

Mar 30, 2018 Ethiopian Airlines 501 11 am Dulles (IAD) 13h 15m duration  
31 7:15 am Addis Ababa (ADD) get visa when arrive the best rates are at the airport.  
Jupiter Hotel Bole <http://www.jupiterinternationalhotel.com/hotel-bole.html>  
1 9:30 Worship Addis  
Tour Grand Holidays Ethiopia Travel  
7 eve Easter worship  
8 Axum tour  
10 start Malaria  
11 fly to Nairobi  
11:20 am Terminal 2 Ethiopian Airlines 304  
1:30 pm Nairobi (NBO)  
Lazizi Premiere Hotel <http://www.thelazizihotels.com>  
12-14 <http://www.naturaltoursandsafaris.com> Masai Mara Safari  
15 Worship Nairobi ELCK church <http://www.uhlc.org>  
16 11:35 am Terminal 1C Ethiopian Airlines 303  
1:35 pm Addis Ababa Terminal 2  
Jupiter Hotel Bole-Addis Ababa. with Dr Burke and Wondimu  
17 10:45 pm Terminal 2 Ethiopian Airlines ET500 Dublin 1 hour stop  
18 8:40 am Dulles (IAD) Total Duration 17h 20m

Tour Itinerary:

Day 01, 01. Apr: Arrive Addis Ababa

Arrive in Addis Ababa (ADD), Ethiopia. Welcome to Ethiopia! Upon arrival at Addis Ababa Bole International Airport, you will be welcomed and assisted by your tour guide and driver for the transfer to your Hotel (4\*). There will be a short drive to your hotel. If you arrive in the morning, we will arrange a city tour. O/N: Jupiter Hotel-Addis Ababa.

Monday Day 02, 02. Apr: Addis Ababa-Bahirdar (B-D)

In the morning, drive to Bahirdar through the Great Blue Nile Gorge with a stopover at different small towns like Dejen, Chanco and Goha Tsion. O/N: Avanti Blue Nile Hotel-Bahirdar.

Day 03, 03. Apr: Lake Tana-Blue Nile Falls-Bahir Dar (B-D)

In the morning, we will make boat cruise over Lake Tana to visit the ancient 14th century island monasteries of Lake Tana. After having lunch at the hotel, we will drive 35 KM to visit the majestic Blue Nile Falls. O/N: Avanti Blue Nile Hotel-Bahirdar.

Day 04, 04. Apr: Bahir Dar-Gondar (B-D)

After breakfast, drive to Gondar through the beautiful countryside scenery to arrive at Gondar around lunchtime. After lunch tour of the ancient city of Gondar. O/N: Goha Hotel.

Day 05, 05. Apr: Excursion Simien Mountains National Park (B-D)

After an early breakfast, we will drive to the Simien mountains National park. The rest of the day, trek to explore the surrounding of Sankaber, part of the Simien Mountains National Park.

O/N: Goha Hotel - Gondar

Day 06, 06. Apr: Gondar – Lalibela (B-D)

After breakfast start driving through the spectacular landscape to Lalibela. En route we will stop at Awramba. This community has been founded by Zumra Nuru in 1972 with the aim to live together peacefully, working collaboratively, sympathetically and cheerfully. They treat each other as brothers and sisters. Gender equality and care for the elderly is also a major subject. O/N: Tukul Village or Harbe Hotel-Lalibela.

#### Day 07, 06. Apr, Good Friday at Lalibela (B-D)

After having an early breakfast, we will drive to the site where we find a concentration of some of Ethiopia's most famous rock-hewn churches, mostly referred by many as "the living wonders of the world"

The rock-hewn churches that we will visit today include: Bete Medhani Alem, Bete Mariam, Bete Meskel, Bete Denagil, Bete Golgotha Michael and Bete Giorgis. In the afternoon, witness the Good Friday ceremony at Bete Mariam rock-hewn church. This is a special day for Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and it is celebrated with a great devotion and in a very ancient way.

On this day, the faithful who has been fasting the whole day without any water or food, dressed in their dazzling white cloths, folk to St. Mary's church to attend the prayers and performance of the priest and deacons. It really creates a special feeling to witness the devotion of the faithful and the special practices made on this day remembering the suffering of Jesus Christ when he was crucified. Every performance of the priest and the deacons as well as the devotion of the people takes you centuries back. O/N: Tukul Village or Harbe Hotel-Lalibela.

#### Day 08, 07. Apr Lalibela (B-D)

In the morning you will continue your journey into Ethiopia's long and marvellous past with a visit to other St. Lalibela's remarkable churches. The rock-hewn churches that you will visit this afternoon include: Bete Gebriel, Bete Mercorios Bete Emanuel, Bethlehem and Bete Aba Libanos. In the afternoon, you will visit one of the most colourful annual Easter Market at Lalibela. In the evening, you will witness one of the most important ceremonies of Easter in one of the biggest rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, Bete MedhaniAlem.

In the evening all the rock-hewn churches will be filled with people who have been fasting for 55 days. None of them have eaten anything at least for a day and half without any water and food. They are here to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ and there will be prayers and candle light ceremonies accompanied by chanting and dancing of the priest until 3:00 in the morning. It's only after the ceremony is over that everybody goes home to break the fasting with the special Easter meal and the feast which has begun at the church continues all day long and the weeks to come. Accommodation: Mount View Hotel-Lalibela.

