

Journaling a Preacher's 2023 5x7 Pilgrimage to Israel

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Pilgrimage to Israel

Pastor Edward Rice

About the Author

Pastor Ed Rice is a retired USAF Systems Engineer surrendered to be a Baptist Preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Saved in 1960 at age 8, he grew up tutored in the Scriptures through Tuscorora Baptist Church in Addison NY. Drafted into the military off of the dairy farm in 1972, Ed and Bev Rice raised 3 boys while serving as a Missile Technician in the USAF. After completing a USAF AECF bootstrap program he graduated from Ohio State University with a degree in electrical engineering and was commissioned in the USAF where he served until 1995 as a weapons integration, and systems engineer at Wright Patterson Air Force Base and Rome Laboratories. He finished his Masters degree in Electrical Engineering through The Air Force Institute of Technology in 1990. Pastor Rice, after serving as a youth pastor at each air base where he was stationed for the past 20 years, surrendered to be a Preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in June 1992. He has a Masters and PhD in Theological Studies from LBU.edu and has been Pastoring in Yates County, NY since April 1995. Since Feb 1998 he has been Pastoring Good Samaritan Baptist Church in Dresden New York. His staunch belief in the preserved accuracy of the inspired Scriptures and his rich background in the history of Bible believing Baptists makes his insights throughout this 14 day tour of Israel pointed and Biblical. If you have never visited Israel do not miss this opportunity to journal through these 14 days. If you have visited, this journal will take you back, and can bring you up on many things about Israel. If you plan on visiting Israel, do not go without first taking this 14 day journaling experience.

About the Subject Matter

Israel is God's chosen people, dwelling on God's promised land.

*In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. 2 For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. 3 And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; 4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. 5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be **a peculiar treasure** unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: 6 And ye shall be unto me **a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation**. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel (Exod.19:1-6).*

Since October 7th, 2023 Israel has been at war. Biblical prophecy shows that all nations will one day gather against her, and God will avenge. Israel's war against Palestinian Terrorists and Islamists who want all Jews annihilated, has shown all nations begin such a turning away from God's chosen nation Israel. Even our own nation, weakened and depraved under liberal leadership with Marxist, socialist intentions, has shown signs of such a turning against Israel. God will bless Israel.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee (Ps.122:6).

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Pastor Edward Rice

via Pastor Lee Pickett and International Heritage Tours
March 16-30, 2023

*“If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land,
and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey” (Num.14:8).*

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Edward G. Rice

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Dedication

I wanted to go to Israel ever since 1960 when I was saved and attended Marian Clark's Sunday School class at Fellowship Baptist Church, Gang Mills NY. I listened to him talk about the places where Jesus walked as if he had been there. I do not know that he had, but the pictures that he painted in my mind's eye week after week, and God's promises that he taught in that Jr. boys class assured me that I would one day stand with my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, on the Mount of Olives and see Jerusalem with him as the King of kings and Lord of lords. I still will, but to visit there in the flesh was a dream I inherited from my Sunday School training and my father, Levi Rice. Since his salvation in the same Church in 1958, Dad always wanted to go to Israel, to actually see Jerusalem, and he had tickets in hand after his second by pass surgery. His heart was weak, but I had told him that to go and even to die in the land, would be better than to forgo such a dream. I was disappointed that his doctor and others, concerned for his heart, talked him out of his 10 day trip to the Holy Land. He canceled his opportunity and died without visiting Israel.

When the opportunity came for Bev and I to go on a 10 day Pastor Familiarization Tour it was financially impossible because we had just purchased tickets for our 10 day trip to Cajamarca, Peru, where our son Shane was ministering as a missionary. Impossible or no, the journal of that trip to the Holy Land was published. Then in July of 2022 another series of health and financial miracles brought us to sign up for another pilgrimage to Israel through Vision Baptist College of Solid Rock Baptist Church, Berlin NJ, where our grand children attended. They would escort us to Israel on Oct 30th through Nov 10th 2022, and our son Shane & Kathy Rice would join us. At the last minute or grandson Micah also got to join us on that trip. God is good, all the time. But then we had also promised our friend Pastor Lee Pickett that we would tour Israel with them when he arranged his tour, he did that on March 16-30, 2023, just three months after our return. God marvelously provided that we could keep our promise. This Half Shekel 2023 Journal Book is likewise dedicated to Misty, Cassandra, Rachael, Rebekah, Moriah, Micah, Alexis, Charity, Lucas, Parker and Christina Rice, our 11 grand children, with the expectation that they too, one day, will get to walk where Jesus walked, and that they too, will one day stand on the Mount of Olives with their Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

God's Itinerary for Israel

The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. 2 It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God. 3 Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. 4 Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you. 5 ¶ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. 6 Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. 7 And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. 8 And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. 9 No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: 10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away (Isa.35:1-10).

Basic Trip Itinerary

Day 1 -Thursday, March 16 Departure from Newark, NJ 9:00pm
Day 2 - Friday, March 17 TEL AVIVI JAFFA
Day 3 - Saturday, March 18 CAESAREA/MT.CARMEL/ MEGIDDO-
Day 4 - Sunday, March 19 JESUS MINISTRY IN THE GALILEE
Day 5 - Monday, March 20 GALILEE/GOLAN HEIGHTS
Day 6 - Tues, March 21 NAZARETH BEIT SHEAN / JERUSALEM
Day 7- Wednesday, March 22 OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM
Day 8- Thursday, March 23 JERUSALEM
Day 9 - Friday, March 24 VALLEY OF ELAH/ NEOT KEDUMIM
Day 10 - Saturday, March 25 JERUSALEM
Day 11- Sunday, March 26 QUMRAN/ MASADA/ DEAD SEA
Day 12 - M, Apr 27 DEAD SEA/ TIMNA NATIONAL PARK/ EILAT
Day 13 - Tuesday, March 28 EILAT
Day 14 - Wednesday. March 29 NEGEV/BEER SHEVA/ TEL AVIV.
Day 15 - Thursday, March 30 Depart Tel Aviv at 12:30am arriving in Newark at 5:15am.

Trip Roster

Jim Bochette	Cherie Bochette
Linda Delregno	Pastor David Elias
John Enns	Susan Grenier
Pete Janzen	
Deacon David Johnson	Lynne (Ville) Johnson
Golda Lamey	Andrew Neufeld
Pastor Henry Penner	Pastor Diedrich Peters
Pastor Lee Pickett	Pastor Dewy Stewart
Pastor Ed Rice	Bev Rice
Abe Sawatzky	Anna Sawatzky
Pastor Bill Thiessen	Mary Jane Van Aalst
Joe Ville	Angela Ville
Larry Ward	Scott Wood

Preface

During my 48 years as a born again Christian I have visited Israel countless times through the slides and stories of others, now Bev and I would visit it in person, again. I would be remiss if I did not capture every piece of information, every sight, every thought and emotion in a journal. My slightly honed writing skills and copious note taking experience would be challenged beyond capability as information, sights, thoughts and emotions poured out of every day, every hour, yeah every minute of these fourteen days in Israel. In the months prior to departure we had returned from a ten day Israel Pilgrimage, and I was busily journaling that experience. I had learned much about the required note taking that would build a journal, but was still barely up to the task. I wish it were complete and more detailed in capturing every piece of information, every Scripture reference, sight, thought, and emotion of this trip. Alas, I pray it is but a taste of an adventure that will whet appetites for growth into the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Bible.

The journal itself is made up of thirty Half Shekel Journals which were sent out for review over the weeks since our March 2023 trip. Through these Half Shekel Journals each event of our adventure was captured and recorded. Much more research into every site and fact is want to be done, and easily accomplished with the vast capabilities of the internet search engines. This journal is but a step towards the research which is to consume a Christian's life; growing in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a first step that can change forever how you read your Bible, set your desire on the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, and get busy in growth and witnessing. It is a step that will cause one to long for their trip to Israel, whether it be a first, once in a lifetime visit, a revisit, or the visit where we will stand together with the Lord Jesus Christ on the Mount of Olives. Every Born-Again Christian will eventually visit Israel.

Why the Half Shekel? ... The shekel is the base unit of Israeli money like the dollar is ours. With their economy as it is, it exchanges for one of our quarters, although it is the size of our nickel. The half shekel is twice as large as a shekel, but half its worth, about 12 1/2 cents or 1 US once-upon-a-time 'bit'. We called these Half-Shekel Journals because it is twice as large but half the worth of the real thing, OR it represents my little 'bit' of info, OR it cost me a half shekel to get it printed, OR, since a cup of Aroma Coffee In Israel cost 16 shekels, the half shekel is almost as worthless as our 2 cents, and the journal is my 2 cents.

If you have never asked and received the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour and Lord of your soul, my prayer is that your reading this journal and exploring further the truths of His precious Word, the Holy Bible will lead you to a place where you will. *“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might **be saved**. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ... He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. ... ²⁴ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life”* (Jn.3:17,18,36, 5:24).

Journaling a Preacher's 2023

5x7 Pilgrimage to Israel



#2301 Thur-Fri 16-17 Mar Flight to Israel, Tel Aviv, Joppa

Now Joshua was old and stricken in years: and the LORD said, unto him, thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed (Joshua 13:1).

After three score and ten years on God's green earth, he has allowed me to visit the land that he loves on two holy pilgrimages to Israel in my 71st year of life. I am old and stricken in years, and there remains yet very much that needs to be written down. I have bought 24 pencils containing the star of David. My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have seen touching his land, his city, and his people: these pencils are to be the pen of a ready writer (cf Ps.45:1).



Rachel Rice
our Driver to
Newark Airport

LORD, Father, touch, my pen, Lord, touch my health and my mind, Lord, touch my proof-reader, touch her health and mind I pray. LORD God, we have walked where your only begotten Son has walked; we have prayed where your only begotten Son prayed; read now my plea, hear now my prayer, let me write of all thy wonderful works, which I have seen, and my ears have heard.

“Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works, which thou has done, and thy thoughts which are to usward: they cannot be reckoned up in order onto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered“ (Ps.40:5).

I expect my Lord Jesus Christ will return before I finish this documentation, even before I wear out this pencil. I trust that you know about his eminent return. I pray that your soul is ready to meet him as Saviour and not as Judge.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ... 36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Rom.3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Rom 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ... 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.¹ (Jn.3:16–18, 36, 5:24, Rom.3:23, 5:8, 6:23, 10:9–10, 13).

Israel is different in March than in November. March closes the

1 The Holy Bible.

latter rain² just before Passover, and November closes the first, or former rain.³ So both can get one wet, and both might drop into the 50s (deg F).⁴

At our home on Waneta Lake NY, per recommendation of Eli, and Lee, we packed an umbrella and rain coat and drove our, just off the show room, 2011 Dodge Grand Caravan 300 miles to Solid Rock Baptist Church, Berlin NJ. The FL wheel bearing growled for the last 100 miles, and trembled for the last 20, but we made it to Bliss' home where our granddaughter Rachel Rice lives. We attended two days of Vision Baptist College classes with our graduating senior Micah Rice, (graduation April 27th) and then, voila, Rachel had us at the Newark International Airport for our 2100 – 1320⁵, El Al, Israel flight #26, seat 41B & C, 10 ½ hour flight, with a 6 hour time zone change.

The flight was excellent, two kosher meals, lots of walking room, in the back there was even an open exercise area (well stretching area anyway), and ready access to restrooms. Even my friend, Dave Johnson, with his areophobia, relaxed and enjoyed the flight.

What they called Day 2 actually began at the Newark New Jersey, 6 PM check in which was midnight Israel time; the day count is generally lost in some kind of jet-lag and so I will not use it in this journal; watch the dates instead. Israel tours do not count in jet-lag, so they often advertise their tours to be one or two days longer than they really are. We arrived at the David Ben Gurion Airport, Tel Aviv as promised, and we were escorted through all the security stations with the excellent provisions arranged by International Heritage Tours (info@ihtours.com).

At the airport exit we met up with eleven Canadians who had

2 “latter rain” is “spring rain” <04456> from “Strong's Exhaustive Concordance”.

3 Strong's <03138> יֹוֹרֵחַ yowreh ,AV-first rain 1, former 1; 2x, Deut.11:14, Jer.5:24, early rain, autumn shower; 04175 מוֹרֵחַ mowreh AV-former rain 2, rain 1; 3x, Ps.84:6, Joel.2:23, (early) rain.

4 Details about the former and latter rain were eloquently given by Johanna, the Bible Gardens guide encountered on a subsequent adventure in this trip.

5 If you don't know military time, just subtract 12 from numbers bigger than 12.

flown in from Toronto, and our total count of twenty five pilgrims was complete. Bev and I knew four of these pilgrims previously, the other nineteen were fast found Christian friends.

Pastor Lee Pickett was as giddy as a schoolboy as he introduced everyone in the group. He was seeing a long, awaited vision, and years of dedicated planning, culminate into reality in an airport parking lot. Pastor Lee choked back tears and gave an impassioned charge about what he expected for us all in the next thirteen days. He led in a prayer and praise, and then introduced Eli Talmi our guide.

Eli gave a hearty Hebrew greeting and a warm welcome, asked us to please follow him quickly, and charged off across the tour bus laden parking lot. At the awaiting King Long 12M Coach, 49 seat, made in China, tour bus, Eli Talmi introduced our exceptional bus driver, Costia (no English, and from Russia). We drag our luggage to the belly of the bus, climbed aboard the luxurious coach, and thus it began.

“Prov.3:5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

Eli Talmi, our guide, and Costia our bus driver, sprang into full gear simultaneously. Costia was negotiating through crowded airport parking lots and then narrow streets of Tel Aviv with a 40 foot tour bus, Eli was detailing what this land would have looked like in 1861 when Mark Twain visited, and wrote his book *“Innocents Abroad.”* Eli quoted a portion of the book illustrating the barrenness of this land back then.

Mark Twain's whole book *“Innocents Abroad”* is available for your reading at Gutenberg⁶ but an article which gives the information referenced and quoted by our Guide Eli, is found

6 Mark Twain's *“THE INNOCENTS ABROAD”* is available in full at <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3176/3176-h/3176-h.htm> or in multiple formats at: <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/3176> [From an 1869—1st Edition] Accessed 4/4/2023 egr

in “*Mark Twain’s unwittingly prophetic vision for the State of Israel*” by Tuly Weisz (founder of Israel365, which connects Evangelical Christian Zionists with Israel); it is quoted below.

“Mark Twain’s unwittingly prophetic vision for the State of Israel”
By Tulu Weisz Published: Sep. 23, 2017⁷

At his peak, Mark Twain was probably the most popular American celebrity of his time. What few realize is that it was an unlikely trip to the Holy Land that established his fame as an author.

A century and a half ago, Twain traveled on an excursion with his American church group to Europe and the Middle East. The material he gathered, first published in a San Francisco newspaper, formed the basis of the humorous book that made him hugely popular: *The Innocents Abroad*.

But while in the Middle East, Twain, whose real name was Samuel Clemens, was not focused on the book he would eventually write, but another, holier work: the Bible.

While in Palestine, Twain took a piece of stationery with “Mediterranean Hotel” printed on the top just above the date, September 24, 1867, and wrote to a Mr. Elias, a local book-binder in the Old City, the following instructions: “Elias, fix up the little Bible I selected (I don’t want any other) – the one that has backs made of balsa-wood from the Jordan, oak from Abraham’s tree at Hebron, olivewood from the Mount of Olives, and whatever the other stuff was – ebony, I think. Put on it this inscription: ‘Mrs.

Jane Clemens – from her son – Mount Calvary, Sept 24, 1867.’ Put ‘Jerusalem’ around on it loose, somewhere, in Hebrew, just for a flyer. Send it to our camp, near head of the valley of Hinnom – the third tent you come to if you leave the city by the Jaffa Gate – the first if you go out by the Damascus Gate. Yours, Sam L. Clemens.”

The King James Bible published by the British and Foreign Bible Society was an ironic choice of gift for the man who famously quipped, “Faith is believing what you know ain’t so.”

A natural skeptic, Twain was not taken by the splendor of the Holy Land. He wrote irreverently about the country’s legendary sites. The Sea of Galilee was, “a solemn, sailless, tintless lake, as unpoetical as any bath-tub on earth.” The Church of the Nativity was “tricked out in the usual tasteless style observable in all the holy places of Palestine.”

Throughout *Innocents Abroad*, Twain explicitly states that the area was desolate and devoid of inhabitants. His group entered

7 <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/unto-the-nations-505760> accessed 3/28/23

Palestine from the north, passing through such sites as the Sea of Galilee, the Banias, Nazareth, Jenin and Nablus.

Riding on horseback through the Jezreel Valley, Twain observed, "There is not a solitary village throughout its whole extent – not for 30 miles in either direction. There are two or three small clusters of Bedouin tents, but not a single permanent habitation. One may ride 10 miles, hereabouts, and not see 10 human beings."

He continues, "Of all the lands there are for dismal scenery, I think Palestine must be the prince... Can the curse of the Deity beautify a land? "Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes. Over it broods the spell of a curse that has withered its fields and fettered its energies."

Twain was not alone in his poor impression of the land of milk and honey. Historians and travelers alike made similarly dreary observations over the centuries.

Six hundred years before Twain's visit, another famous visitor with a nom de plume was struck by Jerusalem's desolation. Rabbi Moses ben Nachman, known as Nachmanides (1194-1270), fled Christian Spain for the Land of Israel. After a long and perilous journey, Nachmanides arrived at the Port of Acre before traveling to Jerusalem in 1267, where he couldn't even find nine other Jews to pray with. He wrote to his son, "Many are Israel's forsaken places, and great is the desecration. The more sacred the place, the greater the devastation it has suffered. Jerusalem is the most desolate place of all."

Nevertheless, the sage, whose Torah commentary is still studied, had an altogether surprising interpretation of the desolation he encountered. He saw it as a blessing in disguise.

Commenting on a verse in Leviticus that describes the curses that will befall the land of Israel, Nachmanides wrote that the devastation "constitutes a good tiding, proclaiming that during all our exiles, our land will not accept our enemies... Since the time that we left it, [the land] has not accepted any nation or people, and they all try to settle it... This is a great proof and assurance to us."

The 13th-century scholar wrote that Israel will remain desolate until the Jewish People assume control. But when the people of Israel finally return to the land of Israel, the region will once again flourish thanks to Divine providence.

As the most famous eyewitness to the 19th-century desolation of Palestine, Twain was an unwitting collaborator of Nachmanides. *Innocents Abroad* brought global attention to the sorry state of Palestine, and proved that Palestine was a land without a people for

a people without a land, just 15 years before the First Aliya and subsequent waves of Jewish immigration.

Half a century after Twain's visit, the Balfour Declaration was issued in 1917. Fifty years later the Six Day War was won. And today, in 2017 – 50 years after that – Israel continues to flourish, moving in leaps and bounds away from Twain's "sackcloth and ashes."

At various points throughout his journey, Twain criticized his fellow "American vandals abroad" for the petty buying and selling of holy land trinkets and religious artifacts. So what compelled this skeptical father of American literature to buy an olive wood-covered Bible for his mother? Twain might not have known it at the time, but by reporting on the "curses" of Palestine during his visit, he was lending credence to the biblical passages he famously mocked in his book, prophecies which were fulfilled less than a few decades later. Likewise, Twain's decision to purchase a Bible over any other trinket is evidence that he was moved by the religious holiness and spirit of the land.

The author, TULY WEISZ, is founder of Israel365, which connects Evangelical Christian Zionists with Israel and strives to be a light unto the nations.

The bus pitched to the right swerved around some horn honking offenders, pitched to the left and broke hard as a car stopped for no apparent reason. Eli gripped the rail in the front of his seat with one hand, and the mic in his other, and didn't react or break his stride. "In 1948 there was a major change in Israel, in fact, May 14, 2023, will mark a celebration of our 75th anniversary of that change. David Ben-Gurion (in Hbrw דוד בן-גוריון) (1886 to 1973) , the first Prime Minister of Israel, informed us then that Israel's future lies in the *Negeb* (in Hebrew <05045> נֶגֶב negeb⁸), (this saying would be rehearsed on several occasions, especially when we were in Southern Judah, the wilderness called the parched south...<05045> נֶגֶב negeb).

Costia slid the 38 foot tour bus into a 40 foot parking slot and the doors opened only inches from the curb. Both Eli and Pastor Lee were beaming with excitement, "Okay, this is our first stop, we are now going to walk on the streets of Joppa, just as we promised."

In 1950 Tel Aviv, (a tel, being a tel, and Aviv, being the spring

8 Strong's Exhaustive Concordance "*Negeb*" <05045> AV 112x "south country" Gen.13:1,3 from an unused Hebrew root meaning to be parched.

season, the name meant to capture the old springing into new life) merged with Joppa⁹. Joppa was the strategic Biblical port city where Cedar trees were ported in from Lebanon on their way to Jerusalem (2Chron.2:16, Ezra 3:7); consequently Joppa has been continuously inhabited for well over 3000 years! Jonah found it useful in his unsuccessful flight from God's call in 860 BC. Today we were only going back two thousand years to visit a house by the seaside, very possibly the house of one Simon the Tanner.

An angel of God said to a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, *"Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do"* (Acts.10:4b-6).

At Simon the Tanner's house, Peter, on the housetop praying, fell into a trance, and saw a great sheet and a great vision. One can read that whole account in Acts 10. We thought of where we stood, here at the door of one Simon a tanner, but more so at the threshold of the gospel reaching into the souls of Gentiles. This was after Peter preached to, and saw the conversion of, thousands of Jews,(Acts 2–3), after the persecution began (ch.4), after Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit, and were slain (ch.5), after the need for deacons arose (ch.6–7), after the conversion of Saul of Tarsus (ch 9), and now in Acts chapter 10, God is keeping his promise that even the Gentiles will be given entry into the kingdom. We let all that sink in while standing at the door of a Joppa house by the sea.

The Tal by the Beach Hotel was exquisite; room 306 at 5:45 PM Israel time was a haven; the kosher buffet for supper at 6:15 PM was... Manna... Exodus 16:15 says *"when they saw it, they said one to another, it is Manna: for they wist not what it was."*

Dusk set in Tel Aviv six hours before it got to Dundee New York, but an hour long hot soak in a tub, took away some of the backache and leg cramps from sitting on an airplane for 12 hours.

9 Strong's Exhaustive Concordance <03305> יָפוֹ Yapho or יָפוֹהַ Yaphow' {Ezr 3:7 } AV-Joppa 3, Japho 1; 4x Joppa or Japho= "beautiful".

We were in Israel! Five hours of solid sleep was not wasted on this pilgrim. Saturday, March 18 early, we would head north along the Mediterranean Sea. There would be much to see there.



#2302 Sat 18 Mar Caesarea by the Sea

Our first full day in Israel began, as was promised, with a wonderful Mediterranean breakfast buffet at the Tal by the Beach Hotel. Bev and I, knowing how fast these 14 days would fly by, knew it was important to connect faces with each name on our two week old prayer list. I was notoriously bad at this art form. I once tried word association tricks, and our friend Brother Herculean, had spent years being called Brother Sampson, because I couldn't even do that right. We set out to meet new friends at breakfast (sometime when I have more time to write I will explain why break – fast is called that, and how God designed us, and our 12 hours of daily darkness, to give our digestive track half a day off, ... every day). At breakfast we tried to associate faces with names and get a little background information on our new friends. Turns out I would still spend the next 10 days whispering into Bev's ear, "What was their name again?..." "Notoriously bad" is an apt description of my skill in this art form.



We had crammed all our worldly possessions back into our "suit" cases and they were crammed into the belly of the King-Long tour bus. Costia flawlessly guided the beast through the narrow streets of Tel Aviv and out to Route 2 toward Caesarea, 45 minutes up the road. Our guide Eli was determined to fill the ride with information

about his homeland, and its rich Biblical history, so as soon as Pastor Bill Thiessen said “Amen”, he gave us a hearty “Bokatov” (in English “good – a.m.”, I think).

Brother Bill had started our Saturday with some profound thoughts from Psalm 121.

«A Song of degrees.» I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. 2 My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. 3 He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. 4 Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. 5 The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand. 6 The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. 7 The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. 8 The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore (Ps.121:1–8).

It is hard to be anything less than profound when you read this Psalm while standing in God's promised land, Israel, right after our first sunrise here, and it being a Sabbath day (as was Adam's very first day in God's universe). Pastor Thiessen circled this Psalm around our wonder, and crowned our morning with a prayer of praise and thanksgiving. It was Saturday, it was Sabbath day, and we were in the land that Jehovah God loved, and, by promise, always occupied! His favorite place here on God's green earth. Profound might not fully capture what this was.

Costia had us cruising smoothly up Route 2 and Eli was just as smoothly detailing the amazing history and construction we would find when we got to Caesarea. He inserted a wealth of insight about the Turkish deforestation of the region, and Mark Twain's aforementioned description of the barren land. He included the 1920s when Zionist settlements started filling the land and he put us in wonder of Isaiah's prophecy that the land would be made fertile again. Eli could not conceal his exuberance over the miracles that unfolded here in 1948, nor did he try. It resonated again when we

passed an orange grove and he described how Israel's *Negeb*¹⁰ bloomed into life, and Israel became a leading exporter of oranges into Europe. He only had time to touch on Israel's power plants as we passed one, and Israel's desalination plants that now produced 90% of Israel's freshwater. ... More needed to be said, but we were getting off the bus at Caesarea National Park.

Herod is called "The Great" for two reasons, as near as I can figure. First, he was greatly psychotic, as can be seen in any brief study of his life. Second, he was a great contractor, who built great things, even impossible things. Caesarea, a leading example of his latter greatness, but it also depicted some of his former psychotic greatness.

Eli was excited to have this group of 25 standing awestruck in front of the entryway of the massive amphitheater in Caesarea National Park. He gathered us there and paused for a moment, some of his zeal was shining in his face. Herod, the Roman Jewish client-king of Judea, born 72 BC, and reigning from 37 BC till his death in 4 BC, who called himself "The Great", thought himself Jewish when he wanted to, and thought it might be helpful, and thought himself Roman, when he thought that might be helpful. He was neither, he fooled no one, he did neither well, and failed in both rolls. He played the role of the persecuted persecutor, but, ... he was a great builder.

Here, at Caesarea by the sea, he built two artificial breakwaters that held 200 ships with his massive palace that overlooked the sea. When Herod the Great, built the city Caesarea, he wanted to be thoroughly Roman, and he built with Roman philosophy of bread plus entertainment, comfort plus entertainment, amusement plus entertainment. On that note, Eli smirked a little, turned a little, waved his little flag a little, said, "Follow me", and walked through the entryway into the massive, acoustically fine-tuned,

10 *Hegeb* in Hebrew נֶגֶב from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, <05045> AV 112x "south country" Gen.13:1,3 from an unused Hebrew root meaning to be parched. (this word would be rehearsed on several occasions, especially when we were in Southern Judah, the wilderness called the parched south...*negeb* נֶגֶב).

amphitheater. It worked well. Twenty-five awestruck tourist sat in the upper left corner of the 4,000 seat theater which is a center of entertainment to this day.

Pastor Bill Theissen came to the center of our little group and opened his Bible to Acts 10. With passion and zeal Pastor Theissen taught how Peter left Jappa and came to Caesarea to preach to the house of Cornelius, salvation through grace. And here we stand in the same town where that door was thrown open to Gentiles. We stand here as Gentiles, saved by grace. “It’s hard for me to imagine that God would do that to save the likes of me... Thank you, Father that you opened that door. Thank you, that you saved such a wretch as me.”

That truth gripped our hearts. Tears wet our eyes and a silent, holy rejoicing lifted from this group of believers. Pastor Lee took a moment to polish and crystallize the praise and worship. But eventually schedule, and our guide Eli, directed us down through the amphitheater seats. As we went, Bev and I took a moment to pull aside and thank the Lord who brought us back to Israel, back here where we could sit and savor precious moments like these, where we could rejoice, and see what it does to the first time visiting believer,... No, I guess, what it does to every believer that steps onto this holy ground.

We gathered out on Herod's artificial breakwater, at least on the parts that remained above water after 2,023 years. God raised up a psychotic narcissist, and gave him a propensity to build unbelievable and impossible things. God is not above using people like that, and Satan is not below using people like that. As an engineer, I have supposed that God didn't want his only begotten Son to come and manifest himself in a paltry, half aspped¹¹ rebuilt temple that had been desecrated by Satan and a villainous psychotic narcissist named Anticus of Syria (241 BC – 187 BC). And so God raised up his own psychotic narcissist named Herod. And Herod,

11 There is actually a wood handled wood working plane called an A.S.P. And when a wood worker did not use this tool well, or he only did one side of a board, it was called “half-aspped”. The phrase quickly got misspelled universally. See picture of wood handled A.S.P below.

calling himself “The Great”, made the Jerusalem temple one of the wonders of the world. That’s what I suppose. Here at Caesarea, Herod was in training for building great and impossible things¹², and so he did.

And so it was that Eli pointed out to us the ancient harbor ruins with two amazing artificial sea walls that Herod built, plus the foundations of his stupendous palace that stood in the harbor, and the unbelievable freshwater 8' deep swimming pool, built in the sea, and filled via 10 miles of aqueduct, an engineering marvel to this day, bringing in water from the springs north east of the city.

But wait, there's more. Found at the entry of Herod's Palace was a damaged block of carved limestone now called the Pilate Stone. Its inscription says that Pontius Pilate had built a “Tiberium”. Evidently it was some structure honoring the Roman emperor Tiberius, who ruled from AD 14 to AD 37. Such an archaeological mention of Pontius Pilate was quite momentous to the half-infidels, trying to keep the full infidels at bay. A Bible believer might-ought-to get a little more excited about it than we do, but it is the Holy Spirit of God that confirms the authenticity and superb accuracy of God's Holy Word, not so much the archaeologist's shovel.

But wait, there’s more. As we came back to shore, as it were, out of Herod's Palace foundations, Eli showed us a recently excavated room that was very likely a prison cell. Since that was very likely, Acts 23:35 very likely put the Apostle Paul in this very spot, ... yeah, in this very room!

Who, when they came to Caesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him. 34 And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he

12 An approximate timeline for Herod The Great's construction projects is: Herod, born 77 BC, reigned as the Roman Jewish client king of Judea 37–4 BC, and built 15 palaces; he built a Masada Palace, 37 through 10 BC; the Jericho Wadi Qelt Palace, 35 through 4 BC; Caesarea, 22 through 10 BC; and the Rebuilt Temple, with the extended Temple Mount we see today, 20 through 10 BC, just in time for Christ, the King of Glory.

*was of Cilicia; 35 I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall*¹³ (Acts.23:33-35).

As we left Herod's Palace, and headed towards Herod's hippodrome, we stopped for a photo op at the Roman Head¹⁴. Who could resist the opportunity to sit on such a royal throne and get a picture when it was 2,023 years old? Evidently not very many. ...

En vogue with Roman philosophy, bread plus entertainment, plus entertainment, plus entertainment, Herod built a hippodrome; the gambling and Sin City equivalent of the horse track of our day. This hippodrome, at Caesarea, is the best preserved of its kind, could seat up to 20,000 spectators, and was predominantly used for chariot racing. Our guide Eli summarized all that went on here physically, and then our guide Pastor Lee Pickett summarized all that went on here spiritually. Society, today, does not differ greatly from this Roman city's sin filled, entertainment centered, situation. The wickedness of man is still great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually (cf Gen6:5). People need the Lord. Pastor Lee lead the group in prayer, and with a strong challenge that we need to be witnesses (Matt.28:19-10, Mrk.16:15, Luk.24:46-48, Jn.20:21, Acts.1:8, Great Commission referenced 5 times), and we need to be soul winners (Ps.126:6, Prv.11:30, Dan.12:3). People need the Lord.

We wandered back towards the bus, which would carry us to Mount Carmel.

A note about the Greek word Praetorium, in Acts.23:35 “Herod's judgment hall.”

Acts.23:35 I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And

13 See the extended Strong's Concordance study below, “A note about the Greek word Praetorium.”

14 "The Head" is a 15th century nautical term referring to the bow or fore part of a ship. The ship's toilet was typically placed at the head of the ship near the base of the bowsprit, where splashing water served to naturally clean the toilet area. It thus became a common practice to call the toilet, the head. There is a portable toilet outlet in Upstate NY called “Ed's Head”. You cannot imagine how much I hate their name.

he commanded him to be kept in **Herod's judgment hall <4232>**.

From Strong's Exhaustive Concordance: 4232 πραιτώριον praitorion AV-judgment hall 4, hall of judgment 1, common hall 1, praetorium 1, palace 1; 8 times total. Def. "head-quarters" in a Roman camp, the tent of the commander-in-chief OR the palace in which the governor or procurator of a province resided. Its eight uses in Scripture:

*Mt 27:27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into **the common hall <4232>**, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers.*

*Mr 15:16 And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called **Praetorium <4232>**; and they call together the whole band.*

*Joh 18:28 Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto **the hall of judgment <4232>**; and it was early; and they themselves went not into **the judgment hall <4232>**, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.*

*Joh 18:33 Then Pilate entered into **the judgment hall <4232>** again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?*

*Joh 19:9 And went again into **the judgment hall <4232>**, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.*

*Ac 23:35 I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in **Herod's judgment hall <4232>**.*

*Php 1:13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest **in all the palace <4232>**, and in all other places;*

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance is a very effective tool for rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

Page Fill (let no page be totally blank) How this journal came to be.

It has been a journey, a journaling journey. From 21 pages of scribbled notes in a "Page a Day Travel Journal", I hand wrote 150 pages of narrative, dictated them into an iPhone weekly, made corrections, formatted them into Half Shekel Journals, added photos, made corrections, distributed them, proof-read with Bev and made corrections, formatted them into a book, proof-read with Bev and made corrections, published them in a first print, proof-read with Bev and made corrections, and voila out comes "Journaling a Preacher's 2023 Pilgrimage to Israel" by Pastor Edward Rice, ISBN 978-1-304-60900-7, List Price: \$33.00 + S/H \$6 + Tax \$2 = approx \$41 ea., Book Size: US Letter (8.5 x 11 in / 216 x 279 mm), Page Count: 272 Pages Interior Color: Color Standard Paper Type: 60# White, Book Binding: Paperback Cover Finish: Glossy. Awesome.



#2303 Sat 18 Mar Mt Carmel, Druze, Megiddo, & Mt Arbel

Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table. So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel (1Kngs.18:19-20).



The Hill Megiddo, called
in the Hebrew tongue
Armageddon (Rev.16:16).
18 March 2023

We boarded the bus and headed for Mount Carmel. Eli took the time in the short bus ride to finish his sentence about water desalination. There are currently five desalination plants operating in Israel. It is a miracle that one of the driest countries on earth now makes more freshwater than it needs.¹⁵ The Sorek reverse osmosis

15 "Israel Proves the Desalination Era Is Here - One of the driest countries on earth now makes more freshwater than it needs" By Rowan Jacobsen, *Ensis* on July 29, 2016 <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/israel-proves-the-desalination-era-is-here/> "We are standing above the new Sorek desalination plant, the largest reverse-osmosis desal facility in the world, and we are staring at Israel's salvation. Just a few years ago, in the depths of its worst drought in at least 900 years, Israel was running out of water. Now it has a surplus. That remarkable turnaround was accomplished through national campaigns to conserve and reuse Israel's meager water resources, but the biggest impact came from a new wave of desalination plants."

desalination facility is one of the largest in the world, pumping in seawater from a mile out in the Mediterranean sea. The five operational desalination plants, turning seawater, or brackish water, to distilled water, provides just under 600,000,000 m³ of potable water every year.



The four year drought of 1998 to 2002 that ravished other Middle East countries, drove Israel to innovate. These plants, plus their innovative drip irrigation techniques, are making Israel thrive. (California and Las Vegas still cannot desalinate seawater because their environmental impact studies are not complete).

The bus pulling into Mount Carmel National Park, interrupted Guide Eli's enthusiastic discourse on desalination of seawater, irrigation methods, and the Negev changing to a garden... *“For in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert”* (Isa.35:6 cf.33:21).

Carmel means “the Garden land” and that only begins to capture the beauty that dwells on Mount Carmel, and that can be seen from its heights. This is where the prophet Elijah staged the contest with the 450 prophets of Baal (and with Jezebels 400 prophets of the groves, who wouldn’t come up the mountain).

Pastor Lee Pickett, standing on Mount Caramel, gives the details.

First Kings 18 begins, “*And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth*”, but the rubber meets the road at verse 21, “*And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.*”

In the climax of the account, Elijah prays a 63 word prayer and the fire comes down from heaven.

LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again (1Kng.18:36–37).

A Christian is strengthened and encouraged by reading this chapter. In the day in which we live it would behoove a believer to memorize Elijah's prayer, and then pray it. The next chapter in Elijah's life finds him 112 miles south of Mount Carmel, fleeing from old Jezebel. He is in the wilderness of South Judah, right near Beersheba. Being on the mountaintop is often a picture of great victory in a Christian's life, being in a desert wilderness, not so much. Elijah heard from God in both places, and we can learn some valuable lessons from both chapters. Both circumstances teach some things about communicating with God.

The view from Mount Carmel was spectacular. Before us was the Air Base of the Israeli Defense Force, beyond that you could pick out where Nazareth (32.704528 N. 35.288805 E.) is, about 15 miles away. Past that, about 5 miles, you could just make out Mount Tabor (32.688041 N. 35.383052 E). But most impressive was how the Jezreel valley spread out everywhere. Eli pointed out that Jezreel, Hebrew <03157> יִזְרְעֵאל *yiz-reh-ale*, means “God sows” referencing the “fertile soil of God”. The valley was all of that.

Following the western edge of the Jezreel Valley southward you

could just barely make out where Megiddo is located. We would stop at Megiddo right after our lunch with the Druze.

The Druze people are a very curious lot. We were to have lunch in a Druze “restaurant” and Guide Eli identified some strangely dressed people leaving Mount Carmel with us, as Druze. On the bus, he then explained a little bit about the people who would be serving us lunch.

The Druze are a very secretive, religious sect that are thought and treated as a branch out of Islam. But Druze do not identify as Muslims, and Muslims do not accept their religion. Druze strongly believe in reincarnation, to the point where their numbers do not change. You only become a Druze by reincarnation. Their religion is closed to all outsiders. Consequently, they do not proselytize, nor teach any of their beliefs to outsiders.

Eli did not mention a second, very strange, tenant of the Druze religion, they believe in the coming of a male-birthed Messiah. Whereas the Hebrew and Christian Messiah was to be born of the “seed of woman” the Druze Messiah, a direct descendant of the Biblical Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, would come from the “seed of man”, with a male birthing, with no female involvement. Consequently, the Druze's male wardrobe includes a strange pouch under their butt, just in case their Messiah should happen to “drop in” through them. I am not kidding, and you can't make this stuff up.

It is understandable why guides no longer mention this tenant of the Druze secretive religion. The Druze were undoubtedly tired of tourists gawking at their very strange male attire, and openly laughing or mocking at the very apparent pouchy pants.

It dare not be skipped here that while leaving Mount Carmel, and maneuvering backstreets in search of the Druze restaurant, Costea, our skilled bus driver, went down a long, winding, narrow street that met with a dead-end caldesac. After two failed attempts of turning the 40 foot King-Long tour bus around in driveways, Costea was given a standing ovation for backing the bus all the way up the 1/4 mile of an incorrigible narrow winding street. And so we had a very

pleasant lunch with the Druze that day.

The dynamics of a group growing together is worthy of some observation, if not a whole study. This group, half Canadian, with some Mennonite background, half not, coming from all walks of life, but all born again believers, was starting to gel. The trying plane ride, an immersion into a strange new world, Caesarea, Mount Carmel, and the bus ride adventures, had all met over lunch in a strange Druze environment, and the group started to change from a mixture with properties in fine suspension, to a more solid form... It began to gel. I could say more, but I don't know exactly how.

It was very powerful, and moving, to stand on the “*tel*” of Megiddo. Megiddo, from the Hebrew <04023> מֶגִּדּוֹ *Mëgiddow meg-id-do*, meaning “place of crowds” comes from a Hebrew root, <01413> גָּדַד *gadad*, meaning “to attack or invade”. That’s an apt description of this ancient city of Canaan, on the southern rim of the plane of Jezreel, 6 miles from Mount Carmel, 11 miles from Nazareth, and 80 miles from Jerusalem.

Our guide Eli explained that a “*tel*” is a mound that accumulates over thousands of years where conquered cities are destroyed and rebuilt, one on top of another, until, in time, and in very strategic locations, a mound of debris forms in layer upon layer of destroyed and burned ruinous heaps. The 20 layers of ruinous heaps in this “*tel*” of Megiddo¹⁶ gives testimony of its strategic location, so does the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which names it as the place for the final conquest of Satan and mankind shaking their fist at God's authority, and his ownership of the planet.

And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon (Rev.16:16).

In short, all the nations of the world gather to wipe God's chosen people, the nation of Israel, off the face of the earth; the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who has opened the seven sealed book, which is the title deed of the earth, comes on a white horse and with

16 Eli named and described the heavy-handed tactics of the “archaeologists” who unearthed the 20 layers of this “*tel*” by driving a bulldozer right through the middle of it!

a sharp sword, smites all these nations, and then rules them with a rod of iron for 1,000 years. The Bible says, to those who believe the Bible, that his foot touches down on the Mount of Olives and mountains move aside,... and “*tels*” as well, to make a valley reaching all the way to Megiddo! Spilled blood in this valley reaches all the way to the horses bridle!¹⁷

The apostate catholic churches, have taught their “Christians” to deny these facts, calling them, allegorical and figurative. But the genuine believer, armed with a factual, non-ecumenical, and non-copyright, authorized Bible, holds these truths to be literal and self-evident.

It is hard to make a thorough application of all this in a 10 minute devotion, or in a 300 word essay, but this author attempted it, while standing beside his hat on the “*tel*” of Megiddo. The essay is repeated below.

Msg #2316 Defeating Satan's Strongholds

What The Bible Says

Good Samaritan's Penny Pulpit by Pastor Ed Rice

The “hill of Megiddo”, Armageddon in the Hebrew tongue (Rev.16:16), is a stronghold city overlooking the crossroad that connects empires, in the center of a country, Israel, that connects three continents. Biblical prophecy tells us that God has his eye on that stronghold, and will make it the place of the final showdown when all nations gather to wipe Israel off the face of God's earth. The Revelation of Jesus Christ details how that works out for the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, ... and his cronies (Rev.16,19-20). King Solomon rebuilt Megiddo into an impressive stronghold city for Israel (1Kings.9:15), and we can today view his signature three gate design, horse stalls and chariot parking lot in its “*tel*”(mound of destructions). Although Solomon conquered and rebuilt physical stronghold cities he neglected to take down Satan's spiritual strongholds in his life.

The Apostle Paul details how that can be done in 2Cor.10.

“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth

17 Rev.14:20, cf “Eschatology, Volume 11 by this author,
www.GSBaptistChurch.com/theology .

itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; 6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled” (2Cor.10:5-6). Two major ingredients here, first captivating every thought and bringing it into obedience. This is called “renewing of your mind” in Romans 12, and “think on these things” in Phil.4:8. Second, “revenge all disobedience.” Disobedience comes in two flavors, sins of commission, like smoking, drinking, and cussing, and sins of omission, like not praying, not Bible studying, and not witnessing. Take revenge on these sins. Every cuss word, gets an hour of Bible study and prayer. When I miss an hour of Thursday soul-winning, I’ll go two hours on Friday n Saturday. That’s what revenging disobedience looks like. Satan hates that.

An Essay for week #16 - Apr 16, 2023

In light of all this, I think I said, it was very powerful and moving to stand on the “*tel*” of Megiddo.

The bus pulled up to Mount Arbel National Park at 2:30 PM, Costea, our bus driver, was right on time, and right in place, helping the ladies down off the last step of the bus. Mount Arbel is not mentioned in the Bible, which is curious, given that our Lord Jesus Christ centered his ministry in lower Galilee, and centered in lower Galilee, are these high cliffs, a visible landmark from most anywhere on the sea of Galilee. It stands sharply and prominently over the sea, and its graceful stature provides a magical view of the sea, the Golan Heights, and Mount Hermon.¹⁸ (Mount Hermon is mentioned in scriptures in Deut.3:8–9, 4:48, Ps.89:12, 133:3).

Our guide Eli pointed out that in 161 BC “Arbela” was the site of a battle between the Jews, united with the Maccabees, and the evil Seleucid General Bacchides, who defeated and brutally killed his opponents. Josephus mentions in his “Antiquities” that the Greek general captured the many people who had taken refuge in the caves at Arabella. Recall that this Maccabean revolt would eventually

18 See touristisrael.com/mount-arbel

overthrow the vile Seleucid Antiochus IV, Epiphanes¹⁹ who desecrated the temple, and controlled all Judea.

The beautiful well cared for Arbel National Park was perfectly enticing, the gusting wind not so much. We made our way to the summit of Mount Arbel, but Bev and I drew the line at stepping out on the rocky crag that gave the grandest view. Yes, there were guide rails, but wind gust had already made us stagger some as we approach the summit. The view was spectacular. Our Whispers device could not pick up all that Eli was describing to those who went around the last rocky bend, but we could well imagine. I am not afraid of heights, I am afraid of falling from them. So Bev and I perched on a rock atop the peaks of Mount Arbel, and took in the panoramic view. Just before the rest of our group emerged from the narrow walkway, we saw a white hat labeled “Bible Berean Israel Tour” emerge riding on a gust of wind. It flickered around in the updraft then disappeared over the precipice, and was last seen drifting off towards the sea of Galilee.

Dinner at the Lake House Hotel in Tiberius, on the Sea of Galilee, brought with it the stimulating conversation that described every adventure of the day. No one claimed ownership of the white hat that made the advance trip to the Sea. Perhaps we would find it during our Sunday worship service on the Sea of Galilee.

19 “*Epiphanies*” means “god manifest” but people changed his name to “*Epimanes*”, meaning “the mad”.



#2304 Sun 19 Mar Worship on the Sea of Galilee, Boat Museum

The Psalmist writes, *“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile”* (Ps.32:1-2).



I became ankylosing spondylitis conscience at 4 AM, light conscious at 4:01, God conscious at 4:01.5, and Sea of Galilee conscious at 4:02. I am remiss to describe in prose exactly what it is when a born-again, bought-by-the-blood of Christ, Bible believer awakes to consciousness on the Lords day, the first day of the week, the day Christ arose victorious over death, on a Sunday. But when it also comes to mind that we are on the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus called and taught his disciples, ... Well, it is almost overwhelming, and one reaches for a Bible, as in the background he sings, “Alas, and did my Savior bleed, and did my Sovereign die, would he devote that sacred head for such a worm as I?”, meddling it with, “Up from the grave, he arose, with the mighty triumphs o'er his foes.”

It was that kind of morning on March 19, two hours before my alarm would sound. *“This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles”* (Ps.34:6).

Shortsighted motels provide no desk light when they provide a desk, expecting one could turn on the room light,... and wake up the whole room. My little pen light illuminated Matthew 8, and Matthew 14, but not as much as the Holy Ghost did. Disciples were led, they followed Jesus, into the overpowering storm on the Sea of Galilee in chapter 8, and were commanded into the overpowering storm in chapter 14, so I brushed up on both accounts before breakfast.

The alarm got us to a buffet kosher breakfast at the Lake House Hotel in Tiberias, ... on the Sea of Galilee. Our group of 25 were present; I surveyed each trying to discern between “morning people” and “non-morning people.” I think, when you awake in Israel, with great anticipation of a day, everyone is a morning person. I could have launched into our old camp song, “I am alive, awake, alert, enthusiastic” and everyone would have joined right in. ... I could be wrong.

The tour bus was loaded with anticipation and passengers at 0700 on Sunday morning. Pastor Diedrich Peters opened our day together with an open Bible. He likened the experience of being on this pilgrimage, and tasting all the sites we visited, and all the Scriptures we explored, to being at an overwhelming buffet, ... Like a buffet of Jesus' provisions, where there was more available than could possibly be absorbed. It was relatable, and well received, and he closed in a “God is so good, thank you Father” prayer of thanksgiving, which met with resounding “Amen”.

Costia launched the tour bus into light traffic in Tiberias, Israel, as Eli launched into a “*Bogataw*” greeting that congratulated us on being prompt and bringing about a 0715 departure. Eli's eyes sparkled, and his face could barely contain all of the smile that enveloped it as he began to describe our day and the Sea of Galilee. “The Holyland Boat Tours” would take us out to sea, and we would have a worship service while adrift right near where Jesus walked on the water.

I pondered the sea as glimpses of it flashed by the window of the tour bus. I remembered my first look at lake Erie through a car

window. I had looked up to see a line of water touching the sky, and asked, “Dad, Why can’t I see Canada? ... All I see is water!”

My Father, driving our green Rambler Station wagon²⁰ said, “It’s like we are on a gigantic basketball; the shores of Canada are around the curve quite a bit, and all you see is water.” My dad knew everything, and loved to explain in great but plain detail (It is sad, I have run into people hopelessly locked onto an idea that the world is flat. They never had a dad like mine that observed things, and then logically explained them. I left off talking to such misled people; they taught me well that a reprobate mind can have a truth staring them in the face, and yet forever refuse to move from the lies they had been taught.)

One cannot see across Lake Erie, but it was easy to see. across the Sea of Galilee. It was much smaller than what it was showed to be on Map-Plate 6 of my Scofield reference Bible. One could fit 150 Sea of Galilees into one Lake Erie; it being 13 miles long, 8 miles wide, 133 miles in circumference, and 84 feet in average depth. It was about the size of Oneida Lake in upstate New York where we lived from 1989 to 1995. I could see across it as well, and both were very susceptible to very fast rising, very furious storms.

Costia pulled the tour bus into the Holyland Sailing parking lot, and we made our way through the light rain down to the pier. The boats of Holyland Sailing (www.JesusBoats.com) are meant to be replicas of “famous boats that played a key role in Jesus’ life in the Galilee.” I’m thinking he didn’t have the engine, a full awning, or 55 life-vests, but appreciative of these extras, with the barely audible engine purring, we set out to sea.

Someone had the wherewithal to bring a package of crackers and seagulls were doing aerial acrobatics to fly in and snatch crackers out of mid air. These were quite an entertaining and competitive bunch of gulls following our progress out to the center of the sea.

There were three flags flying on the ships mast head and, as the

20 Annually Levi & Doris Rice packed four kids, a Coleman cook stove, and a canvas 6-man tent into a 1965 Rambler headed to Zephyrhills Florida to visit Grandma and Elton Bly. This year we were to visit a Baptist Preacher in Kentucky and tour Mammoth Cave, so we went through Cleveland Ohio.

ship drifted to a stop in the sea, our Sunday worship began with three national anthems:

The Star-Spangled Banner

O say can you see by the dawn's early light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming
Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there
O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

Canadian National Anthem O Canada!

O Canada! Our home and native land!
True patriot love in all thy sons command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North strong and free!
From far and wide, O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee,
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

HaTikvah ("The Hope") Israel's National Anthem



הַתְּקוּהָ

*Kol ode balevav p'nimah -
Nefesh Yehudi homiyah*

*Ulfa'atey mizrach kadimah
Ayin l'tzion tzofiyah.*

*Ode lo avdah tikvatenu
Hatikvah bat shnot alpayim:*

*L'hiyot am chofshi b'artzenu -
Eretz Tzion v'Yerushalayim.*

כָּל עוֹד בְּלִבְבֵנוּ פְּנִימָה,
נֶפֶשׁ יְהוּדִי הוֹמִיָּה.
וְלִפְאַתֵי מִזְרַח קְדִימָה
עֵינַי לְצִיּוֹן צוֹפִיָּה.
עוֹד לֹא אֲבָדָה תְּקוּוֹתֵנוּ,
הַתְּקוּוֹה בַת שְׁנוֹת אַלְפִים,
לְהִיּוֹת עִם חֶפְשֵׁי בְּאַרְצֵנוּ,
אֶרֶץ צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלַיִם.

English translation:

As long as the Jewish spirit
is yearning deep in the heart,
With eyes turned toward the East,
looking toward Zion,

Then our hope -- the two--thousand--year--old hope -- will not be
lost:

To be a free people in our land,
The land of Zion and Jerusalem.

The words to Israel's national anthem were written in 1886 by Naphtali Herz Imber, an English poet originally from Bohemia. The melody was written by Samuel Cohen, an immigrant from Moldavia. Cohen actually based the melody on a musical theme found in Bedrich Smetana's "Moldau."

Our tour guide Eli gave a hearty welcome and some insights about our time out on the sea. The captain of the ship gave a hearty welcome and some facts about Holyland Sailing and her ships. Our tour host, Pastor Lee Pickett, gave a hearty welcome and some exciting words about being on the sea of Galilee, and how thought-provoking it is to be here where Jesus was.

After a couple hymns sung together, Pastor Bill Thiessen opened his Bible to Matthew 14 and gave a moving recital of Jesus saying,

“Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.” And Peter's answered, “Lord, if it be, thou, bid me come onto thee on the water.”

