

Over the Ocean

by Martin Knapp

The sermon recounts a transformative journey across the ocean, exploring significant biblical sites and reflecting on faith and personal growth.

Scripture: Psalm 121:7, Psalm 139:23, Matthew 8:26, Luke 9:23, Philippians 4:13

Topics: "Faith And Mission", "Spiritual Revival"

Description

Martin Knapp embarks on a journey to the Holy Land, crossing the ocean to learn valuable lessons from Oriental lands to enhance his work for God's glory. He visits significant historical and sacred sites in London, Paris, Jerusalem, and other places, reflecting on the spiritual impact of each location. From standing in Wesley's pulpit to beholding the Great Egyptian Pyramids and the birthplace of Jesus, he experiences profound moments of reverence and prayer. Martin encounters storms, shipwrecks, and challenges on his travels, yet remains steadfast in faith and dedication to his mission, ultimately returning home safely with a heart full of gratitude and readiness for new revival victories.

Transcript

The Evangelist had long felt that for God's glory and his own good he should cross the ocean and learn lessons from Oriental lands that would enable him to still more successfully accomplish the great work which God had given him to do. Especially was he desirous himself to travel in

Galilee, sweet Galilee,

The place where Jesus loved to be."

Preliminary preparations having been perfected, January 16 finds him at New York City onboard of the steamship Aurania, his native land receding from his sight, and new and longed-for scenes about to burst upon his vision.

"Going out," he writes, "we passed every boat we came in sight of. Saw one vessel sunken; it looked sad. Another on the ground, with several boats attached to pull it off. So in life we see people, some on a sand-bar, others sunken, others passing all."

As usual Mr. Weber had his eyes open and pen busy, and gathered much valuable material, which of itself would make a very attractive book. It is hoped he may some day see fit to prepare it for the public; here we can give but brief mention of some of the many points of interest.

At London, Britain's great metropolis, he tarried for a time both on his going and his homeward trip. Here he visited many places sacred in history, and others full of interest because of present worth. Among them were St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, each magnificent beyond expression and replete with tablets and statues- of the good and great; the far-famed British Museum sparkling with wonders as the sky with stars; the nation's great granary of gold, the Bank of England; the services of Spurgeon and of Joseph Parker; the Salvation Army in this the great center from which that mighty movement sprang, and where marvels of God's grace, in the shape of souls saved from the deepest depths of sin, outvie the wonders of the outer world collected in the Museum. Also the grave of Bunyan, the Bedford tinker, who became by God's grace the world's teacher, his courage the common jail; and last but by no means least, City Road Chapel, which was built by John Wesley, the Father of Methodism, the mightiest movement of his century. Here our traveler had the honor of **STANDING IN WESLEY'S PULPIT**.

After his visit to this church he wrote as follows, --

"It is not as spacious as I thought it was, a gallery is seen on three sides with a high pulpit up about seven feet out from the tribunal. In this chapel the mighty Wesley stormed the gates of hell. With solemn awe I ascended the pulpit and stood where he stood so often. Then I passed around to the rear of the church, where I saw the tomb of this most godly man. I took off my hat as a sign of obedience to such a man of God. O Jesus, let my days be like his, full of love for the church and souls.

"Stood by the side of the graves of Adam Clarke and Joseph Benson, two mighty men of God, whose commentaries speak if they have passed into the heavens."

From London he passed to giddy Paris, which he also revisited on his return. Her fountains, her museums, her palaces, her works of art by the great masters, and many other points of interest made tarrying here a delight, and as France was the birthplace of his father her attractions had a double charm to him.

"It would take many books," he writes, "to describe what I saw at Versailles."

Among many things mentioned in his glowing description of the French capital he says, --

"Here are fountains, forests, drives, walks, flower-beds, statuary, with many varieties of trees, giving it the appearance of a little Paradise. I never was so charmed with a place as Versailles Palace and its gardens; but much of its history is sad and some of it shocking, but this is the way of all earthly places.

"Thank God, in the Paradise fashioned by the Great Master Hand of the worlds, no sorrow, no unhappy recollections can ever come. I am going to do my best to go there."

