

Footsteps of Jesus Update From Israel #5 Wednesday April 1

Dear Friends and Supporters

Normally Helen accompanies me on our film trips. This time she had commitments that would not allow her to leave. Today is her birthday, so I want to say happy birthday Helen. Thank you for covering our commitments while I am on this film trip.

Today I traveled south to film the dramatic scenery driving down the Patriarch's Path past Hebron into the Negev. The land goes from marginal rainfall that barely allows wheat to grow to pure desert. I wanted to film the land side of Masada the Romans used to capture the fortress and will send this under a separate update (5A).

These two sheepfolds were quite dramatic. The Negev is harsh, but the shepherds so how make a living. It is amazing that Abraham and Isaac were shepherds in this very area.



Sheep pens near Hebron

Judah had two forts as early warning systems for possible invaders. One was at Beersheba which gets sufficient rain to grow grain in the winter. The other was at Arad which was very arid. In this picture you can see the walled fort of Tel Arad. Notice the meager green grass scattered among the rocks.



Tel Arad southern fortress of kingdom of Judah (height of spring)

This is a land of rocks and camels. The drive from Arad to Masada is just over ten miles through some of the strangest looking land in the world. It is stark but beautiful. As we came over the hill we came upon this herd of camels, so we stopped to film them.

This trip was dedicated to collecting eye candy for the series and this day it was spectacular.



Camels near the desert road to Masada

From Masada we had to return to Arad and then head down to the dead sea. This overlook provided a fantastic view of the dead sea. While Jesus probably never traveled to the Dead Sea, it has certainly left it's mark upon the land and we need the footage for the series.



Viewpoint over Dead Sea

Returning to Jerusalem from the Dead Sea we stopped in the Wadi Qelt. This has to be one of my favorite places in the land. The harsh stark desert comes alive where the water flows. This is the Monastery of St. George. It is a delight to hike over to the monastery where you can enjoy cool drinks with the monks. There is an ancient tradition that Elijah hid from Jezebel here. The cliffs are dotted with caves and ladders where hermits have lived through the centuries. This would have been the route that the Good Samaritan was traveling when he came upon the man who had fallen among thieves.



St. George's Monastery Wadi Qelt

We will film the story of the Good Samaritan in this wadi. Speaking of Samaritans, I am planning to return to Mount Gerizim, home of the Samaritans tomorrow.

Please pray for me as I write this episode on the parable of the Good Samaritan, that it will reach and touch hearts and lives around the world to be merciful, helpful and graceful toward one another.