
GRACE BIBLE CHURCH
Israel 2026: Lessons from the Land
Four lessons, a lot of photos and a few stories from our Biblical tour of Israel.
ERIC MARTIN & MIKE JONES

EQUIPPING HOUR

What we want to do together

4 — **Lessons from our trip**
What walking the land taught us about reading the Book

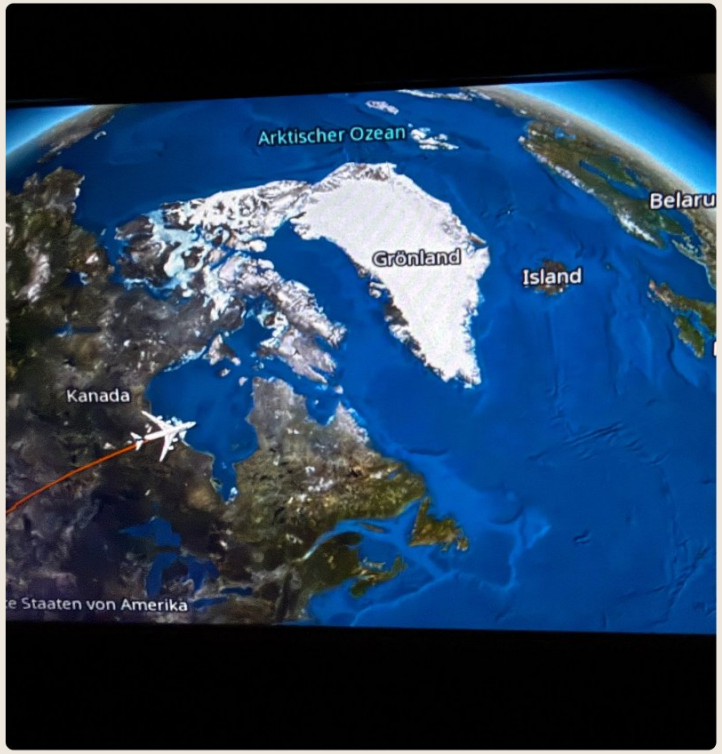
2k+ — **Photos & Videos**
Select ones shared today

+ — **Some fun along the way**
The Dead Sea, a lot of good food, and a few stories



GETTING THERE

Flights across the world



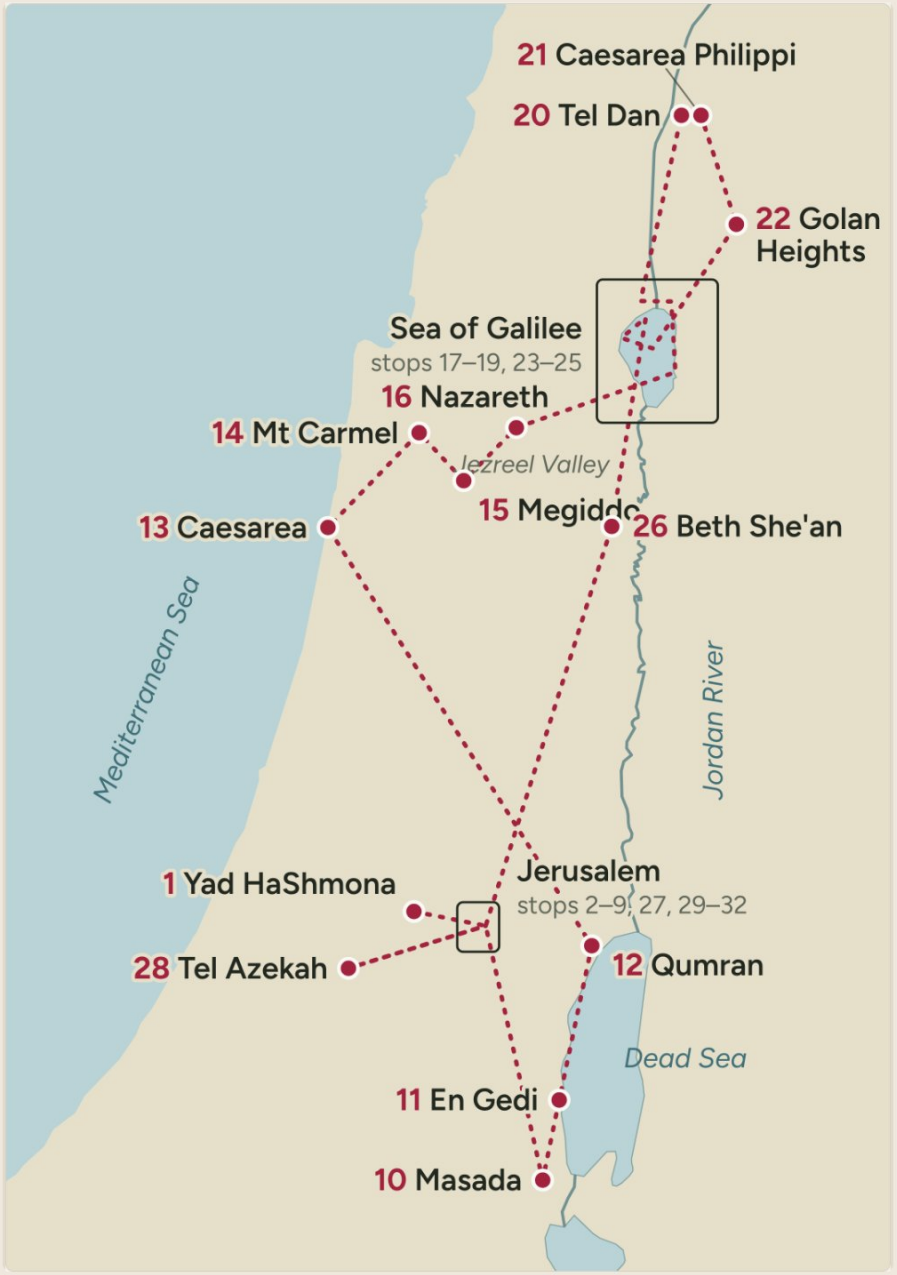
Over the Atlantic, October 23



Layover in Frankfurt



Landed in Tel Aviv, October 24



WHERE WE WENT

32 stops in seven days

From Dan in the far north to Masada by the Dead Sea, and from the Mediterranean coast to the Jordan Valley.