I looked over the rail and down to the calm water about four feet below me. It is likely, their's was a 15 passenger boat, not a 55 passenger boat, equally likely, their's had no safety rail, but hey, Pastor Thiessen gave Peter a lot of credit for his stepping out of the ship; well-deserved credit. As he read scripture, and as I stared at the water below, I could see Jesus's foot prints, there on the sea of Galilee, and look, there's Peter's foot prints right beside his, they are headed to the bow of the ship. It might could be they took a lap around the ship before they climbed aboard.

There were a couple, more hymns, a couple, moving testimonies, and our hour of worship had an afterglow as a replica Jesus boat glided back to the pier. We shall never forget being on the sea of Galilee for Sunday worship.

The Boat Museum (32°50'40.1"N 35°31'29.8"E) houses a most marvelous, imaginative story. In 1986 after a severe drought, some lads, exploring some muddy lake bed, stumbled onto a piece of obviously very old wood. Upon further careful excavation it was found to be the hull of a very, very old fishing boat. Upon even further, very tedious, even miraculous excavations, that challenge the genius of the ablest archaeologist in Israel for 11 years, the whole 27 foot long, 7 1/2 foot wide, 4 1/3 foot high hull was removed from the mud and put in a museum. In 2000 the 15 passenger, 2000 year old²¹ fishing boat, designated “The Ancient

21 Radiocarbon dating, called carbon-14 dating, is one of the most reliable and accurate methods of dating organic materials. It is the Creationist's friend because it is extremely accurate for organic materials that existed in God's 6,000 year old Universe. It is the Evolutionist's worst nightmare because there is no way it can give them numbers greater than the tens of thousands that their reprobate science requires. The basis of Carbon-14 dating is that living plants, animals, and humans ingest carbon dioxide containing some ¹⁴C, a radioactive isotope of carbon, that, upon their death, when they quit exchanging carbon dioxide, begins a natural radioactive decay. After 5,730 years only half of the original ¹⁴C remains and, with today's very accurate bean-counters, very accurate results come from organic materials which died from 100 to 6,000 years ago.

Galilee Boat” went on display in Yigal Allon Museum at Kibbutz Ginosar near where it was discovered. We saw it there; but didn’t touch it. We watched the miracle movie detailing how it went from mud to awesome display. This paragraph is only a readers – digest condensation.

I wish I had more time²² to describe the fisherman brothers, Moshe, and Yuval Lufan, who stumbled onto it, the mortise-and-tenon joints of its planks, the cedar planking and oak frames plus five other woods used, the evidence of repeated repairs showing the boat was in use for nearly a century, the likely stripping and scuttling that landed the hull sunk into the muck 2000 years ago, and all the media hype about the excavation (like the Ministry of Tourism’s knockdown drag out fight with the ultra-Orthodox Jews of Tiberius, who thought there were already way too many “Christian” tourists showing up in Galilee!). Each of these could support a couple more paragraphs and that wouldn’t touch the huge dike that had to be built, or salvaging the ships planking that had the consistency of wet cardboard! To study more, start at seetheholyland.net/jesus-boat.

Our Sunday was just starting and we must get to the Mount of Beatitudes, and the city of Jesus, Capernaum.

Below is an excerpt of Mark Twain’s “*Innocents Abroad*” Chapter IV, that has his humorous insights about journaling. I thought it worth the read, as is his whole freely obtained book <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3176/3176-h/3176-h.htm>

After prayers the Synagogue shortly took the semblance of a writing school. The like of that picture was never seen in a ship before. Behind the long dining tables on either side of the saloon, and

22 On journaling in general it was well said by Mark Twain, “If you wish to inflict a heartless and malignant punishment upon a young person, pledge him to keep a journal a year.” In fact I so enjoyed Twain’s journaling in his book “*The Innocents Abroad*”, that was referenced earlier in this journal (HS2301), and I so feared that my readers would miss Twain’s true expertise, I included an excerpt of his prose about journaling, at the end of this journal.

scattered from one end to the other of the latter, some twenty or thirty gentlemen and ladies sat them down under the swaying lamps and for two or three hours wrote diligently in their journals. Alas! that journals so voluminously begun should come to so lame and impotent a conclusion as most of them did! I doubt if there is a single pilgrim of all that host but can show a hundred fair pages of journal concerning the first twenty days' voyaging in the Quaker City, and I am morally certain that not ten of the party can show twenty pages of journal for the succeeding twenty thousand miles of voyaging! At certain periods it becomes the dearest ambition of a man to keep a faithful record of his performances in a book; and he dashes at this work with an enthusiasm that imposes on him the notion that keeping a journal is the veriest pastime in the world, and the pleasantest. But if he only lives twenty-one days, he will find out that only those rare natures that are made up of pluck, endurance, devotion to duty for duty's sake, and invincible determination may hope to venture upon so tremendous an enterprise as the keeping of a journal and not sustain a shameful defeat.

One of our favorite youths, Jack, a splendid young fellow with a head full of good sense, and a pair of legs that were a wonder to look upon in the way of length and straightness and slimness, used to report progress every morning in the most glowing and spirited way, and say:

"Oh, I'm coming along bully!" (he was a little given to slang in his happier moods.) "I wrote ten pages in my journal last night—and you know I wrote nine the night before and twelve the night before that. Why, it's only fun!"

"What do you find to put in it, Jack?"

“Oh, everything. Latitude and longitude, noon every day; and how many miles we made last twenty-four hours; and all the domino games I beat and horse billiards; and whales and sharks and porpoises; and the text of the sermon Sundays (because that’ll tell at home, you know); and the ships we saluted and what nation they were; and which way the wind was, and whether there was a heavy sea, and what sail we carried, though we don’t ever carry any, principally, going against a head wind always—wonder what is the reason of that?—and how many lies Moulton has told—Oh, every thing! I’ve got everything down. My father told me to keep that journal. Father wouldn’t take a thousand dollars for it when I get it done.”

“No, Jack; it will be worth more than a thousand dollars—when you get it done.”

“Do you?—no, but do you think it will, though?”

“Yes, it will be worth at least as much as a thousand dollars—when you get it done. May be more.”

“Well, I about half think so, myself. It ain’t no slouch of a journal.”

But it shortly became a most lamentable “slouch of a journal.” One night in Paris, after a hard day’s toil in sightseeing, I said:

“Now I’ll go and stroll around the cafes awhile, Jack, and give you a chance to write up your journal, old fellow.”

His countenance lost its fire. He said:

“Well, no, you needn’t mind. I think I won’t run that journal anymore. It is awful tedious. Do you know—I reckon I’m as much as four thousand pages behind hand. I haven’t got any France in it at all. First I thought I’d leave France out and start fresh. But that wouldn’t do, would it? The governor would say, ‘Hello,

here—didn't see anything in France? That cat wouldn't fight, you know. First I thought I'd copy France out of the guide-book, like old Badger in the for'ard cabin, who's writing a book, but there's more than three hundred pages of it. Oh, I don't think a journal's any use—do you? They're only a bother, ain't they?"

"Yes, a journal that is incomplete isn't of much use, but a journal properly kept is worth a thousand dollars—when you've got it done."

"A thousand!—well, I should think so. I wouldn't finish it for a million."

His experience was only the experience of the majority of that industrious night school in the cabin. If you wish to inflict a heartless and malignant punishment upon a young person, pledge him to keep a journal a year.

A good many expedients were resorted to to keep the excursionists amused and satisfied. A club was formed, of all the passengers, which met in the writing school after prayers and read aloud about the countries we were approaching and discussed the information so obtained.²³

23 Mark Twain's "*The Innocents Abroad*" is available in full (Public Domain) at <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3176/3176-h/3176-h.htm> or in multiple formats at: <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/3176> [From an 1869—1st Edition] Accessed 4/4/2023 egr



#2305 Sun 19 Mar Mount of Beatitudes, Chorazin's Synagogue

Our first stop after coming from the Boat Museum was The Mount of Beatitudes. I think I already mentioned how thick tour buses were in Israel. This Sunday morning Costia nuzzled ours in amongst ten others in the over burdened parking lot. We assembled in an alcove in front of a Roman Catholic Church. It was built to commemorate where Jesus preached his longest sermon. Eli explained some details about the location and the Roman Church, Pastor Lee explained some things about Jesus' Sermon on the Mount delivered here on this mount. A few feet away, in another near by alcove, there gathered a group of loud and laughing women in head dress. I supposed they could have been a group of charismatics or Coptic Christians, excited about being where Jesus had preached, but shortly the laughter, just as loud, turned more to a flavor of jeering or mocking. I am not exactly sure why a group of Muslims would visit the Mount of Beatitudes. I supposed then they were there for malicious purposes. We out stayed their “laughter” and they dissolved away into the crowds after several glaring stares in our direction.



Our view of where Jesus likely stood was obscured by the

Roman Catholic Church of the Beatitudes. As much as the 1938 Neo-Byzantine architecture, design by Antonio Barluzzi, blocked our view of the sea, the Roman religion, designed by Roman Emperor Constantine (272–337AD) blocks the view of Christ's salvation by grace through faith.

I praise the Lord that in 1958 a Baptist preacher of the gospel, Cecil Palm, going door to door, knocked on the door of 40 Platte Street, and Levi and Doris Rice were marvelously converted from Roman Catholicism, to the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. “*Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven*” (Mt.18:3). I was born-again-saved two years later.

It would have been worth the time, sitting on the Mount of Beatitudes, to read all three chapters of Christ's sermon on the mount, but, alas, our schedule dictated what could and couldn't be covered here. Matthew, the opening book of the Bible's New Testament is, appropriately, the introduction to the new covenant, which steps us out of the dispensation of law, and into the dispensation of grace. In it the kingdom of heaven is offered to the Jews, who reject and crucify their Messiah, the son of God, who becomes the Passover Lamb of God, and the Saviour of men. Born in Matthew 1, worshiped in 2, baptized in 3, and tested in 4, his sermon on the mount in chapters 5-7 are the full details of the kingdom of heaven. His 9-Blessed “R”s of the introduction of the sermon, divide into three groups of three. Three cover “getting in”, three cover “changes made to a soul”, and three cover “the world's treatment of those in the kingdom”.

Who gets in? The poor in spirit, who mourn over sin, and are meek (Mt.5:3, 4, 5).

Ps 34:18 The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

Ps 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Isa 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place,

with him also that **is of a contrite and humble spirit**, to revive **the spirit of the humble**, and to revive the heart of **the contrite ones**.

Isa 66:2 For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to **him that is poor and of a contrite spirit**, and trembleth at my word.

Isa 61:2-3 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; **to comfort all that mourn**; To appoint unto **them that mourn** in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for **mourning**, the garment of praise for the **spirit of heaviness**; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

Ps 22:26 **The meek** shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.

Ps 25:9 **The meek** will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

Ps 37:11 But **the meek** shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

Ps 76:9 When God arose to judgment, to save all **the meek of the earth**. Selah.

Ps 147:6 The LORD lifteth up **the meek**: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.

Ps 149:4 For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify **the meek** with salvation.

What do they get? The kingdom of God, a comforter, and the earth as an inheritance (Mt.5:3, 4, 5).

Joh 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another **Comforter**, that he may abide with you for ever;

Joh 14:26 But **the Comforter**, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Joh 15:26 But when **the Comforter** is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.

Once a soul is in the Kingdom of God, how do they change? They hunger and thirst after righteousness, are merciful, and are pure in heart, praise the Lord (Mt.5:6, 7, 8).

Our old nature did not hunger and thirst after righteousness. *Rom 3:11-12* “*There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*” *They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*” Our old nature was not merciful, nor pure in heart; the new nature that God enlivens and plants in a born-again-saved soul, is merciful, and is pure in heart.

So, What do they get? They get filled, they get mercy, and they get to see God (Mt.5:6, 7, 8)!

Once “in”, what are they to the world? They are peacemakers, they are persecuted, and they are reviled.

And what do they get for all that? They get called “the children of God”, for theirs “is the kingdom of heaven”, and they can “rejoice and be exceeding glad” (5:9,10, 11).

That is a quick, deep dive into the 9-Blessed “R”s; three Rs get us in, three Rs change us up, and three Rs make us say, “This world is not my home.”

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Rom.11:33).

The sermon on the mount goes on for three chapters but, alas, our visit to the hill where Jesus taught it, had more time restrictions than he did. After a brief examination of the Beatitudes by Pastor Lee, we were given a little time to explore the beautifully maintained park surrounding the Roman Catholic Church, or to venture in for photos, before we were to meander back to the bus.

Several of us circumvented the catholic church and wandered down toward the sea. We imagined what all this would have looked like without the Roman Church, and all the nicely paved walkways. People are often amazed at how a lake backdrop acts as a very effective speech sounding board. Bev and I had the good fortune to live on lake shores of Oneida Lake for six years, and Waneta Lake

for twenty-seven years, and knew how a voice easily carried for a half mile. Jesus preaching to 10,000 people at a time was quite conceivable. From our upper porch deck overlooking Waneta Lake we can listen in on boat conversations half way across the lake. Unfortunately their boom boxes are even louder than that.

Our head count was completed on the bus and we headed out for our next stop at an excavated synagogue at Chorazin.

*Woe unto thee, **Chorazin!** woe unto thee, **Bethsaida!** for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²² But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. ²³ And thou, **Capernaum**, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day (Mt.11:21-23, cf Lu.10:13-16).*

Our guide Eli pointed out that Chorazin ([32°54'48"N, 35°33'47"E](#)), and Bethsaida ([32°54'36"N, 35°37'51.6"E](#)), combined with Capernaum ([32°52'51.6000"N, 035°34'30.8280"E](#)) to outline an area that might be called the “Evangelical Triangle;” a triangle on the northwestern end of the Sea of Galilee where most (about 80%) of Jesus' public ministry unfolded. The three villages were Bible “*Woe unto thee*” cities in Matthew 11 and Luke 10, and sure enough these three cities were all abandoned and forgotten for many centuries. From the farming town of Chorazin (Grk <5523> Χοραζίν (khor-ad-zin'), meaning "a furnace of smoke") you could look down on the two fishing villages of Bethsaida (Grk <966> Βηθσαιδά (bayth-saheedah'), meaning "house of fish") and Capernaum (Grk <2584> Καπερναούμ (cap-er-nah-oom'), meaning "village of comfort").

Curiously Bethsaida, native home of brothers Andrew and Peter as well as Philip (Jhn.1:40-44) is 2 km (1.24 miles) from the sea. It is a fishing village because the Bible says it is, and we surmise that it was on a lagoon of the Jordan river which connected to the sea.

Some suppose that God sent an earthquake that lifted the area, drained the lagoon, and shrank the sea; others favor that Bethsaida was actually at the site of el-Araj, near the north-eastern shore of the sea.

Chorazin is 3.5 km due north of the Mount of Beatitudes. Jewish writings say its wheat was of exceptional quality, but our interest here was to examine the excavated synagogue. My notes were sometimes imperceptible, but in excited overture our guide Eli gave out at least all the detail recorded in this short

<https://www.seetheholyland.net/chorazin/> article, “Chorazin's Synagogue with Seat of Moses”:

The remains of an elaborate synagogue are a striking feature of the ruins of Chorazin. It was rebuilt in the 3rd or 4th centuries, when the town was thriving.

Constructed of local black basalt stone, the synagogue stood on an elevated area in the center of the town. A broad staircase led to its facade, which faced south towards Jerusalem.

It had one large hall, with stone benches around the walls for the community to sit during services. The absence of an upper gallery for women suggests the sexes were not segregated at the time it was built.

An unusual find in the ruins of the synagogue was the Seat of Moses, carved out of a single basalt block, from which the Torah would have been read. On its back was an inscription in Aramaic. The original seat is in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem but a copy remains in the ruins at Chorazin.

Decorations carved in the stone include Jewish motifs, geometric designs and patterns incorporating local flowers and animals. The construction methods showed that the builders were skilled in using the basalt stone, which was brittle and easily broken.

Near the synagogue is a ritual bath (mikveh). To the east of the synagogue are two large buildings, dating from the 4th century, which each probably housed an extended family. The rooms were entered from a large cobblestone courtyard.

After Pastor Lee gave some awe and wonder at our being at the Biblical site of Chorazin, he expanded on what Eli said about “Moses' seat” and gave a fitting address on Matthew 23:1-9.

*Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, 2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees **sit in Moses' seat**: 3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. 4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. 5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries²⁴, and enlarge the borders of their garments, 6 And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, 7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. 8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. 9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven (Matt.23:1-9).*

Jesus declared that Moses' seat represented the authority of Scripture, not the authority of man nor the authority of man's religions. From Genesis to Maps God is concerned with one's relationship with him, not one's religious practices. Man likes to be lifted up, exalted, given authority, given power, given respect, called pious, called a holy father! They put on a black dress, put their collar on backwards, insist that they be called father and that you confess your sins to them. Sixty-six times the New Testament of the Holy Bible addresses “*presbuteros*” and every time the corrupt Roman Catholic Church's corrupt Latin Vulgate translates it “*priest*” in order to validate their vain black robes, *phylacteries* and “Holy Father” titles. That selfsame doctrine of the Nicolaitans²⁵,

24 (Judaism) “*phylacteries*” either of two small leather cases containing texts from the Hebrew Scriptures (known collectively as tefillin); traditionally worn (on the forehead and the left arm) by Jewish men during morning prayer

25 Re 2:6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the **Nicolaitans**, which I also hate. ... 2:15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the

their doctrine of “Clergy vs Laity” got passed right on to all Protestant “religions” and God still hates it. I coveted a bumper sticker I saw this week, it said, “**I am the WRETCH saved in the song!**” That sticker, plus a valid “born-again, saved by the blood, redeemed from hell , converted to Christ” salvation testimony should be required from everyone that would suppose themselves to be “Clergy!” ... but then they wouldn't. They would be satisfied to be called a little “p” preacher of the capital “g” Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Saved by the blood of the Crucified One!
Now ransomed from sin and a new life begun,
Sing praise to the Father and praise to the Son.
Saved by the blood of the Crucified One!
Glory I'm saved! Glory I'm saved!
My sins are all pardoned, my guilt is all gone!
Glory I'm saved! Glory I'm saved!
I am saved by the blood of the Crucified One. *S. J.*
Henderson

My friend Pastor Dewy Stewart, pastor of Watertown Baptist Temple, Watertown NY, opened his Bible to Matthew 11 and gave an exceptional message from the text, “*Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: 21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin!*” ... (vr.20-21a). To whom much is given much is required. Chorazin, perched on a hill overlooking Bethsaida and Capernaum, was a town which saw the majority of Christ's ministry. Yet they repented not. The Bible says, “*From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*” (Mt.4:17, cf 3:2, Mrk.1:15,6:12, Lu.13:3,5 et al).

A note should be added here about Tyre and Sidon and the evil that they represented. We are quite familiar with the evil of Sodom in Mt.11:23, and their vile sodomites who did abominations before

Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

the LORD. The vile evil of Tyre and Sidon was even as despicable. John G. Butler describes these cities in respect to Jezebel's Baal worship. First recall 1Kings21:25, "*But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.*" Then look at her fathers relationship to Tyre and Sidon ...

Jezebel's father was Ethbaal which was the big reason why Jezebel was so evil. Ethbaal (the name means "Baal is with him") was originally the priest of the great temple of Astarte (Ashtoreth, the female counterpart of Baal) in Tyre. At the age of 36 he conspired against the Tyrian king... slew him, and seized the throne. His reign lasted 32 years, and he established a dynasty which continued on the throne at least 62 years longer. Ethbaal headed up the most wicked dynasty then in power. His reign over the Sidonians (also known as the country of Phoenicia with its key cities of Tyre and Sidon) was a great curse to them. His involvement with Baal worship was the key to the great evil of his rule. And his influence upon Jezebel in the matter of Baal worship was the key to Jezabel's extremely unholy attitudes and conduct which made her the arch enemy of all that was good and right. ...

The religion of Baal was morally, rotten, vile, sensual, and a cruel religion which made immoral sex acts a religious exercise. Fertility rites played a large part in his worship. Licentious dances were prominent, and chambers existed for both male and female prostitutes. Baal religion vilely influence the land by dropping the morals of Israel to incredible depths and destroying character en masse.

The cruelty of Baal religion was especially evident in its being very intolerant of the worship of Jehovah. It persecuted the worshipers of Jehovah, with great violence. The land was filled with blood from the great oppression of the worshipers of Jehovah by Baal religion. ... Ahab's wife, Jezebel was the leader in this persecution of the worshipers of Jehovah. Being the daughter of Ethbaal, the great high priest of Ashtoreth (female counterpart of Baal)

in Tyre, she was well acquainted with Baal religion, and its bloody tactics. Her knowledge of this coupled with her personality and corrupt character, made her a vicious and fanatical promoter of Baal worship and a bloody persecutor of the worshipers of Jehovah. Jezebel was so successful in slaying the prophets of Jehovah, that several times, Elijah complained to God that he thought he was the only one left of the prophets of Jehovah (1Kings 18:22, 19:10, 19:14).

The intolerance of Baal worshipers, for Jehovah worshipers illustrates evil's habit of intolerance. Evil often seeks to be allowed and permitted on the basis of tolerance, freedom of expression, rights, equal time, etc. But once it gets a foothold you can count on is changing its tune about tolerance and equal rights. It will be the sovereign, and any competitors will be cruelly battered into submission. ... Toleration soon enabled evil religion to become the dominant religion; and when that happened, it was no longer toleration but totalitarianism²⁶.

The intolerance of evil for righteousness is seen on every hand in our day. Homosexuals talk tolerance today. They want equal rights; they want to be treated like everyone else. But that talk will end once they get in power²⁷. Genesis 19 shows us, that fact. When homos dominate, they will persecute and oppress with cruel viciousness, those who differ with them morally. Communism is the same way. As an example, in China during World War II, the communist insisted on being included in the government. Finally, they were allowed official recognition. Everyone alive today (1994) knows what happened after that. Communism soon took over; and when it did, toleration ceased to exist for non-communist. Protesters for freedom, for other forms of

26 Totalitarianism def A form of government in which the ruler is an absolute dictator (not restricted by a constitution, laws or opposition etc.) , ... The principle of complete and unrestricted power in government.

27 Baker wrote in 1994, today queers and homos are in power, and all tolerance of "Christianity" has blatantly ended. In case you have missed it LGBT does not stand for Liberty, Guns, Bibles and Trump!

government were machine-gunned down and run over by tanks! Hitler also gained power through the toleration of the Nazis by other political parties in Germany. But when the Nazis got power, they bloodied the opposition into near extinction.²⁸

Tyre and Sidon were centers of such Baal worshipping evil, but God says, Chorazin, you should have repented when you saw the Messiah, the Christ, the only begotten Son of God, ... as should we.

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name (John.20:30-31).

It was enlightening and sobering to visit Chorazin. The archaeology digs were ongoing, but the site was superbly accessible; the synagogue was truly amazing, and on this Sunday, we had the whole place to ourselves. After a relaxing visit we made our way to the tour bus. Costia our driver was waiting with open doors and a contagious smile. We had a lunch engagement with Peter's Fish, but first a stop at the more popular archaeological site of a synagogue at Caperaum, "The Town of Jesus."

28 Butler, John G., "*Elijah The Prophet of Confrontation*", LBC Publications, 1994, pg 25, 19-30.



#2306 Sun 19 Mar Capernaum, Peters Fish, Jordan Baptism

It is not surprising that Capernaum is called “The City of Jesus”, he spent more time here, and it gets more mention in the Bible than any other town of Galilee. Here he begins his teaching ministry with his disciples: Matthew 4:13 Mark 1:21, John 2:12.

Mt 4:13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:

Mr 1:21 And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught.

Joh 2:12 After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days.

Here Jesus marveled at a centurion's great faith: Matthew 8:5–7, 10.

Mt 8:5 And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, 6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. 7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. ... 10 When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

Hear people were astonished at his doctrine, and unclean spirits identified him as the Christ: Mrk.1:22 – 24.

Mr 1:22 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes. 23 ¶ And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, 24

Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

Here he was “In the House” and they broke up the roof to get their friend healed of his palsy: Mark.2:1–3.

Mr 2:1 And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house. 2 And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them. 3 And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

Here is where he did the miracles that made Nazareth take notice: Luke 4:23.

Lu 4:23 And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.

Here he talked with power on sabbath days: Luke.4:31-32, 7:1.

Lu 4:31 And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days. 32 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.

Lu 7:1 Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.

Here, being “in the House”, he settle disputes about who would be greatest in the kingdom: Mark.9:33-35.

Mr 9:33 And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? 34 But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest. 35 And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.

Here, a certain noble man's son was healed by Jesus' remote command: Jhn.4:46.

Joh 4:46 So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.

Here they landed their ship after Jesus walked on water: John 6:17.

Joh 6:17 And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. ... Joh 6:24 When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.

Here he did so many wondrous works that Sodom would have repented, had they seen them: Mat.11:23, Luke.10:15.

Mt 11:23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

Lu 10:15 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell.

Here he sent Peter fishing for the fish with a piece of money in his mouth: Mt.17:24.

Mt 17:24 And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?

Here he gave the challenging teaching “I am the Bread of Life”:
Jn.6:59-60,66-68.

Joh 6:59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. 60 ¶ Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? ... 66 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. 67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? 68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.



Here we stood 1,993 years later!

Capernaum is from the Hebrew, *kaphar* = village, *nachuwim* = comfort, i.e. Village of Comfort. Today it is a quaint show town with ample tour bus parking, beautiful gardens, and walkways that lead to each archaeological wonder, as well as little alcoves where groups can meet and talk about, ... “The City of Jesus.”

Eli was exuberant as he gathered us around the sign that announced this visit to “The City of Jesus.” Capernaum was not mentioned in the Old Testament it was only a simple fishing village through those years, likely growing in size until it became the most talked about town in Galilee when Jesus walked there. Much of the archaeology we see here is from from the fourth century, when caravans of traders and travelers passed through Capernaum and its Via Maris route that connected Damascus in the north, to Egypt in the south. But the first century Capernaum was likely home for 1,500 people and we have found many of the buildings which were built from the black basalt rock of the first century. It contrasts sharply with the white ashlar stones (large square cut stones) used in the fourth century reconstruction.

Eli surveyed the crowd for a moment then announced, “Let’s first pay a visit to Saint Peter’s house.” The rain began again, but it was just a very light mist as Eli gathered us at a supporting beam under a large octagonal Catholic Church.

There was not a dated placard that said, “Saint Peter slept here!” But it was pretty close to that. Over 26 years ago in one of the earliest BAR (Biblical Archaeology Review) documented discoveries, Italian excavators, working in Capernaum, uncovered a mundane simple dwelling deduced to be a first century home. Remarkably it was found under the ruins of an octagonal Byzantine Martrium Church (a church or shrine built over the tomb or home of a Christian martyr).

As excavations continued, it was discovered that the simple home with a few small rooms clustered around an open courtyard, changed functionally into a communal meeting area with plastered floors, plastered walls, and plastered ceilings. Pottery findings also

changed from household cooking pots and bowls to larger storage pots and oil lamps. The simple residence had transformed into a gathering place for the earliest Christian gatherings. The rooms old stone walls were buttressed by a new two-story arch that supported a new stone roof. Also graffiti on the walls in multiple languages, said “Lord Jesus help” and “Christ have mercy”. This simple first century home was transformed into a church that survived for more than 300 years before it was replaced in the fifth century by a well built octagonal martrium church, whose inner sanctum was built directly over the very place called Peter's house, which was transformed into the central hall of the earlier church.

Most of us are quite satisfied that that substantiated the placard “Peter slept here”, and that is witnessed by Matt.8:14–17 to authenticate that Jesus slept here.

14 And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever. 15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them. 16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: 17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses (Mat.8:14-17).

As Eli lead us from Peter's house to Capernaum's synagogue, the rain let up, and so did the crowds in the synagogue.

Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. 17 And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. 18 And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him. 19 And when he had gone a little further thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also

were in the ship mending their nets. 20 And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him. 21 And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught (Mrk.1:16-21).

Eli held his book so we could see the layout of the town and the synagogue in the artist conception of the stark foundations that now lay excavated before us. He flipped the page and showed us the perceived layout of the synagogue. We wandered through looking at the placement of the columns, the benches, and the “bema”²⁹ (the podium or platform from which of the Torah and Prophets were read). In the Galilean type synagogue, the Torah shrine would be constructed in the wall closest to Jerusalem. The Basilica construction here put an extra emphasis on a Jerusalem orientation by incorporating an apse (a domed, vaulted recess) on the wall, facing Jerusalem, and an entrance, atrium, and narthex, or waiting room, on the opposite side. Thus the elements in the front of the synagogue are the *aron ha-kodesh*, or the holy ark or niche containing the Torah scrolls, the “*amund*” or prayer desk facing the ark, and the “*bema*” or reading desk, from where the Torah scroll is read.

Jesus was here in this very synagogue when he gave the controversial teaching “I am the bread of life” of John 6.

Since I just used “synagogue” seven times in as many sentences, I am reminded of an excellent point elaborated by F. W. Grant in his 1834 book “The Prophetic History of the Church”

The "synagogue" is the Jewish word for their gathering, as the Christian word everywhere used is "assembly." ... If I speak of the "assembly," of course it could not possibly be confounded with walls, with bricks and mortar; yet that is one notorious abuse of the word "church."

29 Oxford Dictionary, s.v. “Bema”, historically the *bema* is the platform from which of the orators spoke in ancient Athens, particularly where the Olympic awards were judged, consequently, the judgment where “every man’s work shall be made manifest” of 1Corinthians 3:12–15, is called by many the bema seat judgment.

Then, again, if I speak of the Christian assembly as it is in Scripture, i. e., the "assembly which is Christ's body," I cannot think of anything else than the gathering of all His members. ...

Now, let us mark, there is a difference between the Jewish and the Christian words. The word for the New Testament assembly, "ecclesia," is derived from two words meaning "called out." It is not merely a gathering; it is a gathering of people who are distinctly "called out" from others. On the other hand, "synagogue" is a mere "gathering together." It is no gathering out; and this very precisely distinguishes the Jewish from the Christian gathering. ...

The rest of his chapter, and the whole book is available and recommended reading via our website³⁰, take full advantage.

We left Capernaum to rendezvous with Peters-Fish for lunch. It was a whole cooked Tilapia with its eyeball present and staring at the approaching fork. It took effort to get meat out of all the bone, brain, and tail, but it was well worth the effort. The Sea of Galilee supports native fish Tristramella Sacra (long jaw), and Tristramella Simohis (short jaw) Tilapia. Hundreds of thousands of Tilapia (Saint Peter's fish, same genus different species³¹) are released into the sea of Galilee to replenish stocks hit by drought, and over fishing. The sea's fresh water sources, the Jordan, the Dan, and the Hasbani Rivers, replenish the sea, but drought and extensive use of the water for domestic and agricultural use have drawn down the sea's levels, and its fish population extensively. Those who had

30 www.GSBaptistChurch.com/theology/grant_prophetic_history_church.pdf

31 Remember there are seven classifications of living things, Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Family, Genus, Species with a memory mnemonic Ken Plays Chess On Fridays Getting Suspended. But wait there is more, there are seven classifications of visible light, Red, orange, yellow, Green, Blue, indigo, violet, RoyGBiv for an effective memory mnemonic. The capitals, RGB are the trinity of primary colors, ingredients in all visible light. God made our eye and molecules of earth's atmosphere more sensitive to Blue so for us, the sky resonates in it. Purple, is made of infrared and ultraviolet; it is majestic because it contains the beginning and the ending of the visible color spectrum, kind like the Alpha and Omega of the Greek alphabet. Scarlet hangs out at the far edge of visible light, just before it slips into the infrared and becomes invisible to the human eye. Blue, purple, and scarlet are the colors in God's Tabernacle, he did that on purpose. Learn more via the authors upcoming book "God Tabernacles with Men" coming to an internet near you.

“Peters-Fish” for lunch, found it disappearing faster than we could measure its jaw length. It was a delightful lunch.

After lunch we assembled at the Jordan River Baptismal Site. There are two tourist sites used for baptisms in the Jordan River, one called “Betheny Beyond The Jordan” near Jericho, and this site near the Sea of Galilee. Matthew 3 clarifies that, “*In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,*” and there, in his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins, is where he was baptizing those who came to him from Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan. “*Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him*” (vr.13). So, Jesus was likely baptized nearer to Jericho than up here near the sea, but the Betheny site is a muddy little trickle of water today, and this one is more pristine. The Betheny site is also nearer to the Mount of Temptation³² area.

Baptismal in the Jordan River is a full blown tourist attraction and displays just about every error about baptism, and none of its Biblical truths. A genuine convert to Christ is to follow the Lord in public believers baptism, and then regularly be present at the Lord's table to publicly observe communion. These are two ordinances of the local church. They are not sacraments, there is no magical or mystical aspect to these ordinances. Baptism by immersion is a convert's initial public admission, before God and everybody, that they are born–again, blood–bought, justified and redeemed to God through Christ, converts. And the Lord’s table observance that

32 The Mount of Temptation is believed to be the mountain in the Judean Desert where Jesus was tempted by the devil for 40 days and 40 nights. The mountain is approximately 1,200 feet high in a location 11km North West of the West Bank town of Jericho. Entry to the top of the mountain is via a 1300m long cable car ride which takes visitors over the top of the remains of the old city of Jericho, where the walls came tumbling down. Recent archaeological digs have uncovered the remains of the ancient city proving the Biblical narrative to be true, yet again! At the top of the mountain is the Greek Orthodox Monastery (Monastery of the Temptation) which can be accessed by a stone stairway built into the mountainside. The Panoramic view is breathtaking from the top of the mountain – but not a ride for the faint hearted. From <https://holy-land-tours.com/mount-of-temptation/> accessed 6/9/2023

Baptists call communion, is a public testimony declaring, I am still in perfect communion with my Lord and Savior, and in sweet communion with these believers, in this local church. Both baptism and communion are ordinances administered by the local Bible believing church. These are basic Bible doctrines. By them Baptists are named, and for them no little Baptist blood has been spilled. Consequently, many of us are passionate about guarding their authenticity and practice within the local, autonomous, independent, Biblical, New Testament church. Understandably so.

When hordes of “Christian's” rush to the Jordan river to get baptized in “holy water” and gather some of it in a carry home bottle, a Baptist, who knows about the convictions of a Baptist, will be concerned about all the false teaching that is on display at the Jordan River Baptismal site.

Baptist were once called anti-baptists, and re-baptizers, by those who were burning us at the stake for our Bible beliefs. Baptist have always held to believers baptism with no pedobaptism³³, no infant baptism, no baby baptisms, no “christenings”. Consequently, the Holy Bible Believing Baptists have always been at odds, with all Roman Catholic or Orthodox; all Episcopalians, higher or lower, all Protestants, Presbyterian Calvinists, or Methodist Wesleyans, and all Pentecostals, Charismatic holiness or not.

Further, Baptist and New Testament Bible believing churches have never been denominational, i.e. no one church, or leader, usurps authority over any group or association of churches. Each church is a local, independent, and autonomous body of believers. Further Baptists do not divide congregations into Clergy and Laity, Pastors are male, are not Clergy, and do not wear black dresses. Such Baptist distinctives are found in the Holy Bible, and Baptists have the Holy Bible as their sole authority. Any church contending with these Baptist truths would do us a service by taking “Baptist” off of their church signs.

33 Pedobaptism is the practice of baptizing infants or young children; infant baptism is also called christening by some “faith traditions”; still today Wikipedia supposes most Christians belong to denominations that practice infant baptism.

So, bless his righteous heart, Pastor Lee Pickett tried to squeeze all of that into a “short” baptismal message as he baptized our friend Scott Wood with a genuine believers baptism. The more the crowd grew the more time it took to get all of that Bible detail in, and the more Scott’s knees turned blue, ... and the more the talupia nibbled on his toes.

I think Brother Lee covered everything about a Baptist's baptismal, then repeated it all every time the crowd doubled. That brought about three solid explanations of what believers baptism was all about. Praise the Lord.

As we mingled in the site's foyer and gift shop area, Pastor Pickett and Eli were discussing a possibility of visiting a diamond cutting demonstration, but after a very full schedule they decided to relax our pace a little and go from the Jordan River Baptismal Site back to supper at the Lake House Hotel in Tiberias. Here is a short write up of what we missed at the National Diamonds and Jewelry Co.

The ND&J National Diamonds and Jewelry Co a well-known and respected member of the Israel Diamond Exchange in Ramat Gan that specializes in manufacturing diamonds and precious stone jewelry, brings you the experience of visiting and buying from the largest diamond exchange in the world, right here in our luxurious showroom in Tiberias. In our showroom, you'll find thousands of models of diamonds and colored stones at the highest level of quality in the world and at the lowest "dealer to dealer" wholesale prices. From www.visit-tiberias.com

accessed 6/7/23

After the Baptismal service, Pastor Dewy Stewart met with Missionary Steven and Shari Khoury, old friends of his. It was a joy to meet them and they had a wealth of knowledge about ministry in Israel. Pastor Stewart went to dinner with them, but promised we would have more time with them on the morrow.

Our buffet supper at the hotel was delightful, we were exhausted and tomorrow we had a 0700 “wheels up” and a full day's agenda in upper Galilee.



#2307 Mon 20 Mar Hazor, Tel-Dan, Canaanite Gate

On Monday, 20 March, I woke before the sun came out of his chamber as a bride groom, before it rejoice to run its race. This was to be our third sunrise in Israel, and I sat in the dark to contemplate and recall all that went on in our Sunday race with the sun.



Pastor Pickett had conspired with Eli, our guide, to arrange that Costea, our bus driver, would be the very first one to guide a tour bus into the parking lot of the Hazor Archaeological Site; wheels up was scheduled for 0700 (technically buses don't have "wheels up"; that is an Air Force cliché, but many people get it).

As the sun engaged it's race, Bev and I wander down to breakfast, at the beautiful Lake House Hotel on the Sea of Galilee. We engaged with an amazing kosher buffet breakfast with Abe and Anna, and Sue, newfound Canadian friends, sharing the excitement of waking up in God's promised land of Israel. We anticipated the day together.

Pastor Pickett had assembled a little booklet called "Bible Berean Israel Tour, 2023". It gave a map of each day, a place to jot notes,

and a description of the day's events. It called March 20th Day 5, which only worked out if Day 1 was entirely spent in the Newark, New Jersey airport. The map showed Hazor, Tel-Dan, Caesary Philippi, Mount Bendel (valley of tears), and Kursi. There was then two pages of description which said:

We begin our day with breakfast and fellowship and then on the bus for another day of our tour. Today we are headed for the Northern end of Israel to visit five major sites that you see on your map.

1. Our first stop is at one of Solomon's horse chariot cities. There are three of these in Israel; Hazor in the north, Meggido in the center, and Gezzer in the south. 1Kings.9:10-15.

2. Second stop is a nice short hike to Tel-Dan and the Golden Calf Temple built by Jeroboam, in his attempt to replace God's worship in Jerusalem. We will also visit the oldest mud brick gate in the world. 1Kings.22:25-23. (Read also Judges.18 - How Apostasy Begins). What do we take away today?

3. Our third stop is at a place of true hope for us all. Only 3 miles from Dan, is Caesarea Philippi. Here Peter made his great confession. Here Jesus announced the church that was to come. Matthew.16:13-19. What do we take away today?

4. Our next stop is at Mount Bental to view into Syria, and also the modern history of this great nation Israel. Here at the Valley of Tears, God wrought a miracle in October 1973, as just 12 Israeli tanks stopped hundreds and saved the life of the nation. Jeremiah.31:6-12, Isaiah.43:4-7. What do we take away today?

5. Our last stop of the day is at Kursi. Here Jesus Christ saved the demon possessed man. Luke.8:26-39.

As we end the day, let us all be thankful for the great love, that *Jeshua Hamashiach*, Jesus Christ, has for all people, both Jew and Gentile alike.

We end our day with our hearts filled with thoughts and now sit down for a peaceful meal together in fellowship.

Let us all be sure to mingle with those who you have just met. The fellowship of a small group is part of this wonderful experience.³⁴

With umbrellas in hand, we greeted Eli and Costia right on time for our scheduled “wheels up”, and as the bus pulled out of the hotel parking lot, Pastor Henry Penner opened his Bible and we began our day's adventure with a Bible devotion and prayer. An excellent start to any day.

As we rambled up around the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee (actually tour buses don't ramble, every move, they make is with purpose and direction) Eli, our passionate guide, announced, ... On the right hand side you can see Magdala, the city of Mary Magdalene. Magdala has a brand new archaeological site opened, because six months ago, while doing road construction, they discovered a second synagogue that was in Magdala. A town with two synagogues is a very rare thing. (a town with two Baptist Churches is a very common thing; it's been said, “Baptist fight like alley cats, but then, too, they reproduce like alley cats as well.”) The excavators are working there today, and on your next trip to Israel you may want to visit Magdala.

Eli continued, ... we are heading into the Golan, which is a 690 square mile piece of property where southern borders of Syria and Lebanon meet the northern border of Israel. The Golan Heights is the Rocky plateau that was captured by Israel in the 1967 six day war. (angry Arabs still consider it to be Syrian territory held by Israel under military occupation; the majority of the UN agree, so does the worlds news media, and in 2009, even a president of the USA, Barack Hussein Obama, addressing an Arab-spring in Egypt, called Israel “the occupiers of Palestinian land.” No president before or since has had the audacity to do that.) This northern border area of Gods promised land has been war torn since the tribe of Manasseh settled the area in the 15th century BC. In fact “Golan” in Hebrew <01474> means both “their captivity” and

34 “Bible Berean Israel Tour 2023” by Pastor Lee Pickett & Mrs Donna Pickett, March 16-30 2023, Day 5

“their rejoicing”³⁵ With that as our backdrop we are stopping now at one of Solomon’s four fortress cities the northern one called Hazor.³⁶

Just before we get to Hazor, in our attempt to visit every שירותים (*sherutim* (literally “services”) (what you all call a bathroom or restroom) in Israel we will stop at the beautiful Hula Nature Reserve. The Hula Nature Reserve was the first nature reserve to be created in Israel and was designed to preserve the flora and fauna (plants and animals) of the Hula Lake. Hula is a marsh area where birds stop-over on their migrations from Europe to Africa and then again on their return flights, the valley, as a whole, offers bird spotting, endless hikes and walks, bike trails, and beautiful nature to be observed. “Our purposeful stop here will only be for a few minutes, so don't wander off.”

It was raining pretty steady when we entered Tel-Hazor. The archaeological site was large, encompassing 200 acres, and containing artifacts back to Canaanite occupation. Our interest was the six chambered gate, identical in size and design to Solomon's gates at Megiddo and Gazer. The Hazor site included an impressive 130 foot shaft, reaching deep into the tel, accessing the water table below, tripartite pillard buildings (*tripartite* = involving three elements) to store food and house the royal cavalry, and four room pillared houses with a central court, and three side rooms.

We found a covered alcove, as well as a short, heaven sent, respite from the latter rains (the March - April spring rains that mature the crops of Israel), and opened our Bible to 1Kings, and 2Corinthians.

Solomon built some impressive, stronghold cities to protect his homeland of Israel. We have seen the construct of tremendous gates that control who gets in. Solomon was cognizant and wise about the

35 Strong Exhaustive Concordance reference “Golan <01474> of Bashan”
Deut.4:43, Josh.20:8, 21:27, 1Chron.6:71

36 Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo, & Gezer, were Solomon's four fortress cities
1Kings.9:15 *And this is the reason of the levy which king Solomon raised; for to build the house of the LORD, and his own house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer..*

physical security of God's promised land, but Solomon, the wisest man on earth, (God said so) was foolish about tearing down Satan's strongholds and building his spiritual stronghold cities. The Bible says 1Kings.11:1-6:

But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; 2 Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. 3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. 4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. 5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. 6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father (1Kings.11:1-6).

Praise the Lord, God knows us, and our genuine weakness for the same tendencies to build, physical strongholds, and neglect the spiritual dangers all around us. So he addresses this several times in our New Testament. *“Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God: how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past, finding out“* (Romans.11:33).

Of course, the best detailed reference to a spiritual stronghold may be the whole armor of God rehearsed in Ephesians chapter 6, but my personal favorite deals with tearing down Satan's strongholds, as found in 2Cor.10:3-6.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the

flesh: 4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) *5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;* *6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.* (2Cor.10:3–6).

Some things to note in this text are found in a “Taking Back A Stronghold” workbook I have used in my ministry for years. It deals with addictions that get a foothold in a Christian's life, it would have been helpful to Solomon and contains these Five Elements of a Victorious Walk, with verses we should memorize and meditate on:

1. **Genuine Repentance** (Psalm 51). Do you see sin as an affront to a holy God or just have remorse over the consequences? *“Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.”*

2. **Taking back ground** (Eph 4:27). Ground is given by sinful acts. This gives Satan legal jurisdiction in our lives. *“Neither give place to the devil.”*

3. **Tearing down strongholds** (2Cor 10:3-5). These are false belief systems that provide the enemy an area to bring destructive attacks. (See verses above). An important part of tearing down strongholds is found in verse 6, *“And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.”* How does one revenge disobedience? “For every hour I spend in this disobedience, I will spend two in Bible reading and prayer obedience.” or “For every act of this disobedience I will talk to ten people, give them a gospel tract, and tell them what God did for me.” When you start seriously revenging all disobedience, Satan will give you a much

wider berth.

4. **Build towers of truth** (John.8:32). These towers are a belief system based on the truth of God's Word. *“And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.”*

5. **Taking every thought captive** (Phil 4:8). This is God's standard for right thinking. If you do not take your thoughts captive, they will captivate you. *“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”*

Right now each of us could identify, name and claim a “My besetting Sin!” (In the workbook there is a place to write it down!) Depending on our sin there are a myriad of Bible Verses that touch it, they should be memorized, and regularly rehearsed until the stronghold is broken. An applicable verse for most of our addictions is:

My Stronghold Verse:1Cor.6:19-20 *“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”*

Solomon, with all his physical stronghold constructions, was not careful about tearing out Satan's spiritual strongholds and building up God's Spiritual strongholds. Be wiser than Solomon in that arena.

The lite rain was getting, ... less-lite as we headed toward the bus. Our stop at Tel-Dan was just up the road a half hour.

Tel³⁷-Dan is an important site for Biblical archaeology. It is situated at the base of Mount Hermon on the headwaters of the Jordan River, at the northernmost tip of Israel. Being right close to

37 Remember that “tel” is Arabic for a mound and represents a mound of civilizations, one built on top of another. If you own a Bible, there are no “prehistoric” civilizations.

the borders of both Lebanon and Syria, at the headwaters of the Jordan River, Pastor Lee Pickett and Eli, our guide, were noticeably excited to be here and they kept our spirits high despite the need of umbrella and rain coat.

Our stroll through the Tel-Dan Nature Reserve would have combined exploration of remarkable archaeological sites, the exquisite natural habitat areas, and bubbling streams of the Jordan headwaters. The luxurious foliage along the streams would not hide the several aqueducts that carried water off to flour mills and fields of a millennia ago. Although the incessant rain prevented most of our Tel-Dan experience, Pastor Pickett made sure we got a good Bible look at the place. Here is some of my “take-away.”

The first mention of Dan is found in Genesis 14:14, *"And when Abram heard that his brother (his Nephew Lot) was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three-hundred and eighteen, and pursued them into Dan."* Some have speculated wildly why this northern point in the Promised Land was called Dan five-hundred years before the tribe of Dan ever headed up there³⁸. (1913 BC of Genesis 14, to 1406 BC of Judges 18 = 507 years). I have a good answer for that, "Just because!" Any number of etymology reasons could be explored in Hebrew, Canaanite, and Syrian. Rachel called her “first born” Dan (actually born from her handmaid Bilhah). In Hebrew Dan means “a judge”. In folklore it was "judged" that three rivers should unite and make the headwaters for the Jor-Dan river. Jordan can be shown to mean, waters that come from Dan, come from a judge, or come from judgment. Any of a number of explanations could suffice for Abram referencing this place as Dan, and I like my answer of “Just because”, or better still, “Just because the Bible says so.”

Our real interest in the beautiful Tel-Dan Nature Preserve begins when the Tribe of Dan invaded the Canaanite occupied area in 1406 BC. Pastor Pickett gave a review of the background of this invasion. It occurred at the close of the book of Judges when civil and

38 Modernist, ecumenical “scholars”, apostates and infidels contend that God did not write Genesis, they suppose man wrote it and it is not trustworthy.

religious confusion was gaining the upper hand. The record of Joshua, who divided the land out by lots has this “post it note” attached in Joshua 19:47, “*And the coasts of the children of Dan went out to little for them: therefore the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and possessed it, and dwelt therein, and called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father.*” The Bible then adds more detail to this rogue departure of Dan and adds Judges 1:34, “*And the Amorite forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley.*” Then Judges 18 has all the detail of Dan's departure from their inheritance, and their sojourn across the map to a land in the northern end of the promised land.

As they went through Ephraim they stole some idolatry, a crooked priest, his ephod, teraphim (*teraphim* <08655> AV image, or idol), and graven image, and off they went to capture Laish from the Zidonians (i.e. Sidonians of Sidon). It seems Dan experienced civil confusion, religious confusion, and inheritance confusion. Curiously, Dan is the only tribe left out when God seals 12,000 from each tribe in Revelation 7:4 - 8. (Ephraim, the other scalawag that hosted Jeroboam's golden calf, is not listed in Rev.7 either, but is therein called the tribe of Joseph).

The tribe of Dan, who abandoned their inheritance, and their God, is now steeped in idolatry, and when Jeroboam is possessed to set up false gods to drive his ten northern tribes from following the LORD and make them sin a great sin³⁹ (cf 2Kings 17:20-23), Dan fits his bill. Jeroboam didn't want Israel going south to worship in Jerusalem.

20 And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and

39 No less than twenty times the Bible calls out this sin of Jeroboam who made Israel to sin! OnlineBible.net User List: # 1Ki 13:34 14:16 15:30,34 16:2,19,26,31 21:22 22:52, # 2Ki 3:3 10:29,31 13:2,6,11 14:24 15:9,18,24,28 17:21,22 23:15. I have each highlighted via brown colored pencil in my Scofield Bible in order to emphasize the long chain of sinfulness created by one scalawag!

afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight. 21 For he rent Israel from the house of David; and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king: and Jeroboam drave Israel from following the LORD, and made them sin a great sin. 22 For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them; 23 Until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day (2Kings 17:20-23) .

Due to the present rain, the mud, and the slippery trails we were unable to visit the actual site of the altar were we might stand on the very plot of ground where such vile, national, idolatry took place, but Pastor Pickett taught well the evils of idolatry that took place here, and how it can easily take place in our lives, in our homes, and in our nation. Rather than hike through the beautiful, albeit very wet Tel-Dan Nature Preserve, Costia with the King-Long tour bus shuttled us to the oldest mud-brick gate in the world.

The Canaanite Gate, found on the backside of the Tel-Dan nature preserve is over 3,492 years old (Remember Moses was at Mount Sinai in 1492 BC, a memorable date, and we are over 2,000 years into *Anno Domini*, Year of our Lord). It has three arches made of mud-brick and is thus the oldest gate ever found. The archaeological work done on the Canaanite city of Laish afforded a glimpse into the culture of the heathens that God wanted utterly destroyed from his land; Deut.7:1 lists them, *“When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, **the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; ...**”* (It is possible that these in Laish were Sidonians instead of Canaanites). There are good but copyright Bible maps that indicate where these seven nations previously dwelt in God's Promised Land, and where Dan's original inheritance fell out by lot.

When the Lord God was giving his law, commandments, testimonies, and statutes to Israel he often cited “*for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you*” (Leviticus 18:24, cf 28, Deut.9:4-5, 12:30*, 1King.14:24)⁴⁰. It was amazing that they discovered and excavated so much of Laish, the city that the Tribe of Dan destroyed. It was disturbing that the Tribe of Dan was so quickly moved into such vile idolatry. I have heard it said by the ignorant and agnostic, “If I could see God, then I would believe!” Israel did see God, they were there when *mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly*” (Exod.19:18). And yet the Bible records repeatedly how swiftly they fell into unbelief, and dove head first into idolatry. Since the fall of man, man is just bent toward sin, that natural bend is called our “iniquity”.

The Bible records that the verdict is already in about your keeping the law, “*As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one*” (Rom.3:10-12). There is no *law* or works one can do to get out of the condemnation of sin. Which is exactly why every human needs to be personally and individually *saved!* Saved from the condemnation

40 *Le 18:24, 28 Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: ... 28 That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you. De 9:4 ... but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee. 5 Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 12:30 Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. 1Kngs.14:24 And there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.*

attached to sin. *“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God”* (John.3:17-18).

Christ took my condemnation, he took my place, ... *“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Rom.5:8). If you are reading this and are not saved from that condemnation, you can be right now; the Bible says, *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ... 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”* (Rom.10:9-10,13). Call on him today, call on us tomorrow; www.GSBaptistChurch.com.

The bus was loading up, our next stop was to be Caesarea Philippi and we were eager to get there and explore the very place where Jesus said, “Upon this rock, I will build my church.”



