

THE HOLY LAND TRIP

October 11-21, 2018

Departed October 11th from Dulles at 5:15 PM → Newark 6:43 PM. Departed 10:50 PM → Arrived Tel Aviv, Israel October 12th at 4:20 PM

Our group: Mickey & Pam Robertson, Katie Robertson, Fay Parrish, Becky Packett, Coral Losinski, Nina Hillery, Jody Forman, Larry & Susan Croce, Scott & Pamela Hale, Steve & Anna Jones, Dan & Jean Brannon, Tony & Sandra Wilson, Woody & Penny Jenkins

Louisville, KY group: Conway & Polly Stone, Anne Prince, Donna Stevens, Kathy Stone

Saturday, October 12th

Met by our Travel with Friends tour guide, Adam Disoke, and driver, Magic Money Mike. Driven to Tiberias to Leonardo Club Hotel. Late arrival, but dinner awaited us. Table set with dishes of cabbages, hummus and other vegetables as well as hot food buffet with breads and desserts. Beverages included beer and wine on tap.

Adam was the consummate tour guide with a constant flow of both historical and biblical historical knowledge. Notes are bulleted as he popcorned information as we traveled in the bus and walked around the sites.

- Attire: In Catholic churches- men remove hats, women don't cross legs. On Temple Mount women will need head scarves and shoulders covered. All (men as well as women) will need to cover their knees
- It is the year 5779 in the Jewish calendar.
- Greeks brought language. Romans brought roads – Silk Road
- Israel is 100% self-sufficient when it comes to agriculture
 - Part of the land are quite fertile. Water is brought from the Nile for irrigation
 - Export some of what they grow
- Israel gets 50-60 inches of rain per year. Jordan gets 5-6 inches. Jordan is 90% desert
- Israel was the crossroads of civilizations – emperors/empires passed through Jerusalem
- In Jerusalem everything is kosher. No cheeseburgers at McDonalds (no dairy with meat), have a Mac falafel.
- Cars (all small) – taxed 100% (“buy one for you and one for the state”). Petrol is 6.59 shekels per liter or about \$15 per gallon.
- Average income -- \$36,000 per capital. Sales tax – 18%.
- Population – 9 million and growing
 - 2 million Israeli Arabs
 - 60% of Jews are secular, not following Orthodox laws, only participating in some special days
- Arab mosques – identify by green lights on the minarets
- Galilee is a region that goes into Lebanon

- Military – all men and women are obligated to serve. Men for 26 months, women for 18 months.
 - Serve at 18 but in reserves until 35
 - Average of 1.6 guns per capita. Adam, “guns don’t kill people, people do”
- Israel is called a Jewish State, but it is made up of Jews, Muslims, and Christians
- 1st wave of Jews immigrated in 1890s, established first village.
 - Had schools to teach them about agriculture
- Herod built Tiberias over 2000 yrs ago and dedicated it to the emperor.
 - Oral tradition compiled in 3rd century described city as being very religious.
 - In Jesus’ time city was considered impure because it was built over a cemetery
- On Shabbat, families eat precooked meals. Go to synagogue 3 times that day.

Saturday, October 13th

8 AM departure to tour sites around the Sea of Galilee.

Notes as we drove:

- “Boker Tov” – “Good morning”
- “Yalla” – “let’s go” → “yalla yalla” – “let’s go now”
- Read Matt. 5 – the Beatitudes
- Magdala – village covered by a mud slide. Excavated and found whole village from Jesus’ time
- Sea of Galilee – shaped like a harp – Sea of Gennesaret
- Bus drivers are contortionists with driving their buses
- Best olive oil in the world is from the Sea of Galilee area.
 - Many of existing olive trees are ancient, they live for centuries
 - Olives are harvested after the first rain

Mount of Beatitudes – Mount of Joy maintained by Franciscan nuns.

- Silk Road or Spice Road goes through Damascus to Egypt
 - Via Maris – road to the sea in Roman time, Roman Way
 - Simple people lived here on the main travel route
- Herod’s sons
 - Herod Antipas – cruel, beheaded John the Baptist
 - Herod Philippi – was friends to Jesus & his followers.
 - If Jesus felt threatened, he crossed to the other side
 - Capernaum was controlled by the “good” Herod
- Church build in 1922 – octagonal church – 8 blessings
 - Italian architect, Antonio Barluzzi (1884-1960)
 - Wikipedia says he is known as “the Architect of the Holy Land”

Church of the Multiplication

- 7 springs
- During revolt Jews hid in caves in hills

- Benedictine monastery at Tabgha
- Church built on Byzantine ruins
- Mosaic from Byzantine period – fish & 4 loaves. Jesus (the altar) is the 5th loaf
 - Tradition: this is where the first basket was placed (Matt 14:13-21)
- Baptismal font – unbelievers would listen at windows, come out to font to be baptized and then go in.

Mensa Christi – Santi Peter – Sacellum Primatus

“table of Christ”



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- Jerusalem cross:
 - Central cross – cross of Jesus
 - 4 small crosses – the Gospels
 - 5 crosses = the 5 stigmata
- Church so simple that it was never destroyed.
 - Stone in middle of sanctuary is believed to be where Jesus laid the fish to cook for the disciples after his resurrection
- The site where Jesus recruited the fishermen
- And the site where Jesus asked Peter 3 times, “Do you love me?”
- Springs bring minerals to the sea which attract the fish
 - Use nets in the shallow waters to catch them
 - 153 types of fish per the Septuagint translation of the Bible
- Pope John Paul visited in 1964. First pope to visit since holocaust.
 - When Jews met Christians...right after Vatican II
- Many of us put our feet in the Sea of Galilee here – and picked up smooth round stones.
 - Penny put one of her stones on Shindler’s grave
- Jody noted that she saw people water skiing on the Sea of Galilee

Capernaum – “Town of Jesus”

