

A
AN INTERACTIVE
JOURNEY
GUIDE THROUGH
WITH
THE HOLY LAND
JESUS



BOB GOFF

150 YEARS STRONG
DAVID COOK



Capernaum





STOP 1

INVITING EVERYONE INTO COMMUNITY IN CAPERNAUM

Bob's Travel Log

The first stop on our trip is Capernaum. It's remarkable to be in the central location Jesus used for His ministry. I mean, Jesus walked, taught, and performed miracles right here in this town! I can almost see Him strolling on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee behind me and calling out to two fishermen, Peter and Andrew, as they cast their nets. "Come, follow Me!" Jesus shouted. And guess what? They dropped their nets and became fishers of men. I wonder if that discarded net is buried under centuries of sand somewhere close by.

Since Capernaum is a former trading center, there are ancient ruins everywhere. We will explore the remains of synagogues, the site thought to be Peter's house, and other archaeological sites around the village. Even before we get started on this trip, I can feel a sense of serenity in the

beach air. It's like you can tell that Jesus touched this place and its people, making Capernaum live up to its name: a joining of the word *caper* (meaning "village") and the name *Nabum* (meaning "rest").¹

There are layers upon layers of evidence that Jesus made an incredible impact on this place, and I'm excited to see how He changes our lives on this trip too. Let's go!

It's time to watch the video for this lesson.

Settle in for a few minutes and scan the QR code (access code: Journey).



- What is God calling you to do in light of our time in Capernaum?
- What direction do you think He wants you to go next?



Pray

Jesus,

You are the One who opens every blind eye. I don't want to settle for "tree-level faith"; I want the fullness of what You have to offer. Will You please offer me a second touch in the areas where I need it?

Thank You for the friends who carry me to You when I can't walk. Teach me to be that kind of friend too. May my faith help someone else find the healing and hope they need.

If, like the disciples, I need to leave something behind, please help me have the faith to let it go so I can walk freely in You.

You've already met me here in this journey—through Bethsaida, Capernaum, and the pages of Your Word. Now send me forward—changed, honest, healed, and ready.

Amen.



Extend Your Stay

If you want to spend a little more time at this stop, scan the QR code here (access code: Journey). You can take a tour through Capernaum, download a digital recipe, and find cool links.





Recipe

St. Peter's Fish

Located close to the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum—the city Jesus used as His headquarters and where He called former fishermen to become His disciples—has for centuries been known for seafood, particularly fish.

The fish popular in Capernaum is commonly known as tilapia, but it's no surprise that over time this town adopted a new name for it: St. Peter's fish. Traditionally, the tilapia is either grilled or fried and served with tahini or garlic sauce and a side of lemon.

To really experience all the flavor of this seaside city, try cooking St. Peter's fish in your own home or with your Bible study group. Here's an easy recipe.

YOU WILL NEED:

- 2 tablespoons garlic powder
- 2 tablespoons salt
- 1 tablespoon pepper
- 2 tablespoons paprika
- ½ stick of melted butter, or 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 tilapia fillets
- 1 lemon, cut into wedges
- fresh parsley
- tahini

DIRECTIONS:

1. Mix together all the spices and set aside. Warm the butter or oil in a skillet over medium heat.
2. Once the liquid is warmed, add tilapia and cover generously with the spice mixture.
3. Cook the fish on each side for 2–3 minutes or until cooked through.

4. Set the fillets on a plate, and squeeze lemon juice over them.
5. Garnish with parsley, and serve with tahini and an extra lemon slice.

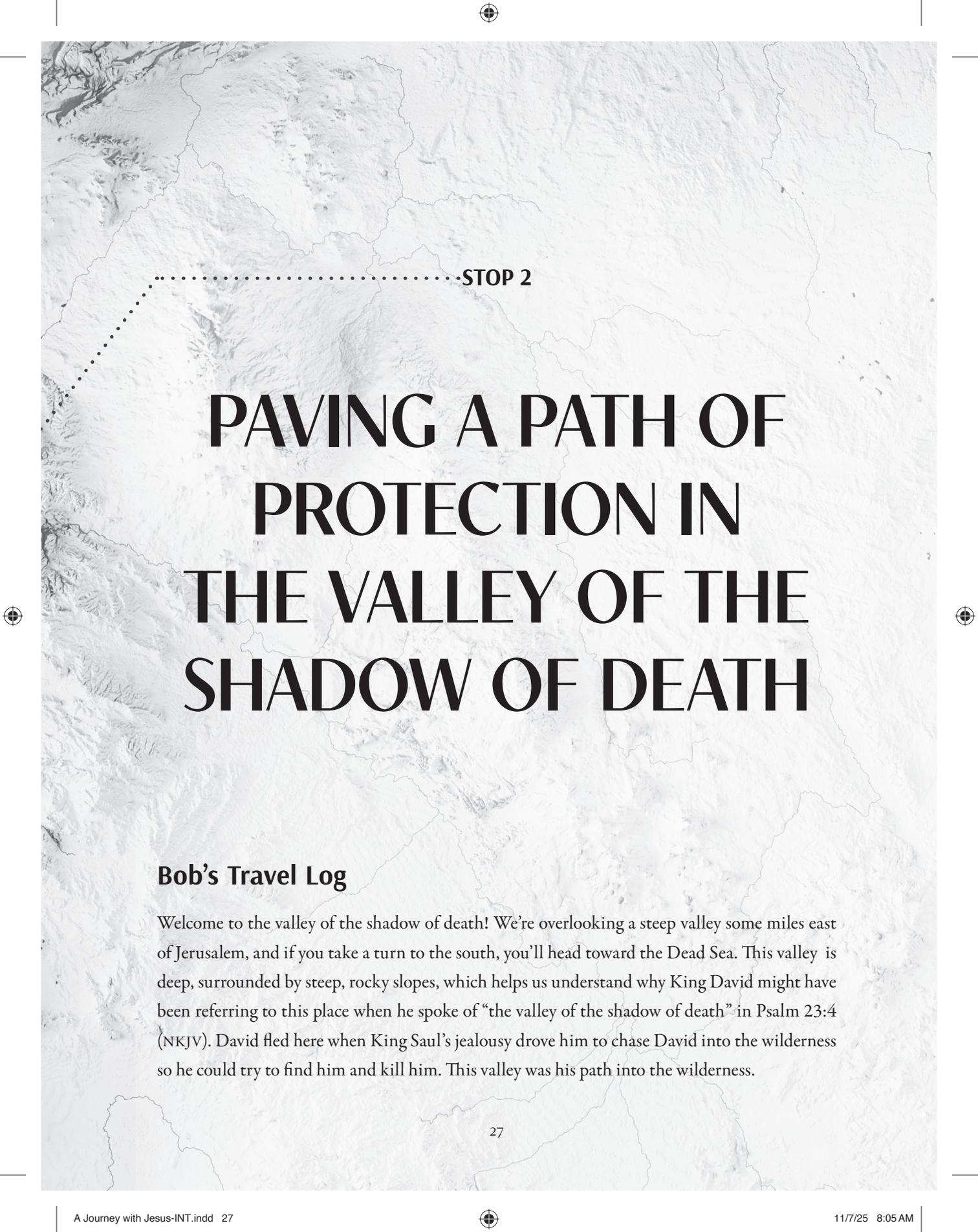
If you're looking for a few sides, St. Peter's Fish is tasty served with rice and veggies.*

*Based on a recipe from <https://faithmag.com/st-peters-fish-pronto>.



**The Valley of the
Shadow of Death**



A topographic map of a mountainous region, likely in the Middle East, showing a dotted line path that starts from the left edge, moves south, then east, and then north. The path ends at a point labeled "STOP 2". The map is rendered in shades of gray, showing terrain contours and some riverbeds. There are four small circular icons with a crosshair in the corners of the page.

