

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF CHRIST



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Caesarea, Mount Carmel, and Nazareth

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In preparation for a tour of Israel in May 2019 that will be hosted by *Berean Bible Society* and *Berean Bible Institute*, leaders from BBS and BBI went on a familiarization tour of Israel this past May. These leaders included myself, Pastor John (and Terri) Frederickson, Dr. Robert Nix, and Pastor Andy Kern. Upon hearing that a group of pastors were going to Israel, other pastors and leaders of local churches chose to join us: Pastor Jim Harley, Pastor Jeff Bertram, Pastor Don Hosfeld, and Jim Humphrey. One of the special things that happens on a trip like this is that, after spending ten straight days together, you form a close bond with the other people on the tour. You see and experience the same special places, you laugh together, and make unforgettable memories. The fellowship we enjoyed was very special, and we all grew closer.



On the flight to Israel, there were many orthodox Jews with us. We flew overnight to Israel and, as it neared dawn, I woke up to seeing many Jewish men and boys standing in the exit rows in their prayer shawls and phylacteries. They rocked back and forth as they prayed. I later learned during our tour that Jews often pray at sunrise and sunset. Seeing those young boys following in the footsteps of their fathers, and observing their zeal toward their religion, I felt the Lord building a greater burden in my heart for Jewish people, who “have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge” (Rom. 10:2). This continued throughout the trip.

As we flew into Tel Aviv, it was thrilling to look out the window as we approached the coast of Israel. I thought of how important this place is in the plans and purposes of God and how much of the Bible is centered on this land. And I thought of how our Lord and Savior came to this world and walked the earth in this place.



CAESAREA

Our first stop on the tour was the city of Caesarea, which is along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Caesarea was built by Herod I (also known as “Herod the Great”) who named it in honor of Caesar Augustus. You may recall a biblical account of Herod’s evil: After the wise men from the East visited him, he tried to kill Christ, the true King of the Jews, by ordering the killing of all children two years old and younger in and around Bethelhem (Matt. 2:16-18).



After going on a footsteps-of-Paul tour in 2017, I realized that, being in Caesarea, I was still following the footsteps of Paul. A riot took place in Jerusalem when Paul was falsely accused of bringing a Gentile (Trophi-mus) into the temple (Acts 21:27-31). Paul was taken into custody by the Roman authorities as they investigated the matter. A plot made against

the life of Paul was uncovered and, for his protection, Paul was brought from Jerusalem to Caesarea under the cover of darkness with a large Roman military escort:

“And he [the chief captain] called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night; And provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor” (Acts 23:23,24).

When Paul arrived in Caesarea, he was kept for five days in the guard room attached to Governor Felix’s residence at Herod’s palace (Acts 23:35, 24:1). You can see the ruins of Herod’s palace in Caesarea, and even see the freshwater swimming pool that was part of the palace.



Because Governor Felix hoped for money to be given to him to release Paul, he kept him in custody. Our apostle was held in Caesarea for more than two years (Acts 24:26,27). During his time in Caesarea, Paul stood before the Roman Governor Felix and then Governor Festus, who succeeded Felix. Paul at those times defended himself against the Jews accusations; “he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come” (Acts 24:25), and he spoke of his faith in the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

After Felix was replaced by Festus, Herod Agrippa II, Roman ruler of Judea and great grandson of Herod I, came with the his sister Bernice to visit, and pay their respects to the new Governor. While they were visiting, Festus brought up the matter of his prisoner Paul, whom he had inherited from his predecessor and whom the Jews desired to kill. This intrigued Agrippa, and he asked Festus to hear Paul for himself, to which Festus readily agreed. Paul recounted his conversion on the Damascus Road in hopes of reaching Agrippa for Christ (Acts 26:9-20). But at the end of Paul’s testimony, “Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian” (Acts 26:28).

These eight words have to be among the saddest within the pages of Scripture. “Almost” is lost. “Almost” is not heaven. “Almost” is not saved. And sadly there have been many who have followed Agrippa in “almost” being persuaded to trust Christ.

“And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds” (Acts 26:29).

Paul longed for Agrippa to believe, and not only him, but all those that were present that day. He said he wished they could be altogether as he was: saved from his sins, having the peace, joy, and assurance of salvation, and the sure hope of heaven. We pray the same for those with whom we share Christ.

As our tour guide read Acts 26 in Caesarea, it made the Scriptures come alive as we stood there feeling the breeze from the Mediterranean, hearing the waves, and seeing the site where Paul stood before King Agrippa. We experienced this throughout Israel when the Word of God was read in biblical locations. It was spiritually meaningful and moving.



The Apostle Peter also came to Caesarea to visit the Roman Centurion, Cornelius (Acts 10:24,25). Peter was shown, first by his vision of the great sheet containing all manner of animals to eat (Acts 10:11-

16), and then by being led to enter the home of an unclean Gentile to share Christ (Acts 10:17-33), that what was considered unclean in the past was no longer unclean. This is a pivotal account in the Book of Acts, showing that God's dealings with mankind were changing from law to grace, from prophecy to the mystery.

In Caesarea, the "Pilate Stone" was found in 1961. A replica of it is on display there. The artifact is significant because it is an archaeological find of an authentic 1st-Century Roman stone inscribed with the name "Pontius Pilatus." It is extra-biblical proof of the existence of Pontius Pilate. We don't need to see these types of discoveries to know that our Bible is true, but they are faith-affirming and encouraging. The whole trip to Israel is like that. All the biblical sites, cities, mountains, and archaeological finds combine in an overwhelming volume of proof of the truth and accuracy of God's Word.



MOUNT CARMEL

Mount Carmel is not far from Caesarea. Arriving there you find a large statue of Elijah the prophet. Elijah had a showdown with 450 prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. The terms of the showdown were for two bulls to be killed and cut up and placed on wood, without any human help in lighting the fire, the deity that responded in sending fire upon the slaughtered bull would be proven to be the true God.

