

# Our Trip to Israel

October 18, 2012

Day Three

10-18-2012

10:07am

On the bus

Items must be 600 years old+ to be considered an antique in Israel. ☺

We got up and had breakfast at the hotel buffet again this morning. Things are done differently here in order to be kosher. In a kosher kitchen, meat and dairy cannot mix. So at our hotel, there is dairy for breakfast and meat for supper. They use eggs for breakfast but not bacon or sausage. They do have milk and yogurt for breakfast. They also have salad.

After breakfast, we drove to Tiberias – passing Migdal on our way – where Mary Magdalene was from. They have begun excavation of this area. Within the next couple years, there will probably be places to visit in Migdal.



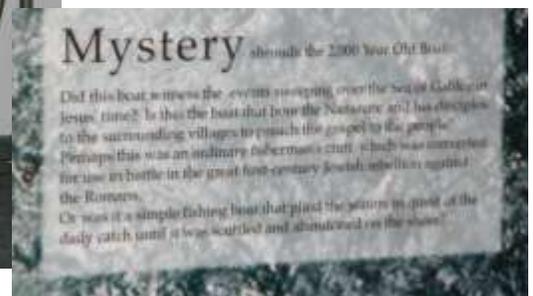
Outside the Yigal Allon Centre where the Jesus Boat is housed.

We pulled up at the museum where the Jesus boat is housed. We got off the bus and walked into the area outside the museum. There are many statues and mosaics around the outside of the museum. There is even a bench outside that students and artists covered in mosaic tiles – it is very pretty!



Upon entering the museum, we talked to one of the shopkeepers (commercial time ☺) and entered the display area where we saw a short video and then saw the boat. There is nothing hugely spectacular about this boat. It is about 2000 years old and in pretty good condition considering it's age. This boat is very similar to the boats that Jesus and His disciples would have used which is what makes it so meaningful. It really puts things in perspective to see a boat like Jesus would have been on – it's not very big, that's for sure! The boat is only 24 feet long! To look at it and think, I wonder if this is the boat that Jesus used to cross the Sea of Galilee...

*That is where the true meaning of this boat is.*



Modern Art!



When they found this boat, it was during a time of heavy drought. The boat had been covered in mud for centuries before it was found and once they exposed it to the air, it began to deteriorate immediately. They wound up having to get a crane to remove it and they eventually had to paint it to keep the wood from rotting away completely.

When we were finished in the display area, we did a little shopping, then it was back to the bus!



This bench is covered in mosaic tiles and was done by children and artists together. This bench is located outside the museum.

Israel has compulsory military service. Everyone serves at least two years (more if they want to) then they serve about 1 month a year until the age of 50.



We drove through the town of Cana and saw where they are excavating the city water center. This is likely where the wedding reception would have taken place.

We kept driving and came to Nazareth. Nazareth is completely closed in by mountains. During Jesus' time, there were about 2,500 people living here, now there are about 250,000 people living here. We stopped at an area overlooking Nazareth to see the whole city and to take pictures, then we drove down into the city.



Overlooking modern day Nazareth

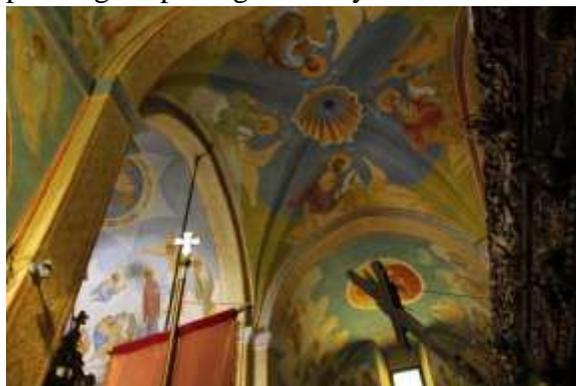




We went into the Basilica of the Annunciation where the springs that feed the city well are located. Some people think that this is where the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary. She was on her way back from drawing water at the well when the angel appeared to her, so it could have happened here by the well, at her house, or anywhere in between.