#2308 Mon 20 Mar Caesarea Philippi, Golan Mt Bental, Olive Factory

One thing about visiting Israel just before their Passover is you learn what the Bible means about the “latter rains” (One might logically think former rains are spring rains, latter rains are autumn rains, but they would be exactly backward in that logic). I suppose Eli our guide was the only one that remained appreciative of the ongoing latter rains we were seeing; Eli lived here and would see the next six months of Israel's semi-arid⁴¹ climate pass without a drop of rain. God regularly used these two rainy seasons to communicate to his people. Jeremiah the prophet gave them one of God's clarifying rainy forecasts:

*Fear ye not me? saith the LORD: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it? ²³ But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone. ²⁴ Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the LORD our God, **that giveth rain, both the former and the latter**, in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest. ²⁵ Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you (Jer.5:22-25).*

41 The northern part of Israel is characterized by a Mediterranean climate, while the southern part is arid, with a narrow, semi-arid strip in between. Israel's climate is characterized by hot summers and mild winters. Rainfall varies significantly across the country and from year to year. This insight was carefully gleaned from the lying deceiving climatechangeology portal called "Climatology - Climate Change Knowledge Portal World Bank" <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org>. From a more reliable source: Israel has a wide variety of climatic conditions, caused mainly by the country's diverse topography. There are two distinct seasons: a cool, rainy winter (October–April) and a dry, hot summer (May–September). From Climate of Israel - Britannica <https://www.britannica.com>

And also:*Hos. 6:3 Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the **latter** and **former** rain unto the earth.*

And again: *Joel.2:23 Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the **former** rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the **former** rain, and the **latter** rain in the first month.*



For our present circumstance God's latter rains were hindering our tour of Caesarea Philippi, even as they dampened our visit to Tel-Dan. “*In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you*” of 1Th.5:18 came to mind, but I did not have the wherewithal to say it out loud just now. We stood under umbrellas staring at the huge cliff face and cave entrance located in the Herman Stream Nature Reserve and called “Ein-Panias” meaning the city of Pan, the god of the wild and companion of the nymphs. In Bible times it was called Caesarea Philippi and

Jesus came into the “coasts” of Caesarea Philippi, indicating he came to the “edge” of the city and did not necessarily enter into the Roman city.

As we stared through the rain at the sight, our guide Eli clarified that Jews were not allowed to enter the Roman city dedicated to the false god Pan. He talked of the Pan-Flute legend wherein a beautiful nymph spurned the devil god Pan's advances and prayed to the river gods who transformed her into “Syrinx” meaning reeds. Folklore supposed the devil god played reed flutes the rest of his life. But that is innocent folklore compared to what went on here at the mouth of this spring at the base of Mount Herman, only 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee. This cave was thought to be a gateway to the underworld; the spring from its mouth was thought to be bottomless, and here every kind of pagan, devilish sacrifice imaginable was made as a propitiation to appease the gods that controlled the Greek and Roman mind. Children, and goats were thrown into this bottomless spring to sink to their death and appease the devil's gods. The cliffs all around the cave's mouth were riddled with “sacred niches” cut into the stone to hold every kind of graven image, teraphim, and idol that pagan, heathen, unregenerate minds could conceive. Here the pagans burnt incense. Here they filled this cave with the blood of innocents.

As God sent Judah into the Babylonian captivity, Jeremiah the prophet, in 605 BC, was sent to report that Israel was not guiltless of this type of paganism:

Hear ye the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle. ⁴ Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents; ⁵ They have built also the high places of Baal,

to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind:(Jer.19:3-5).

We were at the base of Mount Hermon and looking into a cave mouth that was the largest spring feeding the Jordan River. The cold waters of this spring, flowing out of the cave, has been a hot-bed for pagan worship of false gods. In the Old Testament of the Bible it was called Baalherman (Judges 3:3, 1Chron.5:23) and Baalgad (Joshua 11:17, 12:7, 13:5), but it was later named Pnias after the Greek god Pan. That's Pan with a "P". An open air sanctuary was built for Pan next to the cave.

Augustus Caesar gave this city to Herod the Great, who built a marble temple to Augustus. When Herod the Great died, in 4 BC, the city passed to his son Philip the Tetrarch, who rebuilt the city and changed the name to Caesarea Philippi. Philip made it his capital, and ruled the area until 33 AD. He depicted the Shrine of Pan on his coins, some of which have survived to this day.

Caesarea Philippi is called by several names today: Banias and Pnias are the most common, and it turns out that Banias is just an Arab's pronunciation of Pnias, Arabs have no "P" sound in their alphabet. Eli was fluent in giving a wealth of background about what we saw as we came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi. He alluded to every aspect of the paganism found at this bubbling spring and headwaters to the Jordan River. As the rains subsided Pastor Lee Pickett took the whisper microphone and highlighted how important this stop, in the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, was to understanding what Jesus said to his disciples at this very place.

Mat.16:13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

Mrk.8:27 And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am?

If we open our Bible to Matthew 16, we can see the Biblical significance of why we were here today. Jesus came to the “coast of Caesarea Philippi”, he did not enter the city, ... probably stood right here where we were meeting. With the backdrop of this massive rock, pouring out its water, and all the pagan idolatry and false god worship present in the background, Jesus asked his disciples, “*Whom do men say that I the son of man am?*” Then he asked “*But whom say ye that I am?*” It was Simon Peter that answered and said, “*Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.*”

As non-Roman Bible believers, as non-catholic Bible believers, it is important to rightly divide the word of Truth in Jesus' paramount statement in verse 18. “*And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter (<4074> Petros, stone) and upon this rock (<4073> petra, rock, cliff or ledge) I will build my church ...*”. A good paraphrase is, “Peter, you're just a little stone, but on this rock, i.e. the truth that I am the Christ, the son of the living God, ... I will build my *ecclesia*, i.e. a called-out gathered together body of believers.”

But wait there's more: I can well picture the most pragmatic teacher to ever walk on earth as he gave a full 3 second pause, then swung his arm across all the pagan worship going on behind him and said slowly and emphatically, “*and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*”⁴²

Standing in this spot, viewing that huge rock and hearing these Bible truths expounded has an impact on the mind that will not soon go away. It was good to be here in the coast of Caesarea Philippi. We had to forego the paths up to the caves mouth, and those around the pagan god's “sacred niches” because they were glistening with fresh rain and very slippery. The bus was loading, and we were presently right on time for our Druze lunch stop. Who the Druze were, and what all they believed was covered succinctly in half shekel 2303. This lunch was a timely pleasant stop and a good deal,

42 Some have speculated that this water springing cave was called “The Gates of Hell”, previous to Jesus's arrival here, but there is no such evidence. It would seem much more likely, to this Baptist preacher, that God labeled it such in his son's declaration, and that the label stuck around after that.

I think, ... \$16.

Mount Bental is one of Israel's favorite peaks to visit because of its panoramic views of the Golan, even seeing all the way to Syria. Pastor Lee's booklet "Bible Berean Israel Tour" says, "Our next stop is Mt Bental to view into Syria and also the modern history of this great nation Israel. Here, at the Valley of Tears, God wrought a miracle in October, 1973 as just twelve Israeli tanks stopped hundreds, and saved the life of the nation. (Jer.31:6-12, Isa.43:4-7)"

For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God. 7 For thus saith the LORD; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O LORD, save thy people, the remnant of Israel. 8 Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither. 9 They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. 10 Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. 11 For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he. 12 Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the LORD, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all (Jer.31:6-12).

Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give

men for thee, and people for thy life. 5 Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; 6 I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; 7 Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him (Isa.43:4-7).

During the Yom Kippur War in 1973, one of Israel's largest tank battles took place at the foot of Mt. Bental. The fierce battle earned the area below Mount Bental the name Valley of Tears. In 1974 a demilitarized zone was established between Syria and Israel and monitored by the UN.

This Golan region has a long and important history previous to the Yom Kippur War of 1973.

*Jos 21:27 And unto the children of Gershon, of the families of the Levites, out of the other half tribe of Manasseh they gave **Golan** in Bashan with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer;*

Golan of Bashan was a bordertown and subjected to “captivity,” as the name means in Hebrew. Ben Haddad of Damascus was defeated by King Ahab here, and it has been a war-torn area ever since. Eli was passionate as he described for us how from 1948 - 1967 Syria controled the Golan Heights, and used it as a military stronghold to randomly snipe at Israeli civilians in the Hula Valley below, forcing children to sleep in bomb shelters. In late 1966 a youth was killed by a landmine while playing football near the Lebanon border. Syria allowed Yasser Arafat's Fatah to carry out such attacks.

During the 1967 Six Day War, on June 9th Israel moved against Syrian forces on the Golan. By late afternoon on June 10th, Israel was in complete control of the Golan plateau. In the wide margin of

my Bible, I have written:

In 1948 Israel was founded as a nation. The armistice gave them the wailing wall, now they were recognized as a nation. In 1956 after continual Arab attacks on its border, Israel overruns the Gaza strip and would advance all the way to Egypt, if not stopped by the action of the major powers. In 1967 Egyptian Nasser, armed to the teeth by Russia, and urged ahead by them, declares total Arab war against Israel. Israel's June 6th preemptive strike totally eliminates the Egyptian Air Force. Israel takes Jerusalem, their Holy of Holies, vowing never to retreat again (1948 only gave access to the Wailing Wall, now they had all of Jerusalem). They swept to the Jordan River valley, Jordan armies were cut to bits. They advanced against Syria and Egypt, taking the Golan heights, Syria's strong post. In six short days Jordan demanded a ceasefire (against Russian advice). Thus in six days Israel increased her territory from 8,000 to 34,000 square miles, with 1,000 Israeli fatalities, and 35,000 Arab fatalities!

Six years later, in a surprise attack on Yom Kippur, the Syrians overran the Golan Heights, before being driven back by the Israelis. Syria signed an agreement that left the Golan in Israel's hands. Peace processes faltered, and Syria renewed threats and made troop movements, but Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated on April 17th, 2016, that Israel will never give up the Golan Heights. "It's time that the international community finally recognized that the Golan will remain forever under Israel's sovereignty."

Eli filled in more details of the Yom Kippur war. The six day war had made Israel a little arrogant, and in 1973, on Yom Kippur, October 6th, 14,000 Syrian, Egyptian and some Iraqi forces overran the IDF with 1,260 Syrian T-62/64 tanks (vs 170 antiquated WWII Israeli tanks). Avigdor Kahalani, commander of the Israeli tank battalion of the 7th Brigade, and war hero of the Six Day War where

he was burned over 80% of his body, advanced the slogan, “Never Surrender!” Defense Minister Moshe Dayan (with his black eye patch) said to Golda Meir, “Golda, we have only a few tanks, should we use nukes?” Golda responded, “No, we will fight to the last bullet.” After four days, 1,260 T-62/64 tanks retreated before 170 Israeli tanks. “The lessons learned in the Yom Kippur War of 1973 are, 1) Never be arrogant, 2) Have faith, and 3) Practice, practice, practice.”

Today Israel has built thriving communities for Arabs, Druzes, Alawites⁴³, and Jews in the Golan, but Syria has never signed a peace agreement with Israel. Visiting Mount Bental is a moving experience for any Israeli x-military, and any Israeli citizen is an Israeli x-military. In that Eli talked about it to visitors a couple times a month, he was especially impassioned during this visit. It rubbed off on all of us.

We never got to Kursi National Park ...Kursi is an archaeological site in the Golan Heights containing the ruins of a Byzantine monastery and identified by tradition as the site of Jesus' "Miracle of the Swine". Part of the archaeological site is now an Israeli national park. Instead we went to the Olive Factory.

What an interesting place; the tree in the entryway was 800 years old? and the wheel press 2000 years old? A short movie explained the uses and byproducts of the olive oil, as well as some very interesting things to learn about olive oil. The Talmon family moved from Tel Aviv in 1997 and began growing olive trees on their farm. They developed some “carved in stone” values of family, respect, honor, innovation, reliability, responsibility, and sustainability. And voila, here we are today.

There are some interesting things to be learned about olives. The difference between a green olive, and a black olive is a couple weeks on the olive tree. Black olives are ripened. Also, there is no such thing as “extra” virgin olive oil, even as there is no such thing as an “extra” virgin maiden. When olives are crushed it is critical

43 Oxford Dictionary, s.v. “alawites” a member of a Shiite Muslim group living mainly in Syria.

that the pits are not crushed. They contain toxins that leach into the olive oil when pits are crushed. The first crushing, with no crushed pits, produces virgin olive oil. The second crushing, with some pits possibly crushed, produces just olive oil, and the third and fourth crushing, with substantial pit crushing, produces oil lamp grade olive oil, fit for burning. That brings us to the toxins in the pits, and the aged question, “What does one do with the tons of pits produced?” Turns out, the pits, that naturally fall under the olive tree, prevent other plants from growing there; and can, consequentially, be marketed as a kind of “all natural” weed killer. But wait there is more, the olive pit toxins are also kind of an “all natural” hand cleaner, found later to be a superb, and healthy skin cleaner, and later still, an effective beauty cream. Turns out, all these olive pit uses are as lucrative as the virgin olive oil produced to begin with.

We were walked through the family run factory and then sampled olive oils, spices and beauty products. The face and body scrub soaps made skin feel remarkably soft, and I don't think anybody made it through the outlet store with their wallet remained in their pocket / purse. What a marvelous experience. Learn even more via <https://oleaessence.com/our-story/>.

Before supper Dave and Joe took a challenging hike to “Throne” at the top of the hill overlooking the hotel. They found the ruins of a byzantine era church and fort at the top of the mountain. They also got some spectacular photos.

What a superb day in Israel. What a superb supper at the Lake House Hotel on the Sea of Galilee, with two dozen friends.

Tomorrow, 21 March 2023 we visit Cana (Sepphoris), Nazareth Village, Nazareth Precipice, Gideon's Spring, and Beit Shean on our way to the Prima Kings Hotel, Jerusalem. Pack your bags n load m in the bus, it leaves at 0730.



#2309 Tue 21 Mar Cana of Galilee, Sepphoris, & The Precipice

On Tuesday, March 21st Bev and I were up at 05:30. Most of our packing was done last night, so after reading Joshua 8 and 9, and Psalms 81, on the 81st day of the year, we had our bags in the lobby of the Lake House Hotel, Sea of Galilee, at 0630. The trick of spending 14 days on an Israel tour with only one small check bag and one carry-on, without smelling funny on Day 14, had to do with washing laundry in hotel sinks and drying clothes on hotel shower curtain rods. On Day 6 we were as fresh and happy as we were on Day One.



We had a delightful breakfast with Jim and Cherie, and Golda; what an adventure we're having, and there was nothing but heightened expectations for this day. We were to head out toward Jerusalem today, and the little booklet from Pastor Pickett promised a great deal on this Tuesday.

Day 6 we Begin our day with breakfast and then check out of our rooms as we will be in the City Of God tonight,

in Jerusalem. Be sure to have all your things packed and clear out your safe and please have your bags at the appointed place on time. After a short devotion on the bus we are off.

1. Our first stop will be in Cana or Sepphoris depending on schedule issues. Cana is where Jesus performed his first miracle in turning the water into wine. Both Nazareth and Cana were just small towns around Sepphoris. Sepphoris is not mentioned in the Bible. Today we will be asking WHY? I think this is vital to understanding the Word of God. John 2:1-11 (Cana), 1st Corinthians 1:25-28 (Sepphoris), Deuteronomy 7:6-8 (God's heart), What do we take away?

2. Our next stop is Nazareth Village, a First century living history village located in modern Nazareth. Isaiah 61:1-3, and Luke 4:14-20, What do we take away from here?

3. Our next stop will be at a place called The Precipice which overlooks the valley of Armageddon. This is a traditional site of the attempt to throw Jesus from a cliff. Luke 4:20-30, What is our takeaway?

4. Next stop is the Harod Spring. This is the actual site of Gideon's selection of 300 to destroy the Midianites, the Amalekites, and the children of the east. (Remember old, ancient, and new), Judges 7:1-8, Take away?

5. Next stop Beit Shean. Site of the hanging of King Saul's body on the city wall. Also the largest Archaeological dig in Israel. This is also the large Roman city of the Decapolis. 1Samuel 31:8-13.

6. Up to Jerusalem!! Next stop the Capital of Israel. The Capital of God's universe. The City of The Great King. As the Israelites of old did, we are going to read the Psalm of Ascent as we ascend up to Jerusalem. There are 15 of these that were read worshipfully or quoted from memory as the Jewish people would ascend to Jerusalem on the feast days. They are also called the Psalms of Degrees, and the Pilgrim Psalms. The Psalms of Ascent are Psalms 120-134.

Psalm 120 The Lord is salvation and peace.
Psalm 121 The Lord is help and security.
Psalm 122 Joy in the house of the Lord.
Psalm 123 The Lord brings Mercy from above.
Psalm 124 The Lord brings hope.
Psalm 125 The Lord preserves his people.
Psalm 126 Sowing in tears reaping in joy.
Psalm 127 Life without the Lord is vain.
Psalm 128 The fear of the Lord is walking in his ways.
Psalm 129 The Lord is righteous power.
Psalm 130 The Lord gives hope in his Word!
Psalm 131 It is good to be humble.
Psalm 132 The Lord dwells with those who prepare themselves.
Psalm 133 The Lord loves unity in his people.
Psalm 134 Worship brings Joy to the Lord.

WELCOME TO JERUSALEM!! Let us all worship and give thanks to God! The God of all mankind! The God who loves his Nation Israel, and loves all peoples of the earth.

We now check into the Prima Kings Hotel and enjoy a pleasant meal together. *Laila Tov*.

It was a blessing to have a short devotional each day when we first boarded the bus. Today Deacon Dave Johnson shared some Scriptures, and some thoughts about the birds he heard singing this morning; they would have been the same songs they sung to Jesus two-thousand years ago. Dave opened our day of touring with a prayer of thanksgiving. Our driver Costia guided our King-Long 12M Coach, 49 seat tour bus through Tiberius and onto Route 77 West, and Eli, our Israeli guide, welcomed our day, teaching us a Hebrew response to, “How are you?” מַה שְׁלוֹמְךָ , which would be, “Good, thank you”, טוב, תודה . Eli carefully sounded out each word and had us repeat it several times. Journal readers can do that by using the Hebrew Alphabet pronunciations shown below, and remembering that the letters are read from right to left. Good luck with that; let me know how you make out.

א	Aleph	silent	מ	Mem	<i>m as in mother</i>
ב	Bet	<i>b as in boy</i>	נ	Nun	<i>n as in now</i>
ג	Gimel	<i>g as in God</i>	ס	Samek	<i>s as in sin</i>
ד	Dalet	<i>d as in day</i>	ע	Ayin	silent
ה	He	<i>h as in hay</i>	פ	Pe	<i>p as in pastor</i>
ו	Waw	<i>w as in way</i>	צ	Tsade	<i>ts as in boots</i>
ז	Zayin	<i>z as in Zion</i>	ק	Qof	<i>k as in king</i>
ח	Ôet	<i>ch as in Bach</i>	ר	Resh	<i>r as in run</i>
ט	Tet	<i>t as in toy</i>	ש	Sin	<i>s as in sin</i>
י	Yod	<i>y as in yes</i>	שׁ	Shin	<i>sh as in ship</i>
כ	Kaf	<i>k as in king</i>	ת	Taw	<i>t as in toy</i>
ל	Lamed	<i>l as in lion</i>			

Rain forecasts and scheduling challenges required that we pass by Cana of Galilee and Sepphoris on our way to the Precipice overlooking Nazareth. As we got glimpses of Mount Tabor and then the location of Sepphoris out of the bus window, Pastor Pickett clarified some issues about the ancient city that awakened a passion in him. Sepphoris was the thriving Roman administrative center for the Galilee region. It was only 4 miles from Nazareth, and it was receiving a lot of attention due to the new archaeological sites at Tzippori National Park. Touring promotions, along with modernist ecumenical “scholars” were blatantly supposing that Jesus, as a child, must have visited this Roman city often. These imagined visits were nowhere to be found in the Bible, in fact, they would be very contrary to the Bible.

Even though Herod was building Sepphoris into the “Ornament of all Galilee”, even though the powers of Hell convinced him to make his administrative capital of Galilee in this Roman city, right next to Nazareth, where Jesus was growing up, and despite the fact that forces afoot wanted to compromise Jesus's upbringing with seditions not in evidence, the Bible is clear, true, and accurate, that Jesus was sinless. As a youth Jesus was “*found in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them*”

questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers” (Luk.2:46-47).

In the Holy Bible Jesus was not in Zippori, or Tzippori, or Sopporis, but after he was found in the temple he went down with his parents to Nazareth, and was subject unto them (2:51), “*And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man*” (2:52). Further, the first miracle he did was in Cana of Galilee, the Bible says so. Don’t let the world, the flesh, or the devil besmirch the youth of our Lord Jesus Christ with stories about what was going on near Nazareth (or with Roman catholic stories about show off miracles done as a teenager!). Thank you Pastor Pickett for being clear, Biblical, and blunt about this rumor mill astir in Zippori, the city changed to Sepphoris, by the evil king Herod. The Bible is clear about the Hebrews, God's chosen:

Thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. 7 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: 8 But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt (Deut.7:6-8).

The Bible is clear about Herod and his tomfoolery:

Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: 27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things

of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence (1Cor.1:25-29).

Costia pulled the bus into the parking lot at the Precipice that overlooked Nazareth. Eli was ecstatic as he pointed out the many familiar Bible locations that one could see from this location, but somber as he pointed out the rising Arab Muslim population in Nazareth and they're persecuting controls on the Arab Christian population. Nazareth was a tiny "one-horse" town in Jesus' day, but a thriving modern metropolis today. Under Christian dominance it became the MIT equivalent in Israel, filled with the elite and educated, the engineers and technology moguls. Presently the large influx of Arab Muslim population has so harassed and beset Christians that their influence and presence has dropped from 150,000 to 70,000, leaving a dire forecast for Nazareth's future.

We gathered in an alcove that exposed the great height and overlook the city, and Pastor Diedrich Peters opened our Bibles to Luke chapter 4. Verse 16 reports, "*And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.*" Don't miss that, in the town where Jesus grew up, his custom was to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and to stand up for to read. When he did so on this day,

There was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 *And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.* (Luk.4:17-20).

If we “give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine” (1Tim.4:13), we cannot miss that Jesus abruptly stopped his reading just before the prophet announced “*the day of vengeance of our God.*” Jesus then went on to proclaim himself the Messiah, and note what happened when he did that: “*And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, 29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong*”(Luk.4:28-29).

“It was on a precipice, the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, very similar to this one, where a miracle of deliverance occurred.” Pastor Peters peered over the steep fall of the precipice that held us as he recited the next verse, “*But he passing through the midst of them, went his way and came down to Capernaum.*”

Awesome, awesome: the things we could see from this precipice. As Costia guided the tour bus down the steep winding roadway towards Nazareth, Pastor Lee explained, after a particularly breathtaking view of Mount Tabor, that it was more likely not the Mount of Transfiguration. Both Matthew 17 and Mark 9 report that Jesus led them (Peter, James, and John) “*up into an high mountain apart by themselves.*” Mount Tabor contained two prominent idolatrous worship areas, which would not afford a place where they could be by themselves for this miraculous event. The more likely place of the transfiguration is over on Mount *Scribbleslashscribble* ... as Costia broke hard and swerved to miss an incompetent driver, my pencil slid across my journal notepad and to this day I cannot make out what Lee said from what I actually wrote here. (After Lee reads this I will get back to you.)

Nazareth village is a quaint little area on the backside of Nazareth. I found it spellbinding. That's our next stop.

Page Fill (let no page be totally blank) A 2009 Fruits of 1st Israel Pilgrimage Penny Pulpit

Msg #907 The Peace of Jerusalem

What The Bible Says

Good Sam's Penny Pulpit by Pastor Ed Rice

The Bible exhorts us to *“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions’ sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good.”* (Psalm 122) As I viewed it from atop Mount Carmel last week the Promised Land dwarfed to a proper dimension while God's chosen people loomed into a proper perspective. Overlooking the lush green Jezreel Valley, Nazareth, Caesarea and Megiddo it was clear that God still loves Israel with a mighty love. Christians love what God loves, but unregenerate depraved man and his religions hate what God most loves. Man made religions are diabolical in their hatred and massacre of Jews. Today, Islam is open about its annihilation goals for Judaism and Israel. In 1492 as God cracked open a door for Christians to escape persecutions in Europe, God threw open the doors for Jews to enter their homeland and escape Catholicism's sword in Spain. In the 40s even America turned back boat loads of God's Chosen People attempting to escape the diabolical slaughter of Jews in Europe. A Christian standing on the Promised Land of the Bible, will more love what God loves, the people to whom this land was promised. In 10 days I learned clearly that every time a Jew sinks his plow in that ground the earth brings forth her increase, and every time an archaeologist sinks his shovel into that ground, Bible truths are found exactly accurate and profoundly pertinent. *“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. ... Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good.”*

Pastor Ed Rice, Good Samaritan Baptist Church, Dresden NY

300 Words for Week #907, Feb 15 2009

Sign up for weekly Penny Pulpits at www.GSBaptistChurch.com



#23010 Tue 21 Mar at Nazareth Village
Nazareth, as called out in the Book of Matthew,
gives a good perspective for our next visit:

Mt 2:23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

Mt 4:13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:

Mt 21:11 And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

Mt 26:71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.



Right on schedule at 0930 Tuesday, Costia pulled our tour bus into the parking lot of Nazareth Village (32°42'02.94"N 35°17'29.06"E). Nazareth Village was a “Living-Museum of Jesus' Time” and we had already heard some things about the village from Steven and Shari Khoury, the Missionary friends of Pastor Dewy Stewart. Shari worked at the village and spoke very highly of it; she was disappointed that she would not be working while we visited. With little other introduction we stepped back in time a couple thousand years into a small rural village called Nazareth.

The website of Nazareth Village gives this background of the living museum:

Set on the outskirts of old Nazareth, the Nazareth Village is built on ancient agricultural land that boasts the area's last remaining first-century wine press. The original farm has been restored with its ancient wine press, terraces, irrigation system and stone quarry, and exact replicas of first-century houses, a synagogue, a watchtower, mikveh and olive presses have been carefully constructed using the original building methods and materials.

Together, these elements form the Nazareth Village, an authentic first-century farm and archaeologically accurate re-creation of the hometown of Jesus with real ties to the life and time of His friends, family and fellow Nazarenes.

Pilgrims to the Holy Land typically only see the dead stones of ancient ruins, but the geographical and cultural nuances of Jesus' teaching are often crucial to understanding their full meaning. At Nazareth Village, Bible scenes are brought to life by “villagers” who populate the farm and houses, living and working with the same type of clothing, pottery, tools and methods that Mary and Jesus would have used. Gifted and knowledgeable guides lead visitors through a living representation of the parables of Jesus within their original context before offering the opportunity to seal the experience with an authentic Biblical meal.

As part of the Nazareth Trust, which runs the nearby Nazareth Hospital, Nazareth Village is a not-for-profit

organisation that covers most operations through entrance fees and gift shop sales. However, it welcomes contributions to cover programmes for children, Biblical and archaeology courses, and especially the ongoing preservation and development of the Nazareth Village site.⁴⁴

Our village tour guide met us in the entry way of the village. She was not dressed in the full apparel of the day but explained that others would be, and would speak in first person of “their village.” The village center was all about both its wine press and its olive press. The name *Nazareth* is a derivative from the Hebrew word *Netzer* found in the Bible, appropriately, in Isaiah 11:1 “*And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch <05342> shall grow out of his roots.*” (Strong's Hebrew Lexicon gives <05342> נֶצֶר netser [nay'-tser], translated in AV *branch* 4 of 4 times, and meaning “sprout, shoot, branch”, always used figuratively.)

As we headed out toward the wine press on the rocky side of a hill we walked through some of the agricultural areas of Nazareth. The olive trees had a unique backdrop as you could see the modern Nazareth over some of the garden wall. Just the same, this park, with its unique and ancient garden area was far removed from modern. It displayed well what Nazareth might have looked like when Jesus walked its streets, ... they were not so much streets as they were well trodden paths. We passed a small shepherds cave, and the shepherd greeted us and told of his day and his business in town. Mrs. Shepherd came over, pointed out her favorite goat and told what a conniver he was as he leaned into her to get his head itched a little.

As we made our way up the grade a little further there was a cave like sepulcher with a rounded stone to guard its entry way. We all peered inside, it was, of course empty. We then came to what we were told was the ancient wine press. Fortunate that we were told; I don't think any of us would have made out the little basin in the rock

44 From <https://www.nazarethvillage.com/about/> , accessed 09/07/2023

where the grapes would have been crushed (with bare feet like in the “I Love Lucy” episode we were all familiar with; turns out the bare foot does not crush the grape seed, and crushed grape seeds make the wine bitter), nor would we have picked out the little channel that carried the juice down the hill to an awaiting bottling area. So that was what an ancient wine press looked like. Whoda thunk.

What an insightful tour this was turning out to be. There was all of this quiet, historic, picturesque garden area right beside the bustling modern city of Nazareth. As we pressed on through the expanse of the park we passed several farmers working in their gardens. Each greeted us with Hebrew greetings that we were just getting proficient at recognizing and responding to. (Thanks to the efforts of Tour Guide Eli). Their crops were just being planted and tended to, and they had “crop circles”⁴⁵ positioned to capture the latter rains of this March April time frame.

We came through the vineyards, of course there were no wires

45 You see what I did there; “Crop Circles” as known by many were hoaxes popularized in the last century by man's propensity to believe in UFOs and ET visitations. In our perilous times (2Tim.3:1-7) of these last days (Gen.49:1, Isa.2:2) that propensity will be further exploited by hoaxers and shysters, even those in our own government! Crop Circles were first mentioned in the 17th century when weather patterns in England knocked down wheat crops in odd patterns. This is still seen today, but in the 1970s when two drunk lads, Bower and Chorley said “Let’s go over there and make it look like a flying saucer has landed”, they attracted a flurry of self-appointed experts wielding mystical and magical pseudo-scientific research, conspiracy theories, and aliens that visited our planet. Voila, the patterns stamped in fields were treated as the activity of earth energies, ancient spirits, the anguish of Mother Earth in the face of impending ecological doom, and evidence of secret weapons testing and, of course, aliens. Otherwise intelligent beings supposed they were messages, buried in complex numerological codes, concerning a Great Change connected to the pre-Columbian Mayan calendar due to occur in 2012. People lie, effectively, very effectively. Hoaxes grow enormously, even astronomically. In 2023 progressive liberals trying to overthrow capitalism and install socialism are well entrenched in society and government; they and their woke moguls are hoaxing, lying, rigging elections, and significantly succeeding. The rapture will be in post-perilous times just as the Bible says.

holding up acres and acres of grape vines as seen around Seneca lake where I pastor; it was curious to see how they used sticks and stones to hold up their grape vines. It quite reminded me of a Hebrew song that I was never able to set to music. God wrote it 2,800 years ago and had Isaiah his prophet write it down for him.

Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard.

My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill:

And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof,

*and planted it with the choicest vine,
and built a tower in the midst of it,
and also made a winepress therein:*

*and he looked that it should bring forth grapes,
and it brought forth wild grapes.*

Isaiah 5:1-2

God goes on to explain the meaning and purpose of his song:

And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. ⁴ What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? ⁵ And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: ⁶ And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. ⁷ For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is

the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

Isaiah 5:3-7

God goes on in this chapter to pronounce six “Woe”s against Israel, and Isaiah himself adds a seventh woe in the next; “*Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts*” (Isa.6:5).

This song, and that seventh woe, might make one examine themselves and ask God's question, “*What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?*” The saved and unsaved alike could reflect here on what all God has done for them in their life. Done so that you, individually, as his pleasant plant, might bring forth righteousness. Don't produce “wild grapes” with your life, and face his judgment. We can be free of all condemnation and living daily in his righteousness:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ... 36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. ... 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life (John.3:16-18,36,5:24).

The first century olive pressing process described here was most impressive. Pastor Pickett had given us a John 15 “*Bring forth much fruit*” devotion back in the vineyard and now he put his *hand to the plough*, as it were, and showed us how the stone wheel press worked. There are many interesting things to be learned about pressing olives, and I journaled some of them back at the Olive Factory in Half Shekel #2308 on page 65 and 66 of this book. Here at Nazareth Village we saw the ancient olive press that was used to press out the oil after the olives were crushed by the donkey driven rolling stone (It was conventionally donkey driven, today Pastor Pickett was only a stand in for the noble beast).

Before us was an exotic 1st century construction of a variable pressure press which immediately caught my engineering eye. Our guide gave a good synopsis of the olive pressing process. The olive pulp taken from the rolling stone press would be put into pockets of the pressing baskets, ten or fifteen baskets were then stacked one on another inside of the press. There was a hole in the rock under the baskets that would capture the oil as it was squeezed out. As the pressing begins the stone weights are cantilevered onto the baskets until, with a series of pulleys and leverage, the full weight of all the stones press every ounce of oil from the pulp.

Each group of baskets is pressed three times, the first time you apply pressure you get the best quality oil. By God's law for the Hebrews the first fruits are to be offered to God, so the oil olive from this first pressing is taken to the temple to be used there. In the second pressing you get good oil olive which they used as food, medicine, perfumes, and cosmetics. By the time they got to the third pressing, however, the quality of the oil was getting pretty bad, and they would use it for oil lamps and making soap.

Our guide continued. The olive press has a very strong connection with Gethsemane, which literally means “press of oils”. Consequently the olive press gives a very good illustration of the pressure on our Lord Jesus Christ as he was praying in Gethsemane. In that garden he prayed three times, just as olives were pressed in

three pressings and in that time, *“Being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground”* (Lu 22:44). As Isaiah 53 puts it, *“⁴ Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”*

Let us never forget what we saw here today, and let us never forget what our Lord Jesus Christ did for us on that old rugged cross.

At Nazareth Village we next went down to the potter's house. I cannot capture in this journal all that was reviewed there. Let it be said that as their potter spun a work on the wheel he spoke of several Bible applications and focused on Jeremiah 18 which begins, *“¹ The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, ² Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.”*

We all peered into the window of a 1st century house as we made our way to the carpenter shop. I had already journaled about the wood working plane called the A.S.P. in Half Shekel #2302 on page 12 of this book (with a picture of one on page 15), but here in the Nazareth Village carpenter shop they had several 1st century wood working tools, and several were in use as we watched. When I was a kid the best my imagination could conjure up for a first century carpenter was somewhere between framing up a house or building a table and chair. Horizon's broadened significantly when I watched a carpenter use a spokeshave wood handle draw knife to form and construct a four foot diameter wagon wheel. And more again each year we visited the state fair carpenter shop to see demonstrations of 18th century woodworking wonders built with an axe, an adze, an A.S.P., a socket chisel, a firmer chisel and ripping chisel, a block plane, smoothing plane, router plane and scrub plane, a gimlet, pit saw and whip saw. Wood planes are made of ... wood, so are tool handles, work benches, and wood clamps.

We could all hone our understanding of what went on in a 1st century carpenter's home, and there is a book for that, "Woodworking Tools 1600-1900" by Peter C. Welsh⁴⁶. Woodworking tools did not much change in time until the invention of the electric drill, and so just Welsh's Figure 3, picture included here (see fig3woodworkingtools.jpg), will help one better understand what Joseph, Jesus' stepfather, had in his woodworking arsenal. So did a short visit to Nazareth Village's carpenter's shop.

At Hanna the weaver's house in Nazareth Village we learned the 1st century skills involved in weaving wool clothes of Jesus' day. Annually for years Beverly and I went to the NY State Fair and for hours at a time hung around the crafts museum where women spun and wove wool, cotton, and linen clothes. Linen is made from flax, and there the intricate production of fine twined linen captured most of our attention. Much is made of it in the Bible, and to this day it can only be made by hand, flax not being conducive to manufacturing processes.

Here at the Village wool was sheared, washed and colored with all natural dyes made from onion skins, fig leaves, or the expensive spice saffron-crocus taken from the flower of the crocus plant. All kinds of natural foods, spices, barks and mosses are used to make dyes, and special "fixatives" were used to keep the dyes from fading. The Romans use of urine for their fixative brought a repulsive response, and it was implied that Hebrews drew the line there. Exotic blue, and purple, and scarlet dyes were mentioned for their challenge, they, and the fine twined linen I mentioned earlier, are specifically called out in the Old Testament tabernacle construction:

*Ex 26:1 Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of **fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet**: with cherubims of cunning work*

46 Welsh, Peter C., "Woodworking Tools 1600-1900", free from Gutenberg.org at <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/27238/27238-h/27238-h.htm>, accessed 9/14/2023.

shalt thou make them. ...

*31 And thou shalt make a vail of **blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work**: with cherubims shall it be made: ...*

*36 And thou shalt make an hanging for the door of the tent, of **blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen**, wrought with needlework.*

They mentioned that purple was the color of kings and majesty but they didn't explain the interesting, "Why?" Turns out that God created purple as a profound combination of infrared and ultraviolet, which is the beginning and ending of the visible color spectrum, kinda like an Alpha – Omega of color. God inhabits that combination in the Revelation of Jesus Christ:

*Re 1:8 I am **Alpha and Omega**, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*

*21:6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am **Alpha and Omega**, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.*

*22:13 I am **Alpha and Omega**, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.*

The other two colors of the tabernacle are equally intriguing. In God's careful design blue is the color of the sky, it robes the firmament which shows the handiwork of God, (Psalm 19). "Why is the sky blue?" is an interesting childhood question.⁴⁷ The firmament

⁴⁷ The sky is not blue because of the Tyndall effect discovered by John Tyndall in 1859, nor because of the Rayleigh effect defined by Lord Rayleigh only a few years later wherein he showed that blue light hitting molecules of air is scattered more than red light by a factor of 7/4 raised to the forth power. Nor is the sky blue because the human eye has three types of cones and one is the most sensitive to the blue wavelength of visible light, and less sensitive to the indigo and violet colors which approach the ultra violet invisible light. No,

created by God is only seen in the night sky because of that blue sky. Scarlet is the color parked at the very brink of the visible light spectrum, it is the color of blood, it is the color of life, and yet it is the color of death and scorn.

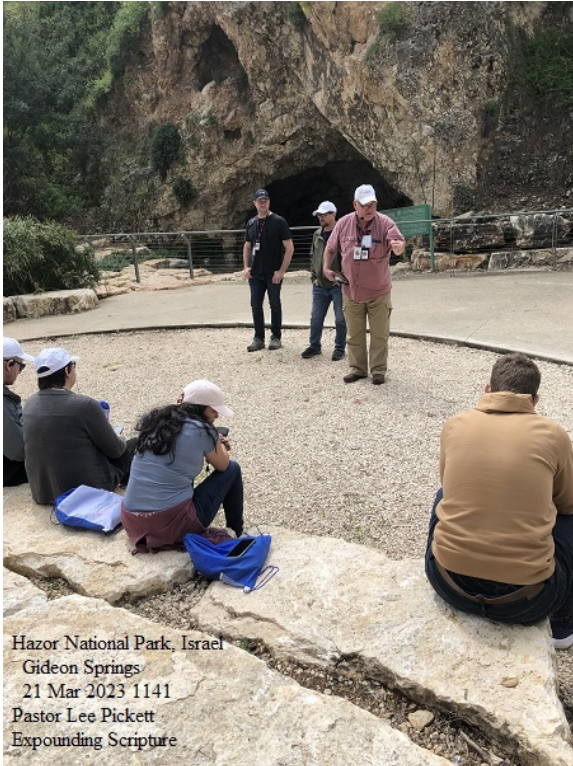
So, enough about exotic dyes, in the weavers house, Hanna showed us how dyed wool was spun into threads and woven on a loom to make cloth. We next sat in the replica synagogue of Nazareth and talked with a scribe about how Hebrew Scriptures were carefully copied and preserved for three thousand years. It was perfectly intriguing, as was our whole hour tour of Nazareth Village. We gathered on the King-Long Tour Bus talking of the wonder and adventure we had seen, and Costia our driver headed us south on a 40 minute drive toward Harod National Park. For it was there *“the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude (Jud.6:5)*, and we needed to meet with Gideon at a spring there.

the sky is blue because there is a God in heaven who designed and created the light spectrum with such perfect grandeur that when it strikes the molecules of air in his atmosphere design, the Red, orange, yellow and Green spectra light pierce right through while the blue spectrum is scattered by the molecules. Indeed scattered to such an extent that an effervescent blue glow seems to carpet the sky and produce a day time closed curtain to the heavens beyond.



#23011 Tue 21 Mar at Harod Spring, Bet Shean, Jerusalem

Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.



For me, standing on a plot of ground in Israel where my Lord and my God unfolded an account of his great love, great strength, and unmitigated involvement in the affairs of man, unfolded in me an unparalleled love for the scope and detail recorded in my authorized King James Bible. Jesus called out the accuracy of one *jot* or one *tittle* of the law in Hebrew, in the same vein, in English, I have

come to love even the KJB punctuation! (cf Matt.5:18). This unfolding was true for me on every road, every street, every plot of ground, yeah “every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon” in the land of Israel. Now we were, “*pitched beside the well of Herod*” in Israel's Herod National Park.

And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. 12 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour (Jud.6:11-12).

This “mighty man of valor”, who was threshing wheat and hiding from the Midianites, was peeking out of the wine press terrified of being caught. It shows us that God sees us for what we could be, and not for what we are. Gideon had God standing at his side, you and I, as Bible believing, born-again Christians, have him standing right inside of our being, and could expect, no should expect, “*greater works than these*” (John.14:12). Look for such miracles in your life.



Judges chapter 6 and 7 give the first ingredients of a pending miracle: 1) a troubling circumstance, 2) a humble servant, 3)

supplicating prayer, 4) an obedient heart, and 5) get up and go action. (Preached by Dr. Cisler in August just five months after Bev and I, Pastor Lee and Donna Pickett, and Pastor Jeff and Denise Carpenter stood at this place in 2009. Again Scripture comes more alive when one has stood on the very place that it took place, even when someone else is giving the five points and the poem.) Our guide Eli gave a good background for where we stood in Herod National Park. In his words we visualize *“the Midianites and the Amalekites, and all the children of the east ... in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude”* (Judges.6:5).

He gave an inside scoop on Gideon and his calling, and his 10 men who threw down the altar of Baal, and cut down the grove that was by it. Eli unleashed his Whisper mic and gave it to Pastor Lee who opened our Bibles to Judges chapter 7 and unleashed the account of Gideon's 300 men. He spoke of God's reducing the odds of victory, his ensuring that he would get all the glory, and his means of selecting who would go. He talked of the tactics that God used in the battle, of Gideon's fear and qualm being calmed when he snuck down and heard of the dream God sent into the Midian camp, and a battle fought against unprecedented odds. And he rejoiced in God's glorious victory.

There were opportunities for several of us to reenact using our hand to dip water from the spring. It was ennobling. It brought us back to a day and time when Israel faced both great physical battles and grand spiritual battles. It symbolized a desire and a resolve to be recruited into the physical and spiritual battles ongoing in our lives in 2023. We will be in battles where the odds will be overwhelmingly against us. *“We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places”* (Eph.6:12).

The story of Gideon and his battle against the Midianites is recorded here so that one will never forget that the Lord will fight their battles for them. We should keep Gideon and his 300 men close to our heart, as we live in perilous times. The pre-tribulation

rapture of the church will be post perilous times and there will be some battles to be won. They will only be won supernaturally, with a genuine surrender to our Lord.

On our way home from the July Northeast division summit I scratched out a 300 word essay that I found encouraging. It was aimed at preachers, but I think any believer might find it a blessing.

Msg #2332 Logistics, Locations, and Lights

What The Bible Says

Good Samaritan's Penny Pulpit by Pastor Ed Rice

The hand of God left Gideon camped beside the well of Harod with three hundred men and a host of logistic problems (Judg.7:1-6). While sending *all the rest of Israel every man unto his tent, and retaining those three hundred men* (vr.8), I would have used Amazon to order up three-hundred empty pitchers and cute little oil lamps; “Lets try for overnight delivery.” Truth is, the three hundred came with their own food and trumpets and Gideon scrounged up empty pitchers and lamps. Joe Shmo said, “Why did I get this grubby ugly water hauling pitcher, and Dr. Capable over there has that ornate, gold trimmed, up for show pitcher?” Gideon responds, “Never mind the type of empty pitcher you have, it is just an empty pitcher, and it is to be broken anyway!” Joe goes on with his lament, “Well, why do I have to stand up on the edge of this obscure steep hillside while I. M. Somebody gets to guard that roadway towards the main mountain pass?” Gideon responds, “Those grasshoppers need to be completely surrounded by light, never mind the empty pitcher type, never mind the obscure location you are at, just break your pitcher, hold up the Light, and sound off with your trumpet!”

Break your vessel where God puts you, hold up the Light where you are at, sound out on that trumpet that you have, blast it as long and as hard as you can, and let God do his perfect work. Obedience is the very best way, to show that you believe. I have often left a conference, come to our two story, 100 max occupancy brick school house, and felt a twinge of discouragement. Pastor Shirley's parting NE Vision

Summit message on Gideon, completely alleviated that tendency on 27 July.

An Essay for week #32 - Aug 6, 2023

As the tour bus lumbered out of the Harod Spring parking lot and Costia guided it onto Route 71 headed toward Beit She'an, Eli took the mic and passionately addressed the hushed crowd. "On your right you can see the HaGilboa Reserve containing mount Gilboa, where they found Saul and his three sons fallen."

1Sa 28:4 And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa.

1Sa 31:1 Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa.

1Sa 31:8 And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa.

Eli then went on, with now spellbound listeners, to describe how in grade school they memorized, in Hebrew, David's Lamentation Over Saul and Over Johnathan His Son. As he recited portions of the Hebrew lyrics the whole bus filled with the passion of the moment.

Holy Bible 2Samuel 1:17-27 English

- 17 *And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son:*
- 18 *(Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow: behold, it*

Holy Bible 2Sam.1:17-27

Hebrew

www.chabad.org/library/bible_cdo/aid/15861

יְזַיְקֶנּוּ דָּוִד אֶת־הַקִּינָה
הַזֹּאת עַל־שָׂאוֹל וְעַל־
יְהוֹנָתָן בְּנֵוֹ:
יְחַוֵּאֲמָר לְלִמַּד בְּנֵי־
יְהוּדָה קֶשֶׁת הַגֵּבָה

is written in the book of Jasher.)

19 The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen!

20 Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

21 Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil.

22 From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty.

23 Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.

24 Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.

25 How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places.

26 I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been

כתובה על־סֶפֶר הַיָּשָׁר
יִטְהַצְבִי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־
בְּמוֹתֶיךָ חִלָּל אֵיךְ נָפְלוּ
גִבּוֹרִים:

כֹּאֲל־תִּגְיִדוּ בְּגַת אֶל־
תִּבְשְׁרוּ בַחֹצֵת אֲשַׁקְלוֹן
פֶּן־תִּשְׂמַחְנָה בָּנוֹת
פְּלִשְׁתִּים פֶּן־תִּעְלֶזְנָה
בָּנוֹת הָעַרְלִים:

כֹּאֲהָרִי בְּגִלְבֹּעַ אֶל־טֹל
וְאֶל־מִטֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם וְשִׁדְי
תְּרוֹמַת כִּי שָׁם נִגְעַל
מִגֵּן גִּבּוֹרִים מִגֵּן שְׂאוֹל
בְּדֵלִי מִשִּׁיחַ בַּשֶּׁמֶן:

כְּבַמְדָם חֲלָלִים מִחֲלֵב
גִּבּוֹרִים קָשַׁת יְהוֹנָתָן לֹא
נִשְׁוֹג אַחֲזֹר וְחָרַב שְׂאוֹל
לֹא תִשׁוּב רִיקָם:

כַּגִּשְׂאוֹל וַיְהוֹנָתָן

הַנְּאֻהָבִים וְהַנְּעִימִם
בְּחַיֵּיהֶם וּבְמוֹתָם לֹא
נִפְרְדוּ מִנְּשָׁרִים קָלוּ:

מֵאֲרִיזֹת גִּבְרוּ

כְּדַבְּנוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־
שְׂאוֹל בְּכִינָה

הַמִּלְבָּשְׁכֶם שְׁנֵי עָם־
עַדְנִים הַמִּמְעֵלָה עַדִּי זָהָב
עַל לְבוּשְׁכֶן

כְּהָאֵיךְ נָפְלוּ גִבּוֹרִים
בְּתוֹךְ הַמִּלְחָמָה יְהוֹנָתָן
עַל־בְּמוֹתֶיךָ חִלָּל

כּוֹצֵר־לִי עֲלֶיךָ אַחִי
יְהוֹנָתָן נִעַמְתָּ לִּי מְאֹד

*unto me: thy love to me was wonderful,
 passing the love of women.
 27 How are the mighty fallen, and the
 weapons of war perished!*

נִפְלְאָתָה אֶהְבֶּתְךָ לִי
 מֵאַהֲבַת נָשִׁים:
 כַּזֵּיךְ נִפְלוּ גִבּוֹרִים
 וַיִּאֲבְדּוּ כְלֵי מִלְחָמָה:

We may not be able to hear Eli recite this lamentation in a recording, but there is a superb audio Hebrew Bible provided by Mechon Mamre (The Mamre Institute). One can hear 2Sam.1:1-27 read aloud in Hebrew at: <https://torahclass.com/audio-bible-in-hebrew/> (Select the chapter reference 2Sam.1 and press <PLAY>. Verse 17 begins at the 3:12 time-stamp.) Once you have learned the Hebrew alphabet (given in Half Shekel #2309 on page 69 of this journal) it is surprising how well you can follow in the Hebrew text as the narrator reads each verse with a slight pause between verses. Hebrew reads right-to-left. It is also pretty easy to follow the reading in English as one can recognize key words. Expand your horizons a little and try it. We will all be speaking man's original language, Noah's language, Hebrew, when we step into Glory. PTL This site has complete and accurate Hebrew voice recordings of every Old Testament book. They are not chanted with a melody (as in a formal synagogue service) but instead are clearly pronounced in Sephardic-style modern Hebrew so that by hearing, you may learn how to properly vocalize the words.

It was a 25 minute drive down route 71, past the hills of Gilboa, that got us to Beit She'an, Israel (32°30'03.8"N 35°30'01.87"E). Sadly, after the death of Saul and his three sons, this was the city that closes the book of 1Samuel:

- 8 ¶ *And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa.*
 9 *And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish it in the house of their idols, and among the people.*
 10 *And they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth: and they*

fastened his body to the wall of Bethshan (1Sam.31:7-10).

Curiously, God did not let the book end with such a bitter defeat. In the next sentence we find, “*And when the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul; 12 All the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Bethshan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there*” (31:11-12).

The valiant men of Jabeshgilead is what holds the Bible-wonder for visiting such a pagan city as Beit She'an. I had read the last chapter of Judges and knew the origins of these men of Jabesh. I had read 1Samuel chapter 11 and understood why these men now acted valiantly. As a young man I had penned the question in the margin of my Bible, “If the valiant men of Jabeshgilead would risk their lives in devotion to their dead king, what would I risk for my living King?” King Saul came from their blood and saved their right eye, my King gave his blood, and saved my whole soul.

The book of 1Samuel has one last verse:“*13 And they took their bones, and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.*” How many Christians today, do you suppose, have fasted seven days about anything? It makes one think.

Beit She'an is a major tourist attraction in Israel, not because it ghoulishly touches the Bible in Saul's death, but because it has the most extensive and best preserved archaeological ruins in the Middle East. We did not visit the actual city of Beit She'an, it was atop of the tel, overlooking Mount Gilboa at the meeting place of the Jordan and Harod Valleys. The 80 meters of tell, which we did not climb, contain 18 levels of occupation going back to the Canaanites. The excavations in Beit She'an proper would have showed us a great circular Byzantine era church replacing both the Canaanite and the Philistine temples. Instead we toured excavations in Sycthopolis, built at the base of Beit She'an. This Roman city flourished from the 4th century until the mid 8th century when an earthquake leveled it and prompted its complete abandonment. The

ruins depict a Decapolis city in the 8th century with nothing whatsoever to do with the 1st century.

Excavations in Scythopolis have uncovered: A three-tiered theatre for dramatic performances, seating 7000 people; An amphitheatre holding 6000, where gladiatorial contests entertained soldiers of the Sixth Legion which was based there; A huge bath and gym complex with swimming pools and halls heated by hot air from furnaces. Its public toilets had channels underneath with running water; A Roman basilica that served as a courthouse and administrative center; A nymphaeum, an elaborate monumental building with a decorative fountain; and A mosaic of Tyche, the Roman goddess of good fortune, wearing the walled city of Scythopolis as a crown and holding the horn of plenty in her hand. (A list from seetheholyland.net/beit-shean/)

Consequently the walk through “Beit She'an” gave a better view of the depravity of man on display during the demise of the Roman Empire, than any glimpse into the 1st century of Christ, or the 11th century BC of its Philistine control at the death of King Saul.

