

A report of Trip to Israel, Saturday 12. Sept. 2015

It is a pilgrimage of prayer and hope!

Having visited The Church of Holy Sepulchre, Bethesda Pool and some other places at the previous day, today we went visiting another important places, such: The Nativity Church in Bethlehem, Gethsemane (where Jesus Prayed to the Father before being arrested), the Church of the Pater Noster (Our Father Prayer translated into hundreds languages) and the Chapel of Ascension in the Mount of Olives. Although we were all exhausted –due to the distance and the hot weather- it was still an incredible and a moving pilgrimage. Saying so, as visiting this so called ‘Holy Land’ is a dream of all of Christians in the world, including me; I am blessed that I am given a chance to visit and get deeper into the history of this Land, reinforcing what I have already known as what is written in the Holy Scripture.

Eyes were sparkling during the way from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, as I tried to imagine that we were going to see the place where Jesus was born in. Nevertheless, on the way back to Jerusalem, an old Palestinian man talked a lot about the conflict between Palestine and Israel, and at the same time, I saw the wall which is used as a barrier in the border between Israel and Palestine. Luckily, I still had some time to ponder on it before we finally reached the bus stop in Jerusalem. Thinking about the ongoing conflict between both ‘Holy Lands’, I came across a question: what the trip to The Holy Land is all about? I eventually realized that stepping feet onto these Lands is not merely to have a chance of seeing the religious and historical places as what Holy Scripture mentions (although it is also meaningful), but more to a pilgrimage of pray and hope; an urge to participate in the situation our brothers and sisters are now facing; a hope for a better and peaceful future of these two Lands of God, and that is the only way we can do to maintain the label of ‘The Holy Land’ –because to me, it is no longer appropriate to be called as a Holy Land when its people are fighting on behalf of God, killing each other for the sake of a territory.

Hopefully, this trip can really be a good reminder for us, the students of FIT, to pay more attention to such issues in Israel and Palestine. We visit this land as a sign that God wants us to pray more and keep hoping for the best for them. May the presence of *Shalom* will stay forever here.



The Nativity Church in Betlehem



(inside the Nativity Church: this place is believed as the place where Jesus was born in. Many people put their hands into the hole as part of their longing to Jesus).



(The Church of Pater Noster: Our Father Prayer can be found here in hundred languages). Wonderful!



(Chapel of Ascension in the Mount of Olives. Jesus footprint can also be found here).



(Around Gethsemane, the place where Jesus was praying to His Father before the crucifixion day)



The complete participants of Israel Trip 2015, in front of the Nativity Church, Bethlehem.

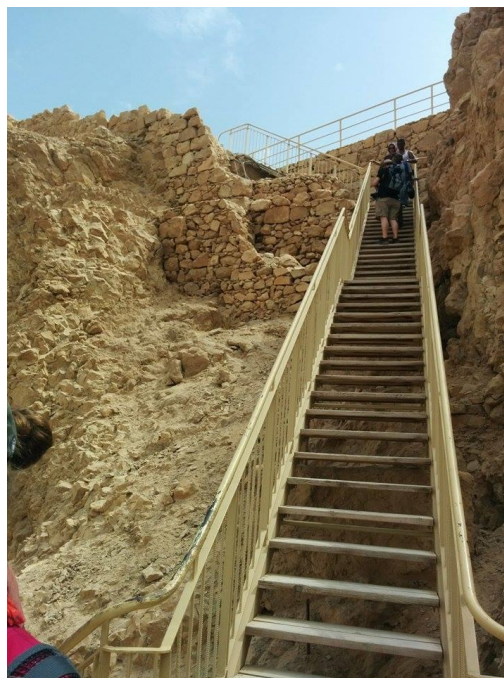
Best, Elim Wilsen Taruk

Monday September 14 – Masada and the Dead Sea

At 9:00 am sharp two taxis came to our hostel to take us to Masada (a Hebrew word for ‘fortress’), where the last stronghold of the Jews stood against the Roman invasion. The journey took about 1.5 hours from our hostel in Jerusalem, and along the way we had great views of the Judean Desert:



Masada is an ancient fortress situated on top of an isolated rock cliff in the Judean Desert. Prior to taking the cable car up the fortress, we saw a short movie about how more than 2000 years have passed since the fall of the Masada fortress and the Jewish revolution.

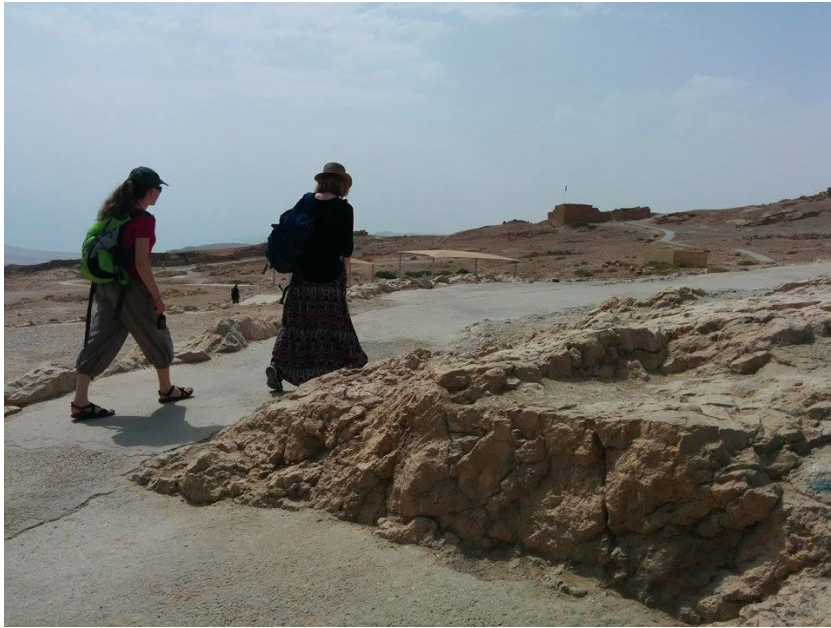




Herod the great built the fortress that included storehouses, large cisterns for collecting rainwater, barracks, palaces and an armory. It also had great views (as can be seen in this picture!)



Here Professor Luebcke is showing us where the north palace was located...



After learning about the history of the Masada as recounted by Josephus, it was time for us to cool down and relax in the Dead Sea:

