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Dear Fellow Sojourners,

In preparation for our **Video Orientation** meeting for all tour participants, we ask that you give a careful reading to this tour introduction. Thank you!

Nava and I are grateful to G-d that you will be joining us for our upcoming tour of Israel: the Land given for all time exclusively to the Jewish people, the land where the Bible has and will continue to unfold and the land where our Messiah lived, taught and ministered to the needs of the Jews of his generation and provided redemption for every generation.

Our prayer for you is that the theme of this tour, "**Your People Shall Be My People**" will come alive in you and be the beginning of a new lifelong direction for you... that the text of the Book of Ruth will be studied from inside the midst of its pages looking out at the world through "Ruth-colored glasses". We desire that G-d will transform you through "living out the Text" in the Place where G-d chose to reveal His Word, His people, and Himself, the Redeemer.

All of us on this tour are embarking on another kind of journey which may very well be utterly unique in our generation. We are attempting something with people from two disparate backgrounds: the Jewish world and the Christian world, and our goal is to transform that multicultural organism into something different, a homogenous entity described by Rabbi Sha'ul (Paul) in Ephesians 2 as "making the two into one new man". It will be an experience which mirrors the experience of Naomi, Ruth and Boaz from the pages of the Bible. How that transformation will take place will unfold before us in the coming weeks.

Nava and I are committed to uncompromising truth as it is revealed in the Bible. We know that each of you come from a variety of different traditions and practices. We want you to know that this tour will not be an ecumenical watering down of differences so that we can all "just get along" and then pat ourselves on the back for promoting unity at any cost. Rather, we will seek to implement biblical principles into our daily lives and explore how traditions and practice ought to mesh together. Learning concepts that affect both Jews and non-Jews honors the Master who said to His Jewish disciples, "*...I have other sheep, which are not of this sheepfold; I must also bring them, and they will hear My voice; and they will become a single flock with a single shepherd.*" (John 10:16) Gentile inclusion into the Jewish flock would by its very occurrence, cause interaction which would necessitate change. We will explore a deeper understanding of what those changes mean and how they will affect what we do on this trip and after we return to our homes.

By no means will we get past a scratching of the surface during this tour, but scratch we will, and as completely as we can. As your rabbi and host on this tour, I will be imparting the geographical, historical and spiritual lessons behind the places we visit. Though I live in the U.S. currently, the Land of Promise (Genesis 12:3, 26:3, 27:29, 28:4) is still my home and I am delighted to welcome you to it as my honored guests.

The Jewish Learning Style

Some people may view their time spent in Israel as a vacation but be assured that it will be far better and more involved than a vacation. Rather, it will be a rigorous journey, with real goals to accomplish. The Torah and our Messiah taught that when a person changes their life to conform to what it says before they understand it, then they will truly learn what it teaches and what it means.

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Objective study, without actively participating, is illusory because it lulls people into a false sense of accomplishment, without any change in their behavior, which would then transform their thoughts. That, explains the Jewish Sages, is why G-d records the method of learning as, *"We will do, and then we will understand"* (Exodus 24:7 literal meaning). While most of the western world has adopted a Greek methodology of acquiring knowledge, the Jewish way of learning is by living what we are told and then understanding it more fully by being transformed through the process. It's the metamorphosis of the thought process (because we have already changed our behavior) that allows us to truly learn (James 1:21-22).

Our desire for this group is that we will see ourselves as integrating into the greater Jewish "kehilah" (community), and become one "mishpochah" (family).

That process will require that we learn as much as possible about the root system into which you have been grafted: *"the rich root of the olive tree"* (Romans 11): the Jewish people. Toward that end, you may be surprised at how you will (or won't) be instructed on your journey. You may not always be given the information you expect. Questions are encouraged, but observation and imitation is expected and required. The Master said that *"every disciple, when he is fully trained will be exactly like his rabbi."* (Luke 6:40) Rabbi Sha'ul (Paul) gave an admonition not to multiply teachers but to become a carbon copy of only one (1 Cor. 4:14-17) and also, *"imitate me as I am, of the Messiah."* (11:1) By careful observation and mimicry of those whose training and practice place them as thoroughly conversant in the ways of Torah (one of the mandatory biblical requirements for a leader in Israel), our hope is that you will become a true "talmid" (disciple). This means you may often be out of your comfort zone, but we ask you to trust G-d that there is much to learn from the journey itself, not just getting to a destination and getting the story. The journey makes the story come alive!

