

Team to Israel

2018.10.29~2018.11.10



■Isaiah Makoto Kihara

(Pastor/TLCCC The Servant of God Nagasaki Church) Pastor Paul Akimoto (center)

Thank you for your prayers. The team to Israel left Narita/Tokyo for Israel by way of Warsaw on Monday, October 29, 2018. It consisted of 91 members including those who joined on short-term, and some others who joined from the U.S.

We arrived in Jerusalem on the evening of 29th, and stayed in Jerusalem for 3 nights. On Thursday, November 1st, we moved to Galilee, and stayed there for 5 nights. And then on Tuesday, November 6th, we returned to Jerusalem and stayed there for 2 nights. At the midnight of Thursday, we left our hotel for Ben Gurion Airport, planning to return to Japan by way of Warsaw. However, we were not able to land in Warsaw because of dense fog. We landed in another airport in Poland, and we eventually split into two groups: one group transferred to Warsaw by air, and the others by bus. After we stayed overnight in Warsaw, some of us returned to Japan in a group of 4, some others in a group of 12, another ones in a group of 22, or 5, etc., in different groups. In this way, we split into several groups flying back to Japan by way of Dusseldorf, Frankfurt, Brussels, Moscow, etc., by different flights. I felt that that was our new start because we had never done something like it before.

While staying in Jerusalem, God opened much about the meaning of “Heavenly Jerusalem” to us. God spoke to us that after the Millennium Kingdom of God, Jerusalem which is now on this earth would change into New Heaven and New Earth, and Heaven, in other words, “Heavenly Jerusalem” which is laid out like a square with 2,200 kilometers each in its length, width, and height would descend there. God spoke to us that we are citizens of this “Heavenly Jerusalem” which is our ultimate destination. Through learning it and understanding it deeply, we are able to make our walk on this earth steadfast.

In Galilee, God gave us the new year Scripture verse. Pastor Paul Akimoto gave a message in which he said that the new year Scripture verse is Matthew 13:23 which says “But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.” God spoke to us through his messages over and over again that it was important for us to hear His word and understands it, and that hearing and understanding His word means understanding His word, teachings, and promises which He has given us, keep remembering them, and living in His word, promises, and teachings. This is done not by our efforts, but by His grace and His word. This new year Scripture verse is connected with Mark 11:22-24 which are the Scripture verse of the last year. Pastor Akimoto mightily gave a message saying that through our walk by faith, a crop of a hundred times, sixty times, and thirty times what was sown would be produced.

Our first holy meeting in our new year was held by the Sea of Galilee on the evening of Friday, November 2nd. In this meeting, Pastor Leon, a Russian Messianic pastor ministered with us. Our first ministry in the new year was with a Russian Messianic congregation in Haifa on Saturday, November 3rd where Pastor Paul Akimoto gave a

message and he spoke about the gift of prophecy in it.

Until the last team to Israel in 2017, those who joined prayer sessions had to pay for lunch separately from tour costs, but our lunch fees this time were included in the tour costs when we had lunch in 7-Arches Hotel on Mount of Olives, and in Pagoda, a restaurant by the Sea of Galilee. In this way, we were much blessed economically, too.

■ Miyoko Kayano

(Pastor/TLCCC Tokyo Antioch Church)

I give you thanks for your intercessory prayers and precious offerings. 91 team members were sent to Israel from 29 October to 11 November.

As for me, I was able to join in this team because of offerings for Gifts, the praising team that I belong to. Everything I saw in Israel touched me, because this is my first visit to the country. Israel impressed me since I entered the country from Jerusalem. I felt that Israel was special, compared to other several countries I have been to. I think it is because Israel was the country specially chosen by God. I joined many tours, since this was my first visit. God spoke to me in many places that appear in the Bible. I was very excited when I visited places like the place Jesus prayed, the place Jesus was tested, and the place Jesus was crucified. We also visited Shiloh, which we can find in the Old Testament Bible, and listened to Jewish explanation about the Temple. We watched movie of Hannah and Prophet Samuel there. It was impressive when the Jewish person said, "There is a lesson for us to learn from Hannah's prayer." After that, we went to the hill of Megiddo and I was impressed by the spaciousness and dynamism there. I imagined the upcoming end times.

Gifts, the praise band sang special praising songs together with other praising teams during every night's meetings. We had chance to serve God by singing at Russian Messianic congregation in Haifa after we moved to Galilee. We sang "God is Love," and "Hallelujah" altogether, while Gifts sang "In the Shining Light." The members of the Russian Messianic Congregation, especially Pastor Leon looked very happy to have us Japanese team in their worship service. They were listening to Pastor Paul Akimoto's message attentively. At last, they danced together and invited us to dance hand in hand together. Our relationship with the Russian Messianic Congregation, which were spoken to us around 30 years ago has been blessed. I really praise God, seeing how wonderful His word is.

The next morning on Sunday was our new year worship service beside the Sea of Galilee. Like every new year, we were given a new year word from God, which is "But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown." (Matthew 13:23) This is the word, based on which we will step out in faith this year. After that, we climbed Mt. Arbel, on which Jesus instructed Great Commission to the disciples, and we worshipped Him there. At that very time, it rained and we heard thunders, which sounded like God was speaking to us. Then Gifts had a promotional video shooting on this Mt. Arbel with the help by Sister N from U.S.A and Pastor S. I am very grateful of that. Then I was able to have time to pray beside the Sea of Galilee.

We moved back to Jerusalem again after that and I joined in the prayer group at Mt. Olives for one day only. I

was surprised to see a donkey, which suddenly appeared in front of us. Surprisingly, the daily devotional of Tokyo Antioch Church on that day was “The Lord needs them (colt) .” (Matthew 21) By that donkey, God made sure that He will need each one of us and will use us for His work. Then God spoke to us deeply about Heavenly Jerusalem and eternity through Pastor Paul Akimoto’s message.

A trouble began when we were about to return to Japan after we completed our whole itinerary in Israel. The flight from Tel Aviv to Warsaw could not land at the airport at Warsaw just before landing because of dense fog. The airplane landed at an airport in a town named Rzeszow. After that, we returned to the airport at Warsaw by bus and airplane. However, all our flights to return to Japan from Warsaw were cancelled. It was good that we gave thanks together and behaved calm, believing that there is a great plan of God behind this trouble. The airline company staffs looked impressed by our behavior very much.

Next day, all of us were separated into 12 groups and transited in many of European countries, and finally returned to Japan. To return to Japan through various countries is just like a sign that we will be sent to the world, since God spoke to us, “Your new year begins from Israel.”

I give thanks to God truly, because Israel team was protected to the end and we were given full of blessings.