

Mary Craig

From: Mary Craig
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Subject: MCM World Missions: Israel, A Reflection

Mary Craig Ministries World Missions Galilee/Jerusalem Israel Mission May 2010

Dear Friends,

The following is a wonderful reflection on the recent MCM mission to Israel by Wanda Barlow. I hope you enjoy her insight, as did I. Dr. Mary Craig

The Land of Milk and Honey: A Trip about Gardens and God

By Wanda C. Barlow

The Trip before the Trip

The mission of Mary Craig Ministries and part of me that is adventuresome overcame my hesitancy about the rigors of travel preparation, catching planes and buses, and finding my way about. Our ministry searched the scriptures, after Spirit-empowered prayer and meditation, for several months before the trip in order to walk prayerfully in the land where Jesus walked. A team of five from MCM joined a group of about forty travelers with a tour company that promised "travel with a purpose". Individuals in the group were selected to read scriptures at the sites we were to visit. The tour company's excellent organization mitigated much of the inevitable disorientation of travel.

The Trip

Many Bible phrases, such as the land of milk and honey, locations and events were more meaningful when we heard explanations, from our excellent Israeli tour guide, given with the love and passion of one who has fought and suffered loss for her country. She was aided by our patient, accommodating, handsome, Palestinian bus driver.



Caesarea-Phillipi near Mt. Hermon



Soldier-sculptured Golan Heights Bunker

We toured from the snow-capped Mt. Hermon in the north to Masada at the Dead Sea in the south. We went from the Golan Heights in the east to Caesarea at the Mediterranean Sea on the west coast. This tiny embattled country, of about

325 miles long and 45 miles wide, is a land bridge connecting the three continents of Africa, Asia and Europe. The amazing geographical variety matches any geography on earth. The Jordan River flows from near the foot of Mt Hermon, that is 9,230 feet high, to the Sea of Galilee, that is 685 feet below sea level, and on to the Dead Sea, the lowest spot on earth at 1,290 feet below sea level. The area's physical and spiritual history is recorded in the world history book written over a span of about 1,400 years, the Holy Bible. Existing locations and numerous excavations site discoveries support the accuracy of the Scriptures and expel myth theories. I prayed scriptures for peace in Israel and all nations. After about the fourth day of following our agile tour guide, we laughed appreciatively when she told about another traveler saying, "We ran where Jesus walked."



Almond Tree at Sippchoris in Galilee



Wanda at Ceasarea on Mediterranean Sea

The Land of Milk and Honey (Ezekiel 20:6)

The land of milk was explained as the rain shadow areas where sheep and cattle were tended and the land of honey as the agricultural areas where fruits were grown. Two Bible themes that were prevalent for me during the trip were the 23rd Psalm and garden verses. As I reflect on these themes, I note with chagrin that we, His people, are portrayed as high maintenance whether described as the more familiar sheep in the land of milk or gardens representing the land of honey; and with gratitude that the Father loves me (you) more than a mother loves her child that requires "handle with care" (Is 49:15). I (you) can come to Him like a child. In fact, He said I (you) must. (Mat 18:3) Will you trust Him to lovingly care for you?



Sheepish Photo by Wanda near Tiberias



Dr. Mary Craig , daughter Joanna , Kate
At Craighouse

The Country Garden

The first morning in Tiberias, I opened my hotel room window with a view of the Sea of Galilee to songs of birds migrating from Africa. A rooster crowed in the early morning hours. Cats also joined in the chorus. I was reminded of the song my mother sang to me and I that I sang to my daughter.

In the Garden

*I come to the garden alone
While the dew is still on the roses;....
He speaks, and the sound of His voice
Is so sweet the birds hush their singing;
And the melody that He gives to me
Within my heart is ringing.
And He walks with me, and He talks with me,
And He tells me I am His own
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has even known.*



Lilies of the Field at Mt. Arbel



Living Waters at Ceasarea-Phillipi

I had expected to see a dry and parched land. We were favored with a lush garden like countryside in Galilee and in the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. Five year drought conditions had ended the week before with abundant rainfall. The weather was excellent for the whole trip. I read scriptures on salvation for the lost at Caesarea-Philippi where Jesus said "On this rock, I will build my church." (Mat 16:18) The waters were flowing jubilantly. I read Scriptures on blooms in the desert and the highway of holiness (Is 35) at Masada. It had even rained in the desert.

The Garden Symbolizes Obedience.

The Scriptures start in Genesis in a garden and end in a garden city in Revelation. In the Garden of Eden, the first Adam failed the obedience test and plunged mankind into the estate of sin and misery by doubting God's goodness, questioning God's word, desiring to be as God, and disobeying. Paradise was lost.

We visited the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mt of Olives in Jerusalem, where the second Adam passed the obedience test by submitting to the will of the Father. He became the Way, when there was no way, for the atonement of sin for all time by His impeccable life of obedience and sacrifice of Himself as the Lamb of God. I read Scriptures on watching and praying, waiting with enough oil in lamps, and the holy elect bride being prepared for the wedding in Rev 19.7.

During His suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane at Passover, Jesus asked His followers to watch and pray lest they enter temptation. They fell asleep. Before His arrest, the disciple Peter feebly, but bravely, attempted to defend Jesus with a sword. Later at a courtyard he fearfully denied Him. Matt 26.

At an earlier Feast of Tabernacles Jesus said "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." John 7:37-38.

Peter, at Pentecost following his denial at Passover, delivered his bold, Spirit-empowered invitation to the nations:

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is for you (me) and to your (my) children and to all that are afar off even as many as the Lord our God shall call". Acts 2:38/39. Will you respond to inherit Paradise regained?



Garden of Gethsemane



Type of Olive Oil Press at Hazor

Definition of Garden

Our tour guide and my Bible dictionary defined a garden as an enclosed plot of ground intensively cultivated, usually irrigated, and highly prized by its Middle Eastern owner for its flowers, vegetables, herbs, fruits, trees, shade, and quiet (John 18:1) Mary's expectation of meeting Joseph's gardener on the first Easter morning is evidence of the care expended on a garden's upkeep (John 20:15).

The King's Bride

The King describes his bride as a garden in Song of Songs 4:12-15:

A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard, Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.

The Garden City

John described a wedding in a garden city. (Rev 21:2, 22:1-2, 22-17):

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

I am (you are) invited to a wedding in a city four-square. He would die for the pleasure of my (your) company. No, in fact, He already did! I hope to be there. How will you respond to the invitation?

As we returned to South Florida, I saw shadows on the earth, of the bright fluffy clouds beneath our plane. His kingdom on earth is like a shadow of His kingdom in heaven. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. The best is yet to come.



Garden Stream at Tel Dan



Clouds over South Florida, USA

I remembered a hymn we sang at the “little brown (grey) church in the vale” of my childhood in the Bible belt:

Will Jesus Find Us Watching?

*O can we say we are ready, brother?
Ready for the soul's bright home?
Say will He find you and me still watching,
Waiting, waiting when the Lord shall come?*



Wanda C. Barlow, CPA, is retired from the School Board of Broward County, FL, Office of the Chief Auditor. She lives with her husband of forty five years in Coral Springs, FL. She has a daughter and two grandsons. She is a charter member of Mary Craig Ministries, Inc. and serves on the Board of Directors. She also serves as ministry Treasurer.

(For more on this mission and the prophetic words delivered to Israel, go to www.marycraig.org, to the prophetic section and then to a special section on Israel. For more on *Craighouse*® a Christian fellowship, its name, purpose, and mission, go to www.craighouse.org. Dr. Mary Craig)

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