

Raymond J Krupa - Israel

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This time it will be number 58. It's all turned to hymn 58, but we'll remain seated throughout the entire hymn, and then Brother Adam Siwak of Steep Creek will lead us in opening prayer number 58. Glorious things.

Then the streams of living waters springing from eternal will supply my sons and daughters heaven.

O un, let's remain seated and brother Adam Siwak will lead us in prayer.

Our loving heavenly Father who dwellest in heaven above. We as thy children this afternoon gathered in convention here come before thy presence once again to offer unto thee the sacrifice of praise because of thy great love which continues to constrain us to meet together and assemble in the worthy name of Jesus, and we are so deeply thankful unto thee, dear Father, for thy infinite love towards us and the gift of thy son Jesus that he should leave his ivory courts in heaven and come down into a world of woe that through him we may be reconciled unto thee. For this, dear Father, we are deeply thankful and feel indebted, and so at this time we raise our voices in thankfulness.

And also, dear Father, as we are gathered here now, we pray a special portion of thy Holy Spirit be upon our dear brother Kupa as he breaks the bread of life unto us. May it touch our hearts and bring a message that shall enable us to become more fervent and more zealous in this narrow way to that we may be able to strive to run for the prize of the heavenly kingdom the things that thou hast offered unto us, and so dear. So dear Father, we commit ourselves in this meeting into thy hands that thou mayest overrule in all things for we ask it in Jesus name. Amen.

And now we are going to listen to our dear brother Ray Krupa who is going to speak to us on Israel. I'm sure we all enjoyed immensely reliving some of the experiences he had as he told of them in his foreign report the other evening, and he gave us a hint that he may take us on a journey again. Very happy at this time to turn over the podium to Brother Krupa.

My dear brethren, I'm sure that every consecrated child of God sometime or another during his or her studies has longed to be in the Holy Land and to become more acquainted with the places that he reads of in the scriptures, and so when the providence of our Heavenly Father directed that I should have that great privilege of visiting the Holy Land, naturally I was very happy. I met Brother Burchi in Rome and together we began our journey toward Jerusalem.

We were to change planes in Cairo and were to stay there overnight and leave at 6:30 the following morning, and so in our planning we realized that we would be rather close to the Great Pyramid and yet so far, because we didn't have the time that would enable us to go there for a short visit. But when we arrived in Cairo that evening, rather late at night, the airline's hostess informed us that there had been a change in the plan that rather than leaving at 6:30 in the morning, our flight was to leave at 2:30 in the afternoon. We felt this was a little token from the Lord, a little overruling that would enable us to visit the Great Pyramid, which we did on the following morning, and it is just as big as it seems from our studies.

And it was really a tremendous blessing to see this stone witness and to go through the passageways, to note the first ascending passage and to note how difficult it is to go up and then to note the vastness of the Grand Gallery and to go into the King's chamber and the Queen's

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chamber and all of that was very strengthening to our faith, and it reminded us of some of the wonderful studies that we have had along the lines of the Great Pyramid and what a corroboration it is of the plan of God. We then started out from Cairo toward Jerusalem, and it was during that day that we had an experience which proved that the Heavenly Father was with us. Seemed for a while as though we would, that is our plane would have to make an emergency landing in the desert.

But he managed to get back to the airport and after some repairs to the plane again we were on our way. Later on the same trip we encountered a very bad storm in the clouds and we wondered whether our little two engine plane would hold together. Then we learned that we had already been delayed so much that the airport in Jerusalem had closed and that they would have to take us on to Amman, the capital of Jordan. Well, we finally arrived there and it was wonderful to set foot on ground again, and after going through customs we were placed in a car and we had the 65 mile journey to make to Jerusalem.

We arrived there about midnight and we found that there was no room in the inn, just as had occurred some 1900 years ago and more to our master. But the Lord apparently thought we had had enough and he didn't ask us to sleep in a place like our master was born in. But he overruled and they did finally give us a room, and so the next morning we were very, very happy to realize that we were in the Holy Land, the land of the Bible, which has provided the setting for some of the most stirring events in the history of. Of mankind.

And we realized that things were happening in that land and that it was coming to life once again. For centuries, this land has lain buried under piles of sifting sands and crumbling terraces, awaiting God's due time when he would set in motion the regathering of the scattered Israelites. Today, Jerusalem still lies divided by a frontier between Israel and Arab Jordan. These two countries are still technically at war, and in order to see some of the historical attractions, like the Old City with its massive medieval walls, and Bethany and Bethlehem and the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane, it is necessary to visit Jordan on the Arab side, that is, of the Holy Land first, because it is not possible to enter Jordan from Israel.