Heat and Feet

The heat is a very real concern in Israel, mostly during the summer. Even though we will be there after the peak of the hot season, there may still be very warm days when we travel there. It is very important that you drink LOTS of water all day, every day. In addition to the heat, there are several intense hikes, both climbing and descending. We highly recommend that you do as much "pre-trip" physical training as possible. Walk as aggressively as you can every day - get your heart pumping! The more "in shape" that you are physically, the more you can absorb spiritually, mentally, and emotionally. You'll gain a whole new appreciation for the ancients and the lives of those who daily walked alongside the Messiah. Thankfully for us, we have the advantage of good quality, lightweight hiking boots which you need to bring with you... be sure to break them in before the trip. It would be a shame to miss days of learning because of blisters or sore feet. Please know that as your rabbi and guide, I am committed to your well-being and I've found on previous tours that people can do far more than they thought possible. We'll take this journey together.

Technology and Tours

This modern age has its blessings and its curses. There are so many of the newest and latest toys that you'll be tempted to load them up to bring home all your memories electronically. Experience has taught us not to do that - try to keep it to a minimum, but don't hesitate to bring your camera. Once we leave our hotel each day, we request that cell phones be either turned off (or set to "do not disturb" if you require your cell phone to take photos). If emergencies require your being reachable by cell phone, you may leave it with our Israeli liaison - who will accompany us throughout the day. With regard to other technologies, please carefully follow the checklist provided with this letter. This list will help you know what to bring.

Clothing Which Allows Us to Serve in Messiah's Name

Many people feel that their personal dress tastes and standards, which are acceptable in their home towns, even among religious gatherings, ought to be "exportable" anywhere in the world. "After all, if our tourist dollars are helping the local economy, the least they could do would be to accommodate our tastes... right?" My father often says that the definition of "deference" is to lay aside my personal rights for the sake of those whom G-d has called me to serve. Rabbi Sh'aul tells us to abstain from practices which would cause another to stumble or might cause offense. If your goal is to have as genuine a "Ruth experience" as possible, and to minister to Naomi, then for the short time that we are in the Land of Israel, we will be upholding the observant Jewish standard of modesty in the way we dress. Please keep in mind that the trip is very casual. Men, expect to wear slacks (occasionally shorts - reaching below the knees) and a t-shirt everyday. Women, slacks are permitted, and long skirts or dresses are normal for observant Israelis, but please no shorts or sleeveless tops. Modesty for women and for men is expected of those who claim an allegiance with and serve the G-d of Israel.

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Within the observant Jewish community, women do not wear low necklines or bare their arms or legs. Lightweight socks under slacks or long skirts will do the trick. Men, bring a kippah (yarmulke) with you in your pocket, even if you don't ordinarily wear one. There may be places that we visit where it will be expected for men to wear a kippah. Women, a scarf or snood, straw hat, etc. will provide relief from the sun and also will allow you to go places where observant women wear a head covering. You know, it was only one generation ago in the U.S., that almost all women always wore a hat to worship. Since the entire land of Israel is holy, think of it as one big worship experience.

Our Day and Kosher Meals

All meals on the tour will be kosher (both in compliance with the Bible and of the observant Jewish community). Our daily pattern for most days will be to eat an early breakfast together (usually 6:30 am) and be out on site until early evening (6:00-8:00 pm). Lunch is not included in your trip cost and often we will have a lunch made for us on site, since we frequently will not be near convenient restaurants. You should plan on bringing \$7 per lunch. Plan to bring kosher snacks from home and pack them in your suitcase to help you through the day, but be sensitive to what is being attempted on this tour, and don't cheat by bringing snacks that are not labeled as kosher. ☺ Look for a "hechsher" (kosher symbol) on any snacks you bring from home. You won't find too many kosher meats that will go in your luggage, but there are so many possibilities that you honestly won't miss beef jerky. If you were to look in your cupboards, you would find that most of what is there is already labeled with a kosher symbol and you may not have even known it. A list of kosher symbols (so that you know what to look for) may be found at: <http://www.kosher-directory.com/supervisions.htm>

Exercising Selective Shopping

Does it matter where you buy? Americans are champions of a good cause and "economic sanctions" and boycotts are part of the way we think. After all, when we withhold dollars from a company, organization, government, etc. because of their questionable or evil conduct, we expect that a financial loss to their business will effect change. The U.S. government has established a list of countries where it refuses to allow trade until such time as the country makes amendments to its policies.

