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SIX LESSONS TO UNLOCKING THE TRUTH
TO GOD'S HOLY LAND



LESSON 1

I.S.R.A.E.L. — Important to God

Think of someone or something that is important to you. What words come to mind?

Important means: valuable, unique, special. And today's lesson focuses on how Israel is important to God; Israel is valuable, unique, and special to Him.

What does it mean to you that Israel is important to God? Why do you think that is true?

Israel is unique because it is the historic, ancestral, and eternal homeland of God's chosen people, the Jews.

Scripture tells us that God specifically chose Israel, or the Jews, as His special people—from whom He would bless others. Israel chose God by accepting His laws. Christians are blessed because of this special relationship through Jesus, who came through the Jewish line and further delivered on God's promise to bless others through Israel.

KEY VERSE:

*"I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you."*

— GENESIS 12:3

MAIN TEACHING POINT

Israel is important to God because

1. It is the land God promised to Abram and his descendants in Genesis.
2. It is considered the Holy Land for both Christians and Jews.
3. It reminds us of the fulfillment of God's promise to His people.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Israel and the Middle East are frequently in the news. Based on what you've read or heard, write down a few facts that you know about Israel already.

Find modern-day Israel on a map. Name a few of the cities or countries around it that are familiar to you. What are your impressions of Israel and the Middle East?

Write down at least three questions you have about Israel. What would you like to know about the country? About the Jewish people? About Judaism?

Going Deeper

READ GENESIS 12:1–9.

To what land does God tell Abram to go?

Canaan is another name for Israel, and it is the land that God had promised to Abram. Israel is also known by other names, including Eretz Israel, Zion, the Holy Land, or simply as *Haretz*, meaning the “land,” a sign of its beloved status and significance.

Abram, at 75-years-old, does exactly what God tells him to do and gathers his family (including his wife Sarai and nephew Lot) and possessions and travels to the new land. When God tells Abram to go, God also makes promises to Abram.

List three things God promises Abram when he moves to Canaan.

Abram would become the father of the Israelite nation through whom many would be blessed. Abraham (God changed his name from Abram to Abraham; see Genesis 17:5) is known as a man of great faith . . . and we can see why. He didn’t know anything about where God was sending him — he didn’t even know the name of the land. All he had was God’s word and God’s instructions. He evidently believed in God and knew that God was going to keep His word so Abraham packed up his family and moved on.

GOD REPEATS HIS PROMISE

God repeats His promise to Abraham and to his descendants. Read the following scriptures and write what God says and to whom.

Verses	God’s Promise	Given to Whom
Genesis 13:14-17		
Genesis 15:18-20		
Genesis 26:1-5		
Genesis 28:10-15		

*Jacob is Isaac’s son.

To what does God change Jacob’s name? (See Genesis 32:28.)

Israel’s 12 sons then become known as the children of Israel and make up the 12 tribes of Israel.

What made God choose Abraham to move to Israel and develop a nation? What made Abraham listen?

We may never know these answers, but we do know the result of Abraham's obedience — the people of Israel became a nation important to God. And throughout the centuries, as chronicled through the Scriptures, God has continued His special relationship with Israel. Even during apostasy — times when Israel was not obedient to Him — God kept His promises.

God made many promises to his chosen people. He promised to give them a land, which is known as Israel. When the nation was split into two following the death of King Solomon, the Northern Kingdom became known as Israel, and the Southern Kingdom was named Judah. The Northern Kingdom was exiled from Israel as punishment for its sins of worshiping idols, and they were scattered throughout the world. They became known as the “Lost Tribes of Israel.” When the Southern Kingdom was exiled by the Babylonians some 136 years later, they stayed together. They became known as the people from Judah, or the Jews.

What does this mean for Christians? We read in Matthew 1:1 that Jesus descended through the line of Abraham; so when we believe in Jesus and are adopted into His family, we, too, are adopted into Jesus' family line that started with Abraham. We, too, become a part of God's plan to bless the world.

Read Matthew 1:1–16. Write the names in the genealogy that you recognize. How does knowing this impact your faith?

It's important that people know about Israel and support Israel — after all, it is God's chosen people and through whom Jesus comes.

