GATEWAY CENTER FOR ISRAEL

Israel Masterclass

Small Group Discussion Guide

Israel Masterclass — Small Group Discussion Guide

Session 1: The Controversy of Israel

Nic Lesmeister

Icebreaker

- As a Christian, when you hear the word "Israel," what thoughts, feelings, or pictures come to mind?

- Why do you think the topic of Israel can be so controversial today?

Key Idea

The Bible is a story about God's interaction with a particular people, the nation of Israel. It is set in a particular place, the land of Israel. God gives their nation a universal mission to bless the entire world to bring all nations into redemptive relationship with the God of Israel. This particularity does not mean that God loves them more than others — however, it is how God chooses to work through history. Theologians call it "the scandal of particularity," the idea that God would attach Himself (and His reputation) to a particular people. Our calling is to avoid offense and to bless what God blesses and love what He loves.

Discussion Questions

1. The Bible was written by Jewish people (with the possible exception of Luke), often to Jewish audiences. Some even call the Old and New Testament together a "Jewish family diary" because the writers recorded their experiences and that which they had received from God to be a testament and witness to others. Why might this matter when we approach the scriptures with a Western worldview? What happens to Israel's story if we read the bible solely for lessons, allegories, or universal principles?

2. Read Genesis 12:1-3 together. What stands out to you about God's promise to Abraham, and how does it connect to His plan for the entire world?

3. Why might the idea that God chose a specific people to represent him to all other peoples feel uncomfortable, confusing, or even offensive to some?

4. The teaching calls this discomfort "the scandal of particularity" and connects it to a belief that if someone else is chosen, we lose. Where does this mindset show up in other areas of life are some other areas of life (culture, families, etc.)?

5. Throughout Scripture, God repeatedly chooses and calls one person (or group) out from among the rest. Theologians call this idea covenantal election; however, God's chosen are called out not for the purpose of partiality, but for responsibility. Some examples are Jacob, Moses, Israel, and David. What does this pattern teach us about how God works? How does God's plan require trust on our part?

6. In Matthew 13:57, Jesus's own hometown was "deeply offended" by Him. How does this reflect the way people respond to God's choice of Israel today?

7. The teaching states, "What God chooses, the enemy hates." How does this shed light on the conflict and controversy surrounding the Jewish people and the land of Israel?

8. The final challenge in the teaching is to “love what God loves and bless what God blesses.” What might this look like *practically* for believers today?

9. How does seeing the particular (Israel) and the universal (God's mission to bless all nations) as connected, *rather than competing*, change the way you think about your own identity and gifts?

Prayer Points

- Thank God that Abraham's family, Israel and the Jewish people, are an ongoing witness of Him to all nations. Pray that Heavenly Father would bless, protect and guide his people.

- Pray for better understanding of how the message of the Bible is rooted in a particular place and particular people who have a universal mission. Ask for wisdom to sort through the controversy surrounding Israel, so that your stabilizing foundation would be a biblical understanding of God’s ongoing fidelity to Israel and the Jewish people.

- Ask for God to reveal any offense and shed light on any confusion about whom and what He has chosen. Pray for special opportunities to bless and serve God’s people, and that Christians can relate to Israel & the Jewish people with biblical truth, love, and humility.

More Resources

- *To the Jew First*, a Center for Israel Perspective Paper

- Overcoming the Hostility Between Israel and the Nations, Center for Israel article by Dr. Jen Rosner

- *Jewish Roots: Understanding Your Jewish Faith*, book by Daniel Juster

Israel Masterclass — Small Group Discussion Guide

Session 2: The Replacement Model

David Blease

Icebreaker

- In your Christian walk, what has been your understanding (whether taught or "caught") of Israel's role after Jesus came into the world?

- Why is it important to study scripture in context? Have you met or known of someone who used certain scriptures, taken out of context, to make their own points?

Key Idea

Replacement theology teaches that after Jesus, God's covenant focus shifted from Israel to the Church — but Scripture says His covenants with Israel are everlasting, and Paul insists God has not rejected His people. This second session teaches that the replacement model defames God's character, dodges key Scriptures, and distorts the Jew-Gentile distinction in such a way that it keeps Jews and Gentiles from walking together as the joint heirs God has created them to be.

