

ANN VOSKAMP AND TONIA PECKOVER

# A Child's Geography

## Explore the Holy Land

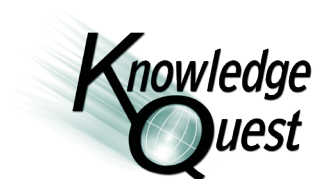
*“Go into all the world...”*

*~ Mark16:15*

*A Child's Geography is an endeavor of which a portion of profits support **Compassion International**, a Christian child advocacy ministry that releases children from spiritual, economic, social and physical poverty and enables them to become responsible, fulfilled Christian adults.*

**“Circle... take her measure... gaze long... climb ...  
Then you can tell the next generation, detail by detail, the story of God.”**

*~Ps. 48 12*



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### **Books in this Series:**

A Child's Geography: Explore His Earth

A Child's Geography: Explore the Holy Land

A Child's Geography: Explore the Classical World

A Child's Geography: Explore Medieval Kingdoms

With more to come!

# Before Embarking

**T**here is nothing nicer than curling up with a good book and your children. You are invited. Come. Snuggle. Explore. Discover. Delight. Worship our Creator. **Here are just a few thoughts before we “Explore the Holy Land” together...**

## Scheduling

“*Explore the Holy Land*” offers you a ticket to an unforgettable adventure through six countries in sixteen chapters. Each chapter is divided into two sections by narration prompts (*Field Notes*) and followed by mapping activities (*Travel Logs*), ending with music, art, poetry, book, and food suggestions (*Bringing It Home*).

The curriculum can easily be spread out over a school year. Some options to consider:

- **~2 weeks per chapter:** Read the entire chapter in one sitting and narrate. The following week do mapping and optional activities.
- **~2 weeks per chapter:** Read half a chapter a week and narrate. Divide the optional activities over each week.
- **~3 weeks per chapter:** Read half a chapter a week and narrate. The third week do mapping and optional activities.
- **~Unit Studies:** Cover 3 countries a term. Use “*Explore the Holy Land*” as a spring board to immerse yourselves in each country. Use the internet, library and local resources to stay in this country for as long as you like.

## Readings

Whether you gather the kids around for a read-aloud or your older students read alone, it is best to study geography with visual aids. Make sure to have an open atlas and/or a globe at hand to look up all the places you’ll be exploring. Each chapter is divided into two sections. These sections may be too long for younger readers or too short for older readers. Feel free to adapt the length to fit **your** family.

## Field Notes

At the end of each chapter section we have offered narration prompts in the form of “*Field Notes*.” Just like modern day explorers, we ask the child to talk into an imaginary recorder and tell of his or her discoveries. We have offered the prompts to stimulate their memories – **but these are not mandatory!** Let your child talk about what captured his or her imagination. You may be surprised at what they’ve learned!

## Travel Logs

Every good explorer keeps a record of his journey. After each chapter, your child will be asked to draw a map of the country we have been studying and label important cities and regions, along with some of the sights we’ve seen along the way. Finally, they will write a short entry of their own observations. A three-ring binder and plastic sleeves may be appropriate for storing maps and log entries or you may want to get creative and make your own authentic travel logs to record your journey!

## A Child's Geography

### Bringing it Home

Each country offers a world of culture for us to explore. We have tried to offer a taste of all these lands by sharing music, simple art projects, suggested reading lists, poetry and recipes that allow you to bring each country into your own home. **All of these activities are optional.** We have tried to keep these activities as simple as possible, thus making them accessible for busy homeschooling families.

Many of the activities are found on-line. All the links specified in the text can be found at our website for your convenience:

<http://kqm2018.knowledgequesthq.com/acg-vol2-dl/>.

### Prayer Walk

Our deepest desire in writing a Christ-centered geography is to help young children develop a love for each of the countries and cultures we study. We hope you will join us at the end of each country study as we pray for the beautiful peoples God has created across the world. Each Prayer Walk is written as a prayer and includes specific requests for that particular country. You may want to pray along with us at the end of each of your lessons.

With all the details taken care of, we are ready to embark on our journey. Grab your kids and let's go!

**“The whole earth is full of His glory!”** ~Isaiah 6:3

# 1

# Turkey

## Direction's to Eden, Please?

### PART I

When I was young and summer days grew warm and long, I used to swim in the cool of the Maitland River, fish in its murky shadows, and canoe under its leafy canopy. The Maitland River isn't well-known so you've probably never heard of it. But perhaps you *have* heard of these four well-known rivers from the beginning of time, written of in Genesis 2:10-14: "Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is Pishon... The name of

the second river is Gihon...The name of the third river is Tigris..."

Wait! Now imagine that the Bible then named the very river that coursed near your home. "And the fourth river is the ...." Wouldn't you catch your breath if you read that verse in the Bible and realized, "That's the very river I swim in on summer afternoons!"? There *are* children today who do indeed read in the Bible of the river that streams just outside their house! The stories of the Bible happen in real, actual places on Earth. God's



Map of Turkey created by Peter Fitzgerald, translated by Joelf, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0



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story, through the ages, is rooted in **geography**. The words of Scripture are firmly rooted in the ground of our world, places you can see and touch and experience today. I can't wait to experience those rivers and mountains and lands with you!

Of course, geographers pack their bags before embarking on a Holy Land exploration, but the most important elements of a journey simply cannot be tucked into a suitcase. Firstly, wise travelers have observing *eyes* that are focused to truly see the sights. Secondly, astute adventurers nurture strong *memories* to net their adventures and keep them as their own. And thirdly, sensible geographers carry with them a healthy *faith*. A growing faith gives our

mention of an exact, geographical location on our Earth. It speaks of a real garden that once existed: the Garden of Eden. If I cracked open my Bible, could I find a map that told me where the Garden of Eden is today? No! No modern map can show us where to find the ancient Garden of Eden. Perhaps we could, however, gather some ideas regarding its location from the Bible and its clue of those four rivers: "Now a river flowed out of Eden...and became four rivers..." (Gen. 2:14). Since Eden means "delight" in Hebrew, we will need to look for a place of delight! Let's begin in a place where children today can eat a candy called "Turkish Delight." These children live in the Middle Eastern country of Turkey...and one of

the rivers that flowed through the Garden of Eden begins in that country. Might Earth's very first inhabitants, created masterfully by God's own hand, have walked through the dark green valleys of this country? Why not hop on a flying carpet to see where the Garden of Eden may have been in Turkey?

Tales of *flying* carpets are merely the stuff of fantasy, but our carpet is as real as the Garden of



*More than 250,000 people visit the 4,000 shops of Istanbul's Grand Bazaar (Kapalı Çarşı, or Covered Market) every day. The oldest part of the Bazaar was built in 1461 under Mehemt the Conqueror. Photo by Brian Snelson, licensed under CC by 2.0.*

heart the eyes to see the evidence and glory of God everywhere we travel. With our trio of essentials, let us depart!

The Bible begins with the story of geography: the story of Earth, and its creation...and it begins with a garden. The Bible reads, "Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden in the east" (Gen. 2:8). This is the first

Eden once was. We'd find such a carpet in Turkey... but where exactly are we? Hold a globe in your hand and spin till you find where God has intersected the Mediterranean Sea, and the continents of Europe and Asia; there you will pinpoint Turkey. Now that you've landed, let's make our way to the crowded Turkish Grand Bazaar in the city





*Fabrics in the Grand Bazaar taken by Gareth Williams, licensed under CC BY 2.0.*

of Istanbul. (Can you locate Istanbul in the northwest corner?) A **bazaar** is the Persian word for market, and it is here in the Grand Bazaar of Istanbul that we would find our ornate Turkish carpet called a **kilim** (KEE-lim). Here, in alleys so narrow one can hardly squeeze through, stringing along more than 65 streets, merchants from over 4,000 shops shout out to passing shoppers trying to sell their colorful wares. Some shopkeepers of the Grand Bazaar grab our arms, tugging us into their stalls, while others tickle our ear with whispered prices especially negotiated for us. In one shop selling carpets, I imagine our fingers reaching out to feel the dark hues and naturally dyed colors. Perhaps the shopkeeper, Ahmet, may roll the kilim out for us, chuckling, “*Evet, evet,*”

(Yes, yes in Turkish) teasing us that our carpet may float away, sweeping us up over the Grand Bazaar and all of the city of Istanbul. Imagine: a dip and a dive, a launch and an upward lunge, and here we would be, on our own kilim, looking down at the country of Turkey below us!

With your eye on your globe and Turkey far below, what image can you form out of the shapes you see? I imagine a strange creature with the Sea of Marmara as an eye. Can you pinpoint where Istanbul and the Grand Bazaar might be?

Turkey covers an area of 301,400 square miles [780,626 square kilometers] which is about the size of the states of Texas and Virginia combined. While we may have an easy overview of the entire country from our carpet, Turkey actually spans



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about 1000 miles [1,609 km] from end to end. We'd have to start driving before the sun rose and drive long after sunset, to cross the entire country.

From your carpet perch, you would surely have noticed the four great bodies of water bordering Turkey: the Mediterranean Sea, the Aegean Sea, the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea. What makes these bodies of water *seas* and not oceans or lakes? A **sea** is a stretching expanse of salty water that is usually a reaching arm of ocean, butting into a continent of land. If you look carefully, you'll find that the Mediterranean Sea, for instance, is really just an arm of the Atlantic Ocean that God has allowed to reach into the lands of Africa, Europe and Asia. Out of the Mediterranean Sea stretches another arm, the Aegean Sea...and out of the Aegean Sea extends the arm of the Sea of Marmara....which reaches out even further as the Black Sea. This arm of seas from the Atlantic Ocean is a long-reaching arm indeed! (Our travels will lead us to seas that

are *not* connected to oceans at all, but are entirely surrounded by land, called **land-locked seas**. Such a body of water is nearly always a body of *salty* water. [An exception is the Sea of Galilee.]

A lake, on the other hand, is a large body of usually fresh water surrounded by land.) Wave-tossed by this quartet of seas, the country of Turkey is actually like a bridge between the two continents of Asia and Europe. Yes, all that separates these two continents is a sliver of water—with the city of Istanbul on either side of the ribbon of blue waves. Istanbul, Turkey's largest city of 9.5 million people, is the only city in the whole wide world built on *two* continents! (You may have heard of Istanbul's ancient name, Constantinople, in your history studies.) That thread of water, which separates the city into East Istanbul and West Istanbul; and separates Europe from Asia, is one of the most important trade waterways in the world: the Bosphorus Strait. It is the connecting waterway for ships from the Black Sea to sail on out to the Sea



*Modern Istanbul skyline at sunset. Photo by Ben Morlok, licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.*



of Marmara, then to the Aegean Sea...and onto the Mediterranean Sea, and out into the Atlantic Ocean.

Although the Bosphorous is a **strait** of water, that doesn't mean it flows perfectly straight, without winding around bends and curves. Actually, the word **strait** has nothing to do with "straight" lines, but means it is a narrow channel of water that God created between two landmasses. This narrow strait joins two larger bodies of water. Try thinking of it this way: have you ever squeezed on a long, thin balloon? Just as a skinny balloon bulges out into large shapes when you squeeze it in the middle, so the strait of water "squeezed" by the two landmasses swells into two larger bodies of water on either side! Looking at your globe, or map, of Turkey, can you determine which two larger bodies of water bulge out of the squeezed (only

0.5 to 2.8 mi. [660 to 4,500 m.] wide!) Bosphorus Strait? Yes, the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea!

Recall that little Maitland River that I used to play in? Big old Hereford cattle use to wander down its banks to lap up the thirst-quenching cool water or sometimes splash across to the other side of the river. The Greeks had a story about their god Zeus supposedly hiding a cow in the silvery, narrow waters of the Bosphorus Strait. Thus, in the Greek language, "Bosphorus"



*The Bosphorus Strait separates the continents of Europe and Asia. A 4,593 foot [1,400 m] rail tunnel, running 180 feet [55 m] underneath the Strait, opened December 20, 2016, connecting Europe and Asia. Photo courtesy of NASA Earth Observatory. Astronaut photograph ISS008-E-21752 in the public domain.*

means "the cow crossing-place." (That makes it rather easy to remember that the Turkish city of Istanbul, is on the Bosphorus strait—the *cow* passage!) You are not likely to not see any cows swimming down there in the Bosphorus Strait but you will probably see streams of cars crossing over top of the strait on the Bosphorus Bridge, the 12<sup>th</sup> longest suspension bridge in the world. This stretch of steel allows you to drive from the continent of Europe right into Asia.



*What an amazing start to finding the Garden that was there in the beginning! Are you enjoying your carpet ride? Have you ever seen someone perched on a floating carpet speaking tales of adventure onto a mini-recorder? You may stay seated on the carpet and I'll be the mini-recorder, listening to your field notes!*

### PRESS RECORD AND TALK TO ME

- ◇ **About how the geography of Earth connects to the stories of the Bible:** *What important place from the Bible might have been located in Turkey? What are three essentials that a geographer brings to every exploration?*
- ◇ **About Turkey's location on a globe:** *What does the country look like from above and what of its size? What bodies of water border Turkey? Which continents? Tell me what you learned about seas. Tell me more about where you found your kilim.*
- ◇ **About the Bosphorus Strait:** *What does its name mean? What is a strait? What does a strait connect? Name the bodies of water the Bosphorus Strait connects. What kind of bridge spans the Bosphorus Strait?*

While you may not see any cows crossing the Bosphorous Strait, if you look across Turkey (*see previous aerial photograph of Turkey on page 11*), can your keen eyes determine where you might find cows in this country? Cows in Turkey like to chew exactly what cows like to chew along the banks of my little Maitland River: lush, green grass. Rich green grass is waiting for us if we soar east from Istanbul up along the northern coast of Turkey. You will notice how the skies are gray with rain clouds here but the coastal mountains below us are deep green. Indeed, here along the Black Sea you may actually see many cows grazing to produce Turkey's very best milk and butter. The climate of this area of Turkey is what we call **temperate**. A **temperate climate** is an area with weather that is not too cold and not too hot - but just right! In temperate regions, like here on the Black Sea coast of Turkey, changes between seasons are not extreme with searing hot days followed by freezing cold days, but subtle, with moderately warm days giving way to moderately cool days.

As the warm air blowing in off the Black Sea rises over the north coast of Turkey, rain clouds are formed, which creates rainfall year round, almost 8 feet [2.4 m] of rain during a year; four to six times the rainfall in other regions of Turkey. (That amount of rain is as high as you sitting on your Dad's shoulders!) The rain clouds that God sends off the Black Sea make these steep mountain slopes verdant and lush with grass and crops. Imagine looking over our carpet's edge to see the Turks on this mountainous northern coast bringing in harvests of cherries from what some believe to be the world's oldest cherry orchards, the gathering of billions of hazelnuts, and expansive tea and tobacco plantations. Four in every ten Turks live by working in God's land growing crops or grazing herds of livestock such as goats or cattle. As we peer over carpet's edge, deeply inhaling those aromas of teas and drying tobaccos, drifting in on the sea breezes up through this garden-like area of Turkey, we can't help but sing praise to our God who owns "*the cattle on a thousand hills*" (Ps 50:10), and who "*care[s] for the land and water[s] it...enrich[ing] it abundantly*" (Ps. 65:9)!

Speaking of fertile, lush gardens, can you spot the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers down there in the southeast





*The Black Sea Region of Turkey taken by İhsan Deniz Kılıçoğlu, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.*

part of Turkey? Recall these words from God's Word "Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers...The name of the third river is Tigris; ...And the fourth river is the Euphrates" (Genesis 2:10,14). Today, we know very little of the first two-mentioned rivers of Eden but we may ponder over the two other named rivers, the Euphrates and Tigris. The name Euphrates itself comes from a root word that means "to gush forth" and we can see that it does just that as the river winds and meanders its way through steep canyons and gorges. As you gaze down on the Euphrates, one can imagine how Abraham must have felt when God said to him "Unto thy seed have I given this land ...unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Genesis 15:18). This great river is the northeastern boundary of the Promised Land and the site of

such great historical events as the battle between Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon and Pharaoh Necho II of Egypt in 605 B.C. (Jer 46:2).

The Tigris River, on the other hand, comes from a word that means "the river that goes," which it certainly does, coursing throughout Turkey faster and with a greater volume of water, than the Euphrates. The Euphrates and Tigris Rivers both begin high up in a rugged region of Turkey called Anatolia. (Can you locate the Anatolian Plateau stretching across the center of Turkey?) From way up in space, we see this vast central region of the Anatolia as dry and rolling. Thus, we aren't surprised that in the Greek language Anatolia means: "Land of the Mother Sun." The Anatolia is what geographers refer to as a plateau.

A **plateau** is like a mountain without a peak. Similar to a mountain, the center Anatolian





*Roughly 100 kilometres from its source, the Tigris is an important river for agriculture just outside Diyarbakır. Photo by Bjørn Christian Tørrissen, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.*

Plateau of Turkey rises high into the air; but unlike a mountain, God creates plateaus with a relatively flat top. A plateau can be regarded as a flat-topped mountain, or an oversized table of land rising up out of the landscape. Think of the Anatolian Plateau as a table rising up out of the central interior of Turkey, a *tableland*, where the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers begin and course down through its rugged terrain.

