



Jim Fleming &
The Board
Present



Encounters In Archaeology

An antiquity center in LaGrange, GA

In the 50-year ministry of Biblical Resources and the non-profit organizations that it has founded, we have depended upon supporters offering their prayers and gifts. We moved from Israel to the United States in 2004 to build a biblical archaeological museum. Unfortunately, the new board was no longer guided by respect for Judaism and ties to Israel. Jim Fleming & Hannaniah Pinto felt they had to step away from the original museum which they founded, and began to concentrate on a new and exciting center which will develop many different exhibits and learning experiences.

We endeavor to bring to life the historical-geographical settings and stories from biblical times, so people can experience the context of history, by creating an environment similar to where it happened. By uniting the biblical texts with the land and its geography, people may apply new insights to their lives.

We feel God has guided us to a beautifully forested lake property which makes an idyllic natural setting for our programs and outdoor activities. The property is 19 acres and includes a 4-acre lake.

As you step through the front gates you will find four large courtyards illustrating the environments around the ancient biblical seas. In our world of modern conveniences, it is difficult for us to appreciate how central the seas were to the daily life of Jesus and his followers.

The elevated observation platform shown here will give a bird's eye view of our property's springs which feed our model of the Jordan River flowing into the sea of Galilee.



We hope to find you in great spirits enjoying each season as it leads into the next. The past several years have been difficult for us, as it has for many of you, with people affected by the pandemic. While all lectures and study trips stopped, and on-site work slowed to a bare minimum, we carried on with general maintenance and have survived with God's gracious help. Due to the pandemic, we, like many non-profits, have suffered from a continued lack of volunteers and workers at the site.

Despite these challenges we have endeavored to continue new projects and would like to include a few photos to illustrate the progress we have made with the Four Seas Courtyards.

We are so grateful for your prayers and support which enabled us to keep our eyes on the vision which we were given and find hope in the future. With God's guidance, and your support, we are confident and ready to move forward with our plans and we want to continue to share them with you.

We hope you enjoy looking at this summary brochure about our new museum focused on re-living the many ancient journeys of the biblical seas. Turn the page and see the progress we have made so far.

Four Courtyards with Walkable Maps and Exhibits

Sea of Galilee, Red, Sea, Dead Sea, and Mediterranean Sea



The **Sea of Galilee courtyard** contains a large circular Koi fishpond. Behind it is a raised wooden pier built to show the three kinds of fishing nets mentioned in ancient sources. We have secure stone benches for groups to sit and listen to the teaching explanations and have group discussions. There is also a waterfall area in the back that facilitates peaceful meditation. A cast iron fence has been installed around the 6 foot deep pool to comply with safety rules.

Behind the wooden pier there are also agricultural terraces featuring common Galilee plants (cedar & cypress trees and a vineyard). An exhibit cabinet shows ancient fishing artifacts, a model of a first century boat, and a relief map of the Sea of Galilee area.

We are developing this area to teach about the Sea of Galilee, including Jesus' ministries, fishing techniques, and towns most visited by Jesus and the disciples. This will help many of these stories come to life.



The Sea of Galilee courtyard is connected to the Red Sea courtyard by a curved staircase, which also has an iron railing installed.



The **Red Sea courtyard** features reconstructions of four iconic structures from ancient Egypt: a stone pyramid, an obelisk with hieroglyphs, a pharaoh in royal regalia, and a sphynx with a lion body and human face. The courtyard also includes the path of the Nile River flowing from upper Egypt through the Red Sea (ancient *Reed Sea*) to its delta. The Reed Sea features water with papyrus and growing reed grasses. A cabinet exhibit highlights many of the ancient Egyptian gods. Maps will be included showing possible locations for the ancient Reed Sea.

With the help and guidance of one of our board members Michael Hodgson, we have been able to complete the majority of the archaeological Egyptian portion of our Red Sea courtyard. Michael loves to share with visitors the biblical connections with Egypt in the book of Exodus and also the statistics of the job – how many stones did it take to complete? How many gallons of paint? Here you can see Michael sharing with a visiting group the setting of the great power that the pharaohs exercised over the ancient Hebrews.