STOP 2

PAVING A PATH OF PROTECTION IN THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

Bob's Travel Log

Welcome to the valley of the shadow of death! We're overlooking a steep valley some miles east of Jerusalem, and if you take a turn to the south, you'll head toward the Dead Sea. This valley is deep, surrounded by steep, rocky slopes, which helps us understand why King David might have been referring to this place when he spoke of "the valley of the shadow of death" in Psalm 23:4 (NKJV). David fled here when King Saul's jealousy drove him to chase David into the wilderness so he could try to find him and kill him. This valley was his path into the wilderness.

I'm certain he felt overshadowed here, both in body and soul. Ironically, this is also the valley where David claimed victory over his fears (see Ps. 23). Sometimes when we're in the darkest places, God's light shines brightest, doesn't it?

Another valley we'll visit is the Kidron Valley, which begins on the eastern edge of Jerusalem, sloping dramatically between the Temple Mount and the Mount of Olives, and extends toward the Judean desert and the Dead Sea. From where I stood, I could see the giant stones of the temple, olive trees stretching their branches through the dry Middle Eastern air, and white limestone tombs dotting the hillsides.

Everything there served as proof that the things in the Bible really did happen. Some of those tombs belong to biblical characters like Absalom and Zechariah. Idols were burned there during the reforms in 1 Kings. According to John 18, Jesus walked through this very valley with His disciples on His way to the garden of Gethsemane to pray before His crucifixion and resurrection.

Both of these valleys served historically as gateways from hurt and hardship to hope and healing. I'm praying they still lead us there today. On the other side of the darkest valley is always life in Jesus, so let's head on through!

It's time to watch the video for this stop.

Settle in for a few minutes and scan the QR code (access code: Journey).



As I'm sure you've picked up on by now, the Kidron Valley is a place of deep sorrow, suffering, and transition. Like David, Jesus was rejected as king and betrayed by someone He loved. Imagine, thousands of years had passed between David (Jesus' twenty-eight-times-great-grandfather, according to Matthew 1) and Jesus. But they both took steps through the rocky, rough, unforgiving landscape of the Kidron Valley to accomplish a similar purpose. After a time of great suffering, they both restored kingdoms and set people free. How cool is that?

Take a look at the statements below, and see if you can match them to either David or Jesus. Circle the right answer (find answers on p. 174). (I'll keep all the pronouns lowercase here so I don't give anything away!)

- Betrayed by his son (David/Jesus)
- Betrayed by Judas (David/Jesus)
- Prayed on the Mount of Olives in the garden of Gethsemane before his arrest (David/Jesus)
- Prayed on the Mount of Olives as he fled for the wilderness (David/Jesus)
- Returned to Jerusalem as king after winning a great battle (David/Jesus)
- Will one day return as the King of Kings (David/Jesus)
- Trusted God for restoration: "If I find favor in the LORD's eyes ..." (David/Jesus)
- Submitted to God's will: "Yet not my will, but yours be done" (David/Jesus)
- Had a great earthly kingdom (David/Jesus)
- Has an eternal kingdom and will reign forever (David/Jesus)

- **What is God calling you to do in light of our time in these two famous valleys?**
- **What direction do you think He wants you to go next?**



Pray

Father,

You see where I am, even when I'm deep in the valley. In the darkest places, You do not leave. You light the way.

Thank You for being the Shepherd who steadies my feet when the path feels rocky. Thank You for the rod that corrects and the staff that comforts, even when I can't see what's ahead.

Like Job, I've had times when I've questioned You and asked You why. I've wrestled with moments when life felt unfair. But I'm learning that I'm not walking this valley alone. You've walked it before me. You walk it beside me now.

Help me trust that Your presence is my protection, even when You don't remove the pain. Help me believe that restoration is still possible, even when the path is rough. Help me trust the Nathans you send my way who speak truth when I need it most.

When I wonder if the valley will ever end, remind me: You restore. You redeem. You resurrect. Amen.



Extend Your Stay

If you want to spend a little more time at this stop, scan the QR code here (access code: Journey). You can tour the Kidron Valley, download a digital recipe, and find cool links.





Recipe

Maqluba

(UPSIDE-DOWN RICE WITH CHICKEN AND VEGETABLES)

Located in Jerusalem, the Kidron Valley region is known for a deep connection between food and faith. The recipes here are not only rich in flavor and full of earthy spices but also meant to be traditions shared with friends and family.

Because studying the Bible and gathering with your friends or family is a cause for celebration, I chose to share with you a recipe that the people of this area would also cook for a party: maqluba, or upside-down rice with chicken and vegetables. This dish is full of flavor and fun, and its preparation requires flipping over the pot it's cooked in, which is meant to be a crowd-pleasing event.

So invite your friends or Bible study group over, ask for some help in the kitchen, and gather around the table for maqluba before you dive into this week's material. Savor the flavor, community, and God's Word. It's bound to be a great celebration.

YOU WILL NEED:

- 2 eggplants, cut into small rounds
- 1 ⅔ cups basmati rice
- 8 boneless skinless chicken thighs
- 2 cups olive or sunflower oil, divided
- 1 onion, peeled and quartered
- 10 peppercorns
- 2 bay leaves
- 4 cups water
- 1 cauliflower, cut into florets
- 1 tablespoon butter, melted
- 4 tomatoes, sliced in ¼-inch wedges

8 cloves of garlic, peeled and halved
1 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground allspice
¼ teaspoon ground pepper
½ teaspoon crushed red pepper
1 teaspoon baharat (an all-purpose Middle Eastern spice that you can find at the grocery store or omit if you wish)
1 teaspoon salt, plus more for seasoning
Pine nuts, for serving (optional)
Herbed yogurt or cucumber sauce, for serving (optional)
Lemon wedges, for serving (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Salt eggplant slices and leave on a paper towel for about 30 minutes to pull the moisture out of the fruit.
2. Rinse the rice and soak it in a bowl of water for 30 minutes.
3. Tenderize the chicken thighs with a mallet, and season both sides with salt and pepper. Heat 1 teaspoon of oil in a saucepan over high heat. Cook the chicken on both sides for about 4 minutes. Add onion, peppercorns, bay leaves, and water and bring to a boil. Then reduce heat to medium or medium-low. Simmer for about 20 minutes. Once the chicken is cooked, remove it and set aside before straining and reserving the broth.
4. Warm remaining oil in a Dutch oven over medium heat (the oil should be about ¾ inch deep). Cook cauliflower for about 5 minutes until browned. Then remove to a paper towel-lined plate and season with salt and pepper.
5. Pat the eggplant slices dry with paper towels. Repeat step 4 with the eggplant slices.
6. Discard the oil and wipe the pot clean. Cut parchment paper in a circle to fit the bottom of the Dutch oven to prevent sticking. Then brush the sides of the pot with melted butter. This will ensure the maqluba flip goes smoothly.

7. Now it's time to layer the maqluba. Arrange the tomatoes in an overlapping pattern. Next, arrange the eggplant in a layer. Then scatter the cauliflower. Add the cooked chicken thighs and finish with the rice and garlic on top. Press the rice down evenly.
8. Skim off any fat that has settled on the reserved chicken broth. Whisk in the turmeric, cinnamon, allspice, ground pepper, crushed red pepper, baharat, and salt, and gently pour the leftover chicken broth over the rice until covered. Press down on the rice if it seems too dry, until the broth covers the surface. If needed, add a little more liquid but just enough to cover the top of the rice.
9. It's finally time to cook! Heat the broth over medium heat until it begins to boil. Then reduce the heat to low and cover with a lid. Cook for 30 minutes, and then remove the lid and quickly cover the pot with a clean kitchen cloth. Replace the lid and allow the dish to sit for about 10 minutes.
10. Time to flip! Remove the lid and cloth and place a large serving dish over the top. Flip the pot and allow the maqluba to sit for 3 minutes. Then remove the pot in a grand presentation.
11. If desired, top with pine nuts and serve with cold herbed yogurt or cucumber sauce and a wedge of lemon.