Discussion Questions

1. How would you explain replacement theology in your own words, and why do you think so many Christians believe a version of it without realizing it? Why does the teaching say it is a "dangerous" belief?

2. The teaching traces replacement theology back to early church history, such as the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD. Constantine excluded the believing Jewish bishops and said he wanted "nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd." Why do you think that what became the majority Gentile Church began to have issues with Judaism and Jewish people?

3. Centuries later, Martin Luther wrote horrible, antisemitic things about the Jewish people — language that helped lay a terrible foundation and later exploited at the time of the Holocaust. Why is it important to wrestle honestly with this history rather than look past it?

4. If God made an everlasting covenant with Israel (Genesis 17:7), what would it say about His character if He simply replaced them? How does Romans 11:1-2 answer that question?

5. The teaching points to "dot dot dot" Scriptures we tend to stop quoting early — like Romans 1:16 ("to the Jew first, then also to the Greek") and Matthew 15:21-24, where Jesus says He was sent "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Why do you think we gloss over verses like these?

6. Paul describes Gentiles as branches grafted into Israel's family tree (Romans 11). What does it mean for believers that this tree, with Messiah as the root, has new branches *grafted in* rather than replacing the whole tree?

7. Galatians 3:28 is often quoted to argue there is no longer a Jew/Gentile distinction. The teaching argues the verse is about removing a barrier to belonging, not erasing identity. What is the difference between removing a barrier and removing identity?

8. Why might God want both unity and distinction between Jew and Gentile, rather than one replacing the other?

9. In Ephesians chapter 2-3, Paul calls Jew and Gentile "fellow citizens" (2:19) and "fellow heirs" (3:6). What (or Who) is key to bringing Jew and Gentile together in the plan of God (hint: Ephesians 1:10, 2:21-22)?

10. Read Matthew 5:43-48. The Jewish people serve as a witness to God's power and goodness to guide, preserve, and restore them over the ages. How does Israel's call to be a light to the world and a global representative of their God become dynamic in view of Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5?

Prayer Points

- Start by repenting of any belief, even an unconscious one, that God has replaced or rejected the Jewish people. Pray for God to heal you or your loved ones from any misunderstanding about the faithfulness of our Heavenly Father to His people Israel, and to all who call on His name through Jesus.

- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you understanding the mystery of God's plan and purposes in Messiah, that you may read scripture with eyes to see His faithfulness to His people and His love for all nations.

- Pray for the Church to heal from the harmful effects (Rom. 11:17-20) of believing any form of replacement theology, so that we may walk in genuine partnership with the Jewish people. Pray that the Church would relate to Israel with humility, love, and honor, remembering that God has given us each something the other needs.

More Resources

- *Replacement Theology*, Center for Israel Perspective Paper
- *When Did Christianity and Judaism Separate?*, video teaching by David Blease
- *Everything Wrong with Dispensational Theology*, Center for Israel video podcast (June 30, 2026)
- *The God of Israel and Christian Theology*, book by R. Kendall Soulen
- *When a Jew Rules the World*, book by Joel Richardson

Israel Masterclass — Small Group Discussion Guide

Session 3: How Jews and Gentiles Relate to Each Another

Ezra Benjamin

Icebreaker

- Give an example of a recent time when you realized you had a limited perspective and someone else's perspective helped you understand a fuller picture.

- Can you give an example of a relationship in your life which moved from a limited, transactional relationship to a deeper, committed friendship?

Key Idea

Christians often relate to Israel through one of three limited lenses — transactional, devotional, or eschatological — but the Bible calls us into something deeper: a covenantal relationship where Jewish and Gentile believers are partners in God's plan and bound to each other's destiny. This mutuality is seen in the Great Commission, first given to Jewish disciples, fulfilling God's promise to bless all nations through Abraham, as well as Romans 11, which says the fullness of the Gentiles is meant to provoke Israel to jealousy until all Israel is saved.

Discussion Questions

1. The teaching named four ways Christians often relate to Israel: transactional, devotional, eschatological, and covenantal. Which one stood out to you based on your own experience, and why?

