

SAMPLE EDITION

# THE STORYLINE OF ISRAEL

AN **EIGHT-WEEK** JOURNEY INTO GOD'S LAND



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Our Host and Bible Teacher, Matt Davis

Designed by Fluid Communications

# I S R A E L



# Content Preview

SHALOM **Your place in the story**

Our time together will go like this

LESSON **1 The Wall** — We long to be near God  
*Jerusalem: The Western Wall*

LESSON **2 The Wilderness** — We learn to depend on Him  
*Southern Israel: Judean Wilderness*

LESSON **3 The High Places** — We choose who we will follow  
*Golan Heights & Northern Israel: Caesarea Philippi & Tel Dan*

LESSON **4 The Fortress** — We see his faithfulness when we need it most  
*Southern Israel: Masada*

LESSON **5 The Sea** — We encounter who Jesus really is  
*Northern Israel: The Sea of Galilee*

▶ LESSON **6 The Road** — We keep walking in hope  
*Jerusalem: The Pilgrimage Road & The Pool of Siloam*

LESSON **7 The Mount** — We place what comes next into God's hands  
*Jerusalem: The Mount of Olives*

LESSON **8 The Harbor** — We carry the story forward  
*Haifa: Caesarea Maritima*

Appendix

# שלום Shalom

## Your Place in the Story

Several thousand years ago, before any lines of nations were drawn, a man named Abraham stood under a canopy of stars and believed a promise from God Himself. A three-fold promise. About the land he stood on. About the family that would come. *See those stars? That's how many descendants you will have. What a family!* And out of that family will come the One who will bless the world (see Genesis 15).

That story continues to unfold today as God keeps His promise.

For the next eight weeks as small groups or individually, we will study the Storyline of Israel—inviting the land of the Bible to speak. We'll discover the storyline—from God, to His Word, to His people, to His land and eventually right to us.

We'll see the Jewish people again, not as a headline but as a living story that God is still telling and we'll understand the story behind that story—and why it still matters.

Along the way we'll rediscover God's heart for His people—and our place in that beautiful storyline. May God bless you with His shalom every step of the way.

*The Lord bless you and keep you;  
the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;  
the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.*

