ISRAELU

LOVE WHAT GOD LOVES:

SEEING ISRAEL THROUGH THE FATHER'S EYES

COURSE STUDY GUIDE

COURSE ONE | LESSON ONE


SEEING ISRAEL THROUGH
THE FATHER'S EYES
BEGINS WITH
UNDERSTANDING ISRAEL
WAS SOVEREIGNLY
CHOSEN WITH YOU IN MIND.


ABRAHAM'S FAMILY
IS GOD'S FAMILY.
ISRAELU

Welcome to this study, *Love What God Loves: Seeing Israel through the Father's Eyes.*

We're so glad you've chosen to join us as we explore the scriptures together and discover one of the primary keys to understanding the gospel narrative - Israel.

As believers, our hope is grounded in the God of Israel and the promises He has made to His people. And yet, we understand that Israel can be one of the most misunderstood topics for Christians today.

In this study, you will hear clear truths from a biblical worldview designed to help you navigate some of the questions surrounding Israel and the Jewish people.

The study presents the Israel story in concise, understandable, and unique ways that challenge prevailing narratives and connect us further to God's heart.

We want to provide a safe place to explore some biblical perspectives and align our hearts to the Father. We believe that's where real transformation begins.

Over the next few weeks, we'll explore themes related to God's family - how His choice of Israel reveals His heart for an international family. We'll talk about God's covenant-keeping nature and promises for restoration, even when the family gets messy and off-mission. We'll even step into some difficult realities like why so much controversy has surrounded the Jewish people throughout history, and even the Church's rocky relationship with Israel.

Ultimately, we'll see the beautiful hope and future that God has for Israel and for the nations, and discover the invitation to embrace our role in this story.

When we see Israel through the Father's eyes and learn to love what He loves, God's salvation story, and our place within it, become clearer.



Until All Israel Believes,

Michael & Vanessa

MICHAEL & VANESSA MISTRETTA

CO-LEADERS OF FIRM

FIRM
FELLOWSHIP OF ISRAEL RELATED MINISTRIES

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

OVERVIEW

Love What God Loves is an **eight-lesson course** designed to be experienced in a small-group setting. It also works well for individual study, but we encourage you to invite some friends to join you and enjoy the process of learning together as you deepen community connection.

In your time together, utilize the ***Getting Started question(s)*** as a catalyst for group participation, **watch the video**, and then use any ***video notes and discussion questions*** to engage with the lesson topic.

There may be more discussion questions than you have time for, but that's okay. Remember the quality of your discussion is more important than the quantity of questions. The ***Personal Study for Between Sessions*** section is provided for personal growth and a deeper look into the lesson content.

Group times are designed to run about **90 minutes**. You have the freedom to use the elements of the course as you see best.

GENERAL TIME GUIDE

For those who love a general guide for time.

90 MIN GROUP LESSON

- **10 MINUTES**
  Welcome / Refreshments
- **10 MINUTES**
  In Essence *summary and* ***Getting Started*** *questions*
- **20 MINUTES**
  Lesson Video
- **40 MINUTES**
  Group Discussion *Questions*
- **10 MINUTES**
  Conclusion & Prayer



MATERIALS NEEDED

Everyone in your group will need a Bible, a copy of this study guide which includes a place to take notes from the video teaching, discussion questions, and the personal study section. Everyone will have streaming video access, on demand, but for your group time be sure to have access to the lesson video.



FACILITATION AND GROUP SIZE

Your group will need a person to take the group leader role, responsible for overseeing the discussion, setting up the video, making sure the group dynamics remain safe and time is honored. A comfortable group size is between six to twelve people. If your group is larger, the group leader may choose to split the group in two for the discussion questions to allow everyone ample time to share. **Do what is best for your group.**



PERSONAL STUDY FOR BETWEEN SESSIONS

A personal study section is included to help participants engage with the subject matter during the week. This section includes scripture reading and reflection questions to assist you in diving a bit deeper.



CHOSEN FOR PURPOSE: THE FAMILY OF GOD

IN ESSENCE

God, as a loving Father, desires an intimate relationship with us as His children. His plan to destroy the sin barrier and restore us to Himself, is the central narrative of the Bible.

God orchestrated His salvation plan through Abraham and his family lineage, Israel. Israel is God's chosen vessel for service, entrusted with the good purpose of presenting the revelation of God and the hope of salvation through Jesus to the ends of the earth.