First we went to the Mount of Olives, and there we were able to get a beautiful panoramic view of Jerusalem, and we realized that it was from this place that our beloved Master, toward the end of his career, sat there on the mount, looking over the city, and there he wept in the Mount of Olives. A large Catholic church now marks the traditional site of our Lord's prayer and agony on the night of his betrayal and arrest, and so, to a certain extent, this spoils the whole thing for the Child of God.

But there is a small spot, however, representing the Garden of Gethsemane, which has been preserved, and truly it is one of the loveliest spots in Jerusalem. Eight ancient olive trees, which may very well be shoots from some of those original trees which grew during our Lord's day, still adorn the garden and bear fruit, and you, I'm sure, realized what a blessing it was to be able to lift our hearts in prayer, and this locale that was so often a place of retreat for our master, we could see from across the Mount of Olives another mount. We were told it was Mount Moriah.

It was the southern summit of the mount, and it is believed that here Abraham offered his beloved son Isaac in sacrifice. It is here where Ornan the Jebusite had his threshing floor, which David bought and upon which he erected an altar, and later it was superseded by Solomon's temple, the Dome of the Rock. An Arab church, so to speak, is on this location.

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And we were told that it was the or is the second most sacred place for the Mohammedans, the first place being Mecca itself, and the second being where Abraham offered Isaac, because they believe that Abraham was the first Mohammedan 8 miles south of Jerusalem lies the charming little city of Bethlehem. Now it is much larger than it was in those days of old, but it still has olive groves and terraces which are quite picturesque. Near the outskirts of the city, we could see the Shepherd's Field as it touched the city itself and the environs. We could almost hear the angels singing their glorious song, peace on Earth, goodwill to all people. Just beyond the Shepherd's Field is the field of Boaz.

It was here that Ruth gleaned, and it was here that Boaz uttered those famous words to Ruth, recorded in Ruth 2:12. The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.

And then we went on to Jericho, and on the road to Jericho, you can clearly hear the echoes of the past. Bedouin tents still dot the desert landscape, and occasionally you see a cave right in the hillside, and you'll see children running out of the cave, and occasionally a woman carrying her burden, and you realize that people live in this cave.

And you see the Arab women still carrying pitchers of water upon their heads, and you see them coming back out of a field where they have an outdoor oven, where they have baked bread for the day for the family, and you see them balancing that in a rather unusual way upon their heads, and you wonder how in the world they can do it. Actually, they have a little ring that they place upon their head, and then they place the burden upon that, but it still is most remarkable, and they carry on a conversation with their companions as they walk along, and it is a real sight to behold. The women there do all the work. The men just sit at the door of the tent, smoking their pipe and looking quite rested and enjoying the scenery.

It is not unusual to see one of the Arab women carrying a huge bag of perhaps grain or some other provision, something that looks as though it could possibly weigh a hundred pounds, but they seem to do it rather cheerfully. The men just don't have time for things like that. However, they are kind enough to lift this bag up and place it on the woman's head.

Occasionally you can also see a camel caravan, and that certainly reminds you of those old methods of transportation. It is on the same road to Jericho that you realize there are some very complex problems in the world today. For it is along this road that the Arabic refugee camp is placed. Here some 35,000 Arabs are housed, victims of the war of liberation between Israel and the Arabs in 1948. Most of the refugees seem to be content to sit in their little huts and to wait upon Allah to send them relief.

And so they live in miserable conditions which are far from being desirable. We noticed in Jordan and the Arab part of the Holy Land, and also in those sections where the Arabs live in the land of Israel, that most of their homes have doors which are painted blue. Our guide told us when we asked him about it, he said that they paint them blue because the heavens are blue, and when evil angels come through, when they see a blue door, they think it's heaven and they pass right along, and so you could always spot an Arab house even in the land of Israel, by its blue door.

Jericho is the oldest walled inhabited city in the world. About a mile and a half north of the present city is the site of Canaanite Jericho, which is now just some excavated ruins. But it was there that Joshua led the children of Israel around the city walls for seven days, and you remember how the walls crumbled at their feet. But we have today unmistakable evidence of the site of this ancient city

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and a corroboration of that biblical account.

