

IN THE LAND OF GOD'S ANCIENT PEOPLE:
A LOOK AT WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY SUMMER QUARTERS
IN ISRAEL, 1978-1982

by

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Spring, 1988

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following pastors (some were students at the time of these summer quarters), professors, teachers, lay men and women for sharing their experience with me and allowing me to use their thoughts and words in the writing of this paper. Special thanks is extended to Professors John Brug, Richard Balge and John Jeske for taking the time to be interviewed and permitting me to use their personal notes, correspondence, books, maps etc. in my research.

Any inaccuracies or omissions are entirely my responsibility and will no doubt be reflected in my grade.

Mark Albrecht
Dan Balge
Richard Balge
Robert Balza
Gary Baumler
John Brug
Kenneth Gast
Wilbert Gawrisch
Joel Gerlach
Lillian Gerlach
Dennis Himm

Kay Himm
John Jeske
Paul Kelm
John Lawrenz
Gregory Lenz
Paul Margraff
Thomas Nass
Carol Nitz
Paul Nitz
Lawrence Olson
Armin Panning

Tom Schneider
Armin Schuetze
Esther Schuetze
Robert Schumann
Richard Stadler
Glen Thompson
Carol Trapp
Thomas Trapp
John Vogt
Sandra Vogt
Ernst Wendland
Mark Zarling

FOREWORD

The Summer Quarter in Israel (SQI) was a unique program of the Seminary that brought the classroom into the very land that the events of the Bible took place. The ancient people of God, the Israelites, lived there. Men like Abraham, Moses, Joshua and David walked and fought and died there. Most importantly, it was in that land where God's plan of salvation was carried out. Now certain members of the Wisconsin Synod were going to see what the ancients saw, walk where they walked and experience some of the things they experienced. And these modern day men and women of God would leave that land with a deeper understanding of God's Word and an enriched faith in their God and Savior.

It is my goal as a person who has never been to Israel, to not only outline the history of the SQI's, but also to capture some of the emotion and feelings that these men and women felt as they worked and studied in the Holy Land. I hope this overview will not only be a source of information but also a bit of a motivator to encourage us all to dig deeper into the unfathomable Word of God and thus grow stronger in knowledge and in faith in the Savior of the world, Jesus the Christ.

"I often envied the youngest men in our group who are just starting to teach and preach and I knew that all their work would be richer having seen what they saw and having experienced what they experienced."

Seminary professor

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I. Beginnings of SQI

The idea for an educational experience in the land of Israel for the pastors and teachers of the WELS originated with Rev. John Lawrenz, now president of Michigan Lutheran Seminary (MLS). Lawrenz spent time studying in Israel for his PHD. He became involved in the archaeological program of Tel Aviv University Institute of Archaeology (TAU). TAU was and still is involved with an ongoing study of Coastal Plain of Israel and the settlement of the ancient nations in that region. Lawrenz began digging in Israel in 1970 at Beersheba and again in 1972. During the time he was in Israel he had opportunity to tour it from one end to the other. The digs and his personal touring gave him familiarity with the geography of the land and the discipline of archaeology. He realized the value of having such a background for his work as a pastor. This realization moved him to explore ways of providing opportunities for other pastors and teachers to participate in such an experience.

In time he contacted Prof. John Jeske of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS), and asked if the Seminary would be interested in organizing something in which more people could go to Israel. Jeske brought this idea before the faculty, who in turn approved it and sent it on to the Seminary's Board of Control. The Board of Control approved the idea of a study quarter in Israel as an official program of WLS.

The idea took shape as a WLS summer quarter of study known as Summer Quarter in Israel (SQI). The objectives of SQI were to 1) acquaint the student with the history, structure and methodology of Biblical archaeology so that he might better evaluate the contributions and limitations of this modern tool of Biblical interpretation, and 2) acquaint the student with the important features, locales and peculiarities of the land in which God in ancient times revealed His Word and His Son.

The results of this educational experience would be disseminated throughout the Synod by articles in the Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly, by professors and teachers with their students in the classroom and by pastors to their congregations. Lectures to groups within congregations would also be a way of sharing this experience.

SQI as part of WLS's program of study was aimed primarily for WELS pastors and Seminary students. The primary goal and job of WLS is to build better Bible students, "guys with their feet on the ground in Scripture study."¹ Thus SQI was definitely designed to be an educational experience. The summer quarter was not limited to pastors and Seminary students. Teachers and students enrolled at Doctor Martin Luther College (DMLC) were also invited to participate. Interested lay men and women were welcomed as group size limitations permitted. Pastors from the Evangelical Lutheran Synod were also encouraged to take part.

In order for this program to be carried out, it was necessary for WLS to plug into an existing university system in Israel. That system was TAU. Lawrenz's ties and experience with TAU proved

invaluable here. TAU is widely known as a leader in the field of archaeology. Several world-renown archaeologists are connected to its program and work. The Seminary however, did not want to be considered solely as a breeder school of students for TAU's archeological program. Rather they wanted to be considered as partners in the work that TAU was doing. WLS had specific goals in mind for their men and didn't want anything to prevent these goals from being fulfilled. The status of a partner would permit the Seminary to become part of the determining troupe that would influence the carrying out of the program. The Seminary wanted its participants to get the opportunity to see every significant part of the land and to spend a lot of time in Jerusalem and Galilee. They did not want this goal to be thwarted in any way by whatever TAU would have set up. But at the same time they wanted its participants to learn dirt archaeology through "hands on" experience and lectures which TAU specializes in.

TAU saw the benefits of this plan for their own purposes. They would have at their disposal from WLS plenty of healthy extra bodies to dig their sites and help accomplish their goals. A happy partnership then ensued. The SQI of 1978 (SQI '78) set the standard for the following two summer quarters in Israel. The archaeology portion in which the participants did actual work on the dig sites was performed Monday through Friday for four weeks. Lawrenz and the Seminary staff members then led tours of Israel for one week previous to and one week following the dig, as well as on the weekends of the dig session. So 20 days were devoted to digging, 18 days to touring.

Lawrenz and Jeske were the co-leaders of the three SQI's. Lawrenz took charge of all the travel arrangements to Israel and contracted for all the lodging, meals, tours etc. It was necessary for these arrangements to be made a year in advance of each SQI. Consequently Lawrenz found himself in Israel during the interim years of 1979 and 1981 taking care of these arrangements as well as taking part in the ongoing digs that TAU was a part of.

Jeske was responsible for the educational program, reporting of progress made to the faculty, recruitment of participants, scholarship funding from AAL and much of the correspondence with the prospective participants.

The success of this program had a lot to do with the time and energy devoted to it by these two men. I think Lawrenz is speaking for both himself and Jeske when he makes the statement, "The Summer Quarter in Israel was and is very dear to me."² Comments by the participants themselves that are contained in subsequent pages will show that this work was appreciated and well worth the effort.

II. Educational Set-up

One's first response to hearing that there would be a Seminary led trip to Israel might be: "Sounds like a great vacation." But I think those who took the trip would describe it quite differently. Certainly there were elements of a "vacation" for the SQI participants. They got away from the normal routines of life, saw new sights, learned about a different culture, ate new foods and so forth. But the SQI's were much more. A mere sight-seeing trip it wasn't. Instead it was an in-depth educational experience that will never be forgotten.