Our desire to follow Mr. Weber in his travels increases, and as we hear him say, "Wish so often that my friends were along; get very homesick at times," we take in our imagination the same journey. We pass from Paris to Turin, Bologna, Brindisi, and reach Corfu, Greece, February 13. Here we take passage for Cairo, Egypt, which we reach on the 11th. In the midst of a terrible sea-sickness on this part of the journey Mr. Weber writes: "When I was so sick I would say, 'I will praise Thee; bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name.' Stood it better than if I had complained." Would that others might try the same remedy. Passing by many of the sights that lure us in Egypt, -- the land where the "great Jewish lawgiver" was born, here Joseph served and reigned, where Pharaoh fought with God and was conquered, and whither Joseph, Mary, and the Babe divine took refuge, where once a mighty empire and an advanced civilization held regal sway, and which now is covered with antiquities that attest the glories of the

past, -- we will pass at once to

THE GREAT EGYPTIAN PYRAMIDS

Alluding to his visit here, Mr. Weber wrote as follows:--

"When part of the way up my head would whirl when I would look down; and then the Arabs began to talk about bakshish and to buy some old coins, and I looked at them dourly and said, 'Let us go on.' On we went and rested three times in the ascent, which was very fatiguing. Then in exactly eighteen minutes we reached the summit, and I said, 'Praise God.' Was given some water, and put on my coat, as it was very cool. The sight was one long to be remembered. The delta could be seen for miles with its feeding herds and working fellahin [sic]; the waving palms, the sandy desert, the Sahara Pyramids, the flowing Nile, the moving ships, the minarets on the mosques, the palaces, the fiat houses, the lazy, sleeping Sphinx, were all calculated to stir one to the very depths of his nature."

Leaving Cairo and vicinity, we now pass through a town where the children of Israel made brick, and behold the land of Goshen, now, as then, a beautiful country with green fields and waving palms. We finally reach Port Said, and for the sake of such a companion and for the sights to be seen we are willing to meet the mad fury of the Mediterranean, as spiteful now as when in other days it stranded Paul, and so take passage on the steamer Mars for the long-desired land of the nativity of Jesus. During this part of the journey a storm burst upon the pathway of our voyager, which he describes in the following words, --

"The winds were blowing furiously, the boat was dancing like a chip on a mill pond, and few were ready for breakfast. On the deck men and women were pacing to get an appetite, but by the blueness of their faces and the haggard look of their eyes one could soon discover that they were almost ready to land. The time wore heavily, the storm increased, the captain had a look of uneasiness, and soon we were told that it would be impossible to land at Jaffa, as it was very dangerous, many having found a watery grave here. Discouraged, with a desire to put our hands on our stomachs and make a home run, the deck was cleared and all passengers had returned to their state-rooms.

"The waves increased, the ship leaked, the angry waters were dashing against her side; when the elements were loosed a more terrific blast came, yet the dinner-bell sounded; but not one of the passengers responded. It seemed the ship could not live in such an angry sea. The angry waves beat more furiously, the ship rolled as never before, when suddenly a gust came and the boat lay over as if to rise no more, then back she came; and now a scene took place that shall never be forgotten by those on board. The dishes were breaking, the glasses going to pieces, the sailors running hither and thither, the passengers frightened, and avalanche after avalanche of water pouring into the cabin; there were hand-bags, valises, clothing floating in the cabin, and consternation written on every face. 'The boat has sprung a leak!' says one. There is a man clinging to the sideboard, another being dashed against the side of the ship, some trying to make their way across the room to get something to cling to.

"These are some of the joys a traveler has abroad. All that night and the next day the storm raged. Had the boat gone down with me, I believe I would have been with Jesus. About noon we cast anchor in the Bay of Acre."

Having escaped the threatened shipwreck, Mr. Weber landed at Haifa, Palestine, February 25, from the back of an Arab, as the passengers had to be thus carried ashore because of the breakers. MR. WEBER ON MOUNT CARMEL.

Putting up at the hotel, Mr. Weber went from there to visit at Mt. Carmel. The following is from his pen:--

"We first visited the reputed place of the 'School of the Prophets.' Found many inscriptions on the walls in Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, and Turkish. The room is eighteen by twenty and about ten feet high, with a place for an altar. It is cut out of the solid rock. This might have been the place where Elijah really was.

Describing the scene on the summit, he says, --

"There lay the restless ocean many hundred feet beneath; across the bay lay Acre. Then I thought of Napoleon being defeated, then that city laid in ashes. There were the hills of Galilee, there again Little Herman; yonder the modern style houses built by an enterprising colony of Germans, the green olive trees, the beautiful flowers decking the hill with rich beauty over the mountain. As I thought of that tragic scene of Israel waiting to see the Prophet of God match the enemy, what feelings of awfulness poured their fire in my soul."