Among the places of interest around Jericho is the Mount of Temptation, where Jesus spent 40 days of fasting and studying after his baptism, and where he was tempted by the adversary and where he responded to him in such a remarkable way that his example continues to stand as the very best and the noblest thing for us to follow, and surely we too desire to be unyielding in our faithfulness to our heavenly Father. The River Jordan is east of Jericho, and that is where Jesus was baptized by John. It is a very peaceful river, some hundred and twenty miles long, and it separates Israel from Syria and Jordan. Just as following in the footsteps of our master in full consecration, which is symbolized by water immersion, separates the people of God from the rest of the world, of mankind.

And so it was a blessing to see that place Last evening as our brethren symbolized their consecration. My mind went back to the River Jordan. During the journey from Jerusalem and the Judean hills toward the Dead Sea, the traveler is very aware that steadily he is going down and down and down, because the valley where the Dead Sea is is some 4,000ft below Jerusalem, 1,300ft below sea level. When you come to the Dead Sea, the waters look beautifully blue, very inviting, and that was rather shocking to me because just the name Dead Sea alone seems rather repulsive.

But here we notice the sea was blue, and you might think yourself as being along the Mediterranean. The surrounding hills and the ground nearby are completely barren. Nothing grows here. There's so many minerals, so much salt in the air, that gradually it settles down on the ground.

And during the noonday sun, when the water evaporates on the land, you see nothing but this whiteness of sulfur and salt, and the smell of sulfur hangs very heavily in the air, and you notice there that they're beginning to extract, and have been extracting for some time these minerals on a very large scale from the sea itself. It was near the shores of the Dead Sea that a little Bedouin boy followed his goat into the Quamran cave and found some jars in which the Dead Sea scrolls were found. Now, at first, the scholars that looked at some of these scrolls did not appreciate what a great value they had there.

But the head of the Hebrew University's Department of Archaeology, the late Professor Eliezer Skukunik, was able, with just a glance, to realize that they had a treasure. Now, the very fact that when discovered in their cave, the scrolls were enclosed in jars is itself a wonderful link with the past. Because the custom of putting scrolls in jars to protect them from the humid Palestinian air goes back to ancient times, as indicated in the Bible, or we read in Jeremiah 32:14, the prophet, speaking of documents which he wished to preserve, wrote, put them in an earthen vessel that they may continue many days, and so those Dead Sea Scrolls have continued for many days, even to our day, in order that we might have another evidence that the Bible, the word of God, is living and true. We saw those Dead Sea Scrolls in the Hebrew University, and it was thrilling indeed to see them.

Bethany, just a mile and a quarter southeast of Jerusalem, was the town in which Jesus friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus once resided, and we were taken to a tomb way down into the ground, which is supposedly the tomb of Lazarus, and all of those wonderful miracles of our master, the evidences, the samples that he gave in connection with some of the benefits that would come to humanity, all came back to us, and I'm sure that Brother Burchee and I together again offered that prayer to our heavenly Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

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Any individual, any Christian that goes to Jerusalem surely desires to see the spot where our master finished his earthly ministry, and there is, of course, some controversy there as to which site is the real place. We first went to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, a Catholic church where they say Jesus of Nazareth was crucified. But this church is within the city walls, and the place did not seem to be very authentic. The next day, we went to a place outside of the city walls.

And I'm sure you remember how the poet long ago wrote, on a hill far away stood an old rugged cross, the emblem of suffering and shame, and so we looked for a hill, a hill outside of the old city walls, and our guide took us to this place beyond Damascus Gate, and a place where in Old Testament days, blasphemers were stoned, and even to this very day, the Jews call it the place of stoning.

This hill outside of Jerusalem, rocky and rugged and yet a plateau upon which a group of people could gather, seemed like a likely place indeed for the crucifixion, and as we looked at this stony face of this hill, you could, with a little imagination, note the eye sockets, for it was called the place of the skull. But what is even more remarkable is the fact that this hill is the northern summit of Mount Moriah, God's appointed place of sacrifice, and so when the Heavenly Father called upon Abraham to offer his beloved Son in sacrifice, this was done on the very mount where Jesus of Nazareth also died and where God gave his beloved Son in sacrifice. On finding Calvary, the discovery of the grave of our Lord must quickly follow.

For we read in John 19:41, in the place where our Lord was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new sepulcher, wherewith was never man laid.

There they laid Jesus.