#### Day 09, 08. Apr Ethiopian Easter Lalibela-Addis Ababa-Departure (B-D)

After breakfast, transfer to Lalibela airport for the flight to Addis Ababa. Depending on your departure an optional city tour can be arranged.

In the evening, there will be Grand Holidays' complimentary special Easter farewell dinner party with traditional special buffet and local drinks. Flight schedule permitting). There will also be cultural dance show of the different ethnic groups living in the country. There will not be any better way of ending a trip. At the end of the farewell dinner, transfer to Addis Ababa airport for the flight back. End of tour!

#### Day 1: Lalibela-Axum

In the morning, transfer to Lalibela airport for your flight to Axum. A short flight takes you from Gondar to Axum. After check in to Remhay Hotel, you will start to visit the ancient city of Axum.

This is the birthplace of Ethiopian civilization, and by the first century Axum was a major trading center for exotic goods from Egypt, Rome, Nubia, Greece, Syria, and India. The Holy Ark of the Covenant was brought here before the destruction of the Temple, and Axum is reputed to be the second Jerusalem.

Your today's visit in Axum include: the Stele field, Kaleba Tombs, the 4th century Christian inscription of King Ezana, Queen of Sheba's Palace, Archeological Museum, and Tsion Mariam Church where the original Ark of the Covenant is housed. Accommodation: Sabean Hotel-Lalibela. (Meals: B/L/D)

#### Day 2: Axum-Yeha-Debre Damo

In the morning, drive out of town to the pre-Christian temple of Yeha en-route enjoying the stunning view of historical Adwa mountains and the dramatic mountainous country side scenery of Tigray. The rest of the day, walk around the ancient city and interact with the local people. Accommodation: Sabean Hotel-Axum. (Meals: B/L/D)

#### Day 3: Axum-Addis Ababa-Departure

In the morning fly back to Addis Ababa. The rest of the day, city tour of Addis Ababa which includes: St. George Cathedral, Selassie Cathedral, which are some of the oldest and most beautiful cathedrals in Addis, and the view of Addis Ababa from Entoto Mountain. You will also have the chance to walk around Churchill Avenue and Piassa area for souvenir shopping.

In the evening, there will be Grand Holidays' complimentary farewell dinner party with traditional special buffet and local drinks. There will also be live cultural dance show of the different ethnic groups living in the country. There will not be any better way of ending a trip.

At the end of the farewell dinner,  
April 10 Jupiter Hotel

March 30, 2018

Greetings from Dulles Airport!

We left home just after 6 a.m. in a rented car. Traffic was heavier than I expected, slow at times on the D.C. beltway (it's always slow there!, no matter what time of day we go). I thought of our daughter Stephanie driving home from her 48 hours working at Reagan Airport as a paramedic fireman (she worked a double) - she may have been driving west on I-270 as we crossed it. We arrived at the rental car place by 7:45, turned in the car. (It's cheaper to rent a car each way than any other way except public transportation which would be much slower with lots of connections to make.) The bus driver to take us from there to the airport is from Ethiopia.

It took almost an hour to check in - obviously our flight on Ethiopian Airline will be full. Now we are waiting for our 11 a.m. flight - we saw the plane come in from Ethiopia, we'll arrive back here on April 18th at 8:40 a.m. - the flight was right on time.

Wifi is spotty in Ethiopia, so we may not always be able to send you a daily blog. You may get several days' worth at once, depending on whether we have wifi.

Have a blessed Easter as we celebrate our Lord Jesus' resurrection from the grave.

Love, Lynne and Steve

Greetings!

i know I wrote earlier, but I always write at night, so decided to add a little.

We just came from supper - we split the pot roast lamb with rice and cooked vegetables. The veggies were barely cooked, so I ate few. Steve ate most of them. Getting sick from uncooked (or barely cooked) veggies is not my desire! They don't give any change when we pay them. But then, supper cost \$8.14! which includes a liter of water.

We will go to the Palm Sunday service tomorrow - our guide and driver will take us - and then we have a tour of Addis Abba following.

Some clouds, can't see any stars - we're on the 4th floor.

Stephanie, I have my usual travel bag - the bag you gave me from Ethiopia - so it's back where it came from (but I'm not leaving it here!)

Enjoy your Easter service and dinner! Are you doing anything special?

God bless you.  
love, Mom

Ethiopia - we're here! March 31  
Greetings!

It's 9:20 a.m. in Addis Abba, but you are probably all sleeping, since it's 2:20 a.m. in the Eastern U.S.! We have checked in at the Jupiter Hotel, and will probably spend most of the day here - we're tired!

Our plane ride was pretty good, considering that the plane was rather full. Included in the luggage were 2 mountain bikes (a 24" and a 26") plus two 65" tvs and a 55" tv!

Steve spent most of the ride talking with a professor of Human Rights Law who was sitting with us. David commented that it was a 12 hour conversation! He went to a Catholic seminary for 5 years, left there and became a lawyer. In retirement he is working with the Centre for Human Rights. He was to catch another plane to Pretoria where he will teach a module next week.

