing products from interstate commerce if they had been made by children under fourteen years of age, but the Supreme Court ruled that the law was unconstitutional. The Court said that work conditions in a factory were not subject to regulation as a part of interstate commerce.

Though Wilson established the most progressive record of legislation in the nation's history, the record of the Wilson years was not consistently progressive. Wilson did not support a constitutional amendment giving women the right to vote. He also held and demonstrated prejudiced attitudes toward blacks, and no effort was made to eliminate racial segregation in American life. Five of Wilson's ten Cabinet members were from the South, and Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan was widely revered in the South. This tended to limit the progressive tone of Wilson's Administration. However, Wilson did appoint Louis Brandeis as the first Jewish justice to the U.S. Supreme Court.

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*Louis Brandeis (1856-1941) earned his law degree from Harvard before he turned 21. He often donated his legal services to causes he believed in. Brandeis served on the Supreme Court from 1916 to 1939.*



## Mexico

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President Woodrow Wilson and Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan supported the Roosevelt Corollary by favoring U.S. intervention in Latin American countries in circumstances that would promote democracy. The tumultuous situation in Mexico put this commitment to the test.

Much of the wealth in Mexico was owned by the United States, Great Britain, and the Roman Catholic Church, while many of the people of Mexico lived in abject poverty. Porfirio Diaz had ruled as dictator since 1877. In 1910 the Mexicans revolted and Diaz escaped to Europe. Francisco Madero became president, but he could not control the guerrilla forces that were still active. In 1913 Madero was assassinated and Victoriano Huerta seized power.

Wilson refused to recognize Huerta and persuaded Great Britain to withdraw its support of the Huerta government. The President then offered to help Huerta's chief rival, Venustiano Carranza. In 1914 Wilson ordered American forces to take control of the Mexican city of Vera Cruz to prevent the unloading of a German shipment of arms intended for Huerta. This act of American aggression angered many Mexicans, including Carranza. The U.S. agreed to arbitration by the ABC powers (Argentina, Brazil, and Chile), who arranged for Huerta to resign in favor of Carranza.

Wilson shifted his support to Pancho Villa, a Mexican leader with his own army. Carranza

defeated Villa's forces; and the U.S. recognized Carranza's government in late 1915. Villa then attacked Americans in 1916 in an attempt to regain power by inciting an American response. His men killed fifteen American engineers in northern Mexico and seventeen more in New Mexico. Wilson sent troops to secure the border and ordered a military expedition against Villa's forces into Mexico that was largely unsuccessful. The growing conflict in Europe in 1917 led Wilson to withdraw the American forces involved on the Mexican border.

All of these forays into foreign relations helped the United States to become a greater international power, but they were merely precursors of the huge involvement by the United States in the Great War in Europe.

## 1916 Election

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In the 1916 presidential election, the Republicans nominated Charles Evans Hughes to oppose Wilson. Hughes had been a reform governor of New York before Taft named him to the Supreme Court in 1910. He resigned in 1916 to run for president. The Progressive (Bull Moose) party renominated Theodore Roosevelt, but Roosevelt refused the nomination and gave his support to Hughes. This effectively ended the life of the Progressive party. The Democrats trumpeted Wilson's record of reform legislation. As war engulfed Europe, the President's supporters could say, "He Kept Us Out of War."

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*This American plane is carrying messages in Mexico during the 1916 campaign against Pancho Villa.*







Wilson himself conducted a front porch campaign from his New Jersey home.

The election was surprisingly close. Late on election night, Democrats conceded defeat; but even later returns from California gave Wilson the victory. Wilson won the state by less than four thousand votes. He won the popular vote nationwide by about 600,000 (9.1 million to 8.5 million, or 49.4% to 46.2%) and carried the electoral college 277 to 254.

President Wilson was able to focus on domestic issues and keep the country out of war during his first term, but world events drew the United States into war and dominated the President's second term.

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*Charles Evans Hughes was Secretary of State under Republican Presidents Warren G. Harding and Calvin Coolidge. He then served on the World Court for a time. In 1930 Herbert Hoover nominated Hughes to be chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, a position in which he served until 1941. This portrait is by Thomas C. Corner.*

*But flee from these things, you man of God,  
and pursue righteousness, godliness,  
faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness.  
1 Timothy 6:11*

### ★ Assignments for Lesson 96 ★

- American Voices** Read “Love Lifted Me” by James Rowe (American Voices, page 296).
- Literature** Begin reading *Miracle In the Hills*. Plan to finish it by the end of the next unit.
- Bible** Start memorizing Micah 4:1-2.
- Project** Choose your project for this unit and start working on it.
- Student Review** Optional: Answer the questions for Lesson 96.



*Ruins of Vaux, France (1918)*

## Lesson 97

# Trouble in Europe

**H**e wanted freedom for his people after years of foreign oppression. He was willing to risk everything, even his life, to help his cause. He met with a few people who believed as he did, and they developed a plan. On the fateful day, he took his gun and went out to the parade.

Gavrilo Princip lit the spark that ignited World War I, but the entire continent of Europe was a powder keg waiting to explode. Princip committed his deed in the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo, but the result of his deed was that 32 nations engaged in a four-year war which cost the lives of eight and one-half million Europeans.

### Background Factors

Several factors contributed to building the powder keg. The first was the policy of imperialism that many nations followed. As we discussed in an earlier lesson, the way that many countries built their wealth, prestige, and power was by developing an empire. Great Britain, Germany, and France had done it; and other nations wanted a piece of the action. One such country was Austria-Hungary, and one area it wanted was the Balkan peninsula to its south. The Balkan region was home to a mixture of Slavic peoples in Serbia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and

other nations. Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908.

A second and conflicting factor contributing to war was nationalism. While some countries wanted to take over other countries, people in the threatened countries resisted being ruled by foreigners and wanted to exert their own identity. The people of the Balkans had been a political football for centuries. They resented being dominated by the Austrians and wanted to be independent.

The third factor was the rivalries of various states for power and sometimes for the same land. European nations entered into alliances in order to strengthen their positions against possible enemies. Germany and Austria-Hungary were in an alliance because of their common Germanic heritage and because Germany, as the stronger partner, posed a threat to Austria if it didn't go along. Italy was also a part of this Triple Alliance because it had designs on part of the Balkans and Italian leaders thought aligning their country with Germany was the best way to get it.