And so there is a tomb near this rugged hill, and at the foot of it and before Damascus Road, there is a garden still preserved, and an old winepress where they put the grapes and where they would walk over them in order to squeeze out the juice, and we could see how they had made provisions for the Jews to be funneled out. We noticed that in this garden there is a tomb which is hewn out of the very rock of this same mountain, which is part of this old, rugged hill.

Definitely this tomb was made for private use as a family burial place. It is a Jewish tomb, a rich man's tomb, because there is room for a family instead of just one body, and it is of the Roman period. We read in Mark, the 15th chapter, the 43rd and the 46th verses, the Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable counselor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came and went boldly unto Pilate and craved the body of Jesus, and he bought fine linen and took him down and wrapped him in the linen and laid him in a sepulcher, which was hewn out of a rock and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.

And we saw the little trough before the tomb where a stone could be rolled in it. I'm sure we all appreciate the fact that the death of our Lord Jesus was the greatest sacrifice of all time. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive, we read in 1st Corinthians 15:22, and thus the death of our Master as the corresponding price redeemed Adam and the entire race. But we were so happy to be in this spot.

Even though it might not possibly be the original place, it seems very likely that it is, and we were so thankful to our Heavenly Father for the hope of the resurrection, which is centered in our Master. If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came

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also the resurrection of the dead.

And so we were happy to stand in that tomb that gave every reminder of this tremendous event in the history of the world of mankind, and we could look out over the garden just as the angels did on that morning of the Resurrection. To leave the smaller, walled Old City and to enter into modern Jerusalem, it is necessary to go through the Mendel bomb Gate and over a strip of ground called no man's land. This little journey takes but a few moments, but in effect, you leave behind you an ancient world, and as you cross over, it is as though you made a journey in those few steps of 2,000 years.

You find Israel's Jerusalem modern. You see well fed children, you see them well dressed, you see them happy, you see them content, and yet all of this modernity is set against the background of the old Jewish quarters, whose inhabitants, in their traditional garb, strive to resist all change, and they have recently been reinforced by many newcomers from the Orient. A group of them coming across from their place, their own land to the land of promise, felt very sure that the promise in connection with their being returned upon eagle's wings was having its fulfillment in their experience.

Some of them, we are told, became rather chilly in the air conditioning of the plane, and they decided to make a little bonfire for themselves right there in the aisle to stay warm. The hostess spoke over the PA system and told them that the God of their fathers would not be pleased if they continued to have this fire, and so they felt this was a special angelic message and they put out the fire, and so Israel's Jerusalem, because of all of this influx, the return of so many, has grown into a busy city of a quarter of a million people, and as you know, it is the capital of the state of Israel.

We notice that the fields are being cleared of stone, and these stones are being shaped and are being used to put up some beautiful buildings. Some of the most beautiful and striking are those on the campus of the Hebrew University, and speaking of the Hebrew University, we had the privilege of spending an evening with Professor Revlon, who is professor now retired just recently of ancient languages. He has been a friend of King Husayn's father and grandfather and a very learned man indeed. He translated the Koran into Hebrew.

And during this evening with Professor Revlon, we were able to outline to him our hope. Being an intelligent man, being an educated man, he was willing to listen to our story, and we had quite a discussion, and we explained to him the philosophy of the Ransoms, a life for a life, and while they did not become enthused with our message yet, it was quite thrilling to be able to have this opportunity of explaining the plan of God to them.

We asked another professor who happened to drop in that evening, who was an Old Testament teacher in the university, whether he believed in the resurrection of the ancient prophets, and he said that he did. Later on, when we met Dr. Fralin, who is an author, we spent an evening with him and he was rather distressed, saddened, because of the fact that the Israeli youth of today is very materialistic, and he told us that barely a third of them are interested in the Orthodox viewpoints. He said they believe that the wisest course is that you live for today.

And they are saddened by the fact that the present government of Israel, free of religion for modern Zionism, is doing things without God. According to the most devout Israelites, the brown hills of Palestine are turning green under the determined labor of the people of Israel. Highways are lined with eucalyptus trees, and the desert is really beginning to blossom forth with fruit trees and various other types of vegetation. We were told that during the first 10 years since Israel became a nation,

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35 million trees have been planted. But now they have a project going in which the nation hopes to plant 100,000, excuse me, 100 million trees.