The prophets of Baal cried out to their god, leaped on the sacrifice, even cut themselves, all to no avail. Elijah repaired an altar of the Lord on the mount, and put twelve stones around the altar representing the twelve tribes of Israel. He dug a trench, arranged the wood, cut up the bullock, and directed that four barrels of water be poured over the sacrifice and the wood. He repeated the pouring of water two more times. Then Elijah prayed to the true and the living God, with no shouting, no pleading, and no jumping on the altar. It was just a plainly-spoken request that the LORD show Israel that He alone is God. The response was immediate, and a consuming fire fell from heaven and consumed the offering, the wood, the stones, the dust, and the water in the trench (1 Kings 18:19-39).



It was special to stand in the place where Elijah stood alone and took a stand for the LORD. He was outnumbered 450 to 1, but with God on his side, he was a victorious majority. After the contest with the prophets of Baal and slaying these false prophets in the Brook Kishon (which still exists at the base of the mount), Elijah sat down “and put his face between his knees” (1 Kings 18:42). He then told his servant to check the horizon and look to the Mediterranean Sea. The servant told Elijah that he didn’t see anything (v. 43). Elijah told him to go back seven times, and on the seventh check a small rain cloud was seen in the distance. It was the size of a man’s hand (v. 44). After not raining for seven years, it was a raincloud that brought “a great rain” to Israel (v. 45). What fascinated me was that, standing on Mount Carmel, you could look out and see the Mediterranean Sea, and easily picture where the cloud like a man’s hand was seen in the distance. In every way, the Scriptures are accurate and true!



While we stood on top of Mount Carmel, we heard big guns firing in the distance. We were certain this was Israel’s response to Iran shooting rockets from Syria into the Golan Heights. Also, during the ten days we were in Israel, there was unrest in Gaza while the US Embassy was being opened and dedicated in Jerusalem. With all that going on, we *never* felt unsafe the entire time we were there. Please don’t allow fears about safety to be the reason not to come on a tour of Israel. The security is tight, and they do everything possible to make you safe.



After Mount Carmel, we next visited the city of Megiddo, which sits on a large mound. The large plain below Mount Carmel is in the valley of Jezreel, also known as the valley of Megiddo. This large plain



stretches for a long distance before the nearby city of Megiddo. When the people of Israel invaded the Promised Land under Joshua, they did not drive the Canaanites out of Megiddo (Josh. 17:11-12). Many ruins from the time of the Canaanites have been unearthed in Megiddo. We saw a stone manger there, reminding us of

the type of manger that the Lord was likely laid in when He was born.

In Israel's history, the broad plain that stands before Megiddo was a place of numerous decisive battles: Deborah and Barak defeated Sisera and his Canaanite army (Judges 4-5); Gideon and his 300 drove off the 135,000 man Midianite and Amalekite armies (Judges 7); and an Egyptian army killed Josiah, King of Judah (2 Kings 23:29).



Also, here on the plain before the city of Megiddo, the vast army of the Anti-Christ will gather at the end of the Tribulation period for the battle of Armageddon. "Armageddon" is a Hebrew word (Rev. 16:16). *Har* in Hebrew means mountain, and "Mageddon" is the name of the place. "Armageddon" means Mount Megiddo.

NAZARETH

Israel has nearly every terrain and landscape that exists: seas, lakes, streams, rivers, waterfalls, plains, hills, mountains, valleys, forests, and desert. Nazareth sits on top of a mountain. Nazareth, of course, was where Gabriel told Mary about Christ's birth (Luke 1:26,27), and it is where the Lord was raised and grew up (Luke 2:39,40). We visited a replica village of Nazareth, where we learned some interesting things.

Many believe the word "Nazareth" comes from the Hebrew word *netser*, which means offshoot. The Hebrew term *netser*



was used for the offshoots of trees, and we saw an example of one growing beside an olive tree in Nazareth. Its biblical significance is that *the Offshoot*, the righteous Branch of David and King of Israel (Jer. 23:5), lived and was raised in Nazareth: “And there shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch [Heb. *netser*] shall grow out of his roots” (Isa. 11:1).

Our tour guide pointed out a pomegranate tree as we walked by one. Many Jews believe there are 613 seeds in a pomegranate, just as there are 613 commandments in the Law of Moses. Because of this, Jews eat pomegranates every year on Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year.



We saw a re-creation of a carpenter’s shop. This reminded us how it was in Nazareth that the Lord learned the trade of being a carpenter (Matt. 13:54-56; Mark 6:1-3). The hands that created the universe created things out of wood in Nazareth.



One cannot pinpoint exact locations for many biblical events or places in Israel. Our tour guide often reminded us of this. We, of course, understood. But it was exciting just to be in the vicinity of where these things took place. In Nazareth, we were surrounded by modern homes, buildings and businesses, but it was encouraging just to be

in the area where our Lord was raised and lived most of His earthly life.

We also saw a re-creation of a synagogue in Nazareth. This immediately brought Luke 4 to my mind, when the Lord stood up in the synagogue in Nazareth and read from Isaiah 61:1-2 about the Messiah and how He would “preach the gospel to the poor...heal the brokenhearted...preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind...To preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18,19). The Lord then “closed the book...gave it again to the minister, and sat down” (v. 20), and told those present, “This day is





this Scripture fulfilled in your ears” (v. 21). The Lord rightly divided the Word when He closed the book, because the next part of Isaiah 61:2 says, “...and the day of vengeance of our God,” which speaks of the Lord’s Second Coming.

The people of His hometown rejected the Lord and the truth that He was their

Messiah. They were filled with wrath, and led Him to the brow of a hill to throw Him off of it, but the Lord passed through their midst, and left them (Luke 4:28-30). As I thought of Christ’s rejection in Nazareth and how quickly the people turned against Him, it reminded me, when we share the truth of God’s Word rightly divided with those around us in our hometowns, how quickly they often reject and turn against us too, and would like to throw us off a cliff! Everything Christ did was pleasing to the Father and was His will. It is likewise pleasing to God the Father when we are faithful to the truth, and we proclaim it, even in the face of rejection and ridicule. 

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF CHRIST

*Sea of Galilee, Capernaum,
Caesarea Philippi, Magdala*

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SEA OF GALILEE

After visiting Caesarea, Mt. Carmel, Megiddo, and Nazareth this past May, the next stop on our tour of Israel was the Sea of Galilee. At nearly 700 feet below sea level, the Sea of Galilee is the lowest freshwater lake on earth, and the second lowest lake in the world after the Dead Sea, a saltwater lake.