Jesus was a Jew and was raised following the Jewish traditions. How does this impact your understanding of the Jewish faith and the Jewish people?

So, how can we help Israel today—whose people are in some cases still scattered throughout the world?

1. First, studying and knowing about Israel is important.
2. By sharing your knowledge, you can alleviate misconceptions about Israel.
3. Prayer is extremely important, as it opens our minds and hearts to God's chosen people.
4. We can advocate for Israel and what is in the best interest of her people.

Think About It

Why do you think Israel should be important to Christians?

Why do you think Abraham is considered the father of both the Jewish faith and the Christian faith?

What did God promise to Abram in Genesis 12?

Name ways you see those promises manifested today?

What are some ways you can bless Israel?

LOOK UP THE FOLLOWING SCRIPTURES.

What do these scriptures say about God's special relationship with Israel?

Verses	God's Relationship with Israel
Deuteronomy 7:6	
Deuteronomy 11:12	
Jeremiah 31:3	
Zechariah 2:8-9	

For more teaching about Israel being Important to God, watch the video featuring *The Fellowship* founder and President Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, and his daughter, Yael Eckstein, Executive Vice President.

Hebrew Words for Lesson 1

Hebrew Word	English Spelling	English Meaning
ברכה	<i>Bracha</i>	Blessing
אהבה	<i>Ahava</i>	Love
לתת	<i>Latet</i>	Give
חבר	<i>Chaver</i>	Friend
תודה	<i>Toda</i>	Thank you
בבקשה	<i>B'vakasha</i>	You're welcome

Ask students to read Genesis 14:13 and find the first person to be called a Hebrew.

Devotional reflection — Blessing with Love

KEY VERSE:

*“I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you.”*

— GENESIS 12:3



Twice a year, on special Jewish holidays, people from all over the world come to the Western Wall, one of the holiest places in the Jewish faith. It is the last remaining part of the Holy Temple still standing in Jerusalem, which is where all Jews came to worship, including Jesus and his family.

The people crowd into the plaza to receive a special blessing that Aaron, the High Priest and Moses’ brother, first gave to the children of Israel in biblical times. In fact, the priests who give the blessing today can trace their family ancestors all the way back to Aaron!

The first time we see a priest blessing the children of Israel is in Leviticus 9:22, where we read: *“Then Aaron lifted his hands toward the people and blessed them.”* Yet, while this practice of blessing others has become a firm tradition in both the Christian and Jewish faiths, there is no place in the Bible where the priests are actually *commanded* to bless anyone.

The Jewish sages, who were wise students and teachers of the Jewish Bible, explain why this is so. A blessing, by its very nature, must come from the heart. They taught that a blessing must come from a sincere desire to shower another person with love and favor. This is why God could not command the priests to bless others. It had to come from love, not from duty or obligation.

In Genesis, we learn that God promised that those who bless the people of Israel would themselves be blessed. At *The Fellowship*, we have actually seen this promise come true over and over again. Here is one story:

Jay and Jo Anne are a couple who wanted to bless the Jewish people and Israel. After hearing about *The Fellowship’s* program that helped poor Jewish people from other countries come home to Israel, they decided to give enough money for four Jews to return home – one person for each member of their family.

On the very day they decided to do that, Jay and JoAnn received not one, not two, but four unexpected checks in the mail. But do you know what was most amazing about those checks? When they added up the money, it was the EXACT amount they had planned to donate.

But the story doesn't end there. Jay and Jo Anne continued to bless the people of Israel many times and contributed in different ways – from donating money for food boxes, to helping support orphanages, and to bringing more Jews back to Israel. Soon, Jay and Jo Anne saw many of God's blessings come to them. Their children were successful at work. Their granddaughter was healed of her allergies, as well as other family members were healed.

What a wonderful story, but the real reason to bless Israel is because God wants us to. Most importantly, we need to bless Israel because *we* want to do that, too. Like the priests, we need to bless with love.



BLESS WITH LOVE

All blessings are valuable — be they in prayer, in charity, or in working on behalf of the people of Israel.

But as you bless Israel, remember to also love Israel and the Jewish people. The greater your love for Israel, the greater your blessing will be!