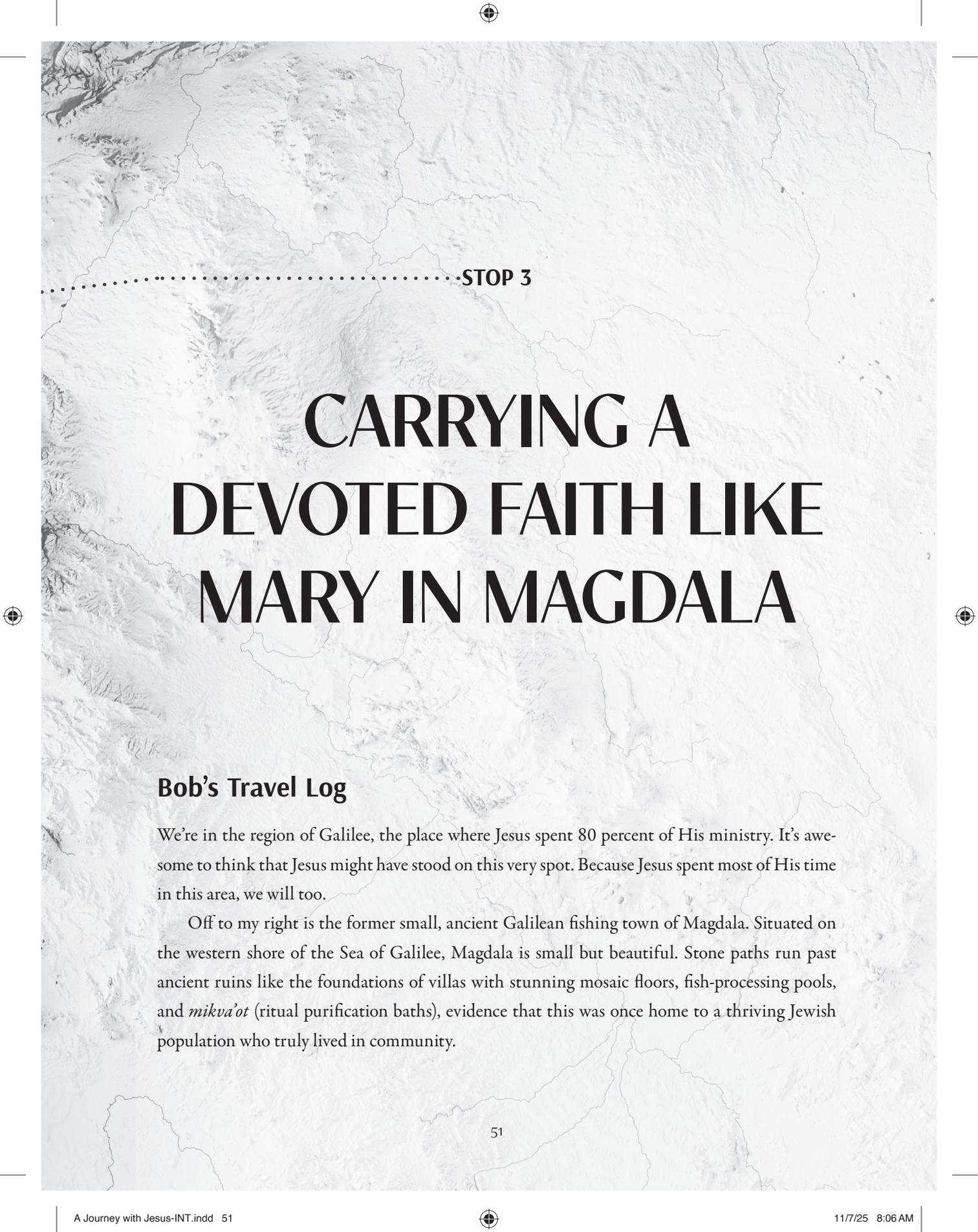
Enjoy with friends and family. Remember, this is a celebration!*

*Based on a recipe from <https://somethingnewfordinner.com/recipe/ottolenghis-maqluba>.



Magdala





STOP 3

CARRYING A DEVOTED FAITH LIKE MARY IN MAGDALA

Bob's Travel Log

We're in the region of Galilee, the place where Jesus spent 80 percent of His ministry. It's awesome to think that Jesus might have stood on this very spot. Because Jesus spent most of His time in this area, we will too.

Off to my right is the former small, ancient Galilean fishing town of Magdala. Situated on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, Magdala is small but beautiful. Stone paths run past ancient ruins like the foundations of villas with stunning mosaic floors, fish-processing pools, and *mikva'ot* (ritual purification baths), evidence that this was once home to a thriving Jewish population who truly lived in community.

“Magdala” comes from the Aramaic word *migdal*, which means “tower” or “fortress,”¹ possibly in reference to its cultural vitality as a fishing, trading, and shipbuilding hub.² The lake and this location, towered over by the jagged cliffs of Mount Arbel, take your breath away. You can just picture fishermen docking and chatting while salting their catch, Jesus sharing a parable in the synagogue, and Mary of Magdala (or Mary Magdalene) returning to her hometown with the disciples, tears filling her eyes as she witnesses miracles. (More on her in just a moment.)

This is a place where our sanctified imaginations can run wild, because Magdala was such an ordinary town, full of ordinary people whom God chose to write into His extraordinary story. You stand here and think, *Anything can happen with God!*

I don’t know about you, but I’m ready to discover more about the miracles Jesus did and the lives He radically transformed in this area. If you’re ready too, let’s visit the very humble but mighty Magdala.

It’s time to watch the video for this stop.

Settle in for a few minutes and scan the QR code (access code: Journey).



tomb-like places to bring the hope of resurrection. Remind me that no one is beyond Your grace ... not even me.

You don't wait for us to come to You; You come to us. You pursue us with purpose. You cast out shame. You replace torment with peace. And then You send us out to tell the story. So today, Jesus, send me. I'll go. I'll carry Your light wherever You lead.

Even in Magdala moments, when nothing big seems to be happening, You're still here. And that's treasure enough.

Amen.



Extend Your Stay

If you want to spend a little more time at this stop, scan the QR code here (access code: Journey). You can tour Magdala, download a digital recipe, and find cool links.





Recipe

Mersu

Don't you think it's time for a dessert? To me, dessert says, "It's time to celebrate!" And it is! Together, we've made it through Capernaum and through the valley of the shadow of death. Now we're in the seaside town of Magdala, and I have found a recipe for an ancient sweet treat made up of staple foods from this region. It's called mersu. Feel free to double or even triple this recipe to share with your Bible study group, neighbors, or friends.

Mersu is simple, using only a few ingredients, like dates, nuts, and honey. It's crazy to think that Jesus and the disciples probably would have eaten mersu, because it was a staple in the diets of ancient Israelites and common to this region of Galilee.⁷

Find a candle and whip out a party hat. Let's try mersu!

YOU WILL NEED:

- 1 cup pitted dates
- ½ cup chopped nuts (most recipes use pistachios, but you can choose walnuts or almonds instead)
- 1 tablespoon honey
- Pinch of cinnamon or cardamom (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Soak dates in warm water for about 10 minutes until softened. Then drain and pat dry.
2. Create a date paste by mashing the dates with a fork or a food processor.
3. Add the nuts, honey, and cinnamon or cardamom and mix well.
4. Form paste into small balls or flatten them into disks like a small cookie.
5. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or until firm.