Seeing Israel through the Father's eyes opens our Bibles anew, revealing how precious we are to God.

GETTING STARTED

Group leader, read the In Essence *summary as you begin your time together. This will help set up the direction for this lesson.*

If your group members are just getting to know one another, take a few minutes to introduce yourselves and, as you do, answer this question.

- **On a scale of 1-10 how easy is it for you to be part of a group like this?**

IT'S HARD!	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	I'M IN MY ELEMENT!

One more question before we move on.

- **When you were younger, was there a treasure or an adventure you wanted so badly that you were willing to work, save, and sacrifice to get it? If so, what was it, and were you successful?**

People are a treasure to God and His desire is to have a close relationship with us. Let's learn more about how God is establishing a family through the video teaching.

LESSON ONE VIDEO

Group leader, stream the video teaching.

As you watch the video teaching, use the following prompts and space provided to record anything that stands out to you.

1. When I began to see Israel through God's eyes, the Bible made a lot more sense.

2. Israel has been chosen not from preference or merit, but for a divine purpose.

3. God chose to orchestrate His plan of salvation through one man, Abraham, and his family, Israel.

4. Israel's rebellion didn't derail God's choice of them or His salvation plan.

5. God will be made known through imperfect vessels.

6. Israel was chosen to be...



...
IN YOU ALL THE FAMILIES
OF THE EARTH WILL BE BLESSED.

GENESIS 12:3

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Group Leader, read aloud the questions and prompts below and lead the discussion.

1. Michael told us that God's desire from the beginning has been to have a close relationship with His creation, and we see that demonstrated in the creation account (Genesis 1-3). Does God's desire and pursuit for a relationship resonate with you, personally? Share with the group, if possible, a time when you knew God was drawing you closer.

   If this doesn't resonate with you, if you've not felt this reality, it's appropriate to say that as well.

2. How would you describe your current connection with Israel and the Jewish people? Here are some levels of connectedness to help you, but feel free to use your own description.

   Not on my radar... primarily think of Israel in the biblical context... visited Israel because it's the land of the Bible...have Jewish friends/family, but we don't discuss religion... pray regularly for Jewish people to know Jesus as Messiah...I am Jewish

3. Most people are familiar with the term "chosen people" in reference to the Jewish people. Prior to this course, what did you understand the term to mean?

   What or who has most influenced your understanding on the topic?

4. Have someone read Deuteronomy 7:6-8 and Exodus 4:22. What do we learn about Israel in these verses? How are they described? What was the basis for God's choice?

5. What was the central purpose for which Israel was chosen?

6. Michael said, “Israel isn’t the source of our salvation, Israel is the vessel through whom God chose to work.” (2 Corinthians 4:6-7) Has God ever used an imperfect vessel to impart something good into your life? If so, what was that?

   When have you been an imperfect vessel used by God for His purposes?

7. Israel’s imperfection didn’t invalidate God’s choice. (We’ll look deeper into this in later sessions.) What do you learn about God’s faithfulness and tremendous love when you consider Israel’s calling and imperfection? How does this relate to us, personally?

CONCLUSION

God wants a people, a family, for Himself and He will have one. The relationship lost to sin in the Garden of Eden is being restored through the death and life of God’s Son, Jesus the Messiah.

Jesus came through a people – Abraham’s family. Israel was entrusted with a great responsibility of presenting God to all the families of the earth. They were chosen for service and the light of God has shone forth through imperfect vessels. Jesus, the Perfect One, came through an imperfect family to reach other imperfect people with the hope of salvation and everlasting life. It’s God’s surpassing power on display, His renown.

Seeing Israel through the Father’s eyes begins with understanding Israel was sovereignly chosen with you in mind. Abraham’s family is God’s family.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you close your time together, see if anyone within your group has a need for prayer, and take a few minutes to cover those. You may also include thanking God for giving His Son, Jesus, for us. Thank God for raising up Israel, through whom Jesus has come. The Lamb of God is also the King of the Jews. Pray for the Jewish people today as their great call has come at great cost. Pray for their salvation.



PERSONAL STUDY FOR BETWEEN SESSIONS

This section is designed for your personal study to help you dig deeper into some of the themes from the teaching and discussion.

DAY ONE

ISRAEL'S UNIQUE CALL

In the lesson this week we looked at Israel's chosenness. God called Israel a segulah *(סְגֻלָּה)* in Hebrew, meaning His treasured possession. We saw that Israel was chosen for service not based on their own merit or magnificence, but simply because God is sovereign and it was His loving will.

