Ancient Words! That could not be more fitting. The trip to Israel was beyond exhilarating, mind exploding, awe inspiring and deeply moving. As you might be aware I did have the blessing of going there 4 years ago, however this time we saw all different places and dove into more of the archeological and fallen realm spiritual battle grounds. This trip was way more physically challenging, but the satisfaction it gave when one conquered the obstacle was so rewarding. The very thought that we were walking the paths of all of those before us going back 4 and 5000 years! To stand on that small spot on Mt. Kibir where God took Abraham when he showed and told him I will make a great nation from you and your descendants. While standing there if you looked to your left, is Mt. Ebol where Joshua’s alter stands, commemorating 800 years later when Joshua dedicated the spot to God before moving into the promise land. And if you looked down below to the north your eyes gaze on Samaria, we could see Joseph’s tomb and Jacob’s well (where Jesus met the woman at the well) They are about 4 blocks apart. To the south was Shekem.

We stood on Mt. Nebo where God took Moses just before he died and gazed at the same Promised land that stretched from the upper part of the dead sea through the Jordan river valley, Jericho, Mount Zion (Jerusalem) and all the way to the peaks of Northern Mt. Hermon. If that wasn’t awe… humbling I don’t know what is.

We went by armored bus that weighed 27 ton, when normal buses weigh 12. We skated the line of Syria at Gilgal and the Golan Heights, we were by Lebanon as we went to the area of the Tower of Babel, the transfiguration of Jesus and the Gates of Hell. We slid past the fence of Palestine as we walked the streets leading to and from Ancient Hebron (where Sarah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are buried) Oh and we were within 15 ft of their tomb. We walked the 8 miles through Petra taking in the magnificent beauty of God’s creation. Saw artifacts including the oldest statues ever found in Ammon Jordan.

We stood in awe at Shilo taking in not just the view but standing where the Ark of the covenant would have sat. (The Holy of Holies!) The spot where the tabernacle found its permanent dwelling place for all 12 tribes to see. I was blessed to read aloud Hanna’s prayer that was uttered after conceiving Samuel and giving him back to Eli the High Priest.

We sat in the seats where Gladiators fought and Chariots raced. I was asked to sing Amazing Grace from the stage at the Colosseum to demonstrate the acoustics, and I stood right where Paul would have when he pleaded his case to be tried in Rome. We sat in the boat in the middle of the Sea of Galilee worshipping singing praises to our God that literally calmed the storm right there, and pulled Peter out of the water. The spot that caught the miraculous catch not once but twice. We walked the ancient streets that Jonah and Peter did in Jaffa, we admired the multitude of mikvahs (ritual baths) that Qumran’s (where the dead sea scrolls were found) Priestly Essences used. We floated in the Dead Sea, felt the Spirit’s presence in the Jordan as I had the humbling blessing of baptizing 27 people!!

The ancient tunnels, aqueducts that we maneuvered through under the Holy City started in the Citadel of David and took us to the ginormous 40ft x 20ft stone used in the temple wall, that we literally put our hands on from King Solomon. Heard the scriptures of the last supper while standing in the Upper Room and stood on the temple mound.

I sang “The Holy City” as we took a break in Old Jerusalem and twice on the bus. We walked down the long, steep winding path of Jesus’ triumphal entry, meditated in the garden of Gethsemane, stood at the more than probable site of Jesus’ crucifixion, sang “Up from the Grave He Arose” in the massive garden tomb across the street and stood at the spot where Jesus is coming back.

This was just a snippet of the miraculous adventure; one that with every step, turn, rock, hill, mountain, valley or site proved the existence of both God and Christ. It literally rang out the fulfillment of ancient prophesies. The Ancient Word… Yohoshua, Yahweh, Adoni, Messiah, Emmanuel, Jesus the Word the Creator God that became flesh and dwelt among us. We serve and can discover Our God who is so big and magnificent, creator of all, and yet literally met his people on the mountains, in the valleys, on the water and walked beside them. The Word is the same from the beginning of time to right now in our time. How Great is our God. Sing with me How Great is Our God.

Shalom,

Pastor Penny