



REFLECTIONS

November 25, 2012

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him.

2 Corinthians 2:14-15

Transformed Images

Sometimes things aren't as we picture them to be. Sometimes images painted in our minds are vastly different from reality and only exposure to the real thing can change them. Recently pictures long embedded in my mind have been challenged and corrections to them have been bountiful. But the revisions have been a blessing that has breathed richness into my images of the Holy Land and growth in my commitment to Jesus Christ.

The notion of an unsettled land threatened by war almost discouraged the trip that would change it all. But waiting for peace to come to the land God gave Abraham's heirs would delay the visit until the dust settled from Armageddon. There has never been peace in the land; and those very heirs haunt the land with unrest today.

So we went and the experience was transforming. There was the walk down the Mount of Beatitudes, the blue waters of the Sea of Galilee before us. There we could almost hear the Sermon on the Mount echo in our ears and we felt inspiration when we envisioned the challenge of the Great Commission that may have been delivered at that very place. And we were walking there!

Through much of Israel we walked where the patriarchs walked and the footsteps of Jesus traveled. Heat from parched sandy ground burned our feet, and the gritty taste of dust dried our mouths as we became absorbed by the barrenness of the land. We understood the travails of Moses as he wandered with his people through the rugged land that offered no meaningful landmarks to guide their way to the Promised Land.

In Nazareth the traditional site of Gabriel's message to Mary presented a new image of that sacred day; and a visit to a nearby town prompted speculation that a young Jesus may have worked alongside his earthly father there. A sycamore-fig tree in Jericho might have been an ancestor of the one Zacchaeus climbed to see the Savior pass by. And the hustling crowded in a busy Jerusalem portrayed an atmosphere much like the one that prompted Jesus to upset the tables in the temple.

Other scenes also transformed images in our minds. But the greatest image is this: Jesus came and lived among us. We walked where He once lived, traveled, died, and rose again. Because He came, we live in triumphal procession in him.

Jesus is God's greatest blessing to us; and we should tell the world.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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