France to the west and Russia to the east were threatened by Germany's power, so they developed an alliance to resist any German aggression. England sided with them, and the three countries were known as the Triple Entente, also called the Allied



Powers, to resist German aggression anywhere it might occur. These alliances created a delicate balance of power as each side hoped that its strength would discourage aggressive moves by the other side. What is more, Russia and Austria-Hungary faced the threat of political revolutions within their own borders. The leaders of these countries thought that they could call on their allies to help quell domestic disturbances if the need arose.

## The Spark

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The heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, and his wife visited Sarajevo, Bosnia, on what he called a goodwill visit. It also served to remind the Bosnians who was in charge. On June 28, 1914, the archduke and his wife rode through the streets of Sarajevo. Serbian nationalist Gavrilo Princip, who had slipped across the border into Bosnia, fired from the crowd and killed them both. He wanted to strike out against Austria-Hungary, which he saw as threatening Serbia and all of the Balkans.

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*Japan, which had its eyes on German possessions in the Pacific, declared war on Germany on August 23. The Japanese print below shows Japanese troops in action. Turkey allied itself with the Central Powers. Italy stayed out of the conflict for a while; and when it did come in, it did so on the side of the Allied Powers.*



*Franz Ferdinand and His Wife, Sophie*

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Following the assassination, Austria-Hungary made a list of ten demands on Serbia, mostly having to do with stamping out anti-Austrian propaganda. The demands as a whole were impossible to meet, but the Serbian government agreed to try to follow eight of them. This was not good enough for Austria-Hungary, which declared war on Serbia on July 28, 1914, and began a military move toward Serbia.

## The Dominoes Fall

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This triggered a response from Russia, which mobilized its forces to help Serbia. Russians and Serbians are both Slavic peoples, and Russia wanted to help its ethnic relatives against aggression by the Triple Alliance. To protect its alliance, Germany declared war on Russia on August 1, 1914, and on France two days later. France then declared war on Germany. Germany planned to knock out France quickly, then move all its forces against Russia. The French had built a strong defensive line on its eastern border with Germany, so the Germans moved through neutral Belgium to get to France.



This violation of Belgian neutrality led Great Britain to declare war on Germany on August 4. The Belgians put up a noble resistance which held up the German forces and gave French and British armies time to reach the area to strengthen Allied resistance to German aggression. The two sides dug in to their positions along a 600-mile front across Europe. Most of the rest of the war involved terrible fighting along this front, with one side or the other making occasional advances.

## Great Suffering

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All war is terrible, but the death and destruction brought about in the Great War was especially costly. The two sides traded attacks using new military technology, including machine guns, aerial bombing, poison gas, land mines, and armored tanks. Many of the infantrymen spent much of the war in trenches along the front, emerging to attack and then either returning to the trenches or digging new ones. Conditions in the trenches were awful, especially in the rain and mud. Flooding and unsanitary conditions cost many lives. The exchange of shelling obliterated large areas of European landscape. In the Battle of the Somme, 20,000 British soldiers were killed and 40,000 were wounded in one twenty-four-hour period.

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*Soldiers in France from the French Colony of Senegal*



*The novel All Quiet on the Western Front by Erich Maria Remarque recounts the awful realities of trench warfare during World War I. Remarque tells the story from the German side, but conditions were much the same for both sides. The book includes some rough language and graphic battle scenes. The German soldier above was photographed in 1916.*

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## American Neutrality

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President Wilson committed the United States to a position of neutrality when the war erupted. He and most other Americans believed and hoped that the isolation afforded to the United States by the Atlantic Ocean would keep the U.S. out of direct involvement in the European conflict.

Nevertheless, feelings ran high among Americans about the countries involved in the conflict. Historically and culturally, most Americans felt drawn to support Great Britain. The historic friendship with France dating back to the American Revolution strengthened American support for the Allied forces. In addition, most Americans had an uneasy feeling about German aggression and the consequences of a German victory. On the other hand, the eight million German immigrants and German-Americans had strong feelings for their fatherland. The four and one-half million Irish in America had an historic hatred of Great Britain, which pulled them toward opposing the Allies. Polish and Jewish Americans disliked Russia.

The practicalities of neutrality were hard to balance. Germany wanted to control more land and Great Britain wanted to control the seas. Both of these policies affected American trade. A strict embargo on American foreign trade would hurt Great Britain, but helping the Allies would hurt Germany. Exports to Allied countries helped the American economy, a benefit that was difficult to give up for the principle of neutrality. Many daring Americans left the country to fly in the new Canadian or French air forces.

Wilson accepted British control of the seas, high-handed as it was at times. He also permitted trade that helped the Allies, although he forbade the making of loans to combatants so that the American gold reserve could remain strong. Wilson changed this policy in 1915, when the J. P. Morgan bankers were allowed to make a \$50 million loan to France; and the ban on loans was lifted that summer. The President also rejected a proposal by German-Americans to halt all sales of arms to the warring countries.

## German Aggression on the Seas

America was pulled into the war mostly by the provocations of Germany on the high seas. On February 4, 1915, Germany declared a zone of attack around the British Isles. It said that all ships were subject to attack without warning by German submarines or U-boats (*unterseebooten*). This was a major change from the traditional rules of war which allowed for safe passage of non-military vessels. President Wilson warned Germany that it would be held to strict accountability for any actions that harmed American ships and lives.

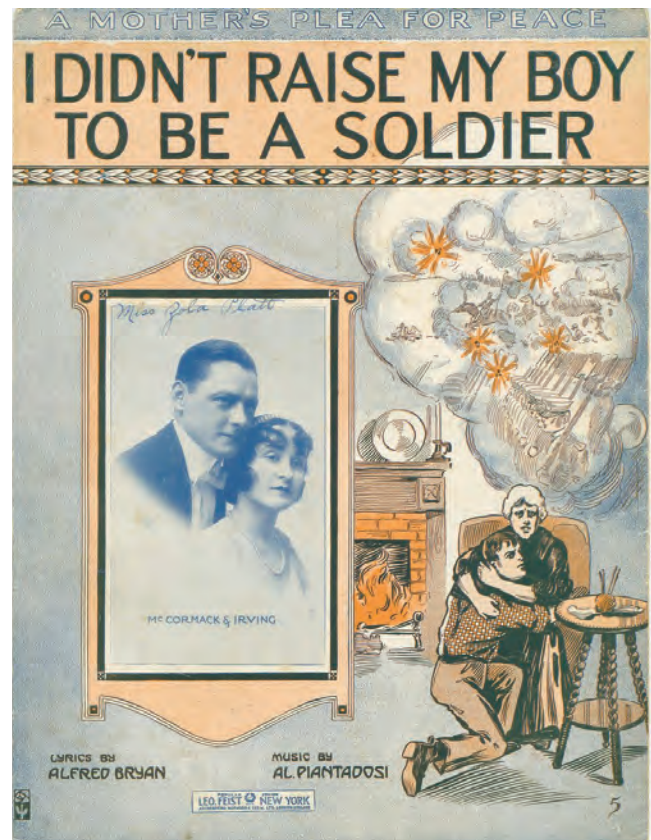
Three Americans died in two separate incidents in the spring of 1915. Then on May 7, 1915, German torpedoes sank the British passenger liner *Lusitania* off Ireland, with the loss of 1198 lives including 124 Americans. Germany had issued warnings in the United States against traveling on

the vessel. Despite these losses and despite Wilson's warnings to Germany, many Americans still wanted to avoid involvement in the war.