In order to make this a truly educational experience much planning and forethought had to be done. WLS offered 7½ credits in two areas under four headings for eligible participants. The credits were used towards a Master of Sacred Theology degree. 1½ credits could be earned each in "Archaeology of the Old Testament" and in "Archaeology of the New Testament." The course work for these subject areas included four weeks of excavation at the dig sites, as well as attendance at the afternoon seminars and evening lectures. The lectures were given by distinguished American, Australian and Israeli archaeologists each evening during the dig session, Sunday - Thursday. The lectures covered the general archaeological horizon of the ancient east Mediterranean, the specific historical periods of ancient Israel and its near neighbors and the technical aspects of archaeological research. Titles of some of these lectures were:

Mediterranean World in Antiquity
 The Jewish Return
 The Persian Period
 Early Bronze Age
 Sharon Plain in History
 Middle Bronze Age
 Late Bronze Age
 Late Bronze Archaeology
 History of the Israelite Period
 Archaeology of the Israelite Period
 Phoenician History and Culture
 The Biblical Negev
 Hellenistic and Roman History through Coins

Students were expected to take notes during these lectures. Credit from TAU could be earned by those who were not eligible to receive credits from WLS, (only pastors, Seminary students, and male teachers could earn credit from WLS) if they took an essay exam at the close of the dig season. The essay was one which demonstrated a basic comprehension of Israel in the ancient world as viewed from

an archaeological viewpoint.

WLS also gave 3 credits in "Geography of the Old Testament" and 1½ credits in "Geography of the New Testament." These credits were available only to SQI credit participants. All non-credit participants, such as the wives of enrolled students were still expected to cooperate fully in all the activities.

These credits were earned by taking part in the Seminary led tours and attending the lectures given by the Seminary professors. Each staff member gave around seven lectures with each lecture focusing on a specific site that was visited. These lectures were delivered at the very site if it was possible and lasted about 30-40 minutes. There were about 40 such lectures given during each SQI. Here is a sample list of lecture titles with the place they were given at in parenthesis:

Jerusalem, the City of God (Temple Mount in
Jerusalem)
Where the Cross and the Tomb? (Garden Tomb)
The Kikkar of the Jordan (NT Jericho)
Philistia of the Philistines (Ashkelon)
Wilderness and Wandering (Beersheba)
Haven of the Patriarchs (Hebron)
Voices Crying from the Wilderness
(Khirbet Qumran)
Citadel in the Wilderness (Masada)
Armageddon at the Crossroads (Megiddo)
Galilee of the Gentiles (Beth Netofa Valley)
The Footsteps of our Lord in Lower Galilee
(Tiberias)
The Footsteps of our Lord Around the Sea
(Tiberias)
Canaan, a land of Contrasts (Mt. Meron)

Each participant possessed a handbook which contained an outline of each lecture delivered (See Appendix B for a sample outline). Space was available in the handbook to take notes on the lecture. In addition to auditing these lectures, credit participants had to demonstrate a 90% or better competency with a skeleton

map of the Holy Land. Following the trip a written paper was to be submitted. The paper was to demonstrate the student's awareness of geography as it related to a Biblical text.

In order to facilitate the educational experience, the participants were divided into equal groups with a Seminary professor as the group leader. These were study and discussion groups. Students could then go to their group leader if they had any questions pertaining to their archaeological or geographical studies. Credit participants selected their written topic in consultation with their group leader as well. Each group had a small library to which the individual members of a group had access to. This library consisted of a Hebrew Bible, a Greek New Testament, a Bible Atlas and The Geography of the Bible by Baly. There was one NIV Old and New Testament Bible for the group, Everyone had their own pocket NIV New Testament as well as a Handbook for Field Archaeology, that was distributed by TAJ and its partner institutions (together known as the Archaeological Expedition to the Coastal Plain of Israel - AECPI).

It is very doubtful that one could learn about Israel's geography or about Biblical archaeology in any better setting than that of Israel where the events of the Bible took place. The following two sections will discuss in depth the archaeological aspect of SQI and the benefits of the study of Biblical geography in Israel.

III. Archaeological Aspect

What is archaeology? Why study biblical archaeology? Archaeology in the minds of many people is often thought of as a study in sensational discoveries from the distant past or an attempt to dig

up old treasures for financial gain. While this may have been true of archaeology in the past, the primary aim of archaeology today is the reconstruction of ancient societies in the widest possible sense through the interpretation and evaluation of evidence gathered from dig sites and historical documents. "Advanced archaeological theorists would now go further and see its ultimate goals in generalizations about the nature of culture in the anthropological sense and even of human social behavior."³

There is special value for the Bible student in studying archaeology. "Since the child of God is interested in God's precious plan for restoring sinful mankind to Himself, he will be interested in whatever can shed light on the unfolding of that plan."⁴ Jeske mentions three special values of archaeology: 1) it has helped to fill in the historical background of the Bible, 2) it has added enormously to a fuller understanding than otherwise possible of the languages and literature of the Bible, 3) it has confirmed the sacred record.⁵

As valuable as archaeology can be, it also can and has been abused. One cannot accept every conclusion that archaeologists come up with because they are only working with a small fraction of what is made or written. Only five percent of potential Near East sites have undergone major excavation, and of a site that is dug, only a small fraction of that is examined. For example, in four years at the excavation of Hazor, 10 miles north of the Sea of Galilee, at one time a Canaanite royal city and later a fortress city of Solomon, only $\frac{1}{400}$ th of the entire site was cleared. This was done with a larger than average size crew of more than 30 archaeologists and more than a hundred laborers.⁶

As one works with archaeology and reads the reports of archaeologists, questions such as the following need to be asked: "What use do I make of archaeology? If I read an archaeological report, do I believe it? On what basis was it composed? What are the sorts of things you find? What conclusions do you draw? An archaeologist is giving you his opinion of some pieces of hardware. Do these pieces of hardware say what he says they are saying, or could it just be his subjective opinion? He'll say these things come from this period of time and are intended to serve this particular purpose. But what if he is wrong?" ⁷

It would perhaps be helpful to mention one more thing as background material before going into what happened at the SQI's. Each site that is excavated is called a "tel." A tel is a mound of dirt that contains layers of ruined cities built on top of one another. A tel looks similar to an Indian burial mound and could normally easily be distinguished from an ordinary hill. It was customary for the ancients to build a new city upon the foundations of a city or village that was destroyed. It is said that present day Jerusalem is 60-65 feet higher than it was 2000 years ago. Many believe that the level of King David Street as it is now is actually the top of the wall of Jerusalem at Jesus' time. ⁸

Reading about archaeology and what has been discovered and all the interesting fact and conjectures that accompany a discovery is one thing. But getting down to the actual "hands on" work is quite another. Participants of the SQI's variously described the work as a refreshing change of pace from working behind the desk, hard physical labor, boring and frustrating, as well as an effective method of shedding some unwanted pounds.

In 1978 and 1980 SQI participants did their digging at Tel Michal. Tel Michal is the site of an ancient town located on the Mediterranean about six miles north of the present day city of Tel Aviv. It was at one time a small world port. Trade could have come from Cyprus, Greece and Turkey. The region of which it is a port is known from Scripture as the Plain of Sharon. Excavation work performed there did in one area reach a level that was occupied during the period of Israel monarchy, 1050-550 B.C.