2. Genesis 12:3 promises blessing to those who bless Abraham's descendants. Why is it easy to stop at that "transaction," and what is missing if we do?

3. It's good to learn the Jewish roots of our faith, but the teaching warns this can become "a love for Jewish things, devoid of a love for Jewish people." How do we avoid that trap?

4. What problems can happen if we relate to Israel mainly through end-times prophecy, treating Jewish people as "pawns on God's end-times chessboard" rather than people the Father loves? How do you think Jewish people view Christians who soley relate to them in this way?

5. The teaching describes a covenantal relationship as one where "your own destiny won't be fulfilled without giving yourself to God's purposes in the other." What would that look like in practice?

6. In Isaiah 43:9-10, God calls Israel His "servants and witnesses" to His glory among the nations. Is this still a reality today?

7. Jesus gave The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19) first to Jewish disciples. How does seeing it as a fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham, rather than a new idea, change how you read it?

8. Romans 1:16 says the gospel comes "to the Jew first." Why might this order matter, rather than feel exclusionary?

9. Romans 11 says the fullness of Gentile salvation is meant to provoke Israel to jealousy, until "all Israel is saved." What does it mean to carry your faith in a way that is "recognizable" to Jewish people, as a grafted-in branch?
10. What is one way your own life or church could move from a transactional or devotional relationship with Israel, toward a true covenantal one?

Prayer Points

- Thank God for His wisdom and faithfulness. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you to see a fuller picture of God's plan, and for a heart that loves and values what He loves and values.

- Ask God to show you ways to move from simply a transactional, devotional, or eschatological view of Israel toward a covenantal one. Also, for opportunities to show your love and commitment to Jewish people, during a time when antisemitism is on the rise. Pray for the grace to carry our own faith in a way that is "recognizable" to the Jewish people, as Paul describes in Romans 11.

- Pray for God to especially bless Jewish believers, to carry the eyewitness testimony of God to all nations, and to bless and serve their own communities in the love and power of Messiah.

- Pray for the fullness of the Gentiles and "all Israel" to come together as partners in God's purposes, as one family, so that God's kingdom may come in fullness on the earth.

More Resources

- Reconciliation in Messiah, Center for Israel article by Dr. Jen Rosner

- *Mutual Blessing,* book by Daniel C. Juster

Israel Masterclass — Small Group Discussion Guide

Session 4: Understanding Zionism

Nic Lesmeister

Icebreaker

- Have you ever had a strong opinion about something, someone, or somewhere, but then reconsidered that opinion because you experienced it or learned the history behind it? Give an example.

- When you hear the words “Zion” or “Zionism,” what comes to mind?

Key Idea

Zionism is the movement of the Jewish people to self-determination and statehood in their ancestral homeland of Israel. From Abraham to Ezekiel to Jesus, God ties His covenant promises to a real people and a real place. Distinguishing the promise of the land (unconditional) from the possession of the land (conditional upon obedience) helps us read both Testaments, and today’s headlines, with more clarity.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you have more clarity on Zionism after this teaching? Which of the distinct kinds (political, religious, Christian, etc.) stand out to you?

2. The land of Israel is a part of God’s covenants with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob so that the people of God might fulfill their God-given purpose. How does land help the people of Israel fulfill God’s plans for them to be a blessing to the nations?

3. How do the lessons of the land help us understand the purpose of our own God-given gifts (eg. our earthly bodies)?

4. Why does it matter that the promise of the land was unconditional, while possession of it depended on obedience?

5. How do the exiles (Assyrian, Babylonian, Roman) and the promised regathering matter for understanding God’s faithfulness?

6. How does Jesus’s use of the word “land” (*ge*) in Matthew 5:5 and the Lord’s Prayer challenge a purely spiritualized reading of His teaching?

7. What does Ezekiel 36:22-28 reveal about why God brings Israel back — and what He intends to do once they are home?

8. Many (not all) of Israel’s founders were secular. Does this diminish or change your view of the modern restoration of Israel as a nation? How about in light of Ezekiel 37:1-14’s passage about the dry bones, which shows a physical restoration before a spiritual one?

9. How can we hold together these two truths at once: that Israel's modern history and politics are complicated, but that God is still faithful to His covenant promises?