The Sea of Galilee is now one of my new favorite places in the world. It is a very natural, quiet, and serene place. Many of the locations that tourists visit in Israel are commercialized, have modern buildings built up around them, or there is a large Roman Catholic Church built directly on top of the site. For the most part, this is not the case with the Sea

of Galilee. The lake and its surrounding mountains haven't changed since the time of the Lord's earthly ministry to Israel.

So much of the Lord's earthly ministry took place around the Sea of Galilee. For the two days we stayed by there, I got up early each morning at sunrise and stayed up late past sunset, just to sit by that Sea. I sat there watching and listening to its waves, looking at the mountains around it, observing the many different species of birds flying around, thinking about the Lord's ministry, praying, and reading Scripture. Having devotions by the Sea of Galilee is a very meaningful experience. One thing you won't learn from the Scriptures about the



Sea of Galilee is that there are mosquitoes of Biblical proportions!

It was special to sit on the shore of this sea where the Lord called Peter, Andrew, James, and John to follow Him (Matt. 4:18-22). It's a place to rededicate yourself to follow the Lord, and to follow Him with your whole heart.

As I sat there thinking, it occurred to me that this was one of the places that the Lord appeared after He rose again! Peter and six of the other disciples had gone fishing (John 21:2). After a full night of fishing they had caught nothing (v. 3). (I apply this verse of Scripture when I go fishing. I usually catch nothing too!). In the morning, they saw a Man on the shore (v. 4). He asked them if they had caught anything. "They answered Him, No" (v. 5). He told them to cast their net on the right side of the boat. When they did, their net filled with fish (v. 6). This immediately triggered John's memory how the Lord did this three years previous when He called them to follow Him (Luke 5:1-11), and John knew at that moment that the Man on the shore was the Lord. When John tells Peter, "It is the Lord," Peter impulsively throws himself into the sea to swim to the Lord, and get to Him as quickly as possible (John 21:7).

At times your heart swells in Israel when you think of the significance of where you are, and it causes you to be thankful to the Lord. I especially felt this when it dawned on me that I was in the place where this post-resurrection appearance of my Savior occurred.

The Sea of Galilee is a peaceful place. The water is very still in the mornings. Looking at the still water made me think of how the Lord stilled that water twice during His earthly ministry. Once, when He was asleep on a pillow in the back of the boat during a great storm, the disciples feared for their lives. They woke Him up saying, "Master, earnest Thou not that we perish?" (Mark 4:37,38). The Lord stood up "and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm" (v. 39). This made me



think of what that meant to me personally. We can draw from that account the principle that the Lord gives us His peace which passes all understanding during our storms of life too.

Being a grace believer, you can't help but think of things from a dispensational perspective! It made me think how that "great storm" of Mark 4 is a picture of Israel's Great Tribulation. At its conclusion, at His Second Coming, Christ will stand up, as it were, and authoritatively say, "Peace, be still," and bring a great peace and stillness to this earth when He, the Prince of Peace, establishes His millennial kingdom. Wherever Christ is, there is peace. Israel will experience God's perfect peace in Christ in the kingdom of heaven on the earth. We, the Body of Christ, will one day experience God's perfect peace in Christ in heaven above.

After Christ calmed the sea and they crossed to the other side to the country of the Gadarenes, where He met the crazed man who was possessed by a legion of demons. The Lord, having authority over all those demons, cast them out of this man into a herd of pigs. The pigs then "ran violently down a steep place into the sea...and were choked in the sea" (Mark 5:13). (The theological description for this is that the pigs committed "sooey-side!") I sat there amazed to be looking at the area of the "steep place" where this event took place.



This man once had no rest and no peace. He had been a screaming, self-cutting, sleepless, naked, uncontrollable, crazed maniac, but after his deliverance by Christ, "And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid" (Mark 5:15). Christ brought peace to the Sea, then He brought peace to a person.

The Messiah must have power over material creation and power over the supernatural realm. These back-to-back accounts in the Gospel of Mark prove beyond a doubt that Jesus is Israel's Messiah and God's Son. The Messiah will alter the creation, causing the desert to blossom like a rose, and the lion to lie down with the lamb (Isa. 11:6-8; 35:1). The Messiah will cast Satan and his host into the bottomless pit for 1000 years when He establishes His kingdom (Rev. 20:1-3). Jesus Christ's authority over creation and over demons in the Gospel records demonstrates that He is the true Messiah. One day, there will be a false messiah on this earth. When the people of Israel go through the seven-year Tribulation, they will have the Word of God to show them

who the true Messiah is. In that day, in order for them to be saved under the terms of the gospel of the kingdom (John 20:31), they will need to place their faith in God's Word that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, their true Messiah.



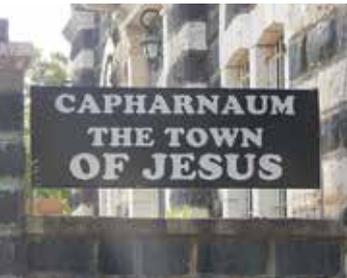
We took a one-hour boat ride on the Sea of Galilee. We sang songs, had a devotion, and prayed together during the boat ride. To hear the account of Christ walking on the Sea of Galilee (Matt. 14:22-33) while you're floating on that very sea is quite the experience. As I thought of being in the footsteps of Christ during this tour, it struck me that, even while I was *on* the Sea of Galilee, I was still walking in the *footsteps* of Christ! To walk

on that water was something very easy for our Savior to do as God and the Creator of all things (John 1:1-3).

After our boat ride, we had a fish lunch at a restaurant along the shore. The fish we ate were caught in the Sea of Galilee. Interestingly, it was tilapia, and it was tasty.



CAPERNAUM



Capernaum is on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. The Lord spent a lot of time in Capernaum, so much so that Matthew calls it "His own city" (Matt. 9:1). The Lord taught in the synagogue and performed many miracles there. Ruins from the time of Christ are plentiful. In Capernaum, we were truly walking in the footsteps of Christ.

