



MY DAILY JOURNAL 2008 ISRAELI DIG

Monday: July 21, 2008

The day began when my body woke me up at 3 am. I now know why King David always referred to the moon in his writings. The moon is the pearl of Israel's sky. The dig site is located on one of the highest points in the Jerusalem area. Because of its strategic view, it has been the site for wars, citadels, and things yet to be discovered.

This is the first site my dad and I helped excavate. The archeologists believe this was the foundational corner of the main buildings on this hill. There was a trench dug either for defense or channeling water. The main item we have been digging for are pottery. The pottery is so valuable because it tells the time period in which the site belongs too. The antiquities are finds such as this pot handle. Any markings or inscriptions on the pottery will be taken to the lab and more-than-likely put on display. Here is a photo of a pot handle that was unearthed at our excavation site. The marking looks Greek and is probably the signature of the potter. In the past, pottery has been found with names that can be found in the Bible. (All of those names that I can never pronounce, like "the son of so-and-so" or "the father of whomever") Those names are very important to archeology and to the truth of Scripture. Every word of God is flawless and the people recorded in the Bible were real people. Sometimes even the smallest name, which we wonder why it is recorded, can prove to be invaluable. I can personally testify that the history recorded in the Bible is accurate and authentic. We have not followed cleverly devised fables when we were told of the coming of the Lord.

Having just completed the first day of digging, I can honestly say that I am quite exhausted. My pastor always says that good, hard work never hurts anyone. Bro Glenn, I just want to let you know that I shoveled my hardest and used my wheelbarrow to the glory of God. I am a worker not ashamed (and the soreness in my body can prove it). I have already begun to learn so much that there is no way I could possible convey it all in these daily writings. However, I will try my best to give you the highlights of each day. It is an honor and privilege to be here in the city of God. I am praying for you and cannot wait to see you all.

Shalom,
Sean

Hebrew word of the day: "Toe-Da" (Thank you)



OUR DIG SITE OVERLOOKING JERUSALEM



POTTERY UNEARTHED



Tuesday: July 22, 2008

Let me tell you what makes Israel such a great place. It is a wonderful place because of the man and the Glory- Jesus Christ. Jerusalem is a beautiful city because God thinks it is a beautiful city. Jerusalem is close to my heart because it is where God walked, taught, died, and then resurrected.

For the past few months, I have had the desire to be able to tell the Jewish people that their Messiah has come. I have been compelled to share Jesus with the Jewish people that God has put around me. Since I have arrived in Israel, God has opened the door on several different occasions for me to share my faith with some of His chosen people.

Here are some questions that I have asked and learned from:

What are the differences in the Jewish denominations? What are the different views of the Messiah? What is your interpretation of Isaiah 53? What do you believe happens after you die? What happens to your sins? Are there any Jewish people that still offer sacrifices? Why or why not?

These questions increase your understanding of Judaism. I have learned so much from just asking specific eye-opening questions and God has already begun to work on several peoples lives here at the Dig. Please, please be praying that I will have many opportunities to share about Jesus while I am here in Israel. Please be praying that God will open their minds and hearts to receive Jesus as God.

Before the day is over, please read, examine, and study Isaiah chapter 53. It is an amazing prophecy regarding the Messiah in the Old Testament. The only logical explanation for the chapter is that Jesus Christ is indeed the promised Messiah who had to die for our sins.

I am about to leave to visit the "Stations of the Cross" (or Via Dolorosa) and one of the two possible sites for Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. I will write again tonight and share about today's earlier dig experiences.

In the Messiah,
Sean



Mrs. Paula and I are shifting the dirt from our excavation site. She has become a good friend and is active in her Jewish faith. I have enjoyed our conversations about Judaism and Christianity. I have been able to ask many questions and she has helped me understand her faith. Please be praying for more great conversations.