32

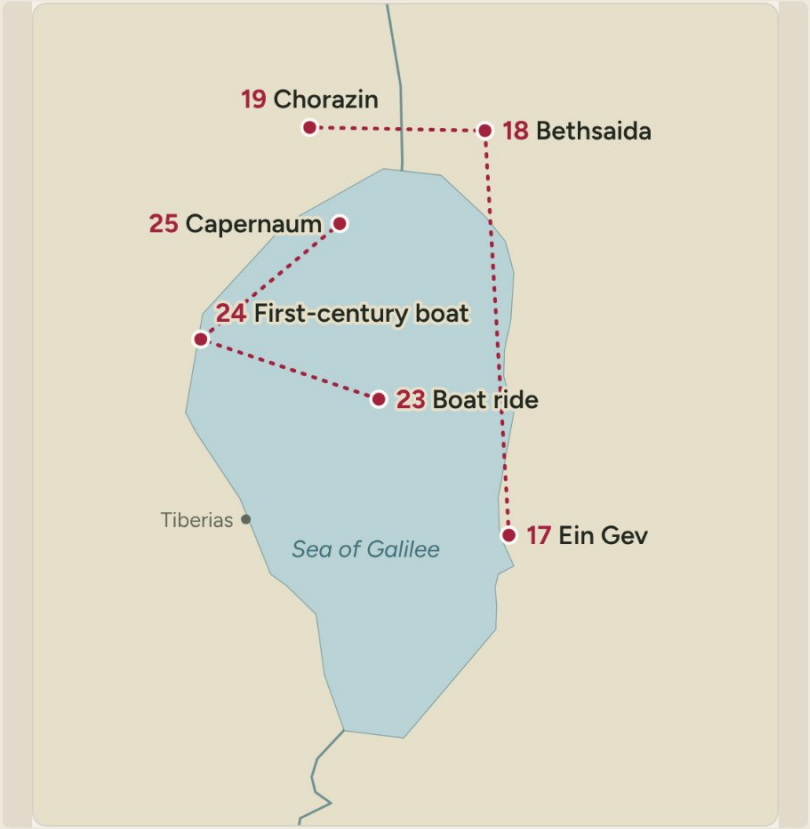
Sites, numbered in the order we visited

7

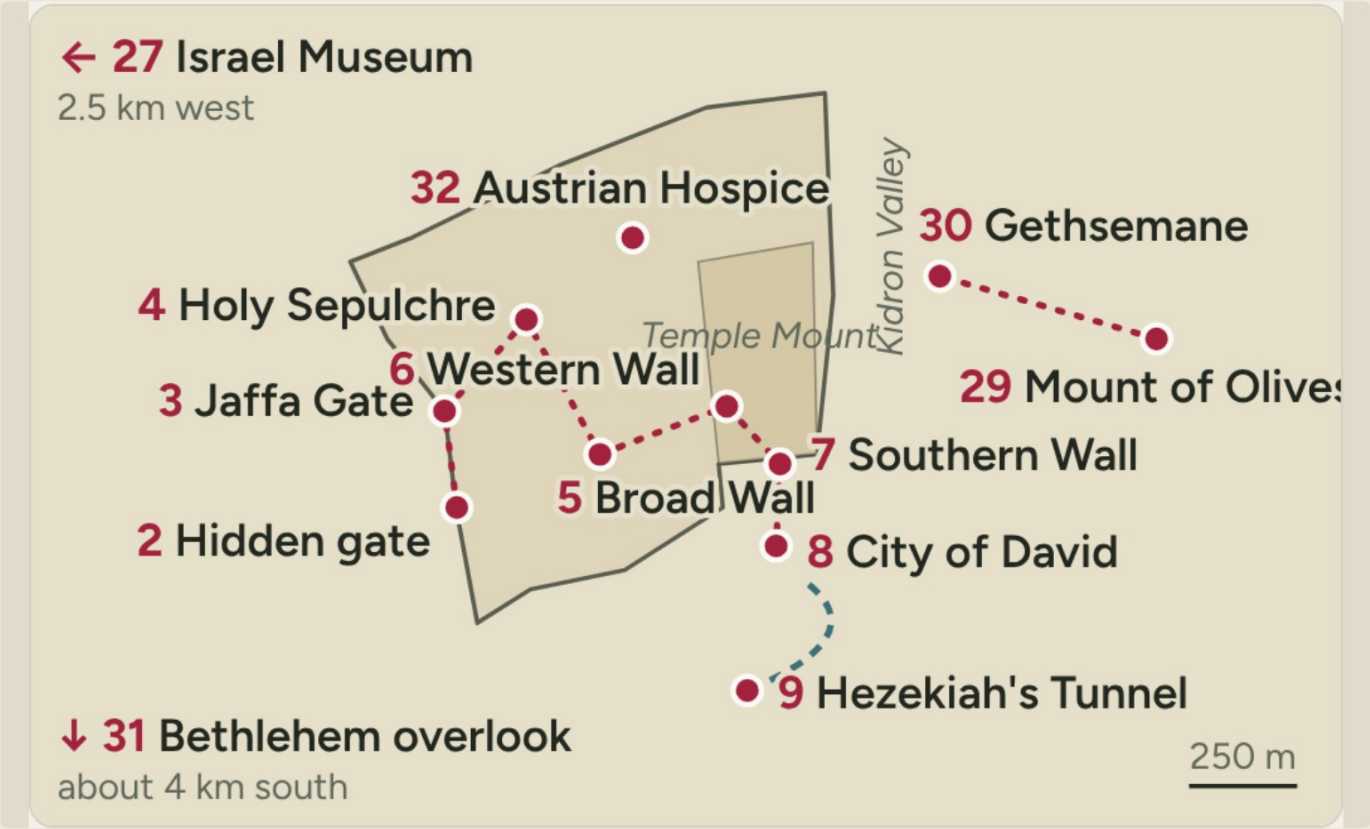
Days of touring, October 25 to 31

TWO PLACES WE KEPT COMING BACK TO

The Sea of Galilee and Jerusalem



Sea of Galilee: stops 17 to 25



Jerusalem: stops 2 to 9 and 27 to 32

EVERY SITE WE VISITED · 1 OF 4

Starting in Jerusalem

1. **Moshav Yad HaShmona**
   Near Kiriath-jearim · 1 Samuel 7:1–2
   Judges 18:11–12
2. **The hidden gate**
   Pilate’s judgment seat? · John 19:13
3. **Jaffa Gate**
   Ottoman gate, built 1538
4. **Church of the Holy Sepulchre**
   Site of Golgotha and Jesus' tomb
5. **The Broad Wall**
6. **Western Wall of Temple Mount**
7. **Southern Wall of Temple Mount**
   Luke 2:41–47; Acts 2:1–41
8. **City of David**

EVERY SITE WE VISITED · 2 OF 4

The Dead Sea, the coast and the Jezreel Valley

9 **Hezekiah's Tunnel**
2 Kings 20:20

10 **Masada**
Final holdout of Jewish rebels in AD 73/74

11 **En Gedi**
1 Samuel 24:1–7

12 **Qumran**
Discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls

13 **Caesarea**
Acts 10; Acts 23:23–26:32

14 **Mount Carmel**
1 Kings 18:19–40

