

**June 14--Arrive Jerusalem, Mount of Olives, Camel, Western Wall, Rabbinical Tunnel, Bethlehem Overlook, Yad Vashem (Holocaust Memorial), Model of Jerusalem, Shrine of the Book**

This morning *Pearl Pebble* prayed for us. It was good.

Hebrew words: SLEE-ha Excuse me

The only way to explore the Old City of Jerusalem is by foot. We will be entering through the Dung Gate. We will have lunch in the Jewish Quarter, and go downtown after dinner. We should not take close pictures of people, except of ourselves. The Israeli Army has a standing center in the Jewish Quarter. Keep some change in our pockets for the street vendors. The streets are narrow—our bus will drop us off and pick us up at certain points at a certain time, where there is room for a bus to park briefly.

As we left the En Gedi kibbutz, by the Salt (Dead) Sea, Ronny spoke to us of **Sodom and Gomorrah**. In the time of Abraham and Lot, **the Jordan valley was lush down by the Salt Sea**, (In **Genesis 13:10**, we read that this was before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah). But there wasn't enough land to hold both Abraham's and Lot's herds, so Abraham gave his nephew Lot the choice, and Lot chose the valleys and Abraham took the mountains—we were in those mountains, both at Qumran, at Masada, and at the Oasis of Ein Gedi. The Salt Sea was still there. For stories of the time before the Lord destroyed the land with fire and brimstone, read **Genesis 14**—the valley was called Siddim, and **full of tar pits**. There was a battle of four kings against five, and after the battle, the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah ran; Lot was captured when Sodom was looted, and Abram took 318 trained men, born in his house, and chased the people north of Dan, and even north of Damascus. Abram rescued not only Lot but the other captives with their goods. Then Abram met **Melchisedek**, possibly on the Jericho road, on the way back to the Salt Sea area. Later Abram returned most of the things that had been stolen from Sodom to the king of Sodom (who had run away). In **Genesis 19: 24-28**, we read of the brimstone and fire that rained down, destroying Sodom and Gomorrah and, when Lot's wife paused to look back, Lot's wife was turned into a **pillar of salt**. **This was all before Isaac or Ishmael were born.**

As we drove north, up to Jerusalem, by the Salt Sea, Ronny pointed out fresh water pools near the salt water. Ezekiel mentions fishermen on or by the Salt Sea. Today, 3000 people mine **potash** from the area (potash is mixed with fertilizer), **bromine** (used in old camera films), **sulfur, magnesium** (used in building engines). There are 43 billion tons of various salts in the Sea. Ronny says that when Israel finishes its desalinization project, then more fresh water will be going into the Salt Sea. However, they don't mine table salt from the Sea—there are too many poisonous minerals. Today we realize that these salts are poisonous—in old times this was not understood. Israel does get **table salt** by **evaporation from the Mediterranean Sea** (not the Salt, or Dead Sea).

The **Judean wilderness** (desert) is a buffer. Anybody coming from the east has to go on the **Jericho Road**. Tamarisk trees reveal that there is water below the surface, and so farming is possible.

### **Jericho to Jerusalem:**

Jesus was baptized close to the Jericho Road. Israeli Bedouins live in the land, but they are no longer nomads. We saw Jericho from a distance.

**A casino/restaurant was by the Jericho Road.** Israelis gambled; **Arafat** (leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization—the PLO—he wasn't the president of any country of his own, although he was president of the Palestinian National Authority) owned the casino, and the gambling money was used against Israelis. So the Jews lost twice: once at the time, from their pocketbooks, and later through bombs. **Today gambling is illegal.**

**We are climbing**, from – 1400 feet to + 700 feet. In Jesus' day, there were many preparations as people traveled to Jerusalem for the 3 yearly festivals. They left their small village, and went to the Jordan Valley, where they joined an ocean of people. The last climb was from Jericho up to Jerusalem, about a 1 day's journey. They likely sang songs of ascent as they climbed.

Our family travels often (not three times a year, but many years!) to Colorado. When we crest the plains, and see Pikes' Peak, we always have a thrill. Ronny said that for him, it is always a thrill to burst through the tunnel with the sight of Jerusalem. *Sue Rogers* and others sang Psalms as we climbed via bus to Jerusalem. There was a CD player on the bus, and they played the song, "Holy City" as we climbed. Even the land reminds me of eastern Colorado—barren with occasional pine trees. The city we saw just before Jerusalem was a "settlement" of 35,000 people, named Azaim, where Ronny lived until a few years ago. And then the song ended, and there was Jerusalem. I was crying as we entered—it was a lot like Pike's Peak, only lots better. This is my home too.

Paris is 10 times bigger than Jerusalem. We are in the Arab (east) part of Jerusalem. West Jerusalem is Jewish. **Muslims and Jews both see Jerusalem as the holy city.**

In Jerusalem, I didn't take notes in my diary. There was much to see, and no time to write, and I enjoyed it all.

I did pray with the women by the Wailing Wall—I prayed for blessings on Jon and Andrew, on Ashley and Evan and Hazel; I prayed for mercy on the United States and on Israel, and for forgiveness for us all.