The well here is definitely the one that was there at Jesus time. It would have been in the middle of the town's square and Jesus would have played around it. He likely would have gotten water for Mary from the well as well as using it personally for himself or his animals. A small chapel was built around the well during the Byzantine Era. A Greek

Orthodox church was built around the chapel at a later time. When you first walk in to the church, you have to go under a type of awning, down three stairs and through a narrow doorway. The inside of the church is covered with artwork. This is artwork not only of the annunciation but also of Greek Orthodox church history. Immediately to the left, there is a desk with candles available for purchase. There is a place to the right and down to light the candles and push them into the sand. There is a small altar area and wooden benches across from the altar where you can sit. If you sit on the benches and look around, you can see all the beautiful and ornate paintings depicting the story of Christ and also various important events in the Greek Orthodox



church. The background of most of the paintings on the ceiling is a brilliant blue with the pictures being made of many different vibrant colors. Most of the paintings feature people. Doron said that the pictures were painted because most people were illiterate but could "read" the pictures to learn their Church history. I think if you would have had the time to go around the church there would have been a sequence to the paintings.

If you walk between the altar and the benches, you can take some steps down into a hallway decorated with tiles in beautiful patterns. The sides of the hallway mirror each other. At the end of the hallway is the remains of the Byzantine chapel and the well itself. In the hallway right outside where the well is found, there is a spout from which you can draw water directly from the spring. There were quite a few people filling bottles of "holy water" at this place. As you went out the main door there was a monk (the same one who was selling candles) who would give you a sticker for your bottle certifying it to be holy water. You took a step up from the hallway and you were in a small space that contained Mary's Well. There was a crucifix hanging from the wall over the well and many people had thrown coins into the well – which go to support the Christians who live in Nazareth.



Mary's Well, you can see the coins that have been dropped in.

Outside the church in the courtyard, you could hear children playing – it sounded like recess time when we were there! We looked but couldn't see the children playing, they sounded just like kids playing here sound!



A market in Nazareth



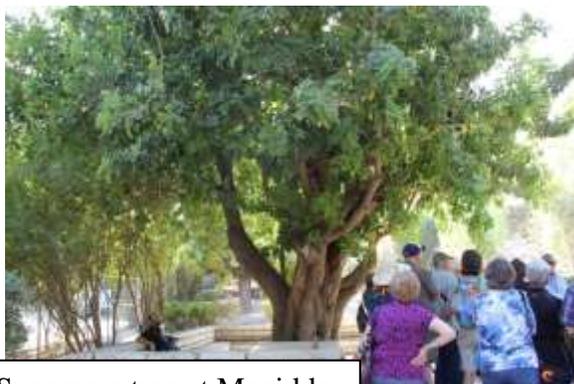
Leaving Nazareth  
Nazareth is in a valley, so you have to climb back up the hills to get out of the city.



Nazareth, a mix of old and new

**Armageddon**

In the 1870s, Chicago University did the first archeological dig at Tel Megiddo. This was the first dig ever. The conditions at this time were very rough in this part of the world. The area was controlled by the Arabs and there were not any Jews living here yet. They had to have water delivered every day and they had to have food delivered every other day. Of course there was no electricity so no way to keep the perishable food from going bad and the weather was quite warm so it was definitely a hardship for them. By the time they came back for the third time, it was 1905. There were Jews that had settled in the area and had begun developing the area for agriculture. Because of the generosity of the Jews, they did not need to have supplies delivered at all. The Jews did not even charge them for their water because they felt that the dig was very important work and wanted to contribute in that way. The dig continued sporadically –



A Sycamore tree at Megiddo

even to this day! At the end of World War I, the diggers got stuck on the top of the hill where Megiddo is located watching the last battle of the war take place. During this battle, the British army defeated the Turks.