We had a nice lunch: entree (he had beef, I had pasta), roll, quinoa, brownie. For supper we had beef and cheese on a small roll with beef - not much to eat! At 11 p.m. EST (about 5:30 a.m. Ethiopian time), we had hash browns, sausage, beans, a stale croissant, a roll, and fruit cocktail. Soda, juice, water, beer, wine, coffee, and tea were also offered at each meal.

It was quiet for the first hour on the plane, then we were served lunch and it got noisier. It was very noisy early this morning, and Steve and David were talking, so I couldn't sleep. I did start some counted cross stitch projects.

We were above the clouds for the entire trip. There was a nice sunrise above the clouds this morning.

We arrived about 6:45 a.m. We had to get a Visa when we arrived (\$50 each) - guess that took more than an hour, then waited for our luggage a few minutes, then couldn't find our driver. The



people at the airport finally figured out he was outside (just as he said he would be - they hadn't let us look outside for him) - Bayu and our driver had been waiting for us since 6:30 - it was well after 9 before we were ready for them. They brought us to the hotel.

There were some pretty purple flowers on the trees by the airport. It's sunny, about 70 degrees.

Our hotel is a mile or so from the airport. We're just off the "main drag" (that's what it looked to me). The street has fence all along the center with an occasional opening for a cross walk. We probably drove an extra quarter mile to turn around to get to our hotel. There was a naked man walking in the street - actually he wasn't nude - he had a blanket over his shoulders that reached his waist - Bayuh indicated that he was crazy. There were two people sweeping the street with brooms which are quite different from ours - they have twigs instead of broom straws.

It's now 10:49 and I can't sleep - we've been up since 5:30 a.m. yesterday. I can't relax, too keyed up. Steve is sleeping. Our room is at the back of the hotel and they are constructing a building behind the hotel, so lots of hammering and other noises going on.

I was disappointed to not see our digital newspaper this morning - then Steve reminded me that it was too early in the U.S. for it to be sent!

It's now 2:51 p.m. We went to the hotel dining room for lunch. Steve had lamb tips with injera bread - it's very spongy, you tear off a piece and then use the piece to pick up the food (no utensils needed!). I had a roasted vegetable sandwich - my plate had 2 sandwiches plus french fries. Before they brought our order, they brought each of us a half bowl of vegetable soup and a roll, offered us more soup, but we didn't take more. All was good. The lamb tips had a spicy red sauce with them. I don't eat spicy, so have to be careful what I order. What we read in guidebooks before we left home said to not eat the salads or fresh vegetables or drink the water (our systems are not ready for the bacteria on their uncooked food or in the water). (Lunch, including a coke and coffee, was \$13.25.)

Then we took a walk down Bole Road towards the airport - it seemed further away when we rode here than when we walked that way. Lots of people were along the sidewalk, many selling shoe shines or shoes, etc. The sidewalk is made up of tiles, about 9" square, many are broken or missing, driveways are concrete, either higher or lower than the sidewalk, you have to watch your step so you don't fall!

We crossed the road - the cars do stop for pedestrians in the cross walks, but it is scary to cross with all those cars coming quickly at you! We're guessing they don't have buses - instead mini vans come along and someone yells something (the destination, I'm guessing), people pile on until the van is overfull, then the van takes off, with one guy standing half out the side window and yelling.

This section, called "Bole", (we are in the Jupiter Hotel Bole), has much construction along the road. A Chinese company is building a headquarters building for Ethiopian Oil Company and one for Ethiopian National Bank across from the street our hotel is on.

There's a huge old foundation across from the hotel - it looks like it's being used as a garbage dump. A herd of maybe a dozen goats were munching away in it.

We went in the market on the corner, looking for suntan lotion (we're at a higher elevation here, so sunburn more quickly) - it had groceries, drugstore items (no suntan lotion though), liquor, couches, dining room furniture, wash machines, etc., in it - quite a collection of different items!

We need to carry water with us - we were both parched when we returned!

We're going to rest some more, then go downstairs for dinner, probably split a dinner, since neither of us finished our lunch - we often split an entree when we eat out in America.

You're probably up by now, our newspaper has arrived, so I'll send this. Then I'll work on photos to send you.

All of the Ethiopians we have met have been very friendly and helpful and concerned about us.

Have a blessed Easter! Jesus is risen! He is risen indeed!

Lynne and Steve



Sunrise over the clouds over Africa



our hotel room



our lunch - lamb tips, injera bread with red spicy sauce, grilled vegetable sandwiches with french fries



hotel bar on left, dining room on right - we sat at the table you can see





Jupiter International Hotel



tree along the road (and near the airport)





morning glories and orange flowers along the road - there are also lots of red geraniums along the roads





Bole Road



Construction from our hotel window. I thought it interesting that they use branches which are not straight in their construction. They are unsheathing the concrete posts.

April 1  
Greetings!

Jesus is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

That would have been the greeting at our church in America. However, today is Palm Sunday in the Coptic Christian Church in Ethiopia, so people are wearing palms on their heads and as rings - I'll send photos.

We slept poorly last night, woke frequently, not sure why, it was quiet in our room. We didn't wake up until 8:20, which is extremely late for us to wake up. We dressed and went down for the complimentary breakfast: many fresh fruits, fried bananas, fried plantain, beans, poached eggs, fried eggs, omelet (I had mine without spice), muffins, cinnamon roll (looked more like a fat cookie), their grapefruit juice was labeled orange juice.