SQI '82 took place at Tel Gerisa. Tel Gerisa is an impressive site of biblical antiquity which lies in northwestern Tel Aviv. Its size, 15 acres, and its location on the banks of the Yarkon River indicate that the site was the foremost urban center between Aphek at the headwaters of the Yarkon and the port of Joppa. It was established as a Canaanite city around 2500 B.C. and was abandoned during the period of Israel's monarchy. It is tentatively identified with Gath-rimmon, a Levitical city positioned within the tribal area of Dan near the Yarkon (Josh 21:24, 1 Chr 6:69).

While at the dig site, the SQI participants were on a rather strict time schedule:

4:30 a.m.	Reveille
4:45 a.m.	Tea and Coffee
5:00 a.m.	Report for work on the tell (about a mile away, could ride bus or walk)
8:30 a.m.	Breakfast at the tell
11:15 a.m.	Mid-morning "meetz" break (a fruit drink similar to to Kool-Aid)
1:00 p.m.	Work ceases on the tell
2:00 p.m.	Main meal at camp cafeteria
2:30 p.m.	Siesta/free time
4:30 p.m.	Snack
4:45 p.m.	SQI daily devotion
5:00 p.m.	Pottery review
7:00 p.m.	Evening meal
7:30 p.m.	Evening lecture
9:00 p.m.	Bed

The work was quite physical. Much of the work required that the participant dig out the sand and dirt with buckets and carry the buckets to a designated area where they were emptied. Although the work was done in the morning hours, the sun still became quite hot. It was necessary that huge amounts of water be drunk ^{by} each digger to prevent dehydration. Often the work would become tedious and boring. This was "grunt" labor and unless reinforced by a "find" of some kind it could and did become quite frustrating to some. Although finds were not abundant, most did make finds of some kind. The following is a list of some of the things that were found or discovered by SQI members:

- small bones
- burial jar that had held a small child
- leg bones and bronze rings in a burial jar
- skeletons in an ancient cemetery
- lamps
- potsherds (pieces of pottery, most common find)
- knife blades
- walls and floors
- small image - possibly a fertility goddess
- a clay disc that had been stamped with a seal, probably had been used to close a letter or package
- a conical seal of reddish semi-precious stone (garnet?) featuring a mythical animal, something like a winged lion
- coins
- comb made from a sea shell
- broken down remains of an oven
- clay bowl in perfect condition, dating to 1100 B.C.
- socket for a door jamb
- cooking pot
- loom weight
- perfume jug
- scarab (an image of a beetle)
- bone awl
- cooking ovens
- animal teeth and bones
- brass door knocker
- nail
- door and threshold
- polished bone pendant 2500-3000 years old

The most significant find by an SQI participant was the

uncovering of the second largest wine press excavated in Israel by Lawrenz and the group that he supervised. It took one digging season to dig it out and is today part of an archaeological park north of Tel Aviv. It could be described as a large grape treading area with two rather oversized collection basins for the grape juice to collect. ⁹

What goes through one's mind when he finds something of value or interest? Seminary professor Richard Balge related what went through his mind when he uncovered a large pot at Tel Michal in 1982: "(The pot) . . . must have been the biggest pot in the house. It was intact, which was unusual. Inside it was a lamp, also intact. I wondered, why was that lamp in that pot? Were they going for lamp oil when things came to an end? Did they douse the lamp because of a threat, because of an enemy? Did they tip the pot over on the lamp? Or wasn't it any of these things? What happened that this jar was on its side and that this lamp was inside it intact? That may have been the last thing that ever happened inside that house before destruction or desertion. You don't know. I don't recall that we saw any sign of fire there. Its a mystery. But fascinating."

This might give the reader an idea of what kind of questions archaeologists need to ask and how much must go unanswered. On a larger scale, when one talks about the function of a city in a particular place and at a particular time, one can imagine that there are many more questions, much more conjecture and lots more that can't be answered.

The most common find in any kind of archaeological excavation is pottery (potsherds, shards). Although pottery is very common

and most of it is discarded after it has been dug up and cleaned, it still plays a vital role in identifying a site and providing key information, such as the years in which a tel was occupied. One can determine the approximate age period that one is digging in by examining the style and size and pattern of the pottery that is found at that level. Other questions that are asked when examining the pottery include: Who made this? Did the makers of this pottery live here or is it an import? Is the pottery found here a result of trade?

The importance of sorting through pottery and analyzing it is seen in the priority that it is given by the archaeologist. Every afternoon (See schedule p. 10) the SQI participant was required to meet with his team and the rest of the groups to wash pottery. Each person filled a bucket with water, put a dozen or so shards in it then washed them. The pottery pieces were then set out to dry. A group's field supervisor then discussed the pottery with them and helped them to identify and analyze the pieces. The pieces found the day before were thoroughly washed at the afternoon session, but each piece was dipped in water on the day it was found to look for the rare shard that may have been used as scribal "scrap paper." Anything that is written is the most important type of information that one could find. Any pottery that is determined to be of special significance would be reconstructed.

Any finds that are made immediately become the property of EAU. Those finds then become part of the story of that tell. It would be a felony for someone to take something that hasn't been discarded. Some of the finds become museum peices, others are used for instruction purposes. Some might even go on the market

once they have been thoroughly studied. With the permission of the university, items that have been dug can be given to the participating schools. There are a small collection of old lamps that are sometimes displayed in the WLS ^{library} that came from the SQI's.

In order for each student to gain a larger picture of the archaeological work in progress at the tel, there was a weekly Friday morning tour of all the areas under excavation. The area supervisors explain what is known, what hypothesis are under consideration, what problems have been encountered and what archaeological picture has emerged in the area.

It didn't take very long for the SQI participant to gain a pretty good idea of what archaeology all involved. For some, the digging and physical labor remained enjoyable throughout, for others it became a drudgery. Most of the participants generally enjoyed having the experience and all definitely learned. Here are some of the comments made by the participants themselves as they reflected on their archaeological experience:

- "(I learned to) take pronouncements of archaeologists with a grain of salt. Archaeology is a very tentative science, it is probably more art than science."
- "(I learned) the limitations of archaeology, how much guesswork it is, and how authoritative is Scripture by contrast."
- "In spite of significant finds and helpful information archaeology still is very limited and speculative."
- "I learned that archaeology helps illustrate Scripture truths, although it doesn't prove Scripture truths. We believe by the Spirit's faith in us."
- "I will never take an archaeological report to be absolute truth. There very definitely is an element of human judgment."
- "Archaeology (is) very imprecise. Once three (archaeological) profs stood on a balkhead and discussed the in situ find. All three came up with different historical hypothesis."
- "the variety of digs and of the ways

archaeology is viewed astounded me. I never realized how much work and care went into it and then how much guess work was used to finally come to a conclusion at some tells. Others tried to use computers and more scientific strategies to study the data."

- "The main benefit for a pastor is to see how archaeology works. When you read books you realize its a lot of interpretation. It creates interest in the Bible and where the information comes from."

- "The practical benefits are not specific facts or things you may find but an understanding of how archaeology works and the gap between what is going on in the field and what you read when you read these handbooks on archaeology. It gives you an idea of what the facts are on what is found and how they go about interpreting it."

