

## Fresh Fire Team Encounters Spiritual Portals in Israel

By Todd Bentley

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**(Israel/Egypt, Dec. 2004)** "A trip to Israel is a life-changing experience-not because you believe more, but because you understand more," said Avner, our tour guide, as our group of 115 began our Fresh Fire, Holy Spirit pilgrimage. For a week we would travel around the country in which Jesus lived, ministered, died and rose again. Not only would we see Jesus' country, including its cities, geography and significant sites, but we would also discover and experience spiritual portals in the heavens over certain places where open heavens still exist today. The FFM team of partners (and other Jesus lovers) began the ministry's first trip to Israel (and Egypt) on December 30th-the trip was designed to combine both spiritual pilgrimage and ministry to the people of Israel and Egypt.

We arrived at the new Tel Aviv airport, in a land still considered by many to be the "Holy Land." A Jewish couple told us that, in the old airport, where people were able to disembark from the plane and walk down stairs onto the ground, many would kneel down and kiss the ground when they arrived in the country.

As we began our tour, we soon learned that Jesus' real Hebrew name was "Jeshua" (changed to "Jesus" by the Greeks who could not pronounce the "sh" sound).

### Capernaum: Receiving Impartation From the World's First Healing Revival

Perhaps our most significant experience in Israel came at the excavated city ruins of Capernaum, on the banks of the Sea of Galilee. This was the town where Jesus based His ministry, where Peter's house was, and in the area where Jesus held a healing meeting where all the sick and diseased were healed. Matthew 4 (and Isaiah 9) speak of Jesus coming to live in this town; it also tells us that great multitudes following Him as He ministered in this area: "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people" (Matt. 4:23). As we all walked into the old fishing village of Capernaum, Todd said He began to experience a powerful encounter with the presence of the Holy Spirit throughout His whole being and began to feel very drunk in the Spirit.

As the team stood in the unearthed remains of the synagogue, Todd read the message (Isaiah 61) that Jesus once preached in the synagogue almost 2000 years ago. "Great multitudes came to this area to be healed," said Todd, "This place is synonymous with a gate and a door in heaven (for healing) that is still open today." Todd referred to Genesis 28 which speaks of Jacob coming to "a certain place" in which he entered into a visionary encounter with God (the ladder vision) just like his father Abraham encountered God in the same place. This passage speaks of this area Jacob encountered God as "the gate of heaven."

Speaking of Capernaum, Todd said, "This is a place (like the place Jacob had an encounter). Matthew 8 and Isaiah 53 converge in Capernaum. This place is (a symbol of) the ministry of Fresh Fire." In this same place Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law and He also had a healing meeting in the area in which He healed all the sick to confirm Isaiah 53. After Todd's message, the whole team prayed to receive that same anointing existing in the open spiritual portal of the area, to heal all the sick and oppressed. Immediately the team entered into a loud cry for that healing anointing; then Fresh Fire staff lined up the entire group and held a spontaneous anointing service, ministering to everyone. Many were deeply touched by the power of God in that place. Because of the dramatic encounter in Capernaum and because the place such a strong healing well, the FFM staff returned the next day to continue soaking in the healing presence of the Holy Spirit; they again received prayer from Todd for an increase of the healing anointing in their lives.

Once of our guide's who had gone to that place twice a month for many years, said that this time in Capernaum she saw the Jesus' priest begin to manifest a demon, speaking out in demonic tongues and doing a demonic dance. She said she had never seen him act this way. It was obvious that the anointing of the Spirit was stirring up and agitating the enemy. We believe that the team and ministry received a special dynamic miracle anointing from heaven in that place.

### Healing Miracles for Jewish People on the Banks of the Jordan

After our visit to Capernaum, our team went to the Jordan river where many were baptized by Todd and some of the staff. It was a wonderful time with great joy, laughter and even drunkenness in the spirit. During that time, our guide, Tisha, struck up a conversation with a Jewish woman with Chrone's Disease. After prayer, she reported that all pain and discomfort was gone and that she felt peaceful and like she was on "a high." Soon after praying for her, right out there in the market place, other Jewish people who were watching began to ask for prayer. Todd prayed for a teen boy who had a problem with deafness in one ear. The Holy Spirit touched the boy and he began to fall back a few times under God's power. Todd preached the gospel to the boy and told him how that Jesus was still a miracle worker like he was in the bible stories. The boy soon reported that his hearing was better." Jesus, the great physician, was at work.

Todd then prayed for God to touch a man who wanted to receive prayer; he said that he felt "something wonderful." Soon after, another Jewish man with hearing aids came for prayer. He was obviously touched and said that he would need to give it some time to confirm any healing. Another Jewish woman came for prayer for healing from pain in her back (which she had experienced for years). Immediately after prayer, she reported seeing a flash of white light and feeling that all the pain was gone. She began to bend over, saying she said she had never been able to this before and was amazed at the healing. The first woman came again for prayer that the Lord would reveal Himself to her. Todd also gave her some accurate words of knowledge about a son with a learning disability and a generational sickness that needed to be broken.

After this powerful spontaneous healing meeting on the banks of the Jordan, it was obvious that these people had seen a great light and were confronted with the reality of the Messiah, Jeshua. After the Lord began to demonstrate His power and the crowds gathered, with joy Todd remarked: "This must have been what it was like when Jesus was here. The crowds would gather as Jesus did miracles."