Our driver Mollie and guide Bayuh picked us up and took us to the Ethiopian Lutheran Church (located next to the seminary and denominational headquarters). We were told that church started at 10, we went in just before 10, the pastor was talking already and probably had been for a while. He then baptized 2 babies. A man spoke for a while. There was a lot of spirited singing - the people knew the songs (no words on the screen or on paper). By 11 a.m. the church was full, maybe 800 or so. Two women read the Bible readings. The children went up to the front for a prayer for them - it was Youth Sunday so they did not have the normal liturgy. A recording was played with a story for the children (illustrations on the screens). The children (about 150+) went to Sunday School. The gospel was read (Mark 11, Jesus entering Jerusalem on Palm Sunday). The man and young adult - youth preached on Living our Calling by loving God, serving others, and sharing the good news about Jesus as our Savior from sin. Steve had e-mailed the president of the seminary and the director of international relations and we met them at the church (neither one is ordained clergy). One elderly woman spoke excellent English with us. There were also 5, Christian Missionary group, students from Norway in the church service (making a total of 7 Caucasians there).

Mollie and Bayuh picked us up and took us to the restaurant next to the National Museum of Ethiopia - many Caucasians were there. We were patted down before we could enter. (Ethiopia is generally a safe country, but our suitcases went through an x-ray machine before we entered the hotel yesterday and we walk through a scanner each time we enter the hotel.) Somalia, neighboring nation, breeds terrorists. We split an order of grilled chicken, beef strips, lasagna, and grilled vegetables. They served us each a half bowl of tomato soup and 4 rolls before our entree came.

Mollie and Bayuh picked up again and drove us to Holy Trinity Cathedral, the second-most important place of worship in Ethiopia. It contains the tomb of Emperor Haile Selassie and his wife. The imperial thrones are in front of the Holy of Holies. The stained glass windows on the left depict scenes from the Old Testament, the ones on the right depict scenes from the New Testament. Our guide told us some of the history of Ethiopia while we were inside. To be a cathedral, it must have a replica of the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies.

We then drove up Entoto Mountain to get a view of the city. We drove past many market places, hundreds of people were walking along the edge of the road. We climbed up the mountain to a good viewpoint where we got out and walked along the mountain to take some photos - it had rained there recently, the road was wet. There was a family from China at that point. An Ethiopian boy gave me a palm leaf crown and a palm leaf ring (asked for money), I took his photo along with another boy.

The roads here are sometimes well done, others have big bumps and drop-offs at the edge of the macadam. Other roads are not paved (dirt) and are extremely bumpy and full of rocks and not well maintained. There is construction of all kinds everywhere.

Along the way we passed a goat market - the goats were just standing on the sidewalk by the shop, not tethered or fenced in. People buy the goats (and sheep) for Easter dinner. On the way up the mountain we passed goats eating the brush along the side of the road. We did see one shepherd with goats along the side of the road.

We are now back in the hotel and "resting" for our trip tomorrow - we are being picked up at 7 a.m. for a many hour drive.

The tree with purple flowers on yesterday's photos is a jacaranda.

It was partly sunny, about 75.

It's now 7:40 p.m. We just finished supper - we split a mild chickpea stew with beef with injera - their definition of "mild" doesn't agree with mine - it was too spicy for me.

Have a good week!

God bless you.  
Lynne and Steve





church we attended



choir leading a worship song



a Coptic church



Victory Statue 1941 - commemorating the victory over the Italians at Adwa





Holy Trinity Cathedral, Steve and Bayou



King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba



Emperor Haile Selassie's tomb (light was terrible in there)





King's throne



Holy of Holies



Transfiguration





View of Addis Abba



Another view of Addis Abba





Palm leaf “crowns”



eucalyptus trees



a typical market





more markets



another market



another market





United States Embassy



Stew and injera for supper

April 2

Greetings from the Blue Nile Resort Hotel!

We slept very poorly last night. I just couldn't get to sleep. I was too hot with the blanket on, too cold without it. Steve didn't do much better. Noisy people came in around 2:30 a.m., noisy people were in our hall at 5:15 a.m. We had to get up at 6, ate breakfast (fried liver, scrambled eggs, teff roll (teff only grows in Ethiopia, it's like flour), yogurt), finished packing, were ready to leave before 7 when we were picked up.

Today we spent mostly in the car, driving from Addis Abba to Lake Tana. Traffic was bad in Addis Abba, even at that hour. I will make assorted, unrelated, random comments about what we saw.

There are very few stop signs (and they do say "stop" in English), I only saw 2 traffic lights in all our driving in the city. Vehicles force their way across roads/roundabouts, faking people out to get across the roads.



Instead of wooden fences around construction areas and around property, they use sheets of corrugated metal. The ones around construction areas are painted with green and yellow stripes, each about 2' wide vertically. In the villages some have corrugated metal doors or corrugated metal houses.

Three burros were wandering across a major road in Addis. Cars had to stop or drive around them. No one was supervising the burros.