15 **Megiddo**
Revelation 16:16

16 **Nazareth precipice**
Luke 4:16–30

EVERY SITE WE VISITED · 3 OF 4

Galilee and the far north

17 **Ein Gev, Sea of Galilee**
Near Mark 5:1–20

18 **Bethsaida**
Mark 8:22–26

19 **Chorazin**
Matthew 11:21

20 **Tel Dan and Abraham's Gate**
1 Kings 12:28–30

21 **Caesarea Philippi**
Matthew 16:13–20

22 **Golan Heights**
Deuteronomy 4:43; Psalm 22:12

23 **Boat ride on the Sea of Galilee**
Mark 4:35–41; Matthew 14:22–33

24 **First-century boat, Ginosar**
Luke 5:1–11

EVERY SITE WE VISITED · 4 OF 4

Down the Jordan and back to Jerusalem

25 **Capernaum**
Matthew 4:13; Mark 2:1–12

26 **Beth She'an**
1 Sam 31:8–12

27 **Israel Museum**
Jerusalem Model, Shrine of the Book

28 **Tel Azekah & Elah Valley**
1 Sam 17 - David & Goliath

29 **Mount of Olives**
Zechariah 14:4; Luke 19:37–39

30 **Gethsemane**
Matthew 26:36–56

31 **Bethlehem overlook**
Micah 5:2; Luke 2:1–20

32 **Austrian Hospice**
View of the Temple Mount

LESSON 1 OF 4

God's Word is full of real places with real people

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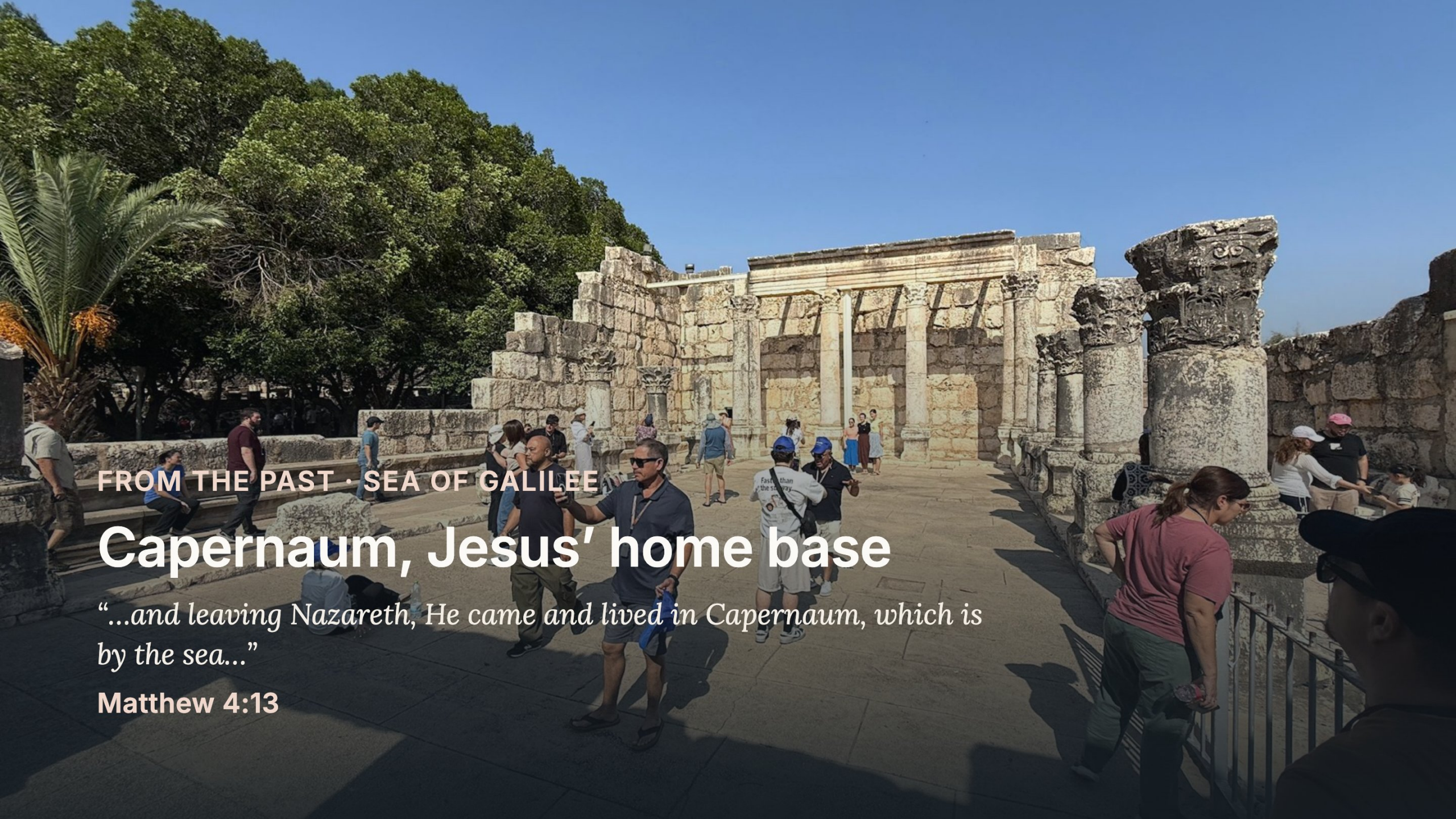
FROM THE PAST · TEL DAN