And you know what that is going to do to the face of the land. One of the unexpected benefits and pleasures of reforestation in Israel has been that bird life has returned. Or, as we read in The Song of Solomon 2:12, the time of the singing of the birds has come, and so, as we would awaken early in the morning, we could hear the birds singing, and it was thrilling to realize that here was another evidence of the Hand of God working there in memory of the 6 million Jews which were killed during World War II.

The nation is planting a tree for every life that was lost. One of the most interesting places in the Holy Land is the district of Mia Sheearim. This is in the northeast section of Jerusalem. Behind its crumbling 19th century walls and along its maze of cobbled streets shuffle hundreds of long bearded Jews dressed in their long black caftans. Most of them wearing wide brimmed fur trimmed hats.

These hats have little tails from animals on them. 12 tails, one tail for every tribe. These people are members of the Naturi Karta, which in Aramaic means guardians of the city. They are by far the most extreme and fanatical of all the Jewish Orthodox sects, and while awaiting the Messiah, they have dedicated their life to studying the Torah and the Talmud.

And they endlessly repeat the litanies of despair that their people have chanted for hundreds of years, and you see them there, bowing, moving, uttering these lamentable cries, and they are greatly distressed with the present government of Prime Minister David Ben Gurion, because his viewpoint is that the present nation of Israel is itself the Messiah. They, the guardians of the city, still wait for the personal Messiah, and as the sun goes down on Friday evenings, one can visit the synagogues and the various Jewish Orthodox communities.

And that in itself thrilling experience. There you see the differences in the ceremonial, the chants and the garbs of the worshippers, and they illustrate the many years of Jewish wanderings. Israel is truly a country of pioneering work and social experiments. We had the privilege of visiting some of the kibbutzim.

And a member of the kibbutz, that is, whether it be man, woman or child, lives a community life where all property is owned in common, all have equal rights. But the tendency now among some of the younger people is to leave this type of a life. They want to be on their own. The work that they do for themselves, they don't want to share with others, but they want to keep their own accomplishments, and so most, many of the young people are seeking more and more university life and the more independent way of living.

And so there are many other places. There was Galilee, there was the ruins of Capernaum, there were those places like the fields, the plains of Megiddo. All of these brought back wonderful memories, and everywhere we could see that vigorous new life has come to the land of Israel. But most Israelites are preoccupied with the task of improving their land.

And very few in the nation are aware that prophecy is being fulfilled in their midst. Some will listen patiently to the message that the God of heaven is beginning to establish a kingdom that will never pass away. But they do not seem to be ready to accept the Bible teaching that Jesus is really their Messiah. But this was not discouraging to us. It was most encouraging because the Scriptures plainly tell us that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come

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in and so all Israel shall be saved.

As it is written, there shall come out of Zion, the deliverer shall turn ungodliness from Jacob, and so the plain evidence in Israel today is that the fullness of the Gentiles has not yet come in, that that fullness has not been completed, that there is still time for us to run for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. If we saw huge numbers of Israelites accepting Jesus as the Messiah, surely we would have to assume that a great step forward in the plan of God had taken place when the due time arrives for Israel's blindness to be removed. According to Romans 11:25 and 26, which I read, the Deliverer will be able to accomplish this miracle through his servants of old, and so, my beloved brethren, the regathering of Israel to their ancient homeland and the daily progress that is being made there in the development of the land should be a great encouragement to us to press on.

For it is additional evidence that our present Lord our King is marching on. Amen.

We thank Brother Krupa for his very interesting report on Israel and his Bible students all focus their attention in that direction. I'm sure we're glad to get up to date information on what's going on. Now we'll have one verse of hymn number 12, one verse only, and let's all stand as we sing this one verse of number 12. After which brother Krupa will ask the Lord's blessing upon the testimony meeting that immediately follows.

That's all staying number 12 all the way my Savior leads me what am I to ask beside Can I doubt his tender mercy Move through life has been my God Every peace divine is comfort hereby faith in him to dwell For I know whate'er may follow me Jesus doeth all things well For I know my all me Jesus, our most kind and gracious heavenly Father we come to Thee with grateful hearts for the evidences of the day in which we live and for the realization that our opportunity to serve Thee in the footsteps of our Beloved Master is still open to us and to all those who are striving to walk in this way and so. We thank Thee for this assurance, Father. We thank Thee for the many blessings of this convention. Now we ask thy continued presence and blessing to be with us. We ask a special blessing upon him who shall direct our thoughts and this meeting.

And upon those dear ones that shall testify these favors and blessings we ask. In Jesus precious name, Amen.