Wednesday: July 23, 2008

This is one of the most exotic and exciting adventure of my lifetime. The Ramat Rachel archeological dig is for students and people from all over the world. The people I am digging with for these two weeks have a plethora of cultures, backgrounds, and accents. People from Germany, England, Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Israel and America are participating in the excavation. Most of the students are working on their doctorate degrees (at colleges like Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Brown), but there also just ordinary people who thought this excavation would be the thrill of a lifetime. Three days ago, I knew nothing about archeology, but now I am beginning to enjoy and understand the basic principles.

The dig site is separated into many different divisions. The history of this site is fascinating and there have been many different uses for this location. This site has been the location of an administrative site for part of the Judean Kingdom, a farm, a cathedral, and a Jewish community with ritual emersion baths. The section that my team is excavating is on the temple courtyard from the Judean Kingdom time period. My team consists of a German theology student, an English archeology student, and my dad. I have been influenced by so many different accents that I may talk quite strange when I return home.

We have been digging in the citadel courtyard for the past two days. The floor is layers of compressed chalk and was used during the Biblical period. We dug through the floor and into the Iron Age (1,000 B.C - about 500 B.C.) found a pottery handle with a royal seal impressed into the pottery. The above the seal was an inscription that said, "Belonging to the king." The king would have been King Hezekiah. We also found another potter handle that belonged to one of the king's personal generals (it is very rare to find a handle with a seal, especially one that is in such good condition). This type of seal is very important because it tells us the date when the vessel was crafted. From these artifacts, we have concluded the time period is between 701 B.C. - 704 B.C which is about the time when the Judeans were preparing for an attack from the Assyrians.

By the time I leave, my brain will hurt almost as much as my body. Yesterday we were about to go into Jerusalem and we could see the Mount of Olives from the wailing wall. I encourage you to look up Zechariah 14:4. What an amazing day that will be!!

Hope all is well,
Sean

Hebrew word of the day:
"Ber-ki-tov" (good morning)



Anna is from Germany and wields a might pickaxe

This is how much dirt we have shoveled and sifted. The white dirt is from the Biblical Period and the Brown dirt is from the Iron Age.



The seal of King Hezekiah's personal general

Thursday: July 24, 2008

I have mentioned that Ramat Rachel is located on a hill, which has a clear view of the surrounding area. When the sky is clear, you can see the dome of the rock and the Mt. of Olives from where we eat breakfast. At the place where we eat dinner, there is a great view of Bethlehem and from our hotel room we can see across into Palestine. (right now my dad is on the porch with his binoculars)

Many people have told about their dream of coming to Jerusalem. They long to see the places Jesus walked. They have a love for a city they have never seen in person, but only have read about in their Bible. For all of these people, I encourage you to turn to Revelation chapter 21. As I look at Jerusalem, I see a fascinating and chosen city. This city is full of history and is beautiful. However, I only see it in part.

When you look and examine the city closely, you will see hostility, tension, and strife. There is much beauty, but there is also much grief. There is little peace and there is a lot of pain. I see the amazing 2,000-year-old stones, but they are crumbling. I see the Wailing Wall, but I do not see the temple. I see God's chosen people, but they do not acknowledge their Messiah. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You who stone the prophets, how long God has wanted to gather you under His wings, but you have refused.

When you view Jerusalem in its present state, you only see it in part. But soon you can see it in full.

If you never get to see this city with your human eyes, do not be discouraged.

If you never get to walk on this city with your earthly feet, do not be discouraged.

Soon you will.

Soon you will not only get to walk where Jesus walked, you will get to walk there with Jesus.

Soon you will not get to see just a city, you will get to see the city with your Savior.

I would love it for each of you to visit Israel in your lifetime, but that is not my heart's full desire.

My true desire is for each of you to see the New Jerusalem with your Savior.

For all of those who call on the name of the Lord, you will see Jerusalem.

And you will see it in full.