The SQI participants did gain a lot from their expericne with archaeology. The most important thing they learned is the fact that archaeology is not the final answer to questions of Biblical antiquity. It is helpful and insightful, but is also limited in its value.

Not only did the participants profit from the digs, but so did TAU. Jeske reports that he was told that the years WLS brought its group over to dig, they (TAU) accomplished more than they ever had before.

IV. Geographical Aspect

Although much was learned from the weeks of archaeological work, the greater benefit for the participants was gained through the study of the biblical geography. The tours of the land of Israel proved to be the most meaningful and helpful for most if not all of the SQI members. This geographical study brought the Bible "alive." Real sights and sounds and smells were associated with familiar and not so familiar Bible events. Features of the land and customs of the people became more vivid and realistic.

WLS designed these tours for the specific purpose of familiarizing the participants with the geographical setting of biblical events. The trips were focused on Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, the Rift Valley, the Negev and Galilee. As stated earlier, Seminary professors offered a series of mini-lectures to shed light on the topography, climate, soil, crops, weather and history of the Holy Land.

These are some of the sites that were visited in Jerusalem: the wailing Wall, Gordon's Calvary, the Garden Tomb, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Pool of Bethesda, the Siloam Pool. Near Jerusalem: the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Kidron and Hinnom Valleys, Bethlehem, the Church of the Nativity, Gibeon, and Jericho. Throughout the rest of Israel places visited included: Bethshemesh, Valley of Elah, Shiloh, Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal, Ahab's palace ruins, Ashkelon, Beersheba, the Dead Sea, Tel Lachish, Hebron, Solomon's pools, the Judean Wilderness, Qumran (where the Dead Sea scrolls were found), En-Gedi, Masada, Megiddo, the Jezreel Valley, Tiberias, Mt. Tabor, the Sea of Galilee, two possible sites of Cana, Capernaum, Chorazin, Hazor, Mt. Carmel, etc.¹⁰

Most of these places are sites of Biblical importance where significant Old and New Testament events took place. Some sites are important in the history of the Jews that is not recorded in Scripture. Certain places like Mt. Calvary, the sites of Jesus' birth and burial, the city of Cana cannot be definitly determined. There may be two or more possible locations for these and other places. (See Appendix A for maps of these tours).

Probably the best way to capture the merit and value that the

geographical portion of the SQI's proved to be is to let the participants speak for themselves. What follows are some of the impressions that were left with them as a consequence of seeing and studying the land of God's ancient people:

- "From being in Israel I have new insights into the Bible."

- "The experience needs to be built on, repeated, updated in order to be of the greatest benefit. Any student of Scripture should find it rewarding."

- "I found the touring more interesting than the dig."

- "It gave me a lot of background on Seminary studies and a deeper appreciation for the fact that Jesus really walked the earth, even a relatively obscure very ordinary part of it. It also de-romanticized the Holy Land for me. There are many things I would like to see again. The trip was a great background for Seminary work. Seminary work would have been a great background to the trip."

- "The best part of the trip was touring Israel. The mini-lectures given by the Seminary professors really helped Israel come alive. It was a real blessing going over there when I did - it certainly helped me understand Scripture much better (especially places and customs)."

- "The touring helped put many thoughts into perspective."

- "I also feel that just going to the Holy Land and seeing it in person makes the Bible come alive. You get a greater feel for the distances as well as the topography of the land."

- "I realized how condensed Israel is. Learned Israel's geography as never before. It heightened my appreciation."

- "I have more questions to ask, more forgetfulness to overcome about the places where Bible events took place. And this time

video-tape everything. I would also like to go back and walk many of the routes Jesus walked- to get a feel for what is being recorded in the Bible. It has transformed my reading of the Bible - enriched it."

- "the summer session personally was most valuable to me in showing me the importance of historical-geography, how a knowledge of geography is essential to the proper understanding of ancient history either in macrocosm or microcosm. During that summer I also finally decided in what area of study I personally would specialize."

- "I gained a much better feel for Bible times, especially the geography."

- "I have a much more vivid idea of the cities and geography of the Holy Land. As I preach or teach, I can visualize the sites. I feel (hope) it makes the sermons and lessons more meaningful for the listeners too. The prolonged stay was part of the value of the experience, because there was the opportunity to soak in the land, culture and history."

- "It (the touring) brought life or pictorial understanding to me in my reading of the Bible, especially the Old Testament."

- "It is good to be able to put a picture with geographical names mentioned in the Bible."

- "In many instances Scripture came alive. The weekend trips throughout the Holy Land was the most enjoyable aspect. The lectures by the professors were so meaningful. To be at a site and hear a lecture on what happened there, that's great. Just being at some of the places was very meaningful, emotional. I still see them in my mind's eye when hearing parts of Scripture."

- "The greatest benefit resulted from seeing and being at the very places where our Savior walked and worked, preached and performed miracles, and died and rose for our salvation. It helps the biblical accounts come alive."

- "I received a feel for the land and the climate. The topography of Israel has helped me better appreciate the Scriptures."

- "I have an entire different view of the land in which Christ walked."

- "I gained a much better feel for the land of Palestine - its topography, climate etc. and felt I had more to convey to the students at the Seminary as a result."

- "I received an experiential knowledge of the land and its geography. This helped a great deal in filling in the background about the Biblical text."

- "The big benefit for the Seminary teacher is to be able to use the stuff from the SQI for their teaching. It is good to be able to visualize the sites, to see Jerusalem and Galilee, and to see where the various battles were. By seeing the terrain you actually understand the history a lot better. It is special to be there and in those places. Generally it is more impressive when you get away from the shrines to a place like the fields of Bethlehem and seeing something which Christ spoke about at the Sea of Galilee, or walking down a path that John the Baptist once actually walked, or seeing the battlefield where David fought Goliath."

- "You could go past the threshing floor and there you would see people involved in the winnowing process just as they did it in Jesus' day. In this way the Bible really came alive."

- "One reason one loves Galilee, the Sea of Galilee, there you knew the Lord really was. You knew that he looked at some of these same scenes."

Pastor Glenn Thompson, who taught at the Bible Institute and Seminary in Lusaka, Zambia, Africa said this: "The dig (SQI) provided me with extra training and expertise to make my subjects 'come alive' for my students." He wrote a textbook entitled Bible Background: Geography, History and Daily Life in Bible Times which was also the name of a course he taught at the Lusaka Seminary. Much of the material for the course was from what he studied and learned from his trip to Israel.

The benefits of this geographical study of Israel extend far beyond the individual growth that each of these participants experienced. It is true, they will have benefited the most because they saw the sites with their own eyes and they felt what it was like. But those same benefits flow over to the student in the classroom and to the member in a pew and in a Bible class. All of WELS membership benefit. Maybe their experience will also encourage those of us who are not able to go on such a trip to do more reading and study into the geography and background of the Bible. There is no shortage of books on these subjects. For some, maybe even a trip to Israel can be a reality sometime in the future. From what is said by those who have gone, I think we can be confident that such a trip would be a good investment of time and money.

V. Human Interest Items

No trip of this sort is without its inconveniences and hardships, humorous incidents and unique observations. In this section I want to cover some of those items that reflect the unique nature of the SQI's, as well as touch on some things common to most trips and hopefully answer some questions the reader might have.