- Arabs destroyed Capernaum in 7th century.
- Site owned now by Franciscans – bought what was a wasteland in 1891 – city below
- Excavated and found Peter’s house – or his mother-in-law’s house
 - First home church – Graffiti on walls – Alpha & Omega
 - In 6th century an octagonal church was built on top
- Synagogue – built with white stone – imported in 540 CE
 - Black stone on the bottom
 - Rabbis read from scrolls and taught.
 - Prayer in synagogue started after the Temple was destroyed
 - Went 3 x a day to synagogue to pray – turned toward Jerusalem, exited the synagogue towards Jerusalem.
- Central courtyard has a mosaic of a peacock.
- Milestone marker – Capernaum on road to Rome
- Menorah – symbol of Israel, 7 branches for 7 days of creation
- Best olive oil in the world is found in area of Galilee
- Olive oil pressing equipment
 - 1st press – oil for synagogue

- 2nd press – for food/cooking
- 3rd press – for oil lamps
- 4th press – to make soap
- Peter's fish – Jesus told him to catch and find coin in the mouth of the fish
 - Mother fish puts eggs in her mouth
 - Tastes like tilapia

Bus notes:

- In 1960's Sea of Galilee was the reservoir for all of Israel
- Israel leads in the world in desalinization and purification of water.
 - Ben Gurion set up the water system
- Kibbutz – everything shared
 - Early ones failed
 - Now 70 kibbutzes - very successful primarily because of family
 - We passed several
- Israel is 65 miles wide and 360 miles long.
 - Is 100% self-sufficient in agriculture
 - Gets 50-60" of rain annually, while Jordan gets 5-6" and is 90% desert
- Israel is crossroads of civilizations. Emperors/empires passed through Jerusalem.

Sea of Galilee – 13 miles x 8 m., 33 miles around

- 215 meters (705 feet) below sea level – lowest freshwater lake in world
 - 2nd lowest lake of any after Dead Sea (salt water)
 - Jordan River flows into Sea of Galilee
- To right, Golan Heights – took over in 1969 from Syria
- Winds come into opening at Jordan, held in by mountains
 - Rough seas
- Sailed in boat similar to the fishing boat of Jesus' time, but obviously much larger
 - Crewmember demonstrated how the weighted nets would have been thrown out in a circle.
- Large catfish in the lake – thrown back because they aren't kosher, no gills
- Took group picture which made boat list.

Lunch - Tanureen Galilee Restaurant

- Pita with various cabbages, hummus, etc. served first
- Then served complete fried fish – head, eyes, to tail – Peter's fish?
- Fresh dates, just picked

Magdala

- Owned by a Mexican church
- Guide: Ruan, a 19-year-old South African. Excellent guide and quite a preacher.
- Josephus wrote that there were towers of Magdala
- Large Jewish settlement
- Only 5 synagogues in Israel – Jesus might have taught here
 - Synagogue was an area for meeting and discussing legal situations
 - On Shabbat the scroll was read

- 1st century synagogue excavated here – colors, tiles
- A wealthy city -- dried fish and exported them
- Carved stone – Josephus describes this as replica of 2nd Temple’s stone
 - Could have just been a stone and not for holding scrolls
 - Carving of jars – oil & wine, menorah
 - Box underneath – site for animal sacrifice
- Excavation of shops, pools (water for keeping fish fresh)
 - Rooms for sleeping only. All other stuff happened outside and in community.
- Mikveh – purification pools
 - Rabbis had to enter the pool and be purified to be able to read the scrolls.
 - Usually the pools were rain filled, but in Magdala they were ground filled.
 - 800+ pool in Israel – 4 are here in Magdala
- Site is only 20% excavated.
- Main building:
 - Atrium – pillars with names of women from New Testament
 - Mary Magdalene
 - Allae Mutae (Mc 15:47 = Mark 15:47) – Mary Magdalene & Mary the mother of Joses
 - Mary Magdalene / Maria Cleopae (JO-19-25 = John 19:25) – “...his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene...”
 - Susanna Joanna, Uxor Chuza (Lc 8:4 = Luke 8:3) – listing the women traveling with Jesus, “...Joanna, the wife of Herod’s steward Chuza, and Susanna, ...”
 - Surrounding rooms with huge mosaics:
 - #1 -Calling Peter & Andrew
 - Large room – boat – stand behind and looks like preaching from the boat
 - 12 apostles around the room
 - #2 – mosaic of Peter walking to Jesus
 - Ruan’s “sermon”: Every day we have the opportunity to get out of the boat. As we start walking we’re to keep our eyes on Jesus. Peter had to reach out to Jesus for Jesus to save him.
 - You can kneel down at the mosaic and reach your hand up to Jesus just as Peter is in the mosaic.
 - #3 – Jesus sending the demon out of Mary Magdalene
 - She’s dirty at the bottom and clean at the top
 - Jesus’ comforting hand held out
 - #4 – Raising Jairus’ daughter, Tabitha
 - Downstairs: huge image of hemorrhaging woman touching Jesus’ hem
 - Ruan – bring your issue to Jesus. As soon as you reach out to Jesus, he can reach out to you.
- Uncovered a new site in 2009 when they started building a 120-room hotel on the site.

Jordan River Baptismal Site

A number of our group recommitted themselves in a baptismal ceremony at this site.

White doves flying above.

Emotion from 1st day: Thousands of tourists/pilgrims from many different countries speaking many different languages. The world of the Big C church international.

Sunday, October 14th

Ice cream by Coral & Nina at 8 AM, because they were last on the bus at the Jordan River. Adam had set the challenge the day before if we were late to the bus.

