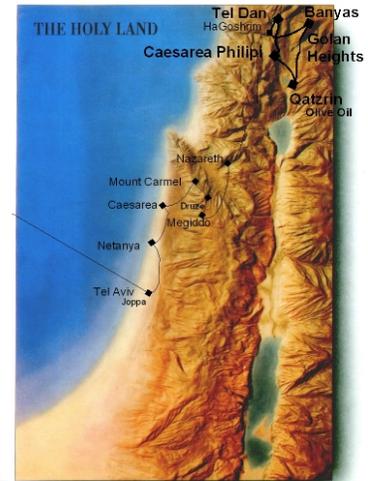




The Half Shekel Journal Vol. IV by Ed Rice
Day 3 & 4 Thu & Fri 29 & 30 Jan Nazareth - Tel-Dan

As we got off the bus in Nazareth the tension in this land crackled and creaked. Three Muslim women sat beneath a huge banner which announced something about Allah, Mohammad and a desired Mosque at the entry way of this Catholic church. The one with the infant jested toward our group and said something in Arabic to the others and all three laughed and giggled and babbled on. As 24 Christians, 12 Baptist Preachers, of the Gospel walked by in silence, their chiding laughter was replaced by booing as we walked by to another 'man made' religious establishment, the Roman Catholic "Church of the Annunciation." Both establishments, Catholicism and Islam, have a history of hatred towards God's chosen. The paganism of Catholicism both amazed and appalled me. Here in the Holy Land the spokesman of Christianity is perceived to be this pagan Harlot, the Roman Catholic Church and her back up speaker the Greek Orthodox Church is competing for property rights on what they perceive to be holy dirt. As we enter the magnificent dome structure their paganism again caused me to marvel. "And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns." (Rev 17:7)



The real marvel of Nazareth was found in the archaeological dig underneath accessed from the outer courtyard of the church. There, 20 feet below the surface of the beautiful poinsettia garden was a small portion of the village of Nazareth. With an estimated population in the hundreds, it should not have been surprising that it was then said of this little place, "can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46) This tiny excavation under the Church showed Nazareth to be a small poor village of masons and stone workers. The modernists want to immediately change the Bible; in their opinion, since no Black and Decker circular saw was found in the excavation Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3 were errant in referencing a carpenter's son and should have mocked him as the mason's son instead. One of the preachers with us (not a Baptist), because he had a year of seminary Greek, even tried to justify their hasty changing of the Holy Scripture. Modernists do not believe in God's preservation of His inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired Scripture, and consider it their duty in life to try to change and 'fix' His book in hopes of restoring some fictitious original manuscripts that God lost 1,500 years ago. The more sincerity they have in doing God this 'favor' the more their ignorance¹ aggravates this Baptist preacher. The excavation of the tiny town of Nazareth is a work in progress, the Word of God is not! We make our way north to the Golan Heights as our guide, Ron Winters, exhibits an awesome expectation of the days that lie ahead. It was getting dark as we checked in to Kibbutz Hagoshrim and we were too tired to take the short exploratory walk that we desired. The facilities and supper were superb. With interest we read their place mat at supper, Bev took hers since mine was spotted with spilled soup. The Mediterranean Kosher meals were an exceptional change to our normal high venison diet; a change little envied but delightfully enjoyed. I still like steak and egg for breakfast and interpreting Exodus 23:19, or 34:26 against it is just wrong.

¹ Not their ignorance of linguistics as much as their brazen ignorance of God's almighty power to preserve his inspired words through the last 2000 years of dauntless attack.

Day 4 Friday 30 Jan of our trip started in a national park at the headwaters of the Jordan River. The invigorating hike along the small stream through a beautiful forest of trees revealed springs adding to the flow of the Jordan which supplied 12% of Israel's drinking water. We recalled King David's boast that his kingdom went from Dan to Beersheba² and we read his 42 Psalm "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God:"



The name of this park had not properly prepared me for the breadth of what I would take in in the last portion of this walk through an Israeli watershed. Tel-Dan was indeed the telling of Dan if one could get double

meaning from the Arabic word 'tel'. Of course the Bible had already told on the Danites, in Judges 18 they left the territory allotted to them by Joshua as also stated in Josh 19:40-48. They proceeded north through the land promised to Ephraim, then through that assigned to Manasseh, Issachar, Zebulun and Asher. They had found a city on Laish in the northern post of the land; a city which dwelt carelessly and isolated. When they left the two cities they had subdued, Zorah and Eshtaol, they stole and kidnapped "an ephod³ and teraphim⁴ and a graven image, and a molten image." (Jud 18:14) and the Levitical priest which dwelt with an Ephraimite named Micah, and easily conquered and burned the city of Laish. The tribe that abandoned their assigned inheritance, took up with a graven image and settled in the most northern tip of the promised land is not even listed among God's chosen tribes in Revelation 7:4-8. Instead his portion is doled out to Manasseh and Ephraim (son of Joseph) whom he had crossed to get to the city of Laish. It seems he also crossed God in abandoning his inheritance.

"The Hagoshrim Kibbutz and Resort Hotel lies in the heart of the Hula Valley. Founded more than fifty years ago, it was first known as HaGoshrim Guest House. During most of the period before the War of Independence this area was held by a Syrian leader, the Emir Fa'ur of the El Fadil tribe. He controlled the region from the beginning of the 20th century. In 1940 he sold his lands to the Keren Kayemet and left his palace, and it was to this site that Hagoshrim Hotel came to be built 13 years later.

"In 1943, a Hapoel HaMizrachi (religious Zionist) group arrived in the area but failed to settle successfully, looked for a new direction and moved to the center of the country where they can be found today in "Moshav Nechalim" village and Yeshivat Nechalim, one of the largest yeshivas (colleges for religious studies) in the country.

"In the years 1944 and 1945 – three core-groups of youth movement graduates arrived from Turkey for agricultural training in the Land of Israel and named themselves "HaGoshrim", signifying "a bridge between Israel and the Diaspora". In September 1948, Kibbutz HaGoshrim was founded and the members settled in the earlier "Nechalim" group's site, interlaced with streams. This was approximately 2 kilometers south of the present location of the kibbutz. The settlers suffered in the inundated area and requested the Jewish Agency's permission to move slightly north to higher ground where they would also gain better access to the main transport route.

"The ruins of the Emir Fa'ur's palace stood at this new site and were then being utilized by the kibbutz members as a storehouse, laundry and various offices. The rear part of the building, behind the stone wall now in the hotel lobby, served as part of the wall of the sheep-pen used by the young farmers.

"In 1952 the idea crystallized of running a Guest House and it was a kibbutz member, Ora Reiss, who was responsible for the idea. It was through her initiative that the Guest House gates were opened.

"The HaGoshrim Guest House opened in 1953, under Ora Reiss' management, in Emir Fa'ur's abandoned palace. The highlight for the guests was the chance to sit on wooden seats by the banks of the stream and dip their feet in the cool waters – a veritable Paradise!" History of HaGoshrim, from guest house place matt.

2 Am 8:14, Jud 20:1, 1Sa 3:20, 2Sa 3:10 17:11 24:2,15, 1Ki 4:25, 1Ch 21:2, 2Ch 30:5, Am 8:14

3 Something girt, a sacred vestment worn originally by the high priest #Ex 28:4 afterwards by the ordinary priest #1Sa 22:18 and characteristic of his office.

4 Givers of prosperity, idols in human shape, large or small, analogous to the images of ancestors.