Planning: The directors of the SQI kept the potential participants informed of the progress of the planning through bulletins that were more or less regularly sent. These periodical bulletins would already have begun to be sent a year in advance of the forecoming SQI. Information that was included in these bulletins were such things as scholarship availability, safety conditons in the Middle East, tips on what to bring and what not to bring,

medical and safety hints, modern Hebrew words that would be good to know, an update on the number of those who were planning to take part, phone and travel arrangements, professors who would accompany the trip and so forth. Those who received these bulletins were encouraged to write back and ask any questions or express any concerns they might have. These were then dealt with in a subsequent bulletin.

Danger factor: There was a certain amount of danger involved in a trip to Israel. The newspaper headlines of what was happening in the Middle East could cause a certain amount of unnecessary fear and alarm. In reality, the danger factor prior to and during the three SQI's were irrelevant to tourists. Incidents that occurred were some distance away from where SQI participants would be involved. There was no more danger, and probably less potential danger to tourists in Israel than there would be in a large American city. Israel's military strength was and is the strongest in the Middle East. Israel rated excellent in their internal security and safety record for tourists.

Living Quarters: At the archaeological site the participants lived in 4-10 man tents. All were provided with metal cots and foam mattresses. The necessary linen was made available by the camp. These tents were cooler during the day than anything else and were aligned to get maximum benefit from the afternoon breezes during the heat of the day. During the touring portion of SQI, living quarters varied from the minimum essentials to the rather com-

fortable. Some places provided private rooms for couples, but not all. At the hostels men and women slept dormitory style in separate rooms. Emphasis in lodging was placed on cost efficiency.

Cost: Approximate costs per person for each SQI was:

1978	\$1500
1980	\$2000
1982	\$2225

Credit enrolled participants could apply for scholarship aid available through grants from the Aid Association for Lutherans and Lutheran Brotherhood.

Hardships: The hardships or inconveniences varied from one person to the next. What one could consider a hardship, another could determine as fun. For example, the camp-like living conditions could be burdensome or a welcome change of pace to simple living conditions. But there were things that one needed to cope with willingly or unwillingly. The heat and the bright sun was unrelenting, the physical labor of digging and hauling bucket loads of sand and dirt. One person counted carrying and dumping 108 bucketfulls before 3:00 a.m. This was especially difficult if no finds of any kind were made. The battle with "Sadat's revenge," known to us American bound citizens as diarrhea was a formidable foe. This was a significant problem for many, especially at the beginning of the dig. The change of diet wasn't compatible with all digestive systems. Humor though was found in watching someone bolt from his or her digging well to the nearest bathroom facility and wondering if he or she made it.

The necessity to shave with cold water encouraged the growth of facial hair. Those who did were defying the words of a certain

Seminary professor who said, "I've never known a man to be improved by a beard." (This person has since followed suit). The early wake-up (4:30 a.m.) was also tough, especially for those who were not morning people. Blaring music "tenderly" awoke the heavy sleepers, sometimes preceded by military jets roaring overhead. The days at the dig site were long and exhaustive making evening lectures given by the archaeologists difficult to stay awake in.

The lengthy time away from wives and family and friends was not so easy either. Mail could take up to 10 days to reach the other party, so family contact was limited. A culture that did not place a priority on promptness or sticking to a schedule was also a test of one's patience.

More examples could be cited, but this should be sufficient to give a picture that the SQI wasn't all luxurious and easy. Quite the contrary. But despite these hardships and frustrations, it doesn't seem that anyone resents going. For some, once was enough. Most however, would love to return if they could, especially for the geographical study.

Medical care: A trained nurse or two accompanied the groups equipped with a first aid kit. Good hospitalization was usually close by at all times. There were some injuries and sicknesses that occurred requiring hospital attention among the SQI participants, but all recovered quickly under God's care. Flu-type symptoms and dysentery were the common causes of spending time off from work to recuperate in bed.

Humorous incidents: It is very difficult to capture the humor

and special comradeship that takes place on an experience of this nature, especially when you are not part of it yourself. Much cannot be remembered by those who took part, and those things that are remembered cannot be retold in a way that will capture the magic of the particular moment as it happened. Yet there is value in attempting to reconstruct some of those moments that are part of the history and story of SQI.

There are those who manage to get lost whenever they go someplace new. There are some WELS members in a congregation somewhere who can make the boast that their pastor got lost in Beersheba by himself. Who else but a group from WLS would think of having a watermelon seed spitting contest in Samaria, once the capitol of the Northern Kingdom? Then there's the time when someone put a huge rock in a pail and covered it with sand. Another unsuspecting worker dumped this bucket of "sand" down the hill. The rock rolled quickly down fortunately striking only the tire of the car that was parked at the bottom. SQI participants had the pleasure of witnessing a sumo-wrestling match between a couple of pastors. Then there were those other competitive times when wheelbarrow races were conducted across the top of the tel.

One of the imaginative participants became quite adept at identifying the gender of skeletons. This particular person was standing in a pit with a 700 B.C. skeleton and proudly showed off the jewelry by the ears. He said he knew it was a woman because as he said: "You could tell because its mouth was open."

A humorous atmosphere was created with the unusual working combination of a group of die hard Mormons from Brigham Young University working with a group of die hard WELS people. Much

of a light and comical nature was discussed, but this was balanced out by discussion that was serious and important.

One distinguished pastor attempted to lead the WELS group in a rain dance, but apparently was unsuccessful in the attempt. Two skeletons that were discovered by two Seminary professors in an ancient cemetery were fondly referred to as Samson and Delilah.

It appears some women got more than their share of the heavy work of carrying buckets of sand due to the bad backs of some of the men. One female participant noted that when it came to carrying these heavy buckets there was no hint of male chauvinism. A city dump near to Tel Michal proved to be an excellent target for an Israeli gunboat. For a moment participants thought they might have been caught in the midst of a Middle East war.

My favorite story is this told by one of the Seminary professors:

"One day my supervisor called over the two leading archaeologists to view a certain crack in the floor I had been working on. They argued for two hours as to its significance. That evening . . . (one of the archaeologists) on his tour or "site review" invited the entire troop of students and leaders to show them this crack, which he considered the 'most significant find' of the day and which 'proved' a certain important point in his theories. I personally feel that I developed this 'crack' through my own careless use of pick, trowel and turia. I kept my mouth shut."

These incidents certainly played their role in bringing these men and women closer together during the SQI's, adding to their experience and enjoyment.

Age of participants: The ages of the participants who contributed to the writing of this paper through their response to a

questionnaire ranged from 22-66. This probably represents the general age span of those who participated. There seemed to be a good mix of veteran pastors and professors, new and young pastors and students, together with their wives, as well as a few teachers and lay men and women.

Worship: At the center of the work, the hardships and the fun, was the one who brought the SQI participants together in Israel, their Lord and Savior. It was for the purpose of gaining a greater understanding of the land that their Savior walked in that they came together to this country so far from their homes. They kept their Lord at the center of their attention through devotions and worship services.

