

June 2, 2004

Hello to all,

Sorry to have been out of touch for so long. This has been a very busy trip, and the rather hectic schedule has not been conducive to me having time to edit photos and write.

I hope to get a few more postings up in the next week or two. In the meantime, please know that we are having fun exploring the Middle East and meeting its people.

Yesterday we visited the baptismal site of Jesus and listened to the Israelis blowing up Palestinian homes a mile or two away, just across and a little upstream from our location on the East bank of the Jordan River. The irony was not lost on us.

Today, we are back in Syria after spending several days in Jordan. We'll be heading back to Turkey in about five more days.

Sorry for the brevity of this message. Hope to get you more details in the next few weeks. We're having many, many adventures and are learning a lot about this area and its people.

Be well,
Doug

PS – Following are a few pictures of what it's like to travel through the Middle East. I hope to get caught up on the photo albums in the next few weeks.



Abandoned cars at the Jordanian/Syrian border. I counted over two dozen high end Mercedes, BMW and high performance cars abandoned and covered with dust. Almost all had Kuwait plates, with a few from the United Arab Emirates. Apparently arriving without all the papers they needed to get their cars across the border, the drivers simply abandoned them, caught a cab to Amman or Damascus, and bought a replacement.



Jordanian gasoline prices. Just about everywhere we've been in the world, people pay about \$4 a gallon for gas. This price works out to about \$2 per gallon. (1,000 Fils to the Jordanian Dinar, 1 Dinar = ~\$.70 USD)



If the people in the National BMW club find out I put this stuff in my bike, I'll be shunned by the totality of the BMW faithful.



Syrian Ford Taurus. A Chevrolet and another Taurus were parked next to it.



It's a good thing they have these signs.



Otherwise, you might hit these.



Steph and I parked along the shore of the Dead Sea, the lowest spot on earth. We're about 1,300 feet below sea level here. (Somebody forward this to Don Mackey, I don't think I have his email address with me. Tell him to look closely at that pannier box. We're taking his "Just Put Me Back On My Bike" sticker with us around the world. The one next to it is from a Turkish Fire Department we had tea with.)



Decisions, decisions...