

A Taste of Judaism
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Session 3: Israel and Community

Questions From Last Time

Israel: Land, People & Modern State

I. Why Is There A People Israel – the Jews?

- A. God first tries to reveal Himself to all people – it doesn't work
 - 1. Adam & Eve - one commandment - they blow it
 - 2. Tower of Babel and Noah
 - 3. 7 laws of the children of Noah - what a gentile needs do to inherit all of the world to come:
 - 1. Prohibition against idolatry
 - 2. Prohibition against improper use of God's name (blasphemy)
 - 3. Prohibition against murder
 - 4. Prohibition against sexual immorality
 - 5. Prohibition against theft
 - 6. Prohibition against inhumane conduct (such as eating the flesh of a living animal)
 - 7. Obligation to set up courts of law and a system of justice
- B. Then God tries Abraham and a particular people
- C. The Covenant (Hebrew: *Brit* or *Bris*)
 - 1. God's side: you'll be numerous, you will be blessed, the nations of the world will be blessed by you, **you'll get the land**, I will be your God
 - 2. Our side: Obey the mitzvot & work on our mission
 - 3. We get the full text of covenant (Torah) only after slavery
- D. The Jews: People and Religion
 - 1. People/Nation/Tribe: born into Judaism
 - a) Jews are members of the nation/people Israel: *Am Yisrael*
 - b) Atheist/apostate Jew fully Jewish if born of a Jewish mother.
 - c) Reform/Reconstructionist approach
 - (1) A child of a Jew and non-Jew is Jewish if raised Jewishly
 - d) Law of Return in Israel. A Jew is someone with one Jewish grandparent.
 - e) We have a language and a land
 - 2. Religion: You can convert to Judaism and be fully Jewish
 - 3. Judaism is the one true religion for Jews: don't seek converts.
- E. Jewish focus is on actions not beliefs and on this world not the next.

II. Our mission:

1. To teach the world that there is one God whose primary demand is ethical behavior.
 - a) *Va-yom ha hu yih'yeh Adonai echad u'Shmo echad.*
 - b) This is why we are hated
 - c) We are to serve as an *Ohr l'Goyim* – A light to the nations
 - d) Chosenness in Judaism – means increased obligations not increased privileges.
2. To perfect the world
 - a) Messianic age
 - b) Judaism is about this world
3. Salvation is a political concept
4. The Three Essential Elements in Judaism
 - a) God
 - b) Torah (story of teach me all of Torah on 1 foot)
 - c) Israel
5. Judaism also revolves around Creation, Revelation & Redemption

III. The Modern State

- A. Born in response to antisemitism and the Shoah
- B. First independent Jewish state since the days of the Maccabees
- C. Key dilemmas
 1. Can Israel be a “nation like any other nation” and a “light to the nations?”
 2. Can Israel be a Jewish state and a democracy?
- D. Israeli Politics and the power of religious parties
- E. I am a member of the people Israel but I am not an Israeli

IV. Jewish Community

- You can be a Jew by Choice but not a Jew by self!
- Who is a Jew?
- People Israel and the State of Israel
- Chosenness
- Am I an Israelite or an American?

V. Life cycle

- Birth and bris
- B'nai Mitzvah
- Marriage & Divorce
- Interfaith Marriage
- Death

VI. Odds and Ends

- Antisemitism and the Holocaust
- The afterlife

VII. Bottom Lines

- For non-Jews
 - We applaud you – be religious!
 - We welcome you – come join us!
- For Jews – become serious (not necessarily Orthodox) Jews
 - Equally committed to God, Torah & Israel
 - Elevate yourself in these ideals
 - Struggle and grow (read and study)
 - Belong – can't be a Jew by self

DISCUSS THE JEWISH LITERACY CLASS



TOP: 1947-48 Partition

TOP: Six-Day War

BOTTOM: 1949 Armistice

BOTTOM: 1993 Accords