When the Bible writers referred to people in broad terms, there were only two categories: Israel and the nations, or said another way, Jews and Gentiles. Israel is not included in the Hebrew word goyim *(גּוֹיִם)* translated as nations or gentiles.

SEGULAH *means "treasured possession" and refers to the personal treasure a king acquired for himself and carefully preserved.*
(Ecclesiastes 2:8; Malachi 3:17)

Before we're introduced to Abraham, the father of Israel, in Genesis 12, God specifically named the nations in Genesis 10, including Abraham's ancestors, the sons of Shem. Why is Israel separated or chosen from all other nations?

God will use Abraham's family, Israel, to bring the Messiah into the world, and to reach all the families of the earth with the revelation of Himself. Israel was chosen to serve, chosen to be a witness and light to the nations. Their chosenness never guaranteed individual salvation, as each of us must receive forgiveness of sin through faith in Jesus - that's true for all people regardless of what family you're born into, but they were chosen as a servant nation.

Israel was chosen with you in mind.

Jesus, the Messiah, took on human form, gave His life to provide for our salvation, and destroy the works of the devil (Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8). Jesus, whose name means salvation, was born into a family, a people, divinely prepared for Him. Israel was that womb.

Look up these verses and write out how Israel is described. Think about these roles or responsibilities Israel was given.

1. **Exodus 19:5-6.**

Note: *In ancient Israel, the priests were intermediaries between God and the people of Israel. Not to separate them, but to bring the two together – a minister to both.*

2. **Isaiah 41:8-9.**

3. **Isaiah 42:6.**

   Read Acts 13:47-49 where Paul connects this role to his ministry.

   What was the result of Paul and Barnabas being such a light?

4. **Isaiah 43:10.**

   Read Acts 1:8. What did Jesus call His followers?

JESUS - THE PERFECT REPRESENTATIVE

Israel was called to these roles although they were imperfect vessels, as we all are. Jesus, however, lived them perfectly.

Matthew 5:17. Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

5. **Read these passages if time permits.** Here is a sampling of ways Jesus fulfilled the Law and the Prophets. There is so much more, though.

> **Hebrews 7:21-28:** Jesus, our faithful high priest
>
> **Mark 10:43-45:** Jesus, the servant of all
>
> **John 8:12:** Jesus, the Light of the world
>
> **John 1:14,18; 12:45; 14:9:** Jesus, the witness of the Father

He was the perfect representative of Israel. Jesus fulfilled the Law, meaning He was sinless in keeping it, and He is the fulfillment of what was written. All the writers pointed to Him; every sacrifice and prophetic role had Him in mind!

To be clear, Jesus's fulfillment of the Law never negated Israel's chosen status as an instrument of God on the earth. They still have a purpose on the earth within the story of redemption, regardless of what it may look like today. We'll cover this more in upcoming lessons.

WITH YOU IN MIND

6. **1 Peter 1:10-11.** How are the Jewish prophets described and who does it say they were serving?

Also, **verses 18-20.** Jesus, who is eternal, stepped into time at the prophesied time, for who's sake?

Seeing Israel through the Father's eyes begins with understanding they have been chosen as God's servants, witnesses, lights, the natural family of the Messiah...with us in mind, so that we would come to know Jesus as our Savior and be reconciled to the Father.