The daily devotions were conducted by both the pastors and Seminary students. The Sunday worship services were conducted by one of the pastors. Devotions were held at a small grove next to the archaeological camp during the week and whatever convenient spot that could be found while touring. Each of the Sunday services was conducted in an unusual setting. Some of the sites: a crusader church in Jerusalem, a kibbutz (collective farm), the excavations of Beersheba, the ruins of a 2000 year old synagogue on Masada, and one on a hill overlooking the Sea of Galilee. Communion services were held at the beginning and end of each summer quarter. Each participant had a small "worship companion" booklet which contained a short liturgy and about 30 hymns. This helped to facilitate worship.

Participants of the 1978 SQI cherish what was for them a most dramatic setting for their final communion service. This was held on Mt. Arbel, the highest point in lower Galilee. A

bus took the party halfway up the mountain from where the group hiked to the top. There the Word of God was proclaimed while the hearers could see in the distance and far below places like Magdala and Capernaum and the Sea of Galilee where Jesus himself had proclaimed that same Word. In all of the services and devotions oneness of faith and mutual joy in service to the Savior were attitudes which surfaced again and again.¹¹

Observations: There were a few observations noted by some of the participants. It became obvious to one that there was a tremendous amount of competition that pervades the academic world, especially in the field of archaeology. There appears to be a lot of jealousy and rivalry between archaeologists. One can only wonder how much this plays into published materials that speak about significant discoveries. Could personal theories be overplayed so as to discredit the theory of another? This is another thing Bible students could keep in mind as they evaluate the conclusions of archaeologists.

Then there is the response to the perceived danger that one is in in Israel. Although at the time of the SQI's a person's life was no more at risk in Israel as it was in America, yet one tends to more aware of the dangers that surround you. As a result you place your security more in God's hands because you don't have the feeling of protection that America gives.

Probably the most penetrating observation is that in Israel there is abundant unbelief. As a participant you are there because of your interest in Christ's life. But the people living there are not interested. Almost everyone there is an unbeliever.

Their whole life is lived in that unbelief. Even the "Christian" shrines are full of superstition. That is why evangelism there is so difficult.

It is sad and ironic that the birthplace of the Savior, the land where the message of the Gospel of peace for all mankind had its beginning is filled with so much unbelief and turmoil.

VI. Future Summer Quarters in Israel

The worth of SQI has been firmly established. Why has it not continued? Will there be another one the future? These are obvious questions to ask in light of the success of the three SQI's that have taken place.

As is known, the SQI's were conducted in the even numbered years of 1978, 1980, and 1982. They were not planned in the odd numbered years because of the WELS bi-annual convention held during those years. Many of those involved with the planning of SQI as well as potential participants would be busy with matters dealing with the convention. In 1984 TAU decided they were going to use that archaeological season to research the artifacts and progress they had made during the previous years. They wanted WLS to return in 1985 instead. Since this proved impossible, the chain of SQI's was broken. At the same time a building project was occupying Lawrenz's time at MLS.

Planning however began and progressed for a 1986 SQI. Some of the problems in the Middle East, however, began to affect the planning. Among the incidents that occurred in late 1985 and early 1986 was the bombing of Libya by the United States in spring. Traveling overseas was becoming more dangerous. Some of the prospective participants dropped out of the SQI enrollment and many

others were becoming nervous. After careful consideration and discussion the WLS faculty cancelled the trip. They were assured by the traveling company with whom the trip was planned that all of the deposits would be returned as the Seminary was within the allotted cancellation time period.

Unfortunately, this long-standing travel company went bankrupt. A large number of people apparently had cancelled their overseas trips and caused financial havoc for the company. Several of the SQI participants lost significant amounts of money. The case that the Seminary has against the company remains tied up in court. Should the case ever get cleared up, it is unlikely that those who lost their money will regain it back from the company.

This SQI which did not ~~occur~~ has put a dark cloud over the entire program. There is some deliberation of whether the Seminary should sponsor another SQI and if so, when such a summer quarter should take place. It has been noted that the number of credit participants, Seminary students and pastors and eligible male teachers, for whom the program was specifically designed, dropped from 84% in 1978 of the total participants to 60% in 1982. In actual numbers, 34 credit participants went in 1978, 18 in 1980 and 13 in 1982. Do these figures mean that there is not sufficient interest for another SQI? Or was the six week committment too long for pastors to leave their congregations? Professor John Brug, who replaced Jeske as co-director for the 1986 attempted SQI, indicated that there was great interest and enthusiasm for SQI '86, especially because a three-week geographical tour was offered with an optional archaeological dig session. It seems the bankruptcy and participant financial loss were the

main causes of the discontinuance of the summer quarter in 1986 and 1988. It is hoped that a 1990 SQI could be held. Nothing definite has been established though, and the growing unrest in Israel over the Palestinian question is a hazard that needs to be reckoned with.

It is my personal belief, and I think it is shared by those who were actually involved with the summer quarters in Israel, that the SQI program has certainly proved itself as to its inestimable worth and value. The permanent loss of such an opportunity for study would indeed be a shame. The Lord God certainly is in control of the history and events of the world. As we explore His will for any future study in Israel, we ask that he give us the wisdom and insight to know what that will of His is and then the strength to follow and obey it.

President John Lawrenz knows the value of his time God graciously gave him in Israel. His numerous trips as a result of his personal study, his working as a liason between the Seminary and TAU, and his direct participation with SQI as co-director, leaves no doubt as to his hopes for the future of the SQI program. I'll let his words sum up this work of WLS in the land of God's ancient people: "I havè learned so much from my ten trips to the Holy Land. I have made so many friends. I have gained so much insight into the Scriptures. I have used it in the classroom and in my contact with coleagues so many times. What can I say? Yes, it has been a major influence in my ministry and life."¹²

