

Dear Friends and Supporters

Today I decided to go up the Patriarchs's Path to the north in the West Bank. This area has an unusual beauty and attraction to me. Perhaps it is because of the olive terraces that have been carved into the hills for thousands of years. It is the spine of the central mountains that stretches from Jerusalem to the Jezreel Valley near Nazareth. Along the way you pass villages named Bet El, Shiloh, Eli and Schechem that were the scene of so many Biblical stories. It is also the location for two very important stories in the life of Jesus.



Terraced Olive groves along the Patriarch's Path (Highway 60)

It is springtime in the land. The lovely red poppies (I like to them of them as the lilies of the field Jesus referred to were scattered among the olive trees and rocks. The sun was striking the flowers in a particularly lovely way so I stopped to shoot video of the hillside in bloom. You can see an azalea type of bush off in the distance. This is spring time in the land, which is the time of Passover.



Spring along the Patriarch's Path (Highway 60)

I drove to the top of Mt. Gerizim where we filmed the episode on the woman at the well. From this vantage point you can look down upon the modern city of Nablus, the ruins of ancient Shekhem, Joseph's tomb, and most importantly the church built over Jacob's well.

Mt. Gerizim is home to the Samaritans, a religious sect of the Israelites. They still celebrate the Passover service. When I arrived in town it was a beehive of activity as they were preparing for the great crowds of people who would come for Passover.

In the picture below you can see the area were they perform the ritual sacrifice. In the distance is the trench where the animals are sacrificed and the blood is drained. They they are roasted over pits (8 of them).



Place of Samaritan Passover sacrifice Mt. Gerizim

As I left town to drive out to the overlook I passed this shepherd watching his flock. I stopped and inquired to see if these animals were going to be sacrificed for Passover. He said yes, forty of the lambs.



Lambs being fattened for the Samaritan Passover

The Israeli military had set up camp at the lookout area with their high powered binoculars. They told me this was a closed military area and would not allow me to walk to the place where we filmed in the fall of 2007. I was so thankful that we had already shot this footage from this vantage point. When I get back I will edit this episode.



Biblical Ephraim (Taybe) where Scripture says Jesus went after the resurrection of Lazarus

The last stop of this day was at Taybe, biblical Ephraim where Jesus went after the resurrection of Lazarus. This is the only 100% Christian village in the land and is very different from the other villages. There is grace and rest here, an enduring legacy of the time that Jesus spent here resting and preparing for the final events of His earthly life.

On Friday I wrapped up pictures in several churches in the old city of Jerusalem. Then packed up the apartment and headed for the airport to fly to Rome from where I will file the next report.

May you find your spiritual "Ephraim" where you can be refreshed and prepared for whatever is before you.