The lands that lie in between the winding Tigris and Euphrates Rivers are known as the Mesopotamia. **Mesopotamia** literally means “the land between two rivers.” Often times the word Mesopotamia is also referred to as the “Cradle of Civilization.” I picture this part of Anatolia, meaning “the land of the mother sun,” as having two arms, the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, which cradled Earth’s very first towns, farms and society, born here in the Mesopotamia, “the land between the two rivers.”

Take a look down there at the southeastern Anatolian Plateau where historians believe that our planet’s very first homes were built and farms were cultivated. Ever since the dawn of time, this sweeping Anatolian Plateau has been the birthplace of a chain of civilizations and peoples whom God has used in mighty ways to write the world’s history. The Hittites of the Bible lived here. The Persians, Romans, and Byzantines ruled here. It was in the Mesopotamia that the first metal was ever made.

Copper, the first metal ever used by mankind is still mined here in Turkey, near the Tigris River. When we read in the Bible of how Adam and Eve’s son was a farmer and that their great-grandson’s great-grandson worked with metal, we wonder if the Garden of Eden itself was once indeed here, somewhere in Turkey, lying between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Did the very first people ever to walk the dust of this earth, Adam



*A photo of Dura Europos, Euphrates River taken by Arian Zwegers, licensed under CC BY 2.0.*

and Eve, indeed first walk here, in the Turkish Mesopotamia, between the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers? In all truth, we simply do not know. The global flood of Noah's day dramatically and catastrophically changed the landscape of our world. Are these two rivers of Turkey the same rivers of the Biblical Garden of Eden? Some suggest not: The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers of Turkey today flow on top of thousands of feet of fossil sediments believed to be from Noah's Flood. Thus, it is argued, these two rivers are not the same rivers of the Garden of Eden. Then why do they have the same names, you ask? The Maitland River that coursed near my house was named after a long ago Governor, Sir Maitland. And it may be that the families who settled this part of Turkey after the flood named these two rivers after the long-ago rivers they remembered flowing out of the Garden of Eden. The original Tigris and Euphrates Rivers of the Garden of Eden fed and watered Adam and Eve's paradise, just as the modern Tigris and Euphrates Rivers do today for great areas of Turkey.

Peer over our carpet's edge and perhaps you may see a young girl dipping her pail in the

Euphrates; or watch two boys watering their cattle at river's edge and another man netting mullet fish. Since the beginning of time, water has been necessary for living. All rivers, like the meandering Maitland River or the great Euphrates and Tigris Rivers, provide drinking water for livestock and people, irrigation for crops, a means to transport goods, travel waterways, and a source of food. Thus, all throughout history, humans have built towns, which have grown into prospering cities, close to where God has provided running water.

Industrious beavers often built dams of sticks and mud across my Maitland River. But what we see as we gaze carefully down from our floating kilim, are definitely not beaver-built structures stretching across the rivers. Nor were these here in the day of Adam and Eve. Do you see the massive concrete dams spanning the width of the rivers? More than 20 such dams are built over both rivers to generate electricity for the Turkish people and to irrigate over 17 million square miles [44 million sq km] of Turkey's land in need of water. While the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers may be dammed up to benefit families in



## Field Notes

*I can't wait to hear your memories and field notes from our first ride through Turkey! Tell me...*

- ◇ **About the Black Sea Region:** *What of its climate? What is grown in this region?*
- ◇ **About the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers:** *Do you remember what their names mean? Where do they begin? Tell me what you think about these rivers and the rivers of the Garden of Eden. How do the rivers help the people of Turkey today?*
- ◇ **About plateaus (or tablelands):** *Once you have described a plateau – what famous plateau lies in the center of Turkey? Can you find it on your map?*
- ◇ **About Mesopotamia:** *What does its name mean? What else is it sometimes called? Why? Can you name some of the people groups that started here?*



*The New Mosque, or Yeni Camii, in Istanbul Turkey by Nevit Dilmen, Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0*

Turkey, dams actually leave *less* water for other families down river.

How God created our Earth—geography—weaves through the stories and peoples of the past, powerfully effects where and how people live on this globe today, and influences the family of humanity's future. The God-designed geography of Turkey, with its Bosphorous Strait, its Anatolian Plateau, its temperate coastlines, and the course of its rivers, such as the Tigris and Euphrates, determines where families live, what they eat around their tables, how they work and what they do. God formed humanity out of the dust of the Earth, and for all of our days, we are intimately connected to the dust under our feet, to the geography of Earth.

We've explored some of the highlights of Turkey's geography, but we have yet to visit Turkey's highest—and most secretive—point, its whirling dervishes, its underground cities to crawl through, its magnificent churches and its camel wrestlers to shake your heads over. So hold on to your carpets!

# Travel Log

USING YOUR GLOBE OR ATLAS, DRAW AN OUTLINE MAP OF TURKEY



**A**s we travel, let's make record in our very own travel log of the places we've visited and the unusual sights we've seen! Make your map large enough to hold all of your discoveries! *Don't worry about making a perfect map, just do your best. Drawing the basic shape yourself will help you remember it better. Or you can use the map provided for you on the CD-ROM.*

## Map Notes:

*Let's record the locations of:*

- ◇ Istanbul
- ◇ Bosphorous Strait
- ◇ Anatolian Plateau
- ◇ Tigris River
- ◇ Euphrates River
- ◇ Mesopotamia
- ◇ Sea of Marmara

*Optional:*

- ◇ Black Sea
- ◇ Mediterranean Sea
- ◇ Aegean Sea

If you'd like, draw pictures or symbols on your map representing:

- ◇ **The Grand Bazaar** (*perhaps a picture of your own floating kilim?*)
- ◇ **Bosphorus Bridge** (*if you draw a cow in the river, that may help you remember the story of the river's name!*)
- ◇ **Cherry trees or baskets of tea on the Black Sea coastline** (*Do you recall that this is one of the oldest orchards in the world?*)
- ◇ **Dams on the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers**

**Travel Notes:** Geographers write what they've seen in order to share the adventure with others—and so they can revisit the places in their memories! On the next page of your travel log, record three important sights you want to remember from your tales of Turkey.

# Bringing It Home

## SIMPLE IDEAS TO BRING THE WORLD TO YOUR DOOR

### *Using These Forms:*

**ART | BOOKS | FOOD | MUSIC | POETRY**



### **Art:**

The Turks are known for their brilliant colors and intricate geometric designs in textiles and tiles.

#### **Perhaps you'd like to try weaving your own kilim:**

<http://www.allfiberarts.com/library/aa01/aa040201.htm>

#### **Or, try your hand at decorating a Turkish Tile:**

<http://www.papermandalas.com/turkishtile.htm>

### **Music:**

Music captures so much of a land and people. Introducing your children to Turkish music is a simple way to transport yourselves around the world: a bit like your own flying carpet! Why not check out these sites while your young geographers notebook and map and let the music play while they recount their travels?

#### **You can hear a wide selection of Turkish music at these sites:**

The Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture

<http://www.discoverturkey.com/english/kultursanat/muzik.html>

National Geographic

<http://worldmusic.nationalgeographic.com/worldmusic/view/page.basic/home>

(Click on Middle East and then Turkey)

Also, you can check your local library for Turkish classical music (called *sanit*) or traditional folk music.



# 2

## Turkey

### Beehives and Fairy Chimneys

#### PART II

**T**ucked in the corner of a high cupboard in my kitchen is a red, heart-shaped plate, the perfect plate on which to eat birthday cake, or Valentine's Day cookies, or just "I love you" meals. The back of the plate reads in black letters: "Made in Turkey." Somewhere in Turkey, a Turk made the heart-shaped plate on which I eat. The Turk and I have never met, but I think of him every time I pull down that red heart dish. And I think I, too, am falling in love with God's land of Turkey and her people. Are you?

I doubt that Noah and his family had any heart-shaped plates, but I would hazard a guess that they loved this land more than you and I both! Who wouldn't, after rocking and rolling on the waters of a worldwide flood for months and months and months?! When God caused the flood waters to recede, I imagine Noah and his family fairly tumbled out of that ark to kiss the land of Turkey, for this grateful family had landed on top of...well, there it is right now!

Pull-up on the carpet, so we don't collide with



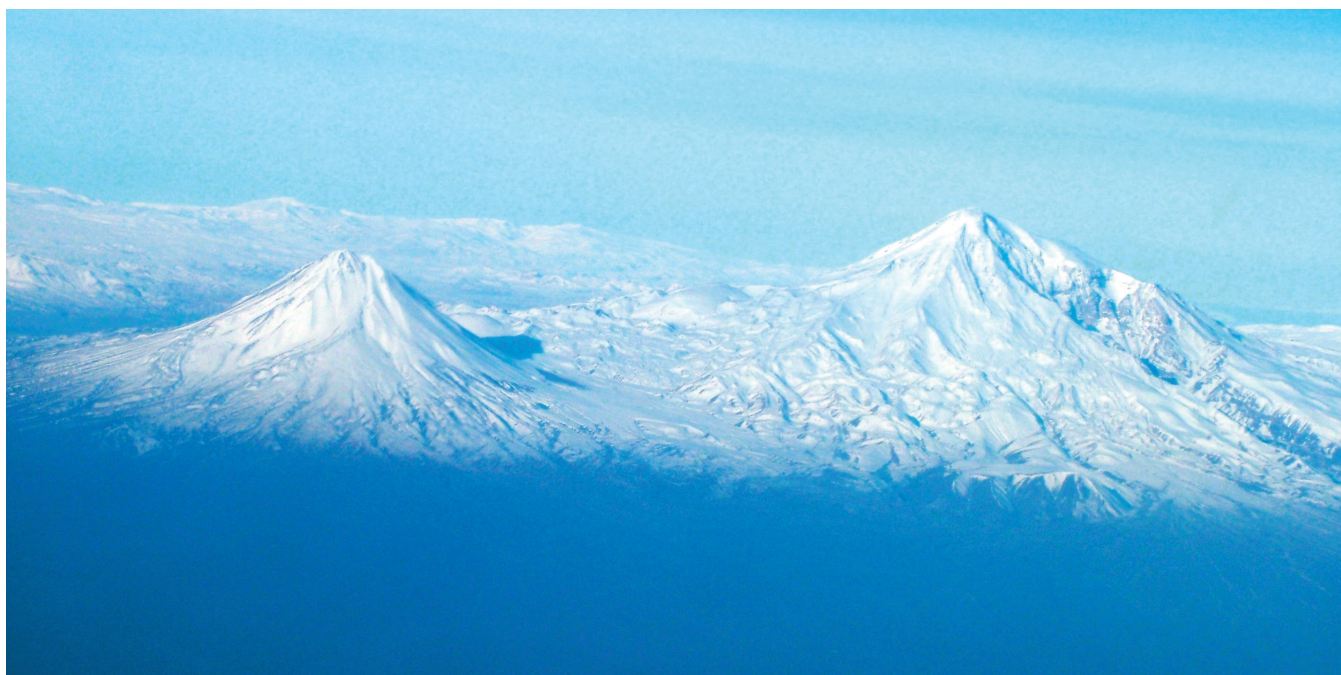
*Lake Van is Turkey's largest lake. Photo taken by Adam Jones, licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.*

## A Child's Geography

that magnificent snow-capped mountain, down there along the northern border of Turkey! That icy, craggy peak below us is the highest mountain in the country: the Great Mount Ararat. While we may never know where the Garden of Eden bloomed on Earth, or where the first Tigris and Euphrates rivers once coursed, Turkey's Mount Ararat is the very first geographical place referred to in the Bible that we can locate today with any

is very similar to that 6:1 proportion! Perhaps the space pictures have merely captured an image of an unusual rock formation—or maybe we are very close to uncovering Noah's ark after all this time!

The children who live today at the base of the looming, volcanic Mount Ararat, in the village of Dogubayazit, tell visitors that they indeed live in Noah's countryside. (Can you imagine saying that?) For down through the ages, fathers and



*View of Mt. Ararat from an airplane, public domain image no licensing required.*

degree of certainty. Mount Ararat is the location the Bible records as the resting place of Noah's Ark after the Global Flood. Genesis 8:4 **reads**, "In the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat."

Now, strain your eyes for a glimpse of ancient wooden beams. Very recent pictures of Mount Ararat taken from a satellite in space have discovered an ark-like shape submerged in the ice and snow. The description in the Book of Genesis tells us the ark was six times longer than wide (300 cubits by 50 cubits). The irregular shape seen in the satellite photographs of Mount Ararat

mothers in this region of Turkey have gathered children on their knees to tell them the story of Noah and the ark with its cargo of antelopes and gorillas and butterflies and flamingos, and all the other marvels of the animal kingdom, perched high atop Ararat. This story of God's goodness and His love for Noah—and of all humanity—leaves the Turkish children of today, living in the shadow of the mountain, to exclaim all good things as being the "the luck of Noah!" I think Noah would rather call such good things the "Grace of God!"

At home on my childhood farm, we marveled at the grace of God experienced by our barnyard cats. Incredibly, those cats survived all manner



of near scrapes and accidents. Our travels now take us to a strange occurrence that is far more incredible than nine-lived farm cats. It is a glorious feat of our Creator God!

South of Turkey's highest mountain, Mount Ararat, we find Turkey's largest and deepest lake, the triangular-shaped Lake Van. It's not surprising that few cities dot this desolate region of Turkey; yet it is unusual to find so few cities surrounding an all-important water source. That is because Lake Van is one very salty body of water and salty water does little to help thirsty animals or crops in the fields. Since Lake Van is fed by sulfur springs and has no apparent outlet to flow into, it keeps

closely and you may see a white and red-haired cat swimming down there among the islands. Known as the Swimming Cat, or named a van kedi in Turk, Van cats, as they are called, are one of the rarest breeds of cats in the world. In this region of temperature extremes, you may never see skaters on a blustery winter day, yet the relentless summer heat may allow one to witness Van cats cooling off with a dip in the salty Lake Van water. Yes, a cat that likes to swim!! Our God is a God of surprises! While other cats have three types of hair, God especially created the Van cat with only one type of hair, which feels like soft cashmere or rabbit fur that dries



*Satellite view of Lake Van, Turkey, courtesy of NASA and the Johnson Space Center.*

growing saltier and saltier! In the chill of winter, you won't find any ice skaters on Lake Van as you would at many frozen lakes. Although the winters in this part of Turkey are bitterly cold, the high salt content keeps the lake from freezing.

However, if you squint your eyes, you may catch a glimpse of something that is most startling and incredible here at Lake Van. Look

quickly when wet—which is especially beneficial if you are a swimming cat with an unusual love for water! When the bitter winter descends in this region of Turkey, the Van cats grow a thick coat to withstand the harsh weather. If a Van cat down there in the lake turns to catch a glimpse of you up on your carpet, you'll never forget its gaze—for a Van kedi has one amber eye—and





*Photo of Turkish Van Cat by Bertil Videt, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.*

one blue eye! Our incredible Creator God has created a cat with a penchant for swimming—and an astonishing, unforgettable set of two-colored eyes. Such multi-colored creation sets us in mind of the rainbow that God once arched across this Turkish sky and Noah's Ark up on Mount Ararat, doesn't it?

Slipping further south now, deep down into the Turkish Mesopotamia, we gaze down on the treeless plateau. A dark haired boy and his father herd a flock of Angora sheep to a muddy waterhole for a drink outside a small rural village. A mother

wearing a white hair kerchief walks down a dusty dirt street with a baby propped on her hip. This is Haran, one of the oldest continuously inhabited places on Earth—and the home of Abraham. God's word reads "Terah took his son Abram, his grandson, Lot, son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law, Sarai, the wife of his son Abram...to Haran [and] they settled there" (Genesis 11:31). Abraham's address once read: Abraham: Haran, Turkey.

At one time the junction of the Damascus road and the highway between Nineveh and Carchemish, Haran was also the place where Abraham's father, Terah died, (Genesis 11:32), where God spoke to Abraham about following Him to a promised land,

where Rebekah's brother, Laban once had his home (Genesis 27:43), and where Jacob fled to escape the fury of his brother, Esau (Gen 27:41-43). In captivating Turkey, children like you live today where Noah first climbed from the ark and walk on the same dirt streets of Haran where Abraham and his descendants once walked with their flocks!

As you look across the landscape from Haran, you will see rolling hills, horse-drawn carts, goats, and sheep, and girls in brightly colored dresses, their hair covered in scarves. (Some





*Ruins of University at Harran. Photo by Zhengan, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.*

say there may now be more farm animals than people in Haran!) What you won't see in Haran are trees. Without trees, you will not find any houses built of wood. So, how do the families of Haran build their homes? It is thought that for at least the last 3,000 years houses in Haran have been built the same way: out of the dirt of the Earth. People use what God has given them where they live, to build their homes and make

a living. Without trees, people make houses of mud!