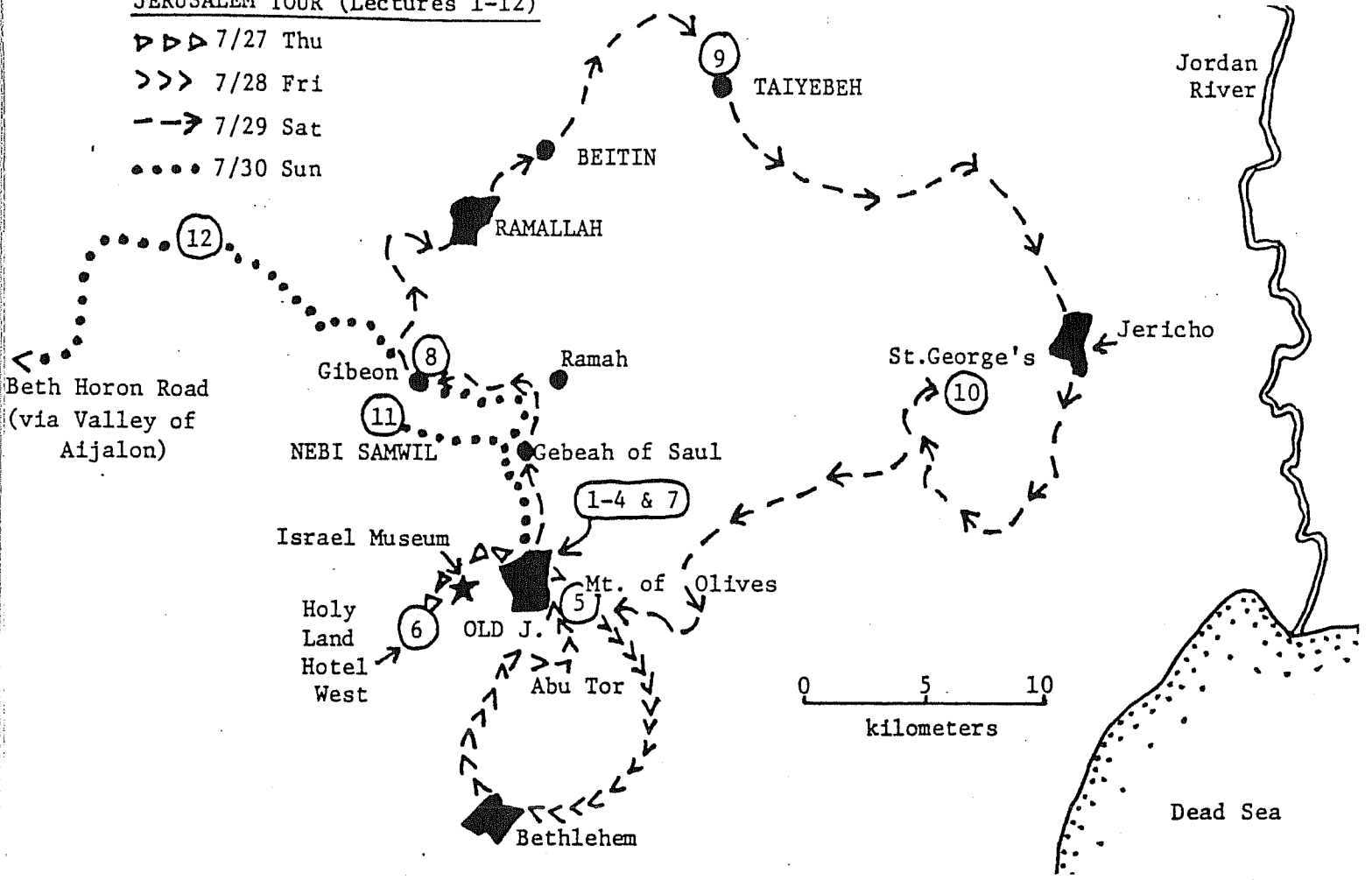
JERUSALEM TOUR (Lectures 1-12)

▷▷▷ 7/27 Thu

>>> 7/28 Fri

-→ 7/29 Sat

..... 7/30 Sun



Beth Horon Road
(via Valley of
Aijalon)

0 5 10
kilometers

Jordan
River

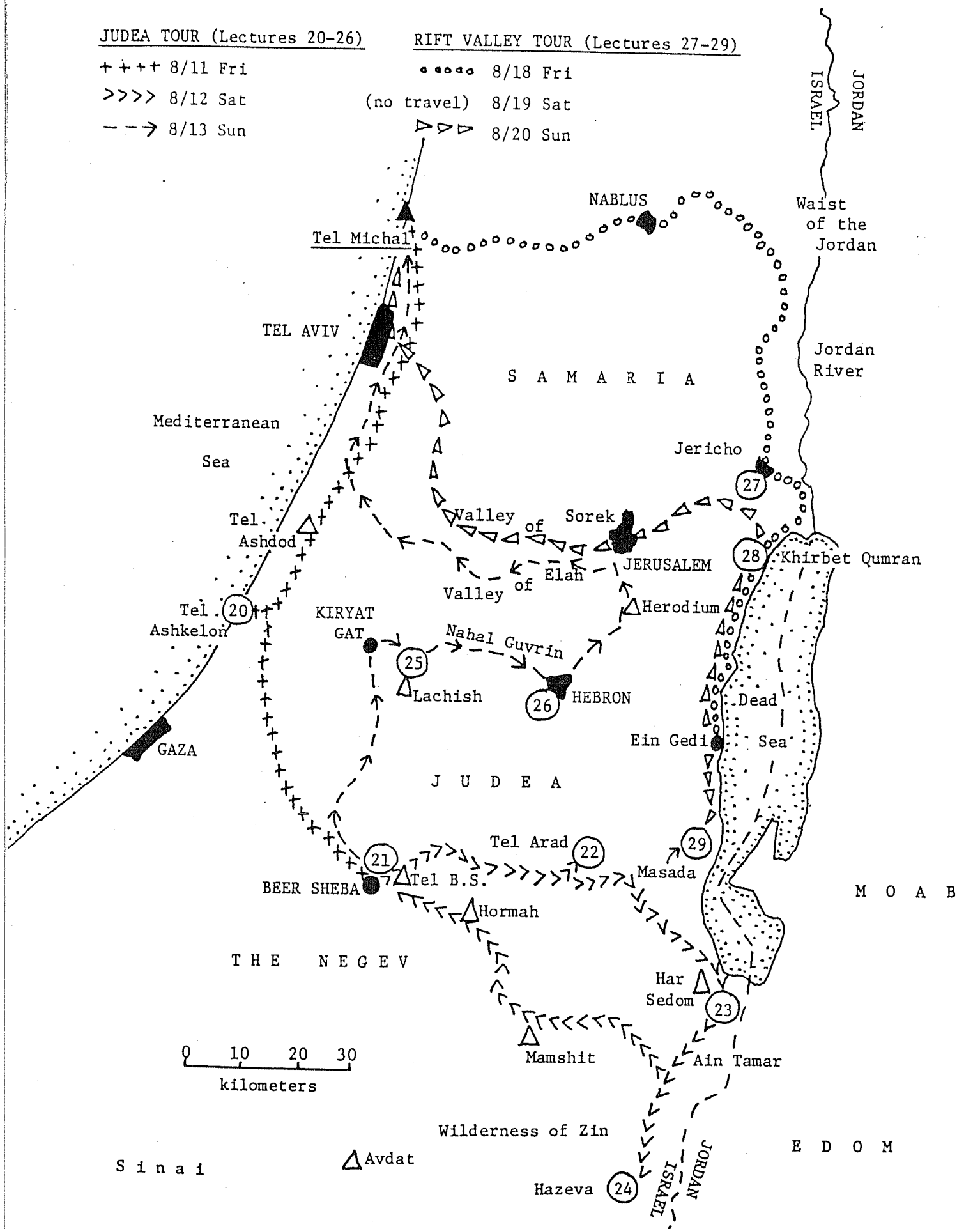
Dead Sea

JUDEA TOUR (Lectures 20-26)

++++ 8/11 Fri
 >>>> 8/12 Sat
 --> 8/13 Sun

RIFT VALLEY TOUR (Lectures 27-29)

o o o o 8/18 Fri
 (no travel) 8/19 Sat
 >>> 8/20 Sun



S i n a i

△ Avdat

Wilderness of Zin

Hazeva (24)

E D O M

M O A B

J U D E A

S A M A R I A

Mediterranean Sea

Waist of the Jordan

Jordan River

Jericho

Valley of Sorek

Valley of Elah

Nahal Guvrin

KIRYAT GAT

Lachish (25)

HEBRON (26)

Ein Gedi

Dead Sea

Herodium

Khirbet Qumran (28)

(27)

Tel. Ashkelon (20)

Tel. Ashdod

Tel. Ashdod

(21)

Tel Arad (22)

