

AUSTIN WETMORE

JANUARY UPDATE

Minnesota, USA | Zealous Israel Project



Shalom from Israel, Hello all! With this past holiday season coming to a close we are now getting back into the swing of things here in Israel. As part of the International Projects Department, I can also say we are happy to finally be settled in our new offices above the JAC with renovations nearing completion. This past year has brought many memorable moments. In looking back over all that I have gotten to experience it is rather difficult to pick out one event or moment among so many great ones. What I think I have come to see as an overarching theme, which includes some of my favorite moments, is the devotion of the Jewish people.

One of my earliest experiences that has stuck with me was a simple conversation with an IDF soldier and the bus. While I was talking to Greg a soldier sitting across from us jumped into our conversation and asked us where we were from. As our conversation progressed we found out he had



moved from Brazil to join the IDF just recently. When we got the chance to explain why we were in Israel he was astounded by our willingness to volunteer. His reaction was fascinating to me as he did not seem to see the irony of how he had left behind the country and family he had known his whole life in order to protect God's nation a world away. The devotion of God's people has continually amazed me as I have seen story after story of the journeys people have undertaken to come here. These stories while alongside the experience of the Jewish holidays has shown me time after time the intensity of the Jewish people's commitment and love of God.

While the excursions have all been great, my favorite to this point has been the trip to the Golan Heights. Experiencing the sites of this important area was a fantastic way to better understand the modern state of Israel and the sacrifices required to create it as it is today.

Beyond getting to take in all this land has to offer we have also been able to serve in so many different ways. One example that stands out is working on a painting project at one of the Beit Shemesh schools we support. Getting to paint alongside the Australian tour group we brought along as well as several Bridges team members was a blessing. Getting to not only give the school a facelift but also see the joy on the faces of kids we got to spend time with was an absolute joy. Likewise, I had that same day the honor of seeing our Feed a Child team at work as they gave the young boy a pair of soccer shoes and a soccer ball. Watching on, I was overwhelmed by how such a simple gift meant so much to him.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers!

Blessings,
Austin

