

Journaling a Preacher's 2023 Pilgrimage to Israel

Pastor Edward Rice

About the Author

Pastor Ed Rice is a retired USAF Systems Engineer surrendered to be a Baptist Preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Saved in 1960 at age 8, he grew up tutored in the Scriptures through Tuscorora Baptist Church in Addison NY. Drafted into the military off of the dairy farm in 1972, Ed and Bev Rice raised 3 boys while serving as a Missile Technician in the USAF. After completing a USAF AECP bootstrap program he graduated from Ohio State University with a degree in electrical engineering and was commissioned in the USAF where he served until 1995 as a weapons integration, and systems engineer at Wright Patterson Air Force Base and Rome Laboratories. He finished his Masters degree in Electrical Engineering through The Air Force Institute of Technology in 1990. Pastor Rice, after serving as a youth pastor at each air base where he was stationed for the past 20 years, surrendered to be a Preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in June 1992. He has a Masters and PhD in Theological Studies from LBU.edu and has been Pastoring in Yates County, NY since April 1995. Since Feb 1998 he has been Pastoring Good Samaritan Baptist Church in Dresden New York. His staunch belief in the preserved accuracy of the inspired Scriptures and his rich background in the history of Bible believing Baptists makes his insights throughout this 14 day tour of Israel pointed and Biblical. If you have never visited Israel do not miss this opportunity to journal through these 14 days. If you have visited, this journal will take you back, and can bring you up on many things about Israel. If you plan on visiting Israel, do not go without first taking this 14 day journaling experience.

About the Subject Matter

Israel is God's chosen people, dwelling on God's promised land.

*In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. ² For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. ³ And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; ⁴ Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be **a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: ⁶ And ye shall be unto me **a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.** These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel (Exod.19:1-6).***

Since October 7th, 2023 Israel has been at war. Biblical prophecy shows that all nations will one day gather against her, and God will avenge. Israel's war against Palestinian Terrorists and Islamists who want all Jews annihilated, has shown all nations begin such a turning away from God's chosen nation Israel. Even our own nation, weakened and depraved under liberal leadership with Marxist, socialist intentions, has shown signs of such a turning against Israel. God will bless Israel.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee (Ps.122:6).

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Pastor Edward Rice

via Pastor Lee Pickett and International Heritage Tours
March 16-30, 2023

*“If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land,
and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey” (Num.14:8).*

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Edward G. Rice

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Book photographs by author and pilgrims as shared on this tour.



Scripture quotations, The Holy Bible, King James Version with no copyright.

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Dedication

I wanted to go to Israel ever since 1960 when I was saved and attended Marian Clark's Sunday School class at Fellowship Baptist Church, Gang Mills NY. I listened to him talk about the places where Jesus walked as if he had been there. I do not know that he had, but the pictures that he painted in my mind's eye week after week, and God's promises that he taught in that Jr. boys class assured me that I would one day stand with my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, on the Mount of Olives and see Jerusalem with him as the King of kings and Lord of lords. I still will, but to visit there in the flesh was a dream I inherited from my Sunday School training and my father, Levi Rice. Since his salvation in the same Church in 1958, Dad always wanted to go to Israel, to actually see Jerusalem, and he had tickets in hand after his second by pass surgery. His heart was weak, but I had told him that to go and even to die in the land, would be better than to forgo such a dream. I was disappointed that his doctor and others, concerned for his heart, talked him out of his 10 day trip to the Holy Land. He canceled his opportunity and died without visiting Israel.

