

March 2020

Going to Israel this past January gave me a greater appreciation for all God has done to make sure we know His Word is grounded and accurate within all its historical context. I attended a two-week, fast-paced seminar designed to give Bible consultants a contextual experience from which to better advise translation teams. As is usually the case in academic research, my colleagues and I soon realized we were merely scratching the surface of all there is to learn about biblical culture and its application to translation. Here are just a few of the insights.

A living history museum has been carefully constructed on the location of an ancient New Testament era farm in Nazareth. The museum boasts a sheep pen, tomb, vineyard, winepress (the original one carved into the rock), olive press, carpenter shop, weaver shop, and a synagogue.

Hillside terraces were made to make space to farm. We learned it took a year to prepare a quarter acre for farming using this method. The hillside is cut, and all rock and poor soil carried away. Walls are built, chalky soil is laid down to help with water irrigation and flow, and then good soil fills the rest of the space. A few parables come to mind. Jesus used everyday scenes as he taught people. Jesus could have been sitting in a vineyard when he told the story of the wicked tenants (Mk 12:1-11). He mentions the **watchtower**, the wine press and the walls. And why did the tenants think they would get the vineyard after killing the son? Because that was likely the only son and now there would be no heir. Jesus was addressing the



Jewish leaders, pointing out their pride, hypocrisy, and assumptions about their position as chosen. The parable of the sower also comes to mind (Mt 13:1-9). How could so much seed fall on so many types of soil? **Terraces** are not necessarily very wide. The soil all around the terraces is



rocky and there are paths in between various terraces. Thorns grow where the land has not been prepared for the planting. So, as the farmer scattered his seed, some fell on the path, some in the thorns, some on the rocky soil and the majority, hopefully, on the good soil perhaps all in one



sweep of the farmer's hand. This word picture would make so much sense to the people of Jesus' day. The name Nazareth, by the way, comes from a word referring to the shoot of an olive tree.

The museum **synagogue** was constructed in a similar manner to ancient times.



## PRAY

**Praise:** for new knowledge and experiencing the land of the Bible

**Pray:** for more Jewish people to realize Jesus is their Messiah.

## Who I am

Becky is YOUR HEART IN ACTION. She serves you as a consultant for translation teams in Liberia, West Africa by using your prayers and support to fulfill your desire to "TELL THEM." Becky rejoices that she is part of your Lutheran Bible Translators team and values this special relationship greatly.

## Contact/Support

✉ Becky.Grossmann@LBT.org  
28210 12<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Gobles, MI 49055

Google Voice:  
269-628-5520  
(text or leave a message)

Mobile:  
269-267-6248

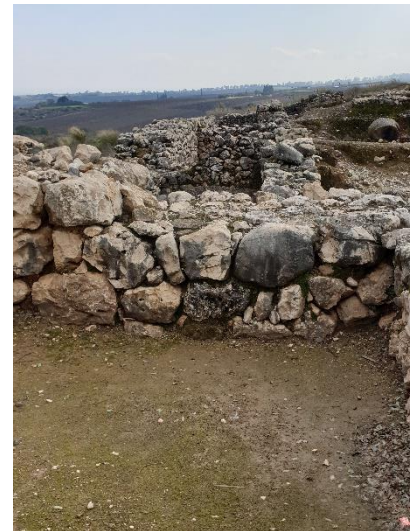
 Lutheran Bible Translators  
PO Box 789  
Concordia, MO 64020  
1-800-532-4253  
Lbt.org  
Designate Grossmann ministry

The roof was particularly interesting. From the inside, beams covered with reeds were visible. On top of that, a layer of mud was plastered to keep the rain out. This synagogue was leaking and would need repair. The mud must be redone every year. Every eight years the roof must be completely replaced. This roof has more beams per safety code than would have been present in Jesus' day. Can you see the friends removing the mud and reeds and lowering their paralytic friend down in front of Jesus?

We visited the ancient ruins of Jericho located in the modern city of the same name. Our guide that day was a conservative Jewish rabbi named Ravi. We were reminded that he and we use the same scriptures. Our entire Old Testament is what they call the **Tanakh** consisting of the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. T for Torah the law, N for Nevi'im or prophets, and K for Ketuvim or writings. Archeology has found many of the cities and sites written about in the Bible. But some things are puzzling. For example, in Jericho two walls have been found. The destruction of neither of these two walls correlates to the time of Joshua and the Israelites.

Ravi indicated to us that research shows the Bible to be accurate geographically, but he and other scholars believe many of the time frames and numbers in the Bible are given symbolically. More evidence must be examined to get accurate dates for events.

Some scholars do not believe that King David or King Solomon were real people because no extra-biblical texts mention them. However, we know from Scripture 1 Ki 9:15 that Solomon fortified three cities. Megiddo and Gezer were excavated and found to be identical. One archeologist predicted exactly where the double **walls** for each gate were found at **Hazor** based on what had already been excavated and on account of the biblical text. This is strong proof that Solomon did in fact exist.



Those of us removed from the biblical context miss out on some of the vivid word pictures the writers of the New Testament used. Jesus went to Gethsemane to pray the night of his betrayal. He prayed three times. He prayed so fervently we are told he sweated drops like blood. "Gethsemane" means "place of the oil press." We learned that olives are first crushed under the weight of a **huge stone**. Then they are placed in **reed baskets** and put under pressure by **huge stones hung on a lever** to squeeze out the oil. This is done three times, adding more weight as necessary. The pain and pressure that Jesus must have felt that night becomes more vivid as we think of the crushing and the weight needed to extract the oil from the olives.



Our faith is truly not a blind faith as we examine the many archeological finds. These can help give us confidence in the whole of Scripture, even those places not so easily proven.

Confidently,

*Becky*