— NUMBERS 6:24-26

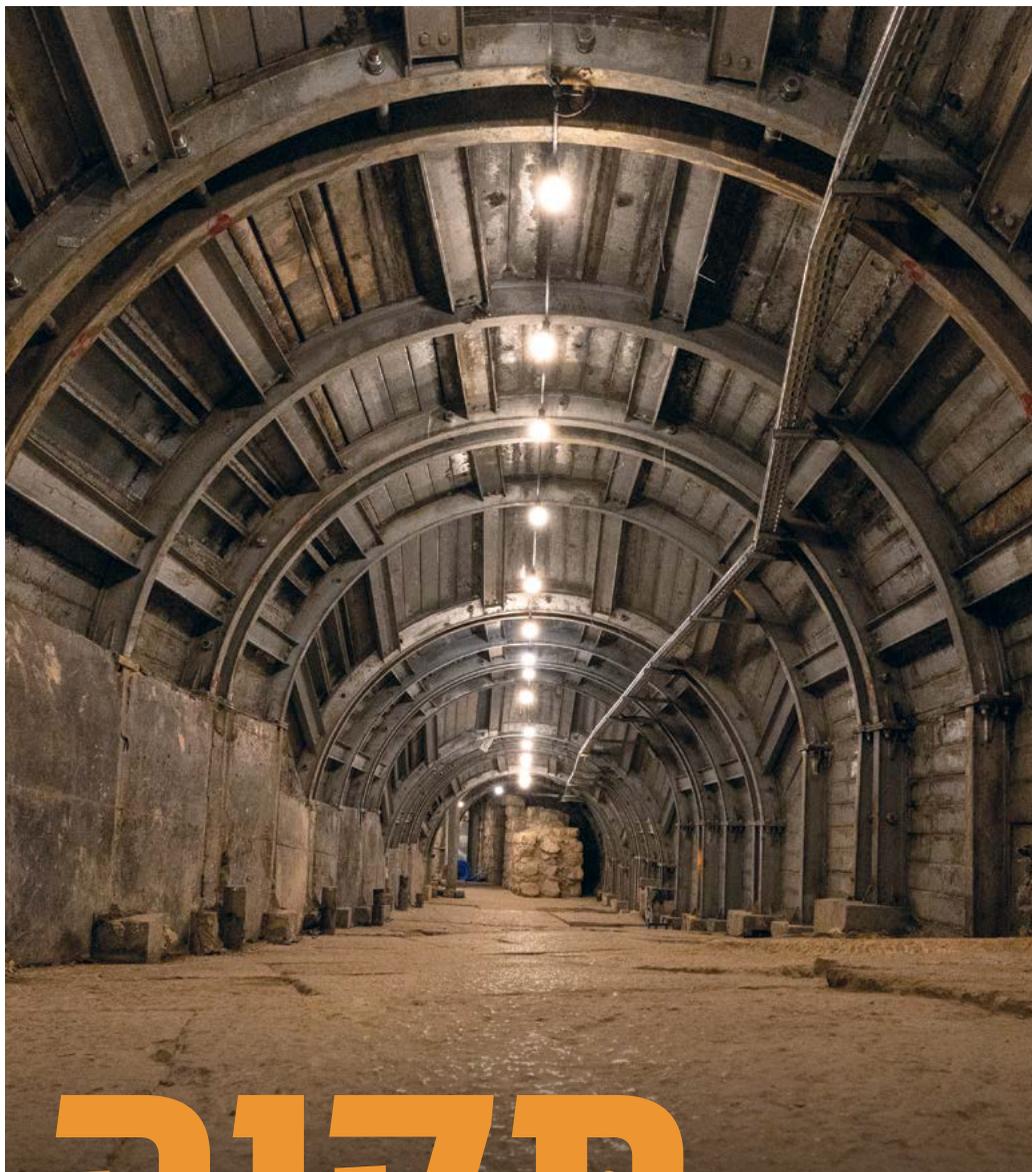


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## Our time together will go like this:

1. Come ready to “travel” to God’s beautiful land—in the present, past, and future and trace the storyline of Israel’s history in the Bible and in current events.
2. First, we’ll watch a video, filmed in a specific place in Israel where God did something amazing. Find it on a map to get oriented in the land and then settle back and learn something new. Discussion questions will help guide our conversation.
3. Then we’ll travel back to the Old Testament and then to the New Testament and discover what happened at that same area. Together as a group or on your own, read about this location in God’s Word, then answer some study questions and discuss some relevant topics.
4. Then, by video we’ll meet some of our Israeli brothers and sisters whom God is using today in the land. They are fascinating people living in an unprecedented time. Hear in their own words how God is still working with Israel. They are still His chosen people, they are still struggling, and their eyes are on God.

Jerusalem: The Pilgrimage Road



# תִּקְוָה

TIKVAH — CONFIDENT EXPECTATION, HOPE

# The Road

## WE KEEP WALKING IN HOPE

You can tell a lot about a story by the road it travels. In this study we follow one specific road into Jerusalem, the Pilgrimage Road. After nearly two thousand years of being buried beneath destruction, it's recently been rediscovered.

In Jesus' day, this same road carried faithful worshippers from the City of David to the Temple Mount by way of the Pool of Siloam. During the festivals, families walked together, step by step, singing and praying. Listen closely and you'll hear their happy songs echo from the stones.

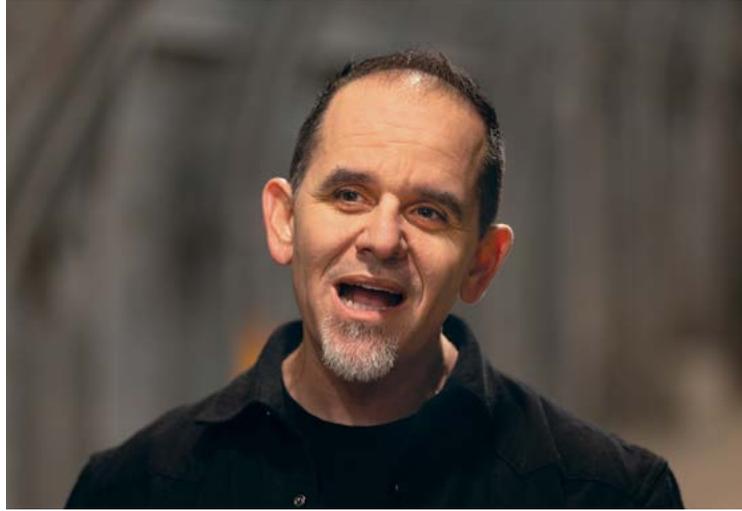
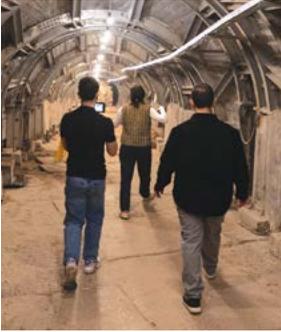
Later that same road carried terror and ashes when first-century Jews ran for their lives as Jerusalem was attacked and destroyed in 70 A.D.

