



Imagine Israel Bible Study

Written by Kathleen V. Derbyshire

With each Bible study and each week passing you will be able to imagine yourself standing on the ground of the Holy Land. I will provide as many pictures as I can with the study so when we get there you can say, "I know that place!"

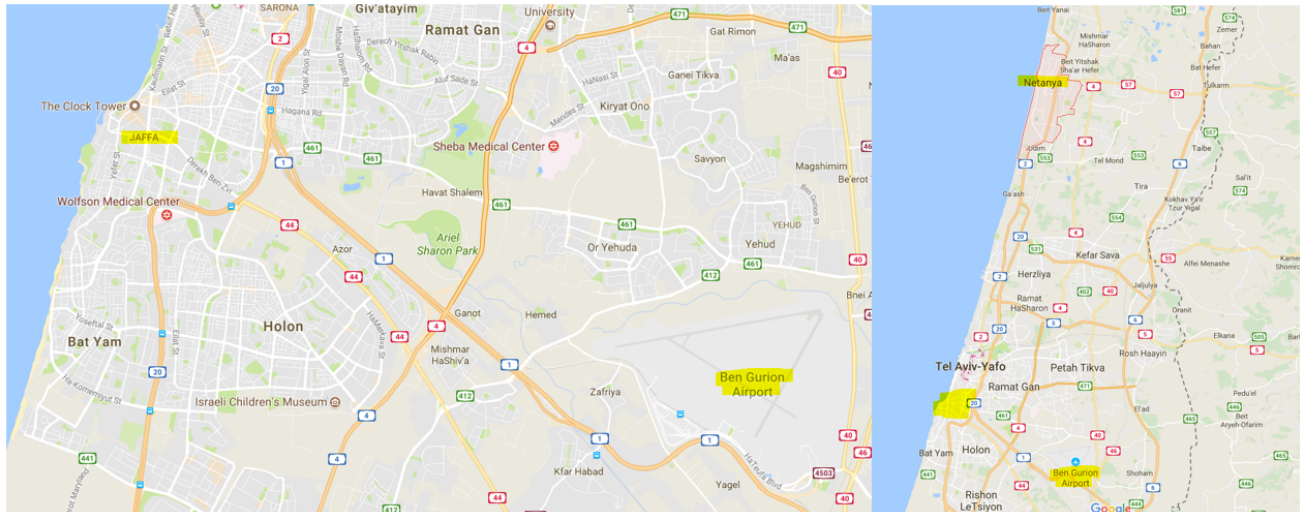
Enjoy the study but most of all enjoy the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ in the process. He is returning to this land we will walk on.

Why did He write about His land and Himself?
Let's find out and apply it to our lives.

Study 2: Mercy Disguised in Joppa

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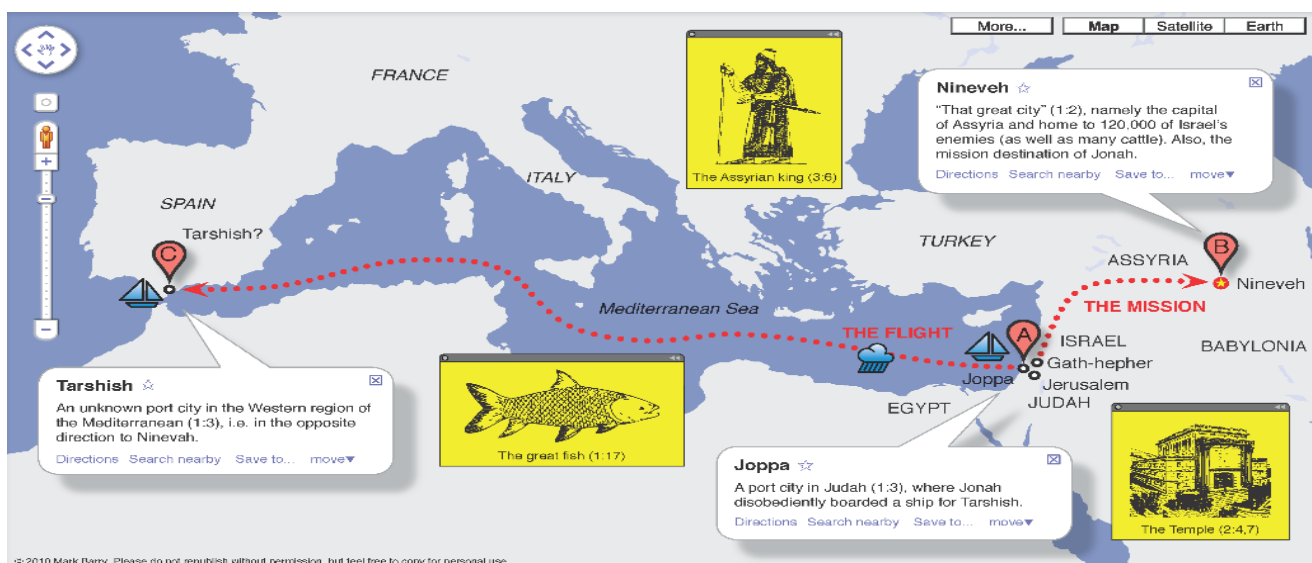
Day one we will travel to Jaffa or Biblical Joppa. It is about 30 minutes by bus to arrive there. We will visit Simon the Tanners house as well as see the ancient port area where Jonah sailed out to flee from the directive of God. Then, we will head to Netanya (settlement began in 1930 after water was found) which has a large population of English speaking immigrants from United Kingdom, Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.