We had the privilege to stand in the synagogue where the Lord cast out an unclean spirit (Mark 1:21-26) and where He healed the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath (Mark 3:1-5). The Lord also healed Peter's mother-in-law in Capernaum (Mark 1:29-31). One of my favorite accounts in the Gospels took place in Capernaum:



“And again He entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that He was in the house. 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. And they come unto Him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto Him for the press, they uncovered the roof where He was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay” (Mark 2:1-4).

The “house” in this account is the house of Peter and Andrew. There was a great crowd gathered in and around the house because of the Lord’s presence and because they knew He could miraculously heal. When the Lord saw the crowd, out of His love and compassion, He gave them what they needed the most: “He preached the Word unto them.” This is always what people need the most. We’re being Christ-like when we do likewise (2 Tim. 4:2).



While he is there preaching, four men brought “one sick of the palsy” to the house. Seeing the great crowd, and desiring to do *whatever it took* to get their friend before the Lord so he might be healed, they went up on the roof, uncovered and broke it up, and then let the stretcher down into the house. Peter and Andrew had some roof repairs to perform after this day! But these four men were true and faithful friends to this man.

It reminds us how we need to do *whatever it takes* to get our friends and family before the Lord and under the hearing of the gospel—even if we have to carry them to get them there! We do this so that they might experience Christ’s spiritual healing and cleansing from sin, which today is by faith alone in Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. This is true love; this is being a true friend.

After all the time the Lord spent in Capernaum, and all that He had taught, and all the miracles that He had performed in this city, people failed to respond in faith to the Lord. Scripture records the Lord’s assessment of the spiritual condition of Capernaum:

“Then began He to upbraid the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not...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. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee” (Matt. 11:20,23,24).

Unbelief in Christ still marks Israel. Israel is a spiritually dark country. It is amazing that, in the country where Christ walked, taught, performed miracle after miracle, and died and rose again, that only 1% is Christian. Islam and Judaism are Israel's predominant religions. Believers from all over the world travel to Israel to see the place where their Savior walked this earth, but the great majority of the people who live there are still in need of the Lord and His salvation from sin.

CAESAREA PHILIPPI



Caesarea Philippi is about 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee. Today it is near the border of Lebanon and Syria. As we rode the tour bus to this location, I realized how far the Lord walked, and how He traveled long distances throughout all Israel during His earthly ministry.

In Caesarea Philippi, there is a large cave on the side of a mountain. Inside the cave is what seemed

to be a bottomless pit with an unlimited quantity of water. The cave was believed by several pagan sects in the time of Christ to be the gate to the afterlife in hades. Temples to false gods were built all around this cave. Our tour guide pointed out that, when

Christ said that “the gates of hell [hades] shall not prevail against” His kingdom church, it’s possible that this statement was made by Christ in relation to the gates of hades supposed to be inside this cave at Caesarea Philippi.



“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? And they said, Some say that Thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell [hades] shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:13-18).

The Lord said to Peter, “Thou art Peter [Gr. *petros*, piece of a rock], and upon this rock [Gr. *petra*, a mass of rock] I will build My church,”

not on Peter, the little rock, but upon Christ and His identity as the Messiah, the Son of the living God. That is the great massive rock upon which Christ's earthly kingdom church will be built. Peter's confession, faith in the revealed identity of Jesus of Nazareth, is what must be believed to be saved under the terms of the gospel of the kingdom. However, to be saved today, under the terms of the gospel of the grace of God, we must trust that Christ died for our sins and rose again (1 Cor. 15:3,4).

MAGDALA

On our way south to the Dead Sea, we stopped to see Magdala, a city along the shores of the Sea of Galilee, very near to Capernaum. "Mary Magdalene, out of whom He [the Lord] had cast seven devils" (Mark 16:9), was from Magdala. Mary was a Magdalene.



We saw many ruins from the time of Christ in Mary's hometown: The ruins of homes, the marketplace, and storage rooms. We also saw a synagogue in Magdala. This immediately reminded me of passages about the Lord teaching in the synagogues throughout this region: "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom..." (Matt. 4:23). It's probable that the Lord taught in this very synagogue, and preached the gospel of the kingdom.

In the center of the synagogue archaeologists found a stone that has carvings of things from the temple in Jerusalem, such as the seven-branched menorah. It dates to before the destruction of the second temple

in Jerusalem in AD 70. This "Magdala Stone" is thought to be the earliest known artistic depiction of the second temple.



In Magdala was a church that had my idea of the ultimate pulpit—a fishing boat pulpit with the Sea of Galilee visible in the background.



In the basement of this church was a very moving depiction of the woman who had an issue of blood for twelve years, reaching through the crowd just to touch the hem of Christ's garment and be healed (Luke 8:43-48). When she did this, the Lord stopped. Faith stops the Lord. Christ differentiated between the crush of the crowd and the personal touch of a woman who needed His help and merely touched the hem of His robe by faith. The Lord stopped, not to make the miracle public, but to make this woman's faith public, and to honor her and comfort her that she had not stolen her healing, but that it was hers by faith. He commended this woman's risk-taking faith in Him. It was stirring to look at this picture, and think that we were in the area where this miracle actually took place. *To Be Continued!* 

In the Footsteps **OF CHRIST**

*Bet She'an, Dead Sea,
En Gedi, Jerusalem*

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BET SHE'AN

We continued our tour of Israel this past May, travelling south from the Sea of Galilee toward the Dead Sea. There's not time to stop in every place, so our tour guide would often point out important sites as we were driving by them. This would cause a mad scramble to grab a camera and try to take a picture before it was too late. One time, I missed my chance to get a picture of the River Harod, where the Lord had Gideon's army drink from the river so as to scale his army down to 300 (Judges 7:1-7).

As we were driving by Mount Gilboa, however, I did get my camera up in time. This is where King Saul died in a battle against the Philistines (1 Sam. 31:1-6). Our tour guide, having seen these things many times, would refer to places like this very matter-of-factly. She would say, "Off to your right is Mount Gilboa where King Saul was killed." For us, seeing it for the first time, we were blown away to



actually see these biblical sites that we read of in Scripture.

We then came to Bet She'an. It was here, after Saul and his sons were killed (including Jonathan, David's best friend), that the Philistines hung their bodies on the city walls.

"...when the Philistines came to strip the slain...they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa. And they cut off his head,

and stripped off his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines...and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan” (1 Sam. 31:8-10).