As a kid, I made mud pies, mud balls, mud cakes, but never mud houses! The mud houses of Haran are the most memorable houses you may ever see. Not square, not with flat roofs, or with peaked roofs, but like...beehives! For thousands of years the mud houses of Haran have been built like beehives with conical roofs. These



## Field Notes

*What a fascinating ride we've had so far! Are you imagining life in a beehive house as I am? I'm so excited to hear about what you have seen!*

### PRESS RECORD AND TALK TO ME

- ◇ **About Mount Ararat and the ark:** *What is that region like today? Has the ark been found? Can you locate Mount Ararat on your map?*
- ◇ **About Lake Van:** *What is unusual about Lake Van? Why don't more people live around the lake? Can you ice skate there in the winter? Why not? Tell me about the amazing creature that swims in the lake.*
- ◇ **About Haran's mud houses:** *What do they look like? Why do the people build them in this way? How does geography affect where people live? Who in real life once lived in or passed through Haran? Describe life in Haran today.*



*The village of Haran, where Abraham and his family once lived, still has beehive-shaped mud houses, just as it would have thousands of years ago. Photo by Albert Herring, licensed under CC BY 2.0.*

homes seem to be an extension of the land they are settled on, growing right up out of the dirt. Why do the people of Haran build such seemingly strange houses?

Again, the geography of a place determines how people live: Haran is very hot in summer and cold in winter—and these beehive-shaped homes stay cool in summer and warmer in winter. Do not be fooled by the rustic appearances, however. These mud houses have electricity and some even have cable television! If we stepped out of the beating sun of Haran's streets and into the cool shade of a bee-hive house, we would find Turkish carpets hanging on the walls, and laying on the floors. We could sit as Turks traditionally sit, on pillows on the carpet, and share with this family a simple lunch: a hunk of cheese made from sheep's milk, a few slices of salami with pide, a broad, round and flat kind of bread made of wheat, washed down with the traditional Turkish drink, ayran, made of yoghurt and water. (If you were to walk into a McDonald's in Istanbul, you could order ayran alongside your Big Mac! Or you could also order the Turks other favorite drink: a coke!)



*Cleopatra's Gate named for the Egyptian Queen who visited Tarsus around 40 B.C. Photo taken by U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Daniel Phelps in the public domain.*

After lunch, we swoop further to the West, where we find the bustling city of Tarsus. The Turkish town of Tarsus was once an important sea port on the brilliantly blue Mediterranean sea but because of the **silting** up, Tarsus is now located some 9.3 miles [15 km] away from the lapping waves of the Mediterranean Sea and its sandy beaches. Over time, God's command of the winds and waters actually shapes and changes the geography of this world!

You may have read of the bustling city of Tarsus before? This city of narrow, cobblestone streets rising up out of the cotton fields of the Mediterranean region of Turkey was the birth place of the Apostle Paul. In Acts 21:39, **Paul says**, "I am a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no insignificant city." Tarsus was certainly a significant city, hosting such famous historical figures as Alexander the Great, Cleopatra, Marc Antony,

Julius Caesar and Cicero! Leaning over the edge of our carpet, we see Tarsus situated on the edge of a fertile plain, cedar groves surrounding its rising buildings. A **plain** is an expanse of level, or nearly level, land. (Do you remember what we geographers call a plain that rises up out of the landscape like a table? Yes, a plateau or tableland!) In general, plains may be more suitable for farming than elevated plateaus like the Anatolia or steep mountains, such as the rugged Taurus Mountains running like a fence between these narrow Mediterranean coastal plains and the Anatolia. Orange and lemon trees, lush banana trees, and waving fields of wheat and barley grow up out of the rich soil. Rice and cotton are also bountiful where precious water is irrigated upon the land. In the fields where the Apostle Paul once walked, we may now see **combines** harvesting soft white balls of cotton to make **textiles**, fabric



## A Child's Geography

and clothing, one of Turkey's most important industries. (One of my favorite pair of cotton pants has a tag reading: Made in Turkey. I'm amazed to think that those pants first began as a cotton plant growing up out of this Turkish dirt!)

No bees lived in the beehive houses of Haran, and neither do any fairies live in the Fairy Chimneys of Cappadocia, but if you imagined there were such things as fairies, would they have



*Fairy Chimneys with their "caps." In this same region are amazing underground cities, originally developed by the ancient Hittites. Photo by Momo, licensed under CC BY 2.0.*

As we fly over the Mediterranean coast, white sails wave at us from boats bobbing on the brilliant blue water, and numerous productive farming villages quietly dot the coastline. Dropping closer, strange, bizarre shapes rising up out of the landscape catch our eye...stranger than mud houses, stranger than beehive-shaped houses. We've stumbled into the land of the Fairy Chimneys in the Cappadocia region of the Anatolian Plateau. (Look for Lake Tuz, and the area between Konya and Kayseri on your map of Turkey.)

houses with chimneys like these strange rock formations? Only our imaginative Creator God could have dreamed up anything as fantastic as these cone-shaped rocks in the Cappadocia!

If you've ever worn a cap outside to protect yourself from the sun's beating rays and pelting raindrops, you'll understand a bit of the structure of these unique formations.

God created these strange Fairy Chimneys from the deposits spewed forth from volcanoes on the Anatolian Plateau: first a thick layer of ash fell,





*Cappadocia's "fairy chimneys" are a popular tourist destination. Made of basalt, these conical structures are shaped by wind and water through a process called erosion. Photo by Wolfgang Moroder, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.*

then a dust that compressed into a stone called tuff and, lastly, a thin layer of lava that hardened into a sturdy **basalt** stone. Over time, God has allowed the outer layer of basalt to crack, and His winds and waters have weathered and washed away the stone into strange shapes. Finally, He sculpts a fairy chimney when a small cap of the original basalt sits atop a cone of tuff. Like when you don a cap, God leaves a cap atop the cone to protect it from eroding or weathering away. When He eventually sends winds that undercut the cap, the cap falls off the fairy chimney, and the chimney itself soon weathers away into nothing....which, thankfully, does not happen to you when you take off your cap!

Ironically, the Fairy Chimneys are in a region of Turkey called Cappadocia—a name which actually has nothing to do with caps but means “the land of beautiful horses.” Let’s slide off our floating kilim and ride a sleek thoroughbred horse up through what some consider Turkey’s most spectacular scenery. If you feel afraid in dark, small places, you may want to stay with our beautiful horse instead of exploring into the shadows of the Fairy Chimneys.

When I was young, my brother, sister and I would head up to the haymow in the barn to make mazes of tunnels and secret rooms dark and deep within the mountain of bales. Riding our horse up through Cappodicia, we would hardly imagine



## A Child's Geography

that underneath these mountains and towers of Fairy Chimneys lay tunnels eight levels deep with whole cities of underground rooms!

The Hittites of the Old Testament were the first people to carve into the soft rock of the Fairy Chimneys to create granaries for their grain stores. Geography, how God forms the land, benefits people down through the ages; the constant cool of the dark caves was the perfect temperature to preserve grains. But no one dug out actual houses in which to live in this brittle, tawny-colored tuff until after the time of Jesus, when persecuted Christians sought hiding places from the Roman Empire. In the three hundred years after Jesus, tens of thousands of new Christians carved bedrooms and stables and churches and flourmills into the Fairy Chimneys—and deep down away into massive underground cities. Perhaps as many as 60,000 New Testament Christians lived in the mazes and labyrinths of low twisting passages leading to room upon room: a whole community of people, living deep underground! The Fairy

Chimneys became the Christian's chimneys. God had created the geography of the land to provide perfect homes for these new believers. In the hot Turkey summers, these caves and tunnels were a cool relief, and in bitter winters, the Fairy Chimneys and underground cities of Cappadocia provided protection from the winds and cold.

If you'd like to experience what those early Christians felt living in the underground Cappadocian cities, there are Fairy Chimney hotels that will let you even sleep here in an underground room of your own! What do you think that would be like?

Before we check in for the night, let's sail a bit further north into the Central Anatolian Plateau to Tuz Golu, where you will see a sight that simply must not be missed. As the sun is setting pink in the sky, do you notice the lake below, gleaming with its own hues of white and pink? If you could speak Turkish, you'd know that Tuz means "salt" and Golu means "lake." Tuz Golu is Turkey's second largest lake, after Lake Van, but it is one of the



*Lake Tuz is like a salt pan. Two major rivers, groundwater, and surface water feed Lake Tuz, but the lake has no drainage outlet, so it becomes very salty during the summer with most of the water. Photo licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.*

largest salt lakes in the world! Lake Tuz is fed by salt springs and, with no drainage outlet, the salt content keeps increasing as water evaporates, leaving the salt behind. While saltier than Lake Van, it is much shallower, with a depth of only 3-6 feet [1-2 m]. In the summer, the sun's heat evaporates much of the water making it possible to walk across the whole lake, hardly getting your legs wet! Don't forget your shoes though; otherwise you'll spend your day shrieking "Ow! Ow! Ouch!" as those sharp, hard salt crystals poke at the bottom of your feet. Because it is not very deep, the salt crystals caked to the bottom of the lakebed gleam a brilliant white, making Tuz Golu look like a huge salt pan—with a pink haze hanging over it. The haze comes from particular pink **algae** that grow in this water, the only life that can live under such salty conditions. People however, do live near Lake Tuz, working in mines to process most of the salt that is used in Turkey. God's imaginative geography not only creates beauty—like that glorious pink hue of Tuz Golu mirroring the brilliance of the sunset—but also provides families and peoples with the resources necessary for living—from the time of Noah, to today.

From the dizzying heights of Mount Ararat, to the dark depths of underground cities and houses carved into the rock of Fairy Chimneys, Turkey is the home of new beginnings. Stepping out on Mount Ararat, Noah and his family begin a new life in the new world after the Global Flood. From his mud, beehive-shaped house in Haran, Old Testament Abraham made a new start in his quest after God. Setting out from his coastal village of Tarsus, New Testament Apostle Paul brought a new religion of hope to ears that had never heard. And deep within the Fairy Chimneys of Cappadocia, early Christians hid from old powers and ways to grow a strong faith in a world after Jesus. With such fascinating stories, who wouldn't pull down their heart-shaped, Made-in-Turkey plate, and feel a genuine love for the country of Turkey—and He who created it all, our Glorious God?!



*Weren't those Fairy Chimneys amazing? I'm not sure I'd want to sleep underground though. Would you? I'm ready to hear all about your trip!*

### PRESS RECORD AND TALK TO ME

#### ♦ **About Tarsus and the Mediterranean coastal plains:**

*What is a plain? What crops grow in this region? Which Apostle was born in Tarsus? Can you name any other famous people who visited there? How has God changed the geography of Tarsus over time?*

#### ♦ **About the Fairy Chimneys:**

*Describe one to me. How does God form a Fairy Chimney? Can you name the region in which they are found? Tell me about the underground cities. Who lived there? Why?*

#### ♦ **About Toz Golu:** *What color is it? Why? What other unusual characteristics does the lake have? Why do people live near Toz Golu? Tell me about salt. Take me on an imaginary walk across the lake.*

*We've seen things today that simply must be mapped, so that they will never be forgotten! Don't worry about making a perfect map, just do your best. Drawing the basic shape yourself will help you remember it better. Or you can use the map provided for you on the CD-ROM.*



# Bringing It Home

## SIMPLE IDEAS TO BRING THE WORLD TO YOUR DOOR

### *Using These Forms:*

ART | BOOKS | FOOD | MUSIC | POETRY



### Books:

#### **The Hungry Coat** by Demi

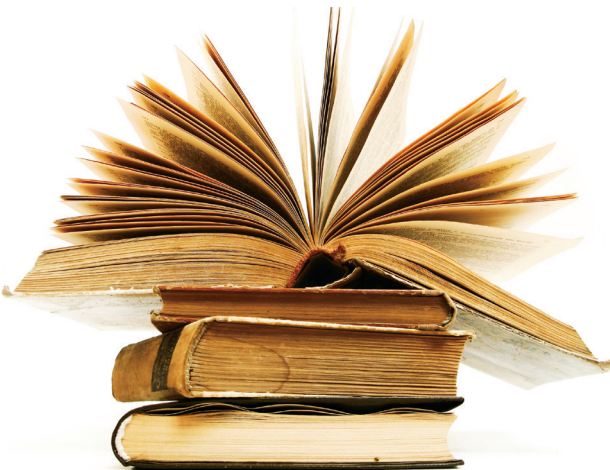
In this Turkish folk tale, Nasrettin Hoca (a medieval philosopher and folk hero) finds his friends treat him differently when he is wearing an old coat and decides to teach them a funny lesson. *\*all ages*

#### **The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers** by Melissa Whitcraft

Follow the Tigris and Euphrates through the Middle East, learning history and geography along the way. *\*\*Read aloud or older readers*

#### **Turkey** by Tamra Orr

Take an indepth look at Turkey's history, peoples and places. *\*\*Read aloud or older readers*



### Poetry:

*The aim in learning is  
To understand God's Truth.  
Because without knowledge  
It is wasted hard labour.*

*~Yunus Emre (1238-1320)  
(Yunus Emre was a thirteenth century  
whirling dervish from Anatolia.)*

# Travel Log

USING YOUR GLOBE OR ATLAS, DRAW AN OUTLINE MAP OF TURKEY



## Map Notes:

*Let's record the locations of:*

- ◇ Mt. Ararat
- ◇ Lake Van
- ◇ Haran
- ◇ Tarsus
- ◇ Cappadocia
- ◇ Tuz Golu

If you'd like, draw pictures or symbols on your map representing:

- ◇ **The Ark** (*perched right on top of Mt. Ararat*)
- ◇ **Van kedis or Van cats** (*swimming in Lake Van!*)
- ◇ **Beehive houses**
- ◇ **Fairy chimneys**
- ◇ **Crops growing on the coastal plains**  
(*there are a lot to choose from, just pick a couple of your favorites*)
- ◇ **Underground cities**
- ◇ **Salt shaker** (*on the shallow Lake Tuz*)



**Travel Notes:** Geographers write what they've seen in order to share the adventure with others—and so they can revisit the places in their memories! **On the next page of your travel log, record three important sights you want to remember from your tales of Turkey.**



# 3

## Turkey

### Wandering, Wrestling, Whirling and Worshipping

#### PART III

**N**ot far from where I live stands a town with a church, a post office and store fronts. You can park anywhere you'd like and you won't find any of the sidewalks crowded.

That's because no one lives in the town anymore. That grey, dilapidated town, no more than an empty shell of lonely buildings, is called a ghost town. But really, not even ghosts live there!



*Satellite image of Turkey in the public domain, courtesy of NASA.*





*Photo of Izmir, Turkey, taken by Nedim Ardoğa, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.*

Today is the perfect day to hop on our floating kilim and wander through a Turkish ghost town—one that thousands of people visit every day!

Kindly navigate our carpet up the Aegean Coast of Turkey, where waves lap warm on the coastline. (Can you locate the Aegean Coast of Turkey on your map?) The many cities along the Aegean, like the bustling İzmir, (Can you find İzmir?) are hard at work, manufacturing clothing and cars. Vineyards and groves of olive trees flourish in the sunshine. From our carpet seats, we can certainly agree with the historian Herodotus who wrote that the Aegean Region of Turkey has “the most beautiful skies and the best climate in the world.”

In the midst of the cities, towns and peoples of the Aegean coast stands Turkey’s most famous ghost town: Ephesus. No one lives or sleeps or works in Ephesus, but Ephesus’ streets swarm with people: tourists and explorers like you and me! For this abandoned town of Ephesus is a town like none other. Ephesus was built 2,000

years before Jesus was born. And a hundred years after Jesus ascended into heaven, Ephesus was a city of nearly a half million people!

After Jesus returned to heaven, his mother Mary and the Apostle John are believed to have come and lived here in Ephesus. Did you know that you probably have a letter in your house that was written to the people who once lived in Ephesus? No, your mailperson did not mistakenly deliver the letter to your house. Open up your Bible and you’ll find that letter! Remember the Apostle Paul who was born in the Turkish city of Tarsus? In 50 B.C. he wrote a letter to the Christians in Ephesus. His letter is in your Bible as the book of Ephesians—for that is what the hundreds of thousands of people who lived in Ephesus were called. Paul actually came to live in the city for awhile and during that time, wrote another letter you’ll find in your Bible: 1st Corinthians. If you turned to the last book of the Bible, Revelation, you’ll read how an angel spoke to the Apostle John, saying,





*Temple of Artemis at Ephesus. Photo taken by Rita1234, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.*

“Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea” (Rev. 1:11). Every single one of those seven churches spoken of by the angel were once located in the country we now call Turkey! And did you take note of the first church mentioned? Yes, the church of Ephesus!

In these old stone walls of Ephesus we will not find a church building, but oh, the buildings we do find! For wandering through ruins, Ephesus is better than Rome itself!