When the opportunity came for Bev and I to go on a 10 day Pastor Familiarization Tour it was financially impossible because we had just purchased tickets for our 10 day trip to Cajamarca, Peru, where our son Shane was ministering as a missionary. Impossible or no, the journal of that trip to the Holy Land was published. Then in July of 2022 another series of health and financial miracles brought us to sign up for another pilgrimage to Israel through Vision Baptist College of Solid Rock Baptist Church, Berlin NJ, where our grand children attended. They would escort us to Israel on Oct 30th through Nov 10th 2022, and our son Shane & Kathy Rice would join us. At the last minute or grandson Micah also got to join us on that trip. God is good, all the time. But then we had also promised our friend Pastor Lee Pickett that we would tour Israel with them when he arranged his tour, he did that on March 16-30, 2023, just three months after our return. God marvelously provided that we could keep our promise. This Half Shekel 2023 Journal Book is likewise dedicated to Misty, Kassandra, Rachael, Rebekah, Moriah, Micah, Alexis, Charity, Lucas, Parker and Christina Rice, our 11 grand children, with the expectation that they too, one day, will get to walk where Jesus walked, and that they too, will one day stand on the Mount of Olives with their Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

God's Itinerary for Israel

The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. 2 It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God. 3 Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. 4 Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you. 5 ¶ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. 6 Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. 7 And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. 8 And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. 9 No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: 10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away (Isa.35:1-10).

Basic Trip Itinerary

Day 1 -Thursday, March 16 Departure from Newark, NJ 9:00pm
Day 2 - Friday, March 17 TEL AVIVI JAFFA
Day 3 - Saturday, March 18 CAESAREA/MT.CARMEL/ MEGIDDO-
Day 4 - Sunday, March 19 JESUS MINISTRY IN THE GALILEE
Day 5 - Monday, March 20 GALILEE/GOLAN HEIGHTS
Day 6 - Tues, March 21 NAZARETH BEIT SHEAN / JERUSALEM
Day 7- Wednesday, March 22 OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM
Day 8- Thursday, March 23 JERUSALEM
Day 9 - Friday, March 24 VALLEY OF ELAH/ NEOT KEDUMIM
Day 10 - Saturday, March 25 JERUSALEM
Day 11- Sunday, March 26 QUMRAN/ MASADA/ DEAD SEA
Day 12 - M, Apr 27 DEAD SEA/ TIMNA NATIONAL PARK/ EILAT
Day 13 - Tuesday, March 28 EILAT
Day 14 - Wednesday. March 29 NEGEV/BEER SHEVA/ TEL AVIV.
Day 15 - Thursday, March 30 Depart Tel Aviv at 12:30am arriving in Newark at 5:15am.

Trip Roster

Jim Bochette	Cherie Bochette
Linda Delregno	Pastor David Elias
John Enns	Susan Grenier
Pete Janzen	
Deacon David Johnson	Lynne (Ville) Johnson
Golda Lamey	Andrew Neufeld
Pastor Henry Penner	Pastor Diedrich Peters
Pastor Lee Pickett	Pastor Dewy Stewart
Pastor Ed Rice	Bev Rice
Abe Sawatzky	Anna Sawatzky
Pastor Bill Thiessen	Mary Jane Van Aalst
Joe Ville	Angela Ville
Larry Ward	Scott Wood

Full Trip Itinerary

(As presented in the original brochure)

Day 1 -Thursday, March 16 NEWARK Departure from Newark flying non-stop on El Al Israel Airlines departing Newark at 9:00pm from Terminal #3,

Day 2 - Friday, March 17 TEL AVIVI JAFFA

Arrive in Tel Aviv at 1:50pm where our tour guide will meet us. We begin our tour in Jaffa affording us a breathtaking view of the city of Tel Aviv. At this picturesque port city of winding alleys, art galleries and crafts boutiques, King Solomon had the cedars of Lebanon rafted for the building of the 1st Temple in Jerusalem. You will view the spot of the House of Simon the Tanner. Jonah departed from Joppa (Jonah 1:3) to Tarshish, Transfer to our hotel in Tel Aviv for check-in, Balance of day at leisure. Dinner and overnight at the Grand Beach Hotel, Tel Aviv