On top of this large hill was where the biblical city of Beth-shan once stood, and where the bodies of Saul and his three sons were hung on the city walls (1 Sam. 31:12). Our tour guide gave those who were interested one hour to hike to the top and back. Four of us were adventurous enough to give it a shot: Dr. Robert Nix, Pastor Andy Kern, Pastor Don Hosfeld, and myself. We huffed and puffed and had



to take a couple breaks, but we made it to the top (and we made it back in time too—barely). This is the view from the top, looking down at an important Roman city whose ruins date from the time of Christ.

The tour guide did a great job of informing us what to expect at each stop, as to the type of terrain we would be walking and how long we would be there. They gave us times for breaks along the way if it was a long walk. Most of the sites were very easy to manage. And like at Bet She’an, we were afforded the opportunity to climb the hill, but it was up to each individual person. The rest of our group walked among the ruins, rested, and took pictures.



DEAD SEA

From Bet She’an, we traveled farther south and stopped by the Qumran caves about a mile from the northwest shore of the Dead Sea, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls is the largest-ever find of biblical texts and manuscripts in one place. Parts of every book of the Old Testament were found, except for the Book of Esther. Included in the discovery was the full Book of Isaiah. Items were found in twelve caves; 90% of the scrolls and texts were found in Cave Four.

When word got out about the value of the biblical manuscripts and ancient texts, there was a “scroll rush.” Many people came to Qumran to scour the many caves in search of more scrolls.



Across the Dead Sea to the east, one can see Mount Nebo. Our guide pointed it out to us. It was the dark-colored mountain in the distance. This is where the Lord gave Moses a view of the Promised Land before he died.

You may recall the reason that the Lord showed Moses the Promised Land from Mount Nebo but did not allow him to enter. In Exodus 17, the Lord instructed Moses to strike the rock at Horeb to give the children of Israel water to drink.

“Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel” (Ex. 17:6).

Later during Israel’s wandering in the wilderness, the people murmured and were again in need of water to drink. The Lord told Moses only to speak to the rock (Num. 20:8). Instead, out of his frustration with the children of Israel, “Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly...” (Num. 20:11).



The Apostle Paul teaches that the Rock in the desert represented Christ:

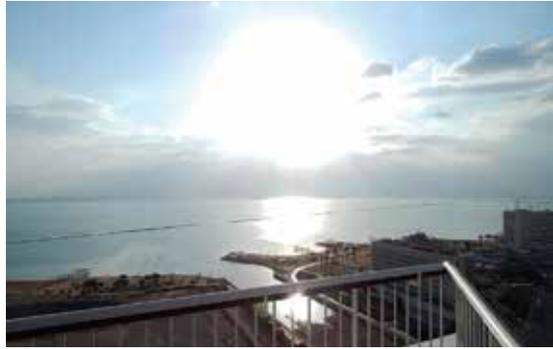
“...they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ” (1 Cor. 10:4).

The Lord instructed Moses only to speak to the rock to preserve the picture created in Exodus 17. When the Lord instructed Moses to strike the rock in Exodus 17, it was a type of Christ the Redeemer being stricken only once at Calvary. It illustrated the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ at the Cross to bring forth, in perpetuity, the water of life eternal (John 4:14; Rev. 21:6). Thus, it was a serious spiritual matter when Moses struck the rock a second time, rather than believing God and just speaking to it. When Moses struck the rock a second time, he distorted the picture of truth God created in Exodus 17 of the once-for-all sacrifice of His Son. As a result, the Lord did not permit Moses to enter the Promised Land. He was only allowed to view it from Mount Nebo.

Looking at Mount Nebo, one’s first thought is of Moses dying there after only viewing the Promised Land. Moses misrepresented God to the people, and for that he was sorely punished. It’s still a very serious matter today to misrepresent God when we share His Word and His message of salvation. It is vitally important to rightly divide the

Word of truth, to ensure that we hold out God’s message for the world today: “the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery” (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:1-9) and the pure gospel of salvation by grace through faith alone (Eph. 2:8,9).

After visiting Qumran, we lodged at a nice hotel on the shore of the Dead Sea where all of us pastors and church leaders went for a swim. The salt concentration of the Dead Sea is 34.2%. By comparison, the salt concentration of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans are 3.5%. There are no fish in the Dead Sea because they cannot survive the high salt level. There are very few boats on the sea because the salt corrodes them. It’s literally a “dead” sea with no life in it or on it.



It is, however, fun to swim in it. It is a simple thing to flip on your back and float, and even just sit in it and bob. The difficult thing is to stand back up because of the buoyancy of the water. After we all took a swim, Pastor Jeff Bertram told me that the BBS should publish a *Berean Searchlight* Swimsuit Edition with pictures of all us pastors in our swimsuits. That’s a scary thought! I told him our subscription list would take a nose dive if we did.

Ezekiel was given a fascinating prophecy regarding the Dead Sea. When Christ establishes His millennial kingdom, a river will flow out of the temple, a river that will flow to the Dead Sea and vitalize it:

“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 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” (Ezek. 47:8-9).

One day the Dead Sea will be a living, freshwater lake! The waters will be healed, and fish will fill it. The dry desert landscape of this entire region of the Dead Sea will change dramatically and flourish when Christ reigns on the earth (Ezek. 47:10-12).



EN GEDI

Leaving the area of the Dead Sea and on our way to Jerusalem, we stopped at En Gedi. En Gedi means “fountain of the kid” or “spring of the goat.” En Gedi is an oasis with a large waterfall, and wild goats inhabit this area. It was here that David once hid from King Saul. King Saul later received word about David hiding in En Gedi.

“And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David is in the wilderness of En-gedi. Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats. And he came to...where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet [take a nap]: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave...Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily” (1 Sam. 24:1-4).

King Saul was trying to find and kill David. Here David finds Saul and is given the opportunity to kill him, but David refuses to do so, even at the urging of the men with him (1 Sam. 24:4). Instead, as Saul was taking a nap in the cave, David quietly sneaked over and cut off the skirt of King Saul’s robe. After David did this, he felt guilty for even doing that (1 Sam. 24:5-6)! David did not take lightly the fact that Saul had been anointed as Israel’s king according to the will of God. Though Saul was trying to kill him, out of his deep respect for the Lord, David knew that he needed to respect the king.



