

■ Philip Miyagi (Pastor, TLEA Nago Antioch Church)

I have joined in the Israel mission team for the first time and am grateful that I have received abundant blessing and God's word. I am grateful that the team was protected from all accidents and troubles by the whole TLEA church prayer as well.

Since this year is the 40th anniversary of my marriage on the 3rd November, my wife and I were shown from Deuteronomy 1:7, "Break camp and advance into the hill country...", where Israelites were directed to depart from the desert, so we were guided by God to join this team. After that, God spoke that vision of Nago Antioch church was to support people from children to elderly people. And when we were asking for the confirmation word about this from the Lord, He showed us, "Your work will be busier." Then while my wife was praying earnestly so that the Lord would give us trainings and corrections, I was given unexpectedly many services like as a sub leader of the tour, a moderator of night services, a congregation worship leader, a special team praising singer and so on. We experienced God's works everyday like that God protected us from a bad traffic accident and that the Lord was with us during the holy meeting. Moreover, I felt this dispatch was the important one of His will with New Year word from God, "But as for you, turn around and set out toward the desert along the route to the Red Sea", delivered through Pastor Paul Akimoto from Deuteronomy 1:40.

As you already know, our Israel team began with an incident that suitcases of all of our team members had gone missing at Tel Aviv airport. However, God, who works for the good of everything moved his hands, because we have activated our faith by giving thanks of this



incident altogether. Then all of our suitcases were sent to Dan Jerusalem hotel two days later, which was truly God's work.

I could confirm the word given to Nago church's vision through Book of Job 29:12 -13 during this mission team. I was grateful that I could learn the history of Israel everyday in the tour at the exact place of Massada, Siloh and so on, and that I was touched by God's deep presence in front of the Golden gate and during the worship service at Mt. Hermon.

Moreover, God's work through praising was shown strongly by the deep presence in the special praising at Pastor Leon's Russian Jewish congregation.

When I saw the rainbow halo around the moon for the first time, I understood by His grace that God is giving blessing to this congregation and that the living God will be with us in the process that we will occupy the land of Canaan, even though there will be trials and hardships. This blessing is given to the whole congregation of TLEA.

In this Israel mission team, 4 members from Okinawa who attended could pray together. Among them, Sister H was able to complete her service as a projector operator and she is now able to continue the projector service in Okinawa.

"Start your New Year worship service from the Sea of Galilee." This great blessing of Israel mission team is given to each brothers and sisters of TLEA.

Let us listen and obey the word of God and receive the blessing of the land of Canaan with thanksgiving and praising. We thank you so much for your intercessory prayers.



■Itsumi Kato (TLEA Tokyo Antioch Church)

Journey into the wilderness: Responding to God's Calling

Before coming to Israel, God repeatedly showed me some scriptures. One was taken from Luke 9:51 "Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him(Jesus) to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." and another was from Duet 1:40 which was also taken as our church's annual scripture in 2023, "But as for you, turn and take your journey into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea."

The Sea of Galilee which I visited for the first time was full of God's Presence. This was the area Jesus had chosen His beloved disciples, and performed many miracles. When I sat at the places which were the centre of His ministry at that time, I felt the power of these places filled with His Grace and His Life. Also, I reflected how much Jesus loved this area and as I saw the water of the Sea of Galilee, I felt how abundantly healing and love flowed from Jesus Himself. I could feel how Jesus Himself would like to stay here all His life doing His ministry to the end. But through the scripture from Luke 9:51, I felt Jesus' strong determination to follow God's Will to go to Jerusalem, to the death on the cross leading His disciples with Him. I felt I was invited to follow Him as well. In February, at the Annual Holy Meeting of Martyrdom, God asked and called me strongly "Do you love me?" "Follow me." (John 21) While we were staying by Galilee, I had an opportunity to visit the place where it is said Jesus may have asked Peter this question and there, I heard God's calling again. It was lovely to dedicate myself again to Jesus on the spot Peter may have heard the same calling from the Lord Himself after His resurrection. Also, God told me that the way He wanted me to follow was the way through wilderness, the way to the cross led by Jesus Himself. As I loved the area of Galilee so much that I did not want to leave, God showed me His blessings as the full moon and rainbow colored the cloud around it during the evening Holy Meeting. It reminded me of God having led people of Israel as the pillar of cloud by day,

Ms. Kato singing praises in Israel



Rainbow colored cloud around the full moon



and the pillar of fire in the nights. I was told God would be with me even in the darkness. He will lead and guide me, giving everything I need on my journey. He will even pour down food from Heaven and flow water from the rock. "So, do not worry and just trust in me. Turn and step forward into the wilderness" thus said the Lord.

I am no better than the people of Israel. I am weak and easily tempted to complain. But for me, Jesus died on the cross and filled me with the power of His resurrection. Jesus leads me walking in front of me, and He has overcome everything, even death. My journey in 2023 may be the journey in darkness and wilderness with many difficulties and trials, but as long as Jesus walks in front of me, leading me and guiding me, everything will be taken care of. It was such a big confirmation and blessing given directly from God in this year's Israel Tour. Give every glory to God! We thank you so much for your intercessory prayers.