Bus notes:

- Mezuzah: placed on door jams. Contains parchment with words of The Shema (Deut. 6:4)
- 1st day of week for Israelis, all going back to school and work
- Arab village – culture is to build a house & begin homes for your children. When they grow up, they finish them.
- 70% of the people in Israel are between 18 & 35 years old.
- Industries:
 1. Security
 2. Technology
 3. Tourism
 4. Pharmaceuticals
 5. Diamond
- Jews today: a growing group that are ½ secular and ½ orthodox. 10-12 years ago only about 1%
 - Can drive on Shabbat.
 - Have fear, not all about you
 - Can accept an idea from today
- Orthodox Jews (20%)
 - Average family size – 9 (no birth control)
 - 614 laws to follow every day.
 - Don't work, don't serve in the military
 - Keep & study the laws, Torah
 - Supported by the state.
 - Closed community – well supported by wealthy Jews from Europe & US
- Coal for electrical plants comes from Africa
- Go to “Jerusalem to pray, Tel Aviv to play”

Caesarea Maritima

- Administrative capital for 600 years.
- 33 miles north of Jaffa and 60 miles NW of Jerusalem
- Eusebius Pamphilli (263-339 CE)
 - Googled: Eusebius of Caesarea, also known as Eusebius Pamphili, was a historian of Christianity, exegete, and Christian polemicist. He became the bishop of Caesarea Maritima about 314 AD. Together with Pamphilus, he was a scholar of the Biblical canon and is regarded as an extremely learned Christian of his time.
 - Wrote a book about Caesarea.
- Romans invented concrete

- King Herod the Great was great architect, used first arches
- No marble in Israel, so any found was imported during Byzantine period
 - Googled: Byzantine history goes from the founding of Constantinople as an imperial residence on **11 May 330 CE** until Tuesday **29 May 1453 CE**, when the Ottoman sultan Memhet II conquered the city. Most times the history of the Empire is divided into three periods.
- Theatre for plays, etc.:
 - built of limestones, covered with plaster
 - Dating: archeologists like coins. Know that anything above it was younger, below it older
 - Lower seats, lower stones are original
- Herod's symbol was a lion
- Inscription helps to date & proves Pontius Pilate was a real person
- Fresh water pool in Herod's palace area.
 - Amount of water at city reflects wealth of city
- Acts: Paul's trial – first Pilot, then Festus, King Agrippa
- Peter went from Joppa to Caesarea and baptized the Centurion and his household
- It was here Jesus asked his disciples who people that he was (Matt 16:13)
- Israel sits on a fault so earthquake zone.
 - Fortifications & sea wall were destroyed over time by earthquakes
- Hippodrome for chariot races
- Under rule of Romans → Arabs (Muslims) → Byzantine empire (Christians)
- Fortress from Crusader period (1095-1291)
 - Internet: The Crusades were a series of religious wars sanctioned by the Latin Church in the medieval period. The most commonly known Crusades are the campaigns in the Eastern Mediterranean aimed at recovering the Holy Land from Muslim rule, but the term "Crusades" is also applied to other church-sanctioned campaigns.
- Aqueduct brought fresh water from mountains.
 - Some section large enough for a full jeep to park inside
 - Without arch couldn't bring water. Works by gravity. Covered so animals couldn't drink.
 - Arches made it possible to go higher.

Bus Notes:

- Baron Edmond D. Rothschild (1845-1934)
 - Internet: Baron Abraham Edmond Benjamin James de Rothschild was a French member of the Rothschild banking family. A strong supporter of Zionism, his large donations lent significant support to the movement during its early years, which helped lead to the establishment of the State of Israel.
 - Plight of Jews in Russia in 1881 led him to begin establishing settlements in Israel for the Jewish refugees.
 - He built 50 settlements and brought Jews from Europe. Taught them agriculture.
 - He's buried in the hills of Mt. Carmel. Soil was brought from the various village settlements to be buried with him.
- In 1917 British parliament promised the land of Israel to the Jews. Finally turned Israel over in 1948
- Yom Kippur – the Day of Atonement – only day when they actually say "Yahweh".
- White tanks on top of rooves are hot water, warmed by solar panels
- Druze – Israeli Arabs living in the mountains – 70,000

- At 40 they can read their secret book and become The Knowledgeable.
- Main prophet – Jethro
- Sovereign to power, so many become generals in the army (Syrian & Israeli)
 - Obligated to serve in the military
- Men – baggy pants, tight at ankles, white caps. Women – long dresses & sleeves, head scarf tied behind

Lunch – “Tamar Halabi Restaurant – Druze Food”

Falafel or chicken schnitzel in pita with soda and buffet of fresh vegetables

Sanctuary & Monastery on Mt. Carmel

- Owned by Carmelite order
- Hebrew “Ezevrel” – “the trash” – what they call Jezebel
- 1 Kings 18: Story of Elijah rebuilding the altar vs. prophets of Baal
 - Altars all over had been deteriorating
- Valley of Armageddon – ancient road from Egypt to Mesopotamia
 - Abraham traveled through this valley
 - Many biblical battles happened in this valley
- View of Israeli Air Force’s underground facilities – saw giant V of runways only
- From Mt. Carmel can see Mt Precipice, Tabor, Moriah, Gilboa, Sumaria
- All of Israel is hilly, mountainous, so hard for enemies to fight using normal war tactics.
- From overlook porch saw Valley of Armageddon, Israeli Air Force’s underground facilities.
 - Saw 4 F-16s flying over and landing and going underground

Megiddo

- **Tel Megiddo** (Hebrew: מגידו; Arabic: مجيدو, Tell al-Mutesellim, "The Tell of the Governor") is an ancient city whose remains form a tell (archaeological mound), situated in northern Israel near Kibbutz **Megiddo**, about 30 km south-east of Haifa.
- 3 biblical tels – Megiddo, Bethel, and ??
- Example of a tomb with a rolling stone
 - Guide Adam said, “My heart is at the garden tomb.”
- Has a cistern (water works) of Ahab – a UNESCO world heritage site
 - Built to get water from outside defense walls – walled up the outside entrance.
 - Group walked down through tunnel to small pool at the bottom.
- Egypt, Babylon communicate using cuneiform – 1st alphabet
- Megiddo was destroyed & rebuilt 27 times in history. 8000 years of history
 - Controlled entrance to the Valley of Jezreel
 - Controlled road leading from Egypt to Mesopotamia
 - Tel has 20 cities built on each other
 - Canaanite city in 2000 BCE
- Fortified in 18th century BCE by Hyksos, then conquered by Pharaoh Thutmose of Egypt in 1478 BC