Abraham’s Gate

A mudbrick city gate from about 1750 BC, still standing with its arch. It was already old when the tribe of Dan took the city.

“…he led out his trained men, born in his house, 318 in number, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.”

Genesis 14:14



FROM THE PAST · SEA OF GALILEE

Capernaum, Jesus' home base

"...and leaving Nazareth, He came and lived in Capernaum, which is by the sea..."

Matthew 4:13



FROM THE PAST · CAPERNAUM

White on top, black underneath

The black basalt foundation is from the synagogue of Jesus' day.

"...and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and began to teach."

Mark 1:21





FROM THE PAST · CHORAZIN

The seat of Moses

A carved stone chair from the Chorazin synagogue, where the teacher sat to read and explain the Law. Eric tried out the replica (top). The original is in the Israel Museum (bottom).

"The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses…"

Matthew 23:2



FROM THE PAST · ISRAEL MUSEUM

Caiaphas' ossuary

The bone box of the high priest who handed Jesus over to Pilate, found in Jerusalem in 1990. It is inscribed "Joseph son of Caiaphas."

"*...and led Him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year.*"

John 18:13

FROM THE PAST · ISRAEL MUSEUM

A nail through the heel

The heel bone of a man named Yehohanan, crucified in Jesus' century. The iron nail is still in it.

"Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails… I will not believe."