Two lions flank the entrance to the **Dead Sea courtyard**, featuring an exhibit of three of the primary ancient mining industries associated with this unusual body of water 1,200 feet below sea level. The exhibit shows a 4,000 year old copper furnace with artifacts; a salt mining operation with a block of Dead Sea salt; and ancient uses of tar with examples of caulking ships, waterproofing baskets, and preserving mummies. The map of the Jordan River Valley will include important towns of Judea on the west and Trans-Jordan on the east. Here, Jim is explaining these three major Dead Sea industries to a group of visitors.

The most visible feature of the four courtyards is the walkable map in the large **Mediterranean Sea courtyard**, painted directly onto the cement floor. This picture shows ¼ of the map which extends from Egypt north to Turkey and from Israel west to Rome. Our map not only shows borders but it also shows elevation on the land masses and depth in the sea by using different shades of blue and brown. Groups can walk on the map as we help to identify the different countries and cities that are mentioned in the biblical stories. This picture shows our first group which followed Paul's journey to Rome. Our board member Betty Gamble gave a dramatic reading from Acts 27-28 as we were tossed through the rough seas of the storm to the shipwreck on the island of Malta.



The courtyard has additional wall maps and cabinets of noteworthy models and artifacts. One can also see sculptures appropriately positioned such as a statue of a resting Greek athlete near Mt. Olympus, a statue of the god of healing near its shrine in turkey, and two Roman statues bringing in grapes from a vineyard.

Lecture Hall & Meal Room

In addition to our four seas courtyards, we have a lecture hall and a solarium for a Galilee meal experience.



Our **lecture hall** includes this exhibit wall showing pictures and maps of the land and seas as well as a library to help provide context for the historical texts set at each location. We use this hall for introductions to our courtyard walks, as well as lectures.

Our **solarium** will be developed into the setting for a Galilee meal experience. Here we will discuss the foods and customs around the two meals of John 14 in Jerusalem and John 14 in Galilee.



We were recently able to host our first group. Their leader sent us this response:

We were so impressed and excited to visit and see the vision you folks have. Your presentations were incredible and enlightening. The wealth of knowledge and wisdom you all possess humbles us all.

It is our hope that visitors to our museum will be able to get a valuable addition to their understanding of the biblical stories by exposing themselves to a physical walk through these courtyards, stimulating all the senses during the visit.

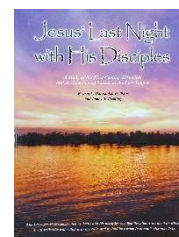
Best wishes,
Jim Fleming on behalf of the board.

From Jim and Hannaniah to You, and From You to Us

On a more personal note, we want to stay in communication with you! Jim Fleming is doing well, as time passes health issues come and go, some resolved by surgeries, others by rest and recovery. Hannaniah Pinto is busy travelling to Israel with groups, sharing the joy of experiencing the biblical environment first-hand.

We wish for you every good thing and we fervently express our appreciation for your support through prayer and donations.

In addition to our museum area in Georgia, our focus is on education. Hannaniah Pinto continues our study tours to Israel and other biblical lands to help people see, experience, and further understand the biblical world. We also send our monthly educational emails to continue teaching on a regular basis. For more information, you can visit the books & education portion of our website <https://encountersinarchaeology.org/educational-resources/> Or you can call us to order any of our books like these two.



Your financial support has made all of this possible, but we still have not reached the finish line for the development of our courtyards, and our daily operations including the educational emails require on-going funds. It is our hope that you will add Encounters in Archaeology to your list of gifts this year. Would you consider making a difference to our future by donating to our work?

You also have the option to become a regular donor. We can set up a monthly charge with your pledge which will help cover our daily expenses.

A donation of any kind will be a blessing so don't hesitate to send us any amount, small or large. You can trust that your donation will be used to advance the ministry of Encounters in Archaeology.

We also know that we can cut expenses by using less printed material. Please send us your email address so we can be in touch more frequently. We will also include you on our monthly teaching newsletter, as our way to say thank you.

Sincerely,
Jim Fleming and Hannaniah Pinto



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