



May 2000

Dear Mishpochah,

## **JERUSALEM JEWELS**

Our journey to the Holy Land was our best yet. We saw the hand of the Lord moving each step of the way and know that prayers were ascending to the throne on our behalf. God put together a very special group of pilgrims who quickly bonded and ministered the love of Yeshua to one another during the entire trip. This was a group of "jewels"! Among our group were a number of physically challenged people, but God went before us. Our group included an E.R. doctor, an ENT doctor, four nurses and a paramedic. Our God is an Awesome God!

The teaching we received from Dr. Randy Smith was so rich, that one member of our tour, who had already been to Israel fifteen times, said that this was without a doubt the **best** tour of all. Actually, the Life of Yeshua Seminar is much more than a tour. It is a total immersion in the Bible and in the Land at the same time. We're not sure when our next trip will be, but we urge you to begin to pray and save **now** so that you can be part of a future Israel study tour.

We marveled at the jewels shared with us by the sea in Caesarea, in the rolling hillsides of the Galilee, on a hill overlooking the valley of Megiddo (Armageddon), and throughout Judea and Samaria. Some of the most precious jewels however, were imparted to us in God's favorite city, Jerusalem.

For those of you who couldn't be with us in the Land, we'd like to share a few of these Jerusalem Jewels this month. We will be sharing more of them throughout the year.

### **Kidron Valley Jewel**

East of the walled city of Jerusalem is a long tree covered ridge called the "Mount of Olives." It is separated from the city by the Kidron Valley. This valley, the deepest in the area, received the drainage of the ancient Temple and surface water from the city and took it toward the wilderness and eventually to the Dead Sea. The Temple operations required sufficient drainage to cleanse the blood from the implements used to slaughter as many as ten thousand lambs in six hours at Passover. Daily sacrifices also required cleansing water that would have drained into the valley. The area would have received a regular amount of blood and water in combination. John 18:1 tells us that Yeshua went from the Upper Room to the Garden of Gethsemane, on the mount of Olives, near the base of the mountain. When the writer included the detail that He walked by way of the "*brook Kidron*," he may have anticipated that the reader would recall the drainage stream. It is as though he were saying, "the smell of death is in the air."

Yeshua crossed the stream of blood and water, and made His way to Gethsemane (from two Hebrew words, "*Gath*" - to press and "*shemen*" - oil), literally, the "place of the oil press." Here the olives would be

pressed until drops of oil were squeezed from them and fell to the ground. The writer uses this imagery when he describes Yeshua being "pressed" in prayer and sweating great drops of blood as He anticipated the wrath to come. (Luke 22:44)

## **Temple Jewel**

The first Temple to the God of Abraham was built by King Solomon (1 Kings 6) and was later destroyed by the Babylonians. We call this historical period of the Israelite kingdom the "First Temple Period" (928-586 BCE) for that reason. After the captivity in Babylon, Israel was allowed to return under the Decree of Cyrus and rebuild the Temple. Zerubbabel, the grandson of the former King of Judah (Jehoiachin) rebuilt a much less ornate building in the place of the First Temple. From about 500 BCE we call this period the "Second Temple Period."

Later, Herod the Great (37- 4 BCE) reconstructed the Temple of Zerubbabel, practically doubling the overall size and shape of the courtyards and worship center. These structures were destroyed by the Roman general Titus in 70 CE ending the Second Temple era. Because Herod erected a completely new altar and structure, students often ask why we don't call the Herodian Temple a "third Temple." The reason for the continuous use of the name is the continuity of the sacrifice, which was continued from the altar of Zerubbabel to the altar of Herod. The fires were kept hot, and the smoke continued to rise.

There was a time, however, when pagans from the Greco-Syrian Seleucid dynasty came into the Temple and the pure Temple sacrifice fires ceased to burn. The offering smoke of the acceptable sacrifice that rose to the heavens for generations ceased when Antiochus IV defiled the temple, daring to bring unclean animals into the Temple of the God of Abraham! The smoke ceased to rise, but the presence of God did **not** leave the Temple. How did the people know? The sons of the priest Mattathias of Modi'in came to rescue the Temple, and God's special symbol of his presence was no longer the smoke, but rather the replenishing of the oil that lit the lamp stands in the Temple.