Tonight I was able to present our group's PowerPoint presentation of our excavation site. There are about 100 students and 6 different dig locations. Tomorrow is our last day of this week's digging and I will share with you the summary of the week. Don't forget to read Revelation 21!

Till tomorrow,
Sean

Hebrew word of the day: "Nude-Nick" (an annoying person)



Friday: July 25, 2008

Today was the last day of digging for the week. I have shoveled, axed, sifted, transported, scraped, dusted, wheel barrowed, and chiseled a whole lot of ancient rock. If there ever was an extreme fitness and exercise program... this is it.

Nevertheless, I must say, it has been well worth it.

So far this week, we have found some significant seals that belong to ancient Kings. We also found several caves and ancient water reservoirs. However, one of our most interesting finds was treasure. Yes, that's right, I'm talking Indian Jones archeology. (Although I am not referring to massive rolling boulders or aliens)

The dig site next to mine, found about 380 coins. They appear to date around the time of Constantine. Once we clean them, we will be able to see the emperor on the face of the coin. When we found the coins, we were told to keep the information a secret. The locals around here might be very intrigued if they heard a rumor of a cavern of gold or a lost treasure city. (it is ok for me to post this on the internet because we have removed all of the coins and we did not find a royal king's treasury).

At the end of the each day, we gather all of our findings and take them to "pottery wash". Archeology falls and rises on pottery. Pottery is vital to archeology because it tells when and if a person has been at that location in the past. We clean the mud and dirt off the all the pottery (and there is a lot) so that we can see if there are any seals or engravings. Pottery wash accomplishes several social things: 1) You become very well acquainted with pottery. 2) You become acquainted with the person next to you who is washing their pottery.

Tomorrow is the Shabbat (Sabbath) and do not have to dig. Instead, my dad and I will be going to Northern Israel. We will be able to see the city of Capernaum (The headquarters of Jesus' earthly ministry), the mount of Beatitudes, the traditional site of the feeding of the 5,000, and the Sea of Galilee (where Jesus walked on the water).

There are several different types of Biblical sites one can visit in Israel.

- **A site** (We know for a fact that the event occurred on that site)
- **B site** (We are pretty sure that event happen on that site, but there might be another possible location)
- **C site** (We know the event was in this general area, but there is no way of knowing the exact location)

For instance, the feeding of the 5,000 is a **C site**. We know the event happen on a hill around the see of Galilee... but we are not sure of the exact hill.

Now the temple in Capernaum would be an **A site**. We know for sure that Jesus taught in that temple in Capernaum.

If you are interested in the events that happened in the headquarters of Jesus' ministry, I recommend reading Mark 2. Have a Shalom Shabbat (peaceful Sabbath).

In Christ,
Sean

Hebrew word of the day: "Ah-Ha-Va" (love)



Our bags of washed pottery



After a day full of digging, we begin cleaning the pottery we uncovered



Saturday: July 26, 2008

There is a beautiful area that Jesus and his disciples visited called Caesarea Philippi. While visiting there, Jesus asked his disciples this question, "Who do you say that I am?"

This is life's most important question.

Today we were able to see the places that Jesus healed many people. We were able to walk on the hillsides that He taught. We were able to see artifacts from His lifetime. Once we have seen and heard about these places, we are faced with this question. Who do we believe Jesus is?

After all the touring for the day was complete, I ask our Jewish tour guide the same question Jesus asked his disciples. Our guide is a very knowledgeable person who has studied both Jesus and the Bible. She knows much more than the average Christian or Jewish person and appears to have very high respect for Jesus Christ. Therefore, I was curious about her personal beliefs about Jesus and asked her for her viewpoint about Jesus. This was her response, "I have no view of Jesus."

Friends, this is a heartbreaking answer.

You see, Jesus Christ is a unique person. Jesus only had three years of public ministry, yet radically changed the entire world. Jesus claimed to be God, and had a perfect life to prove it. Jesus claimed to be God, and did miraculous things to prove it. Jesus claimed to be God, and then rose from the dead to prove it.

