



As we make final preparations for our EXPERIENCE ISRAEL Tour, a tour theme has emerged: **God's Story**.

Why a theme for our tour? Primarily for two reasons:

1. A theme gives us direction. It serves as an anchor point in keeping us mindful of trip objectives.
2. A theme draws us together in common pursuit of what God has prepared for us.

During monthly meetings our group has been introduced to various Israeli people, and hopefully have gotten a small taste of the culture as we have heard live and videotaped interviews and features from those in the land of Israel. Over the course of time, the Lord has deeply planted the truth that this trip is not about us. God is writing a story and has been gracious enough to invite us to enter into HIS Story.

Israel is God's Story. In a sense, Israel is how God speaks to the world!

- When you hear this idea about "God's Story," what comes to mind?

There are two parallel tracks to God's Story: 1.) that which applies to the whole world, and 2.) that which applies to each of us individually. For example, the Bible teaches about creation; Jesus's birth, death, burial and resurrection; and end time events such as the rapture, the tribulation and the Millennial Kingdom. Those apply to the entire world. Yet, salvation, eternal life and service to God and others are individual parts of God's Story. On the personal track, we get to choose whether or not we enter in!

- Describe a time you believe God invited you into His story and you responded by entering in.

God's Story emanates from Israel and the Jewish people. Yet the sites we will see are simply the SETTING of the story, not the story itself! Remove Israel from the plot, though, and God's Story falls apart. Israel is God's chosen land, and the Jewish people are God's chosen people. Not because they are the largest, greatest or most righteous, but simply because God is God and He chose them! Let's explore this idea.

Open your Bible and read [Genesis 12:1-3](#).

- In verse 1, what are God's instructions to Abram (later renamed Abraham)?
- To where did God lead Abram?
- Verses 2-3 list seven promises God made to Abram. What are those promises?
- We're going to focus on the very last promise (the last phrase of verse 3). Write that phrase here:
- Israel is a special place and God is calling some of us to go there for a reason and a season.

But let's focus on that final promise to Abram: "...and in you [Israel] all the families of the earth will be blessed." What is that blessing?

Please read the following passages of Scripture:

[Isaiah 49:3, 6](#)

[Acts 13:44-48](#)

[Luke 2:25-32](#)

[Acts 26:19-23](#)

- Based on those passages, what do you think the blessing is?
- In the first 3 passages there is reference to "...a light to the _____."

 - If you are a Gentile, what are your thoughts about that?

- [Acts 26:19-23](#), however, references light proclaimed to both the _____ people and the _____.

Now, read [Romans 1:16](#) and [John 4:22](#).

- The gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the _____ and also to the Greek (Gentile world).
- Salvation is _____!

Israel and the Jewish people are **God's Story of redemption!**

"Israel's election must always be linked with her mission to the Gentiles." (Chosen People Ministries)

Indeed, if Israel is removed from the story, you have:

- No Jewish nation (Israel is the one and only homeland of the Jewish people.)
- No Jewish Scripture (The Bible was written almost exclusively by Jews.)
- No Jewish Old Testament prophets
- No Jewish New Testament disciples
- **No Jewish Messiah**

As you think of that, where do you suppose we would be as Christians if Israel never existed?

But this is no one way street! **God's Story comes full circle.**

God gave Israel a very special mandate: to be the vehicle of world redemption.

But, He gives us (Christians) a mandate as well. What is it?

Read [Acts 1:8](#):

- ...you [those upon whom the Holy Spirit fell] shall be My _____ both in _____, and in all _____ and _____, and even to the remotest part of the earth.
- According to that verse, what is our mandate?

Now, Read [Romans 11:7-8, 11-15](#) in the New Living Translation (NLT):

- According to verse 7-8, what has happened to the people of Israel?
- Despite that, according to verse 11, have they fallen beyond recovery?
- Verse 11: They were _____, so God made _____ available to the _____.
- In verses 11-14, the Apostle Paul (who wrote this passage) was burdened for his people (the Jews). Describe his burden:

Though the people of Israel may have rejected Jesus the Messiah, there will come a wonderful day when they will accept Him. It will be _____ for those who were _____! (Verse 15)

God is writing a story! Are our eyes open to see it?

On the **EXPERIENCE ISRAEL TOUR**, we will surely see the sites. But this tour is more than simply seeing the sites!

Why are we visiting a home for Holocaust survivors?

Why are we entering the West Bank to visit a factory where Jews and Palestinians work happily side-by-side?

Why are we going to an IDF base?

Why are we spending time with Arab/Palestinian/Messianic pastors and believers?

Because God's Story includes all of them, and we have been given a very special invitation to go to the land of Israel and engage the people of Israel! Of course we will enjoy sites and cool things, but we will also focus on God's Story, and revel in the privilege of being invited into it! We can hardly wait!

Now, for your assignment this week: Please carve out an hour to view Amir Tsfati's teaching [Why Should Christians Support Israel?](#)

PS: If you are not physically going with us to Israel, I invite you to join us in study as we prepare, and via pictures and posts that will occur while we are in the land of Israel! Keep an eye on this blog, [Looking for the Blessed Hope!](#) (Who knows...we may have a surprise or two for you!)