- Ahaziah, King of Judah, fled to Megiddo and died there. Josiah also fell in battle there.
- Walled city taken by Joshua – was one of Joshua’s chariot cities
- Found a prayer structure from 5000 BCE
- City reached prime in David’s time
- Megiddo was abandoned in 4 CE.
- Ahab had a palace on the top. Will find there:
 - Stepped water shaft & tunnel
 - Canaanite temple
 - Sentry tower, walls, gates, soldiers’ quarters, private houses.
 - Stables thought to be built by Solomon, housed 2000 of Ahab’s horses
- Solomonic gate
- Scar of Megiddo – 1st excavation which roughly pulled down to earth
- Our guide Adam’s coin – from 15-40 CE – images of Tiberius & Caesar

Nazareth – Mount Precipice – Mount of the Leap

- Muslims, Arabs, Jews, Christians all live there
- The Annunciation was in Nazareth – Chapel of the Annunciation there.
 - Angel Gabriel came to Mary
- Mary’s house is supposed to have been by the spring
 - Only 1 well in Nazareth located at St. Gabriel’s Church
- Joseph was a worker – maybe a stone mason, not just a carpenter
- Luke 4:16-30: Jesus read from the scroll, was driven out of town to the precipice – “passed through the midst of them and went on his way.”
 - Sign at site says he “leaped” off the mountain.
- Surrounding mountains viewed from Nazareth: Mt. Tabor, Mt. Moriah (means “teacher”, aka Archer’s Hill), Mt. Gilboa, Samaritan Mtns, Mt. Carmel.

Cana – (drive-by in bus)

Site of Jesus’ first miracle (water to wine)

2 churches: 1 Greek Orthodox, the other Franciscan (1879) on remains of 6th century sanctuary.

Tiberias

- Founded 20 CE by son of Herod, Herod Antipas
- Site of ancient Rakkath mentioned in Joshua 19:35, a fenced city.
- In 67 CE Tiberias surrendered to the Roman’s peacefully.
- In 70 CE Jerusalem fell, Jews flocked to Tiberias and schools moved here
- Capital of lower Galilee

Monday, October 15th

Devotion: Conway

Beit Shein – Bet She’An

- One of the Decapolis – 10 cities built to protect Romans
- Tel – 7000 years old – Greek & Roman times until safe to move into valley
- Roman cities were symmetrical with main corridors and cross streets – same in every city so a soldier could find his way no matter which city he visited
 - Declomanus crosses at Falatius St to right & Fluvianis St. to left
 - Social hall built by Fluvianis
- Alexander the Great brought Hellenistic period to the world. He died in 323 BCE, period lasted until 31 BCE
- Metal production – 12th century BCE – Iron Age
- 1 Samuel 31 – Philistines wanted to control Beit Shein
- Egyptian government house found on top of tel
- Dionysius – founder of the city. Temple dedicated to his nurse Visa
- After earthquake, city never returned to its glory.
- Gladiator Coliseum away from major site.

Bus notes:

- Mt. Gilboa is a range
- Took 5-6 days to walk from Sea of Galilee to Jerusalem
- We traveled through the Valley of Jericho
- Went through a check point into the West Bank
 - Area A – controlled by Palestine
 - Area B – Palestine & Israel
 - Area C – Israel – 70%
 - 1948-1967 Jordan controlled the West Bank. In 1990s it was divided up
- Seeds of Peace Camp – there are camps all over world. Adam went. Said that you can find alums of these camps in good jobs all over.
- Palestinian demands:
 - Sovereignty of the borders
 - Removal of Jewish settlements in West Bank
 - Water rights
 - Return of 2 million refugees
 - Return of the political prisoners
 - Jerusalem as the capital
- There’s an electrified fence, but only shows where someone has touched the fence, not harmful.
- 90% of Jordan is desert
- Bedouins seen in desert herding goats and sheep. Goats eat everything including roots of plants; sheep only eat tops so plants grow back
- South is 210-212 feet below sea level. Jerusalem is 850 feet above sea level
- Allenby Bridge
 - Internet: The Allenby Bridge, also known as the King Hussein Bridge, is a bridge that crosses the Jordan River near the city of Jericho, and connects the West Bank with Jordan. The bridge is currently the sole designated exit/entry point for West Bank Palestinians traveling abroad
 - 100,000 Palestinians work in Israel and cross this bridge

- Site? named “The Castle of the Jews”
 - Place where Elijah ascended
 - Wilderness of John the Baptist
- 4 holy cities of Palestine are:
 - Jerusalem
 - Hebron
 - Safed
 - Tiberias

Lunch: Roadside rest stop which included an open-air restaurant, small market, pool table with soldiers shooting pool on their lunch break, and a lovely camel ready to offer us a ride.

Falafels (fried chick peas w/sauce) and shawarmas (lamb in pita w/vegetables)

Jordan Baptismal Site – closer to Jerusalem

- Qaser Al-Yahud
- Guarded by both Jordanian and Israeli soldiers – actually had a floating dividing line in the middle of the baptismal area with steps down from both sides
- After being baptized, Jesus went into the wilderness of the Jericho mountains from here

Bus notes:

- Most of the monasteries around the wilderness that still exist today are maintained by Greek and Russian Orthodox. Emulating John the Baptist.
- From Jericho is a day’s walk “up to Jerusalem” – major elevation from -400 meters to 800 meters
- From where we were to left was the home of the tribe of Judah and to the right the tribe of Benjamin.
- West Bank settlements were originally Orthodox Jews (70’s), but now other secular Jews are moving there for less expensive houses, more land, lower taxes, good schools.

Bethany – passed in bus before check point out of the West Bank.

Ministry of Tourism checks tour guides licensing randomly. Adam was checked.