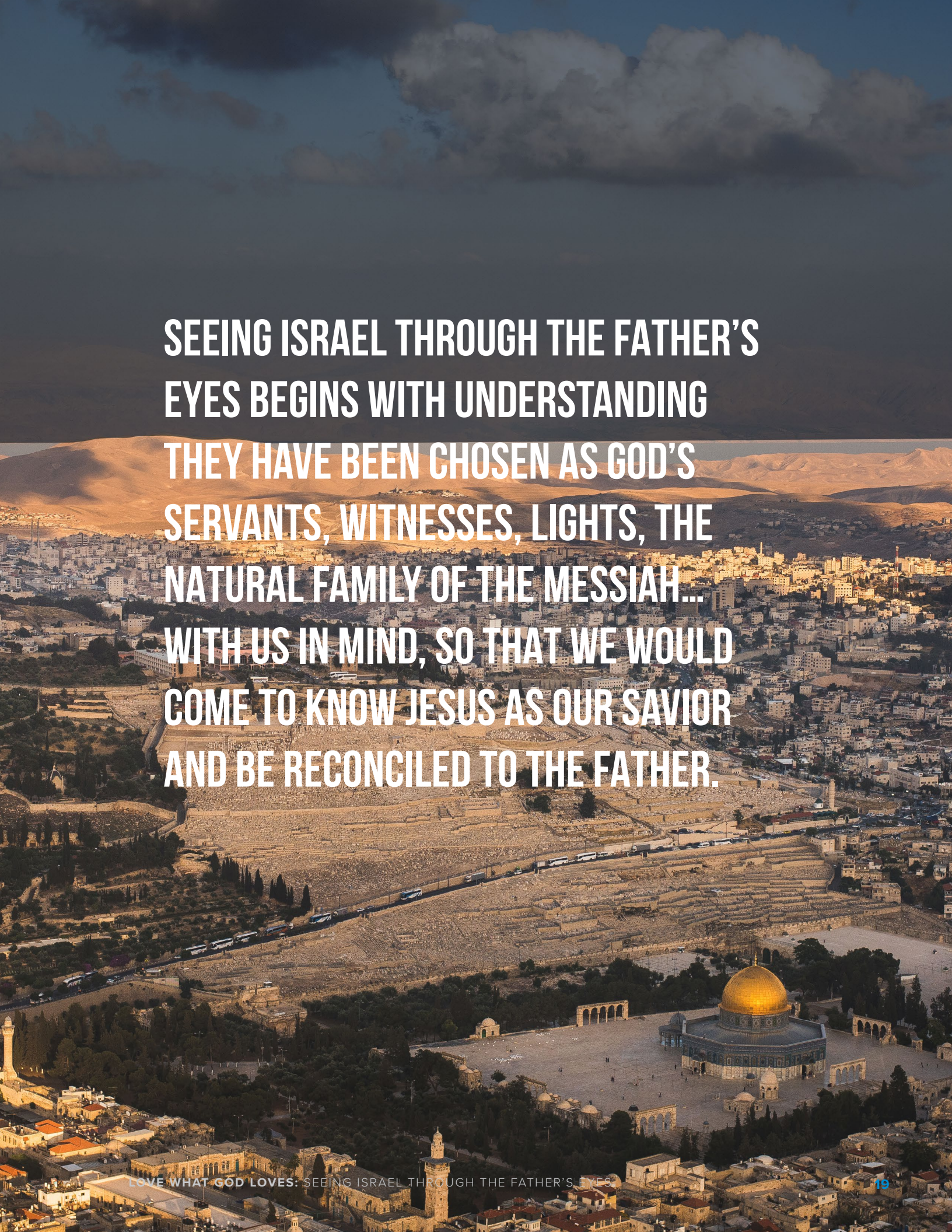
REFLECTION

7. **How has your understanding of Israel been influenced by these truths?**

8. **Reflect on the enormity of God's love that He would move with such intentionality and extreme measure to reach you with the hope of salvation.** Write out a prayer of thanksgiving to Him.

FURTHER STUDY

If you'd like more on God's priority and purpose for Israel, scan this QR code, or click on this link for an article written by Dr. Jack Hayford, titled "8 Biblical Reasons to Stand with Israel Today."



SEEING ISRAEL THROUGH THE FATHER'S EYES BEGINS WITH UNDERSTANDING THEY HAVE BEEN CHOSEN AS GOD'S SERVANTS, WITNESSES, LIGHTS, THE NATURAL FAMILY OF THE MESSIAH... WITH US IN MIND, SO THAT WE WOULD COME TO KNOW JESUS AS OUR SAVIOR AND BE RECONCILED TO THE FATHER.



DAY TWO

ABRAHAM'S FAMILY IS GOD'S FAMILY.

What do we mean by that?

Israel is Abraham's physical family through Isaac and Jacob, but is that the full story for Abraham as a father?

In Paul's letter to the Romans, specifically chapters 4, 9 and 11, we learn more about Abraham's faith, what God promised him, and the broader picture of his family and how that relates to you.

ROMANS 4: *The Father of Faith*

Read the following verses in Romans 4 and write out your answers to the questions.

1. **verses 1-3.** How was Abraham justified and what was credited to him, or (literally) put to his account?

The word justified in the Greek is dikaloo (δικαιόω). It is a legal term, a verb meaning to remove the guilt, the liability to punishment. It declares the demands of justice have been satisfied.