**FROM MEGIDDO TO ARMAGEDDON**

The city of Megiddo played a prominent role in the history of the ancient Near East. Strategically located at the mouth of the Nahal Iron Pass, Megiddo controlled access to the road that linked Egypt with Mesopotamia and Anatolia - the most important trade and military route of that time. Megiddo is the only site in the land of Israel mentioned in the records of all Near Eastern ancient powers and was one of the most fought-over cities in the region. The first fully-recorded battle in history, in which Pharaoh Thutmose III's army faced a coalition of Canaanite kings, took place here in 1479 B.C.

Megiddo is also mentioned in many biblical narratives. Its king was one of the Canaanite rulers defeated by Joshua, it is listed among the cities built by King Solomon, and it was the site where two Judahite kings - Ahaziah and Josiah - met their deaths. For millions of Christians, Megiddo is the Armageddon of St. John's Revelation, where the forces of Good will defeat the forces of Evil in the Final Battle at the End of Days.

Megiddo – Armageddon – is listed in Revelation as the site for the last battle of mankind. Megiddo was King Ahab's most fortified city. It was here in Caanan when Abraham lived here and throughout Bible times.



Our group walking up to the dig site at Megiddo

**3pm**  
**On the bus**

We walked through the active archeological dig at Armageddon (Megiddo). Upon approaching the city, the first gate that you see is the one that Solomon built. It had a ramp for the wealthy and important people to ride up and a steep set of stairs for commoners and their animals to use. We walked past this gate and on to another one.

Ramp for the wealthy and royal

Stairs for the commoners



Solomon's gate



Can you imagine trying to get a donkey up those stairs?!

The second set of gates that we saw was the same gates that Abraham would have used to enter the city. When the Bible says that a city has four gates, it doesn't mean four different gates, it means that there are four gates

precautionary stronghold. There would still only be one way to enter the well-fortified city, but if someone were to use a battle ram to attack the city, they would have to get through four different gates before entering the city.

There are four "indentions" in the gate where there would have been four places to close a gate as you entered the city.



The city gate that Abraham would have walked through



We walked through the gate and saw the remains of the city. They have uncovered 20 layers of city at Armageddon before reaching bedrock. They know that when they reach bedrock, they are at the first layer of settlement for a city. When a new army would conquer the city, they would knock down the things that were currently located in the city and build on top of that creating a new layer.



It was so windy at the top of the hill that my hat kept blowing off!



One of the few bugs we saw, we thought this one was an Israeli millipede.

We walked through “Abraham’s gate” and walked into the main area of the city. There was a space where the elders of the city would have sat. They gathered here to help judge between disputes that occurred in the city and help make big decisions that needed mediation. They were also available to be a witness to an agreement. (Like when Boaz went to the elders at the city gate to seek to marry Ruth.) We saw a large stone that had been carved out in the inside creating a bowl. We asked our guide what this was and he indicated that it was a manger.

From the other side of the city gate



Manger

This manger would have been similar to the manger that Jesus was placed after he was born. All mangers of this time period would have been hewn out of stone. Stone was plentiful, wood was scarce.

We kept walking past the manger and came to an open area where we could see a pagan altar. This altar was round and made of stones. Doron said that it was probably an altar to Baal. At this altar, the pagans would have practiced infant sacrifice. Any time something was “bad” they would sacrifice their infants at this altar to appease the gods and hope to gain their favor again. I wonder how many babies needlessly died on this altar?

A pagan altar



The stairs that the people would climb down to deliver their grain tax



As we continued, we went past a tomb which is the only known remaining burial site of a Canaanite king. Near that we came to a very deep hole in the ground paved with stones where the people. One of the ways that they could pay this tax was in grain. They would walk down on a staircase to the side of the hole and deposit their grain. They would then cross

across the deep well of grain (which if they fell into it, they would drown before they were pulled out) on a plank that was set across the grain well. After their deposit, they would receive a clay receipt proving that they had paid their taxes. In exchange for paying their taxes, they were given water. They know who to pay taxes to based on who they got water from. Water was the most expensive commodity in the area and one got to be king by controlling the water supply for a given area.

Grain was just one way that people would pay their taxes, but the taxes must be satisfied in order to use the water supply. The grain would be eaten by the palace or sold to nearby towns and villages.