### The Fresh Fire Elijah Challenge Prayer in Caesarea

Another very significant spiritual experience took place during our visit to Caesarea, the city Peter First preached the gospel to the gentiles (where Cornelius' entire household was saved). On the second day in Israel, in Herod's amphitheatre in Caesarea, Todd preached a powerful message about the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Gentiles. The Holy Spirit came on Cornelius' household before the gospel spread to the entire earth. It was at this time that the people received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues as a sign of the fullness of the Spirit.

Todd called for everyone to pray for those in the group who had not yet received the gift of tongues. Then we all began to pray to stir up the Holy Spirit within us and to receive a fresh infilling of power to demonstrate the gospel in the nations. One of our Christian tour guides, Tisha, said she had been to that site many times over the years, but had never seen a group like this with fiery preaching and with people praying in tongues and seeking God with such passion. "This must have been what it was like," she said.

Next, the team went to Mt. Carmel, the place where the prophet Elijah had the fiery confrontation with the prophets of Baal. At that same place, Todd also preached with fire, a message about the Elijah challenge thousands of years before in that place. Todd noted that the power encounter on that mountain turned a whole nation back to God-it was a national revival. "We need that same power encounter to come upon God's people to bring revival to the nations," said Todd. We need modern-day Elijah challenges to take place all around the world, he said. The team then began to pray and cry out that it would be known again that the Lord, Jehovah, is God. The group made a commitment to repair the altars of prayer in their lives so the fire could come; then they cried out loudly for the heavenly fire to fall.

While on the mountain two Jewish couples said something like this to a team member: "How are these people doing this? This is just like Elijah-this is incredible!"

### Meetings in Jerusalem release impartation for miracle ministry to Israelis

During its time in Jerusalem, the Fresh Fire team held two revival meetings at the hotel. Between 250 and 300 people crowded into the small room each night, hungry for a touch from heaven. The first night Todd preached a message about the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit that God wanted to release in Israel. He said that he had learned that there was no real Jewish power/healing ministry in Israel walking in a miracle anointing and that only about 6,000 born again Christians lived in Jerusalem. "Nothing will change Israel or get Jewish people saved but miracle working power," declared Todd.

After sharing many scriptures about Jesus healing everyone all the time, Todd challenged the local believers to examine their lives: "Consider how much of Jesus' ministry is operating in your life. How much dynamic power is in your life?" He called for the people to get hungry and desperate for an Acts 2 Fullness of the Spirit in their lives. "Pray till something happens!" he said, "The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not tongues; it's power!"

After the message, Todd called these Jerusalem believers forward for an impartation to take miracles to the nations. The people received powerful touches of impartation. Todd also called forward a number of people forward to receive prophetic ministry, including our tour guide's (Avner's) wife, Rachel. Not knowing her name or who she was, Todd prophesied that the Lord calls her Rachel. Then he proceeded to give a number of accurate words about her life and destiny which also confirmed many previous words from God. Both Rachel and her husband seemed deeply touched by this experience.

The second night a powerful sense of the Holy Spirit fell on the meeting from the time of worship and throughout the rest of the service. Todd preached another message challenging the people to become ones who practiced the supernatural and who regularly received heavenly downloads of revelation. He again preached about open heavens and heavenly portals of revelation in certain geographic areas like Capernaum and the place Jacob received his vision. At the end of the message, staff lined up everyone at the meeting and Todd laid hands on them to release an impartation of an anointing for heavenly visitations and revelation. Hundreds received prayer and lay on the hotel conference room floor soaking in the presence of the Spirit.

### Calling in healing pools for the nations at Bethesda's pools

On our final day before flying to Egypt, the team visited the excavated (original) pool of Bethesda, which consisted of five porticoes. Here Todd read the scripture about the pools and the healing angel that would come down to stir the waters. He read how that whoever stepped into the water first would be healed from whatever sickness he or she had. After telling the story of the healing angel that visited his ministry regularly, Todd preached about the coming healing revival. He prophesied about tens of thousands of healing centers or pools that the Lord was about to create all over the world.

As he encouraged them, the FFM team surrounding the original Pool of Bethesda began to cry out for the release of healing anointing and pools in their lives, their churches, their cities and their nations. We concluded our time at the pool with a healing service and healing anointing/impartation service, as Todd and the staff laid hands on everyone on the trip. It was a wonderful sight to behold; over one hundred people received touches from the Holy Spirit and were laid out under the power of the Holy Spirit all around the pool.

Todd and the team are believing that they will bring back a new impartation of healing anointing from the heavenly healing portal over the Pool of Bethesda.

### Resurrection Life at the Garden Tomb

The FFM group made its last stop at the garden tomb (where some speculate Jesus was buried). After preaching, "The same spirit that raised Christ from the dead lives in you," Todd invited each person to receive communion, believing for an impartation of healing and of Jesus' resurrection life as they partook of the communion in that place.

### Other Holy Land Stops

Over the course of the week in Israel, the FFM team visited the Biblical Gardens, Ne'ot Kedumin; the place where David killed Goliath (and the brook where he chose his five stones) as well as the city of Joppa. It was from this city that Jonah was sent out to Ninevah and where Peter had his vision on the rooftop of the different animals, as a message from the Lord to prepare him to take the gospel to the Gentiles.

The group also paid visits to the Fortress and Valley of Magiddo (where it is thought that the last days Battle of Armagedon will take place); Nazareth (Jesus' home town); the Sea of Galilee; Caesarea Philippi; Mount Hermon, the area where Jesus set the demonized man of the Gadarenes free; Jericho; the old city (which included a walk on the city wall); the stairs to the temple that Jesus would have walked; the Holocaust museum; the Walling Wall and the Well at Beer Sheba.

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