Old City

- 1 square mile – 7 gates, always open
- 4 quarters – Christian, Armenian, Jewish, Muslim
 - Armenian Quarter is smallest. They were 1st nation to become Christians
 - They tattooed the Jerusalem cross or a fish on themselves to secretly identify each other
- 30,000 live in Old City now
- “The Living Tel” – even when destroyed the people always came back
 - Found graves in cemetery from 3000 yrs ago
- Every kind of shop imaginable from jewelry to underwear to medical clinics to laundries.
- Jewish Quarter – in 1967 excavated a Roman Rd.
- Shopping at Dajanian Brothers Orient Bazaar

Outside the Wall – City of David

Upper Room

- Room saved by Byzantines
- Architect in Crusader period rebuilt
- Was a mosque for the Arabs
- When Jews came, room was opened up to all

Jewish Synagogue

Church of the High Priest, Caiaphas

- Peter Gallianti - image - rooster crows 3 times
- Jesus spent the night at Caiaphas' house. Dropped down a dark hole into a dungeon room.
- As we gathered in that room, Polly Stone read Psalm 88 from a notebook with the psalm in many languages.
 - 1 O Lord, God of my salvation, when, at night, I cry out in your presence,
 - 2 Let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my cry.
 - 3 For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draws near to Sheol.
 - 4 I am counted among those who go down to the Pit; I am like those who have no help,
 - 5 like those forsaken among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave,
like those whom you remember no more, for they are cut off from your hand.
 - 6 You have put me in the depths of the Pit, in the regions dark and deep.
 - 7 Your wrath lies heavy upon me, and you overwhelm me with all your waves. Selah
 - 8 You have caused my companions to shun me; you have made me a thing of horror to them.
I am shut in so that I cannot escape;
 - 9 my eye grows dim through sorrow. Every day I call on you, O Lord; I spread out my hands to you.
 - 10 Do you work wonders for the dead? Do the shades rise up to praise you? Selah
 - 11 Is your steadfast love declared in the grave, or your faithfulness in Abaddon?
 - 12 Are your wonders known in the darkness, or your saving help in the land of forgetfulness?
 - 13 But I, O Lord, cry out to you; in the morning my prayer comes before you.
 - 14 O Lord, why do you cast me off? Why do you hide your face from me?
 - 15 Wretched and close to death from my youth up, I suffer your terrors; I am desperate.
 - 16 Your wrath has swept over me; your dread assaults destroy me.
 - 17 They surround me like a flood all day long; from all sides they close in on me.
 - 18 You have caused friend and neighbor to shun me; my companions are in darkness.
- Other sites pointed out from here:
 - Jesus healed the blind man and the lame man at the Siloam Pool
 - Kidron Valley down from Temple Mount
 - Mt. Zion – uphill from Kidron Valley, wealthier area then

Tuesday, October 16th

News: Yesterday there was a Palestinian (Golan Heights) riot because the capital was moving from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Several were killed. We had seen first in the West Bank as we drove back to Jerusalem yesterday. Only about 60 miles away.

Rocket was launched at night and several heard it.

Devotion: By Woody – Micah 5, John 14:27 – Prayers for Peace

Bus Notes:

- Israel is pro-everything and not anti-Palestinian.
- Adam kept referring to the “Status Quo” – a state of peace
- **Bethlehem and Beit Sahour were in Area A controlled by Palestinians.
- Bethlehem star – 14 points representing the 14 generations: Abraham to David, David to Jesus

Bethlehem

- Some of the oldest olive trees are found there
- Early Byzantine monks taught people of Bethlehem how to care.
- 1st temple – pilgrims sacrificed a lamb. Micah 5:2 2 But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days
 - Lamb to be sacrificed as wrapped in white. Jesus’ shroud was white.

Church of the Nativity

- Door of humility – door made smaller so thieves couldn’t drive carts in to steal things
- Greek Orthodox – iconostasis = wall of icons separating people from priests & altar
- 5 Patriarchs of the Church – one was in Bethlehem
- Emblem of Byzantines was the Eagle – eagles looked E & W to conquer the world
- Eye under the cross represents God’s eye watching
- Armenians also have section in same church in an area to left of main altar

Church of St. Catherine

- We walked to left inside Church of the Nativity and came to this church attached to the same main structure inside walled area with a lovely garden in front.
- Large carving? – Samuel – Jesse bringing his sons, David in the field – below it is an olive tree with branches as symbol of off shoots to Jesus
- St. Jerome lived in a cave below the church. Spoke 7 languages. Translated te Septuagint Bible (Greek) into the Vulgate (Latin)

Beit Sahour – Village of the Night Watchers (wisemen)

Shepherd’s Field & Cave

- Put animals in pens above. Shepherds lived in cave below

Chapel of the Angel

- Architect Antonio Barluzzi – shaped like a shepherd’s tent – round windows at top to let starlight in
- We sang “O Come All Ye Faithful” and as a group from India entered, they joined in

Herodian – (only saw from bus)

- Where Herod built palace on flat at top. 7 stories high
- Herod buried here

- Fortress covered with sand over the years

Lunch – Ruth’s Restaurant in Beit Sahour – more falafels & shawarmas with French fries
 Taybeh Beer White (means “delicious”) – Arabic local Palestinian wheat, coriander, orange peel hops, pure water and yeast.

- Site where Mickey had to rescue Jody from a ruthless street vendor.

Bus notes:

- After 1880 started building outside the walled city. Before that everyone lived inside
- 7 gates – we passed Java Gate, Damascus Gate (facing Damascus), Solomon’s Gate (cave of Zedekiah here), Flowers Gate (main entrance to Muslim Quarter)
- Holiest city in the world – God wanted to communicate with the people of the world, so God sent Jesus here.
- Mt. Moriah – main diet, wheat & barley. Threshing floor where Abraham came to sacrifice Isaac.