This lesson about hope takes us down that ancient road again. We'll see today what we may have missed before because we passed by it too quickly. We'll linger at a beautiful moment captured here during the Feast of Booths when Jesus interrupts the celebration with a simple invitation that extends to us across the centuries.

Come and see how this road, tied to so much of Israel's storyline, gives us hope and the will to keep walking.

**Some roads carry memories; others carry hope. This one carries both.**

*Jesus cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink." — John 7:37*



**Our storyline of Israel continues down some ancient roads.**



**JOIN US ON THE PILGRIMAGE ROAD**  
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**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:**

1. Have you ever realized, later on, that you “drove past” something important in Scripture or in life? What made you slow down to look at it?
2. The Pilgrimage Road carried both celebration and destruction. How does knowing that shape the way you think about hope?
3. Jesus interrupts the water ceremony by saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me.” Why do you think that moment mattered so much in that setting?
4. What stood out to you or stayed with you from today's video?



### DID YOU KNOW...

- › The Pilgrimage Road is one of Jerusalem's most recent archaeological discoveries, connecting ancient faith, architecture, and history.
- › Israel Antiquities Authority has recently opened sections of this ancient road, so you can literally walk where Jesus and other countless worshippers walked on their way to the Temple.
- › The busy street was fairly new when Jesus used it. It was commissioned by Pontius Pilate and completed around 30 A.D.
- › On either side of the steep steps, "going up to Jerusalem," were shops, pools, and parks filled with families, shopkeepers, priests, and those from out of town coming to worship. This was the place to hang out and enjoy Jerusalem.

Jesus cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink." — John 7:37

## Celebrations. Observances. Remembrances.

Our days and years are marked by special occasions as they have been since the beginning. Some are full of laughter and feasting; others are solemn, with gratitude and reflection.

Leviticus 23-24 says this was God's idea. He repeatedly put Himself on Israel's calendar with weekly holy days and annual festivals to celebrate their relationship. Like a national "date night"—these feasts and festivals were meant to help Israel remember how God has helped them and set them apart as His own people. In fact, they are called, "God's appointed times."

In an ancient rhythm of the seasons, these special days coincide with Israel's agricultural calendar. The cadence of Spring harvest signaled the feasts of Passover, Unleavened Bread and First Fruits. Mid-summer, brought the barley harvest and Pentecost. And the sober remembrances of the fall feasts of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah), and Atonement (Yom Kippur) led to the celebration of Booths (Sukkot). Later, the Festival of Light (Hanukkah) and Purim were added to the schedule.





Three times each year, the Law required Israelite men—and often their families—to travel to Jerusalem for pilgrimage festivals: Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Booths. These journeys were not casual trips. They were acts of obedience, memory, and hope. Walking together toward Jerusalem, families carried their stories, songs, and prayers up these roads, reminding one another that their faith was not private, but shared, embodied, and practiced together.

1. Why do you think these scheduled special times matter to God?
2. Holidays were God's idea. What does this say about His heart for relationships?
3. Brainstorm ideas for how you can create personal "celebration times" with God season to season. How could this practice keep your relationship with God fresh?

One of the fall festivals, the Feast of Booths/Tabernacles, also known as Sukkot, was likely everyone's favorite. Like our own Thanksgiving but better, this feast lasts all week. To remind themselves how God provided for their ancestors in the wilderness wanderings, they live in temporary shelters. John 7 describes the scene in detail. *Remember how God was with us all those years? Remember how He provided food and water?* This is a time to camp-out, eat well, and intentionally remember God's blessing.

4. Sukkot is called "the season of our joy." Why is joy such a vital part of remembering God's goodness?
5. How has God given you reasons to celebrate lately?



