

Mary Craig

From: Mary Craig

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Subject: Meditations on Holy Journeys



David Patten is Senior Editor of *Newsmax* Magazine and on the Board of Directors of Mary Craig Ministries, Inc. He is also the Director of MCM's Barnabas Project. He, along with his wife Betty, Rev. Jim Craig, Kroy Ellis, and Wanda Barlow, formed the MCM spiritual warfare mission team sent to the Galilee, Israel, and Jerusalem for MCM's fourth mission to Israel.

This latest mission had mostly to do with Jesus' return, His coming again in glory. You can see more about what the Holy Spirit is saying at www.marycraig.org in the prophetic section and in a special section on Israel.

David's thoughts follow as he listened to the guide and reflected on his own personal journey with God. I hope you enjoy it; and I thank you for your support of Mary Craig Ministries World Missions, now to 68 nations and all seven continents.



Holy Journeys: A Meditation atop Mount Arbel

David A. Patten

Just getting to Israel is a pilgrimage in itself. For us, there was a connection in Atlanta and another in New York. Then you board a Boeing 777 for the 11 hour flight to Tel Aviv.

Flying east, you lose another 7 hours due to the time shift. So a trip that began at 2 p.m. on Monday ends with a jet full of groggy travelers touching down in Tel Aviv a day later.

Quite a journey. Then after recovering your luggage and passing through Israeli customs, you board a bus for a 90-minute bus ride to Tiberias, the city built by the son of Herod the Great, Herod Antipas. Our hotel was a welcome haven.

Yet even then our journey had only begun.

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On the first day of our trip, our tour guide, an Israeli woman with a honeyed voice, Tzippi, drove us past the Horns of Hattin, where the cataclysmic battle between crusaders and the Muslim general Saladin was fought in 1187. That battle ultimately would lead the crusaders – who had entered the Promised Land on an arduous journey of their own – to leave Palestine after the Third Crusade, and return to their native countries.

We drove on to the summit of Mount Arbel, a small mountain that towers over the northwest corner of the Sea of Galilee. From here, you gaze over grassy meadows and white stone dwellings along the valley below, and you can see the areas where Bethsaida, Corzin, and Capernaum once stood (there are current-era neighborhoods ... but the ancient sites lie in ruins, a silent testimony to the prophetic punishment they received for their unbelief as Christ prophesied in Matthew 11:21).

“Please do not think of it as a tour,” Tzippi, our tour guide, cautioned us in her harp-toned voice with a clipped Israeli accent. “You are not on a tour, but rather, you are on a journey. A journey through the Promised Land of Israel.”

As we stood atop Mount Arbel, we knew we were more like pilgrims on a mission for God than mere tourists. We could see the lake of amethyst stretching off to the south, the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus calmed the unruly storms during his own missionary journeys.



With water providing the only easy means of spanning great distances quickly, the Sea of Galilee gave the Son of Man a cardio, or route, to spread his ministry and reach beyond the stiffnecked, observant Hebrews who were focused more on relationships of clan and law than on their relationship with God.

When Jesus crossed the lake to reach the mountains looming “on the other side,” he preached to gentiles. We know they were non-Jews because they raised swine (remember Matthew 8, Jesus casting the demons out of people and into swine). Some accepted His words and some did not. But from the beginning, the Lord through his mercy and grace had a plan to rescue even those bereft of any Covenant claim to His salvation.



From atop the mountain we could also see the Valley of the Wind, which is part of the Via Maris – that interstate highway of antiquity that meanders from the continent of Africa alongside the Great Rift Valley. Historians say the Via Maris was the thoroughfare for man’s migration from Africa into the fertile crescent -- humanity’s crèche. Eventually, it leads to the continents of Asia and Europe. This was also the path along which Christ is believed to have journeyed on many of his trips from Nazareth to Capernaum to Jerusalem. Indeed, you can still walk

parts of the Via Maris today, just as Christ would have strode it over 2,000 years ago.

Gazing down at the Sea of Galilee south of Mount Arbel, God's awesome plan becomes evident: Christ had strategically placed his ministry at the cross roads of both civilization and of human history, and did so just as the Roman Empire was constructing a worldly, Gentile empire that the Lord God would use to transmit the infinitely more powerful message of the saving grace of God's perfect sacrifice, the lamb of God, Jesus.



Travelling the land of Israel you discover that all of life, in a sense, is about transport. Your blood transports (along cardios of its own) the vital nutrients and oxygen that your cells need to keep your body alive. Your brain transmits electrical impulses from point A to point B, millions of times a second, so that as you're having a delightful conversation with a good friend, it all happens freely, without conscious effort. Like flowing water, the Holy Spirit moves within you, urging you to His bidding ... and next thing you know, you're on a pilgrimage to Israel!

In a sense, then, all of life itself is a pilgrimage. In your life you travel through space, you travel through time, and most importantly for the Christian, you undertake a spiritual journey that proceeds not along highways and lakes and foot trails, but within the expanses of your own God-given soul.



As with any journey, any pilgrimage, the Christian walk has highpoints and low points, obstacles, setbacks, challenges, moments of rest and refreshment, and inspiring pinnacles from which you can gaze down and see the meandering path your journey took to arrive at where you stand today.

“Do not think of it as a tour,” the guide had said. “Think of it as a journey.”

So how about you, fellow pilgrim? Is your life a God-inspired journey? Or has it become a tour? In other words, are you going in the direction the Lord has called you?



Unlike the ancients, who traveled mostly by camel, mule, or by foot, we live in an age with many amazing forms of transportation. Yet for all the wonders the world has to offer and all the miraculous means of getting there, for believers there still remains just one Destination.



Standing atop Mount Arbel and gazing down I come to see that Jesus is our Via Maris. Jesus is the Way.

So how can we know that we're still on the right path? How can we be sure that our pilgrimage is still on course? Are we still traveling every day on the journey that the Lord God laid out for us to embark with Him on, before the dawn of time?

The call comes for us to re-board the bus. As I regretfully leave the Mt. Arbel vista, it occurs to me that my eyes may never again pause along the wayside to drink in its vast, yawning beauty.

I glance back before I board the bus to resume our journey. How can I be sure I'm still on the right path?

A Bible verse comes to mind. It gently reassures me that, as long as I'm moving in a direction taking me nearer to God's own heart, I'm probably not that far off course. His still voice says: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye."



Mary Craig Ministries...going forth!

The MCM Galilee-Israel-Jerusalem Mission
April 1-10, 2010
Rev. Jim Craig, Kroy Ellis, Wanda Barlow
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Pastor Jim-Mt. Arbel



David Patten-Mt. Arbel



Betty Patten-Tel Dan



Wanda Barlow-Megiddo



Lorraine (new convert), Sara & Kroy Ellis



Pastor Jim & Kroy praying for a pastor from India



Sea of Galilee

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