John 20:25



FROM THE PAST · SOUTHERN WALL OF THE TEMPLE MOUNT

Peter’s sermon at Pentecost

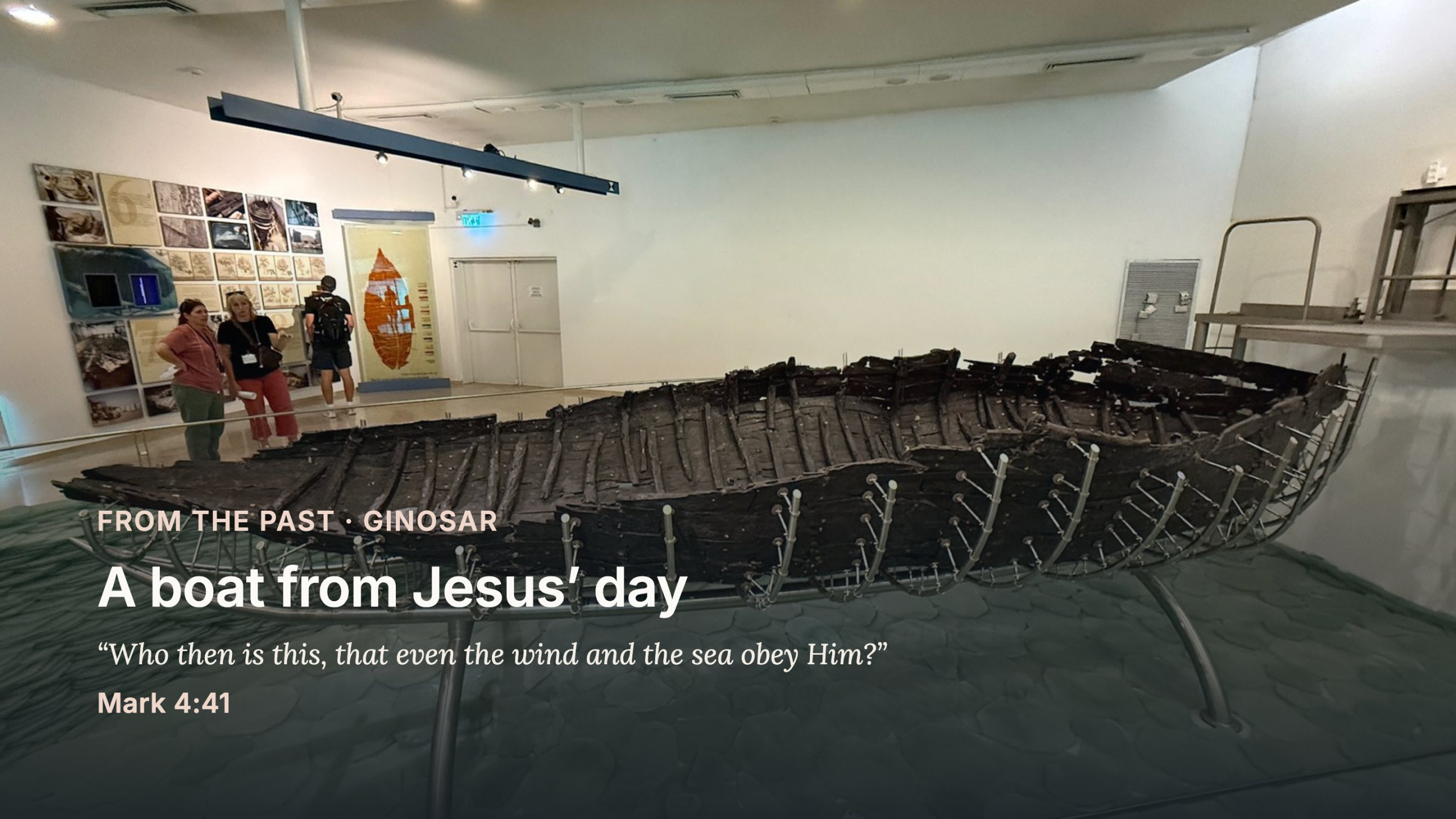


The southern entrance to the Temple Mount



One of many ritual baths beside the steps at the southern entrance

“*...and there were added that day about three thousand souls.*” **Acts 2:41**



FROM THE PAST · GINOSAR

A boat from Jesus' day

"Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

Mark 4:41

FROM THE PAST · TEL AZEKAH

The Valley of Elah

"...they camped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. But Saul and the men of Israel were gathered and camped in the valley of Elah..."

1 Samuel 17:1–2







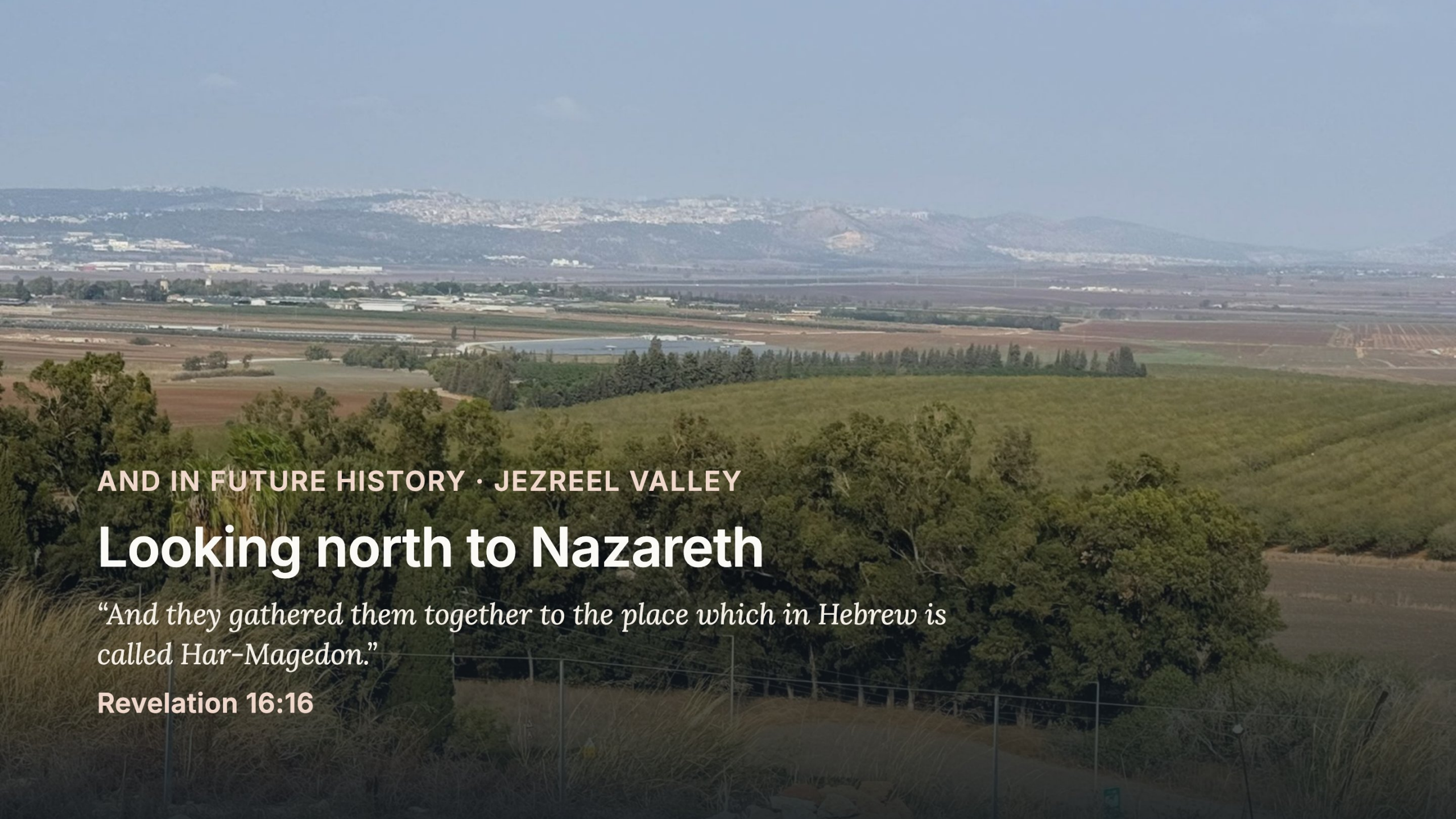
FROM THE PAST · ISRAEL MUSEUM

Armor fit for a giant

Bronze scale armor like this was sewn onto a leather or cloth coat. Goliath's weighed about 125 pounds.