The library in my hometown is a simple, one-story building, but the library of Ephesus’ towers three stories high. Standing in front of this stone structure and its reaching columns, we can almost imagine the librarian from 2,000 years ago, handing out scrolls to inquiring readers, and Ephesians sitting in the reading rooms facing towards the East. Can you guess

why the library reading room faces to the East? Yes, so that the rising morning sun might stream in and light those darkened rooms. God’s design of Earth determines the details of our lives.

Just a short walk from the Ephesian library is Ephesus’ amphitheater. A dramatic sight to behold, the theater in Ephesus took 60 years of digging to create more than 25,000 stone slab seats for people to sit on and behold spectacular plays! Though no one lives in Ephesus any more, tourists and visitors still arrive in hordes to see live plays performed on the same stage where the Apostle Paul himself once spoke out against the worship of false idols.

Ephesus was indeed a city of idol worship. The Ephesians built a temple to the false goddess Diana, the Temple of Artemis, which was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. A man named Anitpater who stood before this Ephesian Temple of Artemis over 2,000 years



ago exclaimed, “When I saw the house of Artemis that mounted to the clouds, those other [Seven Wonders of the World] lost their brilliancy, and I said, “Lo, apart from Olympus, the Sun never looked on aught so grand!” The Apostle Paul obviously cared little for the Temple’s status as one of the Seven Wonders, and from the stage of the Ephesian theater he “persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people [from the worship of the false goddess Diana], saying that gods made with hands are no gods at all!” (Acts 19:26)

Today, as we peer down at where the splendid Temple of Artemis once stood, a brilliant Wonder of the Ancient World, we see not much of anything at all. One lone column rising out of the marshland is all that remains of the monumental building; the first in the world to be constructed entirely of marble. The Apostle Paul was right, wasn’t he? Diana’s temple has been reduced from a celebrated Wonder of the world to one disappointing stone column. The truth of God still stands: “Heaven and earth may pass away, but my Word will never pass away.” Only stones and ruins now testify to this once bustling Turkish city. As you leave Turkey’s most famous vacant town, think on how “all the gods of the peoples are idols, But the LORD made the heavens” (1 Chron. 16:26).

When I was young, a memorable Sunday School picnic game was to slather a pig in oil and compete to be the first to cleverly wrestle down the slippery, fast-as lightning hog. Any Turkish child could have outwitted us for Turks know all about wrestling and oil and they do it like no other peoples you’ve ever seen!

A long time ago, to protect themselves from the mosquitoes on the Anatolian plain, Turks slathered themselves with olive oil. When a dispute broke out, they often ended up “oil wrestling!” Today, dressed in short leather

## Field Notes

*A ghost town, a library and a theater...  
Oh, do tell me all about the wondrous  
sights you’ve just seen!*

### PRESS RECORD AND TALK TO ME

- ◇ **About the Aegean Sea Region:** *Where do we find this region in Turkey? What city do we find in this area? Describe some of the sights of this region. What is produced in this area of Turkey?*
- ◇ **About Ephesus:** *The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the people of Ephesus. If we wanted to read that letter today, where would we look? What would it be like to visit Ephesus today—and how is it different than it once was? What was the library once like? And what is it like today? How was Ephesus’ amphitheater built? Does it look the same today? Tell me about the Temple of Artemis. What do we read about this temple in God’s Word? What remains of this Wonder of the Ancient World today?*



*Turkish Oil Wrestlers. Photo by Ggia, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.*

trousers made from the heavy hide of water buffalo, young boys, not just from here in the Aegean, but from all over Turkey, learn the art of wrestling by apprenticing under the tutelage of a master oil-wrestler.

As if watching the spectacle of oiled men glistening in the sun as they wrestle each other for 40 minutes weren't surprising enough, here in the city of Selcuk, not far from the once grand Ephesus, you may see the butting heads and wrestling of elaborately dressed camels! Milky saliva runs from the mouth and nostrils of the excited camels which aggressively lean on each other until one gives in and charges off into

the crowd! Watch out! Spectators hurriedly scramble out of the way of nearly 1 ton [1,000 kilogram] charging camels!

A day of oil and camel wrestling may be very entertaining, but I think Turkey's Children Day may be the most amusing day of all for Turkish children. I knew a little boy who often asked, "If Mother's Day is in May and Father's Day is in June, when is Children's Day?" In Turkey, Children's Day is celebrated every year on April 23rd with a holiday off school, candies and treats, and week-long festivities! Children, dressed in brilliant costumes, perform their traditional dances and parades





*Camels have been used for transport, sport, food, and as pack animals in Turkey. Photo in the public domain.*

in huge stadiums for the whole country to observe! Other children from around the world even travel to Turkey for Children's Day to represent their own cultures alongside the Turks. Turkish parents and grandparents gather around their television sets to watch these colorful performances of children from different countries all over God's globe!

Have you ever dreamed of becoming the President of your country? On Children's Day, Turkish children get to do just that. The President, Prime Minister, and provincial governors gather in Turkey's capital, the city of Ankara, on the Anatolia (can you find that

on your map?), and allow children to govern the country for the day! What worthwhile endeavors would you undertake if you were made President of Turkey on Children's Day? Today's children are indeed the future governors of their countries. May you grow to be a man or a woman with a voice to help your "nation come and worship before Lord, and glorify [His] name" (Ps 86:9)!

Nearly all the peoples of Turkey follow the teachings of the Qu'uran, written by Muhammed, the founder of the religion of Islam. As Muslims, Turks worship in buildings called mosques. Early in the morning darkness,





*Muslim men prostrating during prayer in a mosque. Photo by Shaeekh Shuvro, licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.*

from all over the country of Turkey, men called muezzins climb the mosque's towers, or minarets, and shatter the stillness of dawn with the loud song, "Hayya-la-l-faleah Hayya la-l-faleah." Having heard the Call to Prayer, called the "Athan," Turks rub sleep from their eyes, kneel down on their prayer mats and offer up prayers to Allah, whom they worship. The name Islam actually means "submission to Allah," which Muslims believe they do by practicing the Five Pillars of Islam.

A faithful Muslim believes and practices these five pillars or five core beliefs:

- 1. Allah alone is worthy of worship and Muhammad is Allah's Prophet.**
- 2. Pray five times daily.**
- 3. Care and give to the poor.**
- 4. Purify through fasting.**
- 5. If at all possible, make the pilgrimage to the city of Mecca once during one's life.**

Turkish Muslims also believe that submitting to Allah includes refusal to eat pork (which is why you will find many wild hogs in some regions of Turkey). During the month-long celebration of Ramadan, Turkish Muslims also fast every day from sunrise to sunset. But don't fret: at the close of the fast of Ramadan, they celebrate Seker Bayrami, meaning the Sweet Fest in Turkish, when they feast for three grand days on chocolates and candies!

Have you ever known a little girl who loved to wear a dress that whirled gloriously about her if she twirled around and around and around? That kind of whirling and twirling is exactly what we will see if we turn our Turkish kilim back to where we began, Istanbul, and into the only Muslim Dervish lodge in the city. The word Dervish refers to a certain group of Muslims who are known for their simple lifestyles and indifference to material possessions. One group of these Muslim Dervishes in Turkey, called the Whirling Dervishes, tries to meditate through a spinning dance - and if we hustle into the Dervish lodge with the other tourists, we may catch a glimpse of the whirling Dervishes and their seven centuries-old tradition of twirling! The





*Photo of Dervishes Avanos taken by Schorle, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.*

beat of the drum and the melody of the reed flute fill the large room. Cloaked in long white robes, tall brown hats perched on their heads, the men spin round and round with their arms crossed. Spinning faster, their bell-like skirts unfurl, their arms rising up. The rush of the Whirling Dervishes, their skirts billowing, is like a gust of wind blowing through the hall, sweeping us up.

Marveling at the spinning rotation of the circling dancers, one question begs an answer: how do they do whirl like that and not fall over

with dizziness? The answer lies in the black shoes under their floating white skirts: for years they carefully practice the work of keeping their right foot planted on the floor as their left foot pumps them counterclockwise. After the ceremony closes, a Dervish turns to us and proclaims, “If Islam is the main body of the [Turkish] tree, we are the flower on that tree.” Let us say goodbye and leave the whirling Dervishes to their bell-like blooming and sweep over to one of the most magnificent buildings ever built!





*Photo of Hagia Sophia, taken by Jerzy Kociatkiewicz, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.*

From our carpet's edge, gaze down there past the children playing in the fountain, past the street vendors selling postcards, to what is sometimes referred to as the eighth Wonder of the World, the Church of the Holy Wisdom. This church, or the Hagia Sophia (hagia meaning "divine" or "holy" and sophia meaning "wisdom"), was a church built more than 1,500 years ago but is today one of the most popular sights to see in all of Turkey. No wonder, considering the 30 million tiny gold tiles decorating its interior, and its immense, flat dome that still leaves architects scratching their heads in wonder.

Hagia Sophia was ordered built by the Christian Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire,

Justinian, in 537 A.D. If we leave our kilim outside and step into the cool, dim oasis inside, we are taken by this magnificent dome hovering 180 ft [54 m] in the air over us. The forty windows that circle the dome's base make it seem as if the dome is floating, as if heaven has descended upon us, like a magnificent umbrella held above an open room, light entering all around. When Emperor Justinian first stood in this breathtaking space, on a Christmas night, he is said to have whispered, "Glory to God that I have been judged worthy of such a work. Oh Solomon! I have surpassed thee!"

On the very same spot, almost one thousand years later, Mehmet the Conqueror, who had

just captured Constantinople (what we now call Istanbul) from the Christians, ordered that the great Church of the Holy Wisdom no longer be a place of Christian worship to God, but become a Muslim mosque. This explains why the Church of the Holy Wisdom today has 4 slender minarets at her corners, each once used to call Muslim Turks to daily prayer. Muslims were so intrigued by the beauty of this Christian church that many of their mosques the world over are patterned after the Church of the Holy Wisdom. Neither Christians nor Muslims worship here now for today the Hagia Sophia is a museum for visitors and explorers to come from all over the world and wonder in its age, its colored history and its spectacular architecture.

We've wandered and wrestled and whirled and worshiped our way around Turkey, from Istanbul by the Bosphorus, up through the wet, verdant Black Sea Region, and across the Eastern Anatolia (with the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers and Mount Ararat). Then down we swooped through Southern Anatolia (can you remember who once lived in this region in his mud beehive?), and over into the Mediterranean coastal plain (with cotton now growing where Paul once lived). Next we sailed up into the Central Anatolia and Cappadocia (what strange place did we visit here?) and over into the Aegean sea region (with Izmir and Ephesus, and wrestling and warm breezes), only to return back to teeming Istanbul with its whirling Dervishes and breathtaking, world-renowned Church of the Holy Wisdom. What a whirlwind trip of Turkey! Are you out of breath? Let's return our kilim to the Grand Bazaar and Ahmet. The memories of Turkey we've netted with our keen eyes and vibrant faith, will always be ours.



*Don't you find Turkey an amazing country of the most unusual sights?! Let's record every detail of our unforgettable trip.*

### PRESS RECORD AND TALK TO ME

- ◇ **About oil and camel wrestling:** *In which region of Turkey would we find such an event? Tell me about the experience!*
- ◇ **About Children's Day:** *What special privilege does the President give to children on this day? What other privileges do the children experience? What is the name of the capital city of Turkey and in which region is it found?*
- ◇ **About the Whirling Dervishes:** *Where in Turkey would we see the whirling Dervishes? What do they wear? How do they keep from falling? Why do they whirl?*
- ◇ **About the Hagia Sophia:** *In what city will we find the grand building? What does it look like? Tell me about Emperor Justinian.*



# Travel Log

USING YOUR GLOBE OR ATLAS, DRAW AN OUTLINE MAP OF TURKEY

*We've seen things today that simply must be mapped, so that they will never be forgotten!*



## Map Notes:

*Let's record the locations of:*

- ◇ Ephesus
- ◇ Izmir
- ◇ Selcuk



If you'd like, draw pictures or symbols on your map representing:

- ◇ **A Dervish Lodge** (*perhaps a whirling circle to represent the spinning dance?*)
- ◇ **Hagia Sophia** (*a great dome?*)
- ◇ **Camel-wrestling** (*with their colorful costumes?*)
- ◇ **Ephesian library** (*maybe a scroll?*)
- ◇ **Ephesian amphitheatre** (*how about a cheering crowd?*)
- ◇ **Temple of Artemis** (*one lone pillar?*)

**Travel Notes:** Geographers write what they've seen in order to share the adventure with others—and so they can revisit the places in their memories! **On the next page of your travel log, record three important sights you want to remember from your tales of Turkey.**



# Bringing It Home

## SIMPLE IDEAS TO BRING THE WORLD TO YOUR DOOR

### *Using These Forms:*

**ART | BOOKS | FOOD | MUSIC | POETRY**



### **Food:**

The Turks love their tea! Turkish tea, çay (CHAH-yee) is brewed in a samovar (a metal urn with a spigot) and served boiling hot. It is a beautiful red-tinted tea that looks lovely served in the traditional tulip-shaped glasses.

Let's brew a pot and imagine we are relaxing on our kilim with our Turkish friends. If you want, spread a rug or tablecloth on the floor and gather pillows and cushions to sit on.

Bring a kettle of water to a boil and brew your tea. (Use tea bags or loose tea.) The Turks allow their tea to steep for 10 – 15 minutes, so wait patiently!

When you are ready, fill your cup half way with the strong, dark tea and fill the rest of the cup with hot water. You may have your tea açık (ah-CHUK) weak, or koyu (koh-YOO) dark.

Serve with sugar and lemon (if desired) – but no milk! Our Turkish friends would not approve!

Enjoy!





# Turkish Delight

*Dessert always goes well with tea. Perhaps you might like to make some Turkish Delight?*



*Turkish Delight, CC BY-SA 2.0.*

**K**nown in Turkey as ***Rahat lokhoum***, the name of this irresistible sweet comes from an Arabic phrase that translates “soothing to the throat.” Do you think you may be like C.S. Lewis’s Edmund who “*thought only of trying to shovel down as much Turkish delight as he could, and the more he ate, the more he wanted?*” That is exactly how the first tasters experienced Turkish Delight! This is the legend:

More than 300 years ago, a Turkish Sultan living in the Istanbul palace of Topkapi ordered the greatest candy makers in Turkey to create a dessert so mouth-watering that the members of his household would cease squabbling as they were savoring the delectable dessert. Candy maker Hadji Bekir looked around his home in the Anatolian mountain town of Kastamonu and concocted a simple recipe that the Sultan couldn’t resist—and neither will you!

2 cups Sugar  
2 Tbl Cornstarch  
1 cup Water  
1/2 tsp Cream of tartar  
1 Tbl flavoring (extract) (such as lemon, orange, rose)

Food coloring (appropriate to flavor, such as yellow for lemon)

1/2 cup toasted almonds or pistachios, chopped

Confectioners’ sugar

**Method:** Dissolve sugar and cornstarch in water and add cream of tartar. Bring to a boil and heat to 220 degrees F. [104 C] (Use a candy thermometer to check the temperature.) Cover the pot during the last 5 minutes of cooking. Add flavor and food coloring, then nuts. Grease a shallow pan. Pour candy into prepared pan. When cool, cut into squares and roll in sifted powdered sugar. Store in plastic bag.

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# Noah's Pudding

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***Dessert always goes well with tea. Perhaps you might like to make some Noah's Pudding?***



*Asure*

**A**lso known as Asure, this is one of the best-known desserts in Turkey. Traditionally shared with friends and family, we invite you to serve up bowls of Noah's pudding while recounting unforgettable stories about a man, a mountain in Turkey and a marvelous promise God wrote all over the sky!

More than 300 years ago, a Turkish Sultan living in the Istanbul palace of Topkapi ordered the greatest candy makers in Turkey to create a dessert so mouth-watering that the members of his household would cease squabbling as they were savoring the delectable dessert. Candy maker Hadji Bekir looked around his home in the Anatolian mountain town of Kastamonu and concocted a simple recipe that the Sultan couldn't resist—and neither will you!

*1 cup barley  
1 cup canned white kidney beans, washed and drained  
1 cup canned chickpeas, washed and drained  
1 cup sugar  
1 tsp vanilla extract*

*10 cups water  
10 dried apricots, soaked in water overnight, cut in pieces  
10 dried figs, cut in pieces  
1/2 cup raisins*

*Garnish:  
1/4 cup walnuts, crumbled*

**Method:** Place 4 cups of water and barley in a large pot over high heat. Bring to a boil. Immediately, turn heat down to medium-low and cook for approximately 30 minutes. Add beans, chickpeas, vanilla, apricots, raisins, figs, sugar and 6 cups of hot water. Cook another 45 minutes on medium-low, stirring occasionally. Pour into a large bowl and let cool. Keep refrigerated. When serving, garnish with crumbled walnuts



# Go into all the world...

## *a walk of prayer*

**A**s we've journeyed through Turkey we've caught a glimpse of an amazing landscape, and customs and lifestyles that are different from our own. Yet the boys and girls who live there are not so different from us at all. They were created by a God who loves them dearly just as He loves you.