Before you knew it we were back on the bus, and waking from a short nap. Eli had the mic and was, with all his passion, saying, “Out to your left you can just make out Mount Nebo where God said to Moses, *“Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, unto mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession: And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people”* (Deu.32:49-50a).

Our next stop was Jerusalem.



#23012 Tue 21 Mar Ascending to Jerusalem

Our Israeli Tour Guide, Eli continued on the tour bus speaker, “Out to your right is Jericho, the oldest continually occupied city in the world, and the lowest altitude city in the world.”



In 1975 while posted at Griffiss Air Force Base, Rome NY, Bev and I had our name in the Rome paper when our middlest son was born, they did that back in the 1900s so all the door-to-door salesmen knew where to call next. So on our meager E2-pay we bought twenty-four volumes of Encyclopedia Britannica, with two volumes of World Almanac (and two more updated volumes promised in the next four years!). I recall my parents pitched in \$50 to prevent our financial collapse. Eli was a walking twenty-four volume Britannica, with four volumes of World Almanac (Bev and I only ever had two), and more, ... he had a couple volumes of Bible Encyclopedia. It always amazed me that some men had minds like that,.. others of us not so much, we just had short pencils.

Eli continued, “here by faith the walls of Jericho fell down, *after they were compassed about 7 days*” (Heb.11:30). Here Jesus met a wee little man in a sycamore tree. It was while departing from

Jericho that Jesus heard blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, cry out, “*Jesus thou son of David, have mercy on me*”, and Jesus responded, “*Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole*” (Mark 10). And in 1973, Jericho and all the West Bank of the Jordan River was given to the PLO, in the Oslo Accord officially labeled a “Palestinian Liberation Authority (PLA).”

In the five-year transition, areas A, B, and C, were created; area A with 18% of the West Bank under “PLA” control; area B with 22% of the West Bank under “Shared” control; and area C with 60% of the West Bank area remaining under Israeli Civil, and Israeli Security control. This arrangement was completely untenable until the Israeli Security Control constructed a very effective wall to stop the PLO suicide bombers. Today the West Bank Area C is separated by barricades and security fences, that the PLA and the liberal press call “The Apartheid Wall!” Eli bit his lip. He wanted to say more, and knew that this captive audience was 110% behind him, and eager for it.

I, for one, wanted that we pull the bus over at the West Bank security checkpoint and air out the whole ugly issue. I wanted it said out loud, shouted and not whispered, that the whole ugly liberal world and all of its media outlets blatantly and wrongfully called Jehovah God's chosen people, Israel, “Occupiers of Palestine!”. Wicked-Pedia and wicked presidents say, “the Israeli occupation of the West Bank began on 7 June 1967 when Israeli forces captured and occupied the territory then ruled by Jordan, during the Six Day war, and it continues to this present day.” It is brazen fabricated lie.

Barack Hussein Obama, in Egypt promoting an “Arab Spring⁴⁸”, was the first US president to call this “The Israeli occupation of Palestine!” I call our current president OBiden because Obama seems to be behind the scene pulling his senile strings of progressive liberal control. Control which is leading us down the Marxist path of complete chaos and overthrow. I don't much bite my

48 Arab Spring was a series of anti-government protests, uprisings, and armed rebellions that spread across much of the Arab world fueled by Muslim jihadists.

lip.

Leaving the West Bank checkpoint, Eli still biting his lip through a short pause, smiled and said, “We now begin our Ascent to Jerusalem.” Costia drove our King-Long tour bus directly into the sunset on Route 1, we were trying to make a Jerusalem overview before 1700. We were excited. Route 1 took us off Route 90 five miles below the very rugged all but impassible five mile canyon road that Jesus walked to Jerusalem. We did pass a sign for “The Good Samaritan Inn” up where our four-lane Route 1 met Jesus' one lane Jericho Road. I like to pick out the Inn of Jesus' parable whenever I go by. One could guess why. We watched out the windows as the rugged drab brown Judean wilderness wizzed by. We began a noticeable ascent when wilderness brown became spotted with a little green, and then still climbing, suddenly it burst into suburbs and populace.

As Jerusalem came into view in the bus windshield, at the urging of Pastor Pickett, I am sure, Eli recited the first of the Ascension Psalms in Hebrew. Pastor Lee recited it in English and gave some impassioned insights about all fifteen Psalms.

The Psalms of ascent sung by the Levitical priesthood as they ascended the fifteen steps to minister at the Temple in Jerusalem, became the Pilgrims Songs, sung by earnest pilgrims ascending up to Jerusalem. Three times in a year Israel was to pilgrimage to Jerusalem:

But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come: ... 16 Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty: 17 Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy

God which he hath given thee (Deut.12:5, 16:16-17).

We only had a short time at Jerusalem's very crowded City Overlook Park and we were back on the bus making our way to the Prima Kings Hotel for supper and rest. We were spending our first night in Jerusalem. It was euphoric.

When I was but a teen a Baptist preacher teaching on the Ascension Psalms assigned a "My or Thy" title to each of these fifteen Psalms. I dutifully jotted them down in my Scofield Study Bible, surprised that Scofield hadn't already included them. Every 15 years or so I would copy the titles to a new Old Scofield Bible, and at least twice a year, as I read through the Psalms and Proverbs annually, I took note of each of these Psalms' title as I read them. I copied them from my latest wide margin Scofield reference Bible below. It's funny, after 40 years of handcopy, this is the first time I've seen them in print.

Psalm	Ed's Title	Pastor Pickett's Israel Tour Booklet Title
	120 My Nature	The Lord is salvation and peace.
	121 My Walk	The Lord is help and security.
	122 My Worship	Joy in the house of the Lord.
	123 My Eyes	The Lord brings Mercy from above.
	124 My Fate	The Lord brings hope.
	125 My Future	The Lord preserves his people.
	126 My Captivity	Sowing in tears reaping in joy.
	127 My Home	Life without the Lord is vain. The fear of the Lord is walking in his
	128 My Fear	ways.
	129 My Affliction	The Lord is righteous power.
	130 My Cry	The Lord gives hope in his Word!
	131 My Haughtiness	It is good to be humble. The Lord dwells with those who
	132 Thy Servant David	prepare themselves.
	133 Thy Unity	The Lord loves unity in his people.
	134 Thy Sanctuary	Worship brings Joy to the Lord.

Also when I ran an online Biblical Hebrew (Self-Taught) Study Group we recited the Ascension Psalms, reading them in Hebrew. It was not eloquent, but quite provocative. The resources for one to read and hear the first two Ascension Psalms in Hebrew are given below. For the more adventuresome, the notes for the whole Biblical Hebrew (Self-Taught) Study Group are still available at www.GSBaptistChurch.com/hebrew_study_group

Holy Bible Psalm 120 English

1 ¶ «A Song of degrees.» In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me.

2 Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue.

3 What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?

4 Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.

5 ¶ Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!

6 My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace.

7 I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war.

Holy Bible Psalm 121 English

1 ¶ «A Song of degrees.» I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence

Holy Bible Psalm 120 Hebrew

https://www.chabad.org/library/bible_cd/aid/16341

אֲשִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת אֶל־יְהוָה
בְּצַרְתָּה לִּי קִלְאֲתִי וַיַּעֲנֵנִי

בַּיהוָה הֲצִילָה נַפְשִׁי
מִשִּׁפְתַּי־שָׁקֵר מִלְשׁוֹן

רַמְיָה:

גַּמְה־יִתֵּן לְךָ וּמַה־יִסְיֵף לְךָ
לְשׁוֹן רַמְיָה:

דַּחְצִי גִבּוֹר שְׁנוּנִים לֵעָם
גַּחְלִי רִתְמִים:

הָאֵוִיָּה לִּי כִי־גִרְתִּי מִשֶּׁרֶף
שְׁלֹכְתִי עִם־אֹהֲלֵי קֶדָר:

וּרְבַת שְׁכֵנָה־לָּהּ נַפְשִׁי לֵעָם
שׁוֹנֵא שְׁלוֹם:

זָאֲנֵי־שְׁלוֹם וְכִי אֶדְבַּר הֲוֵמָה
לְמַלְחָמָה:

Holy Bible Psalm 121 Hebrew

https://www.chabad.org/library/bible_cd/aid/16342

אֲשִׁיר לַמַּעֲלוֹת אֶשְׂא עֵינַי
אֶל־הַהָרִים מֵאֵין יָבֵא

cometh my help.

2 My help cometh from the LORD,
which made heaven and earth.

3 He will not suffer thy foot to be
moved: he that keepeth thee will not
slumber.

4 Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall
neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is
thy shade upon thy right hand.

6 The sun shall not smite thee by day,
nor the moon by night.

7 The LORD shall preserve thee from
all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.

8 The LORD shall preserve thy going
out and thy coming in from this time
forth, and even for evermore.

עֲזָרִי:

בְּעֲזָרִי מֵעַם יְהוָה עֲשֵׂה

שְׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ

גֹּאֲלֵי־יִתְּנָה לְמוֹט רַגְלֶךָ אֶל־
יָנוּם שְׁמֶרְךָ

בְּהִנֵּה לֹא יָנוּם וְלֹא יִישָׁן
שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל

בְּיְהוָה שְׁמֶרְךָ יְהוָה צְלִיךָ
עַל־יַד יְמִינֶךָ

וַיּוֹמֶם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לֹא־יִכָּכֶה
וַיִּגְרַח בַּלַּיְלָה

זִיְהוּה יִשְׁמְרֶךָ מִכָּל־רָע
יִשְׁמֹר אֶת־נַפְשֶׁךָ

חִיְהוּה יִשְׁמַר־צִאתְךָ
וּבואֶךָ מִלְּעֵתָה וְעַד־עוֹלָם

א	Aleph	silent	ʾ
ב	Bet	<i>b</i> as in <i>boy</i>	<i>b</i>
ג	Gimel	<i>g</i> as in <i>God</i>	<i>g</i>
ד	Dalet	<i>d</i> as in <i>day</i>	<i>d</i>
ה	He	<i>h</i> as in <i>hay</i>	<i>h</i>
ו	Waw	<i>w</i> as in <i>way</i>	<i>w</i>
ז	Zayin	<i>z</i> as in <i>Zion</i>	<i>z</i>
ח	Óet	<i>ch</i> as in <i>Bach</i>	<i>ḥ</i>
ט	Tet	<i>t</i> as in <i>toy</i>	<i>ṭ</i>
י	Yod	<i>y</i> as in <i>yes</i>	<i>y</i>
כ	Kaf	<i>k</i> as in <i>king</i>	<i>k</i>
ל	Lamed	<i>l</i> as in <i>lion</i>	<i>l</i>
מ	Mem	<i>m</i> as in <i>mother</i>	<i>m</i>
נ	Nun	<i>n</i> as in <i>now</i>	<i>n</i>
ס	Samek	<i>s</i> as in <i>sin</i>	<i>s</i>
ע	Ayin	silent	ʿ
פ	Pe	<i>p</i> as in <i>pastor</i>	<i>p</i>
צ	Tsade	<i>ts</i> as in <i>boots</i>	<i>ṣ</i>
ק	Qof	<i>k</i> as in <i>king</i>	<i>q</i>
ר	Resh	<i>r</i> as in <i>run</i>	<i>r</i>
ש	Sin	<i>s</i> as in <i>sin</i>	<i>ś</i>
שׁ	Shin	<i>sh</i> as in <i>ship</i>	<i>š</i>
ת	Taw	<i>t</i> as in <i>toy</i>	<i>t</i>

We may not be able to again hear our Israeli Tour Guide recite these Ascent Psalms, but there is a superb audio Hebrew Bible provided by Mechon Mamre (The Mamre Institute). One can hear each read aloud in Hebrew at: torahclass.com/audio-bible-in-hebrew/ (Select the chapter reference Psalm 120 and press <PLAY>.)

Once you have learned the Hebrew alphabet and some Hebrew

vowel marks, given below, it is surprising how well you can follow in the Hebrew text as the narrator reads each verse with a slight pause between verses. Hebrew reads right-to-left. It is also pretty easy to follow the reading in English as one can recognize key words. Expand your horizons a little and try it. We will all be speaking man's original language, Noah's language, Hebrew, when we step into Glory. Praise The Lord.

אָ	a as in father
אָ or אַ	a as in father or aw as in saw
אֵ or אִי	ey as in they
עֵ	e as in met
יֵ or יִי	i as in machine
וֹ or וּ	o as in alone
וֹ or וּי	oo as in moon
ְ	A schwa sound, like a in along or in end of syllable: silent
ְ	A schwa sound with hint of a as in father
ְ	A schwa sound with hint of aw as in saw
ְ	A schwa sound with hint of e as in met
Hebrew Vowel Points with their sounds	



Msg #2311 Visiting Israel HS#01 Journal Excerpt

What The Bible Says Good Sam's Penny Pulpit by Pastor Ed Rice

While Pastor Rice and Bev are touring Israel with Pastor Lee Pickett from March 16th – March 31st, here is an entry from their journal of last years trip: (view the whole journal by visiting our website and clicking “Journaling a Preacher's Pilgrimage to Israel”)

From Half Shekel Journal Entry #01: While Pastor Rice tours Israel here is an entry from last years trip: Our bus ride toward the Temple Mount did not interrupt our worship. “Lord, let the awe of being in your Jerusalem, this holy city of Zion, never lessen in me.” Eiad's miracle maneuvering of a 40 foot Irizar i6S bus through the narrow streets of Jerusalem was repeatedly interrupted with our guide Joe's reports that on the right you can see the Kidron Valley⁴⁹ and the walled up Eastern Gate, ... don't forget them as we will talk more of them shortly; on the left you see the tombs that line the Mount of Olives, remember them we will visit Gethsemane Today. ...

Joe again tries to catch up on the sites rapidly passing our bus windows. Much needs to be said here about the inferno of the old Valley of Hinnom⁵⁰ that we passed, and the City of David, that we will visit. I couldn't capture all that swept by our bus windows, but alas we careened to a halt somewhere near the Dung Gate. Joe said he probably did not need to expound how this gate got its name. Here we would enter and make our way toward the Temple Mount.

The hatred that Muslims have for the Holy Bible, for God's chosen nation Israel, and the people of the book, i.e. Bible believing Christians, would be on full display as we entered the Muslim controlled Temple

49 See the 2022 Journal for extensive note on: The Kidron Valley.

50 See the 2022 Journal for extensive note on: Valley of Hinnom.

Mount. We were instructed to leave all Bibles and Christian literature on the bus, and to conceal all “religious” jewelry and talk, none would be allowed in the Temple Mount area. I even left my walking stick (that the VA calls my cane) behind because it was inscribed with, “In the beginning God” in both English and Hebrew (בראשית ברא אל-הים) the first three words of the Hebrew Bible). This was to be an awesome incursion into the Temple Mount area of the Mount Moriah of Bible times. It is curious that Israel hating, Jehovah hating Muslims are in control of the whole Temple Mount area. In a brief explanation Joe implied that in order to ward off WWII, the area was gingerly handed back⁵¹ to them after the whole city of Jerusalem was conquered during the Six Day War⁵². ...

Lots of drama unfolded at the checkpoint as they searched us to ensure we were not carrying any contraband literature, and god forbid any Holy Bibles. It was quite like Satan himself was in full control of who and what got into this temple mount area.

Fifty born-again believers, nine of them Pastors and Preachers of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ got in just the same, and looked in amazement at the unholy Muslim mosque that stood before us. *“O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps”* (Ps.79:1).

An Essay for week #11 - Mar 12, 2023

A Holy Land Tour Journalled at www.GSBaptistChurch.com/israel22

51 See the 2022 Journal for extensive note on: the Six-Day War.

52 See the 2022 Journal for extensive note on: Summary of the 1967 war.



#23013 Wed 22 Mar Mount of Olives, Gethsemane, Bethseda

Dawn at the Prima Kings Hotel, found me interrupted from my Bible reading by noises from the streets of Jerusalem, marvelous noises, even glorious. To wake up in a city which the LORD our God chose out of all of Israel's tribes to put his name there (Deut.12:5), well it was still a bit overwhelming for me. And yet here we were. Last night, in the lobby of the hotel, Bev and I read Joshua 8-9 and Psalms 81 from our chronological reading schedule⁵³ and so this morning, in lieu of our morning reading we moseyed down to breakfast at 6:00 a.m. Food wise, it did not differ from the Kosher breakfast we were now accustomed to, but gathering for breakfast in the Prima Kings Hotel dining facility, with twenty-five Pilgrim saints who just spent their first night in Jerusalem, well that was electric. Twenty-two of these pilgrims had never been in Jerusalem before, the three old cogs gave it a synergism that could be felt. It seemed to crescendo as we greeted Eli and Costia at the door of the bus eager to depart for the Mount of Olives.

We were all clutching the little “Bible Berean Israel Tour 2023” booklet that Pastor Lee had given us. Some of us had hung on every word it promised for today. It said:

Day 7 March 22nd 2023.

We Begin our first day in Jerusalem with a great breakfast. We then board the bus for a short time of devotion to set the tone for the day. Now we are off to the Mount of Olives.

1. Our first stop is the Mount of Olives. This is where Jesus ascended back to heaven and is where he will return again to rescue the nation of israel. Acts 1:1-12, Zechariah 4:1-8.

2. Now we proceed down the mountain to the garden of gethsemane, where our Lord was betrayed by Judas and began to experience the weight of our sin. Matthew 26:30-50.

3. We now cross the Kidron valley and ascend up to Mount Zion to the traditional site of the upper room. Somewhere in this area is where Jesus initiated the first Lord's supper. Matthew 26:26-29. What do we take from here?

4. We now visit the Church of Gallicantu. This is where Peter denied the Lord three times. This is the likely place of Caiaphas's house and the place of the beginning of Jesus's trial. John 18:11-27..

5. We now proceed through Zion gate into the Jewish quarter of the old city.

53 Chronological Bible Read Schedule at
www.gsbaptistchurch.com/kjv/bible_read_sched_fam20xx.pdf

6. We will walk by the cardo, through the old city, past the menorah, to be used in the third Temple, to the Western Wall. This is the holiest site in Judaism. The Jewish people pray here everyday for Messiah to come, and for the restoration of the Jewish temple. First Kings 9:1-3, 2Chronicles 7: 14 - 16. What do we take away from here?

7. We continue through the city to the pool of Bethesda and Saint Anne's Church and pilots Hall of judgment. Matthew 27:11-31. What do we take away from here?

8. We end our day in the garden tomb. What a sobering place of joy, worship, and reflection as we take time to observe the Lord's supper together. Matthew 27:32-60, 28 1-7. He is risen!

We now go back to our hotel with hearts full of joy and probably some sore feet. Let's all enjoy a great meal together as we consider all the things we have heard. It is so blessed to be saved by our risen and coming again Saviour.



The bus loaded at 0700 and Pastor David Elias gave a devotional on prayer before starting our tour day with prayer. Pastor Lee, picking up on that theme, mentioned for prayer the Owens, whose son at Pensacola college was killed, and Larry and Golda who

would miss our Wednesday's touring because of sickness. We again United our hearts in prayer for these as Pastor Lee worded our supplication. With two missing from our number we sounded off in roll call, Costia pulled the bus out of the hotel parking lot, and Eli manned the bus microphone. "When God made beauty he gave one to the world, and nine to Jerusalem. When God made knowledge, he gave one to the world and nine to Jerusalem. When God allowed suffering he allowed one in the world, he put nine in Jerusalem."

Eli recited a portion of a Jerusalem Stone poem,.. "For worlds exist within these rocks, Jerusalem of gold, what more can see the simple man, then words and stories told."

Stones At Night In Jerusalem

Stones of Gold on City Streets,
At night walk in the midst,
Of stories of old and new alike,
Awaken starlit kissed.

For walk alone do many more,
Who see the simple stone,
Awaken now the inner eye,
And see you're not alone.

For worlds exist within these rocks,
Jerusalem of Gold,
What more can see the simple man,
Than words and stories told.

For brain and mind can not perceive,
What's written at the core,
Look inward for the truest truth,
And time shall be no more.

- Pamela Storch

Jesus said of Jerusalem, "*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not*" (Luk.13:34). Costia turned the tour bus north on Route 60 to skirt the city on our 7 km

trip to the Mount of Olives. Eli called it the Jehoshaphat Valley Crossing, making an unspoken reference about God's heritage Israel out of Joel:

*I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into **the valley of Jehoshaphat**, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land. ...
12 Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to **the valley of Jehoshaphat**: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about (Joel.3:2, 12).*

As we stepped off the bus on the Mount of Olives I recited, as best I could, Zechariah 14:4. It was overwhelming to be in this place. This mount was a secluded garden during the time of Christ. It was a Sabbath Day's journey (less than one half mile, Acts.1:12) from Jerusalem, so Jesus was here often, he taught his disciples here, he prayed here, he sweat, as it were great drops of blood here, he ascended to heaven from here 40 days after his resurrection, and here his feet shall stand at his return in the Day of the Lord. "*And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south*" (Zech.14:4).

*Mt 21:1-2 And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto **the mount of Olives**, then sent Jesus two disciples, 2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me.*

*Mt 24:3 And as he sat upon **the mount of Olives**, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*

*Mt 26:30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into **the mount of Olives**.*

*Lu 21:37 And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in **the mount that is called the mount of Olives.***

*Lu 22:39 And he came out, and went, as he was wont⁵⁴, to **the mount of Olives**; and his disciples also followed him.*

*John 8:1-2 Jesus went unto **the mount of Olives**. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.*

We are on the Mount of Olives, and I was blessed to preach a short devotional on prayer in a small alcove that overlooked the city of Jerusalem.

Luke 18:1 “*And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint*” ... It's curious, I found three *ought-tos* I like in the Bible and this one's the most important; it says in Leviticus 13:14 that men *ought to* work six days a week and rest on the seventh, I like that one; there is one that the woman at the well spoke and said, “You say we *ought to* worship at Jerusalem,” and here we are at Jerusalem. I think we *ought to* worship, ... Praise the Lord.

This “*ought-to*” in Luke 18 is a prerogative for prayer and notice its opposite, if you don't pray you're going to faint. Fainters are worse than sleepers; fainters endanger themselves; they are unconscious; fainters are out of the workforce; fainters occupy other's attention. One can just walk by a sleeper, but if someone has fainted, one has got to take some actions to help them. Fainters, when faint, are one step removed from being brain dead! *Men ought always to pray, and not to faint*. Praying faith is the ability to tap into God's resources to get what you need to meet the needs of others. It is not so much what I want, it is not what I need, but it is to meet the needs of others. Our prayers ought to be intercessory prayers. God has already promised he will meet our needs, but we ought to, again, look to intercede in prayer, and we should be prayers. Think of Christ's prayers, how they were intercessory prayers.

The disciples said, “Teach us to pray.” They did not say, “Teach us how to pray” and certainly we need to learn to pray. If you were to pray for every meal for a whole minute that's 3 minutes a day, and so in 20 days you could have a “Sweet Hour of Prayer.” So, let me ask you, how long does it take you to have a

54 Webster 1828 Dictionary, s.v. “wont”, accustomed; hapituated; using or doing customarily.

“Sweet Hour Prayer?” I hope it's not weeks.

Luke 18 continues with parables about prayer. That is the opening sentence, to pray and not to faint, the first parallel is given in verses 1 through 8, it is about the unjust judge. The unjust judge said, *“Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me”* (Luk.18:4-5).

The next parable begins in verse 9 *“And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.”* Of course we are familiar with that prayer, *“The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ...”* And so we learn some lessons there about prayer and meekness. Our next account begins in verse 15, the disciples rebuked the multitude and Jesus rebuked them saying, *“Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.”* Of course we are to come to our Father in prayer as a child does, and that lesson unfolds there. Another account begins in verse 18 through 30 of this chapter when the Rich Young ruler says *“What must I do to inherit eternal life?”* and he speaks of keeping the law. He supposes he's done all of that, and Jesus says, *“Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.”* The man leaves in sorrow, Jesus says it is easier for a camel to go through the needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. Peter says, “Hello, we have left all and follow thee”, and he said unto them, *“Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.”*

Let me say it again, praying faith is the ability to tap into God's resources, to get what you need to meet the needs of others. He already promises to take care of our needs, and he also said, if we delight in the LORD, he will keep our desires right as well (Ps.37:4).

Now in chapter 18 verse 31 through 34, the Bible says he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, *“Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.”*

So, how long does it take you to have a “Sweet Hour of Prayer?” We are in the Mount of Olives where Jesus spent much time in prayer. Here in the Mount of Olives is the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus prayed, even to the point where his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, ... And so, it is all together fitting that we learn some things about prayer while we're here today.

All that needed to be said on our first standing on the Mount of Olives could not be said. Our guide Eli described with passion the hill we stood on, and the things we viewed looking down and across

the Kidron Valley, and then the skyline of the city of Jerusalem. Pastor Pickett detailed some of the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ from this very Hill.

When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. 9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. 12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey (Acts.1:6-12).

We were reluctant to leave, but boarded the King-Long tour bus. Precise, and on schedule Costia opened the bus door one inch from the curb, and we stepped out on the street just outside of the Garden of Gethsemane. In etymology the name “Gethsemane” likely came from the pressing of olives to get olive oil, and in this garden, Jesus was pressed in prayer until he was found, sweating as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground (Luk.22:44). We walked among the olive trees, through the garnished garden area, and came into a beautiful garden alcove that seated us all comfortably.

Pastor Bill Thiessen opened his Bible and began to speak solemnly about what went on here over nineteen-hundred years ago. We knew the text well, but hearing him read it here, in the garden

where it all unfolded, moved us immeasurably. Pastor Bill's charge was decisive and sprang from Mark 14:41..”Don't just sleep on now! ...”

We prayed, and then stayed in Gethsemane until we had well imagined the crowd, led by Judas Iscariot, showing up to take Jesus. As we dawdled toward the bus I was careful to try and pick out the path that that crowd would have taken back down and across the Kidron valley, and up the other side headed toward Caiaphas's palace. After my last tour here (Nov 2022), I had mapped out “The Way of the Cross” which started here in Gethsemane. The Roman Catholics had imagined a “Via Dolorosa”, called their “Way of Suffering” (in Italian, literally, the “Painful Road”) (it led to the Roman Catholic Church of the Holy Sepulcher, where Constantine's mother imagined she found a piece of magic wood that healed people).

Anyway, I wanted to map out a realistic “Way of the Cross.” A way which started at Gethsemane, crossed the Kidron valley, the Temple's Southern step area, and then went to Caiaphas's Palace, the Praetorium, Herod's Palace, back to Pilot's Praetorium, out to the Damascus Gate, and over to Skull Hill, called Golgotha. That would be the true way of the cross, and it is mapped out with applied scripture references in a map below. Most any student of Christ could type or paste the latitude and longitude waypoints into Google maps and create their own three mile walking trail in an eloquent topographical map. I did not publish mine because of Google copyright considerations. The full directions are included in a footnote below.⁵⁵ The Way of the Cross is listed at the end of this

55 Google can make you a Way of the Cross walking map with these directions: In your browser search, paste “Google Maps 31°46'17.14"N 35°13'55.55"E” ;Click on the map then Click Directions and the little walking icon at the top, it will ask you a starting point, paste in 31°46'47.71"N 35°14'23.03"E ; It will now show a walking path from Al-Mansourieh Street (Gethsemane) to Saint Peter in Gallicantu (20 min 0.9 miles); Click the Add destination button and paste in 31.778994, 35.234391 ; It now shows the walking path from Caiaphas's Palace to Pilot's Praetorium, Again Add destination and paste in 31.777580, 35.228627 ; Again Add destination and paste in 31.778994, 35.234391 ; It shows the walk out to Herod's Palace and

journal entry.

We gathered on the bus and Costia began negotiating the narrow streets of Jerusalem. He was heading us, I presumed, towards the Zion gate. Eli pointed out some landmarks, on your right is the Muslim mosque Jaumund? (an unintelligible scribble in my notes) with its tower of minaret (a type of tower built into mosques, used to project the Muslim call to prayer). As we cross the valley into Jerusalem, we will make our way to the Lions Gate ($31^{\circ}46'57.85''\text{N}$ $35^{\circ}14'13.13''\text{E}$), called that because of the Lions carved there, and according to tradition it flanks Zechariah's tomb (of lions, Zechariah wrote, *“There is a voice of the howling of the shepherds; for their glory is spoiled: a voice of the roaring of young lions; for the pride of Jordan is spoiled”* Zech.11:3).

Our schedule was adjusting for crowds of tourists in Jerusalem, and the pool of Bethesda moved ahead of our Zion Gate visit. We disembarked the tour bus and went through the Lions gate, as per usual, our first stop was at some public restrooms and that ploy left us standing outside of Saint Anne's Church. There was an opening in the line of tourists, we assembled in the vestibule and moved towards the front to sing. Saint Anne's is an excellently preserved Crusader Roman Catholic 12th century Church built on the supposed birthplace of Mary by her supposed mother Anne. All that Roman Catholic tarnish aside, the building had remarkable acoustics and reverberating echoes which drew Pastor Lee to organize a group of guys to sing a special song. As we waited in line it was decided to take full advantage and have the whole group sing a song as well. Soon the chapel walls were reverberating our echoes of our first and last verses of “Nothing but the Blood.” The echoes were awesome, the clarity of the words invigorating.

What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

back to the Pilot's Praetorium; Again Add destination and paste in 31.781775 , 35.230232 ; and finally Add destination and paste in $31^{\circ}47'0.27''\text{N}$ $35^{\circ}13'51.46''\text{E}$ which shows the path from Pilot's Praetorium to the Garden Tomb (except for the little backtrack to get to a crosswalk and across the present day four lane highway). May God bless your map making.

Refrain:

O precious is the flow that makes me white as snow;
no other fount I know; nothing but the blood of Jesus.

2 For my pardon this I see: nothing but the blood of Jesus.

For my cleansing this my plea: nothing but the blood of Jesus. [Refrain]

3 Nothing can for sin atone: nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Naught of good that I have done: nothing but the blood of Jesus. [Refrain]

4 This is all my hope and peace: nothing but the blood of Jesus.

This is all my righteousness: nothing but the blood of Jesus. [Refrain]

United Methodist Hymnal, 1989

After we sang and filed into the wings, the men's quartet got up and sang. “(notes unintelligible, memory a fog).”

We then all filed out and found the Pool of Bethesda right near the church(31°46'53.57"N 35°14'10.37"E). We gathered at the excavation of the pool, it was by the sheep market, and had five porches like the Bible said. Our Israeli guide Eli was excited to point out some of its history especially of its excavations. Sometimes mere tourists don't get as excited as they ought as they stare at a pile of rocks uncovered in a hole. This pool was first excavated in the late 19th century; it was built over with chapels and churches still visible today; and it took 100 years (late 20th century) for archaeologists to sort out all of its intricacies. Most “scholars” dismissed that a five-sided pool actually existed. The allegorizing Roman Church taught that it was an unhistorical literary creation. Yet the excavated site revealed a rectangular pool with two basins separated by a wall, making it, a five-sided pool with five porches! Over and over the archaeologists shovel proves man wrong and the Bible accurate, as believers expect. The Roman Church was wrong, Muslims wronger, and the atheists fools (Ps.14:1, 53:1).

After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2 Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. 3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. 4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water:

whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had (John 5:1-4).

Incidentally John 5:4 is completely rip-torn out of modernist ecumenical copyright bibles like the NIV⁵⁶ and John MacArthur's favorite ESV⁵⁷. It is completely torn out and thrown in the trash, along with 20 other verses⁵⁸, all because they are not found in two Alexandrian manuscripts that were recovered from the trash of Alexandria Egypt. Holding a KJV-only position and discarding all modernist ecumenical copyright bibles is wholly justified.

We were gathered in a large walkway overlooking this excavated pool of Bethesda, it was a holy convocation⁵⁹. Pastor Dewey Stewart opened our Bible to John chapter 5 and begin with “After this there

56 NIV is a registered trademark of the New York Bible Society International, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, standing for “New International Version” and their ecumenical modernist copyright, all rights reserved, 1973 bible.

57 ESV is a registered trademark of the Crossway – Good News Publishers, Wheaton Illinois, standing for “English Standard Version” and their ecumenical, modernist, copyright, all rights reserved, 2001 bible.

58 It is proven by scholars and accepted by liberals, cultists, modernists and now even by the popular evangelicals and fundamentalists, that Matt 17:21 is not supposed to be in my Bible. Should you take your pen knife and cut it out? Would you? You would have to also cut Matt 18:11; 23:14; Mark 7:16; 9:44, and 46; 11:26; 15:28. So too Luke 17:36; 23:17 and John 5:4. You would have to trash Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29; Rom 16:24; and of course I John 5:7. You would also have to rip out most of Matt 5:44 and Luke 9:56 and in Col 1:14 cut out the phrase "Through His Blood." Why have leading fundamentalists and their Bible colleges, like Bob Jones University, accepted this anarchy and taken up their pen knives to cut verses out of the their Bible? What forces are in place that would cause these leading fundamentalists to follow after the liberals and cultists to cut out and discard Scripture verses that honest believers copied and held as sacred and inspired by God for the previous 1900 years? They have followed after modernists and liberals with a flawed method of textual criticism. The tracking of this audacity back to it's diabolic source is strikingly clear. From this author's Systematic Theology Volume 2 Bibliology, page 366.

59 Webster 1828, s.v. “convocation” an assembly called together by summons in which the business of the body is transacted.

was a feast of the Jews ...”. Pastor Stewart was a last minute add to our pilgrimage here. Pastor Lee's wife, Donna Pickett, had been waylaid from attendance by the pending birth of her first grandchild, grandmothers on this trip understood that very well, and it provided a providential opportunity for Pastor Stewart to stand here at the pool of Bethesda with our Bibles open. I have heard Pastor Dewey Stewart preach on several occasions, at Youth Ablaze and at Jubilee, I fondly remember each message, but here, standing on the very place where Jesus said, “Rise, take up thy bed, and walk,” ... well, there is something overpowering about an open Bible in such a circumstance, and the believer knows who He is. Pastor Dewey touched on the verse that the modernists rip-tore out of their bible, but landed on the question “*What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed and walk?*” It is about him. It is always about him. It is all about him.

Tourist scooted through the midst of our holy convocation as Pastor Dewey spoke. When we bowed our heads, and he closed this sacred moment in prayer, a passing group stopped, remove their hats, and bowed their heads. The whole busy place paused with reverent silence; prayer was wont to be made.

The Way of the Cross, a 3 mile worthwhile walk: Start at Garden Gethsemane 31°46'47.71"N 35°14'23.03"E (Mt.26:36, Mr.14:32), walk 20 min 0.9 miles to Caiaphas' Palace 31°46'17.14"N 35°13'55.55"E (Mt.26:57, Jn.18:13,14,24), walk 14 min 0.7 miles to Praetorium site 31.778994, 35.234391 (Mt.27:2, Mr.15:1,16, Lu.23:1, Jn.18:28), walk 10 min 0.5 miles to Herod's Palace 31.777580, 35.228627 (Luke 23:7-12), walk 10 min 0.5 miles back to Praetorium 31.778994, 35.234391, walk 12 min 0.5 miles to Damascus Gate 31.781775, 35.230232 (Heb.13:12), walk 5 min 0.2 miles to Golgotha & Garden Tomb 31°47'0.27"N 35°13'51.46"E (Mt.27:33, Mr.15:22, Lu.23:33, Jn.19:17). May God bless your walk.



#23014 Wed 22 Mar Zion Gate, David's Tomb, Upper Room

We made our way from the pool of Bethesda following Eli through the narrow streets of Jerusalem. He guided us past a sign saying, “Via Dolorosa” and we turned into a small alley called “Nun's Ascent”. We entered a doorway labeled, “Lithostrotos”, and came into an underground area said to be discovered in 1857.



Eli explained “lithostrotos” is a paved section of Roman forum, known to us in Hebrew as “Gabatha” from John 19:13. We are under what would have been the Fortress of Antonia. It was built by King Herod in 35 BC to protect the Temple mount, ... and also to observe the Temple mount. Always trying to extend his persona, Herod named the fortress after his friend Mark Anthony. It stood

115 ft high and was guarded on the North by a 165 ft wide ravine. It was headquarters for the Roman soldiers, and housed over 600 of them. It had a secret passage from the fortress to the temple, a passage which, for Hebrews, for Israeli, for Pharisee, Scribe, and Lawyer, represented the tyrannical control of Rome over their nation of Israel. The holy ceremonial robes of the high priest were confiscated and held in a tower of this Antonio Fortress. The Roman tower overlooked the most holy place, and the whole Jewish temple. On Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and the Fall Feasts of Ingathering, the high priest's holy ceremonial robes passed from Roman control into the holy Temple. As mere Gentiles, we can barely conceive or comprehend the tyranny of such controls.

We stood here on lithostrotos in what would have been Pilot's Judgment Hall in the center of the Antonio Fortress. I, for one, still little conceived nor fully comprehended what we were standing on.

When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement⁶⁰ (<3038> λιθόστρωτος lithostrotos) but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha (Joh.19:13).

By Pastor Pickett's design, and Israeli guide Eli's arrangement, we huddled in this covert of lithostrotos beside busy noisy streets of Jerusalem and Pastor David Elias opened our Bibles to Matthew 27.

When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: 2 And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor. ... 11 And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest. 12 And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. 13 Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not

60 Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, 3038 λιθόστρωτος lithostrotos lith-os'-tro-tos AV-Pavement 1 of 1, Def: spread or paved with stones, a mosaic or tessellated pavement.

how many things they witness against thee? 14 And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly (Matt.27:1-2,11-14).

The preacher's kid, that got saved as a 13-year-old boy on January 3rd 1995, took us back 1,993 years by reading several verses of the chapter from the Holy Bible, the living Word of God. It is indeed *“quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”* (Heb.4:12).

These pavement stones might well have been laid sometime after Jesus stood before Pilot, but they represented well the very place where Pilot said, *“Whom will you that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?”* (Mt.27:17).

We filed out of the sacred room labeled “Lithostroto”, and into the alley called “Nun's Assent”. As we watched for Costia to bring the bus we were given a few minutes of free time and some of us wandered through an open cemetery area along the eastern wall of the city. We stood just outside the Eastern Gate and clicked several pictures. The photo-op was not wasted on the irreverent. In Ezekiel 10 and 11 the glory of the God of Israel rises and departs from Jerusalem departing from “The door of the east gate of the Lord's House (10:19,11: 1). In chapter 43 it is prophesied that the Shekinah⁶¹ Glory of God will return through the Eastern gate.

Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east: 2 And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory. 3 And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision that I saw

61 WordWeb 8, s.v. “Shekinah”, The visible majesty of the Divine Presence, especially when resting or dwelling between the cherubim on the mercy seat, in the Tabernacle, or in the Temple of Solomon; - a term used in the Targums and by the later Jews, and adopted by Christians

when I came to destroy the city: and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face.

4 And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. 5 So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house. 6 And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house; and the man stood by me. 7 And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places (Ezek.43:1-7).

It was very moving to stand just outside this Eastern Gate; since my childhood at Tuscarora Baptist Church I have heard tell what God said, and will do here.

When we regathered at our appointed place Eli was “Whispering” to the group, so Bev and I turned on our whisper earpiece ... So when a friend or loved one visits the cemetery here they leave a little stone on the headstone. Your custom is to leave a flower, which testifies to the beauty and the brevity of life. Ours is to place a stone. The little pebble is to remind them, and show to others, that someone that cares has visited, has mourned for, has respected, supported and honored, this memorial. The Hebrew word for “pebble” is also a word that means “bond.” That little pebble on a headstone is to bond the deceased with the visitor.

Eli went on, ... Another custom often asked about is our breaking of a glass at a wedding. This commemorates, as a reminder, how covenants can be broken, at Mount Sinai the two tables of stone were broken, in history our Temple was twice destroyed, the city of Jerusalem twice broken. So a glass, usually wrapped in a cloth is placed on the floor in front of the groom, the Rabbi sings a song “If I forget you Jerusalem”, commemorating the

falling of Jerusalem and the destruction of two temples. When Jewish people experience immense joy, they should also remember the less than joyous times in their history. They break the glass in order to actively remember. It is our custom that, "With every celebration comes commemoration."

In the bus we sounded off with our numbered roll call. It reminded us to pray for Larry and Golda who were missing out on this day, being on sick leave. The bus pulled from the curb and Costia navigated us towards Zion Gate. I pulled out my harmonica and led off with "We're Marching to Zion, beautiful, beautiful Zion." I could not tire of the streets of this city. The Psalmist, who never got to ride in a King-Long tour bus through these bustling streets, said it for us 3,000 years ago, "*If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning*" (Psalm 137:5).

Zion gate, with its thousand .50 caliber (.50 inch, 12.7 mm caliber) chips in her stones, stood larger than life as we passed under her majesty. I put my thumb in a bullet hole, yea, .50 caliber! In a previous life I worked on the B-52 Stratofortress which had had four menacing .50 caliber, 1000 rounds per minute, machine guns protruding from its tail. General Dynamics then built a .50 caliber Gatling gun with so much firepower that just its recoil could stop the forward progress of an A-10 Warthog! I loved my time in the USAF (23 years, 72-95). Consequently a chip in the rock of Zion Gate could hold my attention quite a while.

We were a couple blocks from David's Tomb. The Biblical site of the Tomb of David would be in the City of David (1King.2:10), but Crusaders (1095-1291 AD) built a replica upper room in the upper part of Jerusalem's Western Hill and thought David's Tomb was near the Biblical upper room, because they misread Acts 2:29.

Subsequently, a Jewish Rabbi saw a vision, and an empty casket was placed in a synagogue built on this same location in order to honor King David. Baptists traditionally discard tradition and hold tight to the Holy Bible, which is the sole authority for our faith and practice, but today, a little upper room tradition, and a lot of Tomb of David tradition, was on our tourist docket.

Before we entered, Eli led an excursion to the roof of the building. As a young lad there was a place here that his father had often brought Eli and his brother. From this spot, on the Western Hill of Jerusalem, one could see the Western Wall, and now it's Prayer Plaza. Eli talked fondly of his memories here, of the passing of his father, and how he would have cherished the 1967 New York Times iconic photo of the three weeping warriors standing at that conquered wall (see photo below). In that moment all of us were enamored by the Western Wall, the 6-Day War, and Eli's childhood and military service. *“Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee”* (Psalm.122:6).

A “Cenacle” is a dining room on an upper floor (cena = Latin for supper). That is what the Bible's upper room was commonly called here. The replica of the “cenacle”, the Bible's upper room, was the best that the Catholic Crusaders⁶² could have imagined. Catholics don't believe too much of the Bible, and they know even less, believing it allegorical and best left to their priest-craft.

*And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover? 13 And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. 14 And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? 15 And he will shew you **a large upper room**⁶³ furnished and prepared: there make ready for us* (Mark.14:12-15).

This restoration of a 12th century Crusader Chapel would have been very much like the room where Jesus had his last supper with

62 Please never call these “Christian” Crusades, they were Roman Catholic Crusades.

63 It is curious that for “pavement” they like the Greek “lithostrotos”, but for “upper-room” they like the Latin derived English “centacle” instead of the Greek <508> ἀνώγειον anogeeon an-ogue'-eh-on, AV-upper room 2; 2, def. a room in the upper part of a house. Go figure.

his disciples. Here, in such an upper-room, Jesus washed his disciples feet, John 13; Jesus appeared to his disciples twice, John 21; Thomas was rebuked, and in a similar upper-room, 120 believers prayed on the day of Pentecost, Acts 1-2.

The replica room, its furnishings, and paintings, stirred our imagination. I longed for time to sit, meditate, read, and journal in such a location. Such an upper room also housed the disciples when the Holy Ghost came upon them.

*Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. ¹³ And when they were come in, they went up into **an upper room**, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.*

¹⁴ These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. ... ^{2:1} And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. ³ And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts.1:12-14,2:1-4).

There was not time to take in all the Bible that unfolded in such an upper room. We moved to the stairs and shortly entered one of the holiest sites for Jews, the commemorating Tomb of King David. Before the 1967 conquering of the Temple's Western wall, this room was the predominant place of prayer for pilgrimming Jews. It was reverently attended to while we visited. In the foyer many of the Jewish worshipers were eager to talk with us, and answered any questions we might have about this prayer practice. I gave out several Isaiah 53 Hebrew Bible portions and was again amazed at how reverently they handled the Scripture track. A Hebrew was not

to destroy or disrespect a Hebrew Scripture copy. Again I thought it would have been worthwhile to spend more time here but such a luxury could not be afforded us. We were yet to go to Caiaphas's Palace today.



#23015 Wed 22 March Gallicuntu, Caiaphas' Palace & Dungeon

Visiting Caiaphas' Palace had a profound effect on my thinking.

*And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, ² Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified. ³ Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, **unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,** ⁴ And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him. ⁵ But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people. ... ⁵⁷ ¶ And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled (Matt.26:1-5,57).*



This morning we were at Gethsemane where Jesus prayed and the mob came to take him. They led him, as we already rehearsed, across the Kidron Valley, across the Temple's Southern Steps, and

up this Western Hill of Jerusalem to Caiaphas' Palace. The leaders and front runners of the pack were still pondering how Jesus' authority in the garden had driven them back and caused them to fall to the ground (Jhn.18:6). Caiaphas' servant Malcus was now hanging back a little; he kept touching his ear and asking friends if it looked okay (Matt.26:51, Mrk.14:47, Luk.22:50, Jhn.18:10, 26).

We now stood in the courtyard where it is supposed that Caiaphas' Palace once stood. Jesus would have been here awaiting his pre-dawn trial before the high priest Caiaphas. “*Galli-cantu*” is Latin for “*cock crow*”, and the church built on this site in Gallicantu has four different levels to explore; an upper level overlooking Jerusalem, a middle level, an underground guard room, and then a prison/dungeon area. In the middle level 5th century Byzantine-era mosaics were discovered in excavation. The three large mosaics show Jesus and his disciples at the last supper, Jesus bound and questioned in the house of Caiaphas, and one depicting Peter in ancient papal dress.

Of course the mosaic dress on Peter came about because Roman Catholics pretend, with no evidence, that Peter was a Pope of the Roman Catholic Church. That “church”, founded by Emperor Constantine the Great, as it were, who forced his form of “Christianity” to be the main religion of Rome while he was emperor from 306-337 (or maybe, via a National Geographic's guess 280-337). We do know, of course, and however, that Peter was martyred in the first century, shortly after he penned his second epistle, likely 66 AD.

In any event it was the lower levels on this site that riveted our attention. There was a guard room, and below that a dungeon area or prison cell both hewn out of bedrock. The guard room contained wall fixtures to attach prisoners chains, and holes in the stone pillars would have held prisoner's hands and feet. We descended into the lower levels. While assembling in a dungeon area, obviously hewn from the bedrock, we broke out in song,

Alas! And did my Sav-iour bleed?
And did my Sov-'reign die?

Would He devote that sacred head, For such a worm as I?
At the Cross, at the Cross, where I first saw the light,
And the bur-den of the my heart rolled a-way,
It was there by faith I re-ceived my sight,
And now I am happy all the day!

The echoes of our harmony subsided; Eli, our guide began to detail where we were, and why we were here. It was somber. Pastor Lee Pickett sang a solo that further captured the moment. We prayed together, and made our way up the narrow stairway out of the dungeon area. Like many sites in Jerusalem, this might not have been the actual prison cell that held our Lord Jesus Christ as Caiaphas the high priest held him for trial nineteen-hundred years ago, but it might well have been. (Travel Journal notebook end, Sword Journal notebook begin)

We ascended from the dungeon area to the courtyard above. There was a statue of a rooster, a woman questioning Peter, and her friend, and a Roman soldier standing behind a stone pillar. Inscribed at the feet of Peter's statue is the Latin phrase, "*non novi illum*", "I do not know him."

Peter's denial of Christ is recorded in all four Gospels (Matt.26:69-75; Mrk.14:66-72; Luk.22:56-62; Jhn.18:15-18, 25-27). The four Gospels are in the Bible in the chronological order of their writing, and depict four perspectives of our Saviour, as King in Matthew, as Servant in Mark, as Man in Dr Luke's Gospel, and as Eagle or deity, i.e. God in the flesh, in the Gospel of John, the disciple whom Jesus loved (Jhn.13:23, 20:2, 21:7, 20). These four perspectives reflect the faces of Ezekiel's vision of God's glory with the face of a Man, Lion, Ox or Cherub, and Eagle (Ezek.1:10, 10:14).

Modernist ecumenical scholars, infidels, suppose God had no part in our Bible's inspiration, that three unnamed "Evangelists" simply copied Mark's list-like documentation, and they call Matthew, Mark, and Luke, "synoptic gospels"! They call them "synoptic" because, they suppose, their "stories about Jesus" often have similar sequence and wordings. Disavow these scoundrels, and back away from any preacher that is entangled in their pernicious

ways. I have heard even Baptist preachers use the “synoptic-gospel” tomfoolery! Make it a point to back away from any preacher who does not understand the pernicious ways of these modernist ecumenical “scholars” or their compromised and copyright bibles, “*by reason of whom the way of Truth is evil spoken of*” (2Pet.2:2). “*For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, whose mouths must be stopped who subvert whole houses, teaching things that they ought not for filthy lucre's sake*” (Titus.1:10-11).

We huddled in an alcove of the open courtyard and Deacon Dave Johnson, “*holding fast to the faithful word as he has been taught,*” opened our King James Bible's to Matthew 26.

Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. ⁷⁰ But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. ⁷¹ And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. ⁷² And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. ⁷³ And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. ⁷⁴ Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. ⁷⁵ And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly (Matt.26:69-75).

Brother Dave teaches our Sunday School Bible studies at GSBC and always ponders between the lines in a unique way. Here standing in Jerusalem, in the courtyard where Peter denied thrice, Dave gave the perspective of three onlookers who heard Peter deny, heard Peter make an oath, and heard Peter curse. Standing just off from a statue of pitiful Peter, Dave's perspective cut into our musing, but more importantly they rang true to the words of God on the topic. Three of the Gospel accounts include Peter's weeping for

his blunder, they are powerful accounts. For me the Apostle John gives the most power, and the deepest insight. John reveals,

“And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. 16 But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter”

(Jhn.18:15-16).

I read this as a teenager and thought it profound. I mentioned it to others, most thought I was mistaken, or said they never saw that in the Bible. Now that I am old and stricken in years, and I have stood in a palace like this, on a hill of Zion, let me say, the disciple John was known unto the high priest, Caiaphas, and he went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest! Further, that beloved disciple used his influence to get Peter into the compound of Caiaphas' palace. God gave John a first person viewing of the trial of his only begotten Son. You will have to read between the lines to know how long he stayed, how far he followed, and what all John saw and did between the palace and the cross, but John 19:26 attests he was at the cross.

John did not write his Gospel in the first person, he did write by inspiration. I have always presumed John was a first person witness to all of Jesus' trial, at Caiaphas' palace, at the Praetorium, at Herod's palace, back to Pilots Judgment Hall (at Lithostrato or the pavement) and then through the Damascus Gate and out to Golgotha, the place now called skull hill. I'll presume John was eyewitness to the whole scene, and wrote extraordinary detail because of that.

It was Dr Luke, the Apostle Paul's relentless shadow, however, that wrote the extraordinary insight, *“And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me*

thrice. 62 And Peter went out, and wept bitterly (Luk.22:61-62).

As we came down from the courtyard I rolled up a Hebrew copy of Isaiah 53 and slipped it into Peter's open hand. Beverly elbowed me, as if this was an impropriety, but his was, a wide open hand in this courtyard. I love my wife, we make a good team, and she has better discretion than I about improprieties. I wanted to climb over the chain and put one in the open hand of the maiden behind Peter, but Bev was now holding my arm a little tighter.

As we came out the side of the church Eli assembled us overlooking a set of carefully excavated steps; Eli explained. This stepped street, descending from Mount Zion to the Kidron valley, would have been in use at the time of Christ. Regardless of whether Caiaphas' palace was here or further up Mount Zion, Jesus would have used this street, and these very steps, to descend with his disciples from washing their feet at the Last Supper, in the upper room. He would here go down into the Kidron valley headed toward Gethsemane. Jesus walked on these steps. Further this church, built next to the steps, illustrate the tumultuous history of each holy site in the Holy Land.

... A major church built here in 457 was damaged in 529 during the Samaritan Revolt and destroyed in 614 by the Persians. It was rebuilt around 628 and destroyed in 1009 by the mad Caliph Hakim. Rebuilt around 1100 by the Crusaders, it was destroyed in 1219 by the Turks. Then a chapel was built, but it was destroyed around 1300. The present church was completed in 1932.⁶⁴

We had time to reflect on all we had seen here at Caiaphas' palace, where our Lord Jesus Christ stood in a mock trial before the high priest. Time, but not ample time. Consider all that these steps had seen and heard. They carried our Lord down to Gethsemane. They carried him back up Mount Zion to be tried in the high priest's

64 From <https://www.seetheholylan.net/tag/house-of-caiaphas/> "Steps that Jesus trod" para 4, accessed 11/13/2023

palace.