It was amazing to walk the path through the park at En Gedi and think that, in one of these caves, this episode from the Bible took place. Everywhere in Israel is like that. Everywhere there are places of biblical significance. It makes the Bible come alive.

JERUSALEM

“Behold, we go up to Jerusalem...” (Matt. 20:18).

Often in Scripture, we read verses about going “up” to Jerusalem. I have a whole new appreciation for that having been there. Geographically, Jerusalem is on a plateau in the Judean mountains. Its elevation is 2575 feet. We came from the area of the Dead Sea, which is about 1400 feet below sea level. Making that climb “up” to Jerusalem from the desert, our tour bus was grinding and whining most of the way.



As we neared Jerusalem, the tour guide told us to prepare ourselves because we were going to enter a tunnel and, at the other end of the tunnel, we would see the city. When we came out of that tunnel and the city burst into sight, it was a powerful moment. I get goose bumps just writing about it. How significant Jerusalem has been and will be in the plans and purposes of God! I was thankful to the Lord to be there and to see it.

We immediately drove to the top of the Mount of Olives. The Mount of Olives affords a magnificent view of the Temple Mount and the city. Looking out from there, one can very slowly begin taking in everything as it pertains to Scripture.

First, one can't help but notice the Dome of the Rock. It is the third holiest site for Muslims, after the Kaaba in Mecca and the "Mosque of the Prophet" in Medina. When I looked at the dome, I saw it as God's way of keeping the temple from being built under grace. A war would start if anyone so much as touched that building. But today we are not under the law, but under grace (Rom. 6:14). We don't need the temple today in the plans and purposes of God, for each believer in Christ is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19)!

As I was looking at the Dome of the Rock, it struck me that this is the Temple Mount. This was where Solomon's Temple once stood and where the glory of God filled that temple, and God's presence dwelt in a physical location on the earth. Looking at the walls around the Old City, I realized that I was looking at the Eastern Gate. This made me



think of Ezekiel's vision of the glory of the Lord departing from Solomon's Temple because of the idolatry taking place within it. The glory of the Lord went out of the "east gate of the LORD's house" (Ezek. 10:19), and then "stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city" (Ezek. 11:23), right where I was standing on the Mount of Olives, and then was gone.

Then I realized that I was also standing where the Lord Jesus Christ was caught up to heaven at His ascension (Acts 1:9-12). And He will return one day at His Second Coming to Israel, "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east" (Zech. 14:4). And the Lord Jesus Christ, Israel's Messiah, will enter through the Eastern Gate when He comes to establish His kingdom on the earth (Ezek. 43:1-8).

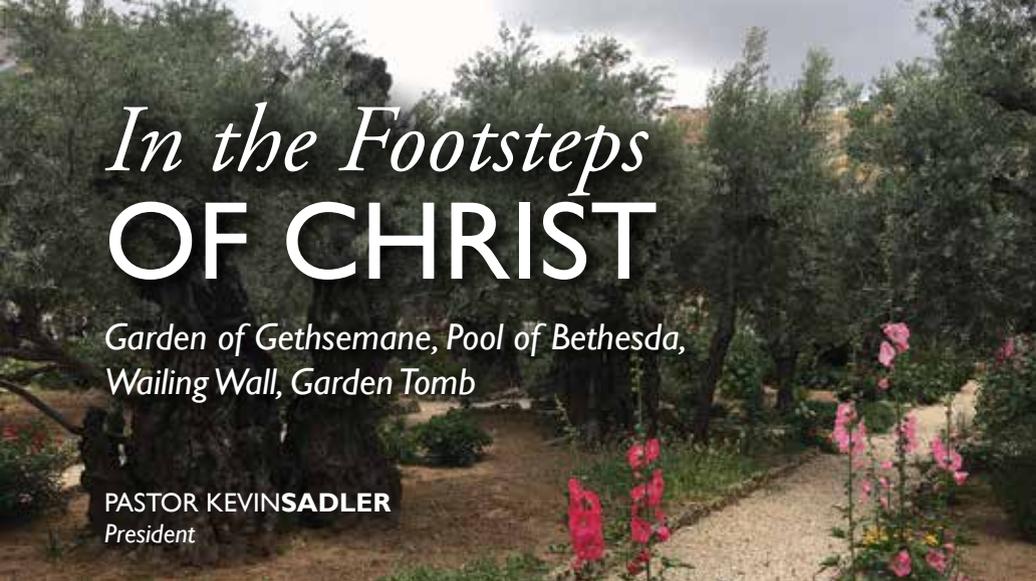
As I stood there, I thought of this being the view the Lord had on His triumphal entry into Jerusalem when He came riding into the city on the colt, the foal of a donkey (Zech. 9:9): "And when He was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice... Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord..." (Luke 19:37-38). Then I thought of how much the Lord loved Jerusalem and its people, and wept openly as He rode into the city: "And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes" (Luke 19:41-42).



At the base of the Mount of Olives is the Garden of Gethsemane, where our Lord fervently prayed in the hours before He was crucified. Looking down into the valley below, it struck me that I was looking at the Kidron Valley. The Lord crossed that valley many times when He stayed in Jerusalem overnight on the Mount of Olives (John 8:1-2). This is the Valley of Decision, the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:1,2,14-16), where the multitudes from the army of the Anti-Christ will be gathered for the Battle of Armageddon. That battle will extend for 200 miles (Rev. 14:20), from Mount Megiddo in the north to Edom in the south. The Kidron Valley and the Mount of Olives will be the center of the action when Christ returns at His Second Coming.

Looking at the Old City of Jerusalem, it also came to mind that I was looking at the area where Abraham was going to offer his son, Isaac, on the altar on Mount Moriah (Gen. 22:2-18), which typified the Cross of Christ. It was here that our Savior, *God's own Son*, walked, taught, and died for the sins of the world and rose again! This is where Christ will return, establish His millennial kingdom, build His temple, and rule as King over all the earth. God is faithful to Israel regarding her earthly hope, and God is faithful to us, the Church, the Body of Christ, regarding our heavenly hope.