Mount of Olives

- Stones placed on grave, flowers die
- Jews buried in soil, no casket.
- Cost: \$22,500 for 1.2 meter x 60 cm. plot and 15-minute service
- Jesus’ time: he would have looked out at the walled city which was 2 x larger and many palaces in the City of David.
- Ossuaries – bone boxes – width of skull, length of femur
- For Jews – prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi buried here.
- For Christians, this is the mount from which Jesus foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and from which he ascended

Domini Flevit – The Lord Wept

- The Lord wept over Jerusalem
- Altar image – Hen with chicks (Matt. 23:37) – looked like a rooster

Garden of Gethsemane

- Gethsemane = “olive press”
- Ancient olive tree – part dies, but keeps putting out new shoots.
- Franciscans own many holy sites – Terra Sante

Church of Agony or Church of All Nations (beside the Garden)

- 12 domes = 12 countries who donated to build the church
- From Byzantine period

Wednesday, October 17th

Devotion: Scott (aka “Kevin”) – John 19:16

Bus Notes:

- 6" rule – between men & women on Temple Mount
- 7 gates to enter the Old City: Jaffa Gate, Damascus Gate (most active gate), Solomon's Gate, East Gate (? Dung Gate), West Gate (? New Gate), Herod's Gate
 - Internet: Zion Gate, Lion's Gate – Gates had multiple names
- Passed New Gate – main entrance to Christian Quarter
- Close family culture: Children at young age go to school and travel by themselves. If lost just give family name and folks will get child home
- Entered through Dung Gate

Some electric street cars and articulating buses in Jerusalem.

Temple Mount

- Dome of the Rock
- Dome of the Spirit
- Al Aqsa Mosque

Adam shared a huge timeline of the history of the Mount. I only recorded some of it and admit that it may be scrambled:

- Temple Mount has never been excavated.
- Solomon built a city on the Mount
- 586 BC destroyed – fire cracked the limestone
- 90 years later Persians in power – Jews back to Jerusalem
 - Most of Old Testament written in Babylon in Judean perspective
- King Herod came and renovated the plaza
- Mosque underground – sites 35,000 – called Solomon's stable
- 1996 – knocked down an area to create an exit point.
- On Friday 150,000 Muslims worship here

Dome of the Rock

- Octagon, Byzantine period, sitting on bedrock
- Oldest shrine in the world
- Templum domini
- Mosque became headquarters for the Knights Templar (fighting monks)
- War – 10's of 1000s killed on Mount
- Jordanian hands until Britain took over in 1977.
- Around top of Dome is written the chapter of the Virgin Mary from the Quran
- More miracles of Jesus in the Quran than the NT, but always with a twist
- 12 columns (pillars) x 2 inside
- Dome is gold plated now, used to be brass
- Dome of the Spirit in straight line with Eastern Gate (aka Golden Gate, Mercy Gate, Beautiful Gate)
 - Adam thinks it is site of the Ark of the Covenant and Holy of Holies.
 - Jesus is believed to be coming back through the Eastern Gate
- Muslim crescent symbol is sometimes a closed circle as on Domes of Rock & Spirit

Al Aqsa Mosque

- Built to south of Dome of the Rock
- Men worship here, women worship in the Dome

As we walked down the steps from the Mount, 4 Orthodox Jews were coming in through the gate making a political statement per Adam. Normally an Orthodox Jew would never enter this area. 4 Muslim security guards in full attire were walking around them.

Entered through Stephen's Gate (aka Lion's Gate, Sheep's Gate)

Church of St. Anne - (Mary's mother)

- Built in Crusader period – only Crusader church still fully intact
 - Muslims used it for a school
- Maintained by White Fathers
- Pool of Bethesda by Church
 - 1st temple period – through this gate, washed lambs for sacrificed
 - 2nd temple period – pool for miracles – John 5:1-8
 - Used rainwater, no spring
 - Found Caduceus symbols on stones by pool

Note: Cats are pure (clean since they wash themselves & bury their waste), dogs are impure. Cats all over Israel. Very few dogs seen.

Via Dolorosa

Internet: The ***Via Dolorosa*** (Latin for "Way of Grief," "Way of Sorrow," "Way of Suffering" or simply "Painful Way"; Hebrew: ויה דולורוזה; Arabic: طريق الآلام) is a street within the Old City of Jerusalem, believed to be the path that Jesus walked on the way to his crucifixion. The winding route from the Antonia Fortress west to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre—a distance of about 600 meters (2,000 feet)^[1]—is a celebrated place of Christian pilgrimage. The current route has been established since the 18th century, replacing various earlier versions.^[2] It is today marked by nine Stations of the Cross; there have been fourteen stations since the late 15th century,^[2] with the remaining five stations being inside the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Via_Dolorosa#Trial_by_Pilate:_stations_one_and_two

1. Flagellation
2. Condemnation
3. Fall
4. Encounter with his mother
5. Encounter with Simon, the Cyrene
6. Encounter with Veronica (wipes Jesus' face)
7. Fall
8. Encounter with pious women
9. Fall
10. Jesus stripped of his garments
11. Jesus nailed to the cross)
12. Jesus dies on the cross) – In Church of Holy Sepulcher
13. Stone of the anointing)
14. Jesus is laid in his tomb)

Church of the Holy Sepulcher

- 95% built during Crusader period
- Owned by Catholics, Armenians, Orthodox, Coptic, Ethiopians –
 - Symbol of living in state of “*status quo*” – peacefully together – Adam referenced “*status quo*” multiple times as we traveled to different areas of Israel.
 - Ladder – standing on part owned by one group, leaning on part owned by another, so never moved
- Key – doors are maintained by a royal Muslim family. Key holder comes and opens the door each morning and is often found sitting to the left of the entrance
- Many visitors, so hard to get to the various areas.
 - Up steps to Golgotha
 - Tomb of Jesus believed to be there – too long a line to see

Lunch – Celia Restaurant - more falafel & shawarma with soda & French fries

Jewish Quarter

- Central area – solid gold menorah weighing 120 lbs. – all ready to be placed in the 3rd temple
- Behind a synagogue built by the Rothschilds.