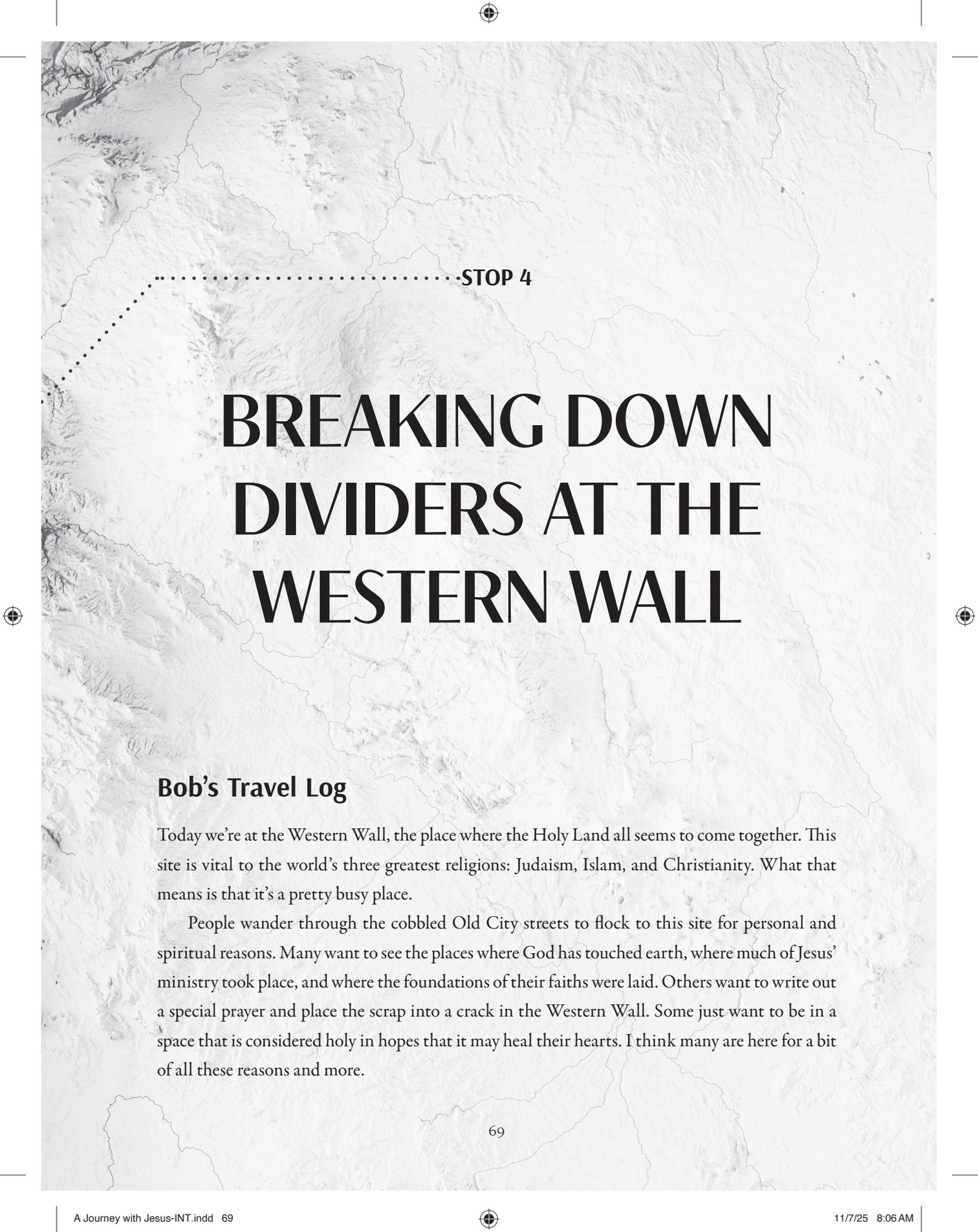
Your friends will have as much fun making them with you as eating them with you!*

*Based on a recipe from <https://eatshistory.com/mesopotamian-recipe-mersu-dessert-balls>.



**The Western Wall
(Jerusalem)**





STOP 4

BREAKING DOWN DIVIDERS AT THE WESTERN WALL

Bob's Travel Log

Today we're at the Western Wall, the place where the Holy Land all seems to come together. This site is vital to the world's three greatest religions: Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. What that means is that it's a pretty busy place.

People wander through the cobbled Old City streets to flock to this site for personal and spiritual reasons. Many want to see the places where God has touched earth, where much of Jesus' ministry took place, and where the foundations of their faiths were laid. Others want to write out a special prayer and place the scrap into a crack in the Western Wall. Some just want to be in a space that is considered holy in hopes that it may heal their hearts. I think many are here for a bit of all these reasons and more.

Right now, it's early morning. We had to head out at the beginning of the day because we were told that if you want a good view at this site, you need to beat the crowds. After sipping a cup of coffee so strong I was convinced it could have powered our airplane, I found myself overlooking the Dome of the Rock glistening in the sun, taking in the ancient architecture of the Temple Mount, and pondering the prayers of the masses of people gathering at the Western Wall.

From this view, I'm inspired to pray with purpose. Those ancient cracks can hold only small pieces of paper. I actually think that's a good thing. Sometimes the most courageous prayers are the shortest ones. "God, help." "Lead me." "Why?" "Heal her." "Bless him." "Send me." Or just, "Jesus ..."

Gazing at those two-thousand-year-old stones full of rolled-up paper prayers, I'm struck by how desperately humans want to connect with God. I'm so grateful that we can speak with God freely and that His presence is no longer waiting behind any wall. Because of Jesus, experiencing God is no longer limited to temple sites. He's with us on early-morning commutes, in sticky situations, and at kitchen tables and kids' soccer games. Still, there's something sacred about showing up. Physically. Emotionally. Spiritually.

It's humbling to be here at the Temple Mount and Western Wall. These stones are no longer a barrier to keep unholy, messy people like you and me out of a perfect God's presence. They are now a reminder that God meets us wherever we are. That He hears even the smallest of prayers. And that maybe, no matter what religion or walk of life we come from, we're all just hoping to hear the whisper that we're still loved, that God is with us, and that we're never too far gone.

I think I'll carry that whisper home with me.

It's time to watch the video for this stop.

Settle in for a few minutes and scan the QR code (access code: Journey).



Verses	Foreshadowing
<p>For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)</p>	<p>Mount Moriah, where Abraham offered Isaac, later became the site of the Temple Mount—the very place where Jesus would later be condemned and sacrificed nearby (Golgotha is within walking distance).</p>
<p>He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (Rom. 8:32)</p>	<p>In writing this verse, Paul used similar language as Genesis 22:12—“You have not withheld from me your son”—to describe God’s gift.</p>
<p>Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29 NKJV)</p>	<p>Though written centuries after Abraham, Isaiah’s suffering servant fulfills the picture Abraham had anticipated: a Son who would willingly carry the wood (cross), be bound, and be offered.</p>
<p>By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice.... Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead. (Heb. 11:17-19)</p>	<p>This verse reflects on Abraham’s faith, seeing it as a herald to resurrection hope—fulfilled in Christ.</p>
<p>Then Solomon began to build the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to his father David. (2 Chron. 3:1)</p>	<p>Isaac is Abraham’s “only son,” offered in radical obedience and love—mirroring Jesus as God’s only Son. God’s act of giving His Son echoes Abraham’s willingness to give Isaac. God did not hold back.</p>
<p>The LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.... He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. (Isa. 53:6-7)</p>	<p>Jesus is the Lamb that Abraham believed God would provide, finally revealed.</p>

Thank You for reminding us that we're the temple now. Not because we've got it all figured out, but because You moved in. And You're not moving out.

Help us be the kind of people who make space: for You, for others, for grace to do what it does best. Help us give up the front-row parking spot, the last word, the perfectly planned schedule. Let us live like love matters most, because it does.

And if there's anyone still standing at a distance thinking they don't belong with You, use us to throw the doors wide open. We want our lives to shout what You've been whispering all along: *You are not too far gone. I'm still here. And I love you like crazy.*

Thanks for being better than we imagined and closer than we deserve.

In Jesus' name, amen.



Extend Your Stay

If you want to spend a little more time at this stop, scan the QR code here (access code: Journey). You can tour the Western Wall, download a digital recipe, and find cool links.