People lined up in long lines in Addis waiting for buses, no pushing or shoving - there might be 100 people in line, waiting for a bus at rush hour.

It appears to me that Ethiopia is a poor nation (though Steve says it's one of the richest parts of Africa). I base this on the fact that houses are very small and dingy looking from the outside. Except for major roads, the roads are dirt. The major roads have multiple potholes, often are very bumpy and uneven, sometimes even dirt. I would hesitate to purchase anything from the roadside shops because everything seems so dirty. (Though the shopkeepers were washing their floors before they opened up for business.) There is no emissions testing here, black smoke was coming out of the buses and trucks, lots of air pollution. There are dumps everywhere - piles of trash all along the road. Each house or group of houses has a fence of some sort around it with a very fancy gate, even if the fence isn't fancy.

There were very few private automobiles. Most people take the bus or van or tuktuk (3 wheeled vehicle which served as a taxi for up to 4 people or to transport goods) wherever they go, or walk long distances. Buses and vans had much piled on top of them - baskets, bags, suitcases, boxes, etc. The trucks (a bit smaller than our dump trucks) had items piled up twice as high as the truck and then covered so you couldn't see what was piled there. And there were many big dump trucks.

It was very crowded and slow going up the mountain with many heavy-laden trucks making it extremely slow. It was difficult to pass them because of all of the curves along the mountain. Our driver passed whenever possible. When nothing was coming, he drove down the middle of the road.

All along the road were individual or groups or herds of cattle (zebu were the most prominent), herds of many kinds of goats, horses, burros. We had to stop for or blow the horn at the animals so we could go. Most of the animals did not have a shepherd with them, they just wandered around. It is not the growing season, so the animals are not hurting the crops as they browse. We saw many horses pulling simple wagons (a bench seat for 2 or 3 with a board for the feet or some boards to load with whatever they were carrying). Many of the burros were carrying a load, some did not have a human watching them as they took their load someplace.

There are many started/partially completed/abandoned buildings. Bayuh said that they can't get the finishing touches so they are incomplete. It looks to me that they should have counted the cost before they started to be sure they could finish! They use the wooden sticks (shown in the first day's photos) as scaffolding.

We saw children waiting for the school bus in the morning. Each school has a different color uniform. Girls all had skirts. We saw many students out at lunchtime, either going home or coming back to school.

In the countryside we saw many people walking, often saw them far from any house or building, so guess they are walking long distances. Many women were carrying empty water containers - houses do not have running water, many do not have electricity. I never saw anyone carrying a full water container. I did see one place where water was available - many people were surrounding it to fill their jugs. Many women were carrying heavy loads on their backs - the older women were often stooped over. Usually I saw the men sitting and talking or acting as shepherds, since the young boys are in school. Men carried a rod (cane) across their shoulders if they were shepherds.

In one area we saw multiple groups of people (usually men) walking their animals (goats, cattle) to market - they were spread across the fields for miles. We guessed the animals would be sent to Addis for Easter dinner.

When a vehicle was broken down or was stopped in the roadway for some reason, rocks (at least 6" diameter) were placed in the road around the vehicle (front, side, back) instead of flares. In some places there were piles of rocks beside the road (to be used in making repairs), some of which had fallen into the roadway, consequently blocking part of the road.

We saw several trucks which had run off the road and turned over. They looked like they had been abandoned for some time.

After 4 hours of driving we stopped briefly for coffee (and a much needed rest stop!). We drove through the Blue Nile Gorge (comparable smaller to the Grand Canyon). There are 2 bridges over the river at one point, we walked across the old bridge which is no longer used for traffic, our driver met us on the other side. A shepherd walked about 8 cattle across the bridge with us. After another 2 hours we were left at a hotel restaurant to eat our lunch. I had spaghetti with spinach, Steve had spaghetti Bolognese. We then drove for 4 1/2 hours to this resort. Our room is less than half the size of the one we had in Addis! A lot of sitting in the car! Mostly we drove on a wide plateau, mostly pasture but with some farm fields. We could see many mountains.

At one point Mollie stopped and the car was mobbed with people all trying to sell us a basket of cocks - Bayuh bought one basket and gave it to us. They are the size of small clingstone peaches, round, taste like peaches - Bayuh said to wash them and eat them, Steve peeled it first.

We went to the hotel dining room - they offered a buffet tonight. We asked the server which items were spicy, he assured us that the vegetable soup and most of the rest was not spicy (fried chicken, fish, fried potatoes, pasta, veggies, beans) - the soup was spicy, he decided there were hot peppers in the pasta, so I ate some of the food. We helped ourselves well to the dessert section - usually we don't eat dessert - none of that was spicy!

It was sunny, cooler on the mountains, warmer in the valleys, about 75 there.

It's great to hear comments from some of you - there is no cost for e-mail.

God bless you.  
Lynne and Steve



April 3

Greetings from 2 exhausted people! We did a lot of walking today!

We slept much better last night - don't know if we were exhausted or why, but we did better. Did I comment that this hotel room is less than half the size of the one we had the first 2 nights?

We thought we were moving to a different hotel today, so we packed up after breakfast and were ready to leave. However Bayuh said we were staying here another night, so the bellhop took our luggage back to our room. Oh, well!

