



Where Does Your Map Take You?

by Jackie Abbott

How was your vacation? Or are you getting ready to go on one? Maybe your trip is scheduled for later on. No matter the timing, it's a fun and relaxing activity to look forward to.

If you are planning to go a long distance, perhaps you have booked a flight to your destination. Definitely a relaxing travel option; let the "driving" be someone else's job. It would be the same if you booked a trip on a cruise ship... easy travel.

I remember the trips that I took as a child with my family. Of course, Dad always drove and always had the trip all mapped out. Being a history buff, it was a sure thing that we would get a little education from Dad's plans. One of my fondest memories is the year that Dad decided to give us visual sights of some of the history of Texas.

First, go southeast; we went to visit the Alamo in San Antonio. Maybe it doesn't sound so exciting now, but remember, this was back in the late '40s and we traveled from Odessa, TX, with my two brothers and I packed in the back seat. (No seat belts then either.) The sight of that famous building was awesome to me. Dad had already told us the story of the battle and of the sacrifices made there for the freedom of Texas. We toured the whole building viewing pictures, ammunition and guns, and assorted memorabilia. What heroes those men were, especially when you remember they had the opportunity to leave, but didn't.

Our next stop, further south was Goliad, TX, another Texas battle field so horrible that some historians call it a massacre.

Our last stop, going east, was in Houston to the San Jacinto battle field, where Texas history took a turn in the right direction and celebrated the capture of General Santa Anna. Of course, a tour of the San Jacinto Monument and the Battleship Texas rounded out our history lesson.

Just thinking back, I can recognize that my father took a lot of time to schedule our time and our direction for this venture. There was always a map in the front seat showing him where to go, where to turn, and where to stop. And we never got lost.

You know, God gives a map too.....the Bible with all the directions we will ever need. Stories for us to use as examples on how to live with one another. Commandments that teach us how to honor Him and how to treat our friends and enemies. Psalms that teach us how to pray to Him. What a volume of history lies in the Bible, from the beginning of time in Genesis to the end times in Revelation!

On top of that, God sent us a guide to help us understand and to lead us in the right direction. That guide was Jesus, God's own son and certainly the best that could be offered. We read of His miracles and realize that His faith and His love are the answer. He led and taught His disciples everything in the very short time that He was here on earth. We saw that His travels were always mapped out at the right time and the right place.

And what a long journey Jesus took. He leaves a perfect home in Heaven with His Father, and journeys to be born in a humble stable to begin His travels on earth. For His thirty-three years on earth, He traveled. His first trip was at the guidance of God to His earthly parents to flee to Egypt as all newborns were destined to be killed by a jealous King. Finally returning to Nazareth, another trip is in store when Mary and Joseph make their annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. Suddenly it is discovered, Jesus isn't with the returning company of pilgrims. Mary and Joseph return to Jerusalem and find Him in the temple listening and learning of the work His Heavenly Father has in store for Him. There comes the time when He travels with His disciples, teaching, healing, performing miracles. A map would reveal sea shores, small villages, a water well, friendly territory, and not so welcoming places. Jesus followed the map laid out for Him.

But the end travels are most disconcerting. After the tortuous travel to Golgotha to be crucified, Jesus goes to the fires of Hell to overcome Satan. That should have been our journey. The map of our lives leads that direction. But, thanks to our merciful God, those sinful paths of ours were laid on the back of our Saviour Jesus. Then, Jesus returns to the earthly homecoming, greeting His disciples and encouraging them that they will one day be with Him again. And then, in the wisp of the wind, Jesus is gone..back to be with His Father in Heaven.

But there is one more journey. The final and victorious journey! Jesus will come to conquer Satan and his evil followers, and to take us – His children – home with Him. What a glorious trip that will be for us...going to our eternal home. Thanks be to God for the plan He has mapped out for us.