"...he was clothed with scale-armor, and the weight of that scale-armor was five thousand shekels of bronze."

1 Samuel 17:5



AND IN FUTURE HISTORY · JEZREEL VALLEY

Looking north to Nazareth

“And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon.”

Revelation 16:16

A LITTLE FUN · KALIA BEACH

Floating and muddy buddies



No swimming needed



A real low point on our trip



Muddy buddies

A LITTLE FUN · MASADA

We hiked up Masada



The trail up to Herod’s fortress



Ballista stone: not liftable

LESSON 2 OF 4

The foolishness of venerating places to earn God's favor

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AN OLD SCHEME

Satan takes what God used and turns it into an idol

"...he broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the sons of Israel were burning incense to it..."

2 Kings 18:4

JERUSALEM · CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

A place cannot earn you righteousness



Venerating the rock of Golgotha



Pilgrims kissing the Stone of Anointing



The shrine over the traditional place of Jesus' tomb



JERUSALEM · WESTERN WALL OF THE TEMPLE MOUNT

Praying at a retaining wall

Herod’s stones are real. The Temple they held up is gone, and so is the need for it.

Hebrews 10:19–22

JERUSALEM · TEMPLE MOUNT

The Dome of the Rock

Built in AD 691 on the platform where the Temple once stood.

Claimed by Muslims because of a false vision of a false prophet: Muhammad.





LESSON 3 OF 4

Scale is significant

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SMALL SCALE · THE SEA OF GALILEE

13 mi
Long, north to south

8 mi
Wide at its widest

700 ft
Below sea level

SMALL SCALE · JESUS' MINISTRY AREA

Three towns, a short walk apart



Chorazin, about 2.5 miles from Capernaum



Capernaum, Jesus' home base

"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida!... And you, Capernaum..." **Matthew 11:21, 23**



SMALL SCALE · GOOGLE MAPS

Jerusalem to Galilee by car

About 2 hours 30 minutes

SMALL SCALE · NORTH TO SOUTH

Jerusalem to Galilee in an afternoon

~2½ hrs

By car today, about 100 to 110 miles

3–4 days

On foot, the way Jesus' family traveled to the feasts

"But supposing Him to be in the caravan, they went a day's journey, and they began searching for Him among their relatives and acquaintances."

Luke 2:44

MASSIVE SCALE · FROM THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

The Temple Mount: about 36 acres

“Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which will not be torn down.”

Mark 13:2





HUGE SCALE · ISRAEL MUSEUM

The Jerusalem Model

Jerusalem in Jesus' day at 1:50 scale. The Temple towered over everything around it.

A LITTLE FUN · WE ATE WELL

Hotel breakfast buffets



Breakfast, Israeli style



The cheese section alone

A LITTLE FUN · WE ATE WELL

Arab kebabs for lunch





Chicken and lamb kebab lunch in an Arab Druze community



A LITTLE FUN · WE ATE WELL

Chicken shawarma, again and again

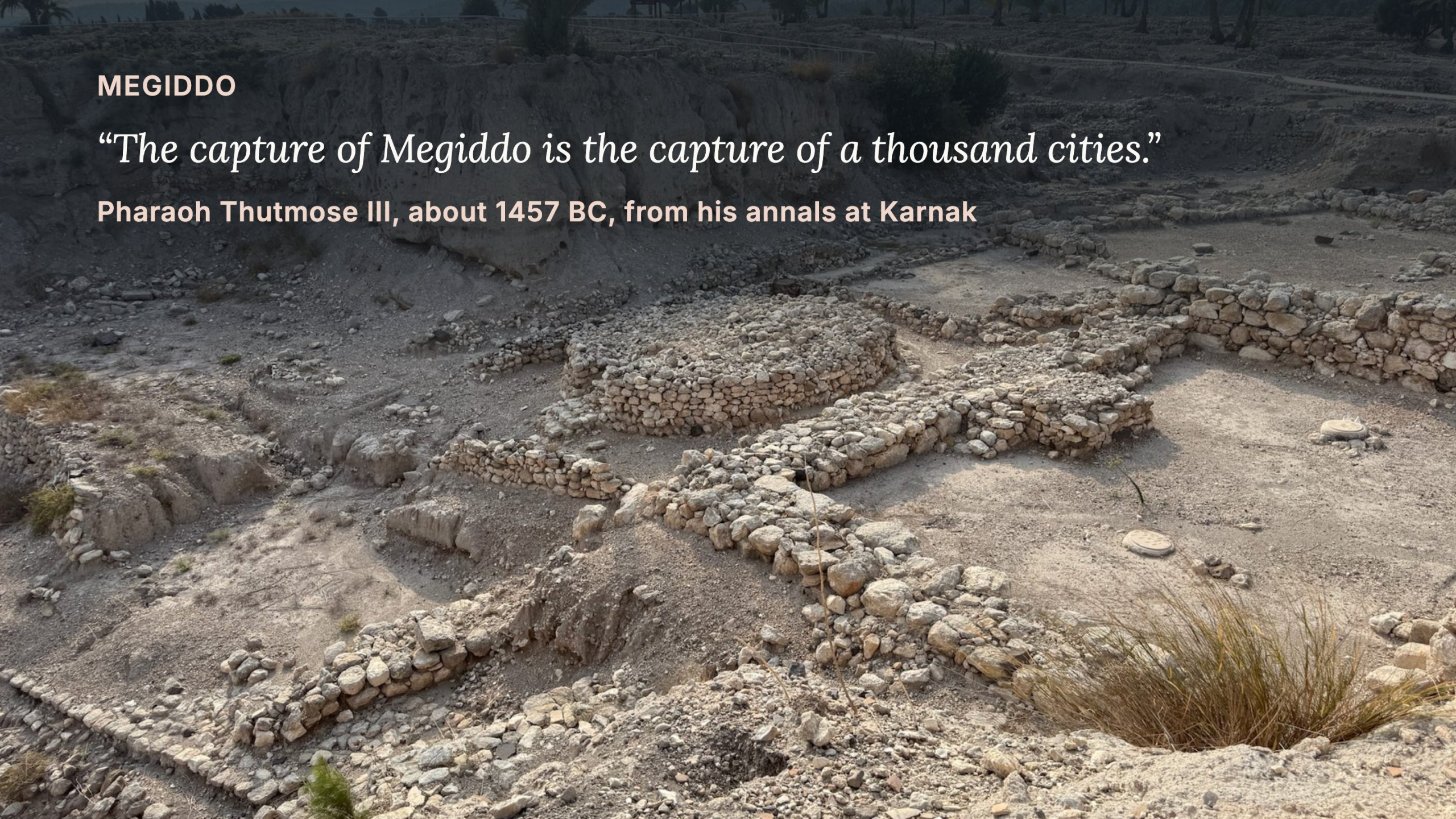
Our go-to lunch between sites. We ate a lot of these.