On the final day of the celebration in Jerusalem, a priest carried a silver pitcher from high on the Temple Mount, walked down the steep "pilgrimage road" down to the Pool of Siloam. He'd then fill the pitcher with water, and walk back up that road, now spilling over with people dancing, singing, waving "lulavs," palm fronds, all the way up to the Water Gate on Temple Mount. The celebrations were so over the top that Jewish tradition says, *"Whoever has not seen the joy of the water-drawing has never seen joy in his life."*

In addition to celebrating what God had done, they also were expressing their hope in what He promised He will do. This was also a celebration of hope—of *tikvah* (תִּקְוָה).

They expressed their confident expectation that God would provide for them again next year. They wouldn't survive unless He did.

In Hebrew, *tikvah* (תִּקְוָה) means a cord or a rope; a lifeline to hold on to. Hope in Scripture is not wishful thinking, it's tangible. You grip it with both hands.

See how people expected God to come through:

— **Read Joshua 2:18, 21**

6. Rahab ties a red *tikvah* in her window. This was a physical rope but what else do you think it symbolizes?

— **Read Jeremiah 29:11**

7. God promises a future and a *tikvah*—picture God throwing you a rope or a life-preserver when you are in trouble. Can you relate to this kind of hope?

— **Read Hebrews 6:19**

8. Jesus is called “the anchor for the soul”—a living *tikvah*. How is His offer of salvation a *tikvah* to you?

Hope is our lifeline tied to God's promises.

Jesus Himself, growing up in a Jewish world, celebrated each of these feasts and festivals every year of His life on earth. They were part of His own family's stories. As a faithful Jewish man, He walked the hundred miles between Jerusalem and Galilee at least six times every year to celebrate the feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles; that's more than 100 times in His lifetime.

As we talk about the joys of Sukkot resounding from that pilgrimage road up to Temple Mount, picture Jesus right there in the middle of the celebration...

*Hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

ROMANS 5:5

## Are You Thirsty?

On the final and most climactic day of the Feast of Booths, the day when hope and longing were at their peak, Jerusalem overflowed with worshippers.

Jesus likely stood on the southern end of Temple Mount on that day, hidden in plain sight near the Water Gate, and where He could watch the priest walk in with the pitcher of water from the Pool of Siloam. This was the moment the water ceremony reached its crescendo. The priest poured out the water, thanking God for past provision and pleading for rain in the year to come. If they didn't get rain in the spring and fall, they didn't eat the next year.

And when everyone stood there, just holding their breath, Jesus stood up, maybe on a stump, a platform of sorts, for making announcements, and He shouted, loudly, something like, "Hey, everyone! Are you thirsty? Come to Me! Believe in Me, and out of your heart will flow rivers of living water!"

Behind all the ceremony, Jesus had also heard their hearts' cry—and it was for more than just rain.

### — Read it as it happened in John 7:37-39.

1. Why do you think Jesus chose the Feast of Booths/Tabernacles—when people were celebrating God's provision of water—to reveal Himself as the source of "living water"?
2. What do you think Jesus meant by "thirsty"?
3. In what ways do we experience spiritual thirst? Describe a time when you felt thirsty for God or when you were satisfied when you came to Him to drink.

You can imagine the stir at Jesus' invitation. Some whispered, "That sounds like the Messiah!" Others shook their heads, "No, I knew him as a boy in Galilee." And later when the officers were asked

by the aggravated chief priests and Pharisees, "Why didn't you bring him in?" the officers shrugged their shoulders, "No one ever spoke like this man!"

It's true. No one else ever said, "I am everything you're looking for."

No one had ever claimed, "You know that rock in the wilderness that you drank water from? Well, that was Me."

No one else ever invited the thirsty to, "Come to Me and I will satisfy you with Living Water." No one else ever qualified to be their Savior. But He did.

When He invited people to come to Him, Jesus is claiming to be:

- the fulfillment of the feast of Sukkot
- the source of living water, of healing and wholeness
- the answer to their wilderness longing

John 7:39 makes it unmistakable: *"By this He meant the Spirit."*

He promised them a time was coming when God's presence would be more than a picture, but His Spirit will be like water being poured out into people.

He was giving them *Tikvah*.





# HEAR FROM US **TODAY**



## MEET ANNAELLE CHOUKROUN



**“It was kept underground for the right time in history —for a generation that needs to see, touch, and know that it really happened.”**

**KING DAVID’S PALACE, CITY OF DAVID, ISRAEL**



**INTERVIEW WITH ANNAELLE CHOUKROUN**  
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Standing in the ruins of King David’s palace, City of David guide Annaelle Choukroun invites us into the unfolding story beneath our feet. With passion and precision, she shows how archaeology, Scripture, and history converge—revealing a resilient people, a faithful God, and a story that was buried, preserved, and uncovered for our time.