Recipe

Jerusalem-Style Mixed Grill

(ME'ORAV YERUSHALMI)

If we were to head toward the Western Wall in Jerusalem, we'd pass a vibrant, thriving street-food scene in the Jewish Quarter, just outside the Old City gates. The smells there are incredible. Traditional foods like falafel (crispy chickpea balls in pita with salad and tahini) and bourekas (flaky pastries filled with cheese, potato, or mushroom) are freshly made and sold in the Old City, while fresh juice is pressed and nuts are roasted on the more modern outdoor shopping street of the Mamilla Mall. Bold spices and organic aromas float through the air. It's enough to make all of us hungry and curious about what to try next.

Just a short taxi ride away is Jerusalem's renowned food market, the Mahane Yehuda Market. The market is known for its incredible offerings, especially the Jerusalem mixed grill we're going to try today. This dish is more than just an excellent street food. Jerusalem mixed grill tells the story of the cultural fusion of Jerusalem, a city that is sacred to Christians, Jews, and Muslims alike. You'll find ingredients in this dish that pull from surrounding ethnic roots and meet the dietary guidelines of religions that have dominated this area for centuries.

Mostly what I like about this dish is that it's a fusion of cultures and religions meant to bring us all together.

So grab your friends or Bible study group, gather around the table, and let's try something new together.

YOU WILL NEED:

- 1 pound chicken thighs or breast, cut into small pieces
- ½ pound chicken hearts and/or liver (optional)
- 1 large onion, sliced

3 tablespoons olive oil
Juice of half a lemon
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon paprika
½ teaspoon turmeric
¼ teaspoon cinnamon
Pinch of cayenne or chili flakes for heat (optional)
Pita bread, for serving (optional)
Hummus or Israeli salad, for serving (optional)
Pickles, for serving (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

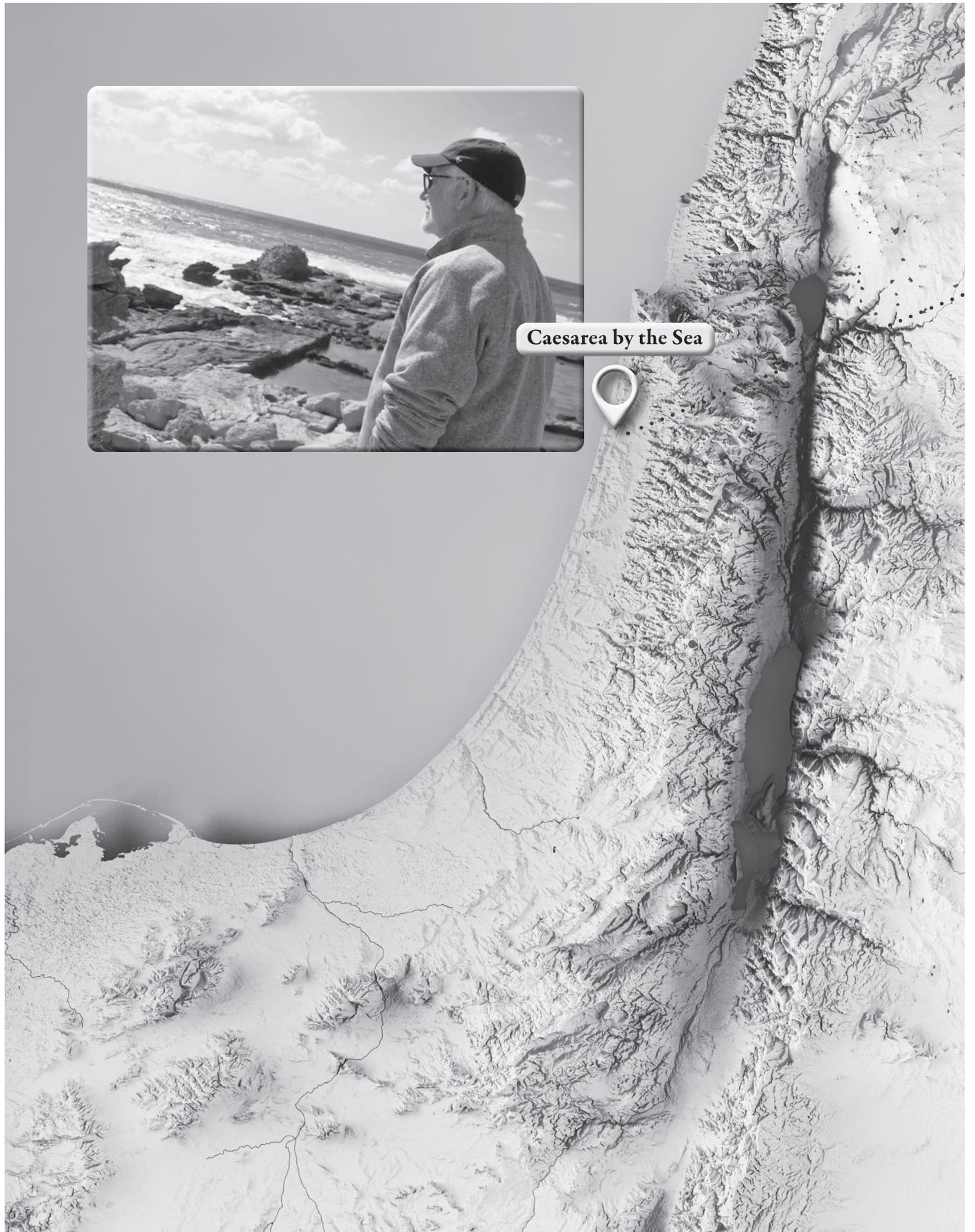
1. Combine the chicken, liver/hearts (if using), onion, olive oil, lemon juice, and all spices. Let sit for 30 minutes (or longer in the fridge) to marinate.
2. Then heat a large skillet or griddle over medium-high heat. Add the entire mixture and sauté for about 10–15 minutes until the meat is browned and fully cooked and the onions are soft and caramelized.
3. Spoon into pita bread with hummus, Israeli salad (diced cucumber, tomato, parsley, lemon, and olive oil), and/or pickles for a true street-food experience.

You and your friends might consider eating these outdoors for a more authentic street-food atmosphere.*

*Based on a recipe from www.israelcart.com/recipes/jerusalem-mixed-grill.



Caesarea by the Sea





STOP 5

SHARING A MESSAGE AT CAESAREA BY THE SEA

Bob's Travel Log

Today I'm standing in a place where ruins whisper and the sea won't stop talking: Caesarea by the Sea. This was the playground of Herod, the king of Judea at the time of Jesus' birth. Later, Paul was thrown into prison here. Caesarea by the Sea was a city built to impress—but now it is mostly held together by memory, salt air, and divine fingerprints.

You can still see the foundation stones of Herod's palace from here, right where the waves crash into what used to be the symbol of human greatness. Herod built colossal structures, possibly hoping he'd be remembered throughout all time. The funny thing is that most people don't remember him for his big buildings; they remember him because he tried to destroy Christianity before it even started.

Herod felt so threatened by the Messiah's arrival that he ordered all Jewish baby boys in Bethlehem to be killed. Warned by an angelic vision, Joseph and Mary rescued the infant Jesus from the massacre, proving that not even political power, fear, or violence can keep God's love from showing up.

The wildest thought I have standing here is that *this* is the place where Paul was held in prison and tried according to Roman law. He sat in chains here. And it was here that he asked to stand before Caesar in Rome. Paul's journey from Caesarea to Rome is how the gospel caught wind and sailed west. Possibly, we all know who Jesus is because Paul decided to launch from this location with the good news. And I think that's where life change begins—not in comfort but in calling. Not with applause, but with obedience.

So I'm standing at the edge of history today, and all I can think is:

Let's launch from here to go love people like we mean it.

It's time to watch the video for this stop.

Settle in for a few minutes and scan the QR code (access code: Journey).