Wilson sent a series of messages to Germany warning her of the consequences of continued aggression. The second of these notes was so strongly worded that Secretary of State Bryan resigned out of fear that it would provoke a German declaration of war. Germany did, however, promise the safety of unarmed passenger liners.

Meanwhile, the U.S. began a slow program of preparedness by strengthening the Army and Navy. Many opposed such a program as the first step toward war, but conservatives generally supported the program. To finance the buildup, Congress increased income tax rates; and about \$21 billion was raised through the sale of war bonds.

*This 1915 song by Alfred Bryan (lyrics) and Al Piantadosi (music) was popular among the large portion of Americans who opposed entering the war.*



Following Wilson's re-election in 1916, he urged the combatants to pursue a negotiated peace; but the replies he received from the nations involved showed coolness to his idea. He addressed the Senate on January 17, 1917, to state his general desires for peace. Wilson said that he wanted to see "a peace without victory" and that "only a peace between equals can last." He urged all nations to avoid entangling alliances, to guarantee the freedom of the seas, and to support government by the consent of the governed.

Two weeks later, Germany resumed unrestricted submarine warfare, revoking its earlier promise regarding passenger ships. In response, Wilson severed diplomatic ties with Germany. America's neutrality would not last much longer.

*The Great War was a complex global conflict. A British propaganda office in China published the poster shown at right. It warned Muslims in China not to trust Germans, referencing a German official in Africa who had issued regulations against Islam.*



***He who is not with Me is against Me;  
and he who does not gather with Me scatters.  
Matthew 12:30***

### ★ Assignments for Lesson 97 ★

- American Voices** Read "A Beautiful Life" by William Golden (page 304).
- Literature** Continue reading *Miracle In the Hills*.
- Bible** Work on memorizing Micah 4:1-2.
- Project** Work on your project.
- Student Review** Optional: Answer the questions for Lesson 97.





*Woodrow Wilson Asks Congress for a Declaration of War*

## Lesson 98

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# America Goes “Over There”

The United States had watched from a distance the European conflict erupt and begin to take its terrible toll. The Wilson Administration had tried to maintain neutrality toward the belligerent nations, although most American sympathies and what little aid was given were directed toward the Allied Powers of Britain, France, and Russia. Germany had caused the loss of innocent American lives by its submarine attacks on passenger ships. For a while, in response to sharp American demands, Germany had ceased firing on non-military shipping; but in early 1917 that practice resumed. This was seen in America as an insult, especially in the face of Wilson’s pleas for a peace without victory and a peace among equals.

### Further German Insults

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Then came another blow. On February 25, 1917, the German foreign minister Arthur Zimmermann sent a telegram to the German ambassador in Mexico, instructing the ambassador to approach the Mexican government about a possible alliance with Mexico if Germany went to war with the United States. Among other things, the note suggested that such a move might help Mexico win back “the lost territory in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona.” The

telegram was intercepted by British intelligence and made public in America on March 1. Once again the American public was outraged. Wilson then asked Congress for authority to arm American ships. When the request was blocked, Wilson found the authority in existing legislation and ordered it anyway.

Three American ships were sunk by the Germans in March 1917. That same month, a liberal revolution ousted the tsar from power in Russia. This made all of the Allies appear to be fighting for democracy. On the battle front, meanwhile, the Allied position seemed increasingly desperate in several areas.

### Declaration of War

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On April 2, 1917, President Wilson asked Congress for a declaration recognizing that a state of war existed between the United States and Germany. He said the world had to be made “safe for democracy.” Congress voted overwhelmingly in favor of the declaration on April 6. Nearly three years had passed since the war began in Europe. Continued aggressive actions of Germany toward the United States finally pushed America into the war. British propaganda about the war and American economic interests played a role in shaping American

opinion, but when principles that America held dear were repeatedly violated, Congress and the Wilson Administration believed they had no choice but to go to war.

America entered into intense war preparations. The most significant early assistance that the U.S. gave the Allied cause was in naval escorts of Allied shipping. This dramatically cut the number of losses from German submarine attacks. In addition, General John Pershing led a 14,500 man contingent to France in June of 1917. His judgment after arriving was that the Allies were unable to mount a significant offensive on their own, and he requested that Wilson send a million American troops to Europe by the spring of 1918. The Army then directed its efforts toward meeting that goal.

## America at War

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When the United States entered the war, its Army numbered 379,000 troops. A month after entering the war, the government instituted a draft (called Selective Service) to register men between 21 and 30. Later the range was expanded to include men between the ages of 18 and 45. The first men were drafted in July. The Army grew to about 3.7 million men. Of those, about two million eventually went to Europe, where 1.4 million saw combat. The recruits were ushered into hastily built training camps, most of which were in the South because of better weather conditions there.

The nation also mobilized its domestic resources to help in the war effort. The War Industrial Board led by industrialist Bernard Baruch had oversight of all industrial production and could order the specific use of raw materials and other resources it saw fit to help the war. The government created other wartime agencies, including the Food Administration overseen by Herbert Hoover.

Hoover was a millionaire mining engineer who had guided relief efforts for embattled Belgium and who then returned to the U.S. when it entered the war. Hoover managed food production and usage to help the armed forces. His agency encouraged people to have Meatless Tuesdays, Wheatless Wednesdays, and Porkless Saturdays and to grow their own gardens in order to make more food available for the troops. The Food Administration did not have to use rationing. The Fuel Administration introduced Daylight Saving Time and encouraged Heatless Mondays. When labor issues arose in the factories, the government usually supported labor in order to keep production going.