At the beautiful Prima Kings Hotel we cleaned up for supper. I pulled my journal notebook and tried to clean my notes a little bit as well. They were fast clogged with unintelligible scribbles that needed context scratched into the margin if they would ever be translated into readable English. Supper was very pleasant. We were all overcome by what we had seen on our first day in Jerusalem. The luxury of the hotel dining facility, and the exquisite kosher meal, gave a nightcap to our day. Not a nightcap of alcohol, praise the Lord, “*Wine is a mocker, and strong drink is raging*”, but a nightcap of reflective conversation, and respectful friendships.

Tomorrow, Day 8 of our pilgrimage, we would visit the Davidson Archaeological Park, and the Temple's Southern Steps.



#23016 Thur 23 Mar Davidson Center, Temple's Southern Steps.

Beverly and I have not grown tired of kosher breakfast, that made two of us. This one, at the Prima Kings Hotel dining room, actually broke an 8-hour fast, even though since it was at 5:30 am, 9 minutes before sunrise here in Israel. The old and arthritic sleep when they can, I was up at 0300, trying to let my wife sleep a couple more hours. Workers were still setting up the breakfast buffet but coffee and danish was an adequate start.



Not many were gathered for breakfast, so Bev and I reviewed Pastor Lee's booklet, that offered a look at our day and caused us to reminisce about our last two visits to the Temple's Southern Steps. For a Holy Land tour, one never forgets their tour guide. We fondly

recalled many of the quipped quotes of Ron Winters in February 2009. “Walking where Jesus walked, sitting where Jesus sat, here on the southern steps of the temple, is more valuable than walking on the moon.” He quoted Neil Armstrong with full authority. Back in November 2022, Joe Freedman gave us grand detail about excavations discovered, mikvahs⁶⁵, why the southern steps were so arranged, and the name of the two gates and why the entrance and exit gates both were called the Huldah Gate. Eli Talmi, our present guide, had already found a warm and memorable place in our hearts with his wisdom and exuberance; we were eager to follow him into day eight of this pilgrimage wherein we would once again visit the Temple's Southern Steps.

City of David
Jerusalem Walls National Park
Dedicated by
E. and S. Shvidler
For the Glory of Jerusalem
Photo Sign 23 March 0744
City of David
Jerusalem Walls National Park
Dedicated by
E. and Z. Shvidler
For the Glory of Jerusalem

Pastor Lee's booklet, “Bible Berean Israel Tour 2023” described day 8 as follows:

Day 8 March 23rd 2023. We Begin our day with breakfast and devotions on the bus to set the tone of the day.

1. Our first stop will be at Davidson Archaeological Park, at the southern wall.

2 We will stop at the southern steps where Jesus would have taught and preached.

3. We now make our way to the City of David. This is the place where David set up his capital on his 12 acre city. It was a very small town called Jebus. Deuteronomy 7:6-9. What would we take from here?

65 Britannica s.v. “mikvah” (“collection [of water]”), in Judaism, a pool of natural water in which one bathes for the restoration of ritual purity. The Mishna (Jewish code of law) describes in elaborate detail the requirements for ritually proper water and for the quantity of water required for ritual cleansing.

4. We now stop at the pool of Siloam and Hezekiah's tunnel. John 9:1-11.

5. Our next stop is at the Holocaust Memorial, Yad Vashem. This is not a museum but a memorial to the more than 6 million Jewish people murdered during World War II. Proverbs 28:1, 2Timothy 1:7-8. What is our takeaway today?

6. Our next stop is the Israel Museum to visit a model of Jerusalem and the Shrine of the Book, where the Dead Sea Scrolls are housed.

7. Our final stop of the day is in front of the Knesset (Israel's Parliament or House of Representatives). Here we have another Menorah which is the emblem of the Nation.

Back to our hotel, for relaxing evening of good food and fellowship.
Laila Tov.

The Minister Jehucal Made His Mark

”And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, to the prophet Jeremiah, saying: 'Pray now unto the Lord our God for us'” (Jeremiah 37:3).

At this spot, a *bula*, an imprint in clay used to seal documents, was found. The *bula* bears the name Jehucal son of Shelemiah son of Shobai, one of the royal officials of King Zedekiah, who ruled over Judah at the time of the destruction of the First Temple. The *bula* of another royal functionary Gedalahu son of pashur (Jeremiah 38:1), was found nearby.

We greeted Eli and Costia at the bus at 0700. Everyone was eager for the second day in Jerusalem and I was privileged to start our day with a “short” on the bus morning devotional. Allow me to give a nutshell of that here.

Like most, when I got saved I could not word just what happened or what just happened. But I knew it did. The Bible says I was instantly **Converted**, via repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, **Justified** before God, **Indwelt** by the Spirit of God, **Quickened** with new eternal-life, and **Baptized**, or fully immersed, into Christ. Wow, I was only 8 years old at the time. In the 9-Blessed “R”s of Matthew 5 Jesus introduces the kingdom. The first three get us in (Poor in spirit, They that mourn, The Meek) the next make us a new creature, and the last show us to be, not of this world and persecuted because “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution”(2Tim.3:12). It is a blessing to be saved, a very special blessing to be saved and in

Jerusalem today.

This model is designed for the visually impaired and represents a first temple period residential structure.

To access it, please be in contact with the on-site staff. This model was made possible with funding from the National Insurance Institute, and in cooperation with the Nature and Parks Authority and the Ir David Foundation.

We had prayer together and as Costia launched the King-Long tour bus into traffic, Eli manned the mic.

Today we visit the Southern Wall Archaeological Park, the biggest one in Jerusalem. There are still excavations in progress and they started here after the 1967 Six-Day war. Oh, look off to your right and you can see where the Potter's field or *akeldama* (Aramaic for "field of blood") is located. I couldn't see what was pointed out as the bus circled the south side of Jerusalem.

The "Field of Blood" was named that in Matthew 27:

*Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. 5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. 6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. 7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. 8 Wherefore that field was called, **The field of blood**, unto this day. 9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; 10 And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me (Matt.27:3-10).*

As I strained to see out the bus window, the bus turned to the left, and headed what I perceive to be north. Again Eli exclaimed, Now when you look to the right you can see the Hinnom Valley which goes south of Jerusalem. It is called in Jewish theology and history, the valley of Gahanna or the valley of hell. We will explain much more about that valley later.

The three valleys that surround Jerusalem had been pointed out a couple times now. A brief article from Immanuel-Tours.com puts the three in good perspective:

The Valleys of Jerusalem Through History.

an article from www.immanuel-tours.com

Jerusalem, "The City of Peace" is the city where Christians and Jews yearn to ascend to. This city on a hill is surrounded by three valleys that from their depths, no doubt, made the gleaming Temple look even more impressive and grand; The Tyropoeon Valley, the Hinnom Valley, and the Kidron.

Jerusalem has been at the center of the world for millennia and prior to its religious significance, it had strategic military advantages being surrounded by valleys which created immediate high ground. These valleys have stories, and histories as well, that reach far beyond just being the beginning of ascent.

The Tyropoeon Valley is also known as "Valley of the Cheesemakers" (though there is no evidence any cheese was ever made there) and it divided the Old City and Mt. Moriah. Today, it is barely recognizable and is filled with houses and debris and streets with close proximity to the Al-Aqsa compound.

The Hinnom Valley, also known as Gehenna translated to "hell". This small valley has arguably the saddest history of the area, as children were sacrificed to Molech, with drums beating to drown out the screams of the children in the fire. This is spoken of in the books of Jeremiah and 2 Kings 23. In 2 Kings 23:10, it states that King Josiah defiled the valley and ensured that no man would ever make sacrifice of his child there again during his reforms to bring a new covenant with the Lord.

Gehenna as a term was used by Jesus to describe eternal punishment and fire. This was in no way by accident, as the people he spoke to would have been well aware of the dark history of the area.

The Kidron Valley is the most well known of the valleys. It separates the Temple Mount from the Mt. of Olives. This massive valley extends 20 miles, all the way to the Dead Sea. David fled through the valley to escape his son. It is the Kidron Valley to which Satan tempted Jesus to throw himself from the Temple. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, he

walked through the Kidron Valley to get there and passed back and forth several times through it. In John 18:1, it even mentions the Kidron Valley in conjunction with the Garden of Gethsemane.

The Kidron Valley is lined with graves, as it has long been a place of burial, and it holds massive significance for the Jewish people believing that the Messiah will pass through the valley to the Golden Gate, raising the dead in the cemeteries there on his way. This has made the area very sought after for burial. There are some monumental tombs there as well, the Tomb of Zechariah, the Tomb of Absalom and the Tomb of the Sons of Hezir.

Next time you are in the Old City, remember that the areas around it hold just as much history!⁶⁶

As Costia guided our tour bus toward the city of David from the south, Eli pointed out the pool of Siloam at the lower portion of the city of David. As the bus slowly made its way through the streets of Jerusalem, Lee Pickett explained that we would not follow all that was in our schedule today because of necessary changes, but those hiking through Hezekiah's tunnel were to exit at the next stop and those choosing to skip that hike should stay on the bus and go to the Archaeological site and wait for us. Exuberant hikers clamored off the bus at 7:45 am, the elderly and infirm, LOL, stayed behind and rode the bus to the archaeological site where excavations were in progress. While waiting for the hikers Bev found the Hinnom Valley on her Scofield Bible maps plate 1 and 9.

The Canaanite Pool

“... and cause Solomon my son to ride upon my own mule, and bring him down to Gihon. And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel. (1King. 1:33-34).

This pool was carved into the rock 3,800 years ago and was fed by waters from the nearby Gihon Spring. It served as Jerusalem's wartime water source in the cities early days, to be used in times of siege. Some speculate that King Solomon was crowned king of Israel in this very spot (1King.1:32-40). Towards the end of the First Temple period, the pool was filled with earth and simple homes were built upon it. Hundreds of bullai (seal impressions), and thousands of fish bones found buried in the debris that filled the pool, attest to the vibrant trade ties that existed between the Kingdom of Judah and the Kingdoms of Israel and Phenicia, and to the opulent dietary habits of the inhabitants of Jerusalem in those days.

66 From <https://www.immanuel-tours.com/israel/the-valleys-of-jerusalem/> accessed 11/18/2023.

Turns out, some of us were quite familiar with this Hinnom valley, its history and theology. In Hebrew *hinnom* means “lamentation”, and the valley of the son of Hinnom refers to a deep narrow ravine with steep rocky sides located southwest of Jerusalem, separating Mount Zion to the north from the “Hill of evil council” and the sloping rocky plateau of the “plane of Rephaim.”⁶⁷

The Holy Bible clarifies some of this:

Cut off thine hair, O Jerusalem, and cast it away, and take up a lamentation on high places; for the LORD hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath. 30 For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the LORD: they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it. 31 And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart. 32 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place. ... 19:1 Thus saith the LORD, Go and get a potter's earthen bottle, and take of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests; 2 And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the east gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee, 3 And say, Hear ye the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle.

4 Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents; 5 They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded

67 Quote from the the online Bible Hebrew lexicon.

not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind: 6 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but The valley of slaughter (Jer.7:29-32, 19:1-6).

But wait there's more, in Greek this valley is called "gehenna", translated "hell" all twelve times it appears in the Holy Bible. When one uses a modernist ecumenical copyright version of the bible (little b), they find hell is very often not translated but transliterated and not spelled out as "hell". "Hell" is in your King James Bible 54 times, 32 OT, 22 NT; it is only in the NIV 13 times, 0 OT, 13 NT; it is only in the ESV 14 times, 0 OT, 14 NT. Our King James Bible aptly translates three original Hebrew/Greek words to the word "hell." Additionally those modernist ecumenical copyright bibles have 64,000 fewer words than the accurate English Holy Bible.

"Hell is a place of the future punishment called "Gahanna of fire". This was originally the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, where the filth and dead animals of the city were cast out and burned; a fit symbol of the wicked and their future destination."⁶⁸

So, the valley of the children of Hinnom was a vile place of abomination where mankind, "without natural affection" for their children (cf 2Tim.3:2), would make them pass through the fire to Molech (2Kings.23:10, 2Chron.28:3, 33:6, Jer.32:35). It was the dump, the place of perpetual burning and Jesus used it as a fit symbol for the hell to be avoided at all cost.

We were at the Southern Wall Archaeological Park, known as the Jerusalem Archaeological Park. It is the largest Archaeological Park in Jerusalem, resulting from several large scale, excavation projects following the Six Day War when Israel took control of the entire city of Jerusalem.

Here we could view, and visit the many finds of the digs around the Southern Wall of the Temple Mount. Excavations yielded a wealth of finds in an extensive area; Cobbled streets with shops and ritual baths called mikvah, designed to ensure the purity of pilgrims who climbed the southern steps. They would enter and exit the

68 Quote from online Bible Greek Lexicon.

temple mount through the Hulda gates, named after the prophetess, who clarified prophecy for a young king Josiah, as stated in 2Kings.22:14. The prophetess was entombed near here. The gates were sealed shut in the middle ages and remain blocked to this day. Jesus walked and talked and preached in this temple entrance area in all likelihood on some of these very first century stones uncovered in these extensive excavations.

Our group gathered on the southern steps of the temple. Pastor Lee Pickett exclaimed more of the wonder of where we now sat, and asked Pastor Diedrich Peters to give a Bible devotional as we sat here on the southern steps.

Pastor Peters opened our Bibles to Luke 19 and expounded on the authority that Jesus had in his teachings, and the many times he would have been right here in this place teaching with that authority. It was electric, and Pastor Dedrick walked us through verse after verse that describes the power and authority that Jesus had in his teaching.

We had about a half-hour here to reflect and ponder. Bev and I moved to the upper corner of the southern steps and prayed together. It was a moving time, we had visited and prayed at the steps twice previously: in February 2009, unforgettable, and November 2022 absolutely unforgettable, and now here in March 2023, making memories that would never be forgotten.

From the southern steps, we went past the “Robinson’s arch” discovered in 1838, and headed up the Western Wall of the temple toward the Western Wall Prayer Plaza. Eli, our guide, delighted in giving detail about the Western Wall. The Western Wall is the only remains of the retaining wall of the first and second temple wall. It has been a place of prayer for 1000 years; the first temple was destroyed by Babylonians in 586 BC, the second by the Romans in 70 AD. Some hold that Titus left the Western Wall as a painful reminder of the Roman defeat of Judah. Disputes about access to the wall have been ongoing, and in the June 1967 Six Day War that gave Israel total control of the wall area, these disputes have not been totally eliminated. The Bible says, and many Jews believe, the

divine presence never departs from the Western Wall (De.12:5, 1Kng.9:3, Ne.1:9).⁶⁹

Jews, who have pilgrimaged to Jerusalem from all the corners of the world, gather at the stonewall to pray about the suffering of exile, and for the peace of Jerusalem. Men and women pray separately, and men should wear a kippah, yamaka, or other head covering. You may take photos at the wall, but do not disturb those who are praying. There are many ceremonies that take place at the Western Wall, including bar Mitzvahs, and military swearing in ceremonies. Security checks are required before entering the Western Wall Prayer Plaza, there are no knives or weapons of any kind allowed.

Welcome to the Western Wall a remnant of the Temple
"Request the welfare of Jerusalem; may those who love you
enjoy tranquility. May there be peace in your wall, tranquility
in your balances" Psalms 122:6-7)

My heart stopped when Eli said the word knives: I did have a jackknife in my pocket; I go almost nowhere without one. Only about four paces further a prominent sign was posted showing contraband, all I saw was a picture of a knife, it was not a jackknife, per se, but I had been down this road many-a-time before. I slid to the back of the group and told Pastor Pickett of my dilemma. He went to the front and whispered to Eli, and the three of us met. Eli confirmed I would not be allowed in with my jackknife. I was not disheartened. I really wanted to pray at the wall with this group, but instead of entering the security checkpoint, I ascended some stairs

69 *De.12:5 But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come:1Ki.9:3 ... I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. Ne.1:9 But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there.*

and took a perch overlooking the security entry point and some of the wall.

Watching a security checkpoint for the Western Wall Prayer Plaza turned out to be an interesting affair. There were three panhandlers working the crowds, they worked more in competition than collectively, but they didn't miss a tourist, nor approach a native, ... as best I could recognize which were which. Tour groups with the guides were pretty much off-limits, and the bar Mitzvah parties that came through made panhandlers disappear entirely. I watched three such parties go by, dancing, and singing, joking and poking fun. It was easy to pick out the lauded young man, more so his parents. There was the bashful sort, the business sort, and the bodacious sort; all three were a joy to watch, as they made their way through the security check point, and went down into the Western Wall Prayer Plaza to, ... have prayer, I guess, to pray over the lad.

I missed being at the prayer wall. It is true born- again Christians can come boldly unto the throne of grace and obtain mercy from any location or place we might be, (that's one of the 13 heads of lettuce in Hebrews (Heb.4:16)). Just the same, being in a place solely dedicated to prayer, especially an international place, particularly this one, where God had chosen to put his name there, forever! Well, it is a very special place of prayer. The group returned, I could tell Lee and Eli were very relieved that I had not wandered off. I met my Beverly, and as we walked to the bus, we exchanged stories of what all we had seen in the past hour.

Photo read 23 March 1218
Welcome to the garden tomb`
Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden,
and in the garden a new tomb where no one had ever been laid.
John 19 v 41 new paragraph

Our next stop held special excitement. We were headed to Golgotha, and the Garden Tomb.

«A Song of degrees of David.» I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD. 2 Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.

3 *Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: 4 Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD. 5 For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David. 6 ¶ Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. 7 Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. 8 For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. 9 Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good (Psalm 122:1-9).*



#23017 Thur 23 Mar Golgotha and The Garden Tomb

We boarded the bus and headed to The Garden Tomb. Beside a hill, obviously shaped and fashioned like a human skull, just outside the Damascus gate of the city of Jerusalem, was found an empty, rock-hewn tomb in a garden area. We gathered in an outdoor meeting area, a young lady stood before us and pointed to the old rock quarry's knob that still resembled the face of a human skull, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Skull-Hill.



In her intro she related to our group which were half Canadian, that in 1867, when Canada was made a nation-a⁷⁰, there was a rock-hewn tomb discovered right beside the hill that obviously bore the face of a skull. She held up an enlarged photograph of what Golgotha looked like a hundred years ago, and pointed out the hill beside us; it had obvious skull like features that remained after erosion and vandalism had taken a toll. “Romans crucified their criminals outside the city, and in very public locations. Right here where the Damascus Road meets the Jericho Road was a most

⁷⁰ Indeed it was 1 July 1867 when territories of Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick were united into one dominion called Canada.

popular crucifixion place, and since it was beside a skull shape, it was, in all probability, where they crucified the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Skull-Hill is absolutely outside the 1st century city wall; as readily proven repeatedly by archaeological discoveries. Rocks pulled from this quarry, were pulled by Herod the Great and are found in his temple mount. This was called Skull-Hill in oral tradition from the 1st century.

In the 4th century, when the Roman Catholic Church selected a location for their Church of the Holy Sepulcher, there was no archaeological evidence for where the city walls of Jerusalem stood. Indeed, towards the end of the 3rd century the over bearing emperor, Constantine, took control of the Roman Church and gave his mother, Helena, unlimited access to the imperial treasury in order to locate the relics of Christianity. Traditionally she is credited with finding the relics of the 'True Cross'. The legend goes that Helena entered a temple of Venus, built by Emperor Harrian on a hill in urban Jerusalem, ordered it torn down, and thereupon found three crosses underneath. A woman from Jerusalem who was at the point of death, recovered suddenly when she touched, not the first cross, nor the second cross, but the third of the three crosses, and Helena declared this the “True Cross.”

Whereupon her son, Emperor Constantine, built the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, also called the Church of the Resurrection, upon this hill that they assumed to be the Hill of Calvary. They found a small cave during construction, cleaned it all out, and called it “The Empty Tomb.” All this myth, superstition, and legend 290 years (325 AD) after the crucifixion and resurrection however, had nothing to do with what the Bible says about Joseph's “*own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock*”, nor about “*Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull*” (Matt.27:33, Mark.15:22, Jn.19:17).

In 1842 Otto Thesnius, searching for the Greek 'Golgotha', rather than the Catholic's Latin 'Calvary', discovered that the revered hill north of the city wall and still bearing the appearance of a skull on its outcropping was much more likely the place of the crucifixion

than the urban area where Helena spent her son's treasury.

Our Garden Tomb guide went on to describe the 1894 Garden Tomb Association, founded to develop the site where the rock-hewn tomb was discovered in 1867. In 1883 General Charles Gordon found this outcropping of rock that again came to be called “Skull Hill”; it fit the Bible description of Golgotha. The Garden Tomb Association has been the caretaker of the site since its founding. They do not own the actual hill, it is owned by the Muslim Cemetery on the hilltop, consequently the hill is protected. There are Catholic trained naysayers about its authenticity, but the 450,000 visitors annually support the predominant belief that this is genuine. Our guide then reminded us, “It’s not so much about the place, as it is about the Person.”

Listen, I do not know just what that little knob of rock, in the land of Moriah, looked like 1,872 years before the birth of Christ when Abraham took his only begotten son, Isaac, to this mountain (Genesis 22). It is possible that this very mound of rock was shaped like a human skull on that day. It is further possible that God pointed to the skull shaped mound, and told Abraham to build an altar there and offer his only begotten son. There Abraham told his son, “*My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering ...*” (Gen.22:8).

Listen, I don’t know for sure, what this little knob of rock looked like 1,063 years before Christ got here, when the shepherd boy named David brought the skull of one Goliath, and left it here in Jerusalem (1Sam.17:54). I think he left it on a skull shaped hill, on Mount Moriah. That skull signified victory over the Philistines; this skull shaped hill was to signify victory over death. The hill where Abraham offered his only begotten son, is the same hill where God offered his.

God’s only begotten Son, however, shed his blood and died as the perfect lamb of God, and he became the propitiation for our sins (Rom.3:25).

*“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:25 Whom God hath set forth **to be a***

propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom.3:24-26).



It may have been the hand of man who took stone from this rock quarry just outside the Damascus gate of the city of Jerusalem, it may have been the hand of man, I say, that formed the shape of the skull where they found Goliath's head, and knew that Abraham offered his son, but I believe it was the hand of God, because he, more than any man, knew what would be offered there.

“And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him. 32 And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon

*by name: him they compelled to bear his cross. 33 And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, **a place of a skull**, 34 They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. 35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. 36 And sitting down they watched him there” (Matt.27:31–36, Cf Mark 15: 20–25, Luke 23:33, John 19:16–18).*

We next gathered at the worship area near the garden tomb. Pastor Bill Thiessen opened our Bibles to Matthew's account of the crucifixion, and Christ's glorious resurrection, and together we walked through the sacred events that unfolded on the very ground on which we now stood. Often, when I read these precious Scriptures, I rehearse what was told me years ago, “Be careful not to leave your fingerprints on such a sacred accounting.” We were careful, how could we not be, we sat here between Golgotha and an Empty Tomb.

Each of us had the opportunity to visit the empty tomb. It was extraordinary. A tomb chiseled out of rock, as a rich man's tomb might be. It had a preparation area and room for three bodies to lay entombed. It had a rolling trench that would hold a large stone door that would seal the tomb. Other tombs of the sort might hold several generations of family members, decomposed bones would be ordered into urns inside the tomb. This tomb excavated in 1867 was found with no bones, unused, as it were, which made it extraordinary. The location is right and accurate, “Skull-Hill” fit the title Golgotha, it was located outside the gate, it was at a public crossroads, the rock-hewn tomb was right and accurate, and the whole experience of being here, praying here, and worshipping here was surely the highlight of a Holy Land tour to Jerusalem.

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. 2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled

back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. 3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: 4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. 5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. 6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. 7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. 8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word (Matt.28:1-8).



Since my youth I have had a 1909 Scofield Reference Bible. It was the first Bible I read from Genesis to Maps as a 13 year old lad. That reference Bible contains five orders of event studies assembled by C. I. Scofield, which impacted and instilled a reverence in me for these holy accounts and the Holy Scriptures. Those studies are listed below; they are 'old-school'.

Matt.26:20 Note: The order of events on the night of Passover: Scofield Reference Bible Notes - Matthew 26:20 sat down with the twelve

The order of events on the night of the Passover supper appears to have been:

(1) The taking by our Lord and the disciples of their places at the table;

(2) the contention who should be greatest;

(3) the feet washing;

(4) the identification of Judas as the traitor;

(5) the withdrawal of Judas;

(6) the institution of the supper;

(7) the words of Jesus while still in the room Mat 26:26-29; Luk 22:35-38; Joh 13:31-35; 14:1-31.

(8) the words of Jesus between the room and the garden Mat 26:31-35; Mar 14:26-31; Joh 15:16; Joh 15:17 it seems probable that the high-priestly prayer Joh 17:1-26 was uttered after they reached the garden;

(9) the agony in the garden;

(10) the betrayal and arrest;

(11) Jesus before Caiaphas; Peter's denial.

Matt.26:57 Note: The order of events on the crucifixion day: Scofield Reference Bible Notes - Matthew 26:57 led him away
A comparison of the narratives gives the following order of events in the crucifixion day:

(1) Early in the morning Jesus is brought before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin. He is condemned and mocked Mat 26:57-68; Mar 14:55-65; Luk 22:63-71; Joh 18:19-24.

(2) The Sanhedrin lead Jesus to Pilate, Mat 27:1; Mat 27:2; Mat 27:11-14; Mar 15:1-5; Luk 23:1-5; Joh 18:28-38.

(3) Pilate sends Jesus to Herod Luk 23:6-12; Joh 19:4.

(4) Jesus is again brought before Pilate, who releases Barabbas and delivers Jesus to be crucified Mat 27:15-26; Mar 15:6-15; Luk 23:13-25; Joh 18:39; Joh 18:40; Joh 19:4-16.

(5) Jesus is crowned with thorns and mocked Mat 27:26-30; Mar 15:15-20; Joh 19:1-3.

(6) Suicide of Judas Mat 27:3-10.

(7) Led forth to be crucified, the cross is laid upon Simon: Jesus discourses to the women Mat 27:31; Mat 27:32; Mar 15:20-23; Luk 23:26-33; Joh 19:16, 17.

For the order of events at the crucifixion, see Mat 27:33.

Matt.27:33 Note: The order of events at the crucifixion.

Scofield Reference Bible Notes - Matthew 27:33 "And when they were come unto a place called..."

The Order of Events at the Crucifixion:

(1) the arrival at Golgotha Mat 27:33; Mar 15:22; Luk 23:33; Joh 19:17.

(2) the offer of the stupefying drink refused Mat 27:34; Mar 15:23.

(3) Jesus is crucified between two thieves Mat 27:35-38; Mar 15:24-28; Luk 23:33-38; Joh 19:18-24.

(4) He utters the first cry from the cross, "Father, forgive," etc. Luk 23:34.

(5) The soldiers part His garments Mat 27:35; Mar 15:24; Luk 23:34; Joh 19:23.

(6) The Jews mock Jesus Mat 27:39-44; Mar 15:29-32; Luk 23:35-38.

(7) The thieves rail on Him, but one repents and believes Mat 27:44; Mar 15:32; Luk 23:39-43.

(8) The second cry from the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me," etc. Luk 23:43.

(9) The third cry, "Woman, behold thy son" Joh 19:26; Joh

19:27.

(10) The darkness Mat 27:45; Mar 15:33; Luk 23:44.

(11) The fourth cry, "My God," etc. Mat 27:46; Mat 27:47; Mar 15:34-36.

(12) The fifth cry, "I thirst" Joh 19:28.

(13) The sixth cry, "It is finished" Joh 19:30.

(14) The seventh cry, "Father, into thy hands," etc. Luk 23:46.

(15) Our Lord dismisses his spirit Mat 27:50; Mar 15:37; Luk 23:46; Joh 19:30.



Matt.28:1 Note: The order of events resurrection day.
Scofield Reference Bible Notes - Matthew 28:1 In the end of the Sabbath

The order of events, combining the four narratives, is as follows:

Three women, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, start for the sepulchre, followed by other women bearing spices. The three find the stone rolled away, and Mary Magdalene goes to tell the disciples. Luk 23:55-24:9; Joh 20:1; Joh 20:2. Mary, the mother of James and Joses, draws nearer the tomb and sees the angel of the Lord Mat 28:2. She goes back to meet the other women following with the spices. Meanwhile Peter and John, warned by Mary Magdalene, arrive, look in, and go away Joh 20:3-10. Mary Magdalene returns weeping, sees the two angels and then Jesus Joh 20:11-18 and goes as He bade her to tell the disciples. Mary (mother of James and Joses), meanwhile, has met the women with the spices and, returning with them, they see the two angels. Luk 24:4; Luk 24:5; Mar 16:5. They also receive the angelic message, and, going to seek the disciples, are met by Jesus. Mat 28:8-10.

Matt.28:9 Note: The order of our Lord's appearances.

Scofield Reference Bible Notes - Matthew 28:9 Jesus

The order of our Lord's appearances would seem to be:

On the day of his resurrection:

(1) To Mary Magdalene Joh 20:14-18.

(2) To the women returning from the tomb with angelic message
Mat 28:8-10.

(3) To Peter, probably in the afternoon Luk 24:34; 1Co 15:5.

(4) To the Emmaus disciples toward evening Luk 24:13-31.

(5) To the apostles, except Thomas Luk 24:36-43; Joh 20:19-24.

Eight days afterward:

(1) to the apostles, Thomas being present Joh 20:24-29.

In Galilee:

(1a) To the seven by the Lake of Tiberias Joh 21:1-23.

(2) On a mountain, to the apostles and five hundred brethren 1Co
15:6.

At Jerusalem and Bethany again:

(1) To James 1Co 15:7.

(2) To the eleven Mat 28:16-20; Mar 16:14-20; Luk 24:33-53;

Act 1:3-12.

To Paul:

(1) Near Damascus Act 9:3-6; 1Co 15:8.

(2) In the temple Act 22:17-21; Act 23:11.

To Stephen: outside Jerusalem Act 7:55.

To John: on Patmos Rev 1:10-19.

We had another sacred stop to make today. It was not a Bible
time sacred, it was *Yad Vashem*, The World Holocaust
Remembrance Center.



#23018 Thur 23 Mar יד ושם
Yad Vashem

After worship at the Garden Tomb we made another sacred stop on Day 8 of our Holy Pilgrimage in Israel. It was not a Bible time sacred, but sacred just the same; it was: *Yad Vashem* (Hebrew: יָד וּשְׁמָ; literally, "a memorial and a name"), The World Holocaust Remembrance Center, Israel's official memorial to the victims of the Holocaust.

Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off (Isaiah 56:5).

ה וְנָתַתִּי לָהֶם בְּבֵיתִי וּבְחוֹמֹתַי, יָד וּשְׁמָ--טוֹב, מְכַבְּדִים וּמְכַבְּרוֹת: שְׁמָ עוֹלָם
אֶתֶּן-לוֹ, אֲנָשָׁר לֹא יִכָּרֵת.⁷¹

In English that Scripture continues:

*6 Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant;
7 Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people* (Isa.56:6-7).

We exited the tour bus at the World Holocaust Remembrance Center. We knew we were on sacred ground when feet hit the pavement, and as we gathered a somber hush was measurable, on

⁷¹ Hebrew Scripture from <https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt1056.htm>. Accessed 12/03/2023

us, and on Eli our guide as he spoke. “Holocaust⁷² means *sacrifice* this was not that, ... it was חַשׁוּב *schvaa* , catastrophe, cataclysm, disaster, ... and murder. *Yad Vashem* (Hebrew: יָד וּשְׁמָה) literally means 'a memorial and a name.' It is a depository for the names of those murdered in the Holocaust. Such atrocity that was unveiled in January 1945 at Auschwitz.



Eli was particularly moved. He told how as a soldier visiting

72 Webster's 1828 Dictionary s.v. “Holocaust” A burnt-sacrifice or offering, the whole of which was consumed by fire; a spices of sacrifice in use among the Jews and some pagan nations.

Auschwitz he with his unit assembled under the sign over the entrance to the camp which read "Arbeit macht frei"⁷³, which means "work makes one free." There they sang their Israeli National Anthem.

There was a particularly moving video (23 March 2023 1419) of Eli and Lee on the bus singing the Israeli National Anthem (called Hatikvah, literally "the hope," its lyrics were written in 1886 by Naphtali Herz Imber, a poet originally from Galicia, the melody was written by Samuel Cohen.) I did not, however secure a copy of that video.

The Anthem in English, "As long as within our hearts The Jewish soul sings, As long as forward to the East To Zion, looks the eye – Our hope is not yet lost, It is two thousand years old, To be a free people in our land The land of Zion and Jerusalem." The Anthem in Transliteration: "*Kol od ba'le'vav p'nima, Nefesh yehudi ho'miyah. U'lefa-atei kadimah, Ayin le'Tziyyon tzofiyah. Od lo avda tikva-teinu, Ha'tikvah bat sh'not al-payim Lih-yot am chofshi b'ar-tzeinu Eretz Tziyyon v'Yerushalayim.*"

"Established in 1953 by an act of the Knesset (Israeli Parliament), Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, is entrusted with the task of commemorating, documenting, researching and educating about the Holocaust: remembering the six million Jews murdered by the German Nazis and their collaborators, the destroyed Jewish communities, and the ghetto and

73 Auschwitz was the largest camp established by the Germans. It was a complex of camps, including a concentration, extermination, and forced-labor camp. It was located near Cracow (Krakow), Poland. Three large camps constituted the Auschwitz camp complex: Auschwitz I, Auschwitz II (Birkenau), and Auschwitz III (Monowitz). More than one million people lost their lives at Auschwitz, nine out of ten of them Jewish. The four largest gas chambers could each hold 2,000 people at one time. A sign over the entrance to the camp read Arbeit macht frei, which means "work makes one free." In actuality, the opposite was true. Labor became another form of genocide that the Nazis called "extermination through work." From United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org> Accessed 12/03/2023

resistance fighters; and honoring the Righteous Among the Nations who risked their lives to rescue Jews during the Holocaust. Yad Vashem encompasses 45 acres on the Mount of Remembrance in Jerusalem and is comprised of various museums, research and education centers, monuments and memorials. Among these are the Museum Complex, the Hall of Remembrance, the Valley of the Communities and the Children's Memorial." From www.yadvashem.org Accessed 12/03/2023

We made our way through only a small portion of the center. Even so, it was very effective at "Remembrance."

Let me say with great respect that none of us were alive in 1945 when Auschwitz was uncovered; consequently this was more an exercise of Enlightenment, than of Remembrance. It was enlightenment to the dark depravity of man with emphasis that we never forget.

It was enlightenment to the dark hand of Satan, the opposer of Jehovah God, a hand that ever twists in the dark soul of man to bring him to hate what God loves. Such hatred for God's chosen nation Israel, for God's chosen people, the Hebrews, particularly and of late the group called Jews because of God's Messiah's seed-line, the tribe of Judah, that hatred, I say, is beyond reason, and beyond all logic, and it is certainly diabolical. Our short visit here did enlighten, it enlightened the darkness, but it could not penetrate the darkness.

Beverly and I remembered together our visit here when we walked through the darkened halls where the names of six million murdered Jews was read aloud. Those halls, lit only by a flickering candle, once again brought us to tears as we stood in this Remembrance Center fourteen years later.

The sun was fast sinking on our eighth day of this journey, and there was not adequate time to absorb all that needed pondered in such a sanctuary. We came here from Golgotha, where the unequivocal love of God, who SO loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, was beyond our comprehension. Now we stood

in this place of Remembrance, where the unequivocal hatred of unregenerate man, who SO hated God's people that he murdered six-million men, women, and children, was beyond our comprehension as well.

At supper back at the Prima Kings Hotel a somewhat somber, but more so sober mood prevailed. All that we had taken in on this day stirred our soul, but now rested on weary minds. Curiously, that brought our group together in a more serious and reflective meal together. We hung around for well over an hour after supper. There was reflective talk about things entrenched in our minds by the day, things that made us small. People share better when made small. The help was waiting patiently for access to the last table to be cleared and made ready for breakfast. It was their noted patience that moved our reflections out to the lobby.

Oh, also on the bus ride back to the Hotel, Pastor Lee Pickett raved about, and played some of “The King's Harpists” live from Jerusalem's Southern Steps. I expect I was not the only one intrigued enough to look it up and listen in on youtube, but if so here are excerpts of a newspaper article that accompanied the delightful music.

More than 1,000 Christians from 140 nations attended a conference, hosted by the Jerusalem House of Prayer for All Nations. ... The convocation, which began on the Feast of Trumpets until the eve of Sukkot, featured the harp concert on the Southern Steps of the Temple Mount, the location where Peter is believed to have preached on Pentecost.

The harpists, from 30 nations, led worship in multiple languages while facing the Temple Mount, as the crowd overlooked southern Jerusalem – flanked by the Old City to the west and the Mount of Olives to the east. ... the number of harpists was based on Revelation 14 which talks about the 144,000 who will be singing and playing harps on Mount Zion. <https://allisrael.com> article “The sound of harpists' heard at the Southern Steps of the Temple Mount in worship event” by Nicole Jansezian

Published: October 11, 2022

*And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him **an hundred forty and four thousand**, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: **and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:** And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth (Rev.14:1-3).*

It is still worth the youtube search to hear concert excerpts.

Here is the Dec WhatsApp message I sent about this: Merry Christmas! This am while typing in a Half Shekel Journal entry Pastor Lee Pickett was infatuated with The King's Harpists concert on the Southern Steps of Jerusalem. It's well worth a YouTube search. Rev.14:3 speaks of 144k harpists, here they had only 144. Awesome. Sent from my iPhone

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. 7 Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. 8 For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. 9 Because of the house of the LORD (Jehovah) our God I will seek thy good” (Psalm 122:6-9).

I typed a Half Shekel Journal entry about our visit to Israel's Yad Vashem on 5 December 2023 when Israel was in day 60, week 9 of their war with the terrorist organization Hamas. Hamas started that war with atrocities committed on Saturday, 7 October 2023. This weeks headlines from <https://allisrael.com/> reads “Israel pushes further into Khan Younis, 98th Division paratroopers participate in search for Hamas leaders.” Israel is justifiably pursuing the total annihilation of the whole terrorist organization, at all cost.

This week, week 9 of Israel's 2023 war, our nation's leftist leaders are pressing Israel for a cease fire, and the acceptance of a two state solution, expecting (with ignorance, incompetence, insubordination and/or insurrection) that diplomacy might quell Hamas' diabolical hatred for God's chosen nation Israel. Ignorance,

incompetence, and insubordination prevails in Washington DC.

My prayer, “Our Father, Hallowed be thy name, may all the world know that there is a Jehovah God in heaven who loves Israel; Father bring Washington DC to its pending confusion, and bring victory to your people Israel as they war against your enemies, which are their enemies. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. In the name of Your Only Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus the Christ, Amen.”

"HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR AND VOLUNTEER AT YAD VASHEM WROTE TO HER COLLEAGUES:
My dear fellow friends, We all stand hand in hand and we will overcome. The price is awful. We will take the time to cry for them, but now we are fighting for our lives. We stand strong even if we are bleeding. So ... waiting to see you at a better time and go on doing what we do. Love you all. Berthe Badehi"

Jehovah God said of Israel, *“I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed”* (Gen 12:3). We are not currently standing in a place where God can bless America; we are fast moving toward a WOKE place of his cursing.

Further, we have come to a day in America where riotous chants in the streets call out to “Gas the Jews!” Colleges call out to give the Hamas terrorists “From the River (Jordan) to the Sea (Mediterranean)” and exterminate the Jews. Islamasists have always had diabolical goals for extermination of Israel, and the extermination of what they call “The Great Satan.” Leftist leaders of our society, with Marxist goals of overthrowing America, now openly unite with them, knowing that Islamasists' “Great Satan” is none other than the US of A! Make no mistake, those leftist entities pulling the strings on our senile president know exactly what they are doing.

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. 7 Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. 8 For my brethren and companions’



#23019 Fri 24 Mar Knesset, Neot Kedumim

“They” say, after running a marathon it is best to engage in some low intensity workouts for a couple days of recovery (rather than, I suppose the preferred, NO intensity workouts). I'm not sure who “they” are, and I've never run an actual marathon, but Day 9 was opportunity for a lower intensity, if not a genuine low intensity workout. Make no mistake a mental-emotional-spiritual marathon was engaged when we walked where Jesus walked from the Upper Room to Gethsemane, to Caiaphas' Palace, to the Praetorium, to the Damascus Gate, and to Golgotha. There is no more intense walk in history on this planet, and we followed that with a visit to Yad Vashem.



Before dawn on Friday, March 24th while staring at a ceiling in the Prima Kings Hotel, in Jerusalem, I mentally rehearsed events of the last 48 hours and audibly rehearsed this prayer “Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.” Last night Bev and I had reviewed today's five stops in Pastor Lee's booklet and talked about the mental exhaustion that sets in on a Holy Land Pilgrimage. Most tours run 10 days,

Pastor Lee purposefully designed and laid out these 14 days with cunning. Day 9 was to be less intense and tomorrow, Day 10 was to be an “Enjoy the rest, and have a Free Day in Jerusalem.” I smiled at the “less intense” day ahead of us and as a marathon runner might gingerly lower aching legs to the morning floor, I closed my eyes in the warm morning shower as my mind's eye embraced the day. Pastor Lee's booklet described Day 9:

We begin our day with breakfast and get on the bus for another day of adventure in Israel. Today we venture into the region called the Shephelah or Hill country.

1 Our first stop is in the valley of Elah where David slew Goliath. If Israel lost that region they lost the bread basket of Israel at that time this made the victory so very important. 1 Samuel 17.

2 Our next stop is at Beth Shemesh The Ark is returned to Israel. 1 Samuel 6.

3 We now visit the valley of Ajalon where the sun stood still and the Lord brought a great victory. Joshua 10: 1 - 15.

4 Our next stop is at Neot Kedumim. This is a Biblical Landscape reserve where we will be introduced to the agricultural life of ancient Israel.

5 Our last stop of the day is Mod'in. This is where the Maccabees began to resist the Seleucid Empire from 167 BC to around 134 BC. They were a people set on proper worship of God. It is from these folks that the Jewish people celebrate Hannukah.

We finish our day back at our hotel and look forward to a restful night.

I let my Bev sleep a couple more hours and we got around to morning devotion at 6 am. Our chronological Bible read schedule had us reading Joshua 15-17 on Friday, March 24th 2023. I have liked schedule and structure in our lives, it had served us well through 23 years of military life that entailed raising three boys, and served us even better since my 1995 retirement from the USAF. Family aloud Bible reading time had been more than a structured routine, it had daily flooded our lives with Godly blessing. So after reading three chapters of Joshua dividing up the promised land into

possessions of the twelve tribes we culminated with Josh.17:13, *“Yet it came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute; but did not utterly drive them out.”* Makes you think, doesn't it.

Psalm 84, read aloud, was our Psalm of the day⁷⁴, and it led us to conclude, *“How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts! ... For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. 12 O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee”* (Ps.84:1,11-12). Family altar is one of the most valuable principles to be steeped into a believers daily life, seconded by daily personal Bible devotions. Bible, Bible and Bible, *“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them”* (Joh.13:7).

A kosher breakfast in Jerusalem, among new acquaintances, now bonded, and now friends-A, was equally stimulating for our 9th day in Israel. We climbed on the King-Long, made in China, 12M 49 passenger tour bus with baited anticipation. It was an hour after the 6:38 am sunrise in Israel, and I was more baited with anticipation than others, I was to give, our morning 'short' bus devotion to start our day.

Matthew 5-7 is Jesus' longest recorded sermon. The book of Matthew is introductory to the New Testament, and thus introductory to the New Testament's kingdom of heaven. This long sermon is introductory to the book of Matthew, the nine blessed-Rs are introductory to the long sermon, and the first three blessed-Rs are key to getting one into the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed R the poor in spirit, ... *“The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit”* (Ps.34:18): for their's IS the kingdom of heaven. Blessed R they that mourn, ... *“Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes”* (Job.42:6): for they shall be comforted, ... *“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he*

⁷⁴ An approximate Julian date was 30 days of Jan + 30 of Feb + 24 of Mar. = 84th day of the year, making the Psalm of the day, Psalm 84, remember structure is good.

may abide with you for ever” (Joh.14:16)! Blessed R the meek, “The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever” (Ps.22:26): for they shall inherit the earth, “He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son” (Rev.21:7)!! These three Blessed-Rs are key to being born-again, saved, bought with the blood, redeemed, and converted to Christ. And “Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, ... ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt.18:3).

It was short, but it was a dense pack of truth, and one of my favorite salvation outlines.

The bus leapt into Jerusalem's morning traffic and our guide Eli, took up the microphone. Good Morning, *Boker Tov* (בוקר טוב) (Our response was *Boker or* (בוקר אור) or right back at you, ... I think.)

We missed a couple things in our busy schedule in Jerusalem and this morning we will make up one by swinging by the Knesset on our way out of town.

The Knesset is Israel's house of representatives (the parliament). It has four main functions: 1) To pass laws – the Knesset has the sole authority to pass laws, 2) to supervise government work, 3) to choose the President of Israel and the state comptroller, and 4) to deliberate over state issues through the Knesset committees and the work of the Assembly. We will stop at Wohl Rose Park (Hebrew: גן רוזים, Gan HaVradim) a public garden located opposite the Knesset and government precinct, at the foot of the Israeli Supreme Court. It is a 19 acre park and there are over 400 varieties of roses grown there, many of them gifts from countries around the world. Our main point of interest is the Bronze Menorah built by Benno Elkan; a British-Jewish sculptor who worked on it for 6 years. The Parliament of the United Kingdom gave it to Israel in 1956.

Eli was a walking encyclopedia, and regularly amazed us. I wrote so fast in my journal, in a bouncing, swerving, regularly braking hard tour bus, that most of my notes were only bits and pieces of

Eli's profound recitation. I reconstruct what I can, but when we saw the 14 foot high 4 ton bronze menorah in person, Eli was again off and reciting.

The original menorah, a seven branched candelabra, stood in the Temple and has been a symbol of the Jewish people since the 2nd century BC. It became a national symbol of the State of Israel in 1948. Eli walked us through a description of each picture in the relief panels on the Menorah. In a chronological sequence, the three branches on either side of the center branch depict the story of the Jewish people since the destruction of the First Temple and the subsequent exile of the Jewish people. In the center branch, you see the images that symbolize the return of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel and the establishment of the modern State of Israel. I wrote madly but had to reconstruct some of the list from outside research. I think it was worth the effort.

The 29 Relief Panels of the Bronze Menorah at Knesset are: Branch 1, 1. Isaiah with Lion & Lamb, 2. Yohanan Ben Zakkai , 3. Golden Age of Jewry, 4. Willows of Babylon, Branch 2, 5. Ezra the Scribe, 6. Job, 7. The Talmud, 8. King Solomon, Branch 3, 9. David & Goliath, 10. The Return to Zion, 11. Abraham "Here am I", Center Branch 4, 12. Moses & Amalekites, 13. Ten Commandments, 14. Rachel & Ruth, 15. Ezekiel & Dry Bones, 16. Warsaw Ghetto, Base, 17. Shema Yisrael "Hear O Israel", 18. Return to Zion, Branch 5, 19. Bar Kokhba Revolt, 20. Messianic Hope, 21. Jacob Wrestles, Branch 6, 22. Rabbi Hillel , 23. Rabbi Harima Ben Teradion, 24. Kabbalah – Mysticism, 25. Halacha - Torah Application, Branch 7, 26. Jeremiah, 27. Maccabean Revolt, 28. Hasidim – Mysticism, 29. Nehemiah Rebuilds Jerusalem.

Some notes with the Relief Panel, #2 Yohanan Ben Zakkai (the youngest and most distinguished disciple of Rabbi Hillel. Zakkai has been called the "father of wisdom and the father of generations (of scholars)" because he ensured the continuation of Jewish scholarship after Jerusalem fell to Rome in 70 AD); #22 Rabbi Hillel (Born in Babylon 110 BC died in Jerusalem ?? AD); #23 Rabbi Harima Ben Teradion (Haninah ben Teradion, Rabbi: (2nd century AD) Mishnaic sage, father of Rabbi Meir's wife Beruriah.)

Prayer is the foundation of Jewish life. Eli explained that the daily prayer recorded on the base of the bronze Menorah, was the prayer recited by Jews at the extermination camps. I was unable to decipher it in my notes but Chabad.org said the the prayer on the base of the Menorah was: “Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of

the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to kindle the Chanukah light. Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who performed miracles for our forefathers in those days, at this time.”Back on the bus the city of Jerusalem slowly disappeared into beautiful but rugged countryside. As the bus passed a security checkpoint with an obvious high tech security fence, Eli picked up the microphone. The fences you see have very effectively eliminated suicide bombers from the PLA.

Remember that in 1973, Jericho and all the West Bank of the Jordan River was given to the PLO, which the Oslo Accord officially labeled a “Palestinian Liberation Authority (PLA).” In a five-year transition, areas A, B, and C, were created; area A with 18% of the West Bank under “PLA” control; area B with 22% of the West Bank under “Shared” control; and area C with 60% of the West Bank area remaining under Israeli Civil, and Israeli Security control.

This arrangement was completely untenable until the Israeli Security Control constructed a very effective wall to stop the PLO suicide bombers. Today the West Bank Area C is separated by barricades and security fences, that the PLA and the liberal press call “The Apartheid Wall!” Eli bit his lip. He wanted to say more, ... In 2005 Israel had a unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, and in 2006 Palestinians, by election, put the terrorist group Hamas in charge of the area. Hamas initiated violent conflicts in 2008, 2012, 2014, and 2021. Eli was obviously pessimistic about where things were now headed.⁷⁵

75 Curiously this journal was being typed on Day 70 of the Israeli Hamas war, started by Hamas atrocities of October 7th 2023. Today a British journalist exposed and forsook internal antisemitic bias in order to stand behind Israeli efforts to completely destroy Hamas. That is better than the US of A's Liberal Lefts President Joe O-Biden, who is urging Israel to protect all Palestinian civilians, consider a cease fire, and seek a two state solution for Gaza. College students, trained by leftist Marxist college professors are chanting “gas the Jews” and give “From the River (Jordan) to the Sea (Mediterranean) to Hamas! ...give it to the raping, pillaging, beheading, hostage taking terrorist of the 7 October massacre! It's diabolical! I could say much more about our leftest government plotting the Marxist overthrow of our nation, but perhaps

Going on 9 am, right on time, Costia pulled the bus into the parking area of “Neot Kedumim”, the Biblical Landscape Reserve founded in 1964 in Israel.

This unique recreation of the physical setting of the Bible in all its depth and detail allows visitors to see life as it was lived by our ancestors 3,000 years ago. “More than a garden” showing various plants, Neot Kedumim embodies the panorama and power of the landscapes which shaped the values of the Bible and provided the rich vocabulary for expressing those values.

“On 625 acres of hills and valleys, between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, lies a world apart. Neot Kedumim – the Biblical Landscape Reserve in Israel. a unique endeavor to re-create the physical setting of the Bible in all its depth and detail. it embodies the panorama and power of the landscapes that both helped shape the values of the Bible and provided a rich vocabulary for expressing them on a variety of disciplines – such as Bible scholarship, botany, zoology, geography, history, and archaeology – to bring the Bible and its commentaries to life.”⁷⁶

For the next hour and a half our guide, Johanna, of Neot Kedumim had us imagine a lot of things about existing in this wilderness area and living solely off the land. She described for us this environment as described in the Bible, the plants native in Bible language, the agricultural practices used in Bible times, and people with stamina, determination and genuine dependence on God and his former and latter rains. We peered down into wells and pondered cisterns. We ate almonds, tasted the mustard plant, and pondered the Big-7 food groups listed in the Bible.

*For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; **A land of 1) wheat, and 2) barley, and 3) vines, and 4) fig trees, and 5) pomegranates; a land of 6) oil olive, and 7) honey; A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou***

this in enough said in this venue.

76 From <https://www.neot-kedumim.org.il/> accessed 12/13/2023.

shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass. When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee (Deut.8:7-10).

Johanna continued, in Hebrew the word for “Spring time” is *Abib* <024> אֲבִיב , as in, “for in the month *Abib* <024> thou camest out from *Egypt*” (Exod.34:18). It means month of ear-forming or growing green. Green things are called *yereq* <03418> יֵרֵק for green vegetables, NOT potatoes or root vegetables. All Hebrew holy days (holidays), are agricultural related; Feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Trumpets, spring, summer, and fall.

We are in a land where three continents meet, and three climates come to bear on the land that God loves. Some plants loose their leaves here in the winter, some plants loose their leaves in the summer, mountain tops differ significantly from valleys, and water is always precious. Therein God says:

But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: 12 A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year. 13 And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, 14 That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. 15 And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full (Deut.11:11-15).