Day 3 - Sat, March 18 CAESAREA/MT.CARMEL/ MEGIDDO-

We drive north along the Plain of Sharon, the Mediterranean and the old coastal road- the Via Maris

that linked Egypt and Babylon as we journey towards Galilee. We stop at Caesarea the incredible fortress city built by King Herod the Great. Here, Pontius Pilate had his base; 'where Cornelius lived and was baptized (Acts 10); where Paul embarked to Tarsus (Acts 9:30) and where Philip preached (Acts 8:40). Visit the Roman Theatre, the Hippodrome, and the Crusader City and Aqueduct. We then travel north towards Haifa and ascend Mt. Carmel the site where the prophet Elijah fought the 400 false prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:30). We will stop for an incredible panoramic view of Haifa and the Bahai Gardens. We turn inland and proceed to Megiddo, one of King Solomon's walled fortified cities (1 Kings 9:15; 10:26), with ruins of 20 levels of civilization. From here the Books of Daniel and Revelation will come alive as we read about the final Battle of Armageddon, while viewing the Plains of Jezreel. Finish the day at Mt Arbel which stands sharply and prominently over your first view of the Sea of Galilee. The 'graceful stature and steep slopes, particularly on the easter side, provide magical views across the Sea of Galilee and beyond, to the Golan Heights. Dinner and overnight at Lake House Hotel, Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee

Day 4 - Sunday, March 19 JESUS MINISTRY IN THE GALILEE

After breakfast, we will depart our day with a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee to Kibbutz Ginossar to visit the museum showing an ancient boat that sailed on the Sea of Galilee from the time of Jesus. Continue to Capernaum, the centre of Jesus' Galilean ministry and the site of many of His miracles (Mark 2:4; Matthew 8:5-17). We will see the remains of Peter's house and the synagogue site where Jesus taught and worshipped (Mark 1:21; Luke 4:31). Continue to the Mt. of Beatitudes where Jesus delivered what is perhaps the most famous sermon ever preached "The Sermon On The Mount" (Matt.5). We will then proceed to the site of the city of Korazim (Matthew 11:20-24) where there are the remains of a First Century Synagogue where Jesus frequently ministered. Dinner and overnight at Lake House Hotel, Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee

Day 5 - Monday, March 20 GALILEE/GOLAN HEIGHTS

We start the day at Hazor one of the horse chariot cities from the time of King Solomon. Continue to Tel Dan to see the ruins from Abraham's time and the Dan Spring, which is a source of the Jordan River. Continue to the Baniyas, one of the sources of the Jordan River and the site of ancient "Caesarea Philippi", where Peter made the confession of faith in Christ (Mat; 16:16). Drive to the Golan Heights and the foot of Mt. Hermon the highest mountain in Israel and have a panoramic view of the corner of Israel, Syria and Jordan from Mt. Bental. Visit Kursi the place where a man was healed from demons. (Luke 8:26-39). Dinner and overnight at Lake House Hotel, Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee

Day 6 - Tuesday, March 21 NAZARETH BEIT SHEAN / JERUSALEM

We start the day at Cana of Galilee where Jesus performed his first miracle turning water into wine at the wedding (John 2:1-11). Continue to Nazareth, the boyhood town of Jesus. We will visit Nazareth Village depicting a village from the time of Jesus. Stop at Mt. Precipice for a magnificent view of the Valley of Armageddon before proceeding to Naim where a boy was raised from the dead. (Luke 7:11-17). Drive to Harod Spring the site of the Biblical Battle from the time of Gideon, We continue southward to Beit Shean, where we will walk through the incredible excavations of the largest ongoing archaeological dig in the land of Israel with its Roman theatre, colonnaded Roman streets, mosaics and Roman bathhouses. It is also the city where the bodies of King Saul and his sons were nailed to the walls by the Philistines (1 Samuel 31:10). We then drive through the lush Jordan Valley, where the desert now blooms with flowers and vegetation of every description (Isaiah 35:1-2). Stop at the Jordan River where Elijah stopped before ascending up the Judean Wilderness to the Golden City of Jerusalem. Dinner and overnight in Jerusalem at the Prima Kings Hotel, Jerusalem

Day 7 - Wednesday, March 22 OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

We will drive to the top of the Mount of Olives, for a panoramic view of Jerusalem. Tracing the footsteps of Jesus, we will stroll down the Palm Sunday route on the Mount of Olives to the Garden of Gethsemane and the Church of All Nations, We drive across the Kidron Valley, past the Tombs of Absalom, Zechariah and James to Mt Zion to visit the traditional site of the Upper Room (Room of the Last Supper), King David's Tomb, and the Church of St. Peter's in Gallicantu, built on top of the high priest Caiphas' house. We walk to the Zion Gate and enter the Old City of Jerusalem to the Jewish Quarter. Walk along the Romar/Byzantine Street called the Cardo to the Western Wall, Judaism's holiest. We continue our walk along the Via Dolorosa to visit the Pools of Bethesda, St. Anne's Church and Pilate's Judgment Hall.