Hanukkah is the memory of the time God showed His presence in the Temple, not through accepting the sweet smell of sacrifices, but through multiplying the courage of the sons of Israel, and then replenishing their oil lamps, lighting their way in the Temple as they reconsecrated the Holy Place. (We believe that this foreshadows the New Covenant in which our bodies have become the Temple in which God's Holy Spirit dwells. 1Cor. 6:19)

## **Burial Jewel**

On His approach to Jerusalem, Yeshua's words became more urgent than ever, as He sensed the time was at hand to be sacrificed. One man approached Him and offered to follow Him, but first wanted to "bury his father." Yeshua replied, "*Let the dead bury the dead, you follow me now.*" (Luke 9:60) At first glance the record appears insensitive, almost calloused toward the man. On closer inspection, the saying becomes much less abrasive.

The burial customs of the time included an initial spicing and wrapping of the body by a member of the family. This was followed by an 18-month period of muted mourning, which concluded by placing the body, now bones, into a secondary burial place with the "bones of the fathers." The man in Luke's gospel was offering to follow at some future time, but Yeshua knew His time was near. It was a time to commit and follow, not promise and plan.

## **Ephesians 2 Jewel**

Surrounding the ancient Temple were large porches on all four sides. Inside the porches were large open areas called the "Gentile court," a flat paved area where non-Jews that desired to learn more of the God of

Abraham could come and see first hand the worship of the Jewish people. The opportunity to observe was limited to this court alone, and the inner courts of the Temple were off limits to those who were not Jews, or had not completed the proselyte process. The fence that kept Gentiles from the inner courts of the Temple was called the "soreg" in Hebrew. Paul mentions (Ephesians 2: the "wall of partition" and reminds believers that this wall was "broken down" by Messiah Yeshua in His work on the tree. That wall, now breached, allows all who believe in Yeshua to approach the innermost court of the Living God! For Jews, the access they once enjoyed continues if they acknowledge the perfect sacrifice of Messiah. For non-Jews, a new and living access has been created. They can now rejoice as the Ethiopian eunuch, finally fully accepted by God even allowed to mikveh bathe!

## **Thorn Jewel**

Following the fall of man in the Garden of Eden (Gan Eden), God told Adam that the consequence of man's sin would be the cursing of the ground. God said: "*Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground...*" (Genesis 3:18-19) **Thorns** symbolized the curse that man, through his disobedience, brought upon himself. When Yeshua Ha Mashiach took that curse upon Himself, thereby liberating us from it, he graphically became a curse by wearing a crown of **thorns** on His brow; "*Messiah has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.')*" (Galations 3:13)

## **Hidden Jewels**

Tucked away in a community center in an ultra-orthodox section of Jerusalem is a group of senior citizens, many of whom are holocaust survivors. They receive two hot meals each week, largely due to the efforts of some dear friends whom *Jewish Jewels* helps to support. After our group left Jerusalem, the three of us (Neil, Jamie and Jesse) had lunch with these precious people. It was a moving experience!

The joy in the little, colorfully decorated room was tangible. Middle-eastern music pulsated through the air as one of the men got up and danced in the center of the room. Tears flowed as children from a kibbutz near Gaza arrived with bundles of fresh carrots, celery, oranges and Passover wine as gifts for the elderly.

We asked if these dear souls would be having Passover seders, and were told that they would, but \$300-\$400 was still needed to buy them supplies. We could not return to our luxurious Passover seder at the Sheraton Hotel without knowing that this group of senior Israelis would have matzah and a Passover meal. So we wrote out a Jewish Jewels check for \$400 of **your money** and presented it to the group. Oh, how they rejoiced! We pray that you're rejoicing as well to be able to part of such a wonderful mitzvah.

Would you like to tuck in a little love gift for these seniors this month? Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) is May 12. Let us remember God's people who have suffered and still continue to suffer.

## **More T.V. Jewels**

The Lord willing, we will produce two more *Jewish Jewels* television programs this month: Seniors and Messianic Judaism. Please pray for us as we complete the videotaping for this season. We will begin again in the Fall. We deeply appreciate your loving support in helping us to proclaim Yeshua to millions of people over the airwaves. May the spiritual resurrection of the Jewish people parallel the physical resurrection of the nation of Israel (also celebrated this month)!

Yours for Israel's salvation,

Neil and Jamie