Returning to Jaffa by boat that night, the next morning with Seven others in carriages he set out for the Holy City. Passing through Kirjath Jearim, with its "castle-like gardens and vine-clad hills," and also through the "valley of Ajalon" where "Joshua commanded the sun to stand still," after a ride of eleven and a half hours, he reached the city which in sacred annals is famed above all others, the city towards which both the Jew and the Christian feel drawn by an attraction which at times seems well nigh irresistible. The Evangelist had learned many a lesson from the Holy Book, had sat reverently under the teachings of the holy prophets and apostles, had been following in the footsteps of the Holy Son, and guided by the Holy Spirit, and now, in the Holy Land and the Holy City, he will learn new lessons, never to be forgotten.

The people at present who inhabit the city resort to tricks innumerable to deceive people, and make what they can out of them, but despite all this there is much to remind of sacred incidents and persons.

To copy all that Brother Weber said or has written about this city would make a book of itself; we can simply follow him to a few of the many points of interest. Let us go with him as he visits the "Tomb of David;" the room that is said to be the upper chamber where "the Holy Spirit came on the one hundred and twenty, and the next day, that most wonderful sermon of Peter's from which the world vibrates today; the reputed palace of Caiaphas, the place where Peter denied Jesus." Mr. Weber says, "The Catholics have every sacred place that can be thought of to deceive the people." At the church of the Holy Sepulcher nearly all the events which occurred when Jesus was crucified are pointed out.

AT THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.

The location of the garden is known, and to the sacred spot this man of agonizing prayer naturally wends his way. Concerning this place of holiest memories, and his thoughts when there, he wrote, --

"Took a walk on the east side of Moriah in the Kedron. As I strolled along how my mind went out as I looked at the Garden of Gethsemane, to that awful night of our Lord. How the flesh pleaded, if it were possible, that the bitter cup might pass, but his Father's will, not his own, then his betrayal and death for you and me."

Again, --.

"With my Bible in my hand, I made my way to the brow of Olivet, read there of the awful night with the place really before me, and got more light, and saw more meaning in the Word, than ever before. After prayer

and meditation, I passed through a low gate in the Garden of Gethsemane, which is walled with high walls, kept by monks; they have planted flowers all through the garden. There are eight very old olive trees which may be the original trees, but the time Titus destroyed Jerusalem, in A. D., all the trees were cut down, and these may have sprung up from the roots, or even may have been but very little trees. They look very old. There is no doubt that Jesus prayed and agonized some place near here. I took off my hoots and hat, was overcome, and had to weep. I knelt down by the roots of one of those old olive trees, and prayed that I might be with Him in His glory, and that my dear friends, and the converts who were converted and who should be, should meet over there in heaven's golden land."

Now he is beholding the "valley in which the shepherds kept watch over their flocks by night," where "a small chapel is built, called the home of the shepherds. Here it was that the angels proclaimed a Saviour come, and sounded the glad tidings which vibrate from pole to pole." Time Evangelist has devoted his whole life to the proclaiming of the same glad message. What wonder that his heart dilates with new rapture on this hallowed spot. Now he enters the church of St. Helena, at Bethlehem, the oldest church in the world, and now he nears the very spot of which our mothers sang, Soft and easy is thy cradle;

Coarse and hard thy Saviour lay,

While his birthplace was a stable,

And his softest bed was hay.

And finally he reaches the very place that marks

THE BIRTHPLACE OF OUR SAVIOUR

"I thought, (he writes), of the thousands and even millions who have worshipped at the birthplace of Jesus. The grotto showing where Jesus was born is common property of the Greeks, Latins, and Armenians. The Chapel of the Nativity is thirty-eight by eleven, on the east end is a semicircular apse, and under the altar is a silver star, and on it in Latin is, "Here Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary." Near the star are suspended sixteen silver lamps kept continually burning, and in the grotto thirty-one; on the west, cut in the south side a little lower down, is a marble manger, with lamps suspended. My soul here bowed with my body in reverence to the King of men, the Prince of life. As I knelt, and poured out my soul to Him who is and was and ever shall be, my feelings overcame me, and I prayed and re-prayed that in His kingdom I might worship with the redeemed of earth, and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Kissed the star seven times, once for myself, and the other for my mother, and five of my most loving boys."

The boys mentioned are some of those whom he is helping to educate for God's great work.