10. After this session, how can we engage and respond the next time Zionism or Israel comes up in conversation or the news?

Prayer

- Ask God to open your eyes to understand His Word more clearly and for humble hearts to study topics that are weighty and complex. Pray your learning would always direct your heart toward Him, so that you may exalt God in everything you share and do.

- Pray to understand what Zionism is so you can discuss the land and the modern state of Israel with biblical clarity, humility, and grace. Also, ask to understand how God's gifts are for the purpose of serving and pointing others toward Him.

- Thank God that He keeps every promise, even through exile and centuries of waiting. He is faithful!

- Pray for the modern nation of Israel and for the Palestinian people, that God would draw both toward Himself.

More Resources

- *Israel Matters*, book by Gerald R. McDermott

- *The New Christian Zionism,* edited by Gerald R. McDermott

- Unhealthy Theologies of Israel, Center for Israel Perspective Paper

Session 5: Antisemitism Explained

David Blease

Icebreaker

- Which type of person are you: A history buff who could spend hours at a museum, someone who thinks history is just a bunch of boring names and dates, or someone who falls somewhere in the middle?

- Have you ever noticed the pattern and persistence of Jewish persecution throughout history? ("Why is it always the Jewish people?") If so, what has been your theory of why this takes place?

Key Idea

Antisemitism has resurfaced in nearly every era and culture, from ancient Egypt and Rome through the Crusades, the Inquisition, the Holocaust, and October 7, 2023 — yet no purely political or economic explanation accounts for its persistence. This teaching argues the deepest root is spiritual: hatred toward the Jewish people is tied to the fact that God has attached Himself to them, and what God loves, the enemy hates.

Discussion Questions

1. In your walk as a Christian, have you learned much about antisemitism in Church history?

2. Which moment in the historical timeline (Constantine's empire, the Crusades, the Inquisition, the Holocaust, October 7th) struck you most, and why?

3. The teaching insists that antisemitism is "a heart issue, not a logical one." Do you agree?

4. Read Psalm 69:9. What does the Ocean's Eleven illustration teach us about the real target behind antisemitism?

5. How do passages like Deuteronomy 7:6, Hosea 1:1-4, and Zechariah 2:8 shape the way you think about God's love and fidelity toward Israel?

6. Today many people say they are not antisemitic, but they are anti-Zionist. One is against Jewish people, the other against Jewish peoplehood. Do you think the two can be separate?

7. Read Psalm 83:1-5. Today Israel's enemies have the same language and the same plans. However, a key difference is that there are believers in the God of Israel throughout the global nations. How can the Church respond differently today than in the past centuries?

8. Why do you think the Church sometimes stays silent when antisemitism grows louder?

9. How can we posture ourselves toward Israel & the Jewish people even though we believe that mainstream Judaism has rejected their true Messiah, Jesus?

10. After this session, what is one way you want your heart, prayers, or actions to change?

Prayer Points

- Pray for understanding of the deep suffering and persistent persecution Jewish people have endured across history. Ask God to remove passivity and repent of any indifference or hardness of heart toward His people.

- Pray for people who today are embracing the old, recycled lies which blame society's problems on Jews and Israel. Pray for these people not to listen to voices who use antisemitism to gain power — rather, that they would hear and receive the truth of the Gospel, rooted in God's covenant with Abraham, which brings freedom over bondage to blame and bitterness.

- Pray for the safety and strengthening of Jewish communities facing threats and violence today. Ask for courage to speak truth when antisemitism shows up in conversation, media, or politics. Pray for opportunities to actively work against hatred of Jews and Israel.

More Resources

- What is Anti-Zionism?, YouTube video by Center for Israel (February 9, 2023)

- Did the Jews Kill Jesus?, YouTube video by Center for Israel (September 11, 2024)

- What Christians Need to Know About Islam Right Now, YouTube video by Center for Israel (April 21, 2026)

- *They Have Conspired Against You*, book by Olivier J. Melnick

Israel Masterclass — Small Group Discussion Guide

Session 6: The Jewishness of the Gospel

Dr. David Rudolph

Icebreaker

- Have you ever watched a novel-turned-movie, only to realize important elements of the story were missing or changed? Did it change the meaning or impact of the story?

