



VACATIONS CHAPTER ONE

9/26/2011

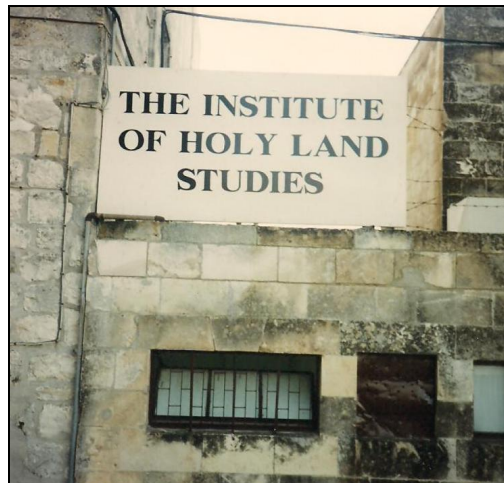
1990 – THE HOLY LANDS – Isabel and Bill

February 24 – March 4, 1990

- Depart JFK Airport, NY TWA #882 -8:05 pm to Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv, Israel - arrive February 24 – 3:55 pm
- Return – Ben Gurion Airport – Tel Aviv March 4 – TWA # 885 7:40 am to JFK Airport – NY arrive 12:35 pm.

While I was serving as the Assistant to the President at Eastern College, St. Davids, PA, Isabel and I joined a tour-group of administrators and faculty members from several colleges on a nine-day tour of the Holy Lands. Our son-in-law, John, drove us to the JFK airport in NY for our flight to Israel.

Arriving at the Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv we were then bused to Jerusalem and stayed at the Institute of Holy Land Studies (Jerusalem University College - 2011).



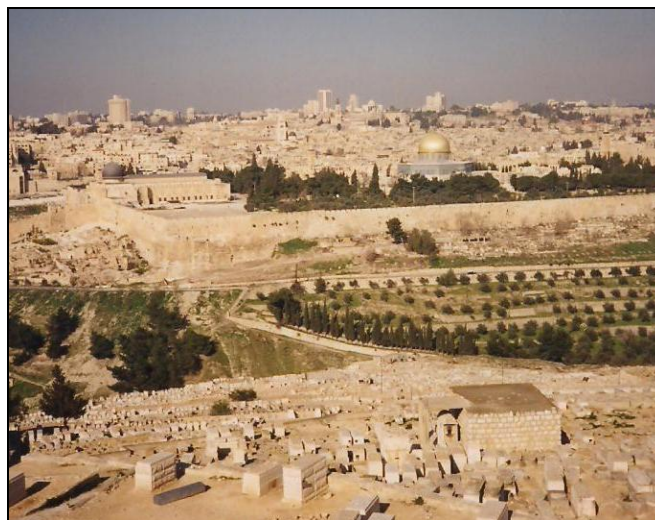
It is actually in buildings constructed on the exterior wall of the old city – Mt. Zion. Following introductory lectures, we walked the Old City of Jerusalem, visiting the Upper Room (entrance only).

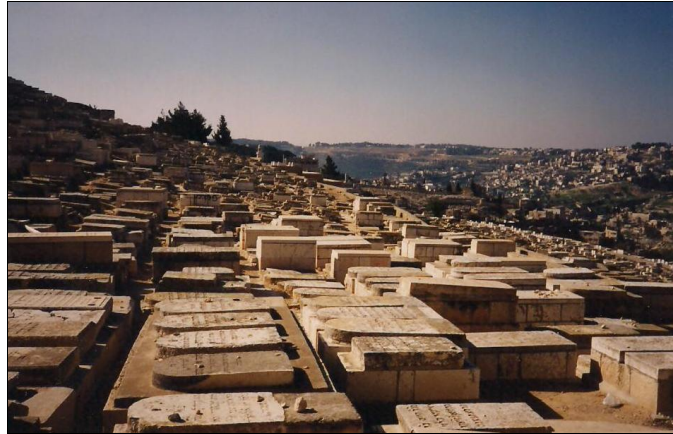


We saw the modern gates, Western Wall – where some of us went right up to the wall to pray standing next to Rabbis, etc. Then to the Temple Mount with the golden dome which is controlled for worship by Muslims and thus we were not allowed as Christians to enter.



Then, Bethesda, Via Dolorosa – the path Jesus followed to his meeting with Herod and then the crucifixion - and then to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The next day we went to the Mount of Olives, overlooking Jerusalem,





and the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus prayed for the city.

We went to the Garden Tomb where some believe Jesus was buried, and we were permitted to enter the tomb itself. From there we went to the High Place of Gibeon, and viewed a very large outdoor model of the Second Temple Period Jerusalem before moving on to the city of Bethlehem. The very large church, visited by so many tourists, particularly at Christmas time, was dark, and somewhat foreboding. One of the most interesting sites was Masada, where the Jewish zealots of the first century tried to escape the onslaught of the Romans in 70 AD.



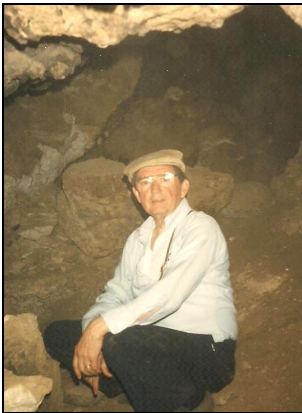
It is located in the southern part of Israel, 1300 feet above sea level at the Dead Sea. We rode the tram to the top, but walked down, very cautiously on the steep paths of sliding stone. Then it was time for a swim in the Dead Sea.



Bill swimming in Dead Sea



After a swim in the Dead Sea, we visited En Gedi, where David hid from King Saul, and the caves at Qumran where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found; then on to the city of Jericho.