Many southerners moved north to work in factories and to escape their rural poverty. This included many blacks, and the black exodus to the north continued into the 1920s. People in the north, however, often did not welcome African-Americans kindly. Race riots broke out in St. Louis, Chicago, and elsewhere as whites committed violence against the blacks they didn't want around and who they saw as a threat to their jobs.




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*When General John Pershing arrived in Paris, he went to the tomb of General Lafayette, French hero in the American Revolution. A war correspondent reported that he heard Pershing say, "Lafayette, we are here," indicating that now it was time for America to come to the aid of France. In his memoirs of the war, Pershing said that he did not remember saying it and that another American officer used the line in a speech in Paris on July 4, 1917.*



## The Battle for American Hearts and Minds

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The Administration also engaged in a certain amount of information and speech control to encourage the war effort. Journalist George Creel was appointed head of the Committee on Public Information, which turned out to be the government's propaganda operation. It kept the public informed of Allied war aims with speakers and pamphlets and sought to influence public opinion in enemy countries. The government also limited domestic free speech in opposition to the war with laws such as the Espionage Act, the Trading with the Enemy Act, and the Sedition Act, which attempted to suppress criticism of the war effort and of government leaders.

A significant portion of the American public opposed the war, and many prosecutions took place under the legislation. Over one hundred leaders of the Industrial Workers of the World were convicted for opposing the war effort. Socialist Eugene V. Debs also was against American involvement in the war. He was sent to jail for encouraging men to resist the draft. While in prison, he received over 900,000 votes for president in 1920.



*This American officer is in an observation balloon near the front lines in France (1918).*

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Women went to work in greater numbers as millions of men joined the army. After the war, most women returned home. Unions generally opposed women being in the workforce. Their stated reason was that women's place was in the home, but they probably also feared that their jobs might be given to women who were paid less. The changed role of women in society did lead President Wilson to come out in favor of women's suffrage by 1918.

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*The Supreme Court upheld the Espionage and Sedition Acts just after the war in its decision in the case of Schenck v. United States (1919). Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. said that speech could be limited when a "clear and present danger" exists. Holmes said that the right of free speech does not, for example, extend to someone falsely shouting "Fire" in a crowded theater and thus causing panic. His ideas have been accepted as limits on free speech ever since. Jane Addams and Helen Keller (pictured at right) were two vocal opponents of the war who were not prosecuted.*





Because of Germany's aggressive actions, things with German connections fell into disrepute. Some people with German ancestry felt the need to change their last names. Familiar terms of German origin were also changed. Hamburger (named for Hamburg, Germany) became Salisbury steak (named for a town in England). Frankfurters became hot dogs. In England, the royal family changed its name in 1917 from the German-sounding House of Hanover to the English-sounding House of Windsor. In addition, many Americans opposed labor strife because it reminded them of Bolshevik (Communist) unrest in Russia.

## Wilson's Fourteen Points

In Russia, the Bolsheviks staged another revolution in November of 1917 and took control of the country. The new government made a separate peace treaty with Germany and pulled out of the war. On January 8, 1918, President Wilson outlined his vision for world peace in his Fourteen Points speech before Congress. He laid out what he saw as essential steps to bringing about a just peace, including "open covenants" arrived at "in the public view," free navigation of the seas, impartial settlement of colonial claims, and the addressing

### Alvin C. York

*The greatest American hero of World War I was a quiet, thirty-one-year-old man from rural Tennessee, Alvin C. York. York had led a wild life before his conversion at a revival in 1914. When he was drafted for military service, York asked not to serve because of his objections to war; but his request was denied. He eventually agreed to go into battle to help stop others from killing.*

*In October of 1918, Corporal York's unit of eighteen men was ordered to take a railroad line in the Argonne Forest. They misread their map and wound up behind enemy lines. A German officer surrendered even though he had the Americans outnumbered. German machine guns opened fire on their own men who had surrendered, killing nine Americans in the process. York, an expert marksman, was ordered to take out the machine guns, which he did. Eventually 132 Germans were captured by the nine remaining Americans. York never claimed to have acted alone, but only two other soldiers were ever decorated for their part in the encounter.*

*News of York's heroism eventually made its way to the American military command. York received the Congressional Medal of Honor, was promoted to sergeant, and was welcomed back to the U.S. as a national hero. Tennessee civic clubs raised money to buy York and his new wife a house, but they were only partly successful and York had to take out a mortgage for the rest. York dedicated his life to helping educate the children of his area. He founded and raised money nationwide for the York Institute, which eventually became a high school and vocational school. York never tried to make money off of his heroism. He resisted Hollywood offers to make a movie based on his life until World War II began. York then agreed to a movie deal to encourage young Americans to support their country in that effort. "Sergeant York" starring Gary Cooper is a good representation of York's life through his return to Tennessee.*





*Americans Celebrate in Philadelphia After Announcement of the Armistice*

of border questions involving European nations. He also called for national self-determination in the Balkans, Turkey, Poland, and other areas. The fourteenth point was a call for “a general association of nations” to guarantee independence and territorial integrity to all people. This became Wilson’s proposal for a League of Nations.

## **Armistice**

The peace settlement with Russia enabled Germany to concentrate its efforts on the western front, but it was too late. American forces began having a real impact in the war in the summer of 1918. Decisive American offensives in September drove German armies into retreat and brought a request from the German high command for terms for an armistice with the Allies. Austria-Hungary dropped out of the war in the fall. The German Kaiser abdicated his throne on November 9, 1918; and an armistice was signed that went into effect at the eleventh hour on the eleventh day of the eleventh month, November 11, 1918. The armistice was signed by German and Allied officials in a railroad car.

*This documentary film described the Allied effort to defeat Germany by France, Britain, Italy, and the United States. Originally intended as a propaganda piece, it was released six days after the Armistice with an edited ending about the end of the war.*





## Unit 20 - America and the Great War



*This photo shows the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery and Memorial in Belleau, France, decorated for Memorial Day in 2013. The cemetery has 2,288 graves with headstones shaped either as Stars of David or crosses. The cross in the foreground has this inscription: "Here rests in honored glory an American soldier known but to God."*

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In all, 61 million people served in the military around the world. Eight and a half million Europeans died as a result of the war, including two million Germans and about 1.7 million each from France and Russia. Nineteen million people were injured. American casualties included 114,000 dead.