Two characters made the town of Joppa famous. Jonah and Peter not to mention Tabitha who was actually the one who made it famous. We will visit Jonah first then Peter and Tabitha. Both of these stories involve mercy disguised until God reveals it to us.

Jonah the son of Amittai

In the book of Jonah, Joppa was made famous by being the place Jonah fled from God and boarded a boat to Tarshish in the opposite direction from Nineveh, the place God actually sent him. The below map shows where he went when God told him to go to the Ninevites to preach repentance to them.



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The story of Jonah is all about disobedience to God not only physically but mentally as well. The Ninevites were sworn enemies of the Israelites. They were very cruel in their dealings with them. Do some research to find out before we go so you know why Jonah was thinking this way? He wanted them dead. He did not want God to have mercy on them but he knew God would so he ran. Jonah was a priest of the Most High God so he knew his God well. When God picked up Jonah with His fish, after the crew through him overboard, Jonah went to Nineveh and preached, they listened. Well, that was it for Jonah, he had enough so he went to sulk. He sulked under a tree the God grew for him then God sent a worm to eat it.

While he was sulking God came to talk with Him and have mercy on him too. Mercy does not always look the same from one person to the next. Mercy for the Ninevites was based on their obedience. They were to repent or die, they repented. Mercy for Jonah was the fish, the tree and the worm. Both the Ninevites and Jonah received mercy from God despite their disobedience. Mercy fraught with discipline.

For the Disciple, then with the Tanner

Acts nine and ten give us a story of the events in Peter's life on these days. Peter was in Lystra when two disciples came to him with a request. Their beloved Disciple Tabitha had passed away. She did many works for the widows of Joppa and they believed without her no one would provide for them. They were grieved to lose her so they sent for Peter. Peter came into the house and the mercy of God for these widows came in with him. Peter, with the power of the Holy Spirit, raised Tabitha from the dead and presented her alive to the widows. This show of mercy for the widows was responsible for many coming to Christ.

Peter tarried there for many days with Simon the tanner who lived by the water. Why did Peter stay at Simon the tanner's house? God needed him to be there because He was already sending Cornelius's men to Peter at Simon the tanners house. Simon probably thought God was having mercy on him just letting Peter stay with a man Peter should have nothing to do with. Jews are not allowed to touch dead things and as a tanner he is touching dead things all the time. Leviticus 11:31 says those who touch a dead animal will be unclean until evening. Well, Simon touches dead animals all the time so he is never clean. To have a Jew staying at his house must be mercy from God or what other way would this happen.

While Simon Peter is at Simon's the tanners house Cornelius the Centurion sends some men to fetch him. An angel of God told him to go get Peter because Cornelius needed to know what to do to become a Christian instead of a Jew. He was a devote man of God but he needed to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Big difference. Peter was to come and tell Cornelius how to do that but first Peter needed a lesson on cleanliness. Peter is put into a trance and shown that everything is clean. Just as he is finishing the men from Cornelius come looking for him. He goes with them to Cornelius' house. Peter is not only supposed to avoid those who are unclean by animal deathness but also the ewwie unclean gentiles. He is walking a Jewish tight rope in Joppa. In Cornelius' house the mercy of God fell on the gentiles. Mercy fell all over the place in Joppa and we get to go there.

Imagine Israel Study 2: Mercy Disguised in Joppa

This Weeks Biblical Life Skills Application

Check in your lifetime to see where you thought God was being cruel to see if what He has done actually belongs in the mercy category. Even now does God have you pinned down for one reason or another. Even though it hurts the mercy God is extending you will serve you well in the future. The Ninevites returned to their nasty way so they are no more today. Obeying God once is not going to be enough for eternity. You must obey Him all the time to have mercy poured out on you all the time.

The mercy that fell in Joppa during Peter's day is the kind of mercy we really want to have. Mercy fraught with discipline is not my first choice in the brands of mercy from God but I have had it and probably will have it again. I have also had mercy fraught with love as well such as in Peter's day. Both of these brands of mercy do one thing – they glorify God. They show His great power and His great love.

There is a difference between discipline and love when it comes to mercy as God has shown you with these two scenarios. Take some time to discover, with Jesus, what the difference is and how often He has supplied you with both brands. Have you extended both brands? We want to be able to see the mercy God has for us and for others so go read the Book of Jonah as well as Acts 9 and 10 to capture in your mind the mercy of God. Then think about the mercy in between. How can you extend mercy to others for the glory of God?

The skill we want to take away from this is finding the positive even though it does not look positive. The mercy of God is all over everything He does. He didn't need us. He had all the company He needed in Jesus and the Holy Spirit. All of this is for our good. Ponder that message and use the positive thinking skills to see the wonders God has set before us. You will be amaze at what you see.