You can ignore many things in life, but Jesus is not one of them. Every person must come to a believe about this Man. It is a foolish thing to ignore Him, because too much is at stake. Let me help narrow down the choices about this Jesus. As C.S. Lewis (an atheist who became a Christian) talks about, there are three options.

Jesus was either a liar, and lunatic, or Lord.

1. **Liar**- Jesus could not have been just a good person, because he claimed to be God and convinced millions of people to devote their entire lives to Him. If he was not God, He lied and thousands of people were persecuted and died because they believed in Him.
2. **Lunatic**- Jesus claimed to be God and then died a horrible death because of that claim. I know of no man who would be crucified for a lie he himself told, so if Jesus was not God then he was insane for letting himself be tortured to death.
3. **Lord**- The only other option is that Jesus was really who he claimed to be. Jesus was God and was crucified because of that claim. He then rose from the dead to prove His Divinity and offers forgiveness to all who will trust Him.

Jesus paid a high price on the cross of Calvary for you. He came to this earth and died in your place so that you could spend eternity with Him. He loves you more than any person could and desires that you will let Him become the Lord of your life.

When you and I die, I believe the only thing that will matter will be our answer to Jesus' question. "Who did you say that I was?"

I beg and I implore you, do not ignore this Jesus. He paid too high a price for us to ignore Him.

In the Lord,
Sean

Hebrew word of the day: "tov-mo-oid" (very good)

My dad and I in the Jordan River



A fishing boat discovered from the time of Jesus. It can hold 12-13 people.



The 4th century A.D. synagogue in Capernaum. It was built over the original synagogue where Jesus taught.



The Jerusalem Cross. It has four smaller crosses around the main cross. They stand for the four ends of the earth to which the gospel spread.

Sunday: July 27, 2008

Herod the Great was a visionary architect. He built about 15 different and amazing palaces and fortresses. He built the fortresses in such strategic locations that they are still used by Israel's military to this day. We visited his fortress that was the pride of his construction. He named this fortress The Herodian. It had the largest swimming pool in the Roman world and has a spectacular view.

Unfortunately, Herod the Great was also psychotic. He had many people, including his family, murdered in unusual ways. It was said it was better to be one of Herod's pigs than one of his sons. This was because Herod kept Jewish law by not killing or eating pigs, but he had several of his sons murdered. He even had his son-in-law drowned in his pool. He was also the king that had ordered all the infants under the age of two to be killed in Bethlehem (Matthew 2). Herod heard about the birth of the Messiah and became concerned that his kingly position might be overthrown. His plot to stop God failed, and in the process he unknowingly helped fulfilled several prophecies about Jesus.

Since we begin digging again tomorrow, I want to share with you our daily digging itinerary. (it is an eight hour time difference from TN)

4:45	Wake-up
4:45-5:15	Coffee and Cakes
5:15	Go to designated work areas with equipment
5:30	Working!
9:00	Full breakfast at the site
11:00	short "fruit break"
12:45	Clean and finish digging
1:00	Pottery wash!
2:00	Shower, lunch, free time
5:00	Summery session
5:30	Text readings (Bible reading at site where events took place)
6:00	Academic Lecture
8:00	Dinner

The days are definitely filled to the brim with activities. In addition, some new archeologists arrived from Spain and Egypt. I'm sure this week will be just as adventurous and educational as the previous week. We will begin our new projects bright and early tomorrow!

Till Tomorrow,
Sean

Hebrew word of the day: "u-lye" (perhaps)



This is the view from the top of Herodian looking down onto the lower palace area. The large square was his swimming pool.



This is inside one of the massive cisterns in his palace. It would fill up during the rainy season and would supply the water for the rest of the year



His palace is on the right hill. He actually took tons of dirt from the hill on the left and had it moved to the right hill. This was done to increase the height of his palace. The historian Josephus talks in detail about the Herodian.