Walk through the Old City alleyways and exit from the Jaffa Gate where our bus will be waiting for us. Drive to the Garden Tomb or Gordon's Calvary for a communion service. Dinner and overnight at the Prima Kings Hotel, Jerusalem

Day 8 - Thursday, March 23 JERUSALEM

We start the day in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City for a visit to the Davidson Center and the Archaeological Park around the southern wall excavations. We visit the City of David excavations once the capital of the Israeli Kingdom under King David. Explore the excavations and learn about Jerusalem's water supply in ancient times, See the Pool of Siloam and the Hezekiah's Tunnel. Drive to Yad Vashem, the national Holocaust Memorial and Museum for an emotional visit. We continue to the Israel Museum to visit the Model of Jerusalem from the Second Temple Period as it looked from the time of Jesus. We will stop next at the Knesset, Israel's Parliament to take a picture of the Menorah, Israel's national symbol. Dinner and overnight at the Prima Kings Hotel, Jerusalem.

Day 9 - Friday, March 24 VALLEY OF ELAH/ NEOT KEDUMIM

Drive to the Valley of Elah to see where the battle of David and Goliath took place. Continue to Beit Shemesh to read from 1 Samuel 6:1-21. Visit the Valley of Aijalon (Joshua 10:1-15). Continue to Neot Kedumim- the only Biblical Landscape Reserve in the world, where you can see and experience the Land of the Bible as it was during the time of the bible. Drive to Modi'in the birth place of the Maccabi's. Dinner and overnight at the Prima Kings Hotel, Jerusalem

Day 10 - Saturday, March 25 JERUSALEM

Today is a free day in Jerusalem to enjoy enjoying last minute shopping in the Old City Bazaars or v has to offer. Dinner and overnight at the Prima Kings Hotel, Jerusalem 1g the many museums that Jerusalem

Day 11 - Sunday, March 26 QUMRAN/ MASADA/ DEAD SEA

Drive to Qumran to see the caves where a young shepherd boy discovered the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947. We stop at Ein Gedi Oasis to read scripture where David fled Saul. Continue south to Masada and ascend by cable car to the summit of this magnificent fortress built by, King Herod the Great and the last stronghold of the Jewish Zealots. We drive to our hotel and the balance of the day for a chance to "float" in the saltiest body of water in the world or use the hotel's spa. Dinner and overnight at the David Hotel, Dead Sea

Day 12 - Monday, March 27 DEAD SEA/ TIMNA NATIONAL PARK/ EILAT

Depart in the late morning and drive south through the Arava Valley to see the Wilderness come to bloom, Isaiah 35:1-10. Continue to the Timna National Park to see the King Solomon Pillars and the Tabernacle in Wilderness (Exodus 40). Dinner and overnight at the Isrotel Yam Suf Hotel, Eilat

Day 13 - Tuesday, March 28 EILAT

Today is a free day in Eilat to enjoy this resort town on the Red Sea, Perhaps go swimming or relaxing at your hotel swimming pool or on the beach, snorkeling or scuba diving. You can visit the world famous Underwater Observatory to see the coral and tropical fish in their natural environment. Dinner and overnight at the Isrotel Yam Suf Hotel, Eilat

Day 14 - Wednesday, March 29 NEGEV/BEER SHEVA/ TEL AVIV.