But You're with us. And You're whispering through the headset like our own personal capcom: "You're ready. I'm with you. This is your moment."

Give us the courage to lift off—to love first, speak when it's time, and live like Love when it's better to show than shout.

We don't need a title or a platform, just a fast horse. Maybe it's a story, a meal, a phone call, or a moment of inexplicable kindness. Remind us that love doesn't have to be loud—it just has to be real.

Jesus, help us love like You love. Help us see people the way You did from the rooftop in Joppa. Help us break down the lines we've drawn around faith circles. Let our hearts be wider than our theology sometimes, because You always made more room for more people, not less.

And when we're afraid of what's next, remind us: You're already there.

So give us fire, give us peace, give us joy that doesn't depend on the outcome. And let our lives, our actual lives, tell the story. Not a sermon, not a sales pitch. Just love. Bold, winsome, wild, Jesus-style love.

In Your name, amen.



Extend Your Stay

If you want to spend a little more time at this stop, scan the QR code here (access code: Journey). You can take a tour through Caesarea by the Sea, download a digital recipe, and find cool links.





Recipe

Limonana

(ISRAELI MINT LEMONADE)

In Caesarea by the Sea, I discovered that there is nothing better on a warm Mediterranean afternoon than limonana. Modern-day Caesarea by the Sea is dotted with kosher cafés and beachside bars where you'll find limonana being served to locals and tourists alike.

You know what I love about limonana? It's both sweet and tart, and it's got this little twist of mint to wake you up just a bit. Isn't that what Jesus does in places like this? He shakes us awake.

Caesarea is more than ruins; it's also a reminder. This was the place where power strutted around in a palace and God whispered hope through a prisoner in chains. Paul was here. Pilate was here. Herod built things here. God built the church here.

And maybe, just maybe, God's message for you today as you or your Bible study group enjoy a glass of limonana is this: Stay sweet, stay sharp, and stay refreshing. Like limonana.

YOU WILL NEED:

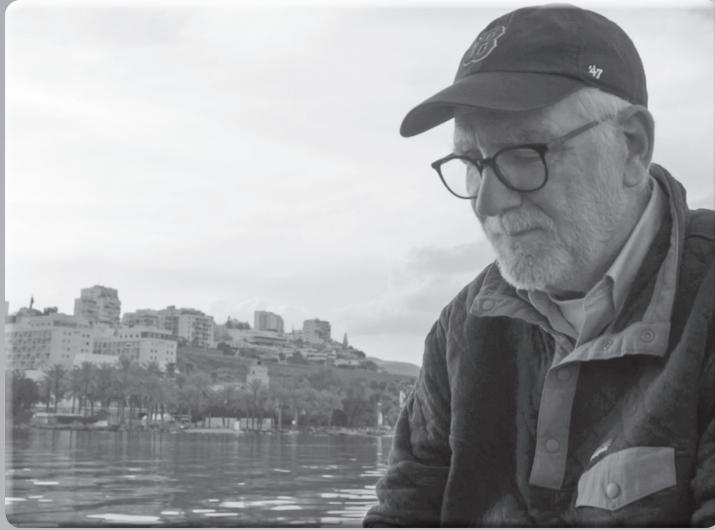
- 1 cup fresh lemon juice (about 4–6 lemons)
- ½ cup fresh mint leaves
- ½–¾ cup sugar or honey (to taste)
- 4 cups cold water (or half water, half sparkling water), divided
- Ice cubes
- Sprigs of mint, for garnish

DIRECTIONS:

1. Blend lemon juice, mint, sugar, and 1 cup of water until smooth.
2. Strain into a pitcher.
3. Stir in remaining water.
4. Serve over ice and garnish with a sprig of mint.

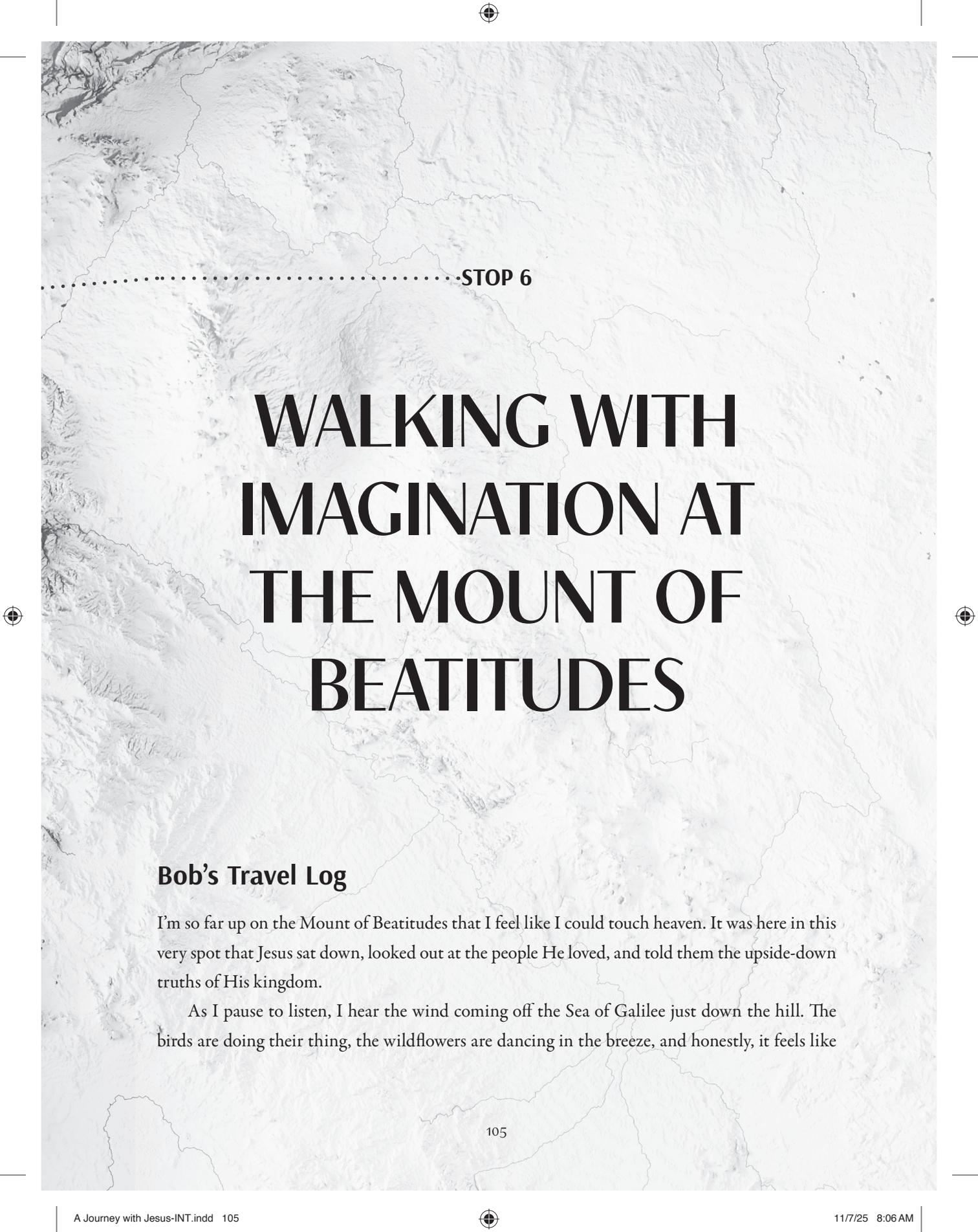
Multiply this recipe according to the size of your group if you're sharing.*

*Based on a recipe from <https://toriavey.com/limonana-frozen-mint-lemonade>.



Mount of Beatitudes





STOP 6

WALKING WITH IMAGINATION AT THE MOUNT OF BEATITUDES

Bob's Travel Log

I'm so far up on the Mount of Beatitudes that I feel like I could touch heaven. It was here in this very spot that Jesus sat down, looked out at the people He loved, and told them the upside-down truths of His kingdom.