***Will you and your family join me in praying for the Turkish people?***

Lord, give us Your love for the peoples of the world, and help our family to live in a way that shows our love for them.

Father, we remember the **earthquakes that devastated northern Turkey** near Istanbul in 1999, leaving many dead and many more homeless. You, Father, know how the country and families are still suffering the effects of these earthquakes. Lord God, provide for these mothers and fathers and children who still need help and homes.

~We pray too, Lord, for the Kurds, thought to be descendants of Biblical Medes (Dan. 5,6), that large people group living throughout the Middle East and comprising a significant portion of the Turkish population. They have no homeland of their own and have faced persecution in many different countries. How we pray for the Kurdish people to know peace. We pray that they will be protected from persecution. Lord, show Christian workers in Turkey how to show Jesus' love to the Kurds.

~We uphold Turkish Christians before Your throne. We pray that You will strengthen them



to follow the Lord, and You will grant them access to Bibles. Please Bbring other Christians to Turkey to fellowship and worship with these believers.

There are hardly any Christian witnesses in Turkey. God, please raise up pastors who will lead Turkish Christians;, provide for their needs and strengthen their faith. Give them Your wisdom to teach the Word of God.

We love you, Lord, and the people who are living in Turkey, today. May the Light of our Savior dawn over all nations today. Draw us all closer to You, Father. In Jesus name, Amen.

## 4

## Israel

## The Land of Milk and Honey

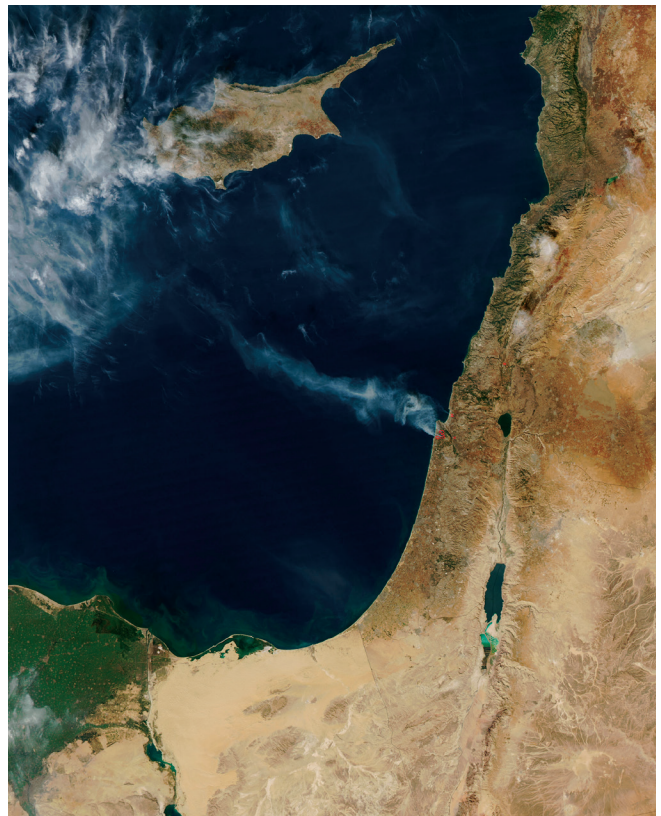
## PART I

On a farm not far from here, I know a boy named Ivan who rises early in the beginning dark of day, and treads out to the barn with his Father and brothers to milk their herd of goats. After the streams of warm goat's milk have been collected into the large tank, Ivan tends to the beehives, gathering pails of sweet, sticky honey. Carrying a pail of honey in one hand, and a pail of milk in the other, Ivan slowly walks to the house with the bounty of his family's farm. It is almost as if Ivan's farm actually flows with milk and honey.

The Bible tells of another such country: "On that day I swore to them that I would bring them... into a land...flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands" ([Ezekiel 20:6](#)). I wonder what Abraham and his family imagined in their minds' eyes when God forever promised them this land? While the Bible speaks figuratively of this land flowing with milk and honey, I always literally envisioned a land of rivers coursing with foamy, white milk, meadows humming with the buzz of bees, and fields awash with golden, gooey honey.

Think of it: this land is the most beautiful of all lands. Who can resist traveling to the most breathtaking, most picturesque, most scenic land on this spinning orb? I can hardly wait!

Our search takes us to the center of the world. If you place your finger on the Mediterranean Sea



*Satellite image of Israel in the public domain, courtesy of NASA.*

and then slide due east, you will find the country we seek: Israel. Not only is Israel literally in the "middle" of the world, near the convergence, or meeting, of the three continents of Asia, Africa and Europe, but Israel is also in the center of the world's news almost every day. If you read today's





*The highlands of Israel. Photo by Israel free image collection project, licensed under CC BY-SA 2.5.*

national newspapers — or yesterday's — or tomorrow's — you will invariably read some news about Israel. The land flowing with God's blessings is a sought after land for which the peoples and powers of the world continue to wrestle. Israel also lies at the heart of three of the world's most noted religions: Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Each faith claims Israel as their holy land.

While the rising red mountains and deep cut gorges of this land have been here since the beginning of time, the country we call Israel is both very old and very young. Israel grew up as a nation of people over 3,000 years ago when Joshua marched into this strip of land (then called Canaan), with the 12 tribes of Israel. These 12 tribes were the descendants of Jacob,

Abraham's grandson, whom God had renamed Israel. We read in the Book of Genesis: "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel..." (Gen.33:28). For over a thousand years, the Israelites called this land home, herding flocks of sheep on the hillsides, fishing in the Sea of Galilee and harvesting wheat in the valleys. Yet a mere 70 years after the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the conquering Romans burnt the Temple at Jerusalem, sending the Israelites fleeing to other countries of the world. The actual land had fallen into the hands of the Romans. The Jewish people no longer governed their own country of Israel. For 1,800 years, if you put your finger on a map of this part of the world, it would not have read the name Israel, but the name "Palestine."



Still, in the hearts of the Jewish people scattered around the world, a flame of hope blazed for a revival of their homeland, Israel.

Then, in 1948, God made a way for Jewish people dispersed all over the earth to finally return home to this land flowing with milk and honey. As He always does, God has faithfully fulfilled His promise! Nearly 2,000 years later, God has done precisely what He said He would do in the first book of the Bible: “To your descendants I have given this land” (Genesis 15:8). This is how Israel is a very old country — and a very young country — at the same time!

Now that you have pinpointed Israel on your map, you’ll find this sliver of a country in the shape of a tilted triangle, perched on the eastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea. You probably already

knew that God Himself is often symbolized as a triangle, with one tip of the triangle representing God the Father, another, God the Son, and another God the Holy Spirit. Now you can remember that Israel is also in the outline of an oddly-shaped triangle!

Israel is a rather small country, comparable in size to the state of New Jersey and comprising only about 1% of the land in the Middle East. You could drive right from one tip to the other tip of narrow Israel in an afternoon. Ivan, with his responsibilities of milking goats and tending to the hives can’t come with us, but we might tour this captivating country and send home some photographs to our hard-working friend. Are you ready to discover the land of Israel and capture the wonder of its four geographical regions: the



*Mount Arbel and the Galilean Hills. Photo by Bukvoed, licensed under CC BY 3.0.*



## A Child's Geography

beautiful Central Hill region, the Coastal Plains, the Negev Desert region, and the Jordan Rift Valley? Focus your eyes of faith, fetch a fine map of Israel, and don't forget your camera!

Our first stop is the Central Hill region. Running like a backbone down the middle of the country, Israel has such an abundance of hills, they are divided into three sections: Galilean, Samarian and Judean. (Can you detect the raised elevation, or height, of these hills on a map of Israel? Often a map is shaded a progression of dark greens to indicate land that lies low, shades of browns to signify hills and shades of white or gray to mark mountains.)

Israel's northern hills are the rugged, steep Galilean Hills. Wave "Shalom" to the shepherd girl herding her flock. As the flock clatters past, we snap a picture of the girl waving back with "Salaam!" (Won't Ivan appreciate this Galilean photo of goats like his? In spite of the intriguing differences in how we live in different parts of the world, we are surprised at the similarities in our stories!) While the home of shepherds and herders, these Galilean Hills are where our Savior, Jesus Christ, spent most of His life walking. Pull your sweater tight, for it gets windier the higher we climb. Some of the harsh slopes are sparsely vegetated, but fertile valleys often lie between the rolling highlands. Today, as you gaze

upon the vineyards and orchards that dot this region, you can almost hear Jesus speaking: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Narrow, cavernous gorges, or wadis, cut up the Galilean Hills and its vineyards. A wadi is actually a dry, rocky bed for a river. During heavy rains, raging, torrential waters carve through these valleys, transforming them into a seasonal river. When the waters eventually subside, the wadi is once again a gorge with a bottom bed of sand. Line up your camera for a shot of this magnificently carved one. Notice the sandy bottom; doesn't it remind you of Jesus' parable of the foolish man building his house upon the sand—like we find at the bottom of this wadi? In the parable, roaring floodwaters flashed down, sweeping away the foolish man's house! Yet the wise man, who built his house high up on the rock, stood unmoved (Matt. 7:24-27). Jesus used the lay of the land



*A wadi is a dry riverbed that only fills with water during heavy rain. Photo by Mai-Sachme, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.*



and the geography of Israel to paint pictures of eternal truths!

Heading south now, let's photograph the Samaritan Hills. Our photos reveal that the Samaritan hills are actually a mountain range, and include the mountain called Mount Carmel. A mountain, a landform rising notably above the surrounding countryside, is generally considered to be steeper and higher than a hill. The name Carmel is derived from the Hebrew words: "Karem El" which means the vineyards of God. Gazing upon the lush rising slopes of Mount Carmel, we think the name is appropriate! From the Bible passage **1 Kings 18:42 we read**, "But Elijah climbed to the top of Mount Carmel; and fell to the ground and prayed"....(NLT) for a rain cloud to blow in from the Mediterranean Sea, which you can see from Mt. Carmel's peak, to water the land of Israel. Isn't it amazing to photograph today the geography of long-ago Bible events?

Can our camera capture the brilliant palette of spring colors painted on the slopes of the third section of hills, the Judean Hills in the south? For hundreds of years, the Judean Hills, home of Jerusalem, Israel's capital city, have burst into a spring blaze of wildflower bloom. Pictures of these hills a few decades ago however, would have looked markedly different. Not so long ago, so many people picked bouquets of wildflowers off the hills each spring, they became bare and nearly colorless! Everyone knows that for a land to flow with honey, the bees need a profusion of flowers. Today Israelis abide by the signs not to pick wildflowers and buy their bouquets in the marketplaces. The Judean hills are once again plush with carpets of red poppies every spring. As we take photographs of wildflowers lightly swaying in the warm breeze, we think of Jesus asking, "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin" (Matthew 6:28).



*Photo of flowering poppies in the Negev, Israel. Photo licensed under CC BY 2.5.*





### Field Notes

*I am so interested in hearing what you think of this “land flowing with milk and honey” so far!*

#### PRESS RECORD AND TALK TO ME

- ◇ **About Israel's beginnings and its peoples:** *According to the Bible, how did the Jews come to live in this land? Have they always lived here? How did God keep His promise to the Jewish people? What three major religions consider Israel their Holy Land?*
- ◇ **About Israel's location and size:** *What three continents meet near Israel? What shape is the country? How big is it? How long would it take you to drive across the country?*
- ◇ **About the Galilean Hills:** *Do you remember who spent a lot of time here? Can you describe the landscape? What grows here?*
- ◇ **About wadis:** *What is a wadi? What does one look like? What parable does the geography of a wadi remind us of?*
- ◇ **About the Samaritan Hills:** *Are the Samaritan Hills really “hills”? What Biblical mountain will we find located here?*
- ◇ **About the Judean Hills:** *What city is located in this region? What gives the hills their color in springtime? Can you tell me more about this?*

As a young person, I had to remember that a vehicle with wings was spelled P-L-A-N-E while something rather common, like unflavored ice cream, was spelled P-L-A-I-N. Did you know there is another P-L-A-I-N? Get ready to snap another round of photographs for Ivan at home with his goats and bees!

A plain, in geographical terms, refers to a broad flat expanse of country that lies relatively low. Such a plain is what we find slipping down Israel's Mediterranean shore. We've arrived in the second geographical region of Israel: the western coastal plain. (**Coastal** refers to the land that runs alongside an ocean or other large body of water.)

This plain is so *unplain* that it has three names. In the North of Israel, it is called The Plain of Zebulun; in the middle it is referred to as the Plain of Sharon; and in the southern section of the coast, folks call it the Plain of Judea. Did you notice more homes and families in this region than the hill region? Two out of every three people in Israel live here, basking in its inviting Mediterranean climate. A **Mediterranean Climate** means that summers are relatively dry, winters are generally wet, and the temperature is rather mild and moderate. A large body of water like the Mediterranean Sea regulates the temperature, making it cooler in the summer, and warmer in the winter.

No wonder the majority of Israel's families live here amidst the surf-pounded cliffs and holiday resorts. Indeed, the sandy beaches that meet the Mediterranean here are among the most dramatically white and beautiful beaches in the world, certainly worthy of a picture for our farmer boy. Even the dirt of the coastal plain isn't ordinary dirt but rich, fertile soil perfect for farming



*Mediterranean Coast of Israel. Photo courtesy of David Shankbone, licensed under CC BY 3.0.*

orange and lemon groves and bountiful crops of wheat. Many small rivers that flow down from the Galilean, Samaritan, and Judean Hills, water the coastal plain and its crops of sweet mangos, strawberries and grapefruit.

Hasn't God perfectly orchestrated the geography of Israel? The moisture-laden winds blow off the Mediterranean bringing seasonal rain, and the soil conditions are perfectly suited to growing fruits and vegetables with a distinctive delicious taste. Make sure to get a picture of the strange clear plastic tunnels we see everywhere.

If you take a peek inside these light-filled tunnels, you will see flowers and vegetables growing in the warm sunshine. Since Israel experiences little rainfall in summer, these tunnels act like small

atmospheric ceilings, or miniature greenhouses, trapping water vapor to fall as droplets again on the crops. Don't you think hard working Ivan would appreciate us bringing him home a juicy coastal plain strawberry?

This flat expanse of plain along the lapping waves of the Mediterranean is also one of the easiest routes for people of countries to the north and south to travel through. As such, through history, this slender coastal plain allowed for neighboring nations passing through to interact with people who knew Yahweh, the One, true Living God. When these people from other lands met those who knew God, they heard stories and saw evidence of His love for His people. This introduced them to the rich gifts of the Lord and



## A Child's Geography

brought more of them into God's family. God uses the geography of Israel, as well as the landscape of other countries, to influence the direction of people's lives and the very course of history!

Standing with cameras in hand, looking out at the stunning blue of the Mediterranean, we are taken with the fact that this coastline seems very straight, with relatively few curves or indentations. Because of this, Israel has only one significant natural harbor along its coast for ships to stop. A natural harbor is a place with land cupping around on three sides to allow ships to anchor and shelter from the weather. What causes Israel's coast to be relatively straight?

Currents in the Mediterranean Sea carry silt, which is a water-transported soil finer than sand. This silt washes up against Israel's coastline, filling in or "silting up" any coast line indentations. Do

you recall Jonah of the Bible who, trying to run away from God, "went down to Joppa (called Jaffe today), found a *ship which was going to Tarshish*," (Jonah 1:3) and sailed away? Thought to be founded by Noah's son Japheth, the 4,000 year old city of Jaffe is one of the world's oldest cities and is still a bustling center on Israel's coastline. (Can you locate it just south of Tel Aviv?) However, if Jonah showed up today at Jaffe looking for a ship to escape on, he'd find no harbor on Jaffe's shoreline but a flat little plain instead! The natural harbor that created the port city of Joppa is now entirely silted up!

If we walked north out of Jaffe, we'd walk right into its twin city, Tel Aviv. More business deals are made here in the tall skyscrapers of Tel Aviv than anywhere else in Israel. Tel Aviv, with its white sands, warm seas and cloudless blue skies,



*Jaffa and Tel Aviv, Israel's second largest city. Photo by Remi Jouan, licensed under CC BY-SA.*





*Photo of Tel Aviv by night taken by Gilad Avidan, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.*

is also the country's most exciting city with many restaurants, dozens of museums and a world-class symphony. Let's sit for a bit in a Tel Aviv restaurant and refresh with a falafel sandwich—Israel's vegetarian hotdog. Inside our falafel, a warm pita bread made with ground chick peas and spices, let's heap cabbage, eggplant, cauliflower and tehina. (Tehina is a sauce of ground seeds, a bit like peanut butter both in taste and looks, that is as common in the Middle East as catsup is in North America.) Founded by exiled Jews returning home, Tel Aviv – which means “hill of spring” - finds its name from Ezekiel 3:15: “Then I came to the exiles who lived beside the river Chebar at Tel-abib.” As we snap photographs of this bustling city we think of this “hill” on the coastal plain, “springing up”

business and grand amusements for the entire country of Israel!