Mollie and Bayuh took us to a boat dock. A catamaran took us across Lake Tana (the largest lake in Ethiopia with 37 islands) to a peninsula (which many call an island for some reason) where there are 2 monasteries. The lake was choppy, and at one point a wave broke over the boat, soaking me from my waist down - the water flooded the cushion I was sitting on. My sweater, which was laying on the seat, is still not dry.

We took the path 0.45 km up the hill to the first monastery church. Just after we started up the path there was a monkey high in the tree. Along the way, every 20' or so was a booth, enticing us to buy something - each salesperson tried to get us to give up our money. Steve did buy a

painting on wood of an angel - all the people which are painted in Ethiopia have large eyes. If the person is painted in profile with only one eye showing, it is a bad person (Judas has only one eye showing).

You enter the 14th century church compound through a fancy gate room. You must take off your shoes and hat to enter the church. It is a round building with a round sort of closed in porch inside it. The porch area has a floor of reeds which are sewn together with animal guts - very uncomfortable to walk on without shoes - they were covered mostly with woven mats. In the center is a square Holy of Holies with paintings all over it - the people could not read, so the Bible stories are illustrated. The square almost fills the circle so there is not a lot of space inside. One fourth (one side of the Holy of Holies) is the women's section, the rest of the building is for the men and priests.

From there we hiked (trekked, according to Bayuh) .5 km to the second monastery, no one tried to sell us anything in that section. This church was very similar to the other one. As we left it, more salespeople with booths were along the way, I bought a necklace with a cross. Even small children were trying to sell us items.

The lake was not as choppy on the way back. We went into the beginning of the Blue Nile River which eventually joins the White Nile River in Khartoum to form the Nile River which goes through Sudan and Egypt. It looked nice, Steve wasn't impressed with it though. It did not have





any current flowing out. On the lake we saw one fisherman with white pelicans near him, another fisherman with cormorants near him.

Mollie drove us to a nearby resort where Bayuh had made reservations for us. I wanted to use the rest room - I had the choice of a Chinese squat toilet or a toilet with no toilet seat. You bring your own toilet tissue.

We were seated outside beside Lake Tana under a gazebo. It was very pleasant outside. We saw 2 boys (maybe 20 years old) swimming naked in the lake. Our waiter misunderstood our order and brought me a vegetable sandwich and a vegetable burger later - I couldn't even finish the one sandwich - I had wanted the burger but I was half finished the sandwich when he brought the burger. Steve had Ethiopian Sheru with meat - it's like a thin stew, served with injera bread and an Ethiopian beer. We didn't pay for the extra burger. Food was good.

Then Mollie drove us for about 27 kilometers on gravel roads to the ticket booth for Blue Nile Falls. As soon as Bayuh got out to buy the tickets, our van was mobbed with people selling hats and jewelry. Finally Bayuh came back with Abraham who was our guide to the falls. Mollie drove us about a half mile over dirt paths to a parking lot. We walked for about 5 minutes to the river. A boat "docked" (the bow hit the river bank) and we climbed awkwardly on. The boat motored across the river, around the point of an island, and across the next part of the river where it again docked by hitting the bank. We climbed out.

We walked for about 20 minutes, sometimes climbing over volcano lava rocks, past a group of people sitting on the ground and pulling the leaves off onions which had been dug up. The onion smell was strong! They then put the onions in large bags and take them to the other side of the river by a different boat.

The Blue Nile Falls are beautiful. At this point in the dry season (wet season is September - January) they are not as outstanding as they are in wet season when they cover the entire rocks. At this time 80% of the flow goes to a power plant. We climbed down the hill to a closer view of the falls, then up on a rocky hill near the falls. The falls lived up to their nickname "the water that smokes" - it did look like smoke from the falls. Sometimes the wind blew the spray on us. After I got to this point, I felt lightheaded and faint. I sat there for a while, knowing I couldn't



climb down from the rocks without falling and fainting. Eventually I felt some better, and Abraham and an older teen helped me down (they had helped me up also). After several stops to rest, we made it to the top of the hill where we sat in the shade for a while to rest. Bayuh had gotten me some coke, which also helped. (All sodas are in glass bottles and they have to be returned for a deposit, so you can't take the bottle away with you. Bayuh put the soda in a plastic water bottle and the top would explode off when I unscrewed it.)

We walked back to the river, waited for the boat, crossed the river, walked back to the van - it was white but covered with a thick coat of dust. After I got in the van and the air-conditioning was turned on, I felt better. We were dropped off at the hotel. We are resting before we go for supper.

Some random observations: there are many palm trees growing here. They have some pretty birds which we don't have. One had an iridescent blue back with a red breast and a large beak, like a kingfisher, but the size of a robin. A larger bird showed black and white on the wings and a red head and neck. Don't know what they are called. We also saw white cattle egrets like we have in the U.S. They flew across the Atlantic to Brazil about 1800 and spread to the US.

We went to supper - no buffet tonight, no one in the restaurant when we got there! But we ate anyway, Steve had fried Nile perch with mashed potatoes and vegetables. I had roasted lamb with mashed potatoes. All was good.

Hope your day is good.

