

## SHALOM MY FRIENDS



There are not many things to do in Israel during Sabbath. In fact, you need to ensure that you have topped up the car with gas and purchased enough groceries for a couple days by mid afternoon on Friday at the latest. Just as in Bible times, they measure the days by "evening and morning" hence Sabbath starts Friday at sunset until

Saturday at sunset. During our frantic paced journeys through the land of the Bible a slower paced day is welcome. A leisurely breakfast of thick, creamy yogurt covered with tendrils of local honey and crumbles of granola seems as if we are eating dessert for the breaking of our nightly fast. Fresh orange juice and coffee are sipped and savoured before we leave the dishes behind, strap on our trusty sandals and head out into the piercing middle eastern sun.

Walking through Jerusalem, we pass families at the playgrounds, listen to the birds that now sing without the droning out of the constant stream of traffic – because the roads are empty. Twisting and turning through the streets we pass a guarded street where the Prime Minister lives and carry on down into one of the many valleys that make up this renewed ancient city. Pausing at the traffic light we look across and can see the oddly shaped square Knesset building – the Israeli parliament on the opposite hilltop. Between us and it is Rehavia Park filled with trees, and hundreds of rose bushes. Meandering through its cross hatched walkways we gently climb up out of the valley and have reached our destination – The Israel Museum.

In a city filled with museums we have chosen to spend our day here, not only is it open on Sabbath but it houses innumerable artifacts from the pages of our Bibles. Within this museum is a special building called "the Shrine of the Book".

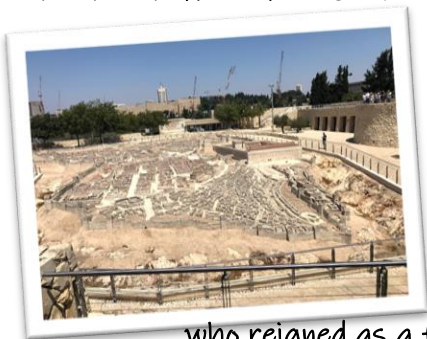
As you can guess from the name inside you can find, parts of the Dead Sea Scrolls on rotation. Different accounts of the discovery of the scrolls all agree that it involved a curious shepherd boy, a lost goat and a stone. These amazing artifacts came into the hands of Israel in the very weeks before it was brought back to life as a nation in May 1948. This building, shaped like the lid of the jars the scrolls had been preserved in for almost 2000 years, is kept cool. The dry refreshing air hit us as we opened the sealed doors, and as our eyes adjusted to the dim lighting. Everyone walking around the exhibits



seems to whisper, creating a hush in the room that can almost be felt. It is amazing to see sections of the Psalms there from the time of Jesus, painstakingly copied by the unknown scribe letter by letter.



We notice that in the translation you can see that the headings for the Psalms that our KJV places as separate is in fact the first section of the first verse, this is repeated through each of the Psalms. Slowly we make our way up to the center display where a replica of the entire Isaiah scroll is on constant display. The original is so precious that it is kept in a controlled and protected area. This seemingly boring old, slightly tattered scroll screams out at us to take note – the Bible is true! Pushing open the doors we walk back into the glaring, humid heat we walk around the next bend and take time to look at a model of Jerusalem from the time of Jesus. You can easily see the “Pilgrim Road” leading up to the Temple, Herod’s palace and the palace of the high priest as well as many other buildings mentioned in the New Testament.



The next 5 hours are not enough to see all the biblical treasures found in the exhibits inside. There are squeals of wonder when one of our group spots Jezebel’s seal among those of the kings and men mentioned in the Old Testament. Pillar capitals from the City of David excavations, the Tel Dan inscription tell us about the house of David; the shepherd boy

who reigned as a faithful king. From simple jars and woven baskets dated back to the time of Abraham to jewels worn by Queens and so many inscriptions we cannot count them! A special exhibit has on loan a brand new discovery – the seal of Isaiah the Prophet! It actually says “The Prophet Isaiah” in Hebrew on it. Lean in closer and look carefully at the bottom – there is a thumb print preserved in the fired clay bulla. Many believe this to be the thumb print of Isaiah from when he sealed this bulla. This incredible discovery was found only a few feet from a seal of King Hezekiah who reigned at the time of Isaiah. I wonder why the seals of these friends were found in the Royal Bakery at the base of the Temple mount – we can ask them in the Kingdom!

Shalom until next time;  
Crazy Auntie Lindsay