Monday: July 28, 2008

Today marked the beginning of a new digging week. Last week's project for my team was to dig down through the courtyard until we hit bedrock. We found the rock bottom of our hole and will begin excavating a new area tomorrow.

I also want to bring you up to date on our latest finds. Another stash of money was discovered inside an underground storehouse. On one of the bottom shelves, a clay pot was found. Inside the clay pot were many coins that had been placed there for safe keeping. After the coins were examined, we were able to see part of the inscriptions and engravings. The coins are silver and were temple tax coins. They belong to the time period when the second temple was still standing.

This stash of coins is significant because it poses many questions. Why was such a valuable amount of money left behind? What happened to the person who owned the coins? Was there a disaster that took place that inhibited this person from returning to retrieve his large savings? How does this correspond with the other amount of money that we found left behind?

Let me relay an intriguing thought. The large amount of silver temple tax coins were from the second temple period. The second temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. Another stash of money was found wedged under a rock. What if the Romans invaded in 70 A.D. and these people had to flee for their lives? These stashes of coins were not small and would not be forgotten about by their owners. Perhaps the owners were unable to return to their savings because the Romans had invaded and war was breaking loose. This would be a possible explanation for the temple tax coins and the large savings that was left behind.

Well, you know what they say, "two archeologists... three opinions."

That is the limitation of any historical science. We were not there when the events occurred. We can only make assumptions and guesses about past events when there is no eyewitness account.

For those of you who went to the Unearthed Creator Conference, this bit of wisdom sounds familiar. When looking into the past, it is always much wiser to trust an infallible eyewitness... instead of an imperfect human who was not present.

Humans can make good guesses about the past... and be completely wrong.

If God's Word mentions something about the past... He, the Eyewitness, is always right.

Tomorrow I will be able to fill you in on our new project and also I will be able to go through Hezekiah's tunnel in Jerusalem. It won't be long before I'm back home! Hope all is well.

Shalom,
Sean
Psalms 146:3-4

Hebrew word of the day: "Dye" (enough)



This was our final day digging in our hole. This is a picture of me eating a plum in the bottom of our "sandbox". Tomorrow we begin our new project.



Notice the mounds of dirt we shoveled in the background.



Tuesday: July 29, 2008

Our new excavation project began today. My dad, Anna (from Germany, Julie (from Spain), and myself, were assigned to dig in an area of a building from the Byzantine period. Ancient rock walls divide the area and we began to discover individual rooms. This area is trickier than our last location because you cannot tell what you are looking at until you take a brush and dust the rocks.

The room next to ours uncovered a shaft below where they were standing. The dark hole below them is believed to have been a cistern used for either bathing or ritual cleansing baths. The interesting part was discovered when we began brushing.

We discovered a tunnel that goes beneath our area. We unearthed a series of rocks that were placed as a channel between the rooms. This is our new project- a tunnel.

We believe there is a small tunnel connecting to the cistern in the room next to ours. I would also like to mention that the room next to ours is the place they found the stash of about 400 coins. I am not sure what is under us when we dig, but my imagination wants to run wild. (Indian Jones theme song in the background)

Speaking of tunnels, we just got back from touring Hezekiah's tunnel. King Hezekiah built this tunnel, just in case the name did not give it away. It was very important for the city of Jerusalem. The purpose of the tunnel was to supply the water to other parts of the city. We actually walked through the tunnel and came out at the pool of Siloam. The water in the tunnel was about knee-high at some points (depending on your height...) and was pitch-black. I will post pictures of the journey tomorrow.

I have had several more great conversations with my Jewish friends. Your prayers are being answered and God is using these conversations to open their minds to the truth. As Jesus said, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." The best part about that quote is Jesus was actually referring to Himself. In John 14:6, Jesus says He is the Truth! When you honestly search for the truth, you will find it. When you find the truth, you will realize it always points to Jesus.