Our search for Israel's one natural harbor leads us north to the ancient city of Haifa, Israel's major port city. A port is an area on the water's edge built up with docks and cranes for receiving ships and transferring cargo to and from them. A clean and green city that stretches from the coastal plain shores of the sparkling blue Mediterranean up into the Galilean slopes of Mt. Carmel, Haifa's name may come from the Hebrew word *hof yafe*, meaning “beautiful beach.” Ships dock easily in Haifa, a city which grew up around a sheltered bay near the mouth of the Quishon River. Do you see the white cruise ships, the heavy-laden cargo ships, and the big gray warships crowding about the harbor? Because



### Field Notes

*I hope you've captured lots of good photographs for Ivan! Will you describe them to me?*

#### PRESS RECORD AND TALK TO ME

- ◇ **About plains:** *What does this word mean in geography? What plains did we discover in Israel? What is the weather like on Israel's coastal plains? What is grown here? Describe what it might be like to live here.*
- ◇ **About the the Mediterranean coastline:** *Is it straight or curvy? Why does it look this way? What is a harbor? What is the name of Israel's only natural harbor? What Biblical harbor has now disappeared from the coastline?*
- ◇ **About Tel Aviv:** *What is the city like? Tell me about its history. What tasty Israeli food might we buy here?*
- ◇ **About Haifa:** *What is a port? What would we find in the important port city of Haifa?*



*The picturesque city of Haifa - Mount Carmel by the sea. Photo by Zvi Roger, licensed under CC BY 3.0.*

of this harbor and its prominence as a port city, Haifa is one of Israel's most industrious cities with oil refineries, automobile manufacturers, steel mills and shipbuilding plants. The way God sculpts the geography of a place determines what people will make and build and work at in a region.

Interestingly, Haifa's name may also be tied to the Hebrew verb "*hafo*," meaning "to cover or hide." When you realize that Haifa is considered by some to be where the prophet, Elijah, hid in a cave from the wrathful King Ahab, the name Haifa seems quite fitting indeed!

Don't you think it's time to sort through the photographs we've taken so far and send them home to our goat-milking, honey-collecting friend, Ivan? Which photos of these two regions of Israel do you think will catch his eye? The plastic light tunnels of the coastal plain? Or the flower painted Judean slopes? The carved wadis of the Hills region? Or the sand white beaches of the Mediterranean Coast? We find God's Word true: Israel is a most beautiful land. Oh, but what still lies ahead on our adventure: a camel trek across the sands, a diving exploration of a coral reef, a blizzard of white flakes in the midst of desert heat, a ride down white water rapids—and more! Are you as excited as I am about our exploration of Israel's two other interesting geographic regions?!

# Travel Log

USING YOUR GLOBE OR ATLAS, DRAW AN OUTLINE MAP OF TURKEY



**A**s we travel, let's make a record in our very own travel log of the places we've visited and the unusual sights we've seen! Make your map large enough to hold all of your discoveries! *Don't worry about making a perfect map, just do your best. Drawing the basic shape yourself will help you remember it better. Or use the map provided for you on the CD-ROM if you are short on time.*



## Map Notes:

*Let's record the locations of:*

- ◇ **Mediterranean Sea**
- ◇ **Sea of Galilee**
- ◇ **Galilean Hills**
- ◇ **Samarian Hills**
- ◇ **Judean Hills**
- ◇ **Mount Carmel**
- ◇ **Jerusalem**

If you'd like, draw pictures or symbols on your map representing:

- ◇ **Wadis in the Galilean Hills** (*perhaps a picture of a dry riverbed?*)
- ◇ **Wildflowers on the Judean Hills** (*be creative!*)

**Travel Notes:** Geographers write what they've seen in order to share the adventure with others—and so they can revisit the places in their memories! **On the next page of your travel log, record three important sights you want to remember from your photos of Israel.**



# Bringing It Home

## SIMPLE IDEAS TO BRING THE WORLD TO YOUR DOOR

### *Using These Forms:*

**ART | BOOKS | FOOD | MUSIC | POETRY**



### **Art:**

The Jewish culture has a long tradition of paper-cut art. Sometimes these elaborate designs are hung on a home's eastern wall to remind the family which way to pray – towards Jerusalem. This is called a mizrach.. Paper cutting is also used to make ketubah, or beautiful wedding contracts which may be displayed in a new couple's home. You can make your own simple paper-cut art by folding a piece of paper in half and drawing a design on the fold. Simply cut out the design using scissors (or a craft knife, for older children) and open the paper. Experiment with different colors of paper, layers and fancy writing or calligraphy.

The following link provides pictures and simple instructions for a paper cutting project:

[http://www.hgtv.com/hgtv/cr\\_paper\\_crafts\\_other/article/0,1789,HGTV\\_3294\\_1382520,00.html](http://www.hgtv.com/hgtv/cr_paper_crafts_other/article/0,1789,HGTV_3294_1382520,00.html)

**Learn the Hebrew Aleph bet!** The Hebrew alphabet, called the Aleph Bet, contains 22 letters. You can learn to read, write and say them at this site: [http://www.akhlah.com/aleph\\_bet/aleph-bet.php](http://www.akhlah.com/aleph_bet/aleph-bet.php)

### **Music:**

Music captures so much of a land and people. Introducing your children to Israeli music is a simple way to transport yourselves around the world. Why not check out these sites while your young geographers notebook and map and let the music play while they recount their travels? **Listen to samples of music from Israeli artists:**

[http://worldmusic.nationalgeographic.com/worldmusic/view/page.basics/country/content.country/israel\\_36?fs=plasma.nationalgeographic.com](http://worldmusic.nationalgeographic.com/worldmusic/view/page.basics/country/content.country/israel_36?fs=plasma.nationalgeographic.com)  
[http://music.calabashmusic.com/world/israeli\\_folk#](http://music.calabashmusic.com/world/israeli_folk#)

One of the world's foremost violinists was born in Tel Aviv. You can most likely find recordings of Itzhak Perlman's music in your local library. For a small sample and a brief biography:

<http://www.geocities.com/BourbonStreet/2571/perلمان.html>

## 5

# Israel

## Farms in the Desert and the Healthy Dead Sea

### PART II

I often wake from dreams where extraordinary things seem bizarrely ordinary, dreams in which I madly run but never go anywhere, in which I can build snowmen on the beach, and in which I can walk through a torrential rainstorm but oddly, never get wet. All that may be the stuff of fantastical night adventures, but would you like to come to a real place on earth where the extraordinary is ordinary? A place where deserts bloom strawberries, blizzards of white blow on

sizzling hot afternoons, and people find life-giving health on the shores of dead waters? Only God could make such wonders a reality. Come, you simply must see this to believe it! (Don't forget your three essentials: keen eyes, a steel-trap memory, and that vibrant faith - oh, the places we'll go!)

Having photographed two of Israel's geographical regions—the hills region, and the coastal plain—let's ready our camera for Israel's



*Sunset in the Negev Desert. Photo by Matthew J. Parker, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.*



## A Child's Geography

third geographical region: the Negev Desert. To travel into the Negev Desert, we pass through the streets of Beersheba. Once little more than a watering hole for Abraham's sheep, today we find Beersheba—a bustling modern city. Yet the Biblical past seems rather present as we stand on a street corner gazing into the stone-enclosed well said to be used by the patriarch Abraham. Do you hear the bleating of sheep there in Beersheba's famous market, just like they did in Abraham's day? Let's ask a merchant if he might loan us a camel for our trek across the desert. Before leaving the market, we purchase a hunk of **halvah** (ground sesame seeds mixed with honey), fill our canteen with cold water, and pull down the peak of our cap: we are about to embark on the hottest part of our exploration of Israel.

Shaped like a dagger, the Negev Desert of the south comprises more than half of the country

of Israel. Derived from the Hebrew word *neghev*, meaning dry, the Negev Desert is indeed aptly named. A **desert** is any geographical region where it rains 10 inches [25.4 cm] or less in an entire year (umbrella rarely needed) and vegetation is sparse (no lawn mower necessary). The hardy **Bedouin** tribes, however, make their home in the Negev Desert and their camps of tents and herds of roaming sheep and goats dot the region. See the friendly Bedouins over there waving us **tourists** into the cool of their tent for a sip of sweet tea? Remember to slip off your shoes as we sit down on the rugs to eat a delicious pita, filled with a mouth watering combination of spices and goat cheese. Goat-milking Ivan at home will be so taken with our pictures!

Heading an hour south out of Beersheba across the craggy Negev, sunlight glinting ever-changing colors from minerals in the scattered rocks, we



*Photo of Bedouin Cooking. Photo by Ed Brambley, licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.*



discover a massive depression in the landscape. Stretching out in the shape of a skinny heart, this gaping 24.8 mile [40 km] long, 1 – 6 mile [2 - 10 km] wide, .3 mile [500 m.] deep cavity is Ramon Crater, the world's largest **karst crater**. A karst crater isn't formed by falling meteorites like other

The blistering desert of hardpan gravel has shrunk by 20 percent due to the ingenious development of desert into *farmland*. The sandy desert not only produces Desert Sweet tomatoes, but sweet grapes, strawberries and melons. How have the Israelis accomplished such an astounding feat?



*Ramon Karst Crater – the world's largest karst erosion cirque. Photo by Tango7000 in the public domain.*

craters, but by massive amounts of water, (such as the **Global Flood**), wearing away at rock. Snap a photo of the striking reds and brilliant yellows of the colorful, looming walls of the Ramon Crater. Focus the lens now on the exposed spiral **fossils**, some small enough to lie in the palm of your hand while others stand the size of huge tractor wheels.

Climbing up on our camel to ride further into the Negev Desert, we wonder if we see tractors and buildings off on the horizon...or is it a **mirage**? Incredibly, right in the middle of the Negev Desert where the thermometer can soar higher than 120F [49C], more than 250 farm settlements flourish.

In the north of the Negev, God has covered the ground with a powdery yellow soil called **loess**. When watered, loess is very fertile. You may be asking where one would find water for crops in this harsh desert? Amazingly, it is right under your feet! Beneath the Negev Desert's soil lie underground pools or **aquifers** of salt water (called brackish water) which Israelis use to irrigate desert crops. In many locations throughout Israel, expensive equipment removes the salt from the underground water (a process called **desalination**) so as to make the water suitable for irrigation.



## A Child's Geography

Yet in other locations, Israeli's have reversed the process: they have developed plants that only soak up the water and leave the salt behind! These processes are called **brackish-water agriculture**. Is this what the Bible means when we read in Psalms 107:35-37, "[God] changes a [desert] into a pool of water, and a dry land into springs of water; and there He makes the hungry sow fields and plant vineyards, and gather a fruitful harvest?" Creatively using their God-given ingenuity, Israeli farmers

the main producer of vegetables for families in Europe to eat during the snowy winter months! It is just as the prophet Isaiah wrote: *"The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. They will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God"* (Isa. 35:1).

This journey through the stifling hot, harsh desert is worth it for what we find at the very tip of the dagger-shaped Negev. Before us, out of the desert dust, rises the resort city of Eilat, an oasis



*Eilat's Underwater Observatory Marine Park in the Red Sea. Photo licensed under CC BY 2.5.*

work throughout Israel, even in the desert, to feed the more than 6 million people who live in Israel, and still export or sell the remainder of their crops for people in other countries to eat. In a few years, this Negev Desert will be a sea of greenhouses and

of luxury on the shores of the Red Sea. Though at the very "bottom" of Israel, Eilat is sometimes called Israel's first city, since it has been suggested that this is where the Israelites, led by Moses, first set foot on this land. Now tourists like you



and me come through the Negev Desert to Israel's most southerly destination to see what swims in Elat's waters and flies in its skies. More different species of fish swim among Elat's breathtaking coral reefs than in any other waters in the whole wide world! Let's leave our camels at the shore and climb in this glass-bottomed boat. Focus your camera lens on a shot of that venomous lionfish or that moray eel swimming about the coral reef. A **coral reef** is a massive rock-like structure built by millions of very small marine animals called corals. **Corals** squirt **calcium carbonate** - which is the same substance that makes our bones hard—from their tiny bodies. This calcium carbonate forms a solid cup-like skeleton outside the coral's body. Over time the

joined outer skeletons of thousands of corals harden into rock and form a reef. Looking down through the transparent bottom of our boat, the coral reef looks like a bustling city or community, with the buildings made of coral, and thousands of colorful, strange-looking marine creatures swimming about. In this sense, Israel's coral reef is like a metropolitan city under the sea!

Now aim your camera lens high overhead. Approximately one billion birds **migrate** through Elat's skies twice yearly, making southern Israel the site of one of the greatest concentrations of migrating birds in the world. God created Israel as a beautiful land figuratively flowing with milk and honey, but also as a land teeming with fish in its seas and swarming with birds in its skies!



*The Red Sea is host to a variety of coral reefs and healthy marine populations, photo licensed for publication.*





### Field Notes

*What amazing sights we've seen today. I hope our photos capture all their beauty.*

#### PRESS RECORD AND TALK TO ME

- ◇ **About the Negev Desert:** *What is it shaped like? Describe a desert. Who lives in this dry, sandy place? What is the temperature like here? Can anything grow in this desert? Why is the Negev shrinking?*
- ◇ **About the Ramon Crater:** *What is it? How was it created? What colors would we see in it? What else would we find in its walls?*
- ◇ **About Elat:** *Where is it located? What is it sometimes called? What would we find in the water here? Describe the coral reef. What would we see in the skies above Elat?*

I try to avoid divisions and rifts, don't you? A **rift** can mean a break in friendly relations (best to avoid), or a break in the Earth's surface (best to explore). Israel's Rift is definitely unavoidable. One the most prominent natural geographical features on the entire planet, the valley can even be seen by astronauts orbiting in outer space. Winding along Israel's eastern border, the Jordan Rift Valley lies on a **fault line**, a crack in the Earth's crust where two **plates** meet. During the catastrophic world wide flood of Noah's day, it is quite likely that the two plates were ripped apart along this **strike-slip fault zone**, creating the Great Rift Valley which cuts through the Middle East and down into Eastern Africa. The deep gash of the Jordan Rift Valley is part of the larger Great Rift Valley.

What would you expect to find slithering through the Jordan Rift Valley? How about something God used to cure Namaan miraculously, something that once stopped in its course to make way for a passing prophet, something which baptized Jesus and which eventually finds itself at a dead end? Yes, through this Jordan Rift Valley winds what some consider the holiest river in the world: the Jordan River. Deriving its name from the Hebrew word "*descender*," the Jordan River does indeed descend down through Israel to... well, you just wait and see it where descends to!

All rivers begin somewhere. To find the Jordan's **tap**, or source, we look to the very northeast corner of Israel to "Gray Beard with the Eye-in-the-Sky." A majestic sight to behold, this mountain, otherwise known as Mount Hermon, is the highest peak in Israel. (Mount Hermon lies in the territory over which Israel and its neighbor, Syria, are disputing; hence, some do not feel Mount Hermon lies within Israel's borders.) Named "Grey Beard" because of its snowy peaks, Mount Hermon is also called Israel's "Eye-in-the-Sky" since from its peak one can see far off into the lands of Israel's neighbors. Depending on the season, we may catch a glimpse of skiers snaking down Mount Hermon's snowy slopes. Snap a picture of these Israelis so excited to see Israel's only snow that they are sledding down the slopes on cookie sheets! The snow that melts on Mount Hermon's sides, coupled with bubbling springs at the mountain's base, is the headwaters of the mighty Jordan River.



*Mount Hermon is the highest point in Israel and a strategic location for the country. Public domain photo by Almog.*

As the Jordan River flows south, it waters the orchards and cotton fields of the lush valleys south of Mount Hermon. As we frame up a picture of an Israeli family picnicking under eucalyptus trees, we wonder if Lot saw a similar scene in Genesis 13:10: *“Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere like the garden of the LORD.”* The most frequently mentioned river in the Bible (noted over 200

times), we recall how Elijah once walked across this Jordan River on dry ground (2 Kings 2:8,14). Today, we catch a glimpse of daring white water rafters riding the Lake Kinneret’s Hebrew name comes from the word, *kinnor*, meaning harp, so named because of the lake’s harp-like shape. But the only instruments we see anyone playing with at Lake Kinneret are water skis and wind surfboards. Did you know that once a man even walked on



*The Jordan River and Kfar-Hanasi bridge. Photo by Beivushtang, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.*



## A Child's Geography

these Lake Kinneret waters? Yes, Jesus! For Lake Kinneret is the Bible's Sea of Galilee. This "sea" is actually a large lake fed by the Jordan River. Like a giant bowl of water nestled into the Galilean hills, the surface of the Sea of Galilee is easily stirred by the winds that rush down the hillsides. Waves may

the winds and waves of the Sea of Galilee—and the whole world!