The American Consul, Hon. S. Merrill, aided him in many ways, and thus he was enabled at great advantage to see the sights and to study the ways of the people.

We regret that we cannot tarry with him longer at "David's well" and Rachel's Tomb, "the site of which is known," at Jericho the scene of Joshua's mighty triumph, the Dead Sea, the Jordan, where John baptized and Jesus received the baptismal rite, where Elijah ascended to heaven in the chariot of fire, and Elisha wrought marvels, and at Golgotha and other places sacred beyond expression to Christian hearts. .

No mills, no cars, no wagons even: Jerusalem lacked nearly all the advantages that civilization brings. This, doubtless, is a part of her doom for rejecting Jesus. Not only is the mark of God's displeasure seen in

this and in the Scattering of the Jewish nation, but the further awfulness of the meaning of those words uttered at our Saviour's crucifixion, "His blood be on us and our children," is vividly pictured at

THE JEWS' WAILING-PLACE

Concerning this sad scene Mr. Weber writes, --

"There were over two hundred Jews at their wailing-place. Many of these were women. It is here they come and weep over their doom, and ask God to avenge them. Some of them were sincere, and the tears would flow very freely. Was very much touched myself. Came near weeping to see how sad they were. What a sad lot they have. If they had accepted Jesus how changed the world might have been."

What a striking commentary on the Scripture. "Then shall they call upon me, and I will not answer they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."

Mr. Weber visited the Mosque of Omer and many other places of deep interest; he observed carefully the customs of the people, now nearly the same as in Jesus' day and earlier; he met Willie Rosenzweig, a "nice, pure Syrian boy," for whose salvation he was greatly burdened, who afterwards was saved, and whom he has brought to America and who is now being educated in the Ohio Wesleyan College, Delaware, O. He made valuable collections of views of important points, garments worn by the people, olive wood, and other relics of the sacred land; and then on March 17, with a company of seventeen persons, he left Jerusalem.

From the sacred city the company journeyed to Ramah, where Samuel was born, and, as they moved onward through the Holy Land, paused at Beroth, and took lunch at Bethel, where Jacob had the wonderful vision. Here Mr. Weber "took a stone for his pillow and lay down and prayed, but did not see any angels." Riding on and the ruins that greet on every side, under the wise leadership of Bernard Heilpern, a man thoroughly posted on every Scripture site that is possible to point out, and who gives Scripture, book and verse, as proof of every place, the company tarried for lunch at 'Jacob's Well,' the site of which is certain, where prophets, apostles, and Christ himself had been. They beheld Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim and ascend the summit of Samaria, where is "pointed out the prison and the tomb of the Apostle John." While riding along the plains of Dothan a caravan of camels was coming over the plains in the same direction also that the Ishmaelites were proceeding when the brothers of Joseph, who were feeding their flocks on this plain, being jealous of Joseph, sold him to them and they carried him to Egypt. God was with Joseph, and he will be with us if true to him.

NAZARETH, THE HOME OF JESUS

Passing Mount Gilboa and Jezreel and Nain, where Jesus raised the widow's son from death, at about 4.4 P.M., March 21, the company reached Nazareth, the city of Joseph and Mary, and which in his childhood, youth, and young manhood was the home of our adorable Lord.

"Went to the Franciscan convent, writes Mr. Weber, where we were shown the place where the angel announced to Mary that a child should be born. A beautiful altar made of marble marks the spot where Mary was apprised of the fact that she was to become a mother ...

"Went on the hill back of the city and had the finest view of Palestine there is around here. We could see over the plains to the Jordan, and the deep cut through which the river runs, and the Moabite hills as a background, then the famous Gilboa with Jezreel at its base; Little Hermon with Nain and Shunem at its

feet; Tabor towering far above like a cap rounded, covered with trees, and a convent on the top; then the blue Galilee hills with Big Herman way up in the clouds covered with snow; then, as we come around the circle, the hills and valleys produce a most pleasing effect, and as we come around the dark Mediterranean with its shores lined with yellow-looking sand, then the Bay of Acre and the Carmelite range uniting with the Dothan hills circling on to meet on the other end near Jordan. A most wonderful panoramic view it was. It was here that Jesus lived for twenty-five years, and then at last the people rejected Him. The brow or ledge from which they wanted to throw Him is located about two miles from the city."