Wailing Wall - Western Wall

- 2nd temple period – last relic of the last temple
 - 20 BCE – Herod built retaining wall around 2nd temple.
 - Roman soldiers destroyed the rest of the building
- Holiest place to Jews where they feel closest to God.
- Men prayed on one side separated from women on the other
 - Noted that women backed away from the wall for a good distance after praying, but men do not. Why difference ?
- Internet: Prayer papers are removed and swept up twice a year (before Passover and Yom Kippur) and bagged and buried unread on Mt. of Olives. Adam said they are prayed over first.

Yad Vashem – “Memorial to the Names” - Holocaust Museum

- Amazing museum filled with faces and recorded stories
- Crisscrossed a central area that went down and then up exiting to a view of Jerusalem – looking at green trees and blue sky – gave you a sense of promised land and hope and beauty.
- No photographs allowed – probably good because it kept our eyes on the displays.
- Visitors need at least 4 hours to even begin to do this museum justice.
- They are still collecting records to be stored in one huge library of boxes for future reference and studies.

Thursday, October 18th

Devotion: Scott Hale - We struggle but nothing like the folks have in Jerusalem. Psalm 46 –

Be still and know that I am God.

News: This morning Israel announced the decision to not retaliate against the Palestinians for the riot. Schools are back in session in Gaza.

Bus Notes:

Traveling down to way below sea level – markers on walls as we descended. Lowest minus 425 meters

- Jordan Valley – Agriculture fulfilling the prophecy of Ezekiel – fields, trees planted
- Passed Palestinian refugee camp on Israeli side of the wall
- Saw camels – each valued at \$5,000
- Dead Sea – human intervention blocking flow of water into sea. Decreasing by 3-5 cm/year = dry in 15 years
 - As recedes, sink holes created. Have had to divert roads.
- Huge industry using the minerals & chemical from the Dead Sea – bromine, ash, calcium, magnesium
- 3% salt
- Ancient times – Asphalt Sea – Asphalt - Great Rift Valley
- To east, mountains of Moab & Jordan

Bus stops out in the middle of the desert along the road

Ahava cosmetics factory store -- means “love”

Ein Gedi - “Spring of the Wild Goat” – (bus view)

- Mike drove the bus around several times so we could take pictures of the goats posing for us standing on top of above ground pipes
- Mountain goat - ibex
- Saul sent soldiers to find David hiding here – 1 Sam 24
- Found synagogue from Byzantine period.
 - People here produced a perfume – found inscription saying they would keep the secret (of the perfume?)
- Bad lands (Sodom & Gomorrah) around this area – Genesis 19

Masada

- Josephus Flavius tells the story of Masada
- UNESCO site – best Roman siege system still intact
- Site on ancient road to Petra
- All stones above the black line have been reconstructed
- In storage rooms, found jars of wine, fish, meat, etc. Large ones held 100s of gallons – always kept fresh. Stamps on jars indicated different countries imported from
- Squares below in valley indicated the different Roman camps surround – A to F
 - F camp – General Flavius, the commander
- Bath house: Cold, warm, hot rooms – wood from Italy, clay pillars. Furnace outside. Flooring had tiles with holes

- Area where they found the lots for the last 10 soldiers – only 1 committed suicide (last).
- Columbarium: kept pigeons and doves
- Ramp: took 3 yrs to build. Built by Jewish slaves, so ethical dilemma re. throwing down stones to stop builders
- Northern Palace for family, Eastern Palace for guests
- Synagogue: found the biblical box where torn scrolls of Torah, etc. put for proper destruction later. Contained dry bones passages from Ezekiel

2 stories here:

- *King Herod the Great* – a paranoid man who built 7 fortresses in the wilderness. Whenever trouble, he fled to one of his fortresses.
 - Brought architects from Rome
 - His mother/family caught in riot situation so he moved them to Masada.
 - Had fortress finished about 4 BCE – about 10 years to build – believe he never returned
 - He was the one who killed the 1st born – dates Jesus about 4-6 BCE
 - All stones above the black
- *The Zealots* – 68 CE
 - They became symbols of bravery and strength – Israeli soldiers use to come here to swear their oath of allegiance

Lunch: Falafel & Shawarma

Qumran

- Josephus wrote about the Essenes living here
- All of Old Testament books were found as well as Apocryphal books and prayers
 - Just found instructional scrolls for High Priest in Jerusalem – why here?
 - Whole book of Isaiah found, bits and pieces of Genesis.
 - Noah's Ark story is different
 - Validates everything we have
 - 1st century BCE to 4th century CE. Oldest from 7th century BCE
- 1947 – found by a Bedouin boy looking for a lost sheep
- For a long time the scrolls that were found were sold to antiquity dealers and ended up scattered all over the world.
 - Even found one on black market made as a show
 - In 1970s Israel took over and started control.
- Found 500 in Cave 4. When cave full, went further up mountain to other caves.
- Then heard the Romans were coming so headed toward Masada, and kept hiding scrolls.

Dead Sea

- Put on bathing suit and float in the sea, but no jewelry as the DS salt & minerals will ruin everything
- Local kibbutz maintains the Dead Sea site and Qumran.
- Queen Cleopatra came to the Dead Sea – nature's own spa treatment

Jericho – Spring of Elijah

- Main business is agriculture and tourism. When it is snowing in Jerusalem, it is warm here.
- Jericho means “good smell” – famous for citrus trees, sycamore trees
 - Produced incense for the temple in Jerusalem
- One of oldest cities in the world – over 10,000 yrs. Settling in walled cities
- Palestinian people in this area
- Tel of Jericho was abandoned and people moved to the valley.
- 1 King 11:2-16: Elijah was fed by the ravens when he ran here to escape King Ahab who was at Mt. Carmel (4-5 day walk).
- Sycamore tree that Zacchaeus climbed up in –traditional, may not be exact tree
- Many Christians in Jericho now because of the Christian history

Friday, October 19th

8:45-9:45 AM: Fire alarms. Many of us were in lobby so sent out front. Woody walked up 8 flights and back down to get our things for the day. Becky Packett said “boker tov” to the fireman as he went past her balcony in the telescoping bucket checking rooms. Fire was in kitchen.