With the warm Sea of Galilee waters lapping at our toes we recall Jesus walking these shores and *"going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea;*



*The Sea of Galilee is one of the lowest freshwater lakes on Earth. Photo taken by Itamar Grinberg of Israeltourism, licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.*

billow as high as 20 feet [6 m]. Jesus, however, simply *"rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm...And [the disciples] feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"* (Mark 5:39, 41). Today our same God controls

*for they were fishermen"* (Mark 1:16). Fishing boats sail the sea today, weathered fishermen hauling in catches of silvery fish. Let's slip into one of the many restaurants that ring the shores and order a freshly caught "St. Peter's fish" as our luncheon fare, just like Jesus and his disciples once fried up on these shores.



While Lake Kinneret may be a bit of a fishbowl for fisherman, it is rather like a water bottle for the country of Israel. Like a huge straw, a large pipeline called the National Water Carrier carries drinking water from this lake to families and crops all over Israel. If you only had one bottle of water on a smothering hot afternoon, you would wisely ration your consumption; so the Israelis carefully conserve the fresh waters of the Sea of Galilee. More than 20,000 Israelis recently linked hands in a ring around the Sea of Galilee, “hugging” the sea from which so much of their water flows, and to again cheer the motto that every Israeli knows and lives by: “Don’t waste a drop!”

Just as the River Jordan feeds into the north end of the Sea of Galilee, so it slides out the south end of the Sea of Galilee, carrying more of this life-giving water further down the Jordan Rift Valley. As we sweep down the current, we think of where

Jesus once immersed himself in the waters of the Jordan in baptism. Standing on these banks, we try to imagine what it would have been like to hear the voice of God declare, “*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased*” (Matt. 3:17).

Israelis, however, also know this area south of the Sea of Galilee, on the banks of the Jordan, as the location of Israel’s first farming village, known as a *kibbutz*. Do your parents ask you to co-operate and share with your siblings? Well, a **kibbutz** is an Israeli farming village where everyone works cooperatively, sharing absolutely everything: all the work, all the decisions, and the profits. If you zoom in your camera’s focus, you’ll capture some memorable scenes of workers eating together in communal dining rooms, selecting their clothes from a community shop, and driving about in community-owned vehicles. In some cooperative villages in the past, parents



An ecological mud hut in Kibbutz Lotan, Israel. Photo by Adi Perez, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.



## A Child's Geography

did not even live with their own children, but shared them with the community! In such a kibbutz, all the children of the kibbutz lived in separate houses with their own caregivers and made daily visits to their parents. Many farms throughout the various geographic regions of Israel are still organized today much like the first farming kibbutz established along the banks of the Jordan River.

Flowing past these cooperative villages, the Jordan River makes its way to its own dead end. Look around at the jagged cliffs where the Jordan River ends in a steamy, gray lake. Does this look like the lowest place on the face of the Earth? It is! The Dead Sea—the end of the Jordan River—is indeed the very lowest place on the entire surface

of the Earth. Standing on the shore of the Dead Sea, we are 1,300 feet [400 m] below sea level. **Sea level** is a rather complex measurement, determined in part, by averaging the ocean levels between high tide and low tide. The height of all land and mountains on Earth are measured from sea level; that is to say, sea level is considered the starting point of zero. Think of sea level as zero on a thermometer, and the Dead Sea being far below the zero, at the bottom of the red bulb. Visualize us here at the Dead Sea as being so far pocketed down in the Earth's surface that we'd have to climb 1,300 feet straight up before we'd have even reached "sea level" or the mark zero! The Dead Sea is not only a dead end for the Jordan River; it is also rather a dead end in terms of the earth's depths!



*Hills east of the Sea of Galilee. Photo by Ian Scott, licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.*



*A Dead Sea Sunrise. Photo by Grauesel, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.*

We won't be eating fish on the Dead Sea as we did at Lake Kinneret, nor will we be sipping a drink of its waters. Not unless you prefer your cup of water to be one-third salt! The Dead Sea is the saltiest body of water in the world and no life, except for brine shrimp, can live in these murky waters; hence, its apt name of "Dead" Sea. The dead end Dead Sea, with no drainage outlet, continues to increase in saltiness as the **minerals** from the cliffs are washed by **erosion** into the sea and the sun's heat **evaporates** water, leaving salt behind.

If you'd like to cool off with a dip and a good book, by all means, dive in! You'll find it challenging because the high salt concentration causes everything to float. You may float on your back in the Dead Sea while you easily read a book

with nary a page getting wet! That's a photograph farming boy Ivan will shake his head over! (But if you've skinned your knee recently, best stand on shore, and take a picture of me since that salt water will sting any open sores!)

You are also more than welcome to roll about in the Dead Sea's mud like the other tourists. The mineral-rich mud from the salty Dead Sea is considered healthy for your skin. You may look very muddy in this photograph but we'll explain to Ivan how refreshed your skin was! Many tourist resorts line these shores for this very reason and the salt from the Dead Sea is sold around the world as a life-enhancing bath salt.

These shores are, however, the site of death and destruction for the Biblical cities of Sodom and Gomorrah which once stood overlooking





*Israel is truly a miraculous place.*

### PRESS RECORD AND TALK TO ME

- ◇ **About the Jordan Rift Valley:** *What part of this valley can astronauts see from space? What runs through the valley? Where does the Jordan River begin?*
- ◇ **About the Sea of Galilee:** *What is its other name? How does the water benefit the people of Israel? Do you remember any stories about the Sea of Galilee from the Bible?*
- ◇ **About a Kibbutz:** *What is it? What kinds of things do the families in a kibbutz share? Do you think you would like to live in a kibbutz?*
- ◇ **About the Dead Sea:** *What makes this body of water unique? What would swimming in the Dead Sea be like? Why do people take mud-baths here? What important mineral is harvested here?*

the Dead Sea. You may well recall Lot's wife who looked back at the judged, burning cities and herself became a pillar of salt (Genesis 19:26). Towards the saltier south end of the Dead Sea, we clearly see salt hardened into strange, contorted formations.

Snap a picture of what appears to be a constant blizzard of snow in the midst of soaring desert heat. That flurry of white is the blowing of salt at the Dead Sea Mineral Works factory, where salt is harvested for commercial sale. In a country with few **natural resources**, the Dead Sea robustly energizes the Israeli economy with the world's largest source of **potash**, a kind of **fertilizer** to make plants grow, and plentiful magnesium bromide, magnesium chloride and of course, salt. While the Dead Sea may be a barren, desolate place, our creative Creator God has also made the Dead Sea, the lowest place on Earth, a place that fosters growth, health and life.

And there! You've explored the wondrous landscape God has wrought in Israel: its spiny hill region, its anything-but-plain coastal plain, its blooming, sweet desert, and its gaping rift that leads the Jordan River down through the Hula Valley, the Sea of Galilee and to its dead end at the Dead Sea. Look to Mount Hermon in the north boasting its snowy slopes; now turn to balmy Elat in the south, with its spectacular coral reefs and colorful, tropical fish. Lying between these two extremes we've traveled through arid Negev desert, lush oases, green Mediterranean woods, and the lowest, saltiest point on earth—the Dead Sea. Deuteronomy 26:15 reads, "Look down, [God], from Your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel, and the ground which You have given us, a land flowing with milk and honey, as You swore to our fathers." With our own keen eyes and our robust faith, we've seen God's blessings upon the land of Israel, and the memories we've netted from our journey are enduringly ours to share—with folks like farming Ivan!

# Travel Log

USING YOUR GLOBE OR ATLAS, DRAW AN OUTLINE MAP OF TURKEY

*We've seen things today that simply must be mapped, so that they will never be forgotten!*



## Map Notes:

*Let's record the locations of:*

- ◇ Jordan Rift Valley
- ◇ Jordan River
- ◇ Mount Hermon
- ◇ Sea of Galilee or Lake Kinneret
- ◇ Dead Sea



If you'd like, draw pictures or symbols on your map representing:

- ◇ **Skiers on Mt. Hermon** (*or sledders on cookie sheets?*)
- ◇ **Fishermen on Lake Kinneret**
- ◇ **Kibbutz along the Jordan River**  
(*perhaps a group of children playing together in their village?*)
- ◇ **"Swimmers" in the Dead Sea** (*remember how the salt affects swimmers!*)
- ◇ **Dead Sea Mineral Works factory** (*a building? A giant salt shaker?*)

## Challenge mapping:

*Add the National Water Carrier and the Hula Valley to your map.*

**Travel Notes:** Geographers write what they've seen in order to share the adventure with others—and so they can revisit the places in their memories! On the next page of your travel log, record three important sights you want to remember from your photos of Israel.



# Bringing It Home

## SIMPLE IDEAS TO BRING THE WORLD TO YOUR DOOR

### *Using These Forms:*

#### ART | BOOKS | FOOD | MUSIC | POETRY

##### Books:

**The Never-Ending Greenness** by Neil Waldman  
A story of a young boy and his family escaping Nazi soldiers in Lithuania and emigrating to “eretz Yisrael” (the land of Israel) to replant a barren and empty land with trees and hope. An uplifting story, it is a most worthy tribute to the work of new settlers “greening” Israel. *Appealing to all ages.*

**Three Wishes: Palestinian and Israeli Children Speak** by Deborah Ellis

The moving stories of 20 Jewish, Christian and Palestinian children, ages 8-18, interviewed in 2002, who speak their own stories of everyday life in a region of conflict. Offering glimmers of hope in the even the grimmest stories, the voices of these children will compel readers to further explore the issues of the Middle East and to pray with fervency. *Gr-4-8*

**The Dog of Knots** by Kathy Walden Kaplan  
Set in the turmoil of the Yom Kippur War of 1973, 9-year-old Mayim moves to Haifa, meeting a stray dog that bonds neighbors together. Offering a glimpse life in modern Israel, this is a story of loss, courage and compassion. *Gr. 4-8*

**Jerusalem of Gold: Jewish Stories of the Enchanted City** by Howard Schwartz  
Eleven stories set in Jerusalem, from King David

to Rabbi Nachman, are complemented with a brief historical background to further understanding of the Jewish traditions. *Gr. 4-8*

##### Poetry:

Did you know that some of the world’s most famous poetry is from Israel? The Bible is full of Jewish poems, many written by the Hebrew King David (the same David who slew Goliath!). One sample of his work from Psalm 65 is below:

*They who dwell in the ends of the earth  
stand in awe of Your signs;  
You make the dawn and the sunset shout for joy.  
You visit the earth and cause it to overflow;  
You greatly enrich it;  
The stream of God is full of water;  
You prepare their grain, for thus You prepare the earth.  
You water its furrows abundantly,  
You settle its ridges,  
You soften it with showers,  
You bless its growth.  
You have crowned the year with Your bounty,  
And Your paths drip with fatness.  
The pastures of the wilderness drip,  
And the hills gird themselves with rejoicing.  
The meadows are clothed with flocks  
And the valleys are covered with grain;  
They shout for joy, yes, they sing.*

## 6

## Israel

## Howdy, Pilgrim!

## PART III

When you think of pilgrims, does your mind's eye conjure up a scene of the Pilgrim's progress to the Celestial City, wallowing and wrestling through the miry Slough of Despond? Or do scenes of Pilgrims setting up a Thanksgiving Feast at Plymouth Rock flash through your mind? Let's close our eyes and become a different kind of pilgrim; one who journeys all the way to the Dome of the Rock in the heart of Israel's Old World.

A **pilgrim** is one who travels or pilgrimages to distant lands, or one who journeys to sacred places. We are going to do both! God's Word promises a blessing to him *"whose heart is set on pilgrimage"* (Ps. 84:5 NKJV). Let's see how God will bless us!

The early church historian, Eusebius, speaks of the first pilgrim, Alexander, (later to become the Bishop of Jerusalem), who traveled to Israel before 213 A.D. "for the purposes of prayer and investigation of the Holy places." That was a mere 200 years after the crucifixion of our Lord. For the following 1,800 years people just like you and me have been strapping on their sandals, filling their water jugs, and coming to see with their own eyes the places where Jesus was born, where He lived and taught, and where He sacrificed Himself for all the world—then staggeringly, rose from the dead! So, would *you* like to go on this pilgrimage?

Can you sing the song with me? "O Little Town of Bethlehem..." Stand here atop one of the rolling Judean Hills, looking out over the white buildings of Bethlehem, and listen to the words the prophet



*Walk the way of the pilgrims through the old streets of Jerusalem.  
Photo by Nagillum, licensed under CC BY 2.0.*



## A Child's Geography

Micah spoke of this place, *“And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; for out of you shall come forth a ruler who will shepherd my people, Israel”* (Matt. 2:6). Ruth, from the Book of Ruth, may have lived in Bethlehem; but it was great-grandson, King David, who was both born in Bethlehem, and rose to shepherd the nation of Israel. Yet the Scripture speaks most importantly of this Bethlehem as the place where God became flesh.

(Can you find Bethlehem on your map of Israel? From the streets of Bethlehem, we can see the buildings of Jerusalem 6 mi [10 km] to the north.) Doesn't it seem fitting that the Good Shepherd,

from our hike up here, we'll never again think of Mary's donkey easily cantering down a flat road into this dusty town. Bethlehem rises up out of the steep rugged terrain in the Judean and Samaritan hill country. Our pilgrim road journeys over extremely rocky hills punctuated by deep ravines and plunging gorges that make travel in central Israel a strain on both man and machine.

Past Rachel's tomb, we travel Bethlehem's main thoroughfare, Manger Street, seeking to find the exact spot where Jesus was born. Actually, no one knows the spot for certain! Centuries ago, a certain cave used as a barn for cattle was believed to be where our Lord Jesus spent His first night on



*The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem is one of the oldest Christian churches in the world. Photo by Berthold Werner is in the public domain.*

Jesus, whose body would be like bread broken for us, would be born in the town of Bethlehem whose name means “the house of Bread?” Breathless

Earth. But if we visit that cave today, on Manger Square, we find a white-stoned church: the Church of the Nativity. As Jesus humbled Himself by



coming to earth, so we too bend low to enter the small doorway of the Church of the Nativity. Built by order of Constantine the Great (A.D. 330), and rebuilt by Emperor Justinian after its destruction during a revolt, this dimmed Church of the Nativity with its ancient stone walls, may be the oldest Christian church in the world. Inside

a population of more than 185,000 people, is a Muslim town. There is however, still a bylaw that requires the mayor of Bethlehem to be a Christian.

We pilgrims now shake the dust off our sandals, and head north out of Bethlehem and up to the northern hills of Galilee to the city of Nazareth, the town where Jesus grew up and



Today we find the "little town of Bethlehem" to be a modern city of more than 60,000 people. Photo by Lux Moundi, licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.

the hushed place of worship, we step down a dark, narrow stairway into a candle-lit space revered as perhaps the manger of Jesus' birth. Don't you marvel that He came at all? We worship too.

Stepping back out into the street and the light of day, we venture past another nearby grotto, or small cave, where during the 5<sup>th</sup> century St. Jerome is said to have spent thirty long years hunched over texts, translating the Scriptures into Latin.

When Jesus was born, Bethlehem was a Jewish town. After the time of St. Jerome, Bethlehem was a Christian town. Today Bethlehem, with

lived most of His 33 years. Why did Jesus live in Nazareth instead of any other town in Israel? The Bible tells us, *"This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: 'He shall be called a Nazarene'"* (Matt. 2:23).

The word Nazareth is thought to be rooted in the Hebrew word *"netser"* which means "shoot" or "branch." And do you remember these words that Isaiah prophesied about the Messiah? *"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse and a Branch shall grow out of his roots"* (Isa. 11:1). Jesus was that branch! How fitting it is that Jesus' hometown was Nazareth, the "branch."



## A Child's Geography

Cupped as if in a basin, looming **limestone** hills rise around Nazareth. Nazareth's red roofed houses were built of the white limestone from these hills. Now where exactly did Jesus live with

began digging in search of the problem. Come see the startling discovery he dug up! We step down into a beautiful high-vaulted room from which Mr. Shama guides us through underfloor



*Nazareth in Galilee with the Basilica of Annunciation. Photo by Daphna Tal, licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.*

Joseph and Mary in Nazareth? Or can someone point the way to the carpenter shop where He hammered away? Again, we don't know for sure. We do see a sign directing us to Mary's well. Gaze down into the well's dark eye. Can't you see the boy Jesus drawing up water here for Mary's washing and cooking?

Across the modern plaza in front of Mary's well, we wave hello to Elias Shama, a Christian Arab and owner of the Cactus gift shop. While offering us a cold drink, Mr. Shama explains to us that the floor of the storage room at the back of the gift shop was always damp, so he

heating channels to a white marble floor and tile columns meeting overhead in an array of **arches**. Unbelievably, we are standing in an unearthed **Roman bathhouse**. Is it from the time of Jesus? One pilgrim wrote over 500 years ago, "*arriving the next day in Nazareth...[t]he citizens told me that there existed a hot bathhouse where the Mother of Jesus immersed herself.*" Perhaps this indeed is the bathhouse of Jesus!