- When you hear the phrase "Jesus, Son of David" do you think of the past or the future?

Key Idea

This teaching argues that the Gospel is not fully understood unless it is received in its Jewish context — Jesus is not only Savior, He is also the Jewish Messiah, the Son of David, which is at the heart of the story of Israel. Dr. Rudolph proposes a "fifth" emphasis to the historic four-fold Gospel: every essential truth about Jesus must be understood within a Jewish context. Recovering that context helps us read Scripture more faithfully and love what God loves.

Discussion Questions

1. The teaching proposes a "five-fold Gospel," with the Jewishness of the Gospel as the fifth, essential emphasis. Why do you think that matters?

2. What stood out to you about Paul's summary of the Gospel in 2 Timothy 2:8: "Jesus the Messiah, raised from the dead, descended from David?"

3. Why is Jesus being the Son of David more than just a family detail? What does it reveal about God's character, identity, and His works?

4. How do Mark and Matthew show that the story of Jesus cannot be separated from the story of Israel?

5. What does it mean to tell the story of Jesus with the "juicy Jewish details" still intact?

6. Why do you think many Christians have heard the Gospel in a way that feels disconnected from its Jewish roots?

7. How might emphasizing the Jewishness of the Gospel help Jewish people see Yeshua as their Messiah rather than as part of a foreign religion?

8. The teaching says the Gospel is, first and foremost, a message "to Zion" and "to the Jew first." How does that shape your understanding of the Good News?

9. How could recovering the Jewishness of the Gospel change the culture of the Church?

10. What is one practical way this teaching challenges how you read Scripture, talk about Jesus, or relate to Israel & the Jewish people?

Prayer Points

- Thank God for the gift of the Gospel which has gone forth across history, geography, and cultures, and has reached us today. Thank Him for the Holy Spirit's power to do this, and for the privilege of knowing Jesus as the Jewish Messiah and Savior of the world.

- Ask God to open your eyes to Jewish context in Scripture you may have missed before, and to understand more deeply why the Jewishness of the Gospel is so important.

- Pray for Jewish people to recognize Yeshua as their promised Messiah who identifies with His people in every way; that their eyes may be opened to see how He has resolutely committed Himself to them and their nation.

- Ask God to help you and your family to do the same, to have a faithful commitment to Israel & the Jewish people. Pray that you might be a part of shaping your church's culture toward love for Israel and unity between Jew and Gentile in the body of Messiah.

More Resources

- *Restoring the Jewishness of the Gospel,* book by David Stern

- *Finding Messiah: A Journey into the Jewishness of the Gospel,* book by Jennifer M. Rosner

- *The Election of Israel*, Center for Israel article by Dr. Jen Rosner

- The Jewish Foundation of Christianity, Center for Israel Perspective Paper

Session 7: The Jewish Jesus

David Hoffbrand

Icebreaker

- The teacher jokingly compares having head knowledge to impressing people by pulling a rabbit out of a hat. What do you think he means by this?

- What do you think about the statement "Jesus is Jewish" (verses Jesus *was* Jewish)?

Key Idea

This teaching emphasizes that understanding Jesus as Jewish is not just an interesting detail. It affects how we understand who He is right now, how we hear His teaching, and how we live out His mission. When the layers of tradition are removed, we begin to see Jesus more clearly and understand Him more fully.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think many people say, "I just want Jesus," while missing how central His Jewish identity is to understand Him?

2. What stood out to you from David Hoffbrand's personal story of growing up Jewish and searching for truth?

3. The teaching describes a Byzantine fresco where older, hidden layers revealed an increasingly Jewish image of Jesus. What does that communicate about how Jesus has been presented over the centuries?

4. The teaching compares Jesus to Joseph, whose brothers did not recognize him until he said, "Come closer, it's really me." Considering Joseph's story, what does that picture stir in you?

5. "Jesus' humanity was not diminished by the resurrection, and, therefore, neither was His Jewishness." What does this mean for believers after our own resurrection?

6. *Halakhah* refers to how a rabbi walks out his interpretation of the commandments of God for living. How can we think about Jesus' death on a cross in light of this aspect of who He was?

