



**The Half Shekel Journal Vol I** by Ed Rice  
**Vol I Day 1-2. Tue 27 Jan:** *Toronto Canada to Tel Aviv Israel*  
*#LY104 Depart 23:55 Arrive Ben Gurion Airport 18:05 El Al Airlines*

January the 27<sup>th</sup> arrived after 6 months of anticipation and \$(*undisclosed*) in hard earned, carefully saved cash. The morning dawned on Waneta Lake with Jeff and Denise Carpenter and Tony Spradlin looking for coffee and our promised steak and egg breakfast. Jeff and Denise would travel on our maiden voyage to Israel with us and Tony would sit and keep our

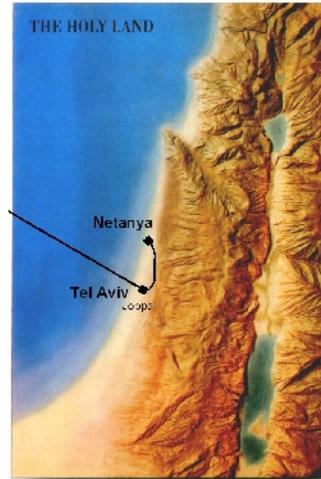


wood fires going and our dogs content for this 10 day adventure. Packing was well nigh complete which allowed a relaxed morning of fellowship and anticipation. Bev's brother and sister were watching for her mom, Betty Cook, and Gary would attend to her fires relieving my beagle and I of our morning chores. Our goal to head to Toronto Canada at 11 AM, and our sunrise dawning optimized an exciting and relaxed morning. "And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long." (Psalm 35:28)

The 500 mile journey to Toronto entailed some bad directions through Buffalo, (fool computers), an easy boarder crossing at Rainbow Bridge, and a Tim Hortons in Hamlin. After phoned up directions to his down town apartment we all arrived for supper at 4:30 PM at Jim and Ruth Bianchis, our missionaries to Toronto. The six of us discussed all the ills and cures of the world at the pizza place, Lebrettos, one block from their apartment. An interesting argument ensued about who should pick up the tab but Jim won by insisting that he get it. After cake and pictures at their apartment they dropped us off at terminal #3 and took my car for 10 days. Praise the Lord.

"Therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD." (Psalm 27:6b) Lee and Donna Pickett, our missionaries to Manitoba, who had connected us to this Christian Journeys Canadian tour, had flown into Toronto the day before and eagerly awaited our arrival at the airport. A joyous reunion surrounded our hurried check in, and our meeting of Marilyn Clarke and Brian Watt, our tour organizers from Christian Journeys and the 20 other 'Baptist'? preachers on our tour. I was excited to meet Matt Dowdy, the youth pastor from Parker Memorial where Shane and Kathy had just brought our 11<sup>th</sup> grand daughter, Christina Hope, into our lives. Matt had seen more of them than Bev and I. The Carlsons from Portage Prairie, friends of the Picketts, a couple from Saskatchewan, a Joshua Jones from W. Virginia, that had preached at Parker Memorial for Dr. Green, and knew Shane, and two or three other couples that I could not yet recall rounded out the colleague list and made me wish I had not left the list of their names on the kitchen table. We would be touring Israel with this group and the excitement and anticipation was intense.

While waiting for our 11 hour flight, I introduced myself to 'Shua' whose dialect and missing name tag disclosed my oversight in thinking he was a Baptist preacher. 'Joshua', as he explained his full name in English, was a business traveler that recruited high school girls to finish their last year of school and get 1 year of college by being an exchange student to Israel. The hour and a half conversation that ensued covered every topic conceivable and drew in several of my colleagues who wanted to preach a little when it was better to absorb from this x-tour guide and very knowledgeable traveler. Shua, just the same, was very impressed with our love for Israel and our savvy and disdain for the liberal Western media. He read through portions of my Isaiah 53 in Hebrew offering but would not keep it. The trust in God and looking for Messiah that he showed was encouraging, but his obvious rejection of Jesus as Christ not so much. What an insightful couple of hours. One more security check, surrounded by police with 9mm Uzzies<sup>1</sup> and we were on board the Luxurious 767 El Al aircraft which lifted off 15 minutes early.



Several 'orthodox' Jews boarded with us and with the dawn over Paris were found with a box strapped to their forehead, what I expect contained Scriptures. As they bobbed back and forth ritualistically they recited softly in Hebrew their prayers or readings. The young fellow beside me accepted a copy of Isaiah 53 in Hebrew which I had brought with me, and thanked me politely. The great interest in the people we will live among for 10 days heightened. Hours into the new day I was very impressed with Clint Eastwood's ability to speak Hebrew so well, although his lips never seemed to align with his words.

**Day 2. Wed 28 Jan:** Israel, Tel Aviv, Boarding our touring coach for Netanya, through Tel Aviv – off of Joppa, “Welcome to Israel Dinner” Blue Bay Hotel (011) 972-0 960-3603



A round of applause went up when the airplane touched down early at Ben Gurion Airport just outside of Tel Aviv. As Bev and I gathered our bags and climbed aboard our tour bus at our 18:05 scheduled landing time it was very surreal. We were in Israel, ... Just outside of Joppa, where Jonah began his flight from God, ... Where Dorcas was raised to life, “and many in Joppa believed in the Lord,” and where Peter stayed with Simon a tanner and saw a vision from God bringing him to Caesarea. We were here in the Holy Land. Bev and I asked the other if it was real. If we were really here. The tour bus headed off into the darkness to a place called Netanya. It was real.

<sup>1</sup> The Uzi (Hebrew: זרזיר, officially cased as UZI) is a related family of submachine guns. Smaller variants are considered machine pistols. The first Uzi submachine gun was designed by Uziel Gal in the late 1940s. The prototype was finished in 1950, and initial service issue began in 1954. Over its service lifetime, the Uzi was manufactured by Israel Military Industries, FN Herstal, and other manufacturers.