1. Annaelle says that today’s generation doesn’t just want to *hear* the story, but to *touch* it. How does archaeology change the way you read or trust the biblical narrative?
2. Why do you think so much of Jerusalem’s story was buried for centuries—and uncovered in our lifetime?
3. What does the ongoing excavation of the City of David suggest about the idea that Israel’s story is finished—or still unfolding?

# What We Share

*We keep walking in hope along ancient roads.*



**TIKVAH — CONFIDENT  
EXPECTATION, HOPE**

## A VIEW FROM MAIN STREET

In January 2026, the Pilgrimage Road—the same one that Jesus frequently walked from the Old City up to the Temple, opened again to the public. This ancient pavement had been Jerusalem's Main Street of the first century but has been buried, covered by destruction, and by ash for 2,000 years. But now we can go back in time and touch the last moments of the city before it was destroyed in 70 A.D.

It's called the "pilgrimage road" because it was the final one-third of a mile stretch for every pilgrim who had traveled to Jerusalem for the feast days from every region of Israel and points beyond. Imagine the songs, prayers, and laughter spilling over into the pavement as they walked this final stretch. They may have been tired, but their hearts burst with joy.

Then came the day in 70 A.D. that everyone mourns—when Jerusalem was burned to the ground. Demolished. This road was important then, too, as people ran for their lives and hid in the drainage channel beneath the street.

Their question should sound familiar by now:

***Is this the end of the story?***



When this road was buried, Israel was at her breaking point, seemingly lost to history. Without hope. Where was their *tikvah*?

But here's the truth history keeps proving wrong: Israel is still here.

***Same language. Same prayers. Same Scriptures.***

***Same feasts. Same longing. Same God.***

Israel's story wasn't erased or broken.

It was just buried—and preserved.

And now, this road has been uncovered again.

At Sukkot, they cried out for God in hope of rain.

For good reason Israel's national anthem is called Hatikvah—*The Hope*.

And they still cry out,

*"As long as in the heart, within, a Jewish soul still yearns...our hope is not yet lost— the hope of two thousand years: to be a free people in our land."*

When Israel was in exile, God promised them that something good will come.

Not because the road would get any easier, but because God promises to be faithful.

Same God as today.

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope (tikvah) and a future.'"*

— JEREMIAH 29:11

*Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.*

— HEBREWS 10:23

Our hope still holds.



**Faithful God,**

*You are the One who walks with Your people in celebration and in exile, on roads filled with songs and on roads marked by loss.*

*Thank You for being a God who keeps His promises, even when the journey is long and the destination feels uncertain.*

*Right now, we remember Israel. We pray for the people of this land—for those still walking through grief, fear, and unanswered questions. Surround them as You have promised. Give them peace where there is weariness and hope where the road feels heavy.*

*We lift up Annaelle Choukroun, whose story we heard today. Thank You for her life, her voice, and her faithfulness. Strengthen her and keep her in Your care.*

*Teach us to walk with **tikvah**, not with shallow optimism, but with confident expectation rooted in who You are.*

*Help us trust You on the road, even when we cannot yet see where it leads. As You have been faithful to Israel through every generation, be faithful to us now.*

*Keep our hearts steady, our steps sure, and our hope anchored in You.*

*We ask for the peace of Jerusalem. And we place ourselves again into Your story, trusting the God who walks with His people and always finishes what He begins.*

*Amen.*



[Hearfromus.org](https://hearfromus.org)

## Who is Hear from us?

**Hear from us** helps the Christian church reconnect the Bible it loves to the Jewish people and the land where that story is still unfolding today.

- ✓ Scripture-centered
- ✓ Pastoral in posture
- ✓ Focused on listening

Who We Are:  
**A fellowship of Christian leaders**

**Hear from us** is a fellowship of pastors, Christian professors, Bible teachers, and ministry leaders from across denominations, united by a shared conviction: the Church cannot be faithful to Scripture while remaining disconnected from the Jewish people and the land that shaped the biblical story.

This is not a political movement. It is biblical theology lived out in our time.