It is getting late here in Zion, so I must depart. Maybe tomorrow we will unearth our own tunnel at the dig! One more thing, Tony, happy birthday! Sorry if the time change in Israel makes me a little late. See you guys soon.

In the Truth,
Sean

Hebrew word of the day: "lo" (no)



This is our new digging site. The long flat panels on the floor mark the begging of an underground tunnel.



When removing the dirt in a confined area, masks are a nice commodity.



Nathan and I are moving large rocks that prevent us from excavating.

Wednesday: July 30, 2008

Had I not visited the excavation of the City of David, I would never have completely grasped a verse in Psalm 122. Verse three says, "Jerusalem is built like a city that is closely compacted together." There are many verses in the Bible we just glance over and not fully comprehend. This verse now comes to life because of the archeology I have seen. When we visited the ruins of the City of David, I was startled at the closeness of the buildings. The buildings are scrunched together just like the urban cities of New York or Pittsburg. The entire city was relatively small, but it was compact. Having seen the actual ruins, is like turning the Bible from black and white into living color.

Under the city is a narrow tunnel that channels water from the only spring near Jerusalem. In the entrance to the tunnel, the water flows above the knee and is freezing cold. It takes about 45 minutes to walk the dark tunnel and it is well worth the experience. I was shocked when I came out of the tunnel because the site looked familiar. The tunnel empties into the pool of Siloam. On my last visit to Israel in 2005, they had just discovered this new part of the pool and had not begun any excavation. Three years later, I was able to see the work they had done in uncovering the rest of the steps and part of the pool. (I also had no idea the tunnel flowed into the pool and was quite shocked when I exited)

In John 9, a blind man encounters God. Jesus spits in the ground and then places the mud on the blind man's eyes. He then instructs the man to go wash in the pool of Siloam. The pool is very close to the temple and was used for ritual cleansing before entering the Holy place. I now understand the meaning behind the pool. After the blind man washed in the pool, which symbolized cleansing from sin, and then could see. If you read the rest of the chapter, you will find the man not only received his sight from Jesus, but he also trusted Jesus for salvation.

Before he met Jesus, he had been blind both physically and spiritually. Jesus not only washed his blindness, Jesus washed his sins.

Have you had your spiritual blindness washed away? Jesus can open your eyes to the Truth and wash all of your sins away. I pray that you too will be like the blind man, and let Jesus wash you clean. The blind man never regretted it, and I guarantee neither will you.

I had not planned on writing about this, but God has placed on my heart such a burden for those people who are spiritually blind to the Truth. Listen to the powerful conversation between the blind man and Jesus.

"Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

"Who is he, sir?" the man asked.
"Tell me so that I may believe in him."

Jesus said, "You have now seen Him;
in fact, He is the One speaking with you."

Then the man said, "Lord, I believe,"
and he worshiped Him.

Have a blessed day,
Sean



I am about to enter into Hezekiah's tunnel.



The compact buildings built today are on the exact same spots as the Biblical period. This is basically how the city of Jerusalem looked during King David's time.



These are the steps leading to the pool of Siloam. The actual pool would have been where the dirt and bushes are today.

Thursday: July 31, 2008

I want to bring you up-to-date on our latest dig site. Between yesterday and today, my dad and I have unearthed the opening to a hole. The entrance to the hole is definitely man made, but the hole was filled to the brim with dirt. This means one of two things. It could mean that mounds of dirt have been layered in our hole over time, or that someone purposely filled the entrance up with dirt. Either way, this find is quite adventurous and exciting.

Today we dug about 5 feet of dirt and rocks out of our cavern. Some of the rocks were so heavy that we had to use ropes to lift them out of the hole. It took four people using four ropes to remove this one rock.

Towards the bottom left of the hole, a small opening appeared. We kept removing dirt until I was able to peer into the cavern with my headlight. We found a chamber that opens up from our hole! We will begin to dig underground tomorrow and see if anything interesting was stored in our cave.