7. How does Matthew 5:17-18 ("I did not come to destroy but to fulfill") change the way you hear Jesus' teaching, once you know "destroy" and "fulfill" were rabbinic terms for interpreting the Torah?

8. What does the phrase "read without religion" mean to you, and how could it impact the way you read Scripture?

9. Had you ever thought about salvation as a doorway into the kingdom of God where Jesus is King, and an invitation to partner with God in building His kingdom on earth as it comes in our lives and the world around us?

10. Why does restoring the Jewish picture of Jesus also help us understand His heart for the Jewish people, as in Romans 11:25?

Prayer Points

- Thank God for revealing more of who Jesus Yeshua truly is, even thousands of years after He came, and that Jesus' humanity and earthly identity were not erased by the resurrection. Ask God to help you understand how Jesus' Jewish identity matters deeply for our faith.

- Ask God to remove old lenses and wrong assumptions from hearts and minds, to understand His identity, His teaching, and His mission more clearly in their true context.

- Pray that as we see Jesus in this light, it would connect us more deeply to His family, the Jewish people.

More Resources

- *The Jewish Jesus,* book by David Hoffbrand

- The Jewish Foundation of Christianity, Center for Israel Perspective Paper

- The Jewish Jesus: Interview with David Hoffbrand, Center for Israel video podcast (May 22, 2024)

Israel Masterclass — Small Group Discussion Guide

Session 8: What about the Palestinians?

David Blease

Icebreaker

- Have you ever faced an issue that felt too complicated to understand or even know where to begin?
- Why do you think people often want every conflict to be completely black-and-white?

Key Idea

Believers in Jesus and the God of Israel are called to hold multiple truths in tension: God does not love Israel to the exclusion of the nations, including Palestinians, who are made in His image. Also, terrorism and antisemitism must be opposed, and the history behind this conflict is far more layered than a single headline can capture. Political solutions matter, but the deepest and most lasting hope for peace is found in transformed hearts through Jesus.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is it so tempting to swing to one extreme instead of staying in the tension of different perspectives?
2. David illustrates the conflict with a mosaic of Babe Ruth made of 1,392 baseball cards — clear from a distance, but unrecognizable up close. How does that picture help you think about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?
3. The teaching points to archaeological evidence (eg. the Merneptah Stele, the Tel Dan Stele, the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III) placing the Jewish people in the land at least 3,200 years ago. Why does that evidence matter, but why doesn't "who was there first" settle everything on its own?
4. What do you think about where the word "Palestine" originally came from? Or that "Palestinian" as a national identity didn't emerge until the second half of the 20th century?
5. Daniel Juster defines biblical social justice as a society in which every person is free to fulfill their God-given destiny, in whatever way God calls them to serve. How does that definition shape the way you think about both Israelis and Palestinians?
6. Isaiah 66:8 asks, "Who has heard of such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall a nation be born in one day?" In 1948, Israel declared national independence and became a nation again in a single day, 2000 years after their previous tenure of sovereignty in their land. How does this connect our modern generation to biblical history? Do you think God is still working in history on Israel's behalf?
7. The 650,000 Palestinians who fled in 1947-1949 are at the heart of the Palestinian grievance. Why is it important to hold both the reality of injustice and the complex situation of various peoples who fled?
8. Israel's 1948 Proclamation of Peace offered full citizenship to Arab residents, and today two million Arab Israelis hold that citizenship. How does that offer shape or complicate the narrative you've heard?

9. Why do statements like Hamas's charter and the "the river to the sea" chant matter for understanding why peace efforts in 1937, 1947, 2000, and 2008 repeatedly failed?

10. There are Jewish and Arab believers in Jesus who walk side by side. How is the Gospel of God's kingdom, brought to the world through Jesus, an answer to the conflict? Does the future Heavenly kingdom do away with national identities, or offer a hope for mutual blessing and harmony?

Prayer

- Pray for God to give you wisdom as you explore painful and complicated issues, and to wrestle thoughtfully with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a biblical lens by simultaneously holding compassion, justice, truth, and the value of every person. Pray for continued hope, anchored in Jesus.