Our work is rooted in Scripture, shaped by pastoral responsibility, and guided by a desire to help Christians listen well before speaking boldly.

## Real People. Real Voices. Living the Story.

Who are the people living in this story right now, and what do they want us to know?

You've heard the story through the land. Now hear it through the people.



Lesson #1 featured an interview with **Dr. Rev. Saleem Shalash**, an Arab Israeli Christian pastor born and raised in Nazareth. He leads Home of Jesus the King Church ([homejtk.org](http://homejtk.org)) and oversees a humanitarian aid center serving Jewish, Muslim, and Christian families. Fluent in Arabic and Hebrew, Saleem is committed to reconciliation, biblical faithfulness, and caring for real needs in the land where Jesus grew up.



In Lesson #2 we met with **Avner Boskey**, an Israeli theologian, Bible teacher, and longtime resident of Beersheba in southern Israel. Having made aliyah decades ago, Avner has devoted his life to helping Jews and Christians understand Israel's story through Scripture, history, and lived experience—especially in seasons of exile, return, conflict, and renewal. (Search YouTube for many resources from Avner Boskey, Final Frontier Ministries.)



We sat with **Stephanie Quick** in Lesson #3, an American Christian living in the Golan Heights of northern Israel. With a background in global ministry and humanitarian work, she chose to relocate to Israel long before October 7 and chose to return again during wartime. Her life and work sit at the intersection of faith, obedience, and the realities of living on Israel's northern border.



**Eitan Shishkoff**, a Jewish theologian, leader, author, and longtime Israeli leader made aliyah (“returned home to Israel”) more than 30 years ago is our guest in Lesson #4. He is the founder of Tents of Mercy (TentsofMercy.org), a nonprofit devoted to caring for new immigrants to Israel - many arriving from war-torn nations or fleeing rising antisemitism. Eitan has spent decades walking alongside Jews returning home, helping them rebuild lives marked by loss, resilience, and hope.



In Lesson #5 we join **Chaim Malespin**, an Israel Defense Force (IDF) Sergeant Major, combat engineer, and longtime resident of the Galilee. With decades of service - including elite missions focused on Israel's most complex security threats - Chaim also leads humanitarian efforts caring for soldiers and families carrying deep trauma from ongoing war. ([youtube.com/@chaimalespin](https://youtube.com/@chaimalespin))



We enjoy amazing history lessons in Lesson #6 with **Annaelle Choukroun**, a VIP guide with the City of David and a specialist in biblical archaeology. Born in France and raised in London, Annaelle found her calling in the stones of ancient Jerusalem. Today, she guides visitors through active excavation sites, helping them see how Scripture, topography, and archaeology fit together—often in ways that surprise even lifelong readers of the Bible.



We sit with **Nathan Silverman**, an IDF soldier, in Lesson #7 who has served more than 430 days since October 7, alongside his work as a pastor and licensed therapist in Israel. An American-born Israeli, Nathan lives at the intersection of frontline service, spiritual leadership, and trauma care—supporting soldiers, families, and communities under sustained pressure.



We met **Yishai Fleisher**, the international spokesperson for the Jewish community of Hebron, in Lesson #8. A writer, educator, and unapologetic voice for Jewish history in the land, Yishai has spent years articulating why Hebron matters—not as an idea, but as an inherited, lived reality rooted in the book of Genesis and carried forward today.

#### BONUS INTERVIEWS:

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#### **Shani Ferguson**

Maoz, Israel



#### **Dr. Hagay Dvir-INPA**

Ancient Harbor  
Capernaum, Israel



#### **Michael Beener**

Sderot, Israel

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Take your small group to Israel in an 8-week study connecting the Israel of the Bible with the Israel of today.

# THE STORYLINE OF ISRAEL

## 8 LOCATIONS

## 8 WORDS

## 8 LESSONS

The Wall .....	שָׁכַן	.....	Nearness of God
The Wilderness .....	בָּטַח	.....	Depend on God
The High Places .....	דָּבַק	.....	Cling to God
The Fortress .....	אֱמוּנָה	.....	Faithfulness of God
The Sea .....	מְמַשְׁלָה	.....	Authority of God
The Road .....	תְּקוּוּה	.....	Hope in God
The Mount .....	מָסַר	.....	Entrust to God
The Harbor .....	שָׁלַח	.....	Sent by God

## TEACHING VIDEOS BIBLE STUDIES CONVERSATIONS

ISRAEL

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