

Sights In The Holy Land Not Al

Damascus, Syria, is a good point with which to begin a tour of the Holy Land. It was there that one of the most dramatic and significant of the Biblical miracles took place. You recall that Paul, on the way to Damascus to persecute the Christians, was stricken blind, and had to be led into the city. This event led Paul to become one of the most consecrated and devout Christians of all time.

There is a small church erected over the place where Paul was stricken blind, and it is attended by a French-speaking priest and his children. This church is not too frequently visited, and the priest was very eager to tell us, through our guide, of his life there. We were invited into his house and chilled rose water was brought in. This is a concoction of the juice of fresh rose petals which is far too sweet.

Regardless of relations between two countries, Arabs are always friendly and hospitable to individual visitors. When one enters their shops, a cup of Persian tea is always drunk before business is discussed.

We proceeded into Damascus and visited the house of Ananias, where Paul was brought by his soldiers. The people of Damascus were still fearful of Paul and made plans to rid themselves of him. He was lowered over the city wall in a basket, however, and escaped to safety. This part of the wall still stands, but the window from which Paul was lowered is sealed over because Moslems threw rocks through it and broke several sacred objects contained in a chapel behind the window.

This area is also restricted by the military. Nowhere in Syria can one escape the presence of the military. We were allowed to take a picture of the window only from directly in front of it. To either side seemed to be areas under military control, and no pictures were allowed. The border patrols and customs officials are also extremely vigilant in their du-

RAY WALKER

ties. Entering and leaving the country, we were stopped four times by these people.

From Damascus, we travelled to old Jerusalem. This city is split into two sections since the war between the Jews and the Arabs. Jordan controls the old section, and Israel controls the new section.

The Garden Tomb (the Protestant tomb) is a tranquil little garden where the tomb of Christ is situated. The tomb is a small room carved out of the side of a hill. The tomb was originally that of a wealthy man and there are spaces for three bodies. The serenity and humbleness of the place is reminiscent of the life of Jesus. During all the wars and invasions this country has experienced, the garden has never been disturbed nor a shot fired over it.

The Catholic Calvary is somewhat inside the city. A large cathedral has been built over the site and there are many expensive trimmings and ornaments surrounding both the site of Calvary and the tomb which are located within the same building.

In the daytime, Jerusalem is a typical Arab city: dirty, and crowded to overflowing with people in the bazaars. Some of the shops there are so small that the owner can reach any of his wares without moving from his seat. By night, the city seems transformed. The narrow winding streets with only a few street lights heighten the mysteriousness of the city. Only a very few people are out at night and the moon is the main source of illumination. One is taken back in time 2000 years, and curiosity gives way to emotion and awe as one imagines himself walking the same streets as did Jesus so long ago

Bethlehem is the site of the manger. One is surprised at the proximity of so many events of the Holy Land. The shepherds grazed their sheep only a short distance from this stable, which was in a cave. Here again we saw a cathedral built above the manger. Descending into the cave, I was disappointed to find that the manger in charge of the manger was fixed the same silver incense burner and gilded drapes to the manger scene as they have to all the other sites which they control. The manger a very humble origin and a very humble life. Something of a meaning seems to be behind such expensive ornaments and such an humble and sacred site.

At the home of Jesus in Nazareth, excavations are still underway. Joseph's workshop and their home are also shown which are close together.

To cross the border from the Arab sector to the Jewish sector of Jerusalem, it is necessary to cross a no-man's-land. One must descend as far as one can to destroyed buildings and the reminders of the war in 1948. Jerusalem is not as rich in Jewish history as is old Jerusalem but we visited King David's tomb and the Jewish war memorial.

Friends

Down by the sands,
Or, down by the sea,
The wind and I
Will always be.

The sea beyond;
And the sands below,
We linger to learn
What the sea gulls know.

Beside the sands,
Or, beside the sea,
Wind, you and I
Will always be.

LINDA WALKER