God bless you.  
Lynne and Steve

photos 4/3/#1









cactus flowers at Blue Nile Resort



Lake Tana from Blue Nile resort





Steve on way to monasteries



papyrus canoe used by fishermen on Lake Tana





coffee trees





loom with scarves made on it



typical home compound in the countryside





horses with wagons





countryside



more countryside



baboon





note the straw being carried on the man's head - sorry he's almost out of the photo!





fancy tea service



note the items on top of the bus





gate to church monastery



monastery church





Holy of Holies door - saints



reading the Scriptures on the “porch”





corner of Holy of Holies



illustration of Salome asking for John the Baptist's head





illustration (people couldn't read) of "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to go to heaven."



illustration of Pilate washing his hands



Beginning of the Blue Nile River (eventually joins with the White Nile River to form the Nile River)





fisherman in papyrus boat with white pelican



flowers where we ate lunch





where we ate lunch





lunch - vegetable sandwich, sheer with injera bread



a tuktuk



scaffolding around a building under construction, corrugated metal fence





Blue Nile Falls



Blue Nile Falls





Lynne and Steve at Blue Nile Falls





Supper - fried Nile fish, roasted lamb

4/4

Greetings from Goya Hotel above Gondar!

12:30 p.m.

<http://gohahotel.com>

We're sitting on the patio overlooking the city - the crows are soaring at our eye level! We ate our lunch here - I had Penne con Funghi (spinach, mushroom, onion, garlic, olive oil, tomato), Steve had Tibes Firfir which is pieces of meat scrambled with injera (pieces of injera in the meat sauce) and Harar beer.

After breakfast (one of the juices is watermelon) at the buffet, we were picked up and drove through the countryside to Gondar. We'll have a tour of the old city in less than an hour.

The town of Bahir Dar (where we stayed the last 2 nights) looks more pleasant than Addis - it's cleaner. First we drove near the palace of Haile Selassie to an overlook of Bahir Dar and Lake Tana with the Blue Nile River below us. Then we drove through the countryside, seeing oxen threshing, a man plowing with 2 oxen pulling a long pole, people at the wells to get water (often

located outside of town), people selling garlic and live chickens at the side of the road. I saw women washing their clothes along a stream bank in Gondar.

Gondar was the second capital of Ethiopia. (Axum, where we go next week, was the first capital.) We went to Fasil Ghebbi (Royal Enclosure), [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fasil\\_Ghebbi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fasil_Ghebbi) the remains of a fortress city within Gondar. It was founded in the 17th and 18th centuries by Emperor Fasilides (Fasil), who founded the city of Gondar, and was the home of Ethiopia's emperors. It is a UNESCO World Heritage site as of 1979. It started to sprinkle as we went in. Thunder soon followed

We first went to Alam-Sighed Fasil's castle, 1632- ?. He claimed to be a descendant of King David (the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon supposedly had a son who was raised in Ethiopia with her.) There were paintings of the Star of David over several doors in the reception room. We had climbed some stone steps to this room - in the U.S., all of these ruins would be off limits to the public because of safety issues, no railings. Nothing was handicapped accessible. The steps leading out were uneven and not real safe.

Next we went to the castle next to his which was his grandson Yasir the Great's castle (1682-1706), who expanded the country. We could only see parts of it, the roof and second floor floor have fallen in. These castles were 2 and 3 stories high, all access to another floor was by spiral staircases located outside the buildings. We walked past Fasil's son's castle (all are located in the 70,000 square meter Fasil Ghebbi).

We wandered around the rest of the area, walked past the queen's castle (only one queen, several sons of Yasir also had castles there). We had just gone out the exit when it started raining. Then it poured for more than 20 minutes, lots of rain.

We drove slowly to Debre Birhe Selassie Church, dating from 1700s. The rain had slowed to a light shower, so after waiting a few minutes we went in. There was a Coptic service going on. The women were on one side porch. The inside was filled with men, some men were also on the other porch. We couldn't see the famous fresco paintings inside. We only stayed a few minutes. Did I tell you that you must take your shoes off to go into a church?

Then we drove to where the Tunket Celebration Fasiledes Swimming Pool (built in the 16th century) is located. On January 19th is a religious holiday to commemorate the Baptism of Jesus. The huge pool (deeper than over your head) is filled with water, and they have a celebration where the priest throws in holy water and blesses the water. Then the boys and young men jump in and swim. It was raining, so I elected to stay in the van while Steve and Bayuh (pronounced "bayou") went in - the rain had cooled everything down and I didn't want to get wet and cold.

We were delivered back to the hotel. We did a few miscellaneous things (visited the gift shop, for one), then went to see the sunset which is supposed to be fabulous from here. However, with the rain, it wasn't at all spectacular. We elected to eat inside - the wind was blowing and it was chilly out. We ordered the vegetable soup, the curried lamb and the chicken cutlets. I noticed that the emergency lights were on, and we realized there was no electricity. Eventually the staff got the candles out and gave each occupied table a candle (which didn't really give off much light). Fortunately the kitchen cooked with gas, so eventually we got our vegetable soup.

Just before our entrees came, the power came back on (off for at least 45 minutes). Orange cake was the dessert - it was a piece the size of a petit four!

We just took our laundry to the front desk - we should get it back tomorrow afternoon.

