

Bless Israel - The Bible Lands (Study Tour) from 16 – 25 Sept 2016

Following the brief on our visit to Mt Nebo and Petra City which are located in the Jordanian kingdom in the last issue of the Vine, below is some more brief about the other sites and pics taken from our journey into the Bible Land.

ISRAEL/JORDAN FAMILIARISATION TOUR

It was the 4th day and after a satisfying Israeli breakfast, we boarded the coach inscribed with the words “Galilee Travel”, a comfortable 40-seater and Wi-Fi enabled, for our journey into the Promised Land. Bro. Gershon Nerel, our 60-year-old Messianic Jewish guide (a former professor of the Hebrew University in Israel) warmly greeted us “shalom” and then another Hebrew phrase “*kulam po*” – meaning “is everyone here?” before the coach would move on.



“Kulam po” would be said and repeated each time the group had to board the coach to be transported to another scheduled site in the tour program. This was to ensure everybody in the group was safe and accounted for and not left behind unwittingly. Each day’s program was like a different lesson in a new setting. It was an awesome experience for the group as we walked and climbed the various terrains and pathways in each location, filled with reverence and emotion as we began to realise and understand how our Lord Jesus Christ had himself also walked and climbed these places without the modern means of transportation and shelters. There were emotional moments and tearing eyes when scripture references were highlighted and relevant passages read on site, connecting the past, present and future regarding the prophecies and promises of God to His beloved children, the nation of Israel.



BETH SHEAN (TIBERIUS - ISRAEL)

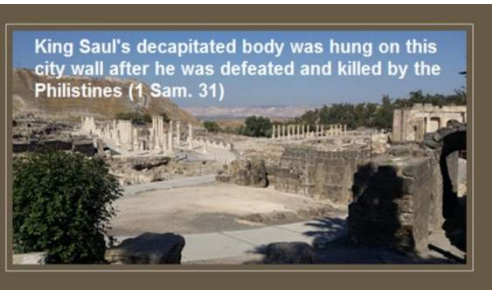
Beth-Shan (or Bet She’an) on the west of Jordan was an important city in Biblical times. Beth-Shan means house of security or rest. It is right at the edge of Mt Gilboa where the men of Israel fought the Philistines army and were defeated. King Saul and his 3 sons including Jona-

than were killed during the battle, and Saul's decapitated body and those of his sons were all hung on this city wall (1 Sam 31).



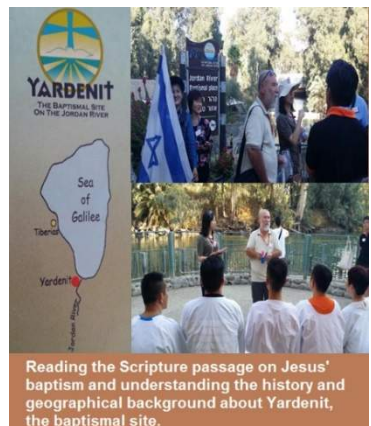
Some time later, King David defeated the Philistines (2 Sam 8:1) and his son Solomon turned Beth Shan into a busy capital city, during the Byzantine period. It was an important gateway from Damascus to Jordan, and about 14 miles away from Lake Ganaseret or Sea of Galilee. In 8th century AD, this city was destroyed by a powerful earthquake. Today, it is one of Israel's most prominent archaeological sites. The remains of a 6,000-year history of settlement were discovered at the site, including a Byzantine amphitheatre and a church with impressive designs featuring black & white stones, marble columns and a colourful mosaic floor.

tre and a church with impressive designs featuring black & white stones, marble columns and a colourful mosaic floor.



THE BAPTISMAL SITE - YARDENIT (TIBERIUS - ISRAEL)

Israel's most important river, the Jordan River, is situated in the Galilee district, between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. It is 251 kilometres long and flows roughly north to south, through the Sea of Galilee and into the Dead Sea. The water from Jordan River is the second largest water resource of Israel, desalination of sea water from the Mediterranean Sea being the first. Conflicts over the waters of the Jordan River was a contributing factor to the 6-day war when Syria attempted to divert some of its headwaters in collaboration



with Lebanon and Jordan in 1965 (ref Wikipedia.org).

Jesus was baptised in the river by John the Baptist nearer to Jericho area, as He began His ministry (Mk 1:0-11). It was also the river that the Israelites crossed to enter the Promised Land. We managed to reach Yardenit (Hebrew

name of the baptismal site) early and were able to enjoy a great devotion moment amidst the beauty and serenity of the place without encountering much noise and disturbances around us. As 1 sister and 7 brothers in our group – trainers and theological students from Charis Mission (a Christian



Brothers and a sister from Charis Mission being baptised in the Jordan River.

half way house for ex-convicts and drug addicts) took their turns to be baptised in the river and shared personal testimonies with thanksgiving to God Yahweh, the rest of us broke into Hokkien chorus of “chin chia ho” as well as songs of praises in Chinese to share in their joy. It was a historical and memorable moment for them; some were visibly wiping away tears of joy and relief, including those standing on dry ground.

We will continue to share pictures and short briefs of other significant sites visited in the coming issues of the Vine. It has been an enriching and awesome experience for me, a journey that draws us even closer into God’s embrace as we revisited the Bible sites and saw how real and accurate the scriptures are. Our Heavenly Father through His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, had revealed His great love and as promised will continue to protect and preserve His children, the nation of Israel, till His coming again. Hallelujah and Amen!

Jessie Lim