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Superior Quality Vacations

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Dear Group,

Recently, our Pilgrim team had the opportunity to sit down in person with one of our trusted Israel suppliers, and I wanted to share with all of you the very positive updates that we received from them. They are located in Jerusalem and are able to give us firsthand information on current conditions and how things have developed over the past several months.

Israel tours are actively operating again. Not only are airlines returning to Tel Aviv in full force, but the tourist sites are open as well with very little exception. The West Bank areas (Jericho and Bethlehem for most groups) have been very quiet, and arrangements can be made to visit them. Except for the area of Tel Dan and Caesarea Philippi where additional caution is advised, all regular tourist sites are available including the Garden Tomb, which is offering timed entrances for groups upon request. As our itineraries always indicate, modifications may be necessary and will be implemented if needed. We anticipate even the northern sites being open for visitors again in the near future and will watch for further updates.

Israelis are living life as normal. While the fighting in Gaza itself will likely continue for some time before reaching a definite end, this is not a unique situation for Israel. There is frequently unrest in the Gaza area that does not affect our groups as it is so remote. The people of Israel are dropping off their children at daycare/school, going to work, traveling within and outside of the country, doing their grocery shopping, going to the park, visiting in each other's homes and living their lives as usual. Again, because the fighting has been kept to such a remote area, it is only the southwest border towns and villages that really saw its effects, and refugees are already being slowly moved back to their hometowns.

Visitors to Israel are not going to be seeing a war-torn land or a war zone of rockets and missiles. Gaza is a remote and small segment of land, and tourists will not see the effects of war other than memorials, banners, etc. as the Israeli people show their support, care and hope for those who are fighting or have been captured.

Our suppliers, the guides and drivers, hotels and tourist sites are ready and waiting to serve our groups as they return to the land. Groups that will be traveling this spring are in for a treat as they will have a very unique experience without the heavy crowds typically seen at the popular sites. Pilgrim Tours is excited to be able to share this update with you, and we are looking forward to the great feedback that we anticipate from our travelers this year.

God bless,

David Schaeffer

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Group Tours
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