If you can't tell, I was spiritually uplifted from being in Israel. When I got discouraged about having to leave a site that really spoke to my heart, such as the Mount of Olives, I would be encouraged again by reminding myself about the tour next year and that I would be back. I am hopeful that you'll be able to join us. The maximum number of people for the tour is how many will fit in one bus (45 people). You will not regret the decision to visit Israel. *To Be Continued!* 



In the Footsteps **OF CHRIST**

Garden of Gethsemane, Pool of Bethesda,
Wailing Wall, Garden Tomb

PASTOR KEVINSADLER
President

GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

Our tour of Israel this past May came to a conclusion by spending the last four days in Jerusalem. One of our first stops was to visit the Garden of Gethsemane. This was a very powerful and sobering place. As you walk among the olive trees at the base of the Mount of Olives, you think deeply about the Lord being there fervently praying in the hours before He was crucified. You feel a range of emotions from sorrow, to anger, to gratitude. You feel anger when you think of Judas leading a band of men to arrest the Lord in the Garden and betraying Him with a kiss. I thought of how when the men entered the garden with lanterns, torches, and weapons,

“Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am He. And Judas also, which betrayed Him, stood with them. As soon then as He had said unto them, I am He, they went backward, and fell to the ground” (John 18:4-6).

It made me grateful for my Savior, the great I AM, in knocking them to the ground by the power of His spoken word, and how this shows that they didn’t take Him, He *willingly* went with them and *willingly* went to the Cross.

Throughout the tour, we had earpieces that enabled us to hear the tour guide. In the Garden, our tour guide had us sit down while she quietly read the account of the Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane. It was a powerful spiritual moment to close your eyes and prayerfully listen to these words in your ear:

“And He came out, and went, as He was wont, to the mount of Olives; and His disciples also followed Him...And He was withdrawn from

them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done....And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:39,41,42,44).

VIA DOLOROSA

The next day, we were thrilled to enter through one of the city gates and walk the streets of Jerusalem. There were vendors everywhere along the street selling bread, candy, dried fruits, souvenirs, knick-knacks, clothing, etc. On one of the days in Jerusalem, we walked the Via Dolorosa. Our tour guide informed us that there is a Catholic Golgotha and a Protestant Golgotha. The Via Dolorosa is the walkway from the Antonia Fortress to the Catholic Golgotha at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.



Along the way, there are different stations of the Cross marked where Christ supposedly fell and people helped Him. This agitated me as I saw the stations where He fell, because the Bible *never* says that Christ fell on the way to Calvary! In my mind, it made my Savior appear weak, when He is not weak. Of course, Christ experienced the pain and natural weakness that accompanied His brutal scourging, but He never fell on the way to the Cross.

We saw a lot of stray cats in Jerusalem. This one was sitting so prim and proper on the Via Dolorosa I had to take a picture of it. I never saw a stray dog in Jerusalem.



Arriving at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, a Roman Catholic Church, we found everything conveniently in one building. As you enter the main entrance, there are stairs to the right leading to the Catholic Golgotha, where it is thought that Christ died on the Cross.

Walking back down the stairs we saw a sight that at first we couldn't understand. People were throwing themselves onto a stone pavement on the floor. They





were crying, bowing before it, touching it, pressing their faces against it, wiping handkerchiefs on it and then wiping the handkerchief on their faces. All of us wanted the tour guide to explain, and she told us that this supposedly was the stone where Christ's body was laid when He was taken down from the Cross. She said that people believe they'll receive a blessing by touching it. It was religion in action. I felt my heart stirred as I watched it, and not in a good way. In their religion, mankind loves relics to be able to touch and worship. Instead of faith alone in Christ's finished work, we

often saw religion, tradition, relics, and ritual.

The next room contained the tomb where Catholics believe Christ's body was laid and where He rose again. The line was so long, we would have been there half a day to be able to walk through it to see it.



LION'S GATE AND POOL OF BETHESDA

We started the next day at the Lion's Gate. This didn't mean much until the tour guide told us that the gate was also known as St. Stephen's Gate, the gate it is believed that Stephen was taken through to be stoned to death outside the city walls. You never saw cameras go up so fast for us grace pastors and grace believers! This is a significant place for Gentiles under grace. Here is where Israel fell in their unbelief, after which God turned to the Gentiles in grace. Here is where Saul held the garments of those who stoned Stephen. I stood there grateful



that here I am in Jerusalem, a Gentile saved by the grace of God, with a relationship with the living God, having a home in heaven, blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, because of God in His grace choosing to have a program with the Gentiles.

Right inside the Lion's Gate is the Pool of Bethesda. I have so many "favorite" things in the Bible I lose track of them all! One of my favorite accounts in the Lord's earthly ministry is the healing of the lame man at the Pool of Bethesda. I appreciated being able to see the place where this miracle took place. Bethesda means "house of mercy," and John 5:4 teaches how God in His mercy toward Israel had an angel stir the water of the pool from time to time, and whoever was first into the water "was made whole of whatsoever disease he had." Thus, there was "a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water" (5:3). This is why there are many hospitals named "Bethesda."



The Lord, in keeping the law, was in Jerusalem for a feast day, and He visited the Pool of Bethesda. Stop and picture that in your mind. Christ in His love and mercy walking among the sick, the infirmed, and the hurting. He cared about them all. He still does care about those who are sick and hurting. That day Christ made Bethesda a house of mercy by His personal presence.



Christ saw a lame man at the pool, who had been lame for 38 years, and He asked him, "Wilt thou be made whole?" (5:6). That is a great question we can ask those who do not believe, who need the Savior and salvation from their sins, "Do you want to be made whole?" Today, Christ makes people whole spiritually by faith alone in His finished work (Rom. 4:5).

The lame man didn't understand that the Lord could make him whole. Instead he began explaining that he didn't have anyone to help him get into the water first when the water was stirred (John 5:7). Your heart goes out to him as you read that! The Great Physician then responded, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked..." (5:8-9). Christ saw his need; He knew the depth of that need, and He took the initiative to meet that need. It's the same with each one of us in our great need of salvation, and Christ meeting that need by His Cross and resurrection.