The word righteousness comes from the same Greek root, and means a person is in right standing with God. God's moral requirements are satisfied.

Abraham's sin guilt was removed and instead God's righteousness was put to Abraham's account. Abraham was a believer, a man of faith! If you've come to God by faith in His Son, Jesus, then you've had the same legal transaction take place: your guilt removed and His righteousness imputed. What a miracle!

2. verse 13. What was promised to Abraham and his descendants?

Did you know that? We'll circle back to that promise at the end of Day Three. Let's continue and see how the promise will come and to whom.

3. verses 13, 16-17. Will the promise of inheriting the earth come through works works of the Law or through those of faith?

Who are Abraham's descendants who will inherit the promise? We see two groups of people listed in verse 16.

In this context, those of the Law are of Jewish descent, and those of faith include Gentile believers.

How is Abraham described?

Abraham has an international family! His physical family, Israel, and spiritual descendants including those from Gentile nations.

Let's drill down and look at just the Jewish side of the family before we return to consider the entire family.

ROMANS 9: *The Israel within Israel*

In Romans 9:1-5, Paul was writing about natural, physical, Israel, whom he called "my kinsman according to the flesh." He added in verse 6: For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel. What does that mean?

Some scholars say it this way: "there is an Israel within Israel." Think in terms of natural and spiritual. There is a spiritual family within Abraham's natural family.

Not all of Abraham's physical descendants have shared his faith. Coming from Jewish descent sets a person into Abraham's physical family, but only saving faith in the Messiah qualifies any of us for Abraham's spiritual family.

For example, some of the Pharisees in Jesus's day boasted of having Abraham as their father, but lacked any bit of saving faith. Jesus rebuked them and said they were of their father, Satan. Those particular Pharisees were sons by birth, but not sons by faith.

Paul calls the Jewish believers within the physical family the "remnant" in Romans 11:5. They are the "Israel within Israel."

Within the Jewish side of Abraham's family, there are those who share in his faith (the Israel within Israel) and those who don't. Some of Abraham's natural children are also spiritual children.

Let's widen the scope again and consider Abraham's entire family - natural and spiritual. Paul illustrates it for us by using the metaphor of an olive tree.

> **In the illustration, we'll see three groups:**
> - Jewish family members who share Abraham's faith
> - Jewish family members who do not share his faith
> - Gentiles who share Abraham's faith

ROMANS 11: *The Olive Tree*

Paul was speaking to the Gentile believers in the church at Rome (see 11:13).

Picture an olive tree with its natural branches and root system. In this metaphor, Israel is the olive tree.

4. verses 17-18. What happened to some of the natural olive branches?

What type of branch did Paul use to describe the Gentile believers ("you") in verse 17?

What was done with the wild olive branch and what benefit came to it?

What warning did Paul give the wild branches in verse 18?

Why were they not to be arrogant (or boastful) toward the natural branches?

What is the "rich root" or "nourishing sap" (Rom. 11:17) of this olive tree that is Israel? In botany we learn every root anchors and nourishes the plant. What God-given gifts have anchored and nourished Israel? Let's see what Paul lists in the following verses.

5. **Read Romans 9:4-5**. These entrustments to the Jewish people were given for the spiritual benefit of all. The supreme gift being the Messiah (Christ), Jesus. He alone makes the root holy.

Back to Romans 11. In verse 18, Paul exhorts the Gentile believers that the root "supports" you. The word supports is bastazo (βαστάζω) and means to bear, to carry, to lift up. It carries the idea of a womb bringing forth life. In Luke 11:27 the same word is used to refer to Mary's womb that carried and gave birth to Jesus.

This rich root has been a womb for the gospel of our salvation. Perhaps you've heard the phrase "the Jewish roots of our faith." This is where that idea comes from.

As wild olive branches, Gentile individuals who come to faith in Jesus, are grafted into Abraham's family tree, and the life-giving sap from the root provides an anchor for our souls and spiritual nourishment.

Again, the supreme and central benefit, what everything points us to, is Jesus.

6. **Read Romans 11:19-20, 23.**
   Why are some natural branches broken off (v.20)?

Can they be grafted into the family tree, spiritually?

7. **verse 25.** What is the “mystery” regarding Israel?

8. **verses 26-29.** What will happen when the partial and temporary hardening over the Jewish heart is lifted (vv. 26-27)?

   Why will it be lifted (vv.28-29)?