Israel’s Shabbat: government offices close ½ days. Normal workday 8 AM-4 PM. Weekend begins. Shabbat is sundown Friday to sundown Saturday.

- We saw many Orthodox Jewish families in the lobby at our hotel very well dressed for celebrating Shabbat meal with their families.

Devotion by Pamela Hale

Ein Karem – “Spring of the Vineyard”

- Birthplace of John the Baptist
- Church sitting over cave where born
- Zechariah was high priest, so lived in wealthy village.
- UNESCO site because of 2000-yr-old irrigation system and still used
- Later Roman temple and 2 Byzantine churches on top
- Near church – where Samuel went to Ramah

Garden Tomb

Tour guide at this site was Patrick, an Irishman

- Unearthed a 2nd temple tomb which represents well the tomb of Jesus, even if not same tomb
- Golgotha (Aramaic) = Calvary (Latin) – was probably at ground level at the crossroads (about where bus stop is now)
- On Mount Moriah – wall built
- Patrick shared, “For us salvation is free, for God it was very costly”
 - “I know that you paid a lot of money to come. You’re going to find nothing inside the tomb, folks. He’s not there.”

- Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus asked for Jesus' body so that they could get it in the ground before night fall – Both men part of the Sanhedrin, what effect on their lives.
- Stone never found – “something in us wants to worship things”
- Water cistern here during Crusader period – probably garden then, vineyards
- Took communion in the garden at 12:25 PM.

Lunch –falafels or shawarmas Again, but this time in sub rolls with French fries option.

Our “last supper” with our Kentucky friends as they departed from us at Bethany

Bethany

To get there have to do less directly because of the border. It's in Area C (Israeli). No soldiers.

People park wherever they want.

- Greek Orthodox monastery commemorating the tomb of Lazarus
- 2 Byzantine churches, 1 Crusader church
- Now rebuilt by architect Barluzzi
- Murals – Jesus meets Mary, some have halos, some without. Myrrh pouring on Jesus head. In mural with Mary & Martha there is a dog at Jesus' feet. Mural at tomb.
- Olive press from Byzantine period

Saturday, October 20th

“Shabbat Shalome”

Devotion: Tony Wilson – “we came to see history” – John 17.

Bible Land Museum

“The future of mankind has its roots in the past...only through understanding our history can we build a better future.” Dr. Elie Borowski, Founder of Museum

- Greater majority of pieces in the museum came from his own personal collection.
- He fled to Australia, became rich, loved Zion, visited, met wife
- Police asked him to prove he had gotten all artifacts legally.
- He agreed to open his collection to the public, but in his own museum.
- Sold 2 vases to afford to build the whole museum.

Notes as we walked through museum with guide, Sabina:

- Pieces dating back to 5000 BCE
- Travel from Egypt to Mesopotamia (means “between 2 rivers) through Israel
- Important to see all cultures – cross-cultures
- Some vases came from temples, so well preserved
- Stone bowl from Mesopotamia – 4000 BCE – cow (strong, useful) & lion (king) – lamb (domestic animal)
- Ziggurat temple in Meso. – no hills, so built tall toward gods. Only king & high priest could go to room at top to hear what gods had to say. Made of bricks. Tower of Babel.
- Stone statues with hands folded at prayer, gems in eyes, colored stones
 - Status will pray for you to all gods, because humans didn't have enough time

- Egyptian era – only 1 pharaoh per pyramid. Stone door with list above of everything stored
- Statue of Pharaoh made of granite – on side are hieroglyphics.
- Mummy – organs in jars. Brain thrown away. Heart in jar and put back in body
 - Heart put on scale and must be lighter than the goddess (feather).
 - Crocodile, lion, alligator eats heart jar if hardened
- Bronze helmet covered in gold was on statue of Sumerian god - god depicted as human with helmet with horns.
 - This is the only one now in whole world
- Special Blue Exhibit: Lapis lazuli stone was like diamond in ancient times

Mt. Zion Roman Catholic Cemetery – Oscar Shindler’s Grave

Shindler was declared among the “righteous among the nations” by Yad Vashem and was then permitted to be buried on the Mount of Olives

- Many of us placed stones on his grave. Woody’s stone to right of P in “RIP”. Penny’s stone from Sea of Galilee just below the 4.
- There are now 15,000 descendants from the 1200 Jews he saved
- If Roman Catholic you can be buried here. Must live in or have connection to Jerusalem
- Tree planted for all deemed righteous. Have plaque on/by tree with person’s name.

Heading towards Tel Aviv

Abu Ghosh – (bus view only)

- Where Ark of the Covenant was kept for 120 years
- During Crusader time, on main road between Tel Aviv & Jerusalem – 38 villages destroyed, but not this one – only village to welcome Roman soldiers

Emmaus – (bus view only)

3 possible sites for Walk to Emmaus.

1. This one is closest to Jerusalem
2. Where a Crusader chapel built
3. Abu Ghosh

Monastery of Latourn – Abbeye de Latourn

- Monastery sadly closed to visitors
- Beginning of low lands – 1300+ feet above sea level
- Wine produced by monastery and sold
- Craft fair on grounds

Rest area stop (grocery store & restaurant) – “booze crew” (Adam’s naming) enjoyed wine from the monastery and fruit and cookies supplied by Mickey & Pam from Ramada Inn

Jaffa – City of Jonah

- Napoleon statues holding tourists’ directional signs – He conquered Jaffa in 1792.
- Had time to wander around the water front and park area. Very clean. Charming old city.

Dinner – kebabs and the normal spread of hummus, cabbage salads, etc. – awesome change after a lot of falafel. Tour company paid.

- We all had our pictures taken with Adam in front of Jonah’s whale.

Tel Aviv

- 70% of population between 18 and 45.

Departed Tel Aviv October 20th at 11:10 PM → Newark October 21st at 4:10 PM. Departed Newark at 6:17 AM → Dulles at 7:31 AM.