Consider the the box myrtle, ancient forests, the Mediterranean shrub, legumes, wild sage, thistle, flax, clover, wild barley, wild wheat, hyssop⁷⁷, ... all with no chickpeas! All managed with highly

⁷⁷ Encyclopedia Britannica s.v. Hyssop - hys·sop /'hisəp/ noun noun: hyssop;

developed but ancient agricultural practices honed by the Hebrew agricultural holy-days. Imagine eight months annually with no rain, and then capture more fully John 7:37-38, *“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”*

This large acreage park, dedicated to bringing back the environment that was here when the twelve tribes settled in, held the higher goal that verses of Scripture would come to better light, and come alive. Even the rebukes of Scriptures can be more clear: *“For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water”* (Jer.2:13).

The efforts of “Neot Kedumim”, the Biblical Landscape Reserve founded in 1964 are also intended to make upcoming prophecies in Scripture hold greater weight.

“Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.²⁴ And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil. ²⁵ And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you. ²⁶ And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed. ²⁷ And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God”
(Joel.2:23-27).

plural noun: hyssops 1. a small bushy aromatic plant of the mint family, the bitter minty leaves of which are used in cooking and herbal medicine. 2. (in biblical use) a wild shrub of uncertain identity whose twigs were used for sprinkling in ancient Jewish rites of purification.

“By reuniting text and context, it opens up before the visitor Israel’s nature as the idiom of the Bible. The symbols, prayers, and holidays of the Jewish and Christian heritage, observed and preserved for thousands of years, blossom in a new and colorful dimension at the world’s only Biblical landscape reserve. A non-profit organization in Israel, Neot Kedumim has received international recognition as a model of restoration ecology – the reclamation of ravaged landscapes.” <https://www.neot-kedumim.org.il/>

This was only an hour and a half spent in touring a Biblical landscape reserve, but it would effect things I read in my Bible from now till Jesus comes. We wandered toward the tour bus, it seemed that every stop and every site we visited ended to soon. I'm sure that would be true for our next stop as well; I was already anticipating finding five smooth stones to hang in a wall plaque with my ancient Hebrew sling.



#23020 Fri 24 Mar Valley of Elah, Aijalon

Everyone knows what a David vs Goliath contest is, but all to many know very little Bible about it.



Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which belongeth to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammim.² And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines. ³ And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between them. ⁴ And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named

Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span
(1Sam.17:1-4).

The thing about visiting the Valley of Elah with Eli, our Israeli tour guide, is the battle stories begin when crossing through the Judean Hills. These valleys were war-torn before the Bible records Israel entering their Promised Land 1,500 years before Christ was born in Bethlehem. These valleys show continual occupation and continual struggle since (what the plaque said was) the Bronze age. Mythical Bronze and Iron ages are based on deceived modernist's evolutionary hypothesis and the caveman. If you have a Bible, there is no prehistoric period and the land was occupied since the cursed Canaanites left the presence of Grandpa Noah! Sites at multiple Canaanite fortresses were found when the area was overflowed by high tech IR and photographing drones. Archaeological excavations were opened at these sites, and at the site of the city of Shaarain (cf 1Sam.17:52), sure enough, excavations discovered a city of “double gates”, exactly as the Hebrew name describes it. (Bible believers need no archaeological discoveries to be Bible believers, but it is nice to have some to rub in the face of infidels and scoffers).

*And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to **Shaaraim** <08189>, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron* (1Sam.17:52). From Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, Shaaraim <08189> שַׁעַרַיִם Sha'arayim, Shaaraim =" double gate", A.V. 3 times, Josh.15:36, 1Sam.17:52, 1Ch.4:31.

Several other unique discoveries were found at the Khirbet Qeiyafa site where the city Shaarain was found. Olive pits radiocarbon dated to the times of King David, hundreds of kosher animal bones showing this to be a Jewish city, and pottery pieces by the thousands. The 5 ½ acre, circular site was not a tel, so it contains only one layer and all discoveries date back to the same era, King David's era. Broken shards of pottery used for writing notes and recipes were called “*ostrakon*”, and many were found here with Hebrew writings.

Eli described other epic battles fought here in these valleys. We would of course explore 1 Samuel 17, and the sun that stood still in Joshua 10, but this prime land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Judean hills, hills that protected Jerusalem, was a very war-torn area. In the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the day after Israel's May 14th Declaration of Independence, there was a major battle here where Ariel Sharon the Israeli general was severely wounded. A wounded private carried him 3 miles to the IDF lines and he later served as the 11th prime minister of Israel. Back in the 12th century the Knights of Columbus built a castle here, called Via Dome, to blockade Jerusalem from the sea.

These valleys were home of the Maccabean revolts in 161 BC, when Jews united with the Maccabees to overthrow the vile Seleucid Antiochus IV Epiphanes who ruled the Seleucid Empire from 175 BC until his death in 164 BC. He desecrated the temple and controlled all Judea with intent of destroying the Jews. The Maccabean Revolt reestablished Judaism just in time for the Savior to step into the Temple that was expanded and rebuilt by King Herod the Great. No coincidence here.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes was a lunatic used by Satan to attempt to annihilate the Jews; Herod the Great was a lunatic used by God to construct the Temple, so that his Christ would enter as “the glory of God.” You got to love irony; God does.

Eli continued, the Valley of Elah connects the Judean Hills, the city of Bethlehem, and the City of Hebron with the Mediterranean Sea. It is just east of the Philistine city of Gath, and southeast of their Ekron and Timnah.

The bus let us off at the base of a small hill and we scurried to the top on a wide well-worn path. Well, those who used up their scurry in earlier years casually strolled up. It was a beautiful day in Israel and we looked out over the large Valley of Elah; we could just make out a host of Israelites gathered on the hill across from us. There was a shrub covered knoll heaved up between us and them, and we watched as a giant of a man, over 9 feet tall and in full armor, walked to the top of the knoll before us.

And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between them. 4 And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. ... 10 And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together”



(1Sam.17:3-4,10).

I needed binoculars to see King Saul and all Israel in dismay and greatly afraid, but I didn't bring them. Instead Deacon Dave Johnson opened our Bibles to 1Samuel 17 and gave focus to what all was going on in the Israeli camp on the other side of the Valley of Elah.

When the shepherd boy held the head of their hero high above his huge dead carcass, however, our vantage point here was just about perfect for watching the Philistines scatter in fear and turmoil. *“And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron”* (1Sam.17:52).

After over 3,000 years it was obvious that every smooth stone that ever laid in this Valley of Elah had long since been hand gathered, in groups of five, and put into someone's memorabilia. It started with the Israelites of Saul's army. It likely included enemy soldiers still serving the Five Lords of the Philistines, who secretly, maybe mockingly, kept such a memorabilia for themselves. Just the same, on the way back to the bus I kicked around in the hillside and picked up five stones of my own, (plus five for a preacher friend who asked). It was a 3,086 year old memorabilia of a Shepherd Boy who said, *“I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou has defied.”*

On the bus some question arose about whether five stones, smooth or not, would be authentic memorabilia since we picked them up on the Philistine hillside. I left mine tucked away in my bulging pocket, and did not enter into the debate. Nor did our guide Eli, but as our bus began to ramble down the hill into the Valley of Elah he picked up the mic and gave this profound insight. I heard it before but never with the authority that Eli gave it.

Recall that in 70 AD Rome utterly destroyed the temple in Jerusalem and killed every Jew in the city. They were (hell) bent on wiping Israel off the face of the earth. There were then two provinces in this area, one for Philistines and one called Paletina.

With Rome's diabolical hatred for the Jews, and their political aspirations to eliminate them from the land, they combined these two province names and called this land Palestine. Arab “sojourners” of the land took to the name Palestinians trying to show themselves the owners of this land. The name Palestine and Palestinian comes from the political ambitions of Rome, and their efforts to wipe out all Jews, consequently Palestinians supposed they were here first. It is a brazen lie from Rome.

Before Eli framed this in a paragraph, I had long heard pieces of this truth. A Bible word study of the Hebrew for Palestine brings out the connection to the Philistines.

Palestine is derived from פלשת P@lesheth [pel-eh’sheth] AV-Palestina 3, Philistia 3, Philistine 1, Palestine 1; 8 times in the Holy Bible, Philistia = "land of sojourners", the general territory on the west coast of Canaan (<06429> Palestina 3x Exod 15:14, Isa. 14:29,31, Philistia 3x Ps. 60:8, 87:4, 108:9, Philistine 1x Ps. 83:7 usually <06430>, Palestine 1x Joel 3:4, in context in Joel 3:4 “Palestine” is used slanderously to label the land when God regathers Israel.)

But Eli succinctly detailed the Palestinian origin in such a way that it locked many things together. It always amazed me that the lie about “Palestine” makes the majority of people think Israel is the occupier of Palestinian land! Even some who purport to know a Jew named Jesus, born in Bethlehem, Israel, think Israel didn't get here until 1948! Presbyterians are wholesale sold on this lie, they promoted sanctions against Israel for occupying Palestinian land!⁷⁸

78 “We who have seen things worsen exponentially, are certain that our Lord Jesus Christ will return in our lifetime; we have read the 2009 antisemitic policy and resolution of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (saying in part “Israel's occupation (of Palestine)... has proven to be at the root of evil acts committed against innocent people...”), and we heard our president, President Barack Hussein Obama II, call Israel the evil occupiers of Palestinian land instead of the blessed occupiers of Jehovah God's promised land. Jesus said, “*Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall*

Martin Luther wrote a shameful tirade of hate toward the Jews⁷⁹, and of course Rome has always hated Jews, their Church ignorantly teaches they should be hated, they killed Jesus! Every bit of it is diabolical, straight from the pits of hell.

The bus rambled across the Valley of Elah and started up through the Judean foothills. We passed the shepherd boy, David, who was carrying the head of Goliath off to Jerusalem (1Sam.17:54). He would doubtless put it on the mount, shaped like a skull, where Abraham offered his only begotten son, it would be a fitting tribute for a verse David knew, “It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel”(Gen.3:15). (of course David knew it in Hebrew.. :אֶרְאֵה אֶת־רֶגֶל עֲקֹב (יְשׁוּפֶהָ רֹאשׁ וְאֵת־הַתְּשׁוּפָנִי עֲקֹב).

As we passed into the Judean hills we passed Beth Shemesh, Mount Jearim, and Mount Seir, and we headed toward Mount Heres. There was a rough spot in the road and I was pretty sure we bounced back in time 400 years before David, and landed in Aijalon, in 1451 BC when Joshua was in a great war with the Amorites. The Amorite would dwell in Mount Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim (place of foxes) (Judges 1:35).

We left the bus at the base of a hill in Aijalon, and again climbed a small hill on a well-worn path. This one was marked by several active archaeological digs. At the top we overlooked the large valley where Joshua asked God to make the sun stand still, and he did!

Pastor David Ellis stood before us and waved his open Bible across the panoramic view of the great valley spread before us. “A man stood here and A-S-Ked God for an out of this world request, and God answered him!” Jesus taught that A-S-K is an acronym

never die. Believeest thou this?” Dr. DeHaan saw 1948, and he believed it. So does this author.” An excerpt from authors “Systematic Theology for the 21st Century, Volume 11 Eschatology”, pg 350.

79 “In 1543, Martin Luther, leader of the Protestant Reformation, wrote a 13-part booklet titled “On the Jews and Their Lies”. It spewed such vitriolic hatred of the Jewish people that it influenced the German perception of Jews for centuries to come and helped Adolf Hitler and the Nazis justify their “final solution to the Jewish question,” an euphemism for the annihilation of European Jewry. An excerpt from this author’s “Journaling a Preacher’s 2022 Pilgrimage to Israel”, pg 54.

standing for Ask, Seek, and Knock. (I always figured, with no proof, that Noah Webster spellednock with a silent k just to make the acronym reverberate). Pastor Ellis opened our Bibles to Joshua 10 and unfolded the profound miracle that occurred here.

Josh 10:1 Now it came to pass, when Adonizedek king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; as he had done to Jericho and her king, ... 5 Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered themselves together, and went up, they and all their hosts, ... So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour. 8 And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; ... And the LORD discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter ... 11 And it came to pass, ... that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them ... and they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword. 12 Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. 13 And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. 14 And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel (Josh.10:1-13).

As we headed down from our perch over the Valley of Aijalon there was a very large cache of broken pottery pieces at the base of the path. Eli, our Israeli guide, told us to help ourselves to pottery pieces to keep for memorabilia. I supposed he had permission or

authority to say so, and Beverly and I both picked up a pocket size shard of pottery, or two, ... or more. We carefully checked each piece for any writing, of course we found none. I was careful to keep them separate from my five smooth stones.

Overwhelmed with rich detail of this busy day, it was good to stop for a late, all junk food, lunch. The outdoor pavilion area rang with laughter and relaxed conversation amongst this group of exhausted but always smiling tourists. The bus loaded up about 3:00 p.m. We were to be back in Jerusalem before Sabbath. Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, was to be a day off, spent in Jerusalem anyway we wanted. There was talk of chartered shopping trips, and the Canadians were off to a mission church that they knew of. Bev and I, I being old and stricken in years (Josh.13:1), decided we would sleep in till 8:00 a.m., eat a casual breakfast, and then accompany Pastor Lee Pickett to the Israeli museum to see a whole wing we had not visited before. Nothing is free over here, it was \$20 cab fare, and a \$20 entry fee, but a very pleasant day.

At the close of Sabbath a couple streets of Jerusalem clogged with peaceful demonstrators in response to their government's push for wide-ranging judicial reforms. The thing about peaceful demonstrations in Israel, is that they are peaceful; no rocks or frozen water bottles are thrown, no one has Molotov cocktails; these are not like the American Liberal left's "peaceful protests" organized by Marxist agitators. In Israel, we were comfortable with peaceful demonstrations, even though the American Liberal left's media made them out to be much more than they were.

On our last night at the Prima Kings Hotel, in Jerusalem we dined in elegance with friends eager to talk about all that they did and saw on a free day in Jerusalem. I can't say this small talk was half of what an Israel tour was all about, but it was a pretty good portion. Shabbat Shalom.



#23020a Sat Mar 25th Sabbath Rest & Israel Museum Visit

It was Sabbath, in Israel, a very interesting day in itself, but Pastor Lee Pickett had graciously scheduled a day of rest on this 10th day of our March 16-30 Bible Berean Israel Tour 2023, which I call our Israel Pilgrimage. His booklet describes it “Free Day in Jerusalem. Enjoy the rest, explore on your own or come with me to walk the walls of the old city.

Many had planned shopping excursions, and other activities right around our deluxe accommodations at the Prima Kings Hotel in



Jerusalem. Beverly and I planned a well relaxed morning and an afternoon back at the Israel Museum with Pastor Lee leading the charge.

The Israel Museum, Jerusalem had several galleries that could be explored, their index displayed these;

A Upper gallery entrance
B Library
C Focus | spertus galleries
D Contemporary art | designs | photography | prints and drawings
E Israeli art | modern art | old masters | asian art | arts of africa, oceania,
and the americas | european art 17th -19th centuries
F Jewish art and life
G Synagogue routs
H Springer auditorium
I Wexner Gallery
J Shop
K Gallery entrance
L Archaeology
M Youth wing for art education
and a cafe | expresso bar

Pastor Lee gave us a heads up that he wanted to explore some more of the Archaeology gallery, so we met him in the hotel lobby at 1 pm, and we shared an expensive cab that took us to the Israel Museum. We had been here on a 10 Day Pastor Familiarization Tour with Lee and Donna 14 years earlier and in the cab ride we reminisced about all ten of those days.

We arrived at the Museum and secured entry. When touring with a group as we were one loses tract of the fact that every place we visit has an entry fee that must be paid. Guided Tours, I expect, get a group discount and it is all covered in their (I thought reasonable) tour price. After paying this museum entry fee, and considering all the entry fees paid for our group on a 14 day tour, I thought the overall tour price we paid to International Heritage Tours was even more reasonable. I recall the brochure saying:

“Touring Price: \$4,399 USD per person sharing twin room. Based on a minimum of 21 paying passengers. If the group drops to less than 21 paying to a minimum of 15 paying there will be a supplement of \$260 USD per person to the above rates. If you pay by check there will be a discount of \$130 per person to the above rates.”

(I actually carried the brochure everywhere I went, well, except the Israel Museum, they made me check my backpack at the entry point

and pick it up afterwards).

The Samuel and Saidye Bronfman Archaeology Wing of the Israel Museum is a remarkable place that could consume hours of time for those who have had a previous taste of what they were looking at here. Brother Lee had. Their brochure stated it:

“The land of Israel has been the home of peoples of different cultures and beliefs for some, one-and-a-half million years. It is to these people and their cultures that the exhibition galleries of the Archaeology Wing are dedicated, serving as primary showcase to the rich and fascinating local archaeological heritage. The archaeological collection on display here is considered among the world's leading collections of its kind, for its scope and quality. It takes the visitor on a journey of unparalleled depth into the historical course of ancient ”

Obviously the PR write up was written by infidels for infidels; if the Holy Bible is true, there are not “a half million years” of peoples anywhere on earth! Jehovah God wrote the record and documented clearly that the whole of the Uni-Verse was created in six days, and His documentation clarifies succinctly that that act of creation occurred right around 4,000 BC⁸⁰. Even the Hebrew Calendar, had today's date as 3 Nisan, 5783, dating creation 5,783 years ago in 3760 BC, and here we were in the Israel Museum which mocked their own Hebrew calendar by 490 thousand years! Go Figure! It seems that Satan and his minions⁸¹ had an influential input even here in the Hebrew stronghold? of the Israel Museum. That was disappointing, and frankly a little shocking. Their brochure went on to describe “prehistoric times” where I stopped reading. Anyone who owns a Bible can completely dissipate the worlds lie that there exists “prehistoric times!”

The brochure did clarify the purpose of its many galleries:

80 Reference the authors “GOD'S GLORY, GOD'S HANDIWORK, AND GOD'S WORD, THE GENESIS ACCOUNT A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of Louisiana Baptist Theological Seminary In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Doctorate of Philosophy in Theological Studies”, January 2017, available for \$14.23 at lulu.com or for free in pdf at www.gsbaptistchurch.com/seminary/dissertation/6day_creation_dissertation.pdf

81 Minions def. A servile or fawning dependant, Fawning def. Attempting to win favor by flattery

“Historical events of prime importance, cultural achievements, technological innovations, and artistic creativity are all displayed in the galleries through thousands of ancient artifacts, many of them are one of a kind. These objects offer a close look to the lifestyle, beliefs, and worldview of the peoples of this area – from ordinary people to kings and monarchs – in distant and fascinating times.”

It was a tremendous sabbath “day-off” at the Israel Museum. We got back to the Prima Kings Hotel in time for my old man's nap. Supper was, as per usual, exceptional, and everyone was abuzz with all that the day-off in Jerusalem captured.

I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD: That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works

(Ps.26:6-7).

Shalom.



#23021 Sun 26 Mar Qumran, Ein Gedi

It was a beautiful Sunday morning, sunrise March 26th. Any Sunday is a beautiful day, it's a Lord's Day, this one was the more beautiful because we awoke in Jerusalem. Before the sun started its Psalms 19 circuit, Bev and I had all our worldly possessions packed into two suitcases and two backpacks. This was our last night in Prima Kings Hotel, Jerusalem; tonight we would dine and rest in the David Hotel on the Dead Sea, 1,385 feet below sea level.

Pastor Lee's booklet, "Bible Berean Israel Tour 2023 hosted by Pastor Lee Pickett March 16th through 30th 2023" described our Day 11:



Day 11 Today we check out of our hotel in Jerusalem, bring your bags. We now descend down to the lowest place on earth, the Dead Sea. It lies 1,385 ft below sea level. (Make sure you have everything.)

1. As we descend we go down into a very hot dry desert climate. Our first stop is at Qumran where the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered in 1947. These are a "National Treasure of the Jewish People." They are one of the oldest Scriptures in the world. Acts 7:38, Matthew 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 16:17. (What do we take away today?)

2. Our next stop is at Ein Gedi, where David hid from Saul in a cave. Here the Lord provided for David. 1Samuel 23:29, 24:1-

3. We now go down to the Mountain Top fortress of Masada. This is one of the Palaces built by Herod the Great. It was there in 73 to 74 AD that 960 Jewish people held out and eventually committed suicide rather than become slaves to Rome. In modern Israel this is the equivalent of their Statue of Liberty or their Plains of Abraham. It is here we will have a short worship service today as this is the Lord's Day.

We end our day as we check into the David Hotel, Dead Sea. I encourage all to go down to the Dead Sea and experience the water. If you do not want to do that the water is brought into the hotel and heated and available for you to use. Have a good night.

We ate a deluxe kosher breakfast to prepare us for a great day. Suitcases were stacked when Costia pulled the tour bus in and we loaded and boarded. Pastor Lee Pickett gave us a morning devotion; we were sad to be leaving Jerusalem today, but refreshed as he read Psalms 122:6-7, *“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.”* Pastor Lee did, and prayed we would.

Eli, excited to be on mic, began an on going discourse as the bus headed out of Jerusalem, and headed into the rugged terrain of the Bedouin West Bank wilderness, headed toward Jericho (I think).

Over the years several ideas have floated up about who it was that hid the scrolls in caves at Qumran. Eli gave us the latest. Jews had fled the corruption of Jerusalem; the priesthood were the very elite, the commoners, the very poor. Fleeing Jews established a “New Jerusalem” with celibate men, taking ritual baths five times a day, and living with very aesthetic rigor, with no deviations allowed. They became very dedicated scribes, living a monkish life, and copying the Scriptures. The Roman takeover of Jerusalem was certain; the burning of the city was certain; and the burning of the “New Jerusalem” or Qumran, was certain. Consequently scrolls were hidden everywhere that would not burn, and most stayed there until 1947!

The Bedouin Shepherd boy, who threw stones into a cave to scare out his goat, heard ceramic pots breaking and sold them for a whopping \$25 a piece. (He got all he needed to buy his dad a brand

new oxcart!) The buyer sold them for \$100 a piece before the value was understood. In 1954 a middleman bought a scroll for 1 million dollars! (Dr Indiana Jones used a copper scroll from Jordan to find “Temple Treasures”, but no royalties actually went to or from Indiana Jones.) The result was that Bedouins quit shepherding and went wholesale into spelunking. We pulled in the Qumran Park and went to hear even more about the Essenes community and the exciting scrolls found here.

I was very excited to revisit Qumran, Lee Pickett and I, with our wives were here in Feb 2009. There used to be more to imagine than there was to see, but now the whole Essenes community area had been excavated and made accessible. The Dead Sea scrolls unearthed here, around the year of my birth, have stirred a lot of excitement in the 76 years of their new life. From the rock precipice where the Qumran community was found and Eli, our guide, could point to a distant cliff containing what was called 'Cave 4.' There, in 1947, the Bedouin shepherd boy made the discovery that started an amazing sequence of events. Eli's intriguing skill unveiled the long untouched jars that the Bedouin's removed, the seven scrolls found inside, the authentication process riddled with excitement and adventure, and the profound importance of where we were standing.

Eventually, without question, the Israeli government paid the Bedouins \$10,000 per scroll, and as the realization of what they had in hand bloomed, that was a small price. On this craggy eastern slope overlooking the Dead Sea, 15 miles from the temple of Jerusalem, God had provided a below sea level, deep basin desert environment that could preserve Hebrew scrolls for 2,000 years! Untouched by human hand and sealed in ceramic jars, the Bedouin desert wanderers discovered 972 manuscripts and fragments from 11 caves around Qumran. Bedouins could quadruple their profits by tearing whole scrolls into hundreds of fragments, and they did. Such wasted resources had to be collected and digitally reassembled, and they were.

The community that lived in these hills before Christ's arrival has been fully excavated and well imagined. Remember, archeology is

10% discovery, and 90% imagination. Here at Qumran there was still room for much imagination. There were excavated ritual baths called Mikvahs, cisterns to hold the precious little water that came into this area, and waterways carved into rocks around the whole general area. There was a flower mill, and a potter's kiln, and evidence that they made and sold honey, ... that would be date honey not bee honey. Recall there was a very large Grove of date trees in the valley towards the Dead Sea.

And then there are the bones of John the Baptist found in the Qumran cemetery, ... in 2010 National Geographic gave that fiction a good go, but any Bible student knows that, although John was radical, he baptized in the Jordan River not in the Dead Sea; and in Bible accounting he never was at Qumran. They may have found bones of a Qumran leader in their cemetery, but they were remiss at connecting anything found here to Bible characters (only to Bible copies, which was a very big deal, still is).

These scrolls and fragments were archaeological gold and were bought and sold, smuggled and stolen for the many years of their discovery from 1947 on. When the Israel Antiquities Authority inventoried the whole collection, they found intact every book of the Hebrew Bible except Esther, all the Apocryphal (pseudepigraphical) books (books that provide inter-testament history which Jesus, Jews and Baptists never called Holy Scripture, but Catholics, and ergo many Protestants, errantly did). Two things are firmly settled with this find. First, history, linguistics evidence, paleographic and carbon 14 dating established the date of the actual scrolls from 200 BC to 68 AD. That is just 100 years after the prophet Malachi wrote, and just two years prior to the Roman ransacking and destruction of the Jewish temple at Jerusalem.

But more marvelous than man's dating is God's preservation! Not the preservation of rolled up animal skins in a dry desert with a high evaporation environment, but the preservation of God's Words so that *“not one jot or one tittle would pass away!”* (Matt 5:18). There was not a word difference found between the whole of the discovered Hebrew Bible, and that found in the Masoretic copies

put to print in 1524 (and put in English in 1611). God had, for over a millennium of hand copying, exactly preserved His words just as He said He would. God's words are 'Preserved': "*The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever*" (Psalm 12:6-7).

They are 'Perfect' words: "*The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple*" (Psalm 19:7).

They are 'Pure' words: "*The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes*" (Psalm 19:8).

They are 'Powerful' words: "*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*" (Heb.4:12).

They are 'Pleasant' words: "*The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD: but the words of the pure are pleasant words.*" (Prov.15:26).

The little I knew about the thousand scrolls found around the Qumran ruins stimulated a renewed interest in the review of these treasures. Back in November I visited The Dead Sea Scrolls Museum, which had on full display The Great Isaiah Scroll, one of the original seven Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in Qumran in 1947. It is the largest, oldest, and best preserved of all the Biblical scrolls. Dated from 125 BC, the 54 columns contain all 66 chapters of the Hebrew copy of the book of Isaiah. The Shrine of the Book Complex displays the oldest extant Biblical manuscripts in the upper galleries, and the Aleppo Codex, being the most accurate manuscripts of the Masoretic text, in the lower galleries. The Aleppo Codex is generally in full agreement with the The Great Isaiah Scroll except for some spellings which reveal minor pronunciation differences of the Second Temple Period.

That is miraculous, and exactly what the Biblical doctrine of

preservation would expect. This Masoretic Hebrew text was used in the translation of the Authorized King James Bible. The white dome of the Shrine of the Book is a portrayal of a lid of the ceramic jars found in the caves near the Dead Sea in 1947. The complex, dedicated and opened in 1965, is intended to be a sanctuary expressing profound spiritual meaning. There was no photography allowed and any audible voice was shushed in a “this-is-a-library” fashion. It was holier than a library.

While there in November I circled The Great Isaiah Scroll several times looking for anything that might point me to the 53rd chapter of Isaiah. I held a paper containing the chapter in Hebrew. I was even accompanied by our Israeli Guide, Joe, who had a similar interest, and could read Hebrew. We were unsuccessful, but did find the close of the book and were working our way backward through thirteen unmarked chapters to try and find the text “*Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?*” written in Hebrew, of course.

It was not futile, just unsuccessful. It was a memorable adventure, and if ever I get back to the Shrine, I will be far better prepared. Electronic viewing of the scrolls can be done online. One can completely view The Great Isaiah Scroll at <http://dss.collections.imj.org.il/isaiah>. I made an extensive comparison of the Isaiah 53 text and wrote up my findings in my previous journal, published this past November.⁸²

It was a beautiful Lord's Day, a first day of the week, a Sunday, and we sat in the excavated center of a 2,000 year ago Qumran encampment as Pastor Lee Pickett opened our Bibles to Psalms 12 and read us verses 6-7 out of the Holy Bible, “*The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever*” (Psalm 12:6-7).

Pastor talked of The Wonder of the find in the caves at Qumran and describe the cave-like display we had just peered into, to see the

82 Rice, Edward, “*Journaling a Preacher's 2022 Pilgrimage to Israel, Half Shekel Journal #10 Thur 3 Nov The Israel Museum*”, Pg 70-72. Available at www.GSBaptistChurch.com/israel22

earthen vessels used to preserve the scrolls for 2,000 years, a heavenly treasure, the preserved Word of God. He spoke of the wonder that the Dead Sea scrolls presented when not a word of the Holy Bible was changed. He spoke of the disparity that we now have as anyone wanting a copyright can change the Words of God, willy-nilly⁸³.

On this Sunday morning, sitting in the middle of an archaeological site exposing a 2,000-year-old Essenes community called Qumran, we worshiped “The Word”; the Word that was made flesh and dwelt among us, as our righteous Lord, and the Word that is preserved by Jehovah God to every generation.

I had previously done a lot of research on what Pastor Lee had just called “willy-nilly” Bible changes sought by modernist copyright mongers. Some of those findings are rehearsed here:

It is appalling what modernist ecumenical copyright seeking liberals have done to Psalm 12:6-7 “*The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever*” (Psalm 12:6-7).

That is clearly what it says in the WCL⁸⁴ Hebrew Bible as well:

אִמְרוֹת יְהוָה אֱמִרוֹת טְהוֹרוֹת כִּסְפֵי צְרוּף בְּעִלְיִל לְאֲרֵץ מִזְקֶק
שְׁבַעֲתִים:

אֲתֵה־יְהוָה תִּשְׁמְרֵם תִּצְרְנֵנוּ מִן־הַדּוֹר זֶה לְעוֹלָם:

Thou shalt keep them (the words of the LORD), O LORD, thou

83 'willy-nilly', meaning “whether one likes it or not and without direction or planning” may have developed from two Latin participles that have the definition, "unwilling, willing". William Shakespeare first used a form of this expression in *The Taming of the Shrew* in 1596 (And, Will you, nill you, I will marry you).

84 This Hebrew text is a digital version of the Leningrad Codex developed by the Westminster Hebrew Institute and made available by The J. Alan Groves Center for Advanced Biblical Research. This version is based on the January, 2016 WCL v4.20 release. The morphology is provided by the Open Scriptures Hebrew Bible project. Lemma and morphology data are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. The text of the WCL remains in the Public Domain. See the LICENSE file at the Open Scriptures Hebrew Bible project for more information.

shalt preserve them (the words of the LORD) from this generation for ever”

And it is what modernists needed to change, the words of the LORD, to get a lucrative copyright. Look what they did:

Psalm 12:6-7 from an NIV⁸⁵ bible, “And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver purified in a crucible, like gold [fn more probably “earth”] refined seven times. You, LORD, will keep the needy safe and will protect us forever from the wicked,”

Psalm 12:7 from an ESV⁸⁶ bible, “You, O LORD, will keep them; you will guard us [fn or “guard him”] from this generation forever.”

Psalm 12:6-7 from an RSV⁸⁷ bible, “The promises of the LORD are promises that are pure, silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times. Do thou, O LORD, protect us, guard us ever from this generation.”

Psalm 12:7 from a CSV⁸⁸ bible, “You, LORD, will guard us;[fn LXX (Septuagint), Jer (Jerome's Latin Vulgate); other Hb mss read “them”] you will protect us[fn LXX (Septuagint), other Hb mss read “him”] from this generation forever.”

And consider what they did; in each modernist ecumenical copyright version they removed the text about keeping and preserving words of God', and stuck in their idea that he will “keep the needy safe and protect 'us’”, or “keep 'them' and guard 'us’”, or “protect us, and guard us”, or “guard us, and protect us”! ... Protect 'us' from what? ... from this generation! No, we need protected from modernist text changers seeking lucrative copyrights!

85 NIV is a registered trademark of the New York Bible Society International, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, standing for “New International Version” and their ecumenical modernist copyright, all rights reserved, Copyright © 1973 bible by New York Bible Society International.

86 ESV is a registered trademark of the Crossway – Good News Publishers, Wheaton Illinois, standing for “English Standard Version” and their ecumenical, modernist, copyright, all rights reserved, Copyright © 2001 bible by Crossway – Good News Publishers.

87 RSV is a registered trademark of the World Publishing Company, standing for “Revised Standard Version” and their ecumenical, modernist, copyright, all rights reserved, Copyright © 1962 RSV bible by World Publishing Company.

88 CSV is a registered trademark of Holman Bible Publishers, standing for Christian Standard Bible® and their ecumenical, modernist, copyright, all rights reserved, Copyright © 2017, 2020 bible by Holman Bible Publishers.

Another look at this calamity is provided from an excerpt from my “*Systematic Theology for the 21st Century Volume 01 Prolegomena*”, pg 5-6:

The Issue of the Copyrights.

If you use a modernist bible you should know that it has SIGNIFICANT DEVIATIONS from the HOLY BIBLE.

In order to secure a copyright on a new bible translation it must be demonstrated legally that there are SIGNIFICANT DEVIATIONS from any previous work, roughly 64,000 of them! The race to get copyrights on so many SIGNIFICANT DEVIATIONS has been so intense that now the NIV is proposing a (per)version that changes God the Father to Mother God, just to secure another lucrative copyright on what used to be GOD'S uncopyrighted WORDS. Shame on Ecumenical Modernists. Stay away from their bibles and bad doctrine. Only their 64,000 SIGNIFICANT DEVIATIONS have allowed them to get several copyrights, but there is only one Holy Bible, and it has no copyright held by mere man.

Baptists believe that “*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*” (2Tim.3:16). This was written about the copies of copies of copies. Modernist translators reject this truth.

Modernist ecumenical scholars contend that no Bible in existence today is inspired. They contend that only the original manuscripts were inspired, i.e. only what came from the apostle's pen! All these original manuscripts are lost and consequently there is no inspired Word of God in existence. However, they think their excellent and revered 'textual criticism' will be able to restore the originals from the two oldest existing manuscripts from Alexandria Egypt. Both manuscripts came from the pen of Roman Catholic Church Fathers, Clement of Alexandria and Origen of Alexandria. Catholic Saint Origen is considered the Father of Textual Criticism

and the Father of the Allegorical Method, whereby Scripture “conceals a secret hidden meaning that only the supremely spiritually astute can see and comprehend.” Baptists never have trusted Catholics, especially their textual criticism, and allegorical methods. Look what the ecumenical “scholars” did to the **WORDS OF GOD**:

Psalm 12:6 The <u>words</u> of the LORD are pure <u>words</u> : as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. (Holy Bible)	6 The promises of the LORD are promises that are pure, silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times. RSV
7 Thou shalt keep <u>them</u> , O LORD, thou shalt preserve <u>them</u> from this generation for ever. (The Holy Bible)	7 Do thou, O LORD, protect us , guard us ever from this generation. The RSV
Psalm 100:5 For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his <u>truth</u> endureth to all generations. (The Holy Bible)	5 For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures for ever, and his faithfulness to all generations. The RSV
Prov 22:12 ¶ The eyes of the LORD <u>preserve</u> knowledge, and he overthroweth the words of the transgressor. (The Holy Bible)	12 ¶ The eyes of the LORD keep watch over knowledge, but he overthrows the words of the faithless. The RSV

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever (Isaiah 40:8). (The Holy Bible)

While I am out here on a “rabbit trail” let me mention that previously a Messianic Jew (he was born-again, but would not accept the title “Christian”, calling it a Greek title) shared this insight with a group of Independent Baptist Preachers. You see, said he, Jews do not live according to the Jewish law, but according to the 'interpretation' of the book of law, the Mishna, or '2nd book.' It is the 1st book of interpretation, made in Tiberius, with corrections published later in the Talmud, or '3rd book', ... and 2nd interpretation. This later became Shulhond Alhugb (spelled by my phonics, not by my Hebrew friend), or 3rd interpretation. ... So

Judaism, today, is just as man made as Catholicism, they are both a bunch of man-made rules vaguely based on what Scripture almost says.

The bus loaded, we pulled away from Qumran, still relishing all of its marvelous assurances of Bible preservation. We moved south on Route 90 in this great sunken valley holding the Dead Sea, and came to an interesting commercial stop called “Ahava, 30 Years of Patented Dead Sea Cosmetics.” It was “Factory Outlet: Visitor Center – Masada – Ein Bokek – Neve Midbar” and a delightful stop and shop that excited all, well not quite all. Beverly has allergic reactions to most perfumes and (I think) all men's colognes, so I slipped in and bought ice cream treats and we sat in their beautiful garden until the rest were all shopped out and loaded up with Dead Sea cosmetics. Ahava is Hebrew for love <0160> אהבה 'ahabah [a-hab-aw], Authorized Version - love 40 times.

It was just 9:55 a.m. and we were to be at Ein Gedi at 10:00, and Masada by noon. Eli gave us more background on the bus, *Ahava* is Hebrew for love, *Qumran* actually means two moons (one reflected from the sea), and *Ein Gedi* is a combination of *Ein*–“spring or oasis”, and *Gedi*–“goat-kid, i.e. Ibex.” The water level of the Dead Sea is receding 3 ft per year and when they tried to import sea water from the Red Sea or Med-Sea the solution produced gypsum (used as a fertilizer) and many environmental concerns.

The Ein Gedi Nature Preserve was an amazing stop for two reasons; first, it had areas where where we could clearly visualize David, and his 600 companions, hiding out from the pursuits of King Saul. At Ein Gedi we could see David resting in a cave where Saul slipped in to take a nap. And it was easy to comprehend David standing on one slope talking to Saul with his armies standing on an adjacent slope. They might be separated by a deep valley, but by land travel they might be over an hour apart.

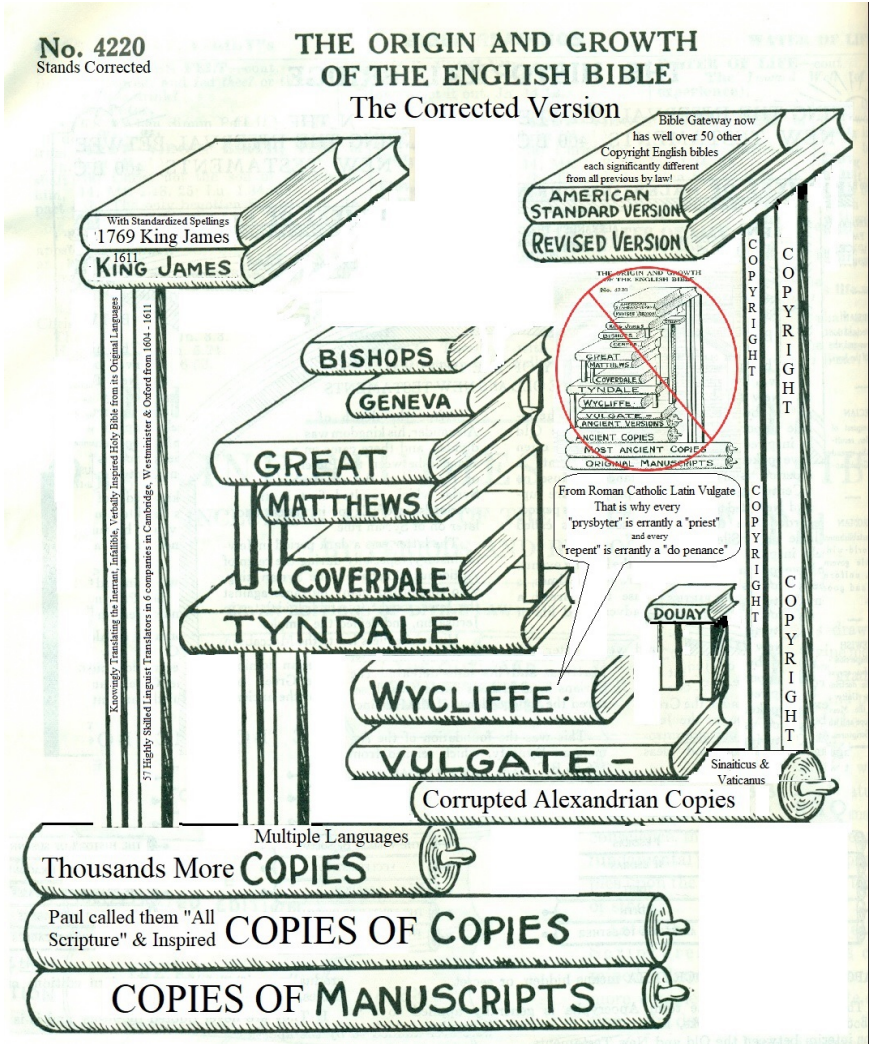
The second amazement here was all the water just springing out of the rock. These not uncommon springs bring to life many common Bible references.

They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at

thy tokens: thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice. 9 Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it. 10 Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof
(Psalms 65:8-10).

We had only an hour here and we had to be off to an exciting visit to Masada.

There is a misleading chart published by ecumenical, modernist bible promoters. I was given a copy from someones Thompson Chain Reference Bible, and for a hermeneutics class I taught, I corrected their chart. No charge.





#23022 Sun 26 Mar Masada, Dead Sea

It was obvious that Eli, our Israeli guide, was most excited about our trip to the top of the mesa called Masada. His excitement rubbed off on each of us as we gathered at the base of the cliffs and watched the cable cars climb the suspended ascent of the face of this majestic mountain. With an x-military exuberance he gave review of some of what we would see once we were on top of this natural fortress sprung out of the desert floor. I watched our group and determined that most were not aware of all the history that Eli would unfold there.



Eli and Pastor Lee both kept the dire ending of this tragic history close, knowing the power of this tragic account was best comprehended when the prelude was well set. Eli was a craftsman at unfolding the narcissist, paranoid nature of Herod the Great, interweaving it into his extravagant Masada palace he built, the amazing water mongering methods he developed, and the long term logistics in place which provided a lavish perpetual existence in this harsh environment atop a barely accessible mountain. Our guide laid all that foundation well before he introduced the post Herod residents who made this their holdout, ... their final holdout. Eli remained somber as he gave heart felt details of what all unfolded here on this mountain top fortress.

Bev and I had walked through and never forgot the powerful emotions of learning Masada's history in our 2009 visit. I was

privileged on this trip to teach in a worship service atop of Masada, and made the focus on Satan's desire to destroy the Jews, and God's upcoming final victory. We had visited here only five months ago, and researched extensively the fuller history and meaning of this amazing wilderness mesa beside the Dead Sea. I recall here in this journal, as best I can, much of that history with insights from the larger history of antisemitism.

Masada, in Hebrew and on modern maps called "*Met-Sada*", stands as a grand monument on the shores of the Dead Sea. The mesa like rock plateau stands atop 1,300 foot cliffs overlooking the Dead Sea. It is an awesome conformation and a monument to three things; 1) to man's unnatural hatred of God's chosen people Israel, 2) to a man's elaborate, extravagant, and psychotic life, and 3) to a fortress with extraordinary archaeological exploration and findings. This was to be a remarkable afternoon in our exploration of God's holy land.

Our bus pulled out of the Ein Gedi Reserve parking lot and turned south for a 13 mile drive on Highway 90. Sandwiched between the Dead Sea and the mountainous wilderness to the west, the drive itself was intriguing. Gorges and canyons opened into the low land desert where their rivers turned to dusty trickles and dumped into the sea. Off in the distance we can see the flat top mountain called Masada rise out of the desert floor. It was the most impressive topography.

The flat top mountain loomed before us as our wide eyed group gathered in the parking lot and stared up the side of the sheer cliff. We followed behind Pastor Pickett and Eli as we made our way through the welcome center and they arranged for our entry and ride on the cable cars. Bev and I were excited to be here again, but there was still a nervous tension in the air as our group waited in line for the suspended driverless cable car, that would dangle us 1,000 feet above the desert floor. I was not sure how many people were supposed to jump into one of these contraptions, but about ten more than should have crowded in to the car ahead of us as it loaded. The automatic doors attempted to close but were blocked by the last

passengers cramming in. Attendants pushed on the overflow until the glass doors slid past them. We watch through the glass as passengers repositioned to get “comfortable” for the accent. It made us a little uncomfortable, but we all glanced at each other with smiles that said it would be okay. We stared at the crammed full car as it lurched into motion and left the station. We kept our smiles, but tension increased as we waited for the next car.

When it comes to phobias a suspended cable car has a good majority covered. A large group of strangers, crammed into a tight area, tightly confined there, with no control over the situation, dangling hundreds of feet in the air, and when two or three smart alicks shift from side to side, so does the whole cable car. Those who had reasonable control over their phobias could look out and wave to the hiking teams as they got tinier and tinier on the hiking trail far below us. The view we had was breathtaking. So were the phobias.

When the doors finally opened at the top of our gentle glide with the spectacular view, the adventure of ascent was not quite complete. We stepped out on a narrow metal mesh gangplank that was suspended above nothing, ... and that nothing went on for three score and ten cubits straight down. I am not afraid of heights, but I am afraid of falling large distances. White knuckles gripped the gang plank hand rail, and I did not venture to look down until my feet were on solid rock on the short path to the top of Masada. Wow!

I called Masada a threefold monument, let me address the least to the greatest. The archaeological digs all over this mountain fortress are impressive. Recall again that archaeology is 10% find, 90% imagination. Wall foundations, artifacts, mosaics, and plaster fascia, bath houses, interconnected cisterns and every archaeological dig found on this mountain top have kept “imagination” here very active. What was built here? How, why, and when was it built? What was built underneath? What did these walls see and hear? Humans armed with inquiring minds are always on a quest to find out more, to uncover the past, to dig a little deeper.

In March, college students, who normally attend to the digs, were in school, but just the same several archaeological sites were still open and being explored here in the fortress atop Masada. The archaeological extravagance was intriguing. Who discovered what—when still intrigues some of us, and the line demarking what was original and what was reconstructed still put good running shoes on active imaginations.

A second monument here was for Herod the Great, who reigned from 37 BC to 4 AD and was psychotic. He was probably not deserving of the “Great” title, except that he was greatly psychotic, and quite a great builder⁸⁹. Here on Masada he built an elaborate Roman bathhouse to support his more elaborate, even exotic, palaces. Herod's northern palace was chiseled into the rock of the northern cliff edge and hung out with nothing but that three score and ten cubits of drop as his backyard. A paranoid recluse might have considered the rocky reef of the Mediterranean Sea a remarkable backdrop of privacy and protection, but this, on Masada, had that beat hands-down. The palaces, the Roman bathhouse, the swimming pool, the elaborate water resources found on Masada, and then all the archaeological wonder that exposed them, were amazing monuments found on this mighty fortress. But they pale in comparison to the depravity of man that was put on full display on this mountain plateau. That is the third monument found at Masada, it is an ugly monument.

Mankind has an unnatural hatred for God's chosen people Israel. A genuine believer understands that antisemitism is a manifestation of Satan's opposition to God. Masada is an important post-AD⁹⁰ cog in Satan's attempt to totally annihilate God's chosen people Israel by genocide. It is not unprecedented. From Genesis 3:15 to Jeremiah 22:30⁹¹, Satan does all he can to destroy the seed line of Messiah.

89 Herod built the 2nd Temple and lavish palace-fortresses at Caesarea, Masada, Jericho, and Herodium.

90 AD is a Latin abbreviation of “*Anno Domini*” meaning “In the year of our Lord.” “Post -AD” refers to the period after the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

91 *Genesis 3:15* “*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise*

Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, Ruben, Jacob's rejected first born (cf 1Chr.5:1-2), Joseph, all the drama of Genesis, and all the lineage of kings, these record Satan's attempts to foul and destroy God's chosen seed line of Messiah.

One can easily see that the seed line is a dynamic ongoing battle which ends up including harlots, Moabites and misfits. Its outcome is cast before the foundation of the earth, but its participants are not! God works with man, and man's free will, to accomplish his purposes. He still does; John Calvin's predestination, election, and fatalism ideologies be gone!⁹² God is dynamically working with man in real time. That is on prominent display throughout the Bible, but is only seen by the Bible student that is not engulfed in other preconceived ideas. God is dynamically working with man in real time, he did then, and does now. So when God stops the clear revelation of this seed line, declaring king Jehoiakim childless, Satan has to take another tact. He chooses genocide, striving to wipe out every living Jew.

If you have read the book of Esther you know about Haman the son of the Agagite, and you see Satan's new hand; his first attempt using genocide. You might rehearse the recorded drama of that account and relish God's providence and victory, even when God's name is found nowhere in the book. One might also dig out some Apocryphal inter-testament history books, they are man made and not Scripture, no matter what Rome says, but we learn about the

his heel.” Jeremiah 22:30 “Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.” Jehoiakim was the last of the kings of Judah, God calls him Coniah, meaning “Jehovah will establish”, and apparently God ends the kingly seed line of Judah in this verse, but according to Matthew 1:11-12, God does a righteous “bait and switch” wherein man, and more so Satan, loses track of the seed line of David which is the seed line of Messiah.

92 The Westminster Confession, accepted by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, John Calvin, and Calvinists, is IN ERROR and contradicts the Holy Bible when it states in chapter 3, “God unchangeably ordained (and decreed) whatsoever comes to pass.” In the Holy Bible, prayer changes things (2Kings.20:1-6), and the “whosoever”'s choose their own destiny (John.3:16-19, Rev.22:17).

villainous Antiochus of Syria and the Maccabean revolts. Les Crawford, director of The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry in Australia, tells us:

Antiochus Epimanes, meaning 'Antiochus the Mad' or 'Maniac' ... unleashed his fury on Jerusalem when he returned from Egypt. First, he killed Jason, the last of the Zadokite high priests. He also ordered the massacre of about 40,000 Jews and sold a similar number into slavery. But this was merely the beginning. His persecution of the Jewish people knew no limits.

Antiochus installed a Seleucid garrison to control Jerusalem and proceeded to stamp out the Jewish faith using murder and torture. Toward the end of 167 BC, he issued a series of devastating decrees that included forbidding Temple offerings and installing pagan altars and images for people to offer sacrifices of pigs and other unclean animals in the Jewish sanctuary. He also outlawed circumcision and Sabbath observance, and he burned Torah scrolls and forced dietary violations. Disobedience was punishable by death— usually a gruesome one.

The climax of the attack on Judaism came when Antiochus offered a pig on the pagan altar to Zeus that had been erected in the Jerusalem Temple. The desecration foreshadows the future, prophetic “abomination of desolation” associated with the Antichrist (Dan. 11:31; 12:11).

The action provoked courageous resistance from the Jewish people, but Antiochus’s garrison initially crushed it. Under the leadership of Mattathias and his son Judah, the Jewish forces grew strong enough to defeat Antiochus’s army. This victory enabled the rededication and restoration of the Temple, a remarkable moment in Jewish history celebrated annually in the festival of Hanukkah.⁹³

Ergo Satan was not able to corrupt the seed line of Christ, nor annihilate the Jew's who brought us the Messiah. And, not surprisingly, Christ bruised Satan's head. “Now, Satan must do all he can to keep God's immutable plans from coming to pass. Satan

93 <https://israelmyglory.org/article/villainous-antiochus/> Israel My Glory January/February 2023, Article “Villainous-Antiochus” by Les Crawford, pg 19.

must prevent the fulfillment of God's covenant promises to Israel.”⁹⁴

What happened at Masada in 74 AD is the tail end of Satan's first post-AD attempt at annihilating all Jews. It is dramatic. It is tragic. Many try to erase it from history, to refute Josephus' record of it, and even to call the Jews, who died here on Masada, repulsive Zealots who deserved to die. Just the same it was the hand of Satan himself and his zeal to revenge himself against Israel's deliverance of the Messiah, just as is described in upcoming prophecy of Revelation of Jesus Christ chapter 12. Note particularly verse 13, “*And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.*”

Masada was only Satan's precursor. Josephus reports that over a million Jews were slaughtered or carried into captivity in the AD 63-74 Jewish revolt against Rome. Jerusalem was destroyed and burned by future emperor Titus until not one Jew remained in Israel. The Roman governor of Judaea, Lucius Flavius Silva, headed a Roman legion and laid siege to Masada to kill the thousand who remained. Such demonic hatred and persecution would pursue Jews to this day.

Bruce Scott writes in his article “Away With Them”:

In the centuries that followed, Jewish people were expelled from cities and kingdoms throughout medieval “Christian Europe,” including Germany, Austria, Hungary, the Papal States, and Italy. One such ill-famed expulsion resulted from the edict of English King Edward I (of William Wallace [Braveheart] fame) in 1290. Thousands were evicted from their homes and forbidden to return to England for almost 400 years. In 1394, King Charles VI expelled all Jews from France.

However, the most infamous expulsion occurred in Spain. On March 31, 1492, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella signed the Alhambra Decree (Edict of Expulsion), which was not made public until May 1, shortly after they commissioned Christopher Columbus to embark on his historic voyage to the New World.