Did you know that by buying from some merchants in Israel, you might actually be financing the death of Jews? There are non-Jewish shop owners who live in Israel, who sell to tourists, but who use their living to oppose Jews and even help finance the taking of Jewish lives. Not everyone who lives in Israel is supposed to live there, according to the G-d of Israel. He describes it this way: *"But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come about that those that you let remain will be as pricks in your eyes and thorns in your sides and they shall constantly harass you in the Land in which you live."* (Num. 33:55, Joshua 23:13, Judges 2:3) If there's been one prophecy of G-d that is as true today as it ever was, this is a glaring example.

For this reason, we are going to place "getting a good deal" as secondary in our priorities when choosing where to shop. Only Jewish merchants who honor the G-d of Israel in their product offerings and their hours of operation will be the recipients of our tourist dollars. We want to reward biblical behavior and be careful not to reward behavior which is inconsistent with what G-d has said.

There will be limited shopping opportunities on our tour and they will be at carefully chosen venues. G-d willing, we will select places along the way for you, that we are confident will have both variety and a good price, which fits into our tour schedule. This helps us accomplish the primary reason for the trip which is a spiritual impact, learning and blessing the Jewish people.

History and Geography

You will be introduced to the basics of historical settings and geography at each site, but it will be very helpful for you to familiarize yourself with these in advance. Maps aren't typically most people's favorite study tool, but for once this will become exciting (after the tour ☺).

Prayer

All that we do and accomplish is by the blessing of G-d, so we are dependent on Him in every way. Prayer is the means by which we express our compliance with His instructions, our gratitude, and experience dependency upon Him, so let me encourage you to enlist several prayer partners on your behalf for this trip.

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Some things you ask others to pray regarding are:

- For the chosen people - Isaiah 41:8-10
- For the land of Israel and Jerusalem: for justice, peace, and biblical understanding - Psalm 122:6-9
- For health and strength so that participants may make the most of G-d's gift to them - Proverbs 13:12
- For travel safety to, from and within Israel - Psalm 43:3
- For true community among the participants - Psalm 133:1
- For the rabbi: for good choices, good communication, for sensitivity and patience - Hebrews 13:17,18
- For all of us to grow in our understanding of the Bible and to deepen our faith in Y'shua (Jesus), our Messiah - Psalm 119:34-36, Deuteronomy 6:5
- For us to be clear and faithful witnesses wherever we go - Deuteronomy 4:5-8
- For the glory of G-d in all things - 1 Corinthians 10:31

Reading Preparation

The following will help you if you read before the trip:

- Genesis chapters 12-50
- Numbers chapters 6, 21, 33-35
- Deuteronomy chapters 1-12
- Judges chapters 13-16
- Psalms of Ascent chapters 120-134
- Isaiah chapters 36-38
- Zechariah chapters 11-14
- Malachi chapters 3-4
- Matthew chapters 1-28
- Mark chapter 7
- Luke chapters 1-24
- John chapters 6, 9
- Acts chapters 1-10, 15, 21-26, 28
- Romans chapter 7
- 1 Corinthians 11:1-2
- 2 Thessalonians 2:15, 3:6
- James chapter 1
- 1 John 5:3

If you have opportunity, watch Masada, Peter O'Toole and Peter Strauss, MCA Universal (1981). We plan to watch this video as a group one evening during our tour.

We eagerly look forward to being with you in the Land where G-d chose to place His Name and to shape His people. May He do so with us as well!

Shalom and G-d bless you,
Rabbi Daniel and Nava

P.S. If you haven't already done so, please sign up for weekly online video Bible learning at:
www.jewisheyes.org

Additional Tour Information

There will be a multi-person **Pre-Trip Video Conference** hosted by Rabbi Daniel and Nava to answer any questions you may have and to discuss preparations for the tour. Details will be made available on our website.