International efforts that had for so long been directed toward war now turned to the task of creating a just and lasting peace. These efforts created a different kind of conflict among nations. They led to an unsatisfactory peace in many ways and left the door open for further conflict later in the century.

***"Comfort, O comfort My people," says your God.  
"Speak kindly to Jerusalem; and call out to her, that her warfare has ended,  
that her iniquity has been removed, that she has received  
of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."  
Isaiah 40:1-2***

### **★ Assignments for Lesson 98 ★**

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- American Voices** Read Woodrow Wilson's War Message to Congress and the excerpts from his "Fourteen Points" speech (pages 297-302 and 305-306).  
Read "Over There" by George M. Cohan (page 303).
- Literature** Continue reading *Miracle In the Hills*.
- Bible** Work on memorizing Micah 4:1-2.
- Project** Work on your project.
- Student Review** Optional: Answer the questions for Lesson 98.



*Hall of Mirrors at the Palace of Versailles*

## Lesson 99

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# An Imperfect Peace

**W**ith the approach of peace, Woodrow Wilson felt the highest calling of his life. He was determined to use every ounce of skill and every resource at his disposal to create a better and safer world. After the war to end all wars, he wanted a world safe for democracy. Wilson's idealism may have helped to create a peace that was better than it otherwise would have been. However, Wilson faced difficulties in implementing his plan; and his intense devotion to his vision created resistance from others involved in the peace process.

### **Partisan Missteps**

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During the congressional election campaign of 1918, Wilson appealed to the American public to return a Democratic Congress that would support him in his efforts for peace. This blatantly partisan call in the midst of war backfired, and the Republican party won enough seats to gain control of both the House and the Senate. Wilson decided to attend the peace conference at the palace of Versailles, just outside of Paris, France. The conference lasted over a period of six months, and Wilson was there for almost all of it.

Wilson's determination to go to the conference showed his commitment to his plan for peace.

However, while he was gone his Administration lacked leadership in generating public support for his plan and furthering the work of government as the nation wound down from its war effort. In addition, Wilson did not name a single Republican to the peace delegation. Republicans in Congress considered this an insult and another example of Wilson's partisanship, and they resolved to oppose Wilson's plan when it came before them.

### **Wilson in Europe**

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When Wilson arrived in Europe, he was wildly welcomed by the people of France, Great Britain, and Italy as a hero and savior. Some homes had Wilson's picture placed behind candles, as though it were an icon. This popular reception increased his sense of mission for the treaty negotiations. He sat down with Prime Minister David Lloyd George of Great Britain, Premier Georges Clemenceau of France, and Premier Vittorio Orlando of Italy with the purpose of crafting a new world order with the United States as the moral power behind it. Representatives of all the nations that had declared war on or broken diplomatic relations with Germany were present, but the meetings were dominated by the Big Four countries and their leaders. Then things started caving in.



## Unit 20 - America and the Great War



*The Big Four at Versailles: David Lloyd George, Vittorio Orlando, Georges Clemenceau, and Woodrow Wilson*

First, Wilson had to deal with the expectations that had been created by previously made secret treaties. When the Bolsheviks had taken over Russia, they had published the contents of secret treaties made by the Allies at the start of the war. These treaties called for the victor nations to carve up parts of Germany and Austria-Hungary and to take over Germany's overseas colonies. England, France, and Italy expected those agreements to be honored; but Wilson had strong objections to such actions, especially since they had been made in secret.

Second, the American President came with high ideals for molding a world of peace without the sense of winners enjoying the conquest of losers. However, the European leaders had seen their countries devastated by war; and they wanted Germany to pay for the damages. Lloyd George had just won an election in Britain with his party using the slogans "Hang the Kaiser" and "Make Germany Pay." He had no intention of being kind to Germany or risking Britain's dominance at sea. Clemenceau had seen France suffer long enough under the threat of German military power, and he wanted to crush Germany's might. Orlando's main interest was in acquiring a portion of the Balkans that Italy had been promised in 1915 when it had come into the war on the Allied side.

Finally, Wilson's primary goal was the formation of a League of Nations, which he believed could prevent or limit future wars. He wanted this so badly that he was willing to compromise on many other points in order to get the League included as part of the final treaty. The treaty called for the demilitarization of the west bank of the Rhine and the giving of the coal-rich Alsace-Lorraine region to France. German colonies were to be given to victor nations and administered by a mandate program under the auspices of the League of Nations. Many other changes were made in the map of Europe. Slavic peoples were given their own countries: Czechoslovakia and, in the Balkans, Yugoslavia. Poland was re-established from the eastern part of the German empire. Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were created to give other ethnic groups their own countries. Italy received the corner of the

*A massive influenza epidemic struck in 1918. Estimates of the worldwide death toll are at least 20 million. American soldiers returning from Europe brought the disease into the country with them, and the eventual death toll in the United States alone was a half million people. Ten thousand Americans died in September of 1918. From then until June of 1919, about one-fourth of the American population had the flu. The photo below shows volunteer Red Cross nurses tending patients in the Oakland (California) Auditorium.*



## Lesson 99 - An Imperfect Peace

Balkans that it was hoping for. Austria and Hungary were made into separate nations.

In the most controversial part of the treaty, Germany (not Austria-Hungary) was made to accept the blame for the war and was ordered to pay huge sums in reparations to the victor nations. The German military was reduced to a tiny force. The United States joined Britain and France in a defense pact against any future German aggression.

Wilson did not like the imposing of war guilt and reparations on Germany, but he was forced to accept these provisions so that the other leaders would accept the League of Nations. As drawn up in the treaty, the League would be overseen by a secretary-general. It would have a general assembly of one representative from each member nation. The real power would reside in a council, which would have the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan as permanent members and other nations rotating on for periods of time. Any of the five permanent members could veto any resolution or action of the council. Other agencies were included in the League's operations as well. The League was well-intentioned, but it had weaknesses. No member state was compelled to act against an aggressor nation that invaded another member state. The veto power of the permanent council members stymied the chances for almost any significant action. Finally, the League simply did not have much power to end a conflict that might erupt.

The treaty was presented to representatives of the German government, who objected strongly to its punitive provisions. However, under threat of an Allied military invasion, Germany signed the treaty on June 28, 1919.