There’s coming a day when “all Israel will be saved” (v.26), meaning the Jewish people living at that time will see and receive the Lord. At that time, Abraham’s entire family will become a spiritual family - a family of faith. The natural and wild olive branches which represent Jewish and Gentile brothers and sisters by faith will be in place. God will have His family.

Abraham’s family is God’s family.

If you have believed and received Jesus as your Lord, if you’ve laid hold of the faith of Father Abraham, then this is your spiritual family (Romans 4:22-25). Gentile believers don’t become Jewish, but are grafted into Abraham’s family of faith. Abraham’s family is an international family - a family from all nations.

REFLECTION

9. **Which branch in the Romans 11 metaphor represents you?** Circle the best description of you.

a. A natural branch (Jewish) who remains connected to the olive tree by faith

c. A wild branch (Gentile) who has been grafted into the olive tree by faith

b. A natural branch who has been cut off because of unbelief in Messiah, but who can be grafted in again

d. A wild branch who has not yet been grafted into the family tree of faith

If your answer is either b or d, we want to invite you to come to the Father, through Jesus the Messiah, and be grafted into the family of faith. Consider these truths.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. **John 3:16**

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Romans 6:23**

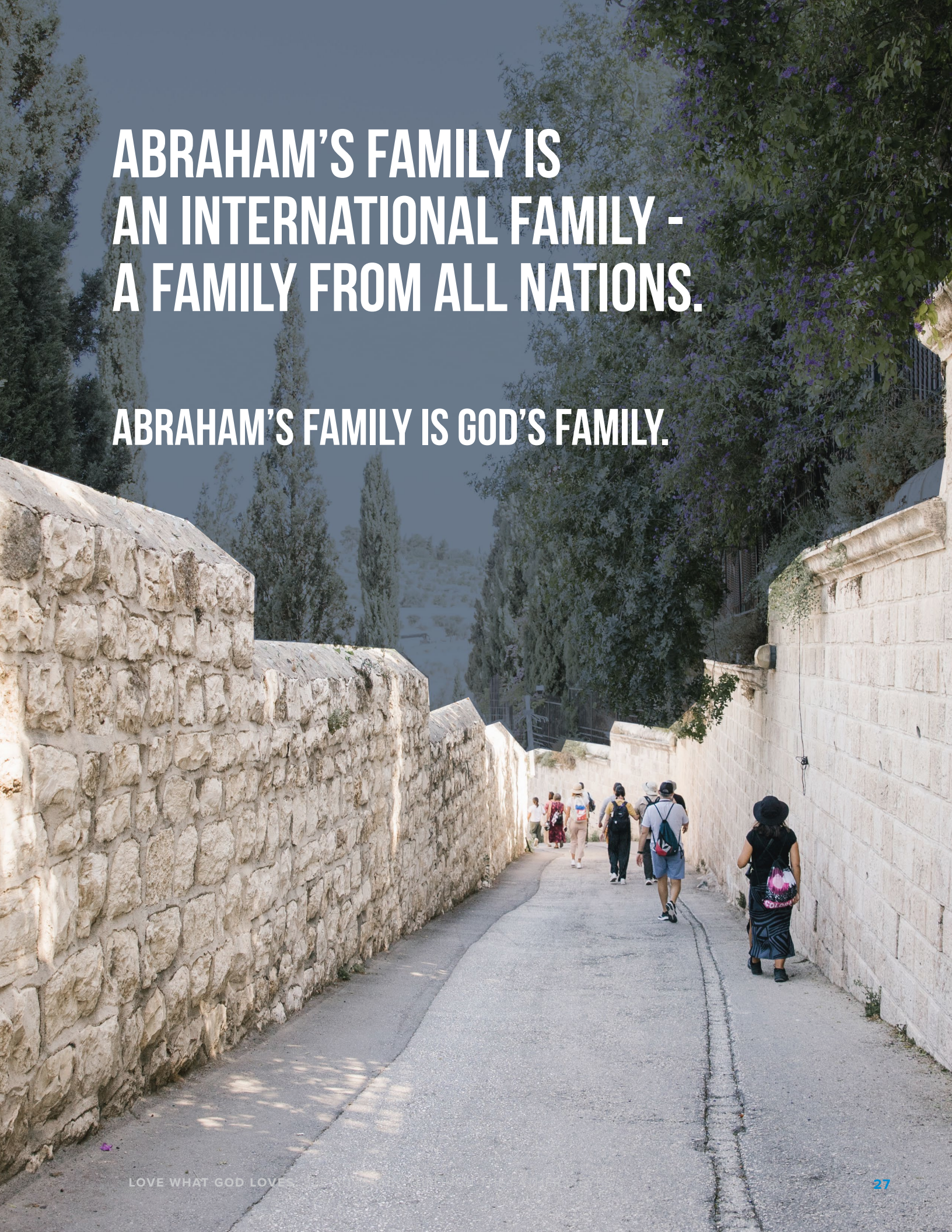
if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. **Romans 10:9-10**

