

TRIP

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brought Bible stories and people to life: Petra, a prehistoric city carved into a sandstone cliff — where scenes were filmed for the movie “Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade” — was home to the Edomites, descendants of Abraham’s grandson Esau; Mt. Nebo, where Moses was allowed a view of the Holy Land before his death after wandering in the wilderness; the Mount of Beatitudes where Jesus is believed to have given his sermon and fed fish and loaves of bread to a crowd of 5,000; Bethlehem, where Jesus was born, and Nazareth, where he grew up — just to name a very few.

Josiah and Nathanael spent a night at a resort on the Dead Sea and the next morning enjoyed floating on the lake’s salty water.

When it came to food, Josiah preferred the fare in Israel over that in Jordan, and said the strict kosher laws in Israel prohibited serving and eating meat and dairy products at the same meal.

Nathanael said they had excellent food the entire time, but noted an especially delicious falafel, which is a deep-fried fritter made of chickpeas or fava beans — “the best falafel I’ve ever had” — at a little shop in Old Jerusalem on the last day.



Overlooking Jerusalem, one of several ancient cities Josiah and Nathanael Martin visited.

Contributed photos

He did get to try one new food item during the Holy Land trip — fresh dates — which he said were “really good!”

Nathanael, who has worked as a travel agent for nine years, has logged in several domestic and international ventures, visiting 25 coun-

tries and 38 states to date. His major trips include Africa, Costa Rica and Nicaragua, Europe twice and, last summer, a solo trip to Peru and Bolivia. He said he’s comfortable traveling alone, but with security concerns in Israel and Jordan, he wanted to be with a reliable tour operator and fully escorted.

Josiah is co-owner of Superior Home Builders in Mt. Vernon. His parents are John and Lori Martin, also of Mt. Vernon.

This was his first time outside the United States, but in just this one trip, he traveled through six countries.

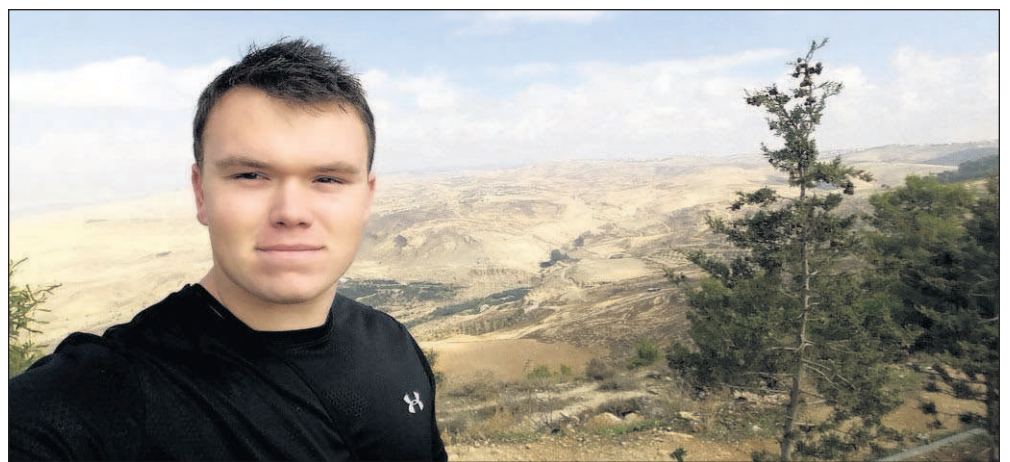
The Holy Land trip stood out for Nathanael as far as history and significance, yet there wasn’t anything, he said, that surprised him.

“I always enjoy observing the different cultures as I travel,” he said.

He also enjoyed sharing the experiences of first-timer Josiah, who definitely had some remarkable moments.

“No westerner can ever forget the first time you’re in a Muslim country (Jordan) and hear the call to prayer go off from the local mosque,” Nathanael said.

He said the Holy Land trip, like all his travels, will impact



Josiah Martin at Mount Nebo, with an expansive view of the Holy Land. Below: Nathanael Martin at David Falls, at Ein Gedi, an oasis on the west coast of the Dead Sea.

If you go

What: Holy Land presentation by Josiah and Nathanael Martin

When: 2:30 p.m. Saturday, March 26

Where: Mt. Vernon Grange

Details: No charge. Everyone welcome.

More info: Call 541-620-0340



his life.

“The more you travel, the broader perspective it gives on nearly everything in life,” Nathanael said. “But this trip definitely was more meaningful than probably any other I’ll ever take.”

Raised a Christian, he said he grew up knowing all the Bible stories and believing they were true, but actually

seeing the places where Jesus walked, taught, healed, sat, ate and slept “made it become

so much more real.” Josiah said, now, whenever he hears a Christmas song and it mentions Bethlehem or Jerusalem, he has a clear picture in his mind of those places, because he’s been there.

And now, both said, reading the Bible is a new experience.

“It becomes not just a story on paper, but a living experience that I was part of,” Nathanael said.

Josiah added, “It really comes to life, and you realize how real those stories are.”

FAMILY HEALTH

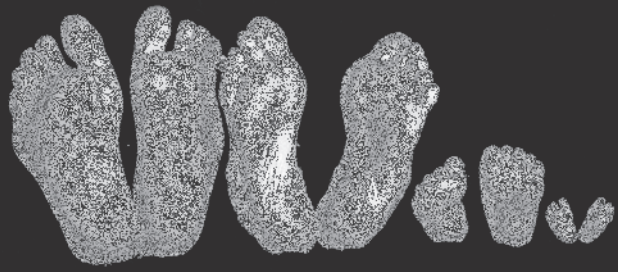
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