### The Battle for the Peace

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Wilson came home in July of 1919 to a nation divided over the Treaty of Versailles. The German-American community and the influential Hearst newspapers didn't like the harsh terms imposed



The Signing of Peace in the Hall of Mirrors, Versailles, 28th June 1919, *William Orpen (Irish, 1919)*

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on Germany. The Irish didn't like that fact that no provision was made for an independent Ireland. Italian-Americans didn't believe that Italy had gotten enough in the settlement. More important politically, many Republicans in the Senate, including a group of isolationists called "The Irreconcilables," pledged themselves to defeat the treaty. Their main reason for opposing the treaty was the League of Nations, which they felt created a permanent entanglement of the United States in foreign affairs which the U.S. was not free to control. Partisanship also played a significant role in the Republicans' opposition. Still, a large number of Americans supported at least the general terms of the treaty and the concept of an international body to maintain peace.

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Henry Cabot Lodge drew up a list of reservations that he wanted attached to the treaty before he would approve its passage. One reservation said that the U.S. would not be obligated with regard to any



## Unit 20 - America and the Great War

*Violence in Ireland escalated during and after World War I as many Irish fought for the independence of their country. During the conflict, the British stationed thousands of constables in Ireland, many of them veterans of the Great War. Because of their uniform colors, they were called the Black and Tans. Ireland eventually became independent of Great Britain through a long series of steps, including the ratification of a new constitution in 1922. The northern counties on the island remained with Great Britain and became Northern Ireland.*

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League of Nations action without a joint resolution of Congress specifically supporting it. Wilson refused to accept any reservations, and the battle over the treaty boiled down to a standoff between Wilson and Lodge.

Wilson tried to go directly to the American people to gain support for the treaty. He went on an exhausting speaking tour informing people about the treaty and attempting to get the public to share his vision for creating the means of maintaining world peace. The response he received was strongly positive. However, seven days after giving a speech in Pueblo, Colorado, the President suffered a serious stroke that paralyzed his entire left side. Robbed of its most effective supporter, the treaty appeared headed for defeat. Lodge presented the treaty with reservations to the Senate. Wilson, dogmatic to the last, urged his fellow Democrats to vote against it; and the treaty was defeated in November of 1919. However, this did not settle the question of how officially to end the war. The country had enough support for the treaty and the League that the treaty was brought up for a second vote in March of 1920, but again it fell short of the majority it needed. A change by seven Democrats would have been enough to ratify it. Wilson then asked that the 1920 election be a "solemn referendum" on whether the United States would fulfill its role on the world stage or retreat into isolationism.

On May 20, 1920, Congress passed a joint resolution declaring the war over. Wilson vetoed it. Another joint resolution passed July 2, 1921; and with the signature of Republican President Warren G. Harding, the state of war was finally ended. The United States concluded separate treaties with Germany and with Austria-Hungary in October of 1921.

## The Recovery Stumbles

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While the political turmoil was going on in Washington, more immediate pressures were facing many Americans. Soldiers returned from Europe and began looking for work just as war production

*1919 Cartoon from Punch Magazine*



ceased and the need for workers fell. Farm prices also decreased as European nations began to rejuvenate their domestic agriculture and didn't need American imports. Labor unions resorted to strikes to try to improve their members' lot. During 1919 a total of four million workers were on strike at one time or other. Some of the strikes became violent. When the Boston police went on strike, the city's mayor and Massachusetts governor Calvin Coolidge called out the National Guard to maintain order. The police then announced their intention to return to work, but the mayor refused to accept them and announced his plans to hire a new force. Governor Coolidge supported the mayor and declared, "There is no right to strike against the public safety by anybody, anywhere, any time." Coolidge's stance gained him national attention and helped him receive the Republican vice-presidential nomination in 1920.

Another upsetting factor in post-war American life was the fear of Communist revolutionaries in the country that came to be called the Red Scare. The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in November of 1917 caused many Americans to believe that a similar attempt was possible in this country. Indeed, thirty mail bombs were discovered, including some addressed to cabinet members and a Supreme Court justice. A bomb exploded on Wall Street at noon on September 16, 1920, killing 38, injuring hundreds, and causing hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of damage.

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*Wilson's first wife, Ellen Axson Wilson, died on August 6, 1914, just as war was brewing in Europe. The President married Edith Bolling Galt, a Washington widow, on December 18, 1915. It is generally believed that Edith maintained a tight control of Wilson's activities following his stroke and might even have been involved in making policy decisions while he was recovering. This 1920 photo shows Edith holding a document for the President, paralyzed on the left side, to sign. Woodrow Wilson died in 1924.*

Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer arrested hundreds of suspected radical agents and had many deported without a trial. The young J. Edgar Hoover was put in charge of building files on suspected radicals. Palmer received criticism for some of his actions, which included making some raids without search warrants. The uneasy atmosphere of the Red Scare was widespread. The New York State legislature expelled five Socialists who had been fairly elected because their ideas were deemed not in the best interests of the country. Americanism became a cause that lasted well into the 1920s and resulted in immigration restrictions and other actions against those whose loyalty some Americans questioned.

The fighting had ended, but tensions were not completely gone in either Europe or in the United States. Different battles emerged during the period of the 1920s.





## What Else Was Happening?

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- 1914 *The first transcontinental telephone line is completed.*
- 1914 *Work begins on the Lincoln Highway, which will eventually carry auto traffic from coast to coast.*
- 1914 *The first signal light to regulate traffic (red = stop, green = go) is installed in Cleveland, Ohio.*
- 1915 *The Corning Glass Works markets the first cookware made from heat-resistant glass.*
- 1917 *Congress passes the Eighteenth Amendment outlawing the making, selling, or transporting of alcoholic beverages. It is ratified by enough states in January of 1919 and goes into effect one year later. The Volstead Act, passed in 1919 over Wilson's veto, outlaws any beverage with more than .5% alcohol.*
- 1918 *British women over the age of thirty are given the right to vote.*
- 1919 *British violence against unarmed Indian protesters causes Mohandas Gandhi to begin a campaign for Indian independence.*
- 1919 *Karl Barth publishes his commentary Epistle to the Romans.*
- 1919 *The Weimar Republic begins in Germany.*
- 1919 *The Cincinnati Reds defeat the heavily favored Chicago White Sox in the World Series, five games to three. It is later revealed that several White Sox players were paid by gamblers to play poorly on purpose to try to lose the games, thus increasing the payout on bets made on the underdog Reds. It becomes known as the Black Sox Scandal. Shoeless Joe Jackson and other players are banned from baseball. Players taking bribes from gamblers has been commonplace since salaries are so low. The first commissioner of baseball, Judge Kennesaw "Mountain" Landis, is appointed to clean up major league baseball.*

*The word which He sent to the sons of Israel,  
preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all). . . .  
Acts 10:36*

### ★ Assignments for Lesson 99 ★

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- American Voices**    Read "Wonderful Grace of Jesus" by Haldor Lillenas (page 307).
- Literature**        Continue reading *Miracle In the Hills*.
- Bible**                Work on memorizing Micah 4:1-2.
- Project**              Work on your project.
- Student Review**    Optional: Answer the questions for Lesson 99.