A simple prayer of faith, agreeing that you are a sinner in need of a Savior, and receiving the forgiveness of sins available only through Jesus's death and resurrection will initiate your being grafted into this family tree of faith. If you have just prayed a prayer of faith, we rejoice with you and welcome you into the family of God, and we encourage you to share your decision with someone in your group.

10. **Take some time to reflect on the truths you've seen in this lesson,** and write out a prayer of response to God for what He has done on your behalf.

FURTHER STUDY

If you'd like more on the role of the Gentile within the olive tree, scan this QR code or click on this link for an article written by Eitan Shiskoff, titled "What is a Gentile and Their Role in the Bible."



ABRAHAM'S FAMILY IS AN INTERNATIONAL FAMILY - A FAMILY FROM ALL NATIONS.

ABRAHAM'S FAMILY IS GOD'S FAMILY.

DAY THREE

YOUR DIVINE PURPOSE

Today, we want to encourage you in your divine purpose. The mission given to the Jewish people hasn't changed, but the family has surely grown!

OUR SHARED MISSION

Read the verses below and write out your answers to the questions.

1. **Read Matthew 28:19-20 and Acts 1:8.** What instructions did Jesus give His disciples?

This mission to reach the world with the hope of salvation through Jesus is still the goal. This is God's family mission.

2. **Read 1 Peter 2:5, 9-10.** How does Peter describe the family of faith in these verses? Note: Peter is writing to both Jewish and Gentile believers living in the Roman Empire.

The mantle of calling entrusted to Israel has been extended over the shoulders of believing Gentiles as well. The wild olive branches grafted into the family tree share in the family mission of reaching the world with the gospel. Not in place of Israel – but alongside as co-heirs of the mission.

3. **Read Ephesians 2:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20.** What has God prepared for us? What is the role of every believer?

4. **Read Philippians 3:12-15.**

   What do you think of Paul's passion to accomplish the mission God set before him? What was he willing to do with his past and how would he approach the future?

   How would you describe your passion and pursuit for what God has given you to do on His behalf?

   What are the natural and spiritual gifts God has given you that can be used in reaching others with the message of Jesus?

5. **Are there hindrances that deter or distract you from living wholeheartedly for the mission?** If so, write them out and pray about what to do about this.

Everyone has individual and unique gifts and abilities to accomplish their calling. We are perfectly fashioned for the task and we each must run in our own lanes, using what He has put in our hands to fulfill what He has given us to do. We must be about the Father's business.

THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM'S HEIRS

In Day Two, we looked at the promise given to Abraham and his descendants recorded in Romans 4:13 – the promise that Abraham's heirs will inherit the world. When Jesus returns, at His second coming, He will establish the kingdom of God on earth and reign as king from Jerusalem. The prophets write about this. Jesus is king, but look who He gives dominion to according to Daniel.

Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom and all the dominions will serve and obey Him. **Daniel 7:27**

The saints of the Highest One are God's family, Abraham's family of faith. The promise of inheriting the earth and serving the Lord wholly will be upheld and fulfilled one day – maybe soon. Are we ready? Will you be ready?

6. **Read Matthew 24:44-46.** What will distinguish the servant as faithful and sensible when the master returns?

REFLECTION

Read the *In Essence* lesson summary provided at the beginning of Lesson One. As you have considered this topic of Israel's chosenness, have there been further questions come to your mind, or perhaps poignant moments when some dots were connected for you? If so, write them out.

FURTHER STUDY

If you'd like more on the connection between Christians and Israel, scan this QR code or click on this link for an article written by Dr. Michael Brown, titled, "Christians for Israel: What Is Our Responsibility."

ISRAEL IS GOD'S CHOSEN VESSEL, ENTRUSTED WITH A UNIQUE PURPOSE THAT HAS EVERYTHING TO DO WITH CONNECTING US TO GOD.

THE TRIBE

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