Masada (29)

(23)

Har Sedom

Mamshit

Ain Tamar

>>> 8/20 Sun

o o o o 8/18 Fri

(no travel) 8/19 Sat

++++ 8/11 Fri

>>>> 8/12 Sat

--> 8/13 Sun

0 10 20 30 kilometers

JORDAN ISRAEL

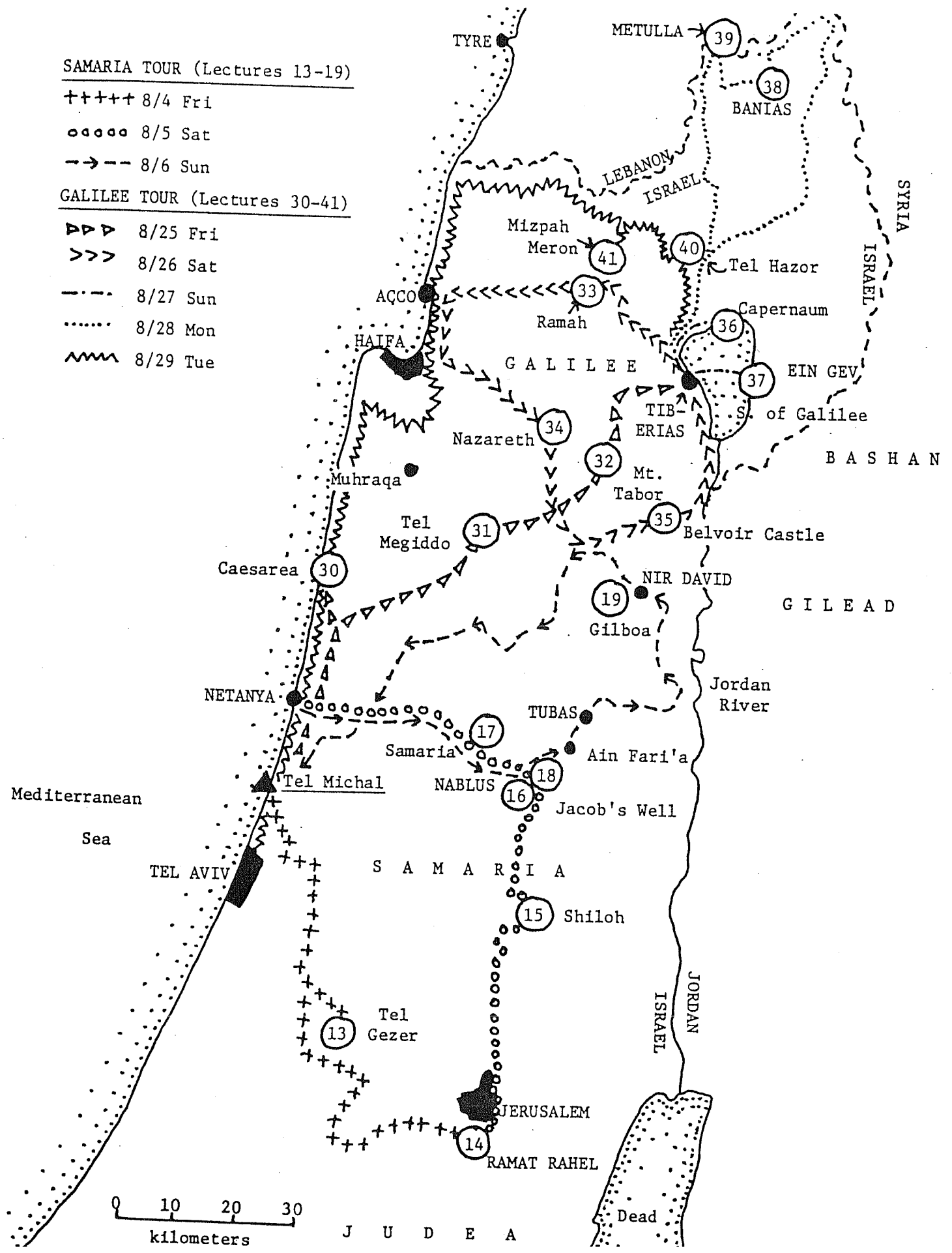
JORDAN ISRAEL

SAMARIA TOUR (Lectures 13-19)

- +++++ 8/4 Fri
- ooooo 8/5 Sat
- - - 8/6 Sun

GALILEE TOUR (Lectures 30-41)

- ▷▷▷ 8/25 Fri
- >>> 8/26 Sat
- - - 8/27 Sun
- 8/28 Mon
- ~~~~~ 8/29 Tue



#34 - THE FOOTSTEPS OF OUR LORD IN LOWER GALILEE

Nazareth apparently served as the base of operation for an early ministry oriented largely toward the south, i.e., Judea.

Note how little is told us about Galilee in the early stages of Christ's ministry.

- the Synoptics stress Galilee.
- John alone informs us of a Judean ministry.
- Nazareth, Cana, Nain are the only towns of Lower Galilee ever mentioned.

I. Initial stages of Christ's ministry (largely Judean) (cp. Macmillan map #227)

- A. Nazareth to Jordan - Mt 3:13 (Bethabara?)
- B. Jordan to wilderness (of Judea?) - Mt 4:1
- C. Wilderness to Bethabara/Bethany - Jn 1:28-51
 - calling of five disciples - Jn 1:35f
- D. Nazareth (?) to Cana
 - water to wine - Jn 2:6-10
- E. Cana to Capernaum "not many days" - Jn 2:12
- F. Nazareth (?) to Jerusalem - Jn 2:13f
 - cleansing of the Temple, first Passover
 - Nicodemus - Jn 3:1f
- G. Tour of Judea - Jn 3:22
 - Note the overlap with John the Baptist's ministry - Jn 3:23,24
 - departure to Galilee at the news of John's imprisonment - Mt 4:12
- H. Through Samaria - Jn 4:1-6
 - woman at Jacob's Well - Jn 4:7f

II. Galilee (cp. Macmillan map #228) - Lower Galilee

- A. Nazareth (?) to Cana - Jn 4:43-46
 - Nobleman's son healed
- B. Cana to Nazareth
 - first rejection - Lk 4:16-30
 - move to Capernaum - Lk 4:31, Mt 4:13 - apparently Nazareth had been His headquarters until this point
- C. Capernaum (Upper Galilee) is headquarters for the remaining ministry which is essentially Galilean (upper & lower), but is centered around the Sea of Galilee.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Interview with John C. Jeske

² Correspondence from John Lawrenze

³ Moorey, Roger Excavations in Palestine, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981, p. 11

⁴ Jeske, John C. WLQ, "The Role of Archaeology in Bible Study," Vol. 68, October 1971, Number 4, p. 228

⁵ Ibid., p. 229f

⁶ Ibid., p. 236

⁷ Interview with John C. Jeske

⁸ Interview with Richard Balge

⁹ Correspondence from John Lawrenze

¹⁰ 1982 SQI Handbook

¹¹ Zarling, W. J. The Northwestern Lutheran, "Summer Quarter in Israel," Vol. 65, Number 22, October 29, 1978, p. 354

¹² Correspondence from John Lawrenz

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Richard Balge, John Brug and John C. Jeske of Wisconsin Lutheran
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