94 <https://israelmyglory.org/article/the-never-ending-hatred/> Israel My Glory January/February 2023, Article “The Never-Ending Hatred - Why does antisemitism refuse to die? What evil fuels this illogical, never-ending hatred?” by Ty Perry, pg 14-17

The Alhambra Decree threw the Jews out of Spain lock, stock, and barrel, adding that any who remained would “incur the penalty of death and the confiscation of all their possessions.” They had until August 1 (9th of the Hebrew month Av) to comply. This expulsion dismembered the largest Jewish community in the world at the time.⁹⁵

The article continues to describe the “ethnic cleansing” undertaken by the Catholic Church which perpetuated wholesale slaughter of Jews with the cruelest means. The hatred and slaughter of God's chosen people continued into Protestant ranks. Scott continues in his article:



It wasn't only Catholics who advocated expelling the Jews. In 1543, Martin Luther, leader of the Protestant Reformation, wrote a 13-part booklet titled “On the Jews and Their Lies”.

It spewed such vitriolic hatred of the Jewish people that it influenced the German perception of Jews for centuries to come and helped Adolf Hitler and the Nazis justify their “final solution to the Jewish question,” an euphemism for the annihilation of European Jewry.

95 <https://israelmyglory.org/article/away-with-them/> Israel My Glory January/February 2023, Article.

Toward the beginning of his ministry, Luther was more congenial toward the Jewish community, thinking Jews might believe the gospel after he restored the doctrine of justification by faith. But when they failed to accept the gospel, he began to despise them.

He wrote “On the Jews and Their Lies” three years before he died. It is a polemic against a Jewish publication in which the author debates an imaginary Christian. Luther not only challenged the Jewish author’s interpretation of Scripture, but also vented his animosity toward all Jews. He held nothing back. “Next to the devil,” Luther wrote, “a Christian has no more bitter and galling foe than a Jew.”⁹⁶

Martin Luther called Jewish people “venomous, bitter, vindictive, tricky serpents, assassins, and children of the devil who sting and work harm stealthily wherever they cannot do it openly.” He also gave credence to the commonly accepted libels of the day that Jewish people kidnapped and mutilated Christian children and deliberately poisoned wells. (This very libel led to the massacre of thousands of European Jews during the Black Death plague in the mid-14th century.)

The tail end of the Roman Empire's hatred for, and destruction of a million Jews, happened on the highland desert plateau called Masada. It is presently one of the most popular tourist attractions in Israel receiving 750,000 visitors per year. We were twenty-two of them, twenty two that should never forget what Rome, in league with Satan himself, did here. The Roman Empire, spiraling into obliteration because of the judgment of God, reached out with its evil fingers and attempted to wipe all of God's chosen people Israel off the face of the earth. They burnt and destroyed the temple and all of Jerusalem in 70 AD, and then with one final villainous campaign they reached to the top of a fortress in a barren wilderness to kill off the thousand Jews that still defied their evil. If we learn nothing else from this tour of Masada, learn this, antisemitism is diabolical, it is a manifestation of Satan himself; Satan “*opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped*” (2Thes.2:4); he will do whatever it takes to prevent the

96 Ibid. pg 22.

fulfillment of God's covenant promises to Israel, but he will fail. Masada is thus a vile taste of the great lengths that Satan would take, through the hands of evil men, to destroy the Jew.



In 1948 Israel was given back what God said was rightfully theirs and a slogan was born to commemorate their homecoming; the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) units are still sworn in on Masada's southern point with that powerful affirmation for the Jewish state, "Masada, shall never fall again." In that swearing in ceremony Elazar Ben Yair's words⁹⁷ are read atop that mesa:

97 "Since we long ago resolved never to be servants to the Romans, nor to any other than to God Himself, Who alone is the true and just Lord of mankind, the time is now come that obliges us to make that resolution true in practice...We were the very first that revolted, and we are the last to fight against them; and I cannot but esteem it as a favor that God has granted us, that it is still in our power to die bravely, and in a state of freedom." from

“Since we long ago, my generous friends, resolved never to be servants to the Romans, nor to any other than to God himself, who alone is the true and just lord of mankind; the time is now come that obliges us to make that resolution true in practice...I cannot but esteem it as a favor that God hath granted us, that ’tis still in our power to die bravely, and in a state of freedom. Which hath not been the case of others, who were conquered unexpectedly. ’Tis very plain that we shall be taken within a days time: but ’tis still an eligible thing to die, after a glorious manner, together with our dearest friends.”⁹⁸

A Christian with their Bible open to the Revelation of Jesus Christ might be found in full agreement with their slogan, “Masada, shall never fall again.” Our bus lumbered out of the parking lot of Masada National Park. Some of us were somber, but all of us were knowing who holds the future, and carried a better perspective which would better enable us to fulfill Psalm 122:6-9,

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions’ sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good (Ps.122:6-9).

There was one more stop for the day, the bus turned south and we headed for a salty beach on the southern end of the Dead Sea, we were headed for the David Dead Sea Hotel⁹⁹ (31°12’09.23”N

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/elazar-ben-yair-speech-at-masada>
(Accessed 01/02/2024).

98 <https://www.ifcj.org/news/fellowship-blog/masada-shall-never-fall-again>
International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, Fellowship-blog article, 21 May 2018. (Accessed 01/02/2023)

99 The David Dead Sea Hotel is a luxury resort and spa, located in the scenic Ein Bokek resort, along the bank of the Dead Sea. The hotel’s vast amount of amenities and facilities means that guests can choose between a tranquil and serene stay or a vibrant and entertaining experience. The hotel is fully equipped with a deluxe spa, multiple restaurants, dining rooms, bars, pools,

35°21'41.03"E). The visit to, and float in, the Dead Sea was so extraordinary it requires another Half Shekel to cover it all. The hotel and the kosher supper were every bit as exotic as their advertisements. That would end our Lord's Day. On deck, Day 12, March 27th.at Timna Park and Solomon's Pillars, then hours at the Model Tabernacle, and a restful repose on the Red Sea at Eilat.

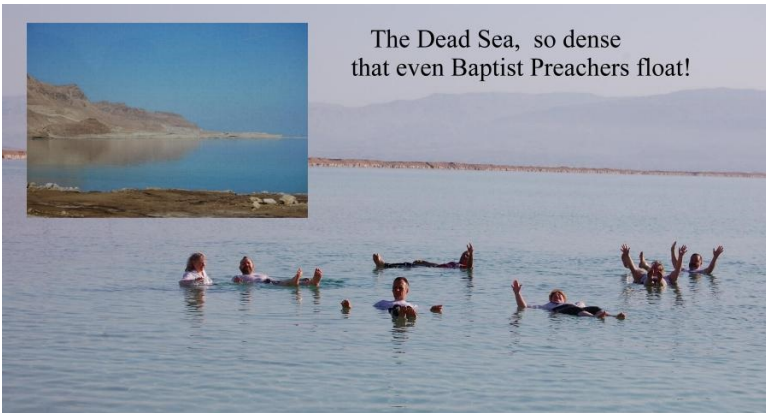


saunas, and much more. For a truly unforgettable Dead Sea travel experience, this is certainly the place to stay. <https://deadsea.com> see david-dead-sea-hotel (Accessed 01/02/2024)



#23023 Sun 26 Mar Dead Sea

It was remarkable to stay at the David Dead Sea Hotel¹⁰⁰ (31°12'09.23"N 35°21'41.03"E), so allow me to remark a little. I didn't get any pictures of our trip to the “beach,” the warning about what this Dead Sea salt does to smart phones was that sobering. I'm sure one of our group that reads this has some neat pictures, and that when they read this they will send them to me, and that I will update this Half Shekel with pictures when I get them, but, for now, I'll attempt to put the picture in your minds eye.



The Dead Sea water is so dense that even a Baptist Preacher will float. (Inside joke, my wife liked it.) We had previously been told about some Roman who described the three wonders of this land as 1) they have a temple where there is not a single graven image; 2) they have one day in the week were nobody works; and 3) they have a sea where everything floats. At about 4 PM or so, our group emerged from their rooms, went across the street to the beaches of the Dead Sea to experience that last wonder. It is a wonder indeed,

¹⁰⁰The David Dead Sea Hotel is a luxury resort and spa, located in the scenic Ein Bokek resort, along the bank of the Dead Sea. The hotel's vast amount of amenities and facilities means that guests can choose between a tranquil and serene stay or a vibrant and entertaining experience. The hotel is fully equipped with a deluxe spa, multiple restaurants, dining rooms, bars, pools, saunas, and much more. For a truly unforgettable Dead Sea travel experience, this is certainly the place to stay. <https://deadsea.com> see david-dead-sea-hotel (Accessed 01/02/2024)

but the Dead Sea is so much more than that.

The sea with multiple inlets and no outlet was destined to become very high in mineral content and it has the highest on earth, but it got that way in a single day, not in a million years of fictitious evolution¹⁰¹. The high density of the water makes a body float abnormally. In my military career I have worked with some very dense individuals, and I suppose even they might float on the Dead Sea. It was a genuine worthwhile adventure to try it, and just as adventuresome to watch others in the group experience abundant buoyancy.

Exposing bodies to the extraordinary high mineral content of the Dead Sea supposedly has a myriad of health benefits. Consequently, several snake-oil salesmen have made a business of concocting various lotions, soaps, and creams, prepared by the apothecary art, that we could buy here for half price, several did. My Beverly is inclined to allergic reaction sinus infections when exposed to perfumes and colognes so we carefully avoided the concoctions, as best we could.

I still feel bad having a 2023 Half Shekel Journal record without pictures so I pulled some from 14 years ago when Lee and Donna Pickett, myself with Bev, and our good friends Pastor Jeff and Denise Carpenter floated on the Dead Sea in 2009. The times were different, Lake levels were significantly higher, and Hamas was assembling and launching missiles made of school and hospital sewer pipes from Gaza, trying to reach Tel Aviv, but the Dead Sea was still, ... well, dead.

The spiritual significance of the Dead Sea is squelched by the tourist trade, and categorically denied by our atheistic, or agnostic,

101 Encyclopedia Britannica says “Beginning about 2.5 million years ago, heavy streamflow into the lake deposited thick sediments of shale, clay, sandstone, rock salt, and gypsum. Later, strata of clay, marl, soft chalk, and gypsum were dropped onto layers of sand and gravel. ... During the past 10,000 years, the lake gradually shrank to its present form. In so doing, it exposed deposits that now cover the Dead Sea valley to thicknesses of between about 1 and 4 miles.” The Bible says the four mile deep layer of mineral deposits came in one day (Gen.19) for a reason (Gen.13:13).

or apostate catholic society. They miss or dismiss significant Scripture:

The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. 24 Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; 25 And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. 26 But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt. 27 And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD: 28 And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace (Gen 19:23-28).

When God rained down fire and brimstone¹⁰², the fertile plain that surrounded Sodom and Gomorrah, described in the Bible as being like the garden of the LORD (Gen.13:10)¹⁰³, was turned into a brimstone laden, sulfuric, salt, and mineral laden slime which sunk so low that it is now the lowest place on all of the LORD God's otherwise green earth, and Sodom and Gomorrah's brimstone goes to a remarkable depth of four miles down under that Dead Sea! That was done for a reason, Jehovah God says:

So that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the LORD hath laid upon it; And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any

102Noah Webster's 1828 - BRIM'STONE, n. Sulphur; a hard, brittle, inflammable substance, of a lemon yellow color, which has no smell, unless heated, and which becomes negatively electric by heat and friction. It is found, in great quantities, and sometimes pure, in the neighborhood of volcanoes. It is an ingredient in a variety of minerals and ores. The sulphur of commerce is procured from its natural beds, or artificially extracted from pyrites.

103Ge 13:10 *And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.*

grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath: Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger?

(Deut.29:22-24).

When God uses adjectives to describe the sin that went on in those two cities, those Hebrew adjectives exceed all others in the vile, disgusting, sinfulness, they adjectate; more-so than all other “abominations.”¹⁰⁴ Consequently the destruction of that sinful place became a perpetual monument of what brimstone does to prime real estate when Jehovah God turns his wrath upon it. That is precisely where all that mineral content came from; actual blocks of brimstone are quarried out of this place to this day! Hiroshima and Nagasaki (ref Atomic bombings of, Aug 6-9, 1945) were eventually re-populated, but this place, this Dead Sea, will remain a dead sea until the healing waters from the throne of our Lord Jesus Christ flow into it and rejuvenate the earth during the millennial reign of Christ.

Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing

104“*The first use of the word that pertains to what God finds disgusting, loathsome, vicious, vile and abhorred is found in Leviticus 18:22, “Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination <08441 תוֹעֵבָה tow‘ebah or to-ay-baw’>” Sexual sinfulness, particularly sodomy, is again called out in the Bible as being exceedingly sinful (Genesis 13:13), very grievous (Genesis 18:20), and now as sin that God finds disgusting, loathsome, vicious, vile and abhorred. We are not here profiling any sin, we are doing word studies that examine some first use Hebrew words for sin and find that sodomy is ranked up there as the most vile sin for heathen nations.” See “A Systematic Theology for the 21st Century Volume 07 Hamartiology - Chapter 4 Etymology of Sin”, www.GSBaptistChurch.com/theology/21cent_vol07Hamartiology.pdf, pg 27-45.*

that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. ... And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine (Ezek.47:8-9,12, cf Rev.22:2).

If you have not secured a place in that Kingdom of Heaven, you need to do it now. “*Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven*”(Matt.18:3).

You cannot enter God's Kingdom carrying the condemnation of sin, but the Gospel of Jesus Christ tells us: *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ... 36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. ...*

5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life (John 3:16-18, 36, 5:24).

Salvation from that condemnation is a free gift, “*For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*” (Rom.6:23).

Christ paid your sin debt on Calvary, “*But God commendeth his*

love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom.5:8).

It is a free gift but there is a formal acceptance policy for it, you must take advantage of it to get into the Kingdom, *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom.10:9-10).*

Being saved from condemnation and entering the family of God to be part of the Kingdom of Heaven is just that simple, anyone can do it anywhere! Be sure you have; be sure you are “IN”. *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom.10:13). “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1Jo.5:12).*

The information about the Dead Sea's origin, is known to born again Bible believers, but concealed from a blinded world. It is that blinded world, led by Hell itself, who resurrects the hideous sin of sodomy, and wants it as our society's preferred lifestyle today. God help us... Oh, by the way, he will.

Everyone knows someone, or has a family member who is entangled in the queer sin of sodomy. It is the dregs of our society, but they are not: they can be reached with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, with prayer, and supplication with thanksgiving. You can play a part in reaching them with such a simple gospel message. God bless you as you pray, ... and try, and keep trying.

The supper table buzzed with exciting talk and stories about floating on the Dead Sea. Bev and I found a secluded corner of the luxurious lobby to read our “Through the Bible Chronologically in One Year”¹⁰⁵ assignment of Joshua 21-22. We then read aloud Psalm 85 because we read a Psalm/Prov. each day, and this was the 85th day of the year 2023. The Bible is a living book wherever you read it, but reading it here, with Dead Sea salt still cleaving to our skin, made it even livelier than normal. Praise our Lord Jesus Christ.

105 See www.GSBaptistChurch.com/kjv/bible_read_sched_fam20xx.pdf.

And then voilà¹⁰⁶ we were zonked in the luxurious David Dead Sea Hotel, getting rest for a big day tomorrow. Day 12 March 27 would take us to Timna Park, Solomon's Pillars, the Tabernacle Model, and then a restful day off on the Red Sea at Eilat.

106 Voilà is essentially a French combination of two words: voir (to see/look) and là (there). So literally speaking, voilà is an instruction. When you use it, you are telling people to 'look there'. So you can use voilà to draw attention to something that you can physically see. "Wah-Lah" should probably be pronounced, "V-wah-Lah" with a "V" sound at the start. For sure it would be spelled "voila" and not "Wa-La." Be careful, however, because "Wallah" means I swear/by God it literally means "I swear to God," and it is sure to come up in conversation way more times than appropriate, given what Exod.20:7, Deut.5:11, and .Prov.30:9 say about using his name in vain.



#23024 Mon 27 Mar Negev, Judean Date Palm, Timna Park

After a good night of rest, a superb kosher breakfast among friends, the dawn packing of all our worldly possessions into the belly of the King-Long tour bus, and a superb devotional by Pastor Henry Penner, the bus pulled away from the Dead Sea, and headed toward the Red Sea. As we drove past spectacular salt and rock formations, and a huge industrial complex, Eli, our Israeli guide, took the mic and began, with an excited zeal, to pour out pages of encyclopedic information.



The water of the Dead Sea is 58% magnesium chloride, 37% potassium chloride, and 8% salt or sodium chloride. The salt plant you see on our left extracts minerals from the Dead Sea. Large amounts of potash are extracted, 95% is used for, or in, fertilizers, but it is also used in detergents, and ceramics. And we saw how the Dead Sea minerals are used in cosmetics¹⁰⁷; it is curious that when God rained down fire and brimstone for the destruction of Sodom,

107 “Do Dead Sea minerals really work?” The minerals are naturally anti-bacterial, anti-inflammatory, and contain antioxidants that can help reduce the appearance of wrinkles and promote skin healing. Dead Sea minerals also have a gentle exfoliation effect that helps to remove dead skin cells, making them great for acne treatment. (From “The Anti-Ageing Benefits of Dead Sea Minerals in Skin Care” www.thedeadseaco.com Apr 26, 2023).

its aftermath makes a healing cream; when he destroyed the world in a flood its aftermath makes fossil-fuels.

Incidentally, Potassium is often called potash because it was once leached out of wood ash in large iron pots, and the name “Pot-Ash” stuck. “Wood ash may generally be 20% calcium and only 5% potash, but both are important plant nutrients.”¹⁰⁸ Potash predominantly comes from dried seafloors. Seafloors of long ago dried up very large bodies of sea water. Consequently Canada has the largest output of potash: when you understand the Biblical world flood of 2348 BC, you can understand why, but if you are an evolutionist, all you have is a wild hypothesis involving millions and millions of (unsustainable) years.

Recall also that Eli already explained the mixing Red Sea into Dead Sea made large quantities of “gypsum”¹⁰⁹ turning all this barren valley into a large chunk of Plaster of Paris (see the footnote for that to make sense). We will be driving 4 hours through the Negev, Israel's southern area of desert or semi desert, well known for its unique geological features and amazing desert landscapes. It amounts to about 2/3 of the 8,500 sq. mile country of Israel, which is roughly the size of New Jersey's 7,353 sq. miles. The Golan heights area is about 460 sq. miles, while the Negev is 5,000 square miles of desert.

Also, since you asked, the minimum wage in Israel is ₪ 5,572 (shekels) per month, \$1,476 USD (₪ 1 (shekel or NIS¹¹⁰) = 0.27 \$

108 Wood ash and Potash insights from crop nutrition.com, accessed 01/10/2024.

109 Gypsum is a soft sulfate mineral composed of calcium sulfate dihydrate, with the chemical formula $\text{CaSO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$. It is widely mined and is used as a fertilizer and as the main constituent in many forms of plaster, drywall and blackboard or sidewalk chalk. Crude gypsum is used as a fluxing agent, fertilizer, filler in paper and textiles, and retarder in portland cement. About three-fourths of the total production is calcined for use as plaster of paris and as building materials in plaster, Keene's cement, board products, and tiles and blocks. “Gypsum | Definition, Uses, & Facts – Britannica”, www.britannica.com Earth Sciences Dec 7, 2023

110 The new Israeli shekel (NIS) was introduced in September 1985 to replace the earlier Israeli shekel. The government and central bank introduced this measure as part of a successful economic stabilization policy that helped

USD), average wage is ₪ 12,454 NIS per month, \$3,300 USD. Gasoline is \$7 per gallon and a four room apartment in Tel Aviv is ₪ 7,140 NIS per month, about \$2,000 USD per month. Despite a nice apartment in Tel Aviv costing about a million dollars a year, our economy is robust, and this Negev holds a gold mine of minerals, ... no gold, however.

After about an hour the bus pulled off the main road and started down a drive towards what appeared to be sort of a desert oasis. The Ancient Judean Date Project was to be our refreshing and informative first desert stop today.

It is hard to imagine that date palms could be germinated from seeds that are more than 2,000 years old, seeds excavated out of the top of Masada in the mid 1960s, but that is just how it happened. In 2005 several such seeds were secured by Louis L. Borick Natural Medicine Research Center, and given to Dr Elaine Solowey, at the Center for Sustainable Agriculture. She was the first to successfully germinate one of these seeds, and she named the young date palm sprout Methuselah.

Today our bus pulled into the Arava Institute Research Park on Kibbutz Ketura where Methuselah, a male tree, now lives. He was transplanted here from his greenhouse pot in 2011, and 12 years later we are making a house call. Following Dr Solowey's success, six additional date seeds were grown and the Ancient Date Project, sprouting *Phoenix dactylifera* date palms, became an important symbol for Judaism.

Methuselah is the species of desert date-palm grown in ancient Judea, it was prominent during the time of Christ, its image appeared on coins and in synagogues as a symbol of the region, and its fruits were famous for taste, large size, and medicinal properties. This was a big deal in Israel.

Judean Date Palms: a Fascinating Heritage & First Fruits

In 2005, the germination of "**Methuselah**," a date seed radiocarbon dated to the 4th - 1st century BC, showed it was possible to wake up ancient seeds which had been dormant for 2,000 years.

control a rate of inflation that had grown steadily since the 1950s. cf
Britannica Encyclopedia.

From 2007 to 2012, **Dr. Sarah Sallon**, leader and founder of the ancient Judean Date Project, procured 32 additional ancient seeds discovered during excavations of Masada and Judean desert caves. Of these, 6 were successfully germinated by **Dr. Elaine Solowey** including: 2 females "**Hannah**" and "**Judith**" (4th - 1st century BC) and 4 males "**Adam**" (2nd - 1st century BC) and "**Boaz**", "**Uriel**" and "**Jonah**" (1st - 2nd century AD). These trees possess a fascinating heritage.

Using sophisticated generic tools, scientists from the Date Palm Unit at the prestigious Institute of Research in Montpellier, France showed these ancient date palms have connections to Arabian, Iraqi, and North African varieties of date palms. However their seeds are significantly larger than the modern varieties of these dates.

Says Dr. Sallon, "... these finding mirror the Jewish Diaspora and trading links around the Mediterranean thousands of years ago - an ancient 'snapshot' of history and migrations at the crossroads of continents."

Dr. Solowey: "After years of effort, these very special trees have been 'reborn'. A real connection to our past history. Germinating and nurturing them has been an Impressive challenge."

Currently "Hannah", "Jonah", "Adam" and "Judith" have been planted out in this special ancient date palm grove. In 2020 Hannah was pollinated by "Methuselah", producing **the first Judean dates in 2,000 years!**

Dr. Sallon: "In this age of climate change and species loss, these unique trees show nature's incredible resilience, a beacon of light in difficult times."

METHUSELAH

Methuselah, the historic date palm you see in front of you, was sprouted in 2005 from a date seed over 2,000 years old. It was the oldest seed ever germinated!

Discovered in the 1960s during excavations of Masada, the fortress built by Herod overlooking the Dead Sea, this ancient date seed was found buried under rubble at the entrance to the Northern Palace, near the ruins of the food stores.

In 2005 **Dr. Sarah Sallon**, founder and director of the Louis L. Borick Natural Medicine Research Center at Hadassah Hospital, Jerusalem, initiated a project to germinate ancient seeds recovered from local archaeological sites as part of a program to study Israel's medicinal flora. Her "Ancient Seed Project" aimed to restore species once found in this region but now extinct.

Dr Sallon turned to **Dr. Elaine Solwey**, founder of the Center for Sustainable Agriculture at the Arava Institute, who had extensive experience cultivating desert plants growing under extreme conditions. She decided to accept the challenge. Astonishingly one of the 3 Masada seeds planted by Dr. Solowey germinated. Named after the oldest person mentioned in the Bible, Methuselah grew and developed as a male date palm tree and was planted into the ground in Kibbutz Ketura in 2011.

Published in 2008 by Dr. Sallon in the prestigious journal "Science", Methuselah quickly became a celebrity, written about widely in the media, and earning a place in the Guinness Book of World Records.

In August 2021 Arava Institute harvested three bunches of dates from a world famous ancient date-palm, in its second year of production, from this previously extinct tree. Hannah, sprouted from one of the 2,000 year old date seeds, produce 700 dates (111 in its first year) after being pollinated by Methuselah, and two other

ancient date palms, Adam and Jonah. The three named ancient palms were moved from their greenhouse home to the Arava Institute's Research and Visitor Park in 2019. Much more info is at the arava.org website.

There was a great Wonder unfolding in this place, some have called it a miracle. Pastor Lee Pickett gathered the group together under a palm tree and opened our Bibles to Isaiah 35:6, he led us through some of Eli's Negev details, summarized some of the wonder of a germinated 2,000-year-old date palm seed, and then pointed out and detailed a greater wonder, a greater hope, a greater promise. "Streams in the desert"...

The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

2 It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God.

3 Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. 4 Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you. 5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. 6 Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. 7 And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes (Isa.35:1-7).

Brother Lee continued, God made some promises to Israel and the Lord is not slack concerning his promise. God has shown us here, in the germination of a 2,000-year-old date tree, only a shadow of what is to come to this land. There is coming a day, that great day when Jesus returns, when "*no lion shall be there, ... but the redeemed shall walk there.*" Off in our future, God says he will keep

his promise.

No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: ... (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. ... 25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. 26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: 27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins (Isa.35:9, Rom.11:8,25-27).

What a day that will be.

As Costia pulled our tour bus away from this Oasis of great hope and expectation, my mind went to more of the Bible's great hope and expectation for this dry and thirsty land wherein the Negev will flourish with springs of living water:

Isa.35:7 And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. ... 41:18 I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. ... 49:10 They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them (Isa.35:7, 41:18, 49:10).

The tour bus carried us down route 90 as outstanding desert landscapes flashed across bus windows. It lulled some of us into a numb nap, and I was off in another dimension when suddenly the bus erupted with excitement and chatter. Joe Ville made an audacious claim of seeing an ostrich out his window and several around him were trying to calm him down and assure him he was

just confused, mistaken, or hallucinating. Joe would not be quieted but had no corroboration. I saw Eli smiling wryly, and stayed awake considering it. Suddenly, again the bus erupted with excitement and chatter, as two others said, “Look there's an ostrich.” Now no one slept on the bus, we were all busy pointing out ostrich sightings right up to the time we pulled into Timna Park.

In the sprawling Negev of Southern Israel there is a 15,000 acre horseshoe shaped valley surrounded by steep cliffs. Mount Timna stands tall in its center, and it is the site of the world's first ever copper mine. “First ever copper mine” makes Timna Park a gold mine of archaeology; so much so that all copper mining in this massive valley was halted and banned until archaeologists were done digging in the valley. They are still digging.

The Mushroom

In the valley below you is the Mushroom rock and an ancient copper smelting camp that dates back to the Egyptian activity period at Timna (from the 14th to 12th centuries BC) General view: (1) Mushroom, (2) smelting furnace, (3) local shrine, (4) industrial courtyard.

There are ancient copper mines and mining shafts throughout the park and the remains of smelting furnaces date back to ancient imperial Egypt. But wait, anyone with a Bible knows that Edomites were here before ancient imperial Egypt was, and sure enough, when you give archaeologists enough time, they will eventually substantiate God's truth. And they did find Edomite copper mining that predated Egyptian smelting of copper here.

Archaeology does not prove the Bible; only God does that. The unbelieving world is so consumed with prehistoric cavemen evolving through a bronze age into an iron age, that they will never discover Lamech's son Tubalcaine, “*an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron*” (Gen.4:22). God said Tubalcaine was in the 7th generation from Adam. Tubalcain, a decedent of Cain, and Methuselah, a descendant of Seth, were both 7th generation from Adam, and were possibly born around the same time. Methuselah was born in 3317 BC, in a 687 year old earth, 969 years before the world flood (Methuselah died the day before it started to rain!) (see the table of the ages of the “Sons of God” at the end of this journal).

Although much of the archaeological findings pointed to Egyptian mining operations of the 14th century, findings of their temples and shrines, their hieroglyphics, sculptures, and jewelry, totaling thousands of artifacts, the Timna Valley is today designated “Solomon's Copper Mines.”

Eli explained how dating olive and date pits brought us to Solomon's 1015 BC time frame and the abundance of 'kosher' food remains that indicated the Hebrew presence. In 1930 scientific and public interest in Timna copper mining was attributed to King Solomon by dated discoveries of Nelson Glueck, and pretty much the whole Timna Valley was named “King Solomon's Mines,” with the southern area labeled “Solomon's Pillars”.

In 1959 Professor Beno Rothenburg of University College, London, led the Arabah Expedition, and by 1990, 10,000 copper mines and smelting camps with furnaces and rock drawings were being excavated.



Eli confided that Solomon's camps had 10,000 workers living here and working these mines. The Bible speaks of this land of mines as, “*a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass*” (Deut.8:9). (Brass is an alloy of copper (Cu) and zinc (Zn) in proportions which can be varied to achieve different colours and mechanical traits and hardness).

Also Job says in the Bible, “*Surely there is a vein for the silver,*

and a place for gold where they mine it. Iron is taken out of the earth, and brass is molten out of the stone” (Job.28:1-2).

Although there is no Bible mention of Solomon and copper, we know that his Temple construction had great quantities of brass.

We wandered through a small portion of the park, read the signs and pondered the immensity of it all. We took notice of The Mushroom, surrounded by copper or smelting sites. The mushroom was a red sandstone rock formation curiously wrought by erosion. Back in the bus we were now headed to the Tabernacle Replica in the Timna Valley. I was eager to see it, I had spent hours building a model of the Tabernacle, and exploring its features.

	Table of the ages of the “Sons of God”	BC Date to	BC Date	Birth Yrs Before Flood	Died Yrs Before Flood	Earth Age at Birth	Earth Age at Death	Cain's Kin
	Creation	4004		1656	0	0		Gen 4:16-
1	Adam	4004 to	3074 ^B C	1656	726	0	930	Cain
2	Seth	3874 to	2962 ^B C	1526	614	130	1042	Enoch
3	Enos	3769 to	2864 ^B C	1421	516	235	1140	Irada
4	Cainan	3679 to	2769 ^B C	1331	421	325	1235	Mehujael
5	Mahalale el	3609 to	2714 ^B C	1261	366	395	1290	Methusael I
6	Jared	3544 to	2582 ^B C	1196	234	460	1422	Lamech
7	Enoch	3382 to	3017 ^B C	1034	669	622	987	Jabel, Juba I
8	Methusel ah	3317 to	2348 ^B C	969	0	687	1656	Tubalcaim
9	Lamech	3130 to	2353 ^B C	782	5	874	1651	
10	Noah	2948 to	1998 ^B C	600	-350	105	2006	
	Flood	2348 to	2347 ^B C	0	-1	165	1657	

Note: Jude 1:14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam,

prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,

Note: *Gen 4:19 ¶ And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. ... 22 And Zillah, she also bare Tubalcain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubalcain was Naamah.*

Note: God said Tubalcain was an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron, and that he was 7th generation from Adam. Methuselah was 7th generation from Adam, was born 3317 BC, into a 687 year old earth, and died just before it started to rain in the world flood of 2348 BC (in an earth only 1,656 years old!). To a Bible believer there is no prehistoric time, no Bronze Age or Iron Age, just Bible truth.

Page Fill (let no page be totally blank) A Penny Pulpit published while on our Pilgrimage



Msg #2312 Visiting Israel HS#02 Journal Excerpt

What The Bible Says Good Sam's Penny Pulpit by Pastor Ed Rice
While Pastor Rice and Bev are touring Israel with Pastor Lee Pickett from March 16th – March 31st, here is an entry from their journal of last years trip: (view the whole journal by visiting our website and clicking “Journaling a Preacher's Pilgrimage to Israel”) From Half Shekel Journal Entry #02:

Being careful about who was listening in, (on the very restrictive, Muslim controlled Temple Mount) Pastor Charlie continues. Another page of HisStory was written beneath this Temple Mount we are standing on. Solomon built the first temple on this very spot. Pastor continued to carefully expound God's documentation about Mount Moriah. King David accumulated the resources and designs for his son's miraculous construction of the temple. No chisel or hammer sounded on this site during the whole seven year construction (1Kng.6:7,38). But the Psalmists sure sounded out a lot about Solomon's Temple that stood here. Read here from Psalm.¹¹¹

It is hard to envision Solomon's temple as we stand here on a huge platform built by King Herod. The foot print of Solomon's temple is dwarfed by the platform that Herod built. Solomon's temple was glorious just the same. The Bible gives the dimensions for artist to imagine the pictures shown. There are also the models seen at the Israeli Museum.

Solomon's temple was gutted when Nebuchadnezzar ransacked the city in 606 BC (2Chr.36:6, 2Kng.24:14) and then completely destroyed when he came back in 595 BC (2Chr.36:13-21, 2Kng.25:1-17). Israel was thrust into the Babylonian captivity for 70 years as God said (2Chr,36:21, Jer.25,27,29), and, consequently, the Jews returned exactly 70 years after 606, in 536 BC (Ezra 1:1-4), and the rebuilt temple was finished twenty

111 Online Bible Verse List: Ps 5:7, 11:4, 18:6, 27:4, 29:9,48:9,65:4, 68:29, 138:2

years later in 515 BC (Ezra 6:15)¹¹². God runs a pretty exacting calendar.

Standing on Mount Moriah and reviewing events the Bible records 2,600 years ago added a depth to our worship here. Noah Webster defines a "pilgrimage" as "a long journey, particularly a journey to someplace deemed sacred and venerable (worthy of reverence), in order to pay devotion to relics of some deceased saint." We were not here for deceased saints, but for a living Savior. This was a pilgrimage just the same, and God said that this place where we stood was indeed sacred. The slides shown here are from a Temple History presentation assembled by the author in 2015.

Pastor Charlie pulled us from 600 BC back to the present, Look at this great platform that Herod built, that dome and the mosque are each laden with demonic symbols and represent Satan's presence here, but look back to visualize the temple that stood on this ground. Herod's temple, the temple where Jesus overthrew the tables of the money changers, stood right here. Pastor laid before us the very presence of Jesus in this place; and the authority he always displayed with his presence in this temple. Always? Yes always! It was as if he owned the place.

An Essay for week #12 - Mar 19, 2023

A Holy Land Tour Journalled at www.GSBaptistChurch.com/israel22

112 Dates given are according to Ussher's very Biblical dating calculations which often differ from modernist "scholar" dates. James Ussher (1581-1656), Archbishop of Armagh, but genius believer.



#23025 Mon 27 Mar Timna Tabernacle Materials

As we pulled away from Solomon's Copper Mines I was excited about our next stop at Timna's Replica Tabernacle. I had done extensive study on the Tabernacle, had built a scale model of it in my study, and taught a couple seminars on it over the past ten years. Now I would visit a full scale replica of it in the very Negev where it was first constructed and stood 3,515 years ago (1492BC+2023AD).

When we say replica we gotta know that they did not build the mercy seat or candlestick out of solid gold, but seeing the replica would provide me an experience that was, ... pure gold.



In October, 2000, a full scale replica of the Old Testament Tabernacle was completed by Dr. Randy Smith, and erected at the

Almog Kibbutz. I've reviewed pictures¹¹³ and found it to be a fabulous model, superior to the Timna model, but, unfortunately, it was taken down in October, 2006 because of financial reasons.

The bus pulled into the parking lot and I could see the tabernacle enclosure nestled in the desert backdrop of the Timna Valley. My first thoughts were, wow, it looks exactly like the model I have in my study. Brother Lee had shared photos that he had taken on his previous trips to Timna Valley, so nothing surprised me, but everything moved me.

I had read some excellent books on the Tabernacle from my father, Levi Owen Rice's library. When a mentor, the elderly Rev. Torpico, left Waneta Chapel, NY and moved to Ohio he left me his whole library, and I read some more excellent books on the topic. Pictures sketched in books could not capture what God had constructed in the desert. God had built a place where he would meet with man, and I needed a scale model to comprehend what that meant.

My first model was too small, my second was too large, I think. It was to be 1 inch to one cubit, but while cutting out forty-eight boards to be 1.5 inches wide, 10 inches long, and, I had guessed 3/8 inches thick, I cut my thumb-tip half off on the table saw and quit. Then, while eating a popsicle with my thumb in a bulky band-aid, I was struck with a new and profound thought, use forty-eight popsicle sticks, and let 1 cubit equal 1/4 inch; I would not need a whole garage to hold the model! I cut forty-eight of the 3/8 inch wide popsicle sticks (1.5 cubits) into 2.5 inch lengths (10 cubits) and voila the Holy Place was ready for glue and gold paint. It was (is) awesome. Now, here in the Timna Valley of Israel, for the first time in my adult life, I stepped into a full scale replica of the Hebrew Tabernacle.¹¹⁴ I was moved.

I stopped being moved as soon as the young guide spoke about what we were looking at, well unless one counts being moved to

113 View pictures at <https://biblicalisraelstours.com/old-testament-tabernacle-model/>, accessed 01/20/24.

114 In the nineteen-hundreds at Lancaster Pa. we saw a model of just the Holy Place; it was impressive, but not moving.

choler (Noah Webster 1828 - “anger; wrath; irritation of the passions.”). The young lad regurgitated what his modernist, ecumenical teachers had told him to say, that the wood used in the tabernacle was “acacia” wood (just like it said in all the modernist, ecumenical, copyright bibles!). I politely interrupted and asked, if he supposed the cubit and half boards that were ten cubits long were made from acacia wood like the modernist bibles said. He said yes, they were all made from acacia wood. So I followed up, “Acacia wood is a very beautiful, aromatic wood that comes from a desert acacia bush that rarely gets ten feet tall, how did they get a 27 inch wide 15 foot long board made out of acacia wood?” Of course modernists-ecumenicals have no answer to that obvious conundrum in their copyright bibles, and it was painfully obvious that the young lad had never considered the folly of what he had been taught to say; painfully obvious, and now publicly awkward. I felt my wife squeezing my arm. I thanked the young man, and let him go on with his well taught, but unthought dialogue.

When God called out the materials for the tabernacle's construction in Exodus 25, he called for three precious metals; gold, and silver, and brass. Brass has a crispness which makes it resonate well in a trumpet, (I still have my childhood trumpet, though it is quite tarnished. As a preteen I took dad's steel wool and removed a thin invisible coat of lacquer, it had superb luster, looking almost like gold, ... but only for 1 week.) The crispness makes brass less malleable and ductile than other precious metals, and it readily tarnishes, ... readily. But it is still a precious metal because of its very high luster and other qualities, you might classify it as barely precious. Brass is also not a pure metal but an alloy of 67% copper and 33% zinc. To much zinc makes brass brittle, to much copper makes brass soft. We will soon find brass representative of judgment, and judgment, like brass, can be too hard or too soft. Other qualities of brass will relate to its use in the tabernacle, so keep these qualities of brass in mind.¹¹⁵

115 From authors “*Tabernacling With God – Lecture 1*” seminar, slide 18 of 33, 2013, unpublished.

When the young lad giving the tour of the Timna replica tabernacle saw me cringe at his declaration, about the Brazen Alter he looked away. Although he obviously did not want to hear or address my question, I was going to be obstinate. Again the young guide regurgitated what he had been taught to say, “Obviously the Brazen Alter was not made out of brass, because it was built well before the Bronze Age, and consequently it was made of copper.” He had to know I was going to protest, he had emphasized what he thought was his superior knowledge on the topic.

“Excuse me, excuse me!, Did you just say, The Brazen Alter, that God describes distinctly in the Holy Bible, saying it was to be made out of BRASS, was actually made out of COPPER? And that Moses had not EVOLVED into the Bronze Age yet, and did not know how to make BRASS? Is that what you were taught?”

Beverly was not just squeezing my arm, she was kind of pulling me back into the middle of our crowd at this point. I too observed the utter defeat in the young man, as he, probably for the first time in his life, thought about what he had just said. It showed on his face. He couldn't gracefully retract what he had just said, what he had been taught to say. He had no answer available. He had walked in the counsel of the ungodly; he had stood in the way of sinners, i.e. Bible-changers; he had sat in the seat of the scornful, i.e. apostate, modernist, ecumenical, Bible changers, selling copyright bibles. When Satan accosted Eve in Genesis 3, he started with “Yea, hath God said, ...” Satan has found fertile ground in man's mind by questioning and disparaging God's Holy Word. Modernist-ecumenical apostate bible-changers give what they think God meant to say, to get their lucrative copyrights. Satan is having a “field day”, ... which, in the military, is “a review and an exercise in maneuvering around an enemy.”

I felt bad that his apostate teachers had set him up so badly. Here he was standing in front of a group of Bible Believers, telling us the Bible is a pack of lies. I'll suppose he had no idea how badly he was set up. He struggled noticeably through the rest of his presentation. I did not. Nor did I behave myself unseemly. I knew where he was

coming from, he was regurgitating what he had been taught by apostate modernist ecumenical “scholars.” They would be held accountable, the young lad just needed to meet more Bible believers. God and Beverly reminded me, he needed to meet compassionate believers, not obstinate ones. Touring a replica Tabernacle was to be a great adventure for me, even though it involved a well bit tongue. I needn't bite my tongue in this journal.

The Hebrew Tabernacle carries such weight in the Revelation of God that we are delinquent if we do not study and explore every revealed detail. And this we will do in the pages which follow.¹¹⁶ Every detail recorded about this tabernacle will be found rich with insight in an ultimate quest to know the LORD God.

God Tabernacles With Man: The Creator dwelling in fellowship with his creature. Chapter upon chapter of the Pentateuch are consumed with the detailed description of this tabernacling of God with man. The study of this wonder is a revelation about our relationship with God; in the Exodus Tabernacle, in Solomon's Temple, in Herod's Temple, and finally, through the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary's Cross, in his saints. The late Evangelist Loren Dawson would say repeatedly, “In the Old Testament God made a tabernacle for his people, in the New Testament God makes a people for his tabernacle.”

God's intent from the beginning, was to tabernacle with man; Garden of Eden – Fellowship with man in innocence; Pre-Flood – Fellowship with man's clean conscience; Post-Flood – Fellowship with governed man; Abraham – Fellowship with man through promise; OT Israel – Fellowship with Israel through LAW; In Christ – Indwell, Quicken, Justify and Fellowship with born-again

116 I shall include material from my first two lectures on the Tabernacle, “*Tabernacling With God – Lecture 1 & 2*”, which include 70 slides which I dare not publish because of a preponderance of copyright pictures taken from internet sources (my high-school science students rounded up pictures without copyright concerns). Pastor Lee Pickett, Fellowship Baptist Church, 20022 NY-3, Watertown, NY 13601, has graciously allowed me permission to include pictures he took in his 2013 Israel tour of the Timna Valley Tabernacle.

believers; On the Throne of David – Rule among man as King of kings; and finally In Eternity – “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men” Revelation 21:3.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. ... Re 21:3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

Consider this Hebrew Tabernacle unfolded before us in great detail: “*This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. 43 And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory*” (Exod 29:42-43). Every detail recorded about this tabernacle will be found rich with insight in an ultimate quest to know the LORD God.

The Hebrew Tabernacle finds its first depiction in heaven. Moses is repeatedly instructed to make everything after the image which he was shown in the mountain where he met with God. Thus the very first unfolding of this depiction begins in Exodus 25 that describes the materials to be used in its construction.

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering. 3 And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, 4 And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, 5 And rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood, (Exod 25:1-5).

We will begin this study with a thorough consideration of these materials. Consider the trinity of precious metals, “*And this is the*

offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass.”

The precious metals are not precious for their rarity or costly value, but for their quality and characteristics. It is their quality and characteristics that make them rare and costly. Gold is most precious because of its untarnished enduring luster and perfect malleability. Gold does not break down, corrode or tarnish when exposed to the elements. It remains pure and retains a high luster. Gold is the most malleable and ductile of all metals; able to be beat into a sheet thinner than a human hair, and stretch into a thread finer than such. Gold was not scarce but it was precious, it might be more scarce now, but it has always been precious because of these qualities. Gold is, of course, to represent the everlasting righteousness of God.

Silver, as a precious metal, shares these qualities but not to such perfection. Silver is a precious metal that needs perpetual attention to maintain its high luster and purity. It oxidizes into a thin layer of tarnish that must be removed to expose the pure, high luster silver beneath. Silver is likewise malleable but hardly comparable to gold. Silver does exceed gold in two areas, it has the highest thermal and electrical conductivity of all metals. It is thus used in modern circuit boards and such.

Compared to gold, silver is less stable, less malleable, less ductile, less lustered but a better conductor of heat and electricity. That is an interesting list for its symbolic use in God's tabernacling picture. Wherever God's Tabernacle touched this world, it did it with tarnishable silver.

*Ex 26:19 And thou shalt make **forty sockets of silver** under the twenty boards;*

*Ex 27:17 All the pillars round about the court shall be **filleted with silver**; their hooks shall be of silver, and their sockets of brass.*

*Ex 38:12 And for the west side were hangings of fifty cubits, their pillars ten, and their sockets ten; the hooks of the pillars and their **fillets of silver**.*

We mentioned the brass in the intro. Brass has a crispness which makes it resonate well in a trumpet. The crispness makes brass less malleable and ductile than other precious metals. It is still a precious metal because of its very high luster and other qualities, but you might classify it as barely precious. Brass is also not a pure metal but an alloy of 67% copper and 33% zinc. Too much zinc makes brass brittle, too much copper makes brass soft. We will soon find brass representative of judgment, and judgment can be too hard or too soft. Other qualities of brass will relate to its use in the tabernacle, so keep these qualities of brass in mind. *Ex 30:18 Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein.*

“Bronze is another metal alloy that primarily contains copper and 12% tin. Other elements—such as aluminum, arsenic, manganese, phosphorus, and silicon—are also added to yield different properties. These mixtures form some of the common bronze alloys, including: Leaded bronze.”¹¹⁷

The trinity of colors, blue, purple and scarlet; “*And this is the offering which ye shall take of them, ... blue, and purple, and scarlet.*” God purposefully chose the representative colors that would fill his tabernacle. Each tells a story. You cannot consider the question “Why blue?” without hearing a 6 year old ask, “Why is the sky blue?” “*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard*” (Psalm 19:1-3). When we look up to those sun lit heavens and glimpse into his firmament we see a sky that is purest of all blue. Ergo the color blue shall be representative of the glory of God.

The sky is not blue because of the Tyndall effect discovered by John Tyndall in 1859, nor because of the Rayleigh effect, defined by Lord Rayleigh only a few years later, wherein he showed that blue

117 From “Metal Comparisons: Brass vs Bronze”, Sequoia Brass and Copper, www.sequoia-brass-copper.com › Blog, accessed 01/20/2024.

light hitting molecules of air is scattered more than red light by a factor of seven-fourths (1.75) raised to the fourth power (9.37890625).

Nor is the sky blue because the human eye has three types of cones and one is the most sensitive to the blue wavelength of visible light, and less sensitive to the indigo and violet colors which approach the ultra violet invisible light.

No, the sky is blue because there is a God in heaven who designed and created the light spectrum with such perfect grandeur that when it strikes the molecules of air in His atmosphere, His Red, orange, yellow and Green spectra of light pierce right through, while the Blue spectrum is scattered by His molecules of air. Indeed it is scattered to such an extent that an effervescent blue glow seems to carpet the sky and produce a closed curtain to the heavens beyond.

Now the Blue, indigo and violet spectra of light all experience this scattering effect but the Blue marks the breaking-point in the effect. Blue demonstrates the most scatter. Also, as previously mentioned, His design of the human eye is such that three cones in the retina respond most markedly to Red, Green, and Blue light. Which is why, Roy G. Biv, used to track the seven major light divisions, keeps these three primary colors capitalized. Thus some of the Blue sky phenomenon is contained in His design for light energy penetrating the atmosphere, and some of it is in the eye of the beholder, who is created in His image and likeness.

God created some amazing properties when he said, "Let there be LIGHT." And this is only our VISIBLE LIGHT. That is a lot of analysis for a single color in God's Tabernacle, but it can develop a resounding appreciation of the glory of God. The curtain that God daily draws across the heavens, which declare his glory, is a rich vibrant blue curtain. The purer the atmosphere, the clearer the blue curtain. The blueness of the blue is only observable because of its resonance from the material world, coupled with the resonance in the eye of the beholder. We are the only creature holding the image and likeness of the Creator. A Creator who has all glory. That is awesome.

“And this is the offering ... purple ... ” Purple, the second color in God's tabernacle, portrays the Majesty of God. We have always been told that, ... Purple, the color of majesty; the color of kings. God did not choose purple in his tabernacle because human kings liked it so and deemed it a color of majesty. No, kings choose purple because God first chose it for his tabernacle. You will be amazed how many times Bible teachers get the cart before the horse¹¹⁸ and then keep it there because some Bible commentary backs up their Tom-Foolery. Lets analyze purple for a moment.

Purple is of great interest here. It is a combination of the first visible in the spectrum of visible light, red, and the very last visible in the spectrum of visible light, violet. Like Alpha & Omega to our eyes. As God revealed himself to be the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. So to purple, in the visible spectra is both the beginning and the end. Purple, in God's Tabernacle, represents his majesty, because he designed it to mirror the Alpha and Omega.

When mere human kings wear purple, don't let it detract from this pure and powerful representation of God's majesty. The color purple is a combination of the most separated of the visible light spectra and is rare in nature. When it is seen, may it forever depict the majesty of the only first and last. Watch for purple in the world. It is sometimes in flowers, rare in sunsets, and not really found in purple mountains majesty.

“And this shall be the offering ... and scarlet.” The last of the colors represented in the Tabernacle of God with man is the color of blood. Scarlet is the color of life, and the color of death. It is the color of sacrifice, and thus the color of grace. It is the color of relationship, yea the color of scorning. Red is the beginning color of the visible light spectrum. As you approach the beginning of the beginning the red darkens and as you disappear into the invisible

118 My power point slides on this point have an amazing array of pictures of “carts before the horse,” which were lifted from the internet by my high school science class with little consideration of who copyright what. I use them in lecture, but carefully avoid publishing them because of copyright considerations.

blackness of the infrared spectra of light, the very first of the visible light, being a deep, dark red, is called scarlet. Unlike purple, scarlet is monochromatic. It stands on the boarder between the visible and the invisible, between light and darkness. Therein stands its representative likeness. It stands between life and death, good and evil, sacrifice and offering.

When God chose colors for his tabernacling with man, every color he chose is significant, having characteristics, symbols, and important revelations. Every color, every metal, every fabric is significant and participates in his divine revelation to man. Don't miss a single aspect of it all.

In the Old Testament God built a tabernacle for his people. In the New Testament God builds a people for his tabernacle. If you are a born-again believer the Bible says, "*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? ... 19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's*" (1Cor.3:16, 6:19-20).

If you still need to be born-again, saved from your sin debt, Romans 10:9-10 says, "*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

... 9:13 *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*"

The five most important things: 1) *Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.* When jumping from Long Island to Spain, ... I may jump further than you do. We will both fall short *All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

2) *Rom.6:23 The wages of sin is death; Death is Separation; Separation from loved ones here, Separation of body soul and spirit, Separation from God.*

All have sinned, and the wages of sin is DEATH.

3) Rom.5 *As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, ... Even so, by the righteousness of one man, (Jesus Christ,) the free gift came ... justification of life. ... For as by one man's disobedience (Adam)many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one (Jesus Christ) shall many be made righteous.*

4) Rom.5 *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* He died FOR us: He died IN OUR PLACE; His Death on Calvary was a Substitutionary Death; He died taking your punishment.

5) Rom.10 *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

To be saved, one needs to know: 1) All have sinned, 2) The wages of sin is DEATH, 3) God accepts a Substitute, 4) Jesus is the ONLY Substitute,, 5) Personally Accept His Substitute.

If you are saved, God tabernacles in you: *1Corinthians 6:19-20 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

In the next Half Shekel there are other important lessons to be learned about the materials in the Hebrew Tabernacle. There are four coverings and wood working lessons. Then there are important furnishings that portray important principles about God's tabernacling with man.



The Half Shekel Journals of 2023 by Pastor Ed
Rice

#23026 Mon 27 Mar Timna Tabernacle.

In my last journal we began a walk through the materials God requested for the construction of his tabernacle, where he would meet with Israel while he led them from Egypt into the Promised Land.

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ² Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering. ³ And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, ⁴ And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, ⁵ And rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood (Exod.25:1-5).

And we learned that the Tabernacle was an important revelation for knowing God, and his desire to tabernacle with man.

This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. ⁴³ And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory (Exod.29:42-43).

We learned the importance of the trinity of precious metals: Gold – Most pure and untarnishable, representative of the pureness of God's righteousness; Silver – Pure but quite tarnishable, representative of the man to God relationship; Brass – Alloy, ideally of 67% copper, 33% zinc but may be mixed harder or softer, representative of judgment.

We learned the importance of the trinity of colors: Blue – The color of the curtain which God draws across the heavens,

representative of the glory of God; Purple – Combination of infrared and ultraviolet, representative of the Majesty of the Alpha and Omega; Scarlet – The closest man can come to seeing into the infrared, representative of blood and life, and death and scorn; though your sins be as scarlet ...