Kinnerat Valley – Some Jewish people approached a Scottish gentleman and asked to buy this land. He had only seen it once as a child, but recalled it being a desolate area. As a result, he sold this



land to the Jews for 10 pounds. The Jews came and began to settle this area. They tamed the landscape to be productive in the way of agriculture. The Turks who controlled this area at the time, thought that the Jews were crazy to live in the middle of such an unproductive area, but did not want them to become a military threat. They did not allow the Jews to build a city wall around their compound. The Jews had a need to protect themselves against attack, so they built their compound with fences around each yard and each yard connecting to both its neighboring yards. In this way, the Jews were able to exercise self-preservation without breaking the letter of the law.

*6pm*

*At the hotel*

We walked from the granary over to a lookout point where you could see out across the whole valley. We saw where they are working to find a military camp outside of the city walls. The current theory is that what is now identified as Solomon's Stables is actually another place where people could go to pay their taxes



The view from Megiddo



The remains of Solomon's stables?  
A place for people to go and pay taxes?

with a different commodity other than grain. They say that of course Solomon would not have kept his stables and his military right next to the palace, the stench from the stables alone would have dissuaded him from this. Also, if a city is attacked, he would have wanted to shut the city gates immediately and not open them again to let the army out. He would have preferred to keep his army outside the city walls between himself and his enemies. For this reason, they are digging in an area just outside the city walls (maybe a mile away?)

looking for proof of their current theory.

We sat looking out to the east as our guide explained that the lowland in front of us is the only spot in the whole area where people can invade and not have to climb a mountain to do it. Tradition says that the battle of Armageddon will be fought at Megiddo with an enemy coming out from the east in the small space between the mountains there.



When we had taken some pictures, we walked all the way back across the city past the granary to King Ahab's water reservoir. Here we walked down 185 steep steps – not straight down, but definitely going down very deep into the ground.



reached the bottom of these 185 steps, we came to a 90 foot tunnel which we walked through. As we walked down the stairs

and through the tunnel (which was lit) you could see the tool marks on the

The water system from the top  
This would have been full of water at the time it was built.



wall made by the workers who dug the tunnel thousands of years ago.



Left: If you look closely, you can still see the tool marks on the walls.

Below: The source of the spring water which has been tapped into and does not flow as abundantly as it did when it was the water source for Megiddo.



It amazed us that there was nothing preventing you from touching the walls of history as you walked through! At the end of the tunnel was the original location of the springs that once brought water to this city and the surrounding



community. It doesn't flow much now because other wells have tapped into the underground reservoir in other places, but it still faithfully trickles out a stream of water at this source. During the occupation of the city, the stairs and tunnel that we had just walked through would have been entirely under water.



It was hazardous to the city to have the water supply come from outside the city walls. It made the city vulnerable to the water supply being cut off during a siege. Camouflaging the springs and bringing the water supply into the city without it being detected and cut off made the city more resistant to attack. The area on the outside where the springs come from was covered with rocks to look like the rest of the mountainside.

We got back on the bus and started driving toward our hotel. We stopped partway there at a scenic spot that looked out over the Kiddron valley and the Sea of Galilee at a spot that was at Sea Level.



We continued back to our hotel where it was approaching sunset – the earliest that we had gotten back so far! We changed into our suits and went swimming in the Sea of Galilee at sunset. The water was very clear and fairly warm. We were able to wade out quite a ways without it getting very deep.





We watched the sun slip behind the mountains and in the last of dusk's light, we returned to our cabin to get ready for supper.

We ate supper at the buffet and attended the evening meeting, then we needed to do some laundry in preparation to leave the hotel the next morning. We also needed to divide our luggage to take into Jordan only what we needed for overnight. After some debate, we went down to the reception area and bought soap and tokens. Dan decided

to do the laundry where he met a new friend – an Israeli frog! I went back to the room and divided out the luggage between the minimal things we needed to take across the border into Jordan and the rest of our things which would stay on the bus while we were in Jordan.