*Church Service in N'Gaoundere, Cameroon (2007)*

## Lesson 100 - Bible Study

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# From Every Nation, Tribe, and Tongue

**T**he involvement of the United States on the world stage made Americans more aware of the peoples of different lands, especially those who were different from them in terms of skin color, language, culture, and religion. This is therefore a good time to consider what the Bible says about the nations of the world and how Christians should think of them.

### **Nations in the Bible**

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After the great flood that is described in Genesis, the children of the sons of Noah spread out over the face of the earth and gave rise to the nations of people who inhabit the earth (Genesis 10). At first all the people used the same language; but when some people attempted to build a tower to the heavens, God confused their language in order to keep them from accomplishing their goal (Genesis 11). Thus the different languages of the world were begun.

The Bible does not place a great emphasis on what we call the racial divisions of mankind. However, Scripture does take note of various nations. In the Old Testament, nations and people groups that are mentioned include: Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Edomites, Moabites, Gileadites, Egyptians, Philistines, Assyrians, Babylonians (Chaldeans), Persians, and

Israelites. The New Testament refers to the Jews (descendants of people from the tribe of Judah who returned from captivity in Babylon), Romans, Greeks, Syrophenicians, Ethiopians, Scythians, Spain, and the area on the Balkan peninsula called Illyricum.

The Jews, generally speaking, saw the world as divided into two kinds of people: Jews and Gentiles. The Jews saw themselves as God's special, chosen people; and they saw Gentiles as dirty dog sinners with whom Jews were not to associate. Among the unacceptable people in the Jews' minds were the Samaritans. Samaritans were descendants of the intermarriage of two groups: the pagan Assyrians who were brought in to repopulate the Northern Kingdom after the Northern Kingdom was taken into captivity, and the pagan Northern Israelites who remained in the land. These pagan people received some instruction about serving the Lord, so as a result the people "feared the Lord and served their own gods" (2 Kings 17:24-41). The Samaritan religion accepted only the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament.

### **Jesus' View of the Nations**

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Jesus taught His disciples to look at others without the stereotypes and prejudices that people



often have. Jesus spoke freely with a Samaritan at the well—indeed, He spoke there with a Samaritan woman, thus pushing aside two social taboos at once (John 4:7-9). Every Roman centurion who is mentioned in the New Testament is discussed in a positive way (for example, Matthew 8:5-10). Jesus told His disciples that He had “other sheep, which are not of this fold” (John 10:16). This is usually understood to refer to His followers who are not Jews.

In the Great Commission, Jesus instructed the apostles to “make disciples of all the nations” (Matthew 28:19). The Greek word for nation is *ethnos*, from which we get the word ethnic. The meaning of the Greek word is closer to the English

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*After World War I, the Young Women's Christian Association offered help to immigrants seeking to understand American culture and establish new lives in their new country.*



term people-group than it is to how we use the word nation today. Today we think of a nation as a geographic area with defined political boundaries, but often a modern nation will encompass many ethnic groups. The Kurdish people in Iraq, for instance, are a distinct ethnic group. Native American nations are ethnically different from European-Americans who live in the United States. The aborigines in Australia are a separate ethnic group. Large countries, such as Russia and China, have many different ethnic groups within their borders. Many African nations encompass a number of tribal groups. There are about two hundred nations in the world today; but there are hundreds if not thousands of distinct ethnic groups and language groups in the world.

When Christians seek to fulfill the Great Commission, they need to realize that Jesus' call goes beyond simply entering a political nation. It includes the ethnic groups within each nation. Reaching the predominant ethnic group in a country is not necessarily the same as reaching every *ethnos* in that country.

## The Nations Hear the Gospel

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The first step in taking the gospel to all the nations took place on the day of Pentecost, when Jews from many different countries heard the message of Jesus for the first time (Acts 2:1-11). Later, God used persecution in Jerusalem to nudge Christians into the mission field; and Philip proclaimed the gospel in Samaria (Acts 8:1-8). Then God forced Peter to get out of his comfort zone by leading him to teach about Jesus to Cornelius, a God-fearing Roman centurion (Acts 10). Because of this experience, Peter had the earth-shattering realization that, “In every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him” (Acts 10:35), a shocking idea for someone who had been a faithful Jew. In Antioch, Christians from Cyprus and Cyrene shared the gospel with Gentiles, and many of them turned to the Lord (Acts 11:19-21). On Paul's first missionary journey, when Jews rejected his message,



*This 1903 photo shows the Christian Mission School in Nablus, Palestine. Today Christians in Palestine are among the most active worldwide in sending out international evangelists.*

Paul declared that he was going to teach the Gentiles. Many Gentiles responded joyfully (Acts 13:46-48).

Some Jewish Christians opposed bringing Gentiles into the faith. When Peter returned to Jerusalem after entering the home of the Gentile Cornelius and teaching him, Peter had some serious explaining to do (Acts 11:1-18). Some time later, a heated discussion took place in the church in Jerusalem about whether Gentiles had to be circumcised and had to obey the Law of Moses in order to be faithful Christians (Acts 15:1-35). The problem was that many Jewish Christians believed that a person had to become a Jew in order to become a Christian. Paul understood that this was not the case.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Paul grasped a worldview-changing truth. The gospel made national differences inconsequential. Referring to Jews and Gentiles, Paul said that Jesus “made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall . . . so that in Himself he might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace”

(Ephesians 2:14-15). In Christ “there is neither Jew nor Greek” (Galatians 3:28). In other words, the important fact about Christians is not that they are Jewish, Greek, French, American, or Kenyan. The important fact is that they are Christians, period. This is the most important distinguishing trait of God’s people, wherever they live and whatever their national or tribal background might be.

In the thrilling description in the book of Revelation of the throne of God, John tells of seeing “a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands” (Revelation 7:9). The separation and scattering of people because of sin as described in Genesis is reversed through the blood of Christ. In Christ the nations of the world are truly made one.