While digging, my dad discovered a Byzantine (A.D. 300s- 1400s) stamped pottery handle. The stamp was a cross inside an oval. Although my dad and I were excited, the scholarly people around us were not as impressed. They prefer pottery from the Iron Age and not the Byzantine period. Nevertheless, my dad still did a victory dance and rejoiced. It was old and we found it. That was all that mattered to us.

Later, we also found an ancient corroded nail. One of our supervisors says that the nail is the same type of nail that was used for crucifixion. I hope that more exciting finds will come from tomorrow. It is our last official day of digging! Time has gone by so quickly. We will also be visiting the Garden Tomb. It is one of my favorite places in all of Israel. It is a possible location for Jesus death, burial, and resurrection. I will post info and pictures tomorrow.

Goodnight,
Sean



A nail found in our hole. It is the same type of nail used for crucifixion.



My dad's victory dance after we found a Byzantine pottery stamp.



After the massive rock was removed, one of the dig supervisors crawled further down into our cave. That is his head emerging from the tunnel we discovered.



I am attempting to tie a rope around a large rock so we can pull it out of our cavern.

Friday: August 1, 2008

August 1st! Our digging experience is complete and our two-week adventure is almost at an end. We will be touring the Dead Sea area on Shabbat (Saturday), and then will be leaving for home late Sunday night. I will never forget the people, experiences, and places that I have encountered during my stay in Israel. This will be my final journal and it is bitter-sweet. I am sad to leave, yet longing for home. Here is a short summary (that could never do the two weeks justice) of my adventure here digging in God's city.

During the first week, we learned the basic ropes of archeology. Our area was blessed with some amazing finds such as two rare seal impressions from the time of King Hezekiah, a stash of silver coins and mounds of ancient pottery. The second week we discovered two nails similar to the ones used for crucifixion, a water cistern, and a Byzantine seal impression.

Today we explored the inside of our hole/cave; and it was assumed it was probably a cistern. The inside is lined with plaster, which people used for retaining water. The dig leaders will be sending us information on the continuation of our projects so we will be able to hear about the final excavation results.

This trip has taught me a lot about history, archeology, science, theology, religions, and Israel. However, I learned something else that supersedes everything. There is one thing that I have discovered that is so much more important than any academic or textbook knowledge.

The most important thing in life is your relationship with Jesus Christ.

I have learned that you can gain the whole world, yet lose your soul. You can gain all the knowledge in the world, yet miss the purpose of life. Many of the students I have been digging with are very smart good people. They study theology, Biblical history and religion. However, the majority of them appear to lack one vital thing in life. They have never trusted Jesus as God and have never chosen to follow Him. They have everything except the only thing they need.

They know a lot of information, but they do not know God.

How sad it is to lose one's soul.

This week has taught me that Jesus is all that matters in life. Sharing His love with people is the purpose of life. I have been able to dig up ancient artifacts, but they will one day crumble and be useless.

The pottery I dug up this week is temporary, but the people I have dug with are eternal.

I now know the reason God sent me to Israel on this dig.

It was not for pottery, but for people. God has opened the door on every occasion to share about the good news of Jesus Christ. Today one of my archeological friends trusted Jesus as her Savior.

That is what life is all about. That is much better than any old rock. God sent me to Israel so I could share the Truth, and so that another person will be in heaven one day. What an amazing God.

This is what God has taught me on this trip:

At the end of life, the only thing that matters is what we did with Jesus. In the words of Mother Teresa, "Jesus is Everything."

Till the world is turned,
Sean
Acts 17:6-7

Hebrew word of the day: "Li-hit-tri-oat"
(we will see each other again soon)



One of the possible tombs that Jesus was placed inside. He is not there, He is risen.



This is a possible location for Jesus' crucifixion. He was crucified on "Golgotha" or "place of the skull". Notice the resemblance of a skull in the face of the rock. They also found crucifixion bones and nails here at this hill.