God uses materials he created to portray his tabernacling principles and requirements. God created precious metals, precious. God created light with characteristics that most of us have barely acknowledged. Bible scholars and teachers all too often get the proverbial cart before the horse (allow me liberty to show one photo that a helpful high-schooler sent me, undoubtedly gleaning it off the internet). In this study of God's created materials; God did not use them to make his point because he found them available, he created them with that purpose. So one might ask, "Where does that leave Badgers Skin?"

Glad you asked: lets look at the tabernacle coverings. “*And this is the offering which ye shall take of them, ... fine linen, and goats’ hair, And rams’ skins dyed red, and badgers’ skins, and shittim wood*” (Exod.25:3,4-5). Each of the four materials that covered the holy place are significant in God's picture of his tabernacling with man. Consider first the fine-linen.

The Fine Linen is often called Fine Twined Linen. Linens were once used to make all our sheets, tablecloths, handkerchiefs and underwear (i.e. used to). Linen is laboriously made from flax fiber (no machine can efficiently card and spin flax into thread it must be done by hand, so linen is very rare today. God chose a fabric that would never be cheapened by mass production). The more Linen is worn, the softer it becomes. Other fabrics yellow in the sun, Linen bleaches whiter and becomes more refined when exposed to the sun. Linen is a picture of the righteousness of saints.

*Ex 26:1 Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle with **ten curtains of fine twined linen**, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them.*

*Ex 26:31 And thou shalt make **a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work**: with cherubims shall it be made:*

*Ex 26:36 And thou shalt **make an hanging for the door of the tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen**, wrought with needlework.*

*Ex 27:9 And thou shalt make the court of the tabernacle: for the south side southward there shall be **hangings for the court of fine twined linen** of an hundred cubits long for one side:*

*Re 19:8 And to her was granted that she should **be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.***

When considering the goat's hair, Cashmere and Mohair are

words that should come to mind. Mohair is the long silky hair from the angora goat. Cashmere is the fine-downy hair grown beneath the outer hair of the goat. Goat's hair is very fine, very eloquent, a precious and coveted material. It is very soft, not rugged, very thermal, not water resistant, very stretchable (it is very producible but not so much as wool or cotton). It is the 2nd Layer of Material in the Tabernacle, covering the fine-linen. Consider its softness and its warmth in the representative picture of tabernacling with God.

Now consider the layer of tabernacle covering, provided only when an animal gave its life. Clear symbology is found in the rams skin dyed red; an animal must be slain to acquire it. The ram is the adult male sheep, the ewe is the female, the lamb is the young. (God calls out an ewe of the first year, but never so for a ram. God is careful.) The first Bible occurrence of a ram, is found when Abraham offers a selection of animals to confirm God's covenant. Second, was Abraham's ram caught in a thicket, wherein he had told his son, "God will provide himself a sacrifice."

The ram is a sacrifice. The life is in the blood (Lev 17:11,14, Deut 12:23), and without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin (Heb 9:22). Ram's skin dyed red is the third layer over the holy place of the tabernacle.

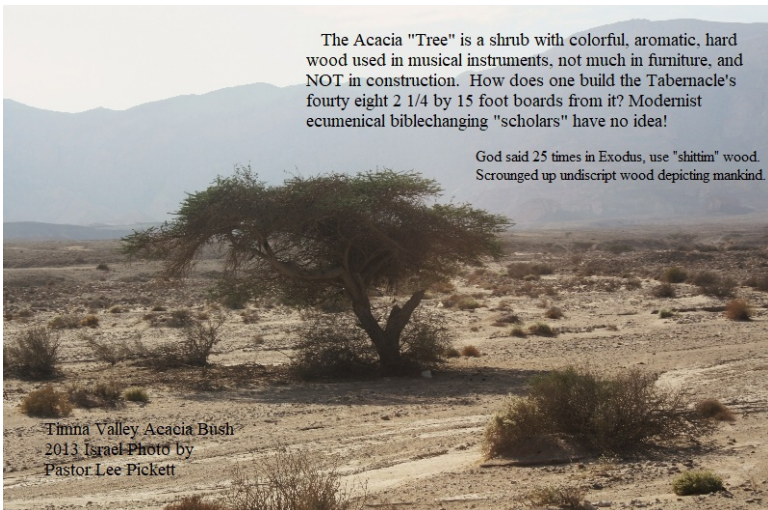
The fourth covering for the holy place of the tabernacle, is the outer covering of badger skin. It very likely emphasizes an inward beauty over an outward ugly appearance.

The badger, has rugged individualism, is tenacious, and independent. It survives in a barren wilderness. It is an unclean carnivorous (meat eating) mammal with short legs and long claws on the front feet. A badger can burrow faster than its food, a rodent or rabbit. Its skin turns into a thick commercial leather, often shoe leather; "*I shod thee with badgers skin*" (Ezek.16:10).

Their heavy grizzled hair used in all kinds of brushes, most commonly in shaving brushes once sold door-to-door by the Fuller Brush Man. The badger's name comes from its white badge. Why Badger's Skin? Why not a camel? It's similar in leather and hair, has a larger hide, and it is plentiful. Why not the fox? They are more

plentiful in the wilderness. Why not the skunk, they are everywhere?... Well, Okay, we get that. Anyway God said use the badgers skin for the outer covering. In the desert wilderness, all these covering might be important to keep cool more than to keep warm, but the four layers were selected for far more than creature comfort.

Those four layers covering the holy place of the tabernacle of God: first, fine twined linen, interlaced with cherubims, made wholly from the flax plant with amazing characteristics; then goats hair, from an animal but not requiring the shedding of blood; then rams skin dyed red, from a slain, domesticated 'clean' animal; and finally, the badgers skin, the thick grizzly hide from a slain, wild carnivorous, unclean animal.



The next tabernacle construction material mentioned is “shittim wood”, a very important revelation is found in its use. The Hebrew word “shittah” is of uncertain origin, but carries the connotation of refuse or discarded. The English word “Shittim” is a transliteration devised by the fifty-seven (57) expert linguists that took seven years to translate the King James Bible. It has the same connotation of refuse or discarded. That is why we do not like to pronounce it in Church. Shittim Wood is not likely a specific type of wood, as much

as it is refuse or discarded wood. Shittim Wood is ALWAYS covered with a precious metal, and most certainly represents man in the tabernacling of God with man. Precious metals always would cover the shittim wood; both gold, representing the righteousness of God, and brass, representing judgment were plated onto the wood. The world supposes that only the choicest of hard woods might be used by God in his Tabernacle, but in a King James Bible we see God will use the basest of wood. God's ways are not man's ways; in his service he will even use a “wretch like me.”

*Ex 25:10 And they shall **make an ark of shittim wood**: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. ... 13 And thou shalt **make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold**. ... 23 Thou shalt also **make a table of shittim wood**: two cubits shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. ... 28 And thou shalt **make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold**, that the table may be borne with them.*

*Ex 26:15 And thou shalt **make boards for the tabernacle of shittim wood** standing up. ... 26 And thou shalt **make bars of shittim wood**; five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle, ... 32 And thou shalt hang it (the vail of cunning work) upon **four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold**: their hooks shall be of gold, upon the four sockets of silver. ... 37 And thou shalt make for the hanging **five pillars of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold**, and their hooks shall be of gold: and thou shalt cast five sockets of brass for them.*

*Ex 27:1 And thou shalt **make an altar of shittim wood**, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof shall be three cubits. ... 6 And thou shalt make staves for the altar, **staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with brass**.*

Ex 30:1 And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim wood shalt thou make it. ... 5 And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold.

Ex 35:24 Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought the LORD'S offering: and every man, with whom was found shittim wood for any work of the service, brought it.

Shittim wood is NOT acacia wood, as is misnomered in modernist, ecumenical, copyright bibles. If God wanted only acacia wood, he would have said only acacia wood, he did not! He said “shittim wood” <Strong's 07848> שִׁטִּים shittah [shit-taw'] meaning the sticks of wood; n f; AV-shittim used 27 times, shittah tree used 1 time; 28 times total in the Holy Bible. (Be careful of all modernist concordances and lexicons, they errantly suppose it means “Acacia Wood!” Acacia is not used one time in the Holy Bible.) Acacia is any of 800 small trees or shrubs. Some Acacia yield true gum-arabic, a substance used in adhesives, pharmaceuticals, inks, confections, and other products. Several Australian acacias are valuable sources of tannin. Few produce timber of any kind, none can represent a wretch like me.

That covers the materials that God required for the construction of his tabernacle in the wilderness, lets now consider the furnishings that are required to host his tabernacling with man. The first call is for the Ark of Covenant, literally the container of the covenant.

I'll suppose we all heard about the agnostic who said only a fool would believe the Bible, because in Genesis, God told Noah to build an Ark that would hold all the animals in the world, in Exodus baby Moses floated in it on the Nile River, and then in the book of Joshua four priests carried it over the Jordan River! Okay, I guess he's got us there. But the truth is in English the word “ark” means a vessel. That is what Noah built, and what baby Moses floated in. In Exodus 25 when God describes the ark, or vessel that would carry the covenant of Israel, he uses a slightly different Hebrew word <0727> that is more conducive to a vessel like a chest or repository, but that still fits the exceptional English of “ark.”

And they shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. 11 And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. 12 And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof; and two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it. 13 And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. 14 And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them. 15 The staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it (Exod.25:10-15).



The box (Ark) itself was made of shittim Wood! Again, this did not imply some beautifully scented exotic hardwood like Acacia! Shittim wood is what the language implies in Hebrew and is aptly transliterated into KJV English, i.e. wood no better than ... well refuse! The box or Ark itself was plated with Purest Gold. The shittim wood, no matter its type, had to be completely covered. In the tabernacle all the wood was shittim wood. In representation: The wood, - the depravity of man, Covered with - Pure Gold, the Righteousness of God.

The box or Ark itself, always had the carrying staves installed and ready. Staves were likewise made of shittim wood, and plated with pure gold. The carrying staves, always present implied the

covenant was to be readily transported.

“And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; 4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant” (Heb.9:3-4).

Over the ark of the covenant there was a covering called “The Mercy Seat.” *“And over it (the ark) the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly”* (Heb.9:5).

The Mercy Seat is never called “the ark cover” although that is what it was, and that is how I, as a teen, understood it. The name is very significant. The Mercy Seat was made of pure beaten gold. The Mercy of God must rest on the covenant between God and man. MERCY is the guilty NOT getting what is DESERVED; GRACE is ones getting what is NOT Deserved, or unmerited.

Cherubim is the plural of Cherub, which are mighty beings always connected with the throne of God. More than just angels, they were connected with God as a symbol of the presence of God himself. They kept man from the Garden of Eden; *”So he drove out the man; and he placed at the end of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life”* (Gen. 3:23, 24). They were over the Mercy Seat, and the vail and ten curtains of fine twined linen, had cherubims of cunning work (Exod.26:1,31).

Beside cherubims in the angel realms, there are six winged “seraphims” that are only mentioned in Isaiah 6, and there is an “archangel”, implying authority or position, mentioned in 1Thes.4:16 and Jude.1:9. It seems seraphims declare the Glory of God, the cherubims protect the Glory of God. Satan was once a “cherub”: *“Thou are the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire”* (Ezek. 28:14).¹¹⁹

119 I have often pondered, but not said to loud, that perhaps God had an

The cherubims, symbolizing the presence of God, were above the Mercy Seat that covered the Ark of the covenant. They and the cover were made of pure gold. A Holy Righteous God, symbolized in pure gold, made a covenant with unrighteous man, symbolized via shittim wood, wood which must needs be covered with His Righteousness, symbolized in gold plating. That is the only way such a covenant could be made, the only way God could tabernacle with man, and Jesus Christ the righteous, is the only gold that can plate shittim wood. “*2Cor. 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” Consider what is in that covenant, sinful man, able to tabernacle with a sinless God; “*1Jo 2:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”**

Exo.25:17 And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof.

Exo.25:18 And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat.

Exo.37:6 And he made the mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half was the length thereof, and one cubit and a half the breadth thereof.

Exo.37:7 And he made two cherubims of gold, beaten out of one piece made he them, on the two ends of the mercy seat

Exo.25:22 And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in

archangel, Michael, the Holy Ghost had an archangel, Gabriel, and Christ had an archangel, Lucifer. Lucifer fell (after Gen.1:31) and Saints are to be his replacements. That's profoundly logical, but with little, or no Scriptural basis.

commandment unto the children of Israel.

The next order of business in God's tabernacling with man is a table, quite like, "*Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.*"

Thou shalt also make a table of shittim wood: two cubits shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. 24 And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round about. 25 And thou shalt make unto it a border of an hand breadth round about, and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about. 26 And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet thereof. 27 Over against the border shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table. 28 And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them (Exod.25:23-28).

This table holds vessels, and shewbread: "*And thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and spoons thereof, and covers thereof, and bowls thereof, to cover withal: of pure gold shalt thou make them. And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread before me always*" (Exod.25:29-30). For the Christian the type and symbology is clear, the table is prepared, the bread is the Word, both the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Word of God that is "*quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*" Both Christ and the Word of God should be "*our daily bread*" and be before us always.

There is much more that is to be said about God tabernacling with man, and the Hebrew Tabernacle is the most detailed portrait of what God has revealed about it. A companion of this printed

journal will be my printed book that documents insights to the rest of this study. Furnishings yet to be explored are the candlestick, the incense altar, the altar of burnt offering, the laver and his foot. God tabernacling with man is a big deal, consuming page after page of the Pentateuch. Christians are encouraged to pursue it to its fullest because, *“Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them”* (Ps.119:165).

The last chapter of my *“God Tabernacling with Man”* book, to be published this year, has this excerpt:

Exodus 35 gives complete instruction for the making the tabernacle, and Exodus 39 gives complete revelation of what they actually made. I would be remiss, if I didn't compare them here.

What was commanded for building the tabernacle is in Exod.35:4-19:

- 4 *And Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the LORD commanded, saying,*
- 5 *Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and silver, and brass,*
- 6 *And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair,*
- 7 *And rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood,*
- 8 *And oil for the light, and spices for anointing oil, and for the sweet incense,*
- 9 *And onyx stones, and stones to be set for the ephod, and for the breastplate.*
- 10 *And every wise hearted among you shall come, and make all that the LORD hath commanded;*
- 11 *The tabernacle, his tent, and his covering, his taches, and his boards, his bars, his pillars, and his sockets,*
- 12 *The ark, and the staves thereof, with the mercy seat, and the vail of the covering,*

- 13 *The table, and his staves, and all his vessels, and the shewbread,*
- 14 *The candlestick also for the light, and his furniture, and his lamps, with the oil for the light,*
- 15 *And the incense altar, and his staves, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the hanging for the door at the entering in of the tabernacle,*
- 16 *The altar of burnt offering, with his brasen grate, his staves, and all his vessels, the laver and his foot,*
- 17 *The hangings of the court, his pillars, and their sockets, and the hanging for the door of the court,*
- 18 *The pins of the tabernacle, and the pins of the court, and their cords,*
- 19 *The cloths of service, to do service in the holy place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office.*

The finished product, what was actually built, is given in *Exod.39:32-43*, and it aligns with the command.

- 32 ¶ *Thus was all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation finished: and the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did they.*
- 33 *And they brought the tabernacle unto Moses, the tent, and all his furniture, his taches, his boards, his bars, and his pillars, and his sockets,*
- 34 *And the covering of rams' skins dyed red, and the covering of badgers' skins, and the vail of the covering,*
- 35 *The ark of the testimony, and the staves thereof, and the mercy seat,*
- 36 *The table, and all the vessels thereof, and the shewbread,*
- 37 *The pure candlestick, with the lamps thereof, even with the lamps to be set in order, and all the vessels thereof, and the oil for light,*
- 38 *And the golden altar, and the anointing oil, and the sweet*

- incense, and the hanging for the tabernacle door,*
- 39 The brasen altar, and his grate of brass, his staves, and all his vessels, the laver and his foot,*
- 40 The hangings of the court, his pillars, and his sockets, and the hanging for the court gate, his cords, and his pins, and all the vessels of the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of the congregation,*
- 41 The cloths of service to do service in the holy place, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and his sons' garments, to minister in the priest's office.*
- 42 According to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel made all the work.*
- 43 And Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they had done it as the LORD had commanded, even so had they done it: and Moses blessed them.*

The next stop on our trip through Israel's Negev was a visit to Solomon's Pillars.



#23027 Mon 27 Mar Solomon's Pillars

I might well have spent another hour or two at the Timna Tabernacle. I knew I did not have all the pictures I wanted, and I knew I was not the photographer to take more. A 10-Day Israel tour is madly pressed for time; this 14-Day tour was moderately so. The bus was headed out across the large Timna Valley with a projected stop at Solomon's Pillars before we took our ease at Eliot, Israel, on the Red Sea.

Solomon's Pillars are natural geological formations, now named after the Biblical King Solomon. No one is exactly sure why that name stuck, except for the discovery that Solomon, and his recently discovered copper mining expeditions in the valley, caused his name to be affixed to the whole Timna Valley region.

The large quantities of sandstone around the valley, and the propensity for sandstone to erode by wind and rain into unique geological formations, is what Solomon's Pillars is all about. They seemed to have more of an Egyptian connection than a Bible one. An inscription here depicts Pharaoh Ramsey III offering gifts to their goddess Hathor, and a Hathor Temple was built here by the Egyptians. Just the same, the sandstone formations were stupendous, and offered an hour of relaxation and photo poses with friends we had made on this journey.



See the picture to read the sign in Hebrew or Aramaic.

Staying safe on the trails at Timna: Rules for Visitors -
General safety for visitors on wheels - Including cars, bicycles, and electric bikes.
Don't wander off! Stay on the paved roads and the designated dirt roads.

The roads have no shoulders! Go slowly, respect the road conditions, and be careful.

You'll be sharing all roads with people on foot and on bicycles. Please be extra careful, obey all traffic rules, and follow the directions on the posted signs.

Yield right of way to pedestrians and cyclists at all times.

Safety on the hiking trails

Attention hikers! For your own safety, please follow instructions below and on the posted signs, including:

Walk on the trails map for walking!

Do not leave the trails for any reason. Before you start consider the terrain and the weather. Be sure you have a hat, comfortable walking shoes, and enough water (at least three liters per person). No water is available along the trails, except at the Lake Complex.

Trails are shared trails by motor vehicles, pedestrian and cyclists.

Remember that, and be careful!

Hiking on trails after dark is strictly forbidden.

Watch out for slippery and muddy sections of trails on roads. Stay away from the edge of cliffs. No gliding is allowed. Do not climb the cliffs.

Do not climb on any of the scenic Rock formations. Help preserve them as they are. (Hands off! No graffiti! No emojis!)

Campfires of any kind are strictly forbidden - except in the picnic areas at the lake.

Flying drones anywhere in the park is strictly forbidden unless granted prior permission from the park manager.

Help preserve Timna's natural beauty - wildlife, vegetation and inanimate objects.

Help keep the park clean. Put waste in the containers provided, or pack it out with you.

Note that you are responsible for your own safety while visiting the park and using its facilities. No one else will be liable for any damage or injury to anyone walking or riding in the park or to any vehicle, whether on designated roads, and trails or otherwise. Do not endanger yourself or others.

Timna Park and Solomon's Pillars were replete with hiking trails. Although we read the "Stay Safe on the Trails of Timna" sign, we were not really here for the hiking. In a large expanse that comfortably seated us on rocks around a "surround-sound" cathedral, Pastor Lee Pickett opened our Bibles to Psalms 148 and read all 14 verses before leading us in a prayer praising the Lord for the beauty of Creation and the beauty of the landscape where we were now seated.

Psalm 148 1 ¶ Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens:

- praise him in the heights.*
- 2 Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts.*
 - 3 Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.*
 - 4 Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens.*
 - 5 Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created .*



- 6 He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.*
- 7 ¶ Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps:*
- 8 Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word:*
- 9 Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars:*
- 10 Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl:*
- 11 Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth:*
- 12 Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children:*
- 13 Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven.*

14 *He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD.*

We were surrounded with such a profound beauty of majestic sandstone sculptures, that the verses resonated off the stone walls on three sides of our chapel.

*Ps 89:11-12 The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them. The north and the south thou hast **created** them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name.*

Tabor means “an abrupt mound”, particularly Mount Tabor which rises out of the valley near the foot hills of Nazereth. Hermon means “a sanctuary” particularly Mount Hermon that overlooks Israel's northern most city of Dan. We now sit in the south of end Israel, ... and, “*The north and the south thou hast **created** them.*”

All this makes one ponder our Creator, Jehovah God who said:

Isa 40:25-28 To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.

26 *Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.*

27 ¶ *Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?*

28 *Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.*

“Our Jehovah God, who created all this,” Lee paused and slowly turned around taking in the massive pillars that surrounded our little chapel of stone, ... “He looks down now and sees you, and sees me, ... and He loves us, He sooo loves us.” The world does not know him as their Creator, but we do, and he says:

Isa 42:5-8 Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

These pillars make me feel small, so does this Timna Valley, so does this expanse of Israel's Negev, but my God does not. He is God, ... and there is none else.

Isa 45:18 For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.

Pastor Lee captured the moment, captured it in Scripture that is sharper than a two edged sword, and able to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Eli our guide, gave us a wealth of background about the sandstone's natural monuments, the Egyptian presence here and their temples, and then dismissed us to relax for pictures, exploration, and a casual hike back to the bus. We did all of that, with majestic awe.

God blessed us in a visit to the Timna Valley. I especially enjoyed the Tabernacle, but all of it held an overpowering, never-been-here-before, flavor that I could taste. I'll not soon forget what Negev is. We pressed on through Israel's ongoing Negev, and arrived in Eilat, where we checked in to the Isrotel Yam Suf Hotel

on the Red Sea. Pastor Lee highlighted the incredible view of the ancient land of Edom directly across the Gulf of Aqaba. But I remembered better his emphasis of the good meal and a wonderful nights sleep.



#23028 Tue 28 Mar Eilat's Underwater Observatory

“Now Joshua was old and stricken in years; and the LORD said unto him, Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed” (Josh.13:1).



Breakfast, Isrotel Yam Suf
Eilat Israel 28 Mar 2023 0811

I purposed that in my first conscious thoughts of a morning, I would praise the Lord GOD my Creator for consciousness. Of late, being old and stricken in years, it comes right after I praise him for the ankylosing spondylitis¹²⁰ that brings me to consciousness after

120 Ankylosing spondylitis - an inflammatory arthritis affecting the spine and large joints. The condition is more common among men and usually begins in early adulthood. Symptoms include reduced flexibility in the spine. This reduced flexibility eventually results in a hunched-forward posture. Pain in the back and joints is also common. My treatment includes 2 to 6 aspirin (325mg)

only 5 hours of immobility. This morning, well before daylight, my praise list was long. We were to embark on day 13 of our 14 day Holy Land Tour, and we had already laid some ground-plans for our “free-day” in Eilat, Israel.

Pastor Pickett's Bible Berean Israel Tour 2023 booklet says:

Day 13 March 28th 2023 Today we have a free day in Eilat. There are several things you can do. You can stay at the hotel and sleep. You can go into town with a cab and look around and shop. You can go ice skating in the mall. There are two sites that are of great interest as well. The Underwater Observatory is within walking distance, and the Coral Reef Park is very close by, there you can go snorkeling on one of the world's largest and healthiest Coral Reefs in the world. It is amazing!!

I know being in a foreign country can make you a little uncomfortable to be on your own, so my thoughts are to take those who would like snorkeling for an hour or two, and then go to the observatory. We can work it all out. Remember, I am here to serve you. 1Timothy 6:17, *“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, **who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;**”*.

Bev, who is still in training for being a morning person, woke at 7:00 a.m., when I threw open the curtains a half hour after sunrise. “Free days do not necessitate sleeping in, not when you are in Israel!” I'm not sure I convinced her, but as we enjoyed breakfast alone at 8:00 a.m., she convinced me that she was holding the majority opinion on the subject.

Yesterday, after arriving at our hotel and catching a short nap, we took a late afternoon walk down to the Coral Beach Nature Preserve. We found it had closed at 1400 due to some labor disputes, and would open in the morning, charging us 35 shekels (\$10) each for a walk on their beach. The Underwater Observatory Park was \$125 shekels (\$34) per person to get in! So this morning there was a group headed to there and we propose to go with them. Their plan - part 2 however, was to take a cab to Eilat and shop-till-you-drop; that didn't capture our interest that much.

daily (it is a natural anti-inflammatory), and a teaspoon of Knox unflavored gelatin daily-religiously.



Dave and Lynne Johnson were all excited about a snorkeling adventure and were already off to access the coral reef from an underwater perspective. Their “Meet the Eilat Coral Beach Nature Reserve, History, Heritage and Nature” brochure said:

The most beautiful marine reserve in the world – colorful gardens beneath the sea. The reefs of the Gulf of Eilat are the only coral reefs in our country, and among them a wonderful and colorful world of corals, fish and a huge variety of unique creatures can be seen. The Coral Beach Nature Reserve in Eilat allows visitors easy access to the reef, as well as essential beach services, including a shop, showers, toilets, sunshades, deck chairs and sun loungers. Main Points of Interest include: **Bridges over the reef** – bridges built over the reef, from which the coral reef and the colorful fish swimming around it can be seen. The bridges also offer safe access for divers and snorkelers to the eastern side of the reef that faces out to sea, without damaging the reef and its inhabitants. **Lookouts over the reef** and the wildlife that populates it – visitors to the nature reserve can enjoy the beauty of the colorful creatures living in the reef even without being professional divers. With a diving mask and snorkel (which can be hired at the beach) it is possible to peek into the rich and

amazing world and the protrusions of coral around the fringing reef. Scuba divers can dive along the façade and slope of the reef to see the wonders of the reef at the greater depths. See en.parks.org.il

Turns out, if you want to hear their underwater adventure and their run in with the reef authorities, you need to ask Dave about it. I told them I was pretty sure Lee would have put up their bail to get them home if it had went any further. LOL

I think it was a group-think thing that got us to pay the little bit extra to include the 3D Aquadome Adventure. Bev and I are old, and had long outgrown any 3D dome experience excitement. Group-think, being what it is, thought the Aquadome 3D experience, costing extra, must be the best part of the Observatory experience, so the group hurried us past exhibitions that I wanted to see, and made it to the Aquadome's 3D 10:00 a.m. viewing. It was titled "Meet the Giants of the Ocean. Journey into the majestic kingdom of humpback whales. Breathtaking visual experience! The Aquadome!"

After about 30 seconds of the dome's 3D video, Bev slipped off her 3D glasses and leaned back in her seat with her eyes closed. Sensitive to motion sickness, I perceived that she would not enjoy an ounce of the humpback whale experience. In fact I could see shades of blue flushing across her cheeks ... that may have been the dome lighting, but by the end of the show we were both noticeably moved. Not about the plight of the humpback whales, but about 3D dome induced motion sickness.

We were the first two to turn in our 3D glasses and exit the dome, which was not aqua at all. There was a nice park bench, bathed in sunshine and overlooking the beach just off from the exit. For an hour Bev and I sat there, sipped on Coca-cola, which naturally calms nausea, and which I secured from a nearby soda machine. We considered what we had heard, and not seen, in the show. It had nothing to do with the Red Sea, nothing to do with a Coral Beach, nothing to do with anything else in the observatory, and, most certainly, nothing to do with God who created humpback whales, ... without millions of years, and without evolution.

*Ge 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over **the fish of the sea,** and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*

*Psalms 8:4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? ... 6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: ... 8 The fowl of the air, and **the fish of the sea,** and whatsoever passeth through the **paths of the seas.** 9 O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!*

*Ex 20:11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, **the sea, and all that in them is,** and rested the seventh day:*

We had excused ourselves from the group, saying we would be going through the observatory at a much slower pace than they. It was a beautiful day and we did just that. We sequentially, and casually, went through each and every exhibit. It was just as exciting to watch the children as it was to see the exotic sea creatures. I was amazed that children could speak Hebrew so fluently, and I so poorly; I mean both of us had been working on it for 5 years.

I don't do well at photography of fish through glass, but caught pretty much what I wanted in pictures of Bev and I. To see excellent photos of the fish and reef, one could watch them stream by perpetually at coralworld.co.il

We casually spent the whole delightful day at the observatory. Lunch was reasonable, gift shops not so much. Park benches were plentiful. The Underwater Observatory Tower was spectacular, and consumed a couple hours of our day. If I were not so eager to transcribe my notes about Day 14 I would here delve into some of the remarkable creations we explored in the Red Sea. Like the incredible parrotfish, whose coral-crunching bite can be heard on tropical reefs worldwide. They are close relatives of the wrasse, with more than 30 types living on the reef, often forming large mixed schools with other species. Parrotfish are colorful, tropical

creatures that spend about 90% of their day eating algae off coral reefs. This almost-constant eating performs the essential task of cleaning the reefs which helps the corals stay healthy and thriving.

But wait there is more, the parrotfishes' digestive system, which includes more teeth inside their throats, breaks down coral bits into the white sands that make beaches famous. Known as bioerosion, this process helps control algae populations and create new surfaces for baby corals to attach to and grow. But just how much sand can a parrotfish produce? Surely it can't be enough to really make whole beaches? Think again. Scientists estimate that a single *Chlorurus gibbus* parrotfish can poop out more than 2,000 pounds of sand each year!



We could go on and on about creatures we saw at the Coral Reef Observatory, but suffice it to say:

Job 38:8 Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?

Job 38:16 Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?

Ps 33:7 He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.

Ps 46:2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

Ps 65:5 By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation; who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of

them that are afar off upon the sea:
Ps 66:6 He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him.
Ps 74:13 Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.
Ps 77:19 Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.
Ps 89:9 Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.
Ps 93:4 The LORD on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.
Ps 95:5 The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.

We casually strolled back to Isrotel Yam Suf in time to get my traditional one hour nap, and a delightful supper. Our whole group was a stir with stories. Turns out we had the most casual, uneventful day of all. Dave and Lynne couldn't stop talking about their coral reef snorkeling experience. Even the shop-till-you-drop crowd was exuberant about the sites in Eilat, and the malls, and the ice skating rink, and the time they had.

That was a notable and relaxing “day-off” spent in Eilat, Israel. It will be remembered, I trust, well into my '80s, and then I'll have a great grand child read me this entry.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ... 36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. ... 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word,

and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Romans 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ... 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; ... 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ... 12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: ... 18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. ... 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ... 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.



Msg #2313 Visiting Israel HS#03 Journal Excerpt

What The Bible Says Good Sam's Penny Pulpit by Pastor Ed Rice

While Pastor Rice and Bev are touring Israel with Pastor Lee Pickett from March 16th – March 31st, here is an entry from their journal of last years trip: (view the whole journal by visiting our website and clicking “Journaling a Preacher's Pilgrimage to Israel”)

From Half Shekel Journal Entry #03: As we gathered at the north end of the Temple Mount our guide Joe, and then our guide, Pastor Charlie, addressed what was once standing in the empty lot before us. To address Jerusalem's vulnerability from the north a citadel was placed on a rocky plateau just outside the north west corner of the Temple Area. “The fortress served as a headquarters for the Roman army in Jerusalem... The close proximity of its high towers to the temple complex enabled Roman guards to keep watch on any disturbances that developed. Herod had built underground passage ways that allowed Roman detachments to enter the compound if deemed necessary.”¹²¹

This fortress was used for the Roman's judgment hall and Mark 15:16 says of Christ on trial, “*And the soldiers lead him away into the hall, called Praetorium; and they called together the whole band.*” An old Arabic proverb says, “He that speaks well turns ears into eyes.” As Pastor Charlie spoke we could see the Roman Praetorium¹²² standing in the open lot before us. We could see Jesus in the hands of the mocking soldiers; we could hear Pontius Pilot say to the crowd, “*What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ (Messiah)? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified*” (Mat.27:22).

It only took a moment really; mere minutes of our time standing at the north end of the Temple Mount. The Muslims had made sure that we had no Bibles to open. Our guide Joe, with just a few worded brushstrokes had painted the towers of a Roman citadel, filled with soldiers, and housing a judgment hall called Praetorium. Our guide Pastor Chalie had made that hall echo with God’s word, Pontius Pilot’s words, and soldiers with a purple robe and crown of thorns. Our guide, the Holy Spirit of God now flooded my mind with holy words: “*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the*

¹²¹see www.christianevidences.org accessed 11/22/2022

¹²²Pictures of the Roman Praetorium by the author at the Israel Museum.

righteousness of God in him” (2Cor.5:20). (Ref also Isa.53:6, Jhn.3:17-18, 36,5:24). It is a horrible thing that man did in that judgment hall, that Praetorium that once stood only a few feet from where we now listened to Pastor Charlie.

The law was given in 1492 BC and for 1,500 years man was tried and tested for his ability to keep that law. He was supposed, by keeping the law, to come through the dark veil and stand in the presence of a holy God. He failed, man was, and is incapable of keeping God's law, incapable of standing in God's presence through law. In this judgment hall, the verdict for man is forever in; here man condemned the only begotten Son of God to death on a cruel cross. That guilty verdict for man cries out, *“the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked...”* (Jer.17:9). ... *“As it is written there is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. ... For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”* (Rom.3:10-11, 23). ...

The trial whereby man must keep the law of God is past. That dispensation, or test of stewardship, is ended, that case cannot be reopened by any religion. A new dispensation is now opened and springs on the world as a new dawn. *“For by grace are ye saved through faith”* (Eph.2:8-9, 7)... We somberly walked by the Praetorium which stood in our minds eye, and began our departure from the Temple Mount. It is a marvelous thing to be saved by grace.

Thank you, Lord, for saving my soul. Thank you, Lord, for making me whole.

Thank you, Lord, for giving to me, Thy Great Salvation, So Rich and Free.

An Essay for week #13 - Mar 26, 2023

A Holy Land Tour Journalled at www.GSBaptistChurch.com/israel22



The Half Shekel Journals of 2023 by Pastor Ed
Rice
**#23029 Wed 29 Mar Ramon Crater,
Ashalim, Sde Boker**

The bus was not to leave Isrotel Yam Suf, Eilat, Israel until 0830, making for a relaxing morning for early risers. Pastor Lee had described our day as:

Day 14 March 29th 2023 We Begin our last day as we share breakfast together and check out of the hotel. Be sure to have all your belongings. Today we begin the trip back to where we began in Tel Aviv. It has been such a blessing to serve each one of you. If the Lord does not return this year we will be doing this again in 2024.

1. Our first stop is at Ramon Crater. The Grand canyon of Israel.

2. Our next stop is at kibbutz Sde Boker, this is where the first prime minister of Israel and his wife lived in the last part of their lives. We will visit their graves to pay our respects to this tremendous man and his wife. Ezekiel 37 1-22, What do we take away today?

3. Our last stop is at Tell Beersheva. It is here the old and ancient and the new come together. It is here Abraham was given the gospel. It is here that we see Israel's rebirth truly begin with a modern miracle on October 31st 1917. Genesis 22:1-18, What do we take away today?

A couple hours before sunrise on the last day of our Israel pilgrimage my mind flashed with Beersheba Scriptures I wanted to check, Psalms that should be read, and prayer that was want to be made. I love morning quiet time, at home I own the whole house, here a quiet corner of our hotel room. I let Bev sleep until sunrise. We read three chapters from Judges and Psalms 89 (it was the 89th day of the year), packed up all our worldly possessions, and headed down to a 7:30 breakfast, our last one in Israel.

Being right here on the Red Sea, 200 km from the Dead Sea, and headed to the Med Sea, I somehow felt obligated to again eat some of their cold fish offerings for breakfast. Beverly said, "That makes one of us!" and moved off towards their generous pastry offerings.

Ensuring that all our bags were slid into the belly of the King-Long tour bus was, by now, pretty routine. Costia was beaming his greeting smile as we climb the stairs and headed to the familiar fifth row left hand side. Routines are good. Broken routines are good too. This being our last day in Israel a lot of things go through the mind.



Pastor Bill Thiessen gave a Scripture centered, thought provoking, opening to our day and Eli was noticeably excited about our excursion from the Red Sea to the Med Sea, and all that would be seen on the way.

We had just comfortably left Eilat and started into the now familiar Negev landscapes when we passed a battery of Israel's Iron Dome. Israel's missile defense system consists of batteries of three or four launchers that can fire 20 interceptor missiles. They are located all across Israel and when an incoming hostile missile is

expected to strike a population area, it launches an intercept missile that explodes near the incoming rocket and destroys it. A very sophisticated and genius device which has negated the incessant Islamist-Palestinian rocket attacks on the Israeli homeland. Palestinians, whose name roots back to the Philistine and Palesta Providences present when the Roman empire tried to wipe every Jew off the face of the earth in 70 AD, have avowed, again, and still, to wipe every Jew off the face of the earth. They were given control of the Gaza strip in an absolutely foolhardy land-for- peace Israeli compromise. Palestinians don't want peace, they want annihilation of Israel. In 2005 Israel had a unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, and in 2006 Palestinians, via an election, put the terrorist group Hamas in charge of the area. Hamas initiated violent conflicts in 2008, 2012, 2014, and 2021. Their rockets have not ceased; the Iron Dome has foiled their hostile aggression so far.

A little past the Iron Dome battery we passed a large kibbutz. Eli folded it right into his dialogue as a farming kibbutz for very Zionist settlers. The kibbutz in Israel started as a socialist agricultural entity. Anything built on socialism cannot survive, proving always to be unsustainable. It must migrate back into capitalism, or devolve into complete communism. It is unfortunate that America has not realized and learned this, even with repeated observations. While teaching freshman college Algebra, I once averaged all the quiz scores and gave everyone the same grade, an 82%. The only complaints came from several who had aced the quiz. The next week when everyone got a 72% more complained that it wasn't fair. The next week when they all got a 62% grade, there was a caustic rebellion. I left the socialist grading system and went back to people getting what they earned. High performers, under socialism, abandon high performance. They always have, and always will.

Anyway, in the Negev this curious kibbutz had an agricultural work day from dawn till 9:00 a.m., when the temperature reached 45° C! That impressed the Canadians right off; the Americans had to wait through Eli's full 30 second pause before he clarified "That's like 113° Fahrenheit!" Eli pointed out the little shrub like acacia

“trees” galore around the kibbutz, and smiled at me wryly. I took it that he enjoyed my argument with the tabernacle guide two days ago.

The Negev terrain grew more hostile and rocky as we approached our stop at the Ramon Crater. NASA had eloquently said, “Ramon Crater resembles a landscape from the fictional Star wars planet of Tatooine. It includes sporadic red and yellow clay hills and is surrounded by mountains. The north section of the crater contains a black hill, which was once an active volcano that is now covered with the basalt. ... Ramon Crater also contains a memorial dedicated to Ilan Ramon, the Israeli astronaut who died along with six others crew members in the Space Shuttle Columbia accident in February 2003. The memorial is located at Mount Ramon, the highest peak in the area.” The NASA site also had several remarkable satellite photos of the crater, but it contained much balderdash about the millions of years of evolution it took to form an erosion crater.

Eli explained, the Ramon Crater or Makhtesh Ramon, is one of the five craters in the Negev desert. It is the largest erosion crater in the world, and its rim, overlooking the vast depression, is one of the most spectacular sites in Israel. When God creates a 1600 foot deep, 9 mile by 26 mile crater in your backyard, it is a wonder to behold. An erosion crater is a grand canyon with no outlet, it is entirely encircled by mountains.

Ramon Crater, Israel
29 March 2023 1018



Ramon Crater is an erosion crater that was previously a body of water about four times the size of the Sea of Galilee. Israel's Negev has five such erosion craters. Sandstone was compressed under the lake bed with stratification of seashells and a wide variety of marine animal fossils around the rim. The stratification layers with volcanic activity make a geological wonder and a geological window. The obvious conclusion, there was a world flood at just the time the Bible says there was a world flood. Evolutionist must bury and conceal a flood of crater lake evidence to hold to their NO FLOOD demand. Ramon Crater is the largest National Reserve in Israel with inhabitants of the Nubian mountain goat, leopard, jackal, striped hyena, sand fox, wolf and gopher. Humans can stay here, too, but the motel charges \$1,000 per night.

After overlooking the crater we gathered on the bus and Eli began unfolding his encyclopedic mind as Costia guided the tour bus from the crater's edge, back to the main route north. Currently excavations at three sites in Israel's Negev Desert have uncovered way-stations in an ancient desert highway which connects Gaza to Petra in what is called the "Spice Road." On your right hand you

can see the great solar tower of Ashalim. It is a massive feat of engineering that uses 50,000 reflective mirrors to focus the sun onto the beaming tip of an 800 foot tower. The towers blinding light prompts comparisons to the Tower of Babel, and/or Moses' Burning Bush. The giant water boiler inside the tower's turret runs steam turbines to generate electricity. Solar thermal generation of electricity was thought promising before photovoltaic panels were refined and took over the solar scene.

On your left there is an extensive six-story underground prison housing Hamas prisoners with life sentences. It is six stories high, but completely underground. You will often hear of prisoner exchanges for IDF soldiers, it happens here. You can be sure they are not watching color TV in air conditioned cells over there.

On your right hand you can see a Bedouin camp. These Bedouins are not Israeli and not loyal to any government. Israel built cities for Bedouins, but behind every house was a tent. They are often involved in smuggling weapons. Their youth have ignored all leadership, and become criminal drug and weapons smugglers. Bedouins often claim they are the owners of the Negev, but that is not so.

Coming up on the right is the burial site of David Ben Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister. Kibbutz Sde Boker has his famous home that is now a museum. A number of pioneering families founded this community in 1952, and it was later joined by Ben Gurion. Their vision of creating industry and life in the desert so impressed the Prime Minister that the elderly spokesman applied to join the community. He was accepted with one vote margin, and made Sde Boker his home. Ben Gurion lived here for the rest of his life, hosting world leaders and many other dignitaries in his home. "His passion for developing Israel's desert and his membership in the Sde Boker have undoubtedly been of paramount importance in securing investments in infrastructure and creation of the thriving communities and industries in the Negev which continue to flourish" (touristisrael.com).

Ben Gurion said, "We will do the difficult first, the impossible

will take a little longer.”

From the NY Times Digital Archives December 2, 1973:

TEL AVIV, Dec. 1 — David Ben-Gurion, a founding father of modern Israel and its first Premier, died today at the age of 87. He succumbed at 11:06 A.M. local time (4:06 A.M. New York time) to a brain hemorrhage that had struck him two weeks ago.

Because of the Sabbath the Government withheld an official announcement until sundown tonight. However, the news was reported unofficially earlier by the state radio.

Premier Golda Meir convened the Cabinet for a memorial meeting in Jerusalem tonight. Minister of Interior Yosef Burg ordered flags on all public buildings lowered to half-staff from tomorrow morning until Monday night.

Mr. Ben-Gurion will lay in state at the Knesset, or Parliament, building in Jerusalem from 10 A.M. tomorrow through the night until 7 A.M. Monday. The public will be able to pay respects. Places of entertainment throughout the country will be closed tomorrow.

Okay, get out your Bibles, our next, and final, stop will be at Beersheba.

*And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. 29 And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves? 30 And he said, For these seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well. 31 Wherefore he called that place **Beersheba**; because there they swear both of them. 32 Thus they made a covenant at **Beersheba**: then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines. 33 And Abraham planted a grove in **Beersheba**, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God (Gen.21:28-33).*

Beersheba: <0884> בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע AV- 34 times, Beer-
sheba= "well of the sevenfold oath."



The Half Shekel Journals of 2023 by Pastor Ed
Rice
**#23030 Wed/Thur 29-30 Mar Beersheba, Tel
Aviv, Newark**

We came to Israel with particular attention given to walking where Jesus walked. Today we were to step back nineteen-hundred years before Christ, and walk where Abraham walked.



*And Abraham planted a grove in **Beersheba**, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God. ³⁴ And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days (Gen.21:33-34).*

So is it Beersheba, as in the Bible, or Be'er Sheva as in everywhere else? An interesting question with an interesting answer. The short version is the Hebrew alphabet has its second letter Bet as ב or as בּ, the tiny dot inside the letter changes the letters pronunciation from soft “v” to hard “b”. The Bible was copied for centuries without spaces between words, vowel points, or pronunciation points, consequently it

calls our “well of the sevenfold oath” Beersheba. It is easy to deal with in that light. Since I search the scriptures daily, in English, I more often use Beersheba. Other Hebrew letters with pronunciation points are shown in the table below.

At Tel Be'er Sheva it would be easy to be overrun by a lot of archaeological things and miss the Bible importance of being here. Easy, and not at all uncommon. As can be seen in the welcome sign; 1) the period under consideration for Be'er Sheva runs from twelve-hundred BC to twelve-hundred AD; 2) emphasis is put on the 2nd stratum in what “they” call “the iron age”; 3) great emphasis is put on “iron age” city planning; and 4) great emphasis is put on an extensive water system that gave the city its strength.

שׁ	סׁ	וׁ	וׁ	וׁ	תׁ	תׁ	פׁ	פׁ	כׁ	כׁ	בׁ	בׁ
Sh	S	U	O	V	T	Th	P	F	K	Kh	B	V

Other 'Nikkud' (Hbrw points)

It might sound like I have an ax to grind here, and a little bit I do have a couple. Let's start with “their” Chalcolithic period. Chalcolithic means, literally, a “stone to copper phase” and, thus, it refers to prehistoric man evolving from the stone-age (a palaeolithic¹²³, then mesolithic¹²⁴ and finally neolithic¹²⁵ stone age, with arch-evolutionist's ape-like creatures learning to use stone tools) to a time when man finally evolved high enough to smelt copper. Such an evolutionary age came just before the arch-

123 From the arch-evolutionist archaeological dictionary, Palaeolithic = relating to or denoting the early phase of the Stone Age, lasting about 2.5 million years, when primitive stone implements were used by ape-like cave men. The 2.5 million is obviously from the pen of an infidel evolutionist.

124 From the arch-evolutionist fiction the Meseolithic stone age period comes when palaeolithic hunter-gatherer ape-like creatures learned to make chipped stone tools and even begin some agricultural enterprises, entering a meseolithic period of evolution, where these ape-like creatures moved from their caves and built huts, with a rise of global temperatures there was even a rise of permanent settlements.

125 From the arch-evolutionist fiction the Neolithic stone-age period is distinguished by cave men using polished stone tools, leaving their caves, forming settlements and even learning the domestication of plants and animals.

evolutionist's schemed, but entirely fictional, Bronze-Age. Their Bronze-Age then evolved, when their neanderthal man evolved high enough to smelt iron with a charcoal reducing agent, into their fictional account's Iron-Age. All this took millions of the arch-evolutionist's years.

Again, believers, with a verbally inspired, inerrant, infallible Holy Bible, have none of that in their timeline. They have no “pre-historic” age. The unbelieving world is so consumed with prehistoric cavemen evolving through a bronze-age into an iron-age, that they will never discover Lamech's son Tubalcaine, “*an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron*” (Gen.4:22). God said Tubalcaine was in the 7th generation from Adam. Incidentally Tubalcain, a decedent of Cain, and Methuselah, a descendant of Seth, were both 7th generation from Adam, and were thus possibly born around the same time.

Methuselah was born in 3317 BC, in a 687 year old earth, 969 years before the world flood (Methuselah died the day before it started to rain!) (see the table of the ages of the “Sons of God” at the end of Journal #23024 on page 206 of this volume). Please let this paragraph come to mind every time you see a reference to the arch-evolutionist's Chaleolithic period, Bronze-Age, or Iron-Age.

And so, in our tour of Be'er Sheva we went through Stratum 2 of the 15 strata tel, and were enthralled to explore the extensive water system that gave the city its strength. We examined and photographed the reconstructed four-horned idolatrous altar likely destroyed when King Hezekiah “*did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, ... 4 He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, ... 5 He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; ... 6 For he clave to the LORD, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses* (2Kings.18:3-6).

Also Pastor Pickett briefly explored for us the October 31, 1917 Battle of Beersheba, the first major victory for Britain in World War One. Going into this battle, Britain had been defeated four times by the Turkish army. Now Gen. Edmund Allenby, aided and advised

by a Palestinian Jew and a Christian Zionist intelligence officer, was persuaded to swerve south of Gaza and attack Beersheba, because an agronomist told him, “that is where the water is.”

Gen Allenby used military deception to lull the enemy into thinking he would launch a third major assault on Gaza, but instead, in the last great cavalry charge in military history, the Australian 4th and 12th Light Horse Brigades won the day, Beersheba was taken, and this battle opened the way for the liberation of Jerusalem by Christmas, and the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

Here I can barely touch all the exciting detail Pastor Lee might add to this battle. The Battle of Beersheba was reenacted on its hundredth anniversary October 31st, 2017. More exciting detail is given by a Jerusalem Post Barry Shaw article, “1917 and the Battle of Beersheba.” (ref. [jpost.com/opinion/1917-and-the-battle-of-beersheba-507788](https://www.jpost.com/opinion/1917-and-the-battle-of-beersheba-507788), accessed 02/15/2024.)

The tour, the archaeology, the water wells, the long history of Beersheba, the battles and victories here must, however, pale to the Biblical importance of Beersheba. Here, in Abraham's life the Gospel of Jesus Christ was revealed in exemplary detail. In this holy pilgrimage to a holy land, it is altogether fitting that our last stop be in the place where such an unfolding of such a glorious gospel was revealed.

Remember at Beersheba's first mention, in Genesis 21 there was a well dug and a covenant made there. The name means “well of the sevenfold oath.” Seven, being the number of days in creation's first week, is a number of completeness. It is thus appropriate that here God would reveal his complete covenant to provide man with eternal life and living water (cf. John 4:10,7:38). Genesis 21 closes with Abraham calling “*on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God*” and sojourning at Beersheba in the Philistine's land.

Genesis 22 opens with God calling on Abraham to, “*Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.*” God had promised in Genesis 3:15 that the seed of woman would bruise Satan's head, and in Genesis 12 God promised Abraham, “*I will make of thee a great*

*nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and **in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.***” Now God comes to Abraham at Beersheba, and reveals through him, what God himself was going to do: “*Take now thy son, thine only son ... , whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains*”

Any student of the Bible knows well the story that unfolds in Genesis 22. Abraham is spared from offering Isaac his only begotten son. Isaac says, “*My father: Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?*” Abraham answered prophetically saying, “*My son, **God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering.***” Afterwards, the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven and said, “*By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: ¹⁷ That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; ¹⁸ **And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;** because thou hast obeyed my voice.” This is all familiar to the Bible student, but many miss verse 19 of this chapter, “*So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and **Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.***”*

God did “**provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering.**” And he died for you , he died for me.

John 3: ¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. ¹⁸ He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather

than light, because their deeds were evil. ... 36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. ... 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

How one accepts that free gift is worded succinctly in what we call the Romans Road to Heaven:

Romans 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ... 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Romans 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.,

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And Romans 10:9-10 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ... 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

This Holy Land Pilgrimage was designed to visit the Med Sea, the Dead Sea, and then the Red Sea. Most tours do not go through Israel's Negev and visit the Red Sea. It was well worth tacking on the couple extra days to get it all in, the Negev was absolutely amazing, and closing it out with time in Beersheba, where God's redemption plan was revealed to Abraham, and thru Abraham, made for a superb Gospel synopsis of our time here. We walked where Abraham walked, we walked where Moses walked, we walked where Jesus walked.

The trip's ledger called 30 March Day 15, but our EL AL Israel Flight LY27 Departed Tel Aviv for Newark NJ at 0 0:30 which made Day 15 only 30 minutes long. Pastor Lee's "Bible Barean Israel Tour 2023" booklet closed its Day 14 coverage by saying,

“We end our day checking in at Grand Beach Hotel to refresh and have a meal before departing to the Airport to say good bye to Israel. Our Canadian friends will enjoy a good night sleep and then depart in the morning for home. It has truly been an amazing trip I think we will all remember. Day Fifteen Thursday March 30, 2023 We are Headed Home. Shalom to all.”

It was exceptional and thoughtful that they provided the Grand Beach Hotel room, at Tel Aviv, Israel, for our Wednesday evening. It was a deluxe and luxurious close to a delightful day, and a superb supper with friends. Of course it sure beat waiting in an airport terminal for seven hours. We got our Canadian good byes said -A, and Costia drove us to the Airport.

The flight to Israel was long and laden with anticipation, the flight home was not long at all and laden with exhaustion. I remember taking off, two superb meals, sleeping, stretching in the El-Al “exercise area”, and touching down. And voila we were in Newark NJ where our grandson, Micah picked us up in time to get us to Solid Rock Baptist Church's, Berlin NJ Thursday night prayer service. I love El-Al Airlines.



Since October 7th, 2023 Israel has been at war. Biblical prophecy shows that all nations will one day gather against her, and God will avenge. Israel's war against Palestinian Terrorists and Islamists who want all Jews annihilated, has shown all nations begin such a turning away from God's chosen nation Israel. Even our own nation, weakened and depraved under liberal leadership with Marxist,

socialist intentions, has shown signs of such a turning against Israel.
God will bless Israel.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee (Ps.122:6).

«A Song of degrees of David.»

I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD. 2 Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. 3 Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: 4 Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD. 5 For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.

6 ¶ Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. 7 Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. 8 For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. 9 Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good (Psalm 122:1-9).