



The Half Shekel Journal by Ed Rice
Vol XXXI Day 9 Wed 4 Feb: The Farewell

Mount Zion, in the center of urban Jerusalem, Mount Moriah, with its mysterious and revered temple mount, and now Golgotha, with its features of a skull and its resurrection ground, were now disappearing in the rear view mirror as the tour bus headed toward Joppa on the fringe of darkness for our ninth day in Israel. The farewell dinner was pleasantly divided between marketing, education, and farewells. The several guides used by Christian Journeys were eating with us, the meal was an awesome kosher presentation of delicacies filled with Jewish custom and served in downtown Joppa, and this was our last supper in Israel, and last supper as a group on our pastors familiarization tour. Small talk with the guides scattered around the large banqueting table was occasionally interrupted with more formal presentations, thank-



you, and farewells.

We Gentiles had become somewhat accustomed to eating with our fingers and dipping bread into community serving bowls which made fellowship around a meal fellowship around a meal. But Bev and I, well seasoned with exploring divergent custom and culture because of my 23 years in the military, easily picked out some of the 'culture shock' still visible in a meal with this group of Baptist preachers from up north. There is nothing that could have summed up what we had been through together in the last 9 days. There was no climactic conclusion that could capture it. This farewell dinner, where we had fellowship around an intimate meal together, is the best possible in achieving a 'capping off' of this tremendous time together. Although we did not want it to end, we dismissed, took our final walk together down an ancient street in Israel and boarded the bus that delivered us to the Tel Aviv airport.

It was difficult to sleep on the 11 hour flight which brought us into Tel Aviv 9 days ago; there was too much anticipation and excitement in the air. It was impossible to sleep on the 11 hour flight which brought us into Toronto on our 9th day. I read and reorganized my notes, and wished I had written more. Beverly smiled and recalled something insightful about every note I mentioned to her. The few years we have left before we see our Saviour face to face will not be sufficient to fully revel in the things we saw and heard in these last few days. If they were all recorded in a journal, I know it would be beyond my recall or ability to write it. Just the same, a short journal could document enough for my children and my children's children.

My dozing pen bounced on my notebook as the Israeli airplane touched the ground in Toronto. I knew that a written page typed into a half. As I gathered things to deplane I was thinking I could type 7 pages in just a couple of hours.

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