### **Taking the Gospel to Other Lands**

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, British and American Christians took seriously Christ’s call to fulfill the Great Commission. Missionaries went to many lands to preach the gospel. Their lot was often difficult. Many people responded; but many times the missionaries and their message were rejected, sometimes violently.

Missionaries are most effective when they make a distinction between the cultural traits of a people that should be respected and the aspects of the people’s lives and cultures that need to be changed in order for the people to be submitted to Christ. However, many times missionaries took not simply Christianity but the form of Christianity they had known in their home countries. It seemed as though tribesmen in Africa or villagers in Japan were expected to become British or American in order to become Christians. Missionaries did not understand that such people did not need hymnbooks, pews, organs, clergy vestments, and other elements of western Christian practice in order to be faithful to God.





*Mosque and Church in Ferizaj, Kosovo*

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In addition, Americans have tended to be condescending toward people of other nations and other ethnic groups. It was common for Americans to refer to the people of the Philippines, for instance, as “our little brown brethren” or to use other such belittling phrases. Many mission efforts tried to keep control of their work in the hands of western missionaries, who were thought to be more intelligent or more reliable than the native peoples. In more recent times, missionaries have concentrated on training local men to be preachers who can take the gospel to their own ethnic groups; and this approach has generally been more effective in reaching the lost.

Americans need to remember that Jesus, ethnically, was a Jew. The first Christians were Jewish and non-Jewish people of the Mediterranean world. Many years passed before the gospel made significant inroads into western Europe, and hundreds of years passed before the first believers that we know about came to the western hemisphere. We are all dependent on someone else teaching us the gospel. The gospel that we share with others did

not originate with us; it is only the message that we received from someone else.

“The earth is the Lord’s, and all it contains; the world, and those who dwell in it” (Psalm 24:1). God is moving powerfully in many places on the globe, separate from American presence or influence. The following sections give two examples of God’s work in other nations today: a survey of the Christian faith in Communist China, and an incident in Nigeria that shows how God can use even a little thing like pencils to further His cause.

### **The Christian Faith Is Alive in Communist China**

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The government of the People’s Republic of China is officially atheist. The Chinese Constitution guarantees freedom of religious expression, but this provision has been violated frequently. Believers have often been subjected to fierce persecution by Communist officials because of the believers’ supposedly unpatriotic or imperialistic activities.

China does, however, have an official church. It is called the Three Self Patriotic Movement or the Three Self Church. Because western missionary efforts in China in the 1800s were closely associated with western economic abuse of China, many Chinese are skeptical of western missionaries. The Three Self Church is an attempt to have a Christian church led by the Chinese that is subject to the Communist government. The Three Self Movement encourages churches to be self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating. Three Self Church leaders are considered government employees and, for the most part, parrot the official government position on all questions. The Catholic Church in China is also allowed to function because it has aligned itself with the Communist government. Officially, the Catholic Church in China does not answer to the Pope in Rome.

However, genuine Christian faith is alive and growing in China primarily due to a huge underground house church movement. Millions of Chinese assemble regularly in homes all across China, in large cities and in small villages. Secret training programs equip Chinese preachers and evangelists to work in and to begin house churches. Most of

this activity takes place without any involvement by Americans, although some Americans have helped from time to time.

The policy of the Chinese government toward house churches has been inconsistent. At times the government has beaten and imprisoned house church leaders. At other times, government officials have turned a blind eye to religious activities. Even some leaders and members in Three Self churches do not go along with Communist doctrine, and they have sometimes been allowed to operate relatively freely. It appears that a major factor in the nature of official actions toward churches and church leaders is the attitude of local government bureaucrats. If those bureaucrats choose to ignore Christian activity, the churches can function with little interference. If, on the other hand, local officials decide to crack down on Christians in their district, life for believers can be made miserable.

Right under the thumb of a Communist government, Christianity is thriving and growing. Xiao Min (pronounced *see-ow meen*) is a Chinese believer. She received no formal music training, but she has written over one thousand hymns that beautifully convey the Christian faith using phrases and ideas that communicate well to the Chinese mind and heart. A published collection of her songs is called *Canaan Hymns*.

Chinese Christians have even been leaving China to serve as missionaries in other countries. The picture of faith in China is complicated because China itself is complicated; but God is definitely moving in the People's Republic of China.

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*A Chinese Christian Pastor and His Family (c. 1900)*




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## God Used Pencils to Save Lives

Healing Hands International (HHI) is a Christian relief ministry based in the United States. It provides food, clothing, medical supplies, and other assistance to people who have been affected by droughts, floods, and other disasters. A few years ago, HHI received a large donation of pencils. The organization sent some of the pencils to a contact



in Nigeria. A part of that shipment was then sent to Simon Dabish, a Christian preacher who lives in a predominantly Muslim part of Nigeria.

Simon and his wife decided to distribute the pencils to the families in their community for the children to use in their schools. School supplies are not easily obtained where they live. Mr. and Mrs. Dabish dressed in their traditional Muslim-style attire and went house to house, giving pencils to the children. The families they visited were grateful for the pencils, but beyond that their efforts seemed to have little impact.

One day a riot erupted among the Muslims in their village, and the object of their wrath was the Christians. The mob decided to burn down every church building. One of the Muslim leaders gained the attention of the mob and announced, "It is good for us to teach the Christians a lesson, but there is one church that must not be touched. They are the ones that gave our children the pencils."

Simon and his family watched from the doorway of their church building as the mob burned

all the other church buildings in town. As this was happening, several Muslim children stood around the Dabishes' church building and shouted, "This is the church that is not to be touched!"

A few months later, another riot erupted. This time Simon was not at home with his family. He was away preaching in a nearby village. As he was walking home, some of the angry Muslims recognized him as a Christian preacher. They seized Dabish and planned to execute him. Then the Muslims summoned one of their leaders to carry out the murder.

The leader they called was the same man who had led the previous disturbance. When he saw that the man the mob was holding was Dabish, he told the crowd, "We will not kill this man. This is the same man who gave pencils to our children!" Simon was released and taken home to his terrified family, who had been informed that Simon had already been executed.

God used pencils to save a preacher's life and to continue the work of the kingdom.

*After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands.*

*Revelation 7:9*

### ★ Assignments for Lesson 100 ★

**Literature** Continue reading *Miracle In the Hills*.

**Bible** Recite or write Micah 4:1-2 from memory.

**Project** Complete your project for the unit.

**Student Review** Optional: Answer the questions for Lesson 100, take the quiz for Unit 20, and take the fourth history exam, English exam, and Bible exam.