As I pause to listen, I hear the wind coming off the Sea of Galilee just down the hill. The birds are doing their thing, the wildflowers are dancing in the breeze, and honestly, it feels like

the whole earth is holding its breath to hear the words again: “Blessed are the poor in spirit ... the meek ... the merciful ... the pure in heart.”

This wasn’t just a sermon; it was a revolution. Jesus wasn’t handing out motivational quotes; He was flipping the script on everything we thought we knew. It was as if He was saying, “You want to be first? Be last. You want to be great? Get low. You want the kingdom? Come empty.”

I imagine the crowd wasn’t expecting that. People came looking for a king to crush their enemies, and they got a carpenter who blessed the broken. That’s what I love about Jesus—He never plays by the world’s rules, because He has a heavenly agenda, and I thank God for that.

I can picture Jesus pointing across the landscape at a nearby city and saying, “You are the salt of the earth ... the light of the world ... a city on a hill” (see Matt. 5:13–14).

He didn’t say, “Try to be” those things. He said, “You *are*.” Right here on this hillside, Jesus looked at people who probably didn’t feel very shiny or salty, and He told them they already were. He gave them an identity.

Really, that’s what Jesus is still doing. He’s not asking us to earn His light inside us or prove that we have it. He’s asking us to live like it’s true. But sometimes, we get so busy trying to climb ladders and make names for ourselves that we miss the voice of God whispering over the birds, the flowers, and His people, saying, “You’re already mine. You’re already blessed.”

I want to sit on the hillside with Jesus. To stop trying to be impressive and start being present. May we leave this place a little saltier, shine a little brighter, and love a whole lot deeper.

It’s time to watch the video for this stop.

Settle in for a few minutes and scan the QR code (access code: Journey).



Have you ever heard the phrase “Doing nothing is still deciding to do something”? It’s true in this case. We can hear all the popular sermons on YouTube and sing all the worship songs that made it to the top of our Spotify lists, but if we aren’t doers of the Word, we’re no different from the sandman who built a pretty life without a firm foundation. So how *do* we construct a life on a strong foundation like the wise man and avoid catastrophe when the storms of life billow our way?

Look at the following chart and fill in what being a wise person looks like for you:

Principle	Insight	Bible Reference	Personal Application
Be a doer.	Obey God 30 seconds at a time.	Matthew 7:24	
Actively love others.	Loving others is the greatest command and a great first action step when we don’t know what God wants us to do.	Matthew 22:38	
Fail forward.	Failure is a part of the building process.	1 John 1:8-9	

looking at the birds and the lilies again. I want to be someone who withstands the storms of life, not because I'm strong, but because I'm standing on You.

Help me fill my bucket with trust, not fear. With love, not control. And if I mess it up today (which I probably will), remind me that You're not disappointed—You're just ready to help me rebuild.

I love You. I trust You. And I'm really glad You're not finished with me yet.

In Jesus' name, amen.



Extend Your Stay

If you want to spend a little more time at this stop, scan the QR code here (access code: Journey). You can take a tour through the Mount of Beatitudes, download a digital recipe, and find cool links.





Recipe

Za'atar Pita Chips with Olive Oil

Now that we've dived into the Beatitudes, I want to share a recipe for something I think Jesus would've passed around on that hillside if He could have: za'atar pita chips with olive oil. This is a region where olives thrive, so their oil is a fundamental ingredient in most foods here, including this snack. It's simple, but adding the za'atar—made of local herbs like thyme, sumac, and sesame seeds—kicks the flavor up a notch. These chips are perfectly crunchy, salty, and earthy.

Here's what else I love about these little pita chips: They remind us that simple can be sacred, and humble can be holy. They don't need a fancy dish or a perfect kitchen. Just a willing heart and a little heat.

Make these at home. Bring them to your neighbors. Pass them around at your next Bible study. And when you do, remember: Jesus fed people with bread and truth. This snack offers an opportunity to gather around both.

So crunch away, friends!

YOU WILL NEED:

- 4 pieces pita bread, or flatbread
- 2–3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2–3 tablespoons za'atar, or a mix of thyme, oregano, sumac, sesame seeds, and salt
- Pinch of sea salt
- Hummus, for serving (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Slice pita bread into triangles or strips.
3. Brush or drizzle olive oil over the pita pieces.

4. Sprinkle generously with za'atar and sea salt.
5. Bake for 8–10 minutes, or until golden and crisp.
6. Cool slightly and enjoy plain or with hummus.

Multiply the recipe according to how many people you're sharing it with. Enjoy loudly!*

*Based on a recipe from <https://reformjudaism.org/reform-jewish-life/food-recipes/homemade-pita-chips-zaatar>.



The Valley of Elah





STOP 7

THROWING FRIENDSHIPS AT GIANTS IN THE VALLEY OF ELAH

Bob's Travel Log

As I stand on the dusty rolling hills in the Valley of Elah, the breeze lightly blows through the barley fields and olive trees. The rocks underfoot are smooth. I think if I listen hard enough, I can almost hear a teenage shepherd talking back to a giant.

As I overlook this valley, I can picture that young shepherd, David, looking at the Israelites shaking in their sandals while they stare at a nine-foot-nine-inch giant who has been taunting them for days. He saw what I also see: God is in this place. Even in their fear, God was on their side.

This makes me wonder: What giants have I let stand too long in my life—just because I forgot that God was standing with me?

There is a dry riverbed here that still holds smooth stones like the ones David would have chosen for his sling to hurl at Goliath. Those worn-down rocks remind me that faith has never been flashy. It's sometimes just one foot in front of the other, one smooth stone in a sling, one voice confidently saying, "I come in the name of the Lord."

David didn't win because he was brave. He defeated the giant because he believed. He knew God wasn't just with him but also already out there on the battlefield. It was God's fight to win, not his.

So today, I picked up a stone from the Valley of Elah because, like David, I want to remember who's fighting for us and that the battle belongs to Him. Sometimes the odds seem stacked against us, but now, after visiting this spot, I know for certain that the God of David still meets people in valleys, slays giants, and offers us victory when we call upon His name.

It's time to watch the video for this stop.

Settle in for a few minutes and scan the QR code (access code: Journey).





Pray

God,

We're stepping into the valley to face our giants with a little bit of courage and fear. But we're showing up with all our weaknesses and strengths, knowing we don't have to be the strongest or bravest, because You are.

David didn't bring armor and a sword into his fight with Goliath, but he did bring a sling, a few stones, and a heart full of faith. That's what we want too—to trust that You have purposefully given us our gifts and skills.

You've already equipped us to take down giants. We've learned so much through hardship and in the quiet places. If You can use a slingshot to drop a nine-foot-nine giant, what more could You do when we trust You with what You have placed in our hands?

Lord, please send us some people, fellow fighters, who won't stay on the sidelines of the battle but will run alongside us—friends who will pray boldly, cheer hard, and speak the truth when the giants' lies get loud.

When the giants fall and we see victory on the other side of life's battles, help us remember that this was all about You. It always has been. May our lives shout to the world, "There is a God in this valley, and He's not done yet."

Amen.



Extend Your Stay

If you want to spend a little more time at this stop, scan the QR code here (access code: Journey). You can take a tour through the Valley of Elah, download a digital recipe, and find cool links.





Recipe

Labneh

Before David was a giant slayer, he was a cheese-snacking shepherd. I'm kidding. I don't know the cheese part for sure. But it's possible that before he squared up with Goliath, he was eating some labneh.

The Valley of Elah is in southern Israel, where this creamy, tangy, strained yogurt cheese is very popular. It was even a main food among the ancient Philistine and Israelite people groups who resided in this area. Think of it as cream cheese with a swagger.

Unfortunately, I couldn't bring you a giant and sling today to tell you about David and Goliath, but I can offer you a recipe to experience a taste of the land where this great historical event went down.