Next visited was Cana, where Jesus turned the water into wine, and then Tiberias, and then a ride upon the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus and the apostles oft resorted and to whose waves He commanded, "Peace, be still," and they obeyed Him. They camped near Bethsaida, the former home of John, James, Philip, Peter, and Andrew, and, before leaving the vicinity, Mr. Weber went to the Lake of Galilee and took a bath, gathered some shells and flowers, and also fished, but, like the disciples, 'caught nothing.' Saw many fish, but they would not bite."

On March 23 the company turned their steps towards Damascus, the city of which it is said that "Mohammed loathed to leave it, as it was such a paradise." Passing the place where "Saul saw the light and heard the voice from heaven," on the 27th they reach this beautiful queen city of the East, spend here a number of days in profitable research, then pass on to Beirut, where Mr. Weber takes a boat for Smyrna.

"Stopped at Cyprus, he writes, where we landed and had a fine time seeing the town and the church, in which was a festival. This church boasts as having the tomb of Lazarus, who, as the guide said, 'died twice.' This may be so, as we read that the Jews were planning to kill Lazarus after he was raised from the dead, so he might have fled here. When one stops to think of the ancient glory of many of these places and their desolation now, how different the book of God seems, as in it we read about the judgments pronounced against them."

He visited Smyrna, where once was one of the churches of Asia Minor, of which it was said, "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life," and where Polycarp was bishop, and where, when burning at the stake and offered freedom if he would recant, he said, "Eighty and six years have I served the Lord Jesus; and he has never forsaken me; I will not forsake him." From here he paid a flying visit to Ephesus, in other days second only to Athens in the fine arts and in culture; now a heap of ruins. Here it is claimed that Homer and Crassus both were born, and Alexander the Great, Anthony, Cleopatra, Augustus, and Diocletian have been here. Here is "a reputed tomb of St. John," and here Paul preached the Gospel for two years; and it was here that he laid his hands on John's disciples and they received the Holy Ghost. Here too was the great heathen temple of Diana. "The once proud Ephesus," writes our traveler, "is like a heap, and the place where her temple stood is a place for the frogs to serenade the weary traveler who is fortunate enough on a hot day to walk around and be hurried at a breakneck speed by a guide who simply knew nothing but to get his bakshish." From Smyrna we follow our friend to Athens, where he reveled among antiquities too numerous to name, among them "the prison of Socrates, where he drank the deadly hemlock," and Mars Hill that had listened to the eloquent of the ages, where Paul preached his immortal sermon, his text, "To the unknown God." From Athens he went to Corinth, where Paul founded the church to which two of his epistles are addressed, and then by way of Venice and Florence on to Rome, where Paul and Peter both preached and died the death of martyrs. During this trip the "inspiration came, and he wrote the song "To Save a Poor Sinner like Me," No. 109 in his song-book, "The Evangelist."

At Rome Mr. Weber met Bishop Fowler and family, whose society be highly prized. Here and in other cities of Italy be visited the many places which always attract the tourist, and then by way of Lucerne and Interlaken, Switzerland, and Strasburg, Germany, be passed on to Paris and from thence to London. At London be purchased a

VALUABLE STEREOPTICON

With which to illustrate the lectures he was preparing on his travels. These illustrated lectures the Evangelist sometimes gives in connection with his revival meetings to the great delight of large audiences. It would take volumes to describe what he saw in all the places of interest visited, but through these lectures and the magnificent views accompanying them a person is made to feel their reality almost as vividly as if there. Having, aside from the precious impressions received at Palestine, visited the chief places of interest on the continent and caught the inspiration that comes from viewing the works of the master painters, sculptors, and architects of the ages, Mr. Weber, on June 12, took a passage on the steamer *Servia* from Liverpool to his native land.

On his travels he had often done personal work with souls which was to bear lasting fruit. He had also composed a number of the sweet hymns that the people in his meetings have learned so much to love.

On his homeward journey through his words a man was

SOUNDLY SAVED, and gave evidence of his conversion by saying, "When I crossed before, when a storm would come, I would say, 'Oh, if the boat goes down!' Now I sleep and say, 'It's all right.'"

Carefully preparing the discourses on the Holy Land, which he feels that God is calling him to give, and breathing the prayer, "Jesus, bless them to thy glory," time speedily flies, and, borne swiftly homeward by giant steam, he soon is in the midst of joyous greetings from waiting loved ones.

He had received the assurance, before he went, of a safe and prosperous journey, and such it had been.

Soon we shall see him, qualified as never before, in the midst of new scenes of revival victory.

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