LESSON 4 OF 4

Geography matters, both to God and in man's history

"...a land of hills and valleys, drinks water from the rain of heaven, a land for which Yahweh your God cares; the eyes of Yahweh your God are always on it..."

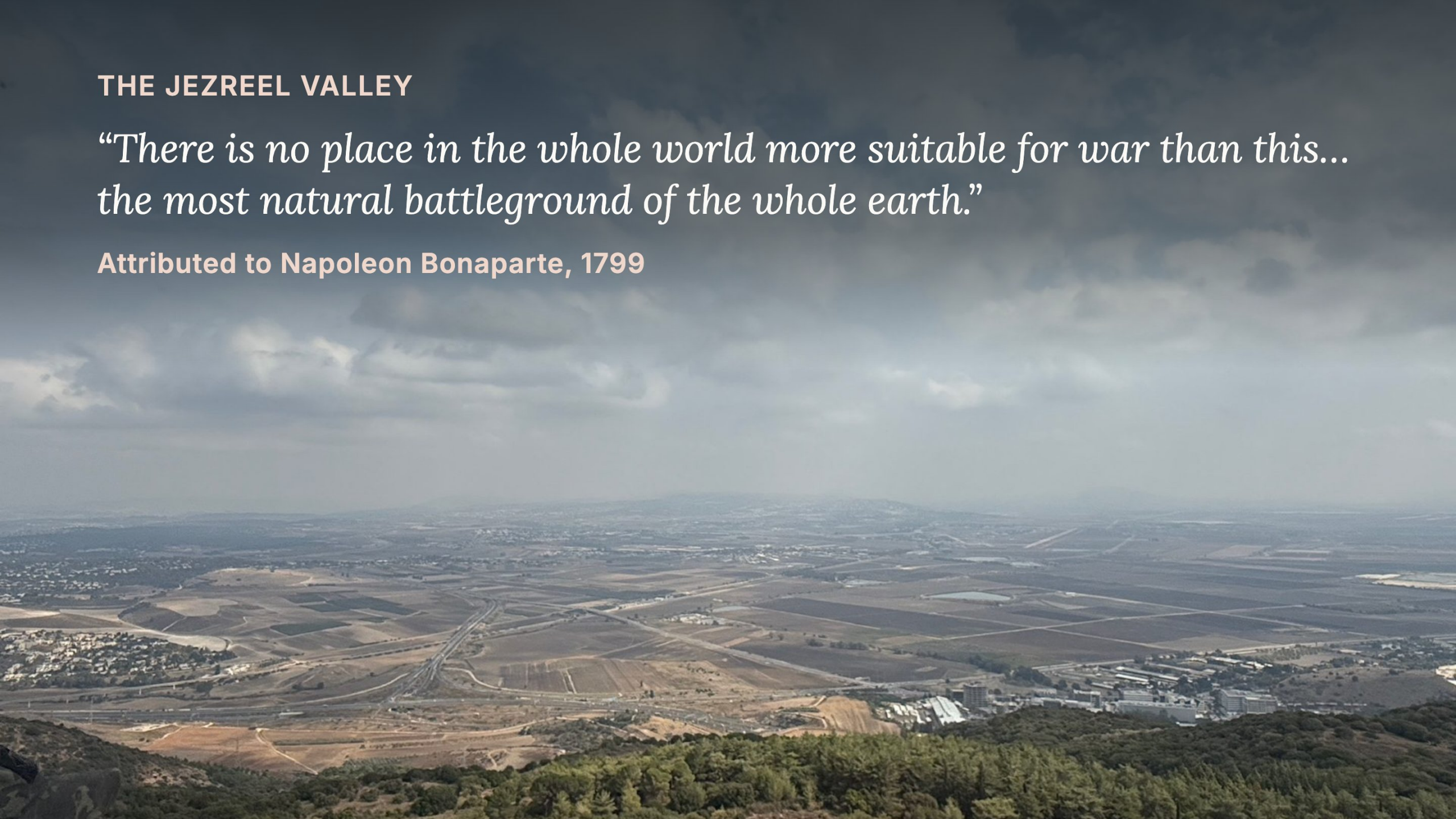
Deuteronomy 11:11–12



MEGIDDO

“The capture of Megiddo is the capture of a thousand cities.”