Saying our goodbyes to Mr. Shama, we pass children playing in the streets as we walk up the hill to the **souq**, the Arab Market. Today Nazareth is a city of more than 80,000, half of



the residents Christian, while the other half are Muslim.

Leaving Nazareth behind, we follow Jesus' trail 18.6 miles [30 km] to the east of Nazareth, passing through the little village once known as Cana, now known as *Kafr Kanna*, where Jesus performed his first miracle of turning water into wine and make our way to the Sea of Galilee. In the eastern shore town of Tabgha, let's slip into the Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes. If we look down to the design on the church floor, we see a mosaic of a basket of bread and two fishes, just like Jesus miraculously multiplied for the ravenous crowds! If you visited my home, you'd find that very same tile picture on a plate hanging on my wall, my very own two "St. Peter's Fish," from the Sea of Galilee.

Meandering south along these wave-lapped shores of the blue-green Sea of Galilee, we think of the Beatitudes Jesus spoke on these hills: "*Blessed are the poor in spirit.*" If we peer through the flowers and palm trees, do you see the **octagonal** Church of Beatitudes perched there with a breathtaking view of the lake? Let's follow the other pilgrims into this beautifully domed church with its eight walls, one for each of the **Beatitudes**, and a beatitude inscribed on each of the eight windows.

Are you discovering the two very different kinds of holy sites in Israel? Some sites are churches where devoted pilgrims have worshipped down through the centuries, while other sites remain as God created them and our Lord Jesus actually saw and experienced them. Stepping out of The Church of the Beatitudes,



*The Church of the Multiplication of Loaves and Fishes. Photo by Berthold Werner in the public domain.*





*The Church of the Beatitudes. Photo taken by Luc Legay, licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.*

into the glorious sunshine of the Mount of Beatitudes, we are struck with the realization that these rolling hills are the same today as when Jesus once stood here; that the water of the Sea of Galilee rocks and rolls today as when our Lord Jesus once preached here; and as Jesus once spoke truth to the crowds on these hillsides, so we too continue to listen to His words.

Let's trek south now to David's city, Jerusalem, where native Israelis mill through congested booths and shops lining narrow streets, where merchants ply their crates of oranges and nuts, and where ancient cobbled-stone streets wind down to modern highways a-blur with cars and tour buses. Valleys drop away on all sides from the perched city of Jerusalem which was the capital of Israel in the time of King David and

is claimed by Israelis today as the capital of the modern country of Israel.

The Palestinian Arabs who lived here before the Jewish people returned to this land consider the eastern section of Jerusalem to be the future capital city of their state of Palestine. Thus, Jerusalem is a contested, disputed city with two nations of people claiming it as their very own capital city. In the midst of this ongoing conflict, pilgrims from three of the world's most recognized faiths—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—pilgrimage to this one city of Jerusalem, dressed very differently, worshiping very differently, and esteeming different locations, yet all seeking to encounter God.

Let us follow these Orthodox Jews, dressed in black suits, some with long side curls wisping out from under their black hats, to their holy



site. Before a looming honey-colored stonewall, the bearded men drape themselves in a white prayer shawl with tassels and bow their heads in prayer. Why do Jews the world over make pilgrimage to this wall built with massive stones? These stones are the last remnant of the Western Wall of Herod's Temple, from the time of Jesus. Jews believe the Western Wall has greater holiness than any other place on Earth to which they are able to pilgrimage. (At the top of the Western Wall lies the area where the hallowed Solomon's Temple once stood. While it is revered as more holy, Jews do not have ready access to this area since it is under Muslim control.) Sometimes the **Western Wall** is referred to as the Wailing Wall—but

neither does the wall wail, nor do Jews cry here. If we listen closely we may hear Jews praying in Hebrew for God to bless the land of Israel. As this wall was once part of God's Temple, Jews believe that to pray before the Western Wall is to pray before the ear of God.

Respectfully standing before this long, expansive Western Wall, with its clumps of grass sprouting up here and there, we are in awe of living during this time in history, when Jewish men, women and children may worship here. From the time of Romans walking around in togas, the Western Wall was not controlled by Israeli Jews but by distant, non-Jewish powers. During a short but fierce six day war in 1967 the Israelites captured the eastern section of



*The Western Wall is the last remnant of the last Temple where Jews come to pray. Photo licensed under CC BY 2.5.*





*Howdy Pilgrim! Are you ready to take a rest and talk about your travels so far?*

### PRESS RECORD AND TALK TO ME

- ◇ **About Bethlehem :** *Which Biblical people were born here? Can you tell me about the journey Mary and Joseph took to get here? What is the Church of the Nativity? How do we get in? What will we see inside?*
- ◇ **About Nazareth:** *Can you describe the town? Why is Nazareth an important city historically? How many people live here today?*
- ◇ **About the Sea of Galilee:** *What miracle did Jesus do at Cana? What would we see inside the Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes? Can you describe the Church of the Beatitudes?*
- ◇ **About Jerusalem:** *Why do so many pilgrims come to Jerusalem? What is the Western Wall? Can you tell me about the people who pray there?*

Jerusalem and for the first time in 2,000 years, Jews once again controlled the Western Wall. Jews around the world cried tears of joy. We too tuck a scrap of paper with our prayer of thanks in with the other paper prayers stuck between the great stones of the Western Wall.

Just above the Western Wall with its praying Jews, do you see turbaned and veiled Muslims pilgrimage to their holy site: the Mosque of Omar? The Mosque of Omar is *not* actually a Muslim mosque (a Muslim place of worship) but a holy **shrine** (a building that houses items considered holy) and no one named Omar built the mosque, but Omar prayed here! Better known as the Dome of the Rock, don't you think its golden **dome** dazzles and glimmers brilliantly in the Middle Eastern sun? Indeed one of the most famous landmarks of Jerusalem, the dome was once covered in genuine gold, but now is an aluminum dome covered with gold leaf, a gift from a king of the nearby country of Jordan.

Take your shoes off as we step into the Dome and onto its plush carpet. Tiled **mosaics** of paradise decorate walls and ceilings, marble columns supporting artful arches. Inscribed in Arabic on the interior octagon of the shrine are the words, "O you People of the Book, overstep not bounds in your religion, and of God speak only the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, is only an apostle of God, and his Word which he conveyed unto Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from him. Believe therefore in God and his apostles, and say not Three. It will be better for you. God is only one God. Far be it from his glory that he should have a son."

As magnificent as the shrine is architecturally, it is the rock underneath the glittering dome that makes this place holy. Named the Noble Rock, the rock under the golden dome is thought by Muslims to be the place where their founder, Mohammed, ascended up to heaven to the throne of Allah. For Muslims, this Noble Rock is the third holiest site in the world. Jews and Christians revere Noble Rock as Mount Moriah. For Jews and Christians,

this Noble Rock of Mount Moriah is the place where Abraham prepared to sacrifice Isaac and where the Jewish Temple's Holy of Holies, the very dwelling place of God, once stood. Yes, Noble Rock indeed! And now we understand the name, Dome of the Rock.

Emerging from the shrine, we note the expansive area, part of the Temple Mount, between the Western Wall and the Dome of the Rock. Someday, perhaps in your lifetime, another glorious temple, the Third Temple, might once again be constructed on the Temple Mount. Then devout people the world over will make pilgrimage to that spectacular holy site, and maybe *you* will write to tell us all about it!

While Christian pilgrims visit Muslim and Jewish holy sites, we also quietly walk the Way of Grief, often called by its Latin name, the **Via Dolorosa**. To walk the Via Dolorosa and its winding cobblestone streets is to follow what many believe to be the same path our bruised Lord Jesus dragged His heavy cross to the crucifixion. As our minds fill with thoughts of our Savior, we pass Israeli children running home from school and Jewish mothers, kerchiefs knotted under their chins, carrying home the groceries from the marketplace. We wonder what Jesus thought as He trod these stones and how He loved the people of this world.

Our Via Dolorosa route leads to a sprawling, domed church, the Church of the Holy **Sepulchre**. This

cavernous church, its dim recesses lit only by lamps and candles, is thought to stand at the location where our Lord Jesus was nailed to the cross. Where once our Lord hung on a rugged cross, today candles glimmer and create shadows before an altar and paintings of the crucifixion. We step into the small inner building housing the place thought to be Jesus' tomb. Leaning low to look into the burial shafts of carved stone, we marvel at the miracle before our eyes: the tomb is empty! Jesus is *alive*! This explains why some Christians refer to the church not as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, but as the Church of the Resurrection!



*Priests still lead pilgrims down The Via Dolorosa each week. Photo in the public domain courtesy of Lewis Larsson.*



## A Child's Geography

Five different Christian denominations share the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, robed priests sweeping this way and that. But until just a few years ago, the church had only one entrance of colossal doors. The five different

church shared by 5 different Christian groups, whose front door is unlocked and locked every day by a Muslim, to see where a Jew died for the sins of the world. Israel truly is a holy land for three different faiths.



*The Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Photo by Jorge Lascar, licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.*

Christian groups could not agree on who would step up the short ladder to the keyhole, head-height off the ground, to lock and unlock the creaking door. To keep the peace, the door's foot-long iron key was entrusted to a Muslim family, the Nuseibehs. For over eight hundred years, from the time of the Crusades, Nuseibeh grandfathers have passed the key down to their sons. In the blue light of early morning, the Nuseibeh family still comes to unlock the church's massive wooden doors, returning to lock the church door each evening at dusk. Here, at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Christians come to one of Christendom's most holy sites, a

When I was younger, I mistakenly thought Israel remained an ancient place where people today still lived just like they did in Bible times. Pilgrims of the faith may explore Israel's ancient sites, but Israelis themselves are exploring the future, areas of knowledge and education, creative innovations and ideas! Actually, the Bible land of Israel is today one of the most progressive, modern countries in the world! Israel has more scientists and engineers amongst its peoples than any other country on earth. The technology involved in the computer on which I write was first designed in the country of Israel. Computer programs such as Yahoo and MSN Messenger are entirely Israeli products. The



*Matam High-Tech park in Haifa – the largest and oldest High-Tech park in Israel. Photo taken by Zvi Roger, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.*

scientists and engineers of Israel also invent more medical devices to help sick people than any other country. A medical test at my doctor's office has the words "Made in Israel" printed in small letters on the side. The lands of the Bible are actually very modern!

Do you know someone with a sparkling diamond ring? That diamond may well have passed through Israel! Digging in Israel's dirt will not yield you any diamonds, but more Israelis purchase rough diamonds from other places in the world than any other country on Earth. Israelis operate lasers and robots to cut these purchased rough diamonds and Israeli craftspeople, using sophisticated polishing equipment, work to manufacture many of the world's most beautiful diamonds. Touch the next diamond you see—it may have come from the hand of an Israeli diamond craftsman. And no wonder, as it said about the Israeli people in the Bible: *"For they are as the stones of a crown, Sparkling in [God's] land"* (Zech 9:16).

We've set our hearts on pilgrimage, traveling throughout Israel, and hasn't God blessed us, just as He promised? Psalm 122:4 declares that *"All...the LORD's people make their pilgrimage here. They come to give thanks to the name of the LORD"* (NLT). So do we. Yet the "Holy Land" is not only over in Israel; every place where the Spirit comes into a person's heart is holy ground. Oh, to remember: ***"The earth is the LORD'S and all...those who dwell in it"*** (Ps. 24:1). Amen!

## Field Notes

*What a rich and fascinating place Israel is. Have you enjoyed our journeys through Bible lands?*

### PRESS RECORD AND TALK TO ME

- ◇ **About the Dome of the Rock:** *Can you describe the Dome? What does the inside look like? What is Noble Rock? Why is the rock a holy site for Muslims? What do Christians and Jews call the rock? Why is it important to them?*
- ◇ **About the Via Dolorosa:** *What does the name mean? Who walked this way?*
- ◇ **About the Church of the Holy Sepulchre:** *What site is this church believed to be built upon? What is another name for this church? Who holds the key to the door? How is it unlocked each day?*
- ◇ **About modern-day Israel:** *What kinds of things are made in Israel? Why do so many diamonds travel through Israel? Is Israel a modern place, like your own town or city? Or has it remained as it was in Bible times?*



# Travel Log

USING YOUR GLOBE OR ATLAS, DRAW AN OUTLINE MAP OF TURKEY

*We've seen things today that simply must be mapped, so that they will never be forgotten!*



## Map Notes:

*Let's record the locations of:*

- ◇ Bethlehem
- ◇ Nazareth
- ◇ Kafr Kanna
- ◇ Tabgha
- ◇ Sea of Galilee
- ◇ Jerusalem
- ◇ Mount Moriah



If you'd like, draw pictures or symbols on your map representing:

- ◇ **The stable where Jesus was born** (*perhaps a star?*)
- ◇ **Jesus' home in Nazareth** (*maybe a hammer to represent Joseph's work as a carpenter?*)
- ◇ **Jesus' miracles** (*a basket of bread and fish in Tabgha? A jug of wine in Kafr Kanna? A Man walking the Sea of Galilee?*)
- ◇ **Western Wall** (*a scroll of paper to represent the prayers?*)
- ◇ **The Dome of the Rock** (*a shining gold dome seems appropriate!*)
- ◇ **Via Dolorosa** (*a cross?*)
- ◇ **Church of the Holy Sepulchre** (*an empty tomb? A long metal key?*)
- ◇ **Modern Israel** (*perhaps a computer? Or a diamond ring?*)

**Travel Notes:** Geographers write what they've seen in order to share the adventure with others—and so they can revisit the places in their memories! **On the next page of your travel log, record three important sights you want to remember from your photos of Israel.**

# Bringing It Home

## SIMPLE IDEAS TO BRING THE WORLD TO YOUR DOOR

### *Using These Forms:*

#### ART | BOOKS | FOOD | MUSIC | POETRY

#### Food:

##### **Bagels and Lox**

The bagel may have originated in Poland in the 1600s and been brought to America by immigrating Jews, but today it is customarily associated with Jewish cuisine. Top a poppy-seed or sesame-seed bagel with cream cheese and lox (smoked salmon) and enjoy! (If you don't have smoked salmon, your store should carry salmon-flavored cream cheese.)



*Bagels and lox.*

##### **Hamentaschen**

These triangular shaped cookies are baked and enjoyed during the feast of Purim, which celebrates the salvation of Israel through Queen Esther's heroic act. The name comes from the Hebrew words osnei haman (literally, Haman's Ears).

*2/3 cup butter*

*1/2 cup sugar*

*1 egg*

*1/4 cup pulp-free orange juice*

*1 cup white flour*

*1 cup wheat flour – no substitutes*

*2 tsp. baking powder*

*Jam of your choice*

Beat butter and sugar thoroughly. Add egg and mix until well combined. Add the orange juice and mix again, until well combined. Add flour, ½ c at a time,

alternating white and wheat, blending thoroughly between each addition. Add baking powder with last addition of flour. Refrigerate until chilled thoroughly – a few hours or overnight. Roll dough as thin as possible without tearing (you may want to roll it between two sheets of flour-dusted wax paper). Cut out 3-4 in [7.6 – 10 cm] circles. Put a dollop of jam in the middle of each circle and fold up sides to make a triangle, overlapping as much as possible so only a small amount of jam shows in the center. Pinch corners to seal. Bake at 350 F [176 C] for 15 – 20 minutes until golden brown.



*Photo of Hamentaschen*



# Go into all the world...

## *a walk of prayer*

**A**s we've journeyed through tiny Israel we've been amazed to walk the land of the Bible and see that all the places we've read about really exist! And we've discovered that Israel is full of boys and girls not so different from us at all. They were created by a God who loves them dearly—just as He loves you.

**Will you and your family join me in praying for the Israeli people?**

Lord, give us Your love for the peoples of the world, and help our family to live in a way that shows our love for them.

Father, we think of this little country that is the center of so much attention, and we think of how much You love her people. We pray for **peace** and Your purposes for the nation of Israel.

~As the holy land for 3 major religions, Israel is continually being wrestled over. Lord, may the people who live within her borders live at **peace with their neighbors**. May they learn to **love each other** as You patiently love us. We pray for godly wisdom for the world's governments as decisions are made regarding this region of the world and may Your will be accomplished.

~We think of the families, mothers and fathers, children and grandparents, cousins and aunts and uncles, who must live their lives in the midst of such turmoil. **We ask that You keep families safe.** We ask that You **provide for their needs** in the middle of conflicts. May there be food for their tables and warm houses to find safety. May they find joy in You.



~We pray for the thousands of **immigrants** who leave other countries behind to embrace Israel as their homeland. Many are without jobs or homes. Please provide for their needs. May no one go hungry or live in the cold.

~We pray for the **pilgrims** who make their way to Israel each year. As they travel, may they discover You, and make their pilgrimage complete.

We love you, Lord, and the people who are living in Israel today. May the Light of our Savior dawn over all nations today. Draw us all closer to You, Father. In Jesus name, Amen.