SOUTHERN WALL EXCAVATIONS

Near the end of the tour, we got on the bus and our tour guide said that we were going to be visiting the southern wall excavations. After many days of touring, you get kind of worn out. I was tired that day and not knowing what this meant I wasn't too enthused about seeing these excavations. But after this day was over, I wrote in the journal I was keeping, "It was an incredible day! One of the best of the tour."



As we stood there looking at Jerusalem's southern wall excavations, our tour guide began telling us all kinds of amazing things rapid fire. The pavement we were looking at was from the time of Christ. The Lord likely walked on that pavement when He visited the temple. She pointed out these huge boulders that were stones hurled down by Roman soldiers at the destruction of the temple in 70 AD. Next, she showed us the storefronts from the time of Christ that were used for the selling of lambs and doves for sacrifice in the temple.



Then she pointed up to what would have been considered the pinnacle of the temple mount. This was a busy section of Jerusalem in the time of the Lord, and from this high point in the temple is where trumpets were blown and announcements were made. It is likely here where Satan took the Lord "up into the holy city, and setting Him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto Him, If thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down: for

it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone” (Matt. 4:5-6).

The devil quoted Psalm 91:11-12 and used this Scripture to tempt the Lord. Don't let it escape your notice that the devil used Scripture. Even today, he misuses it to tempt and deceive. Satan tempted the Lord to throw Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple into this busy courtyard of the temple, and by the angels gathering Him in their arms so that He'd come down to a nice, soft landing, He would demonstrate to all that He was Israel's Messiah and the Son of God. Christ's response was, "It is written...Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matt. 4:7). To have tested the Father in this way would have been to question the Father's love, not prove it. Christ came to do the Father's will and this was not it. The Father's will was the Cross. Christ would demonstrate beyond a doubt that He was the Messiah and the Son of God by His death and resurrection.

We next walked around the corner and came to some stone steps. As we gathered around, we were told this story by our tour guide:



When American astronaut Neil Armstrong, a devout Christian, visited Israel after his trip to the moon, he was taken on a tour of the Old City of Jerusalem by Israeli archaeologist Meir Ben-Dov. When they got to the Hulda Gate, which is at the top of the stairs leading to the Temple Mount, Armstrong asked Ben-Dov whether Jesus had stepped anywhere around there. "I told him, 'Look, Jesus was a Jew,'" recalled Ben-Dov. "These are the steps that lead to the Temple, so



He must have walked here many times." Armstrong then asked if these were the original steps, and Ben-Dov confirmed that they were. "So Jesus stepped right here?" asked Armstrong. "That's right," answered Ben-Dov. "I have to tell you," Armstrong said to the Israeli archaeologist, "I am more excited stepping on these stones than I was stepping on the moon."¹

That's the way it is in Jerusalem. You walk in the footsteps of the Creator of the Universe, our Savior, God in flesh. The significance of this weighs heavily on your heart and it makes you so thankful to be there.



WAILING WALL

Our tour guide told us this on our way to the Wailing Wall: A foreigner once visited Jerusalem. He hailed a taxi. Getting in, the driver asked him where he wanted to go. The man replied, “Take me to that place in Jerusalem where everybody cries.” The taxi driver said, “Okay,” and then he dropped him off at a tax office.

The Western Wall is on the backside of the temple. When the temple stood, it faced the east, and the presence of God in the Holy of Holies was closest to the Western Wall. This is why it is such a significant place for the Jews. Of course, they pray at the Wailing Wall, but they also read and study the law and celebrate bar mitzvahs there. The Wailing Wall is divided between men’s and women’s sections. You must have your head covered to approach the wall. They will give you a free yarmulke if you’re not wearing a hat. I learned that yarmulkes are worn by Jewish men as a symbol of submission. They put it at the highest point of their body to picture their recognition that God is over them.

As I stood back looking at all the Jews at the Wailing Wall, the Apostle Paul’s deep love and desire for his countrymen to be saved came to mind: “For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites... Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved” (Rom. 9:3-4; 10:1). It made me think that to follow Paul as he followed Christ, we too should have a burden for Jewish people to be saved.

I went up to the wall, but I didn’t need to wail or press myself up against it to pray and feel closer to the Lord. As believers in Christ, we are the temple of the Holy Spirit, and we have free access to God the Father at all times through the shed blood of our Savior! If you think about it, that wall is a wall of unbelief. Those who practice Judaism reject Jesus Christ and put themselves under law, when we are under grace (Rom. 6:14).

THE GARDEN TOMB

We also visited the Protestant location of Golgotha. We had a different tour guide for this location. We often sang together as a group





on the bus or at different sites. As we gathered and waited for our guide in the garden, our group broke into singing, “In the Garden.”

The tour guide at “The Garden Tomb” led us to a place that is thought to possibly be Golgotha, the place of a skull (Mark 15:22). Looking at it from the side, I didn’t see a skull. But if you look at a picture of it straight on, you can

see the eyes, nose, and what looks like a skull. Evidence of executions and crucifixions have been found in this area. It was along a busy road that led into the old city, and often the Romans would have crucifixions on busy roads so people could see what happens to those who broke Rome’s laws.

We don’t know for sure if this is the place of the Lord’s crucifixion. But as with the other places we visited in Israel, just knowing we were in the general area was very meaningful. What was also meaningful to me at this place was that our tour guide at the Garden Tomb gave a clear gospel presentation. I appreciated this very much after seeing so much religion and unbelief in Christ in Israel. I shook his hand and thanked him for it. He was a retired man from the United States, who, as a ministry, works at the Garden Tomb just to be able to share the gospel.



In the same area of the Protestant Golgotha, a tomb was discovered that had been carved out of the rock. Again, this was likely not the tomb of the Lord, but it was a reminder of what the Lord’s tomb might have looked like. It was interesting to go in and see a tomb hewn out of the rock.

Our group left the tomb area to go to a place to have a communion service together. There was another group coming, but they hadn’t arrived yet. So I took the opportunity to sit alone by this empty tomb just to think for a while. It gave me the chance to pray and thank the Lord for dying for me and rising again the third day. I also thanked Him for the opportunity to be in Israel and experience all that I had. I hope that you’ll be able to join us as we walk “in the footsteps of Christ” next May 7-16, 2019! 

1. www.tabletmag.com/scroll/110296/neil-armstrong-walks-on-jerusalem.