Pharaoh Thutmose III, about 1457 BC, from his annals at Karnak



THE JEZREEL VALLEY

“There is no place in the whole world more suitable for war than this… the most natural battleground of the whole earth.”

Attributed to Napoleon Bonaparte, 1799



JERUSALEM · MOUNT OF OLIVES

Buried facing the Temple Mount

Jews have been buried on this slope for about 3,000 years, many hoping to be first to rise when Messiah comes.

"And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east..."

Zechariah 14:4



BETH SHE’AN

Where two valleys meet

Beth She’an sits where the Jezreel Valley drops into the Jordan Valley, so whoever held it held the crossroads.

1 Samuel 31:10–12



JERUSALEM · CITY OF DAVID

Hezekiah’s Tunnel

About 1,750 feet of tunnel cut through solid rock around 701 BC, bringing the Gihon spring inside the city walls before the Assyrians arrived.

“…how he made the pool and the conduit and brought water into the city…”

2 Kings 20:20





A LITTLE FUN

Camel rides

Two different days, two different camels, and nobody fell off.



FINAL THOUGHTS

Visit Israel!

If you ever get the chance, go. You will not read your Bible the same!

FINAL THOUGHTS · RESOURCES 1 OF 2

And… you can read your Bible well now

Regional Study Maps
J. Monson with S. Lancaster

Photo Companion to the Bible
BiblePlaces.com · professional photos of the sites

The New Christian Traveler’s Guide to the Holy Land
Charles H. Dyer

Expedition Bible
Joel Kramer · YouTube channel

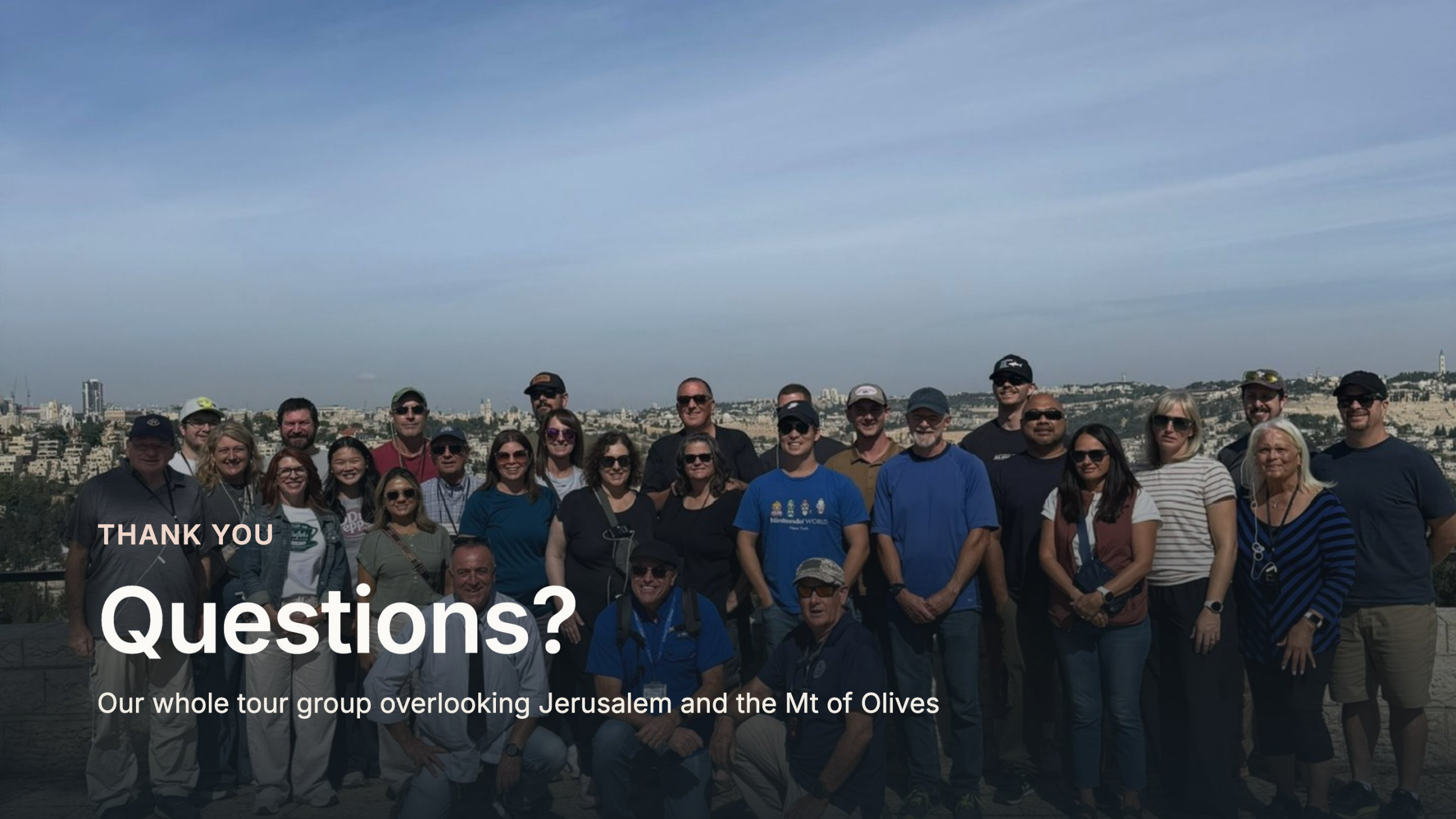
FINAL THOUGHTS · RESOURCES 2 OF 2

A few more worth reading

Model of Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period
David Amit

Zvi: The Miraculous Story of Triumph Over the Holocaust
Elwood McQuaid

Israel: A Concise History of a Nation Reborn
Daniel Gordis · modern Israel’s history


THANK YOU
Questions?
Our whole tour group overlooking Jerusalem and the Mt of Olives