If you have any questions about the content of this letter or other questions about the tour, please email:
lydiabatnava@jewisheyes.org

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PACKING SUGGESTIONS

CLOTHING - MEN:

- Kippah (yarmulke) to wear or carry in pocket for visits to religious sites which require one
- Lightweight slacks / if shorts, modest, near the knee (which dry quickly (i.e. Nylon, hiking type)
- Lightweight knit or T-shirt for each day (please, no tank tops / muscle shirts)
- Swimwear - long baggy shorts type - nothing skin tight and T-shirt (please, no tank tops / muscle shirts)

CLOTHING - WOMEN:

- Scarf, snood, hat of some kind for visits to religious sites which require one
- Lightweight skirts or dresses which go below the knee, with stockings
- Lightweight long slacks which dry quickly (i.e. Nylon, hiking type) - No shorts, please
- Lightweight knit or longer sleeved (to the elbow) T-shirt for each day (please, no tank tops or sleeveless)
- Swimwear - as modest as is possible - high neck - no two piece, etc. Please also wear clothing (which can get wet) over swimsuit. Click [here to see an example of what is possible](#)* - bought at Kohl's, Kmart and Goodwill
The rebbetzin (rabbi's wife) enjoys assisting ladies in planning swimming attire or any part of their wardrobe.

CLOTHING - MEN AND WOMEN:

- If sun sensitive - lightweight long sleeve shirt (prevent severe sun poisoning)
- Hiking socks, lightweight undersocks
- Hiking boots with good ankle support encouraged — break in well
- Hat or visor cap for sensible sun protection (clip on cord or string tie recommended)
- Head sweat band, cotton scarf or “cooling tie” (optional)

AT THE HOTEL - MEN AND WOMEN:

- 2-3 casual outfits for nightly dinner (many eat dinner in hiking clothes)
- Sandals or comfortable casual shoes
- A dressier outfit for Shabbos meetings and Erev Shabbos (Friday evening) meals. Again, please be mindful of modesty standards (sleeves, legs and necklines) - many observant Jews move into hotels on weekends and we will be sharing the same hallways and dining rooms - some even hold religious services in the hotel

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SUPPLIES:

- Inflatable pillow (supplied by GTI) for use on bus and for "rock sitting"
- Camelback with built in water storage, drinking tube and flashlight (supplied by GTI)
- Small Bible - to go in camelback
- Blank Journal (provided by GTI - daily journaling and photo records)
- Sunglasses with neck cord (a must)
- Small bottle of laundry soap in a zip-lock works great
- Small and large ziplock bags for snacks, storage of collectibles (write on bag what it is and where you found it)
- Loofa or mesh sponges or old or inexpensive wash clothes to leave at hotels (hotels do not provide them)
- Kosher snacks (see accompanying letter) - granola bars, trail mix, candy bars (Payday bars are good - no chocolate, as it melts), "tube" peanut butter, crackers (lunch is often late in the day)
- Quasi-medical gel packets for heat exhaustion (from sporting/running store)
- Powdered Gatorade (optional - not very convenient to use)
- Fiber pills, diuretics, ibuprofen, digestive aids similar to: Imodium-d
- Sleep aids similar to: Melatonin, Ambien, or Tylenol PM to help regulate Israel time zone sleeping patterns
- Moleskin or Spenco Blister Kit for blisters, small scissors for trimming moleskin
- Electrical adapter (220 voltage, 3 prong) – only some hotels have hair dryer
- Highlighters / pens (a pen w. grip may be helpful - sweating makes it hard to hold)
- Camera
- Sunscreen (SPF 15+)
- Lots of tissue packs (1-2 per day) - many bathrooms are out of paper
- Packs of disposable cloths (Wet Ones) or a dry-wash liquid may be helpful
- Small bills (singles and fives) can be kept on the bus/totally safe.

TIPS:

- Drink a lot of water!
- Apply sun screen frequently
- Train for strenuous climbing: stair stepping, doing lunges, aggressive walking / hiking in boots, weight training
- Journal each place and faith lesson daily, include 1-2 daily highlights
- Purchase postcards of hard-to-shoot places
- Wear boots every day
- Take credit card, checks and cash (U.S. currency is accepted everywhere)
- To hand wash clothes it's helpful to wring out excess water in towel after shower and dry on deck of hotel or hang in your room closet
- Organize clothes and waist pack (camelback) supplies each evening before bedtime
- Keep toilet paper or tissues in pocket for emergency pit stops

REFLECTIVE HINTS:

- Several times a day stop and look all around you and soak it all in - get the big picture

Don't forget your Passport!

* the above link references: <http://www.jewisheyes.org/modesty/swimwear.zip>

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