Labneh is simple. It's creamy. It's spreadable. And when you drizzle olive oil on it and sprinkle it with za'atar, it's basically holy ground on a pita.

So here's what I want you to do: Take a bite and remember: God loves using simple things. A stone. A shepherd. A snack. Maybe even you. Let's taste and see that the Lord is good—and that labneh isn't so bad either.

YOU WILL NEED:

- 2 cups full-fat plain Greek yogurt
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Olive oil, for drizzling
- Za'atar seasoning (Middle Eastern herb blend)
- Pita bread or naan, for dipping

DIRECTIONS:

1. Mix the yogurt and salt in a bowl.

2. Spoon it into a cheesecloth-lined strainer over another bowl. Let it drain in the refrigerator for 12–24 hours until thick like cream cheese.
3. Scoop into a dish, drizzle generously with olive oil, and sprinkle with za'atar.
4. Serve with warm pita or fresh veggies. Enjoy with your friends!



The Sea of Galilee





STOP 8

RUNNING WITH DELIGHT AT THE SEA OF GALILEE

Bob's Travel Log

I'm back here on the Sea of Galilee, right where it all started. Standing on the shore where Jesus first called His disciples, inhaling the salt air and the scent of olive trees, I can't help but wonder if I would have been bold and curious enough to have dropped my net and gone after Jesus to become a "fisher of men."

After just three years of walking with Jesus along this beach, through many towns, in all kinds of wild situations, these men who said yes to Jesus saw Him crucified and then raised to life. When the chips were down, Peter, one of Jesus' loudest, boldest, and most loyal disciples, messed up big. He denounced Jesus—not just once but three times, even claiming not to know Him.

But Jesus didn't cancel Peter. He cooked for him. Right here on this beach.

After all the drama of the trial, crucifixion, and resurrection, the disciples went back to fishing—maybe because they didn't know what else to do. We all revert to our old ways from time to time. The resurrected Jesus shouted from the shore, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat" (John 21:6). Peter recognized *that* voice. Without hesitation, like kids whose parents have just called them inside for cake, Peter cannonballed into the water and swam toward Jesus.

What did Jesus do? He made breakfast. He offered them bread and fish—and forgiveness.

This place reminds me that God's not interested in our résumés or regrets: He's after our hearts. He's forever pulling up a chair for us at His table and asking us to commune and be with Him, dressed just as we are.

Like the disciples who heard Jesus call them from the shoreline, I want to listen for the truest voice. My ears are tuned in to Jesus' voice, which doesn't shout us down for our mistakes but calls us close.

I press my feet into the sand and incline my ear toward the ocean, trying to listen better. Because if I hear Jesus' voice above this noisy world, I know that's the only voice worth running toward for the rest of my life.

It's time to watch the video for this stop.

Settle in for a few minutes and scan the QR code (access code: Journey).



- **What direction do you think He wants you to go next?**



Pray

Jesus,

Thank You for meeting us back where it all started. May we pause and remember what it was like to first hear You call us. Maybe we could hear our name. Or maybe Your call was a prick in our heart we couldn't deny. We're so grateful that You have called us and keep calling us back.

We admit that we get lost sometimes. When life throws us a curveball, we can forget who we are and whose we are. We can get distracted by all the noise of this world and start comparing ourselves to others. Thank You that You don't shame us. You gently remind us that all we need to do is follow You.

Today, we wish to hear Your voice again. Like Peter, may we jump right in and move toward You. We want to follow You more than we have been following the fear, shame, or noise around us.

Help us to get quiet and listen for Your voice, the one that calls us beloved. Help us to love Your people and remember that our failure never gets the last word—You do.

Thank You for second chances, for calling us close even when we've blown it.

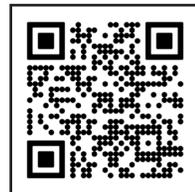
We love You and want to follow You ... all the way to the shore and beyond.

Amen.



Extend Your Stay

If you want to spend a little more time at this stop, scan the QR code here (access code: Journey). You can take a tour through the Sea of Galilee, download a digital recipe, and find cool links.





Recipe

Shakshuka Breakfast on the Beach

We're going to end this Bible study the same way the book of John ends: with breakfast.

While Jesus and Peter ate fish for breakfast, this particular Galilean breakfast plate is what you might find today if you pulled up a chair in a guesthouse overlooking the Sea of Galilee.

Shakshuka sounds fancy, but it's simply eggs in a tomato-and-pepper sauce. It's a savory and delicious breakfast staple across this region. Traditionally, this meal is eaten straight from the skillet with friends gathered around, dipping bread into the sauce.

As you eat, put yourself in Peter's sandals. Imagine looking up and seeing Jesus making you breakfast on the beach. You're in deep astonishment as you look at Him, since not too many days ago, you saw Him crucified and buried. And yet here He stands. You want to drop to your knees and worship Him. But you're held back because of your shame. The risen Lord has decided to show up after the biggest personal failure of your life.

Yet here He stands, making you breakfast. He comes to you, loves you, and cares for you, exactly where you are.

Let's eat like we're with Jesus on the beach. In our final stop on our Bible study trip together, I know that God is already cooking something up just for you.

YOU WILL NEED:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- 1 14-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 4 eggs

Chopped parsley or cilantro, for garnish
Bread and jam, olives, or fruit, for serving (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a skillet over medium heat, heat the olive oil. Sauté the onion and pepper until soft.
2. Add garlic, paprika, and cumin and stir for 30 seconds.
3. Add tomatoes, season with salt and pepper, and simmer for 10–15 minutes.
4. Make 4 wells in the sauce, and crack one egg into each well. Cover and cook until the whites are set.
5. Garnish with herbs, and serve straight from the pan with fresh bread and jam, olives, fruit, and juice or mint tea.

Multiply this recipe as needed for the size of your group. Have fun dipping together!*

*Based on a recipe from www.themediterraneanandish.com/shakshuka-recipe.

ANSWER KEY (from p. 41)

- Betrayed by his son (David/Jesus)
- Betrayed by Judas (David/Jesus)
- Prayed on the Mount of Olives in the garden of Gethsemane before his arrest (David/Jesus)
- Prayed on the Mount of Olives as he fled for the wilderness (David/Jesus)
- Returned to Jerusalem as king after winning a great battle (David/Jesus)
- Will one day return as the King of Kings (David/Jesus)
- Trusted God for restoration: “If I find favor in the LORD’s eyes ...” (David/Jesus)
- Submitted to God’s will: “Yet not my will, but yours be done” (David/Jesus)
- Had a great earthly kingdom (David/Jesus)
- Has an eternal kingdom and will reign forever (David/Jesus)

ANSWER KEY (from p. 78)

Verses	Foreshadowing
<p>For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)</p>	<p>Mount Moriah, where Abraham offered Isaac, later became the site of the Temple Mount—the very place where Jesus would later be condemned and sacrificed nearby (Golgotha is within walking distance).</p>
<p>He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (Rom. 8:32)</p>	<p>In writing this verse, Paul used similar language as Genesis 22:12—“You have not withheld from me your son”—to describe God’s gift.</p>
<p>Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29 NKJV)</p>	<p>Though written centuries after Abraham, Isaiah’s suffering servant fulfills the picture Abraham had anticipated: a Son who would willingly carry the wood (cross), be bound, and be offered.</p>
<p>By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice.... Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead. (Heb. 11:17-19)</p>	<p>This verse reflects on Abraham’s faith, seeing it as a herald to resurrection hope—fulfilled in Christ.</p>
<p>Then Solomon began to build the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to his father David. (2 Chron. 3:1)</p>	<p>Isaac is Abraham’s “only son,” offered in radical obedience and love—mirroring Jesus as God’s only Son. God’s act of giving His Son echoes Abraham’s willingness to give Isaac. God did not hold back.</p>
<p>The LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.... He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. (Isa. 53:6-7)</p>	<p>Jesus is the Lamb that Abraham believed God would provide, finally revealed.</p>