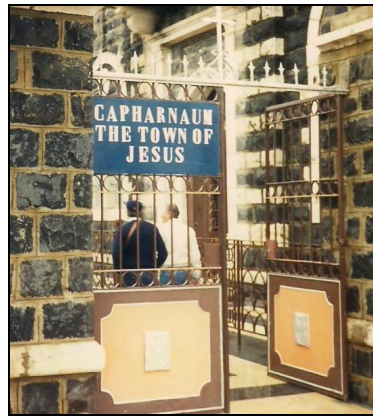
Bill in Qumram cave – At Jordan River



Another very impressive site was Caesarea on the Mediterranean Sea at the location of its ancient amphitheater at the waters edge – Isabel holding her hat.



We walked through the remains of the huge amphitheater before going on to Megiddo, Mt. Carmel, the Jezreel Valley, and the city of Nazareth. There we visited the Church of the Annunciation, and the Arbel Cliff overlooking the Sea of Galilee, staying overnight at Kibbutz En Gev on the shore of Galilee in small tourist cabins a few feet from the water. It was a memorable and emotional experience to rise early in the morning, stand at the water's edge, and imagine what it must have been like to gather with the multitudes to hear Jesus preach. Across the waters we could see Capernaum.



Capernaum

One of the highlights of the trip was the boat ride across the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum. While on the Sea, the captain turned off the motor and we sat silently thinking of being on a boat with Christ. Matthew 8:23-27 was read by one of our group, and we heard again how Jesus calmed the troubled waters of the Galilee, just as He can calm the troubled waters surrounding our lives.

We then visited the Mount of the Beatitudes where our Lord gave those famous words "Blessed are...." Then on to the Jordan River valley where Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist

Our tour guide was Dr. Bill Schlegel, a very well educated and knowledgeable young man who in 2011 is Director of the Holy Land study program for the Masters College in California.



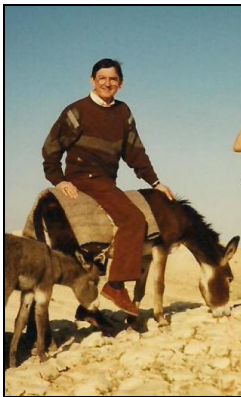


He presently resides near Jerusalem. Other faculty members at the Institute were Gordon Franz, Bob Mullins, and Hal Ronning. Dr. Bernard Resnikoff was one of the scholars who gave lectures that were so informative and helpful to us in understanding the Scriptures. The President of the Institute, Dr. Marvin Inch and his wife held a reception for us at their home. Bill Schlegel or one of the others took us to places like Megiddo, Tel Lachish where they were excavating history, to Ashpela, to the Kidron Valley, the Church of the Ascension, Bethany where Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived, to Nazareth and the Church of the Annunciation, to Megiddo, to Bethlehem and the Church of the Nativity, to Beth Shean where twenty layers of civilization have been documented, and to so many other places. At each site, the corresponding Scripture from the Old or New Testament was read to us. The Bible came alive.

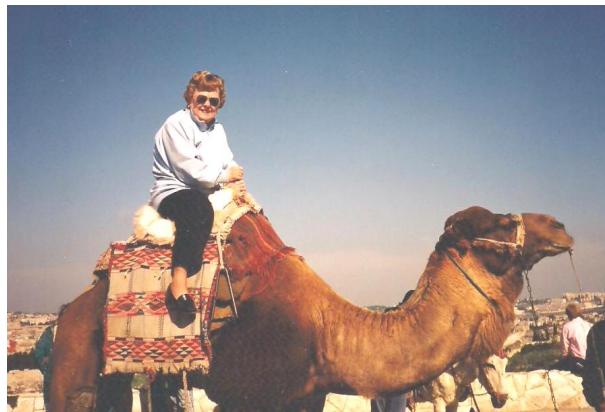
We also visited the Jewish memorial at Yad Vashem, where victims of the Holocaust are remembered. It was a very sobering experience.

We were shown the olive trees and other trees and plants mentioned in the Scriptures. The Institute has set aside a large garden area where these are grown and shown as part of their academic program.

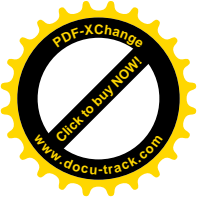
On our last day we walked and shopped in Jerusalem where we purchased mementos of a most-enjoyable and informative trip. I can agree with all who have been in the Holy Lands and say that it was unforgettable. To actually see sites such as the Valley of Elah where David fought and defeated the Giant Goliath, and other sites referred to above, made the Bible stories come alive in a marvelous manner. There were so many things and places we saw, that it is difficult to describe them all here.



Bill & Isabel



One of my favorite hymns of the church is “It is Well with my Soul.” Written by Horatio G Spafford, it was his response to the word he received when his four daughters perished at Sea while crossing the Atlantic to the Holy Lands. The peace he experienced has been shared by multitudes through the years as they have sung this song. But the part I like best is verse three: ”My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought, My sin, not in part, but the whole, Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more, Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, O my soul.” I seldom can sing it without a feeling of deep emotion and gratitude. Well, while we were there at the Holy Land Institute, we were told that the grave of Horatio G. Spafford was right there in the adjoining cemetery. One evening, by myself, I stood at the gravesite, and thanked the Lord for this messenger of hope and peace. My,



what a feeling! Mr. and Mrs. Spafford spent the last years of their lives in Jerusalem in the American Colony, a Christian mission that they founded there.



Isabel and Bill at the Sea of Galilee



END OF CHAPTER ONE