Depart Eilat and drive through the Negev and the moon like landscape of the Ramon Crater. Stop for a visit to Avdat and see the remains from the Roman period and 5th century Byzantine churches. Continue to Tel Beer-Sheva (Genesis 21:22-34) now the capital of the Negev before arriving to Tel Aviv for check-in at the Grand Beach Hotel. Dinner at the Grand Beach Hotel, Tel Aviv before transferring to the airport for our flight home.

Day 15 - Thursday, March 30 NEWARK

Depart Tel Aviv Ben Gurion Airport on El Al Israel Airlines at 12:30am arriving in Newark at 5:15am.

Schedule of Devotionals

Pastor Bill Thiessen, Opening Devos Sat 18th , Wed 29th , Site Devos at Caesarea (By the Sea), Sun Worship Msg Sea of Galilee, Garden of Gethsemane, Communion Msg, Garden Tomb, Psalms of Accent.

Pastor Diedrich Peters, Opening Devo Sun 19th , Site Devos at Precipice at Nazareth, Beit Shean, Ein Gedi, Southern Steps.

Pastor Henry Penner, Opening Devos Mon 20th, Mon 27th, Site Devos at Capernaum, Nain, Pool of Siloam, Pool of Bethesda(Day 7).

Deacon Dave Johnson, Opening Devo Tue 21th, Site Devos at Joppa Port, Valley of Elah, Church of Gallicuntu, Tabernacle.

Pastor David Elias, Opening Devos Wed 22th, Fri 24th , Site Devos at Mt of Beatitudes, Kursi(Salvation of The Demoniac), Pilates Judgement Hall, Valley of Aijalon.

Pastor Ed Rice, Opening Devo Thu 23th, Site Devos at Tel Megiddo,Hazor, Caesarea Phillippi, Mount of Olives, On Masada.

Pastor Lee Pickett, Opening Devo Sun, 26th

Preface

During my 48 years as a born again Christian I have visited Israel countless times through the slides and stories of others, now Bev and I would visit it in person, again. I would be remiss if I did not capture every piece of information, every sight, every thought and emotion in a journal. My slightly honed writing skills and copious note taking experience would be challenged beyond capability as information, sights, thoughts and emotions poured out of every day, every hour, yeah every minute of these fourteen days in Israel. In the months prior to departure we had returned from a ten day Israel Pilgrimage, and I was busily journaling that experience. I had learned much about the required note taking that would build a journal, but was still barely up to the task. I wish it were complete and more detailed in capturing every piece of information, every Scripture reference, sight, thought, and emotion of this trip. Alas, I pray it is but a taste of an adventure that will whet appetites for growth into the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Bible.

The journal itself is made up of thirty Half Shekel Journals which were sent out for review over the weeks since our March 2023 trip. Through these Half Shekel Journals each event of our adventure was captured and recorded. Much more research into every site and fact is want to be done, and easily accomplished with the vast capabilities of the internet search engines. This journal is but a step towards the research which is to consume a Christian's life; growing in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a first step that can change forever how you read your Bible, set your desire on the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, and get busy in growth and witnessing. It is a step that will cause one to long for their trip to Israel, whether it be a first, once in a lifetime visit, a revisit, or the visit where we will stand together with the Lord Jesus Christ on the Mount of Olives. Every Born-Again Christian will eventually visit Israel.

Why the Half Shekel? ... The shekel is the base unit of Israeli money like the dollar is ours. With their economy as it is, it exchanges for one of our quarters, although it is the size of our nickel. The half shekel is twice as large as a shekel, but half its worth, about 12 1/2 cents or 1 US once-upon-a-time 'bit'. We called these Half-Shekel Journals because it is twice as large but half the worth of the real thing, OR it represents my little 'bit' of info, OR it cost me a half shekel to get it printed, OR, since a cup of Aroma Coffee In Israel cost 16 shekels, the half shekel is almost as worthless as our 2 cents, and the journal is my 2 cents.

If you have never asked and received the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour and Lord of your soul, my prayer is that your reading this journal and exploring further the truths of His precious Word, the Holy Bible will lead you to a place where you will. *“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might **be saved**. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ... He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. ... 24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life”* (Jn.3:17,18,36, 5:24).

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