- Pray for help to reject hatred in every form, for God's word to guard from deceptive and divisive voices, and for your heart to stay open to Him. Pray that you can hold compassion for Palestinians and Jews, as well as firm opposition to antisemitism, racism, and terrorism at the same time. Teach us to pray for peace, justice, and reconciliation in the Holy Land.

- Pray for the two million Arab Israeli citizens, and for peaceful coexistence to grow. Pray that believers in Israel would be a light to the society around them because of their love for one another, a living sign of the power of the Gospel.

- Pray for freedom and justice for Palestinians living under the harsh, corrupt, neglectful leadership of Islamic terrorist governments. Pray for Israeli leadership to seek justice and peace, to deal righteously with extremists, and to lead their people to You, so that their nation may be a light to all nations of the one, true God.

More Resources

- Israel or Palestine? Does it Matter?, Center for Israel YouTube video (Sep. 26, 2023)

- God Still Hears Ishmael - His Heart for the Arab People, Center for Israel YouTube video (Jan. 19, 2023)

- Overcoming the Hostility Between Israel and the Nations, Center for Israel article by Dr. Jen Rosner

- Interview with Young Israelis - "I Used to Hate Arabs...", Center for Israel YouTube video (Dec. 6, 2023)

Israel Masterclass — Small Group Discussion Guide

Session 9: Viewing Conflict Through a Biblical Framework

Nic Lesmeister

Icebreaker

- When you face a complicated issue, do you tend to react quickly, shut down, or slow down and look for a way forward?

- What has been one of your most meaningful takeaways during this whole study?

Key Idea

This final session offers a framework for engaging complex issues: Scripture as the foundation, love for every person and the courage to speak prophetic truth from the margins as the sides, and hope in Jesus' return as the capstone. The framework applies to any divisive issue believers face, not only Israel and the Palestinians.

Discussion Questions

1. Nic calls this tool the “Wisdom of a Window,” learned from Messianic Rabbi Russ Resnik. When wrestling with a complex topic, why might a framework for understanding be just as useful as simply consuming more information?

2. The “Israel test” draws on Genesis 12:3 and Matthew 25. What stood out to you about the idea that how the nations treat the Jewish people is observed by God and is important to Him?

3. The window's foundation is Scriptural Authority — not a blog, a TikTok video, or a Christian influencer, but the Church’s shared understanding of Scripture as well as a Christian’s personal study of the Bible. Why does this foundation have to come first?

4. Divine Humanity calls us to treat every person — Palestinian, Israeli, or anyone else — as made in God's image. Nic quotes, “When you put land over people, you get a graveyard.” What does that mean to you?

5. Matthew 22:37-40 and 23:23 speak of loving God and our neighbor and the “weightier matters of the law.” Which one, loving God or loving people (even our enemy), is often harder for God’s people to do?

6. Prophetic Marginality means speaking truth even when it costs you in your own camp, or similar-minded peers. Do you think we are living in a time of history when Christians will have more, or less, opportunities to speak truth even when it costs us?

7. Have you ever considered a prophetic voice to be someone who simply speaks truth and biblical hope of God to the world around him/her?

8. Eschatological Hope means trusting that Jesus will sort out every injustice when He returns (Acts 1:6). How does this hope change the way we engage with conflicts we cannot resolve now?

9. Israel's full possession of the land is contingent on its covenantal faithfulness. What does it look like to be a “true friend” who affirms God's promises yet still speaks up when they are not lived out?

10. This framework is offered as a tool for any divisive topic, not just Israel and Palestinians. What is one other issue in your life or culture where you could apply it?

Prayer Points

- Thank God for all you have learned through this study. Ask Him to ground you in His Word, soften your hearts toward people, and make you courageous in truth.

- Pray that you and your family may be filled with confidence in God’s coming kingdom, and for grace and ability to view complex issues through Scripture, love, truth, and hope.

- Pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6), comfort for the Jewish people, justice and freedom for Palestinians, and the revelation of Jesus across the whole region. Help Christians walk as reconcilers, full of love and faith.

More Resources

- What Should Messianic Jewish Leaders Say About the Palestinian Conflict?, article by Russ Resnik