Our hotel rooms are not well lit. It is hard to see to cross stitch, especially since I'm using light colors right now. Sure do miss having some yarn to knit or crochet! But yarn adds bulk and weight to our suitcases, so I don't carry it when we fly. These are five star hotels that we, and other Europeans, are staying in with our tours. They don't serve much spicy food.

Sleep well!

God bless you.  
Lynne and Steve



fisherman in papyrus boat on Blue Nile River





volcano plug on left - road to Gondar



our room at Goha Hotel



our room at Goha Hotel - picture on left slides over window as a blind





view of Gondar from Goha Hotel



Fasil Traditional Restaurant at our hotel



Steve on patio at Goha Hotel





Ring made from a palm leaf - very intricate!



Castles at Gondar - left one was grandson's, center one was founder of Gondar's, right one was his son's castle



Queen's castle





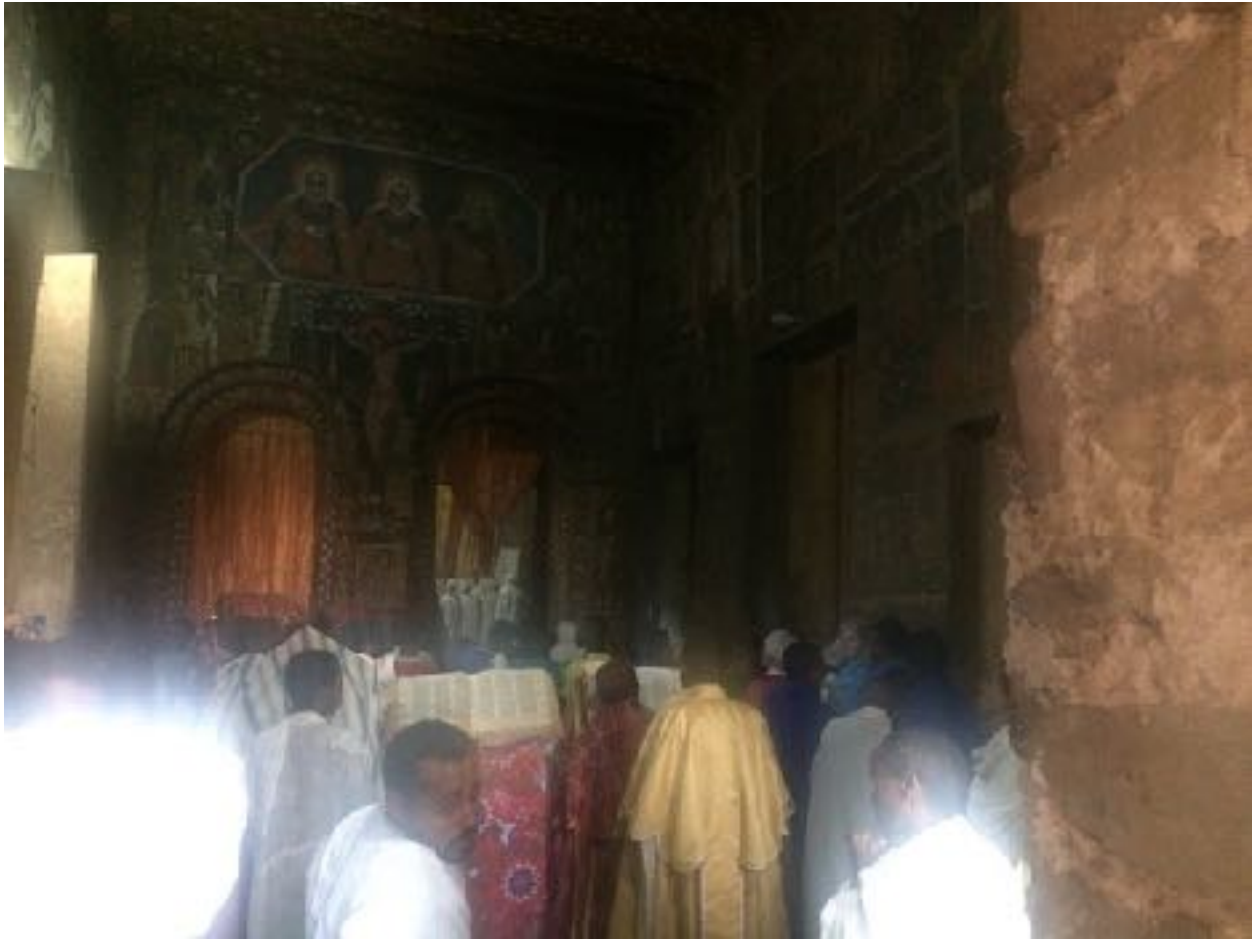
beehive in tree - they smoke it out from the ground, then climb up to retrieve it and the honey





cross above window on queen's castle





worship inside Coptic church



Coptic Church



Tunket Celebration Fasiledes Swimming Pool





Note how the roots come over the wall!



dinner - Steve has lamb, I have chicken, plus red beets, rice, kale

April 5  
Hi!

4:30 p.m.

We're back at our hotel after a busy day, we're sitting on the patio - a couple of people were in the pool.

The hotel was without power for at least 5 hours overnight.

Back to yesterday - Steve had diarrhea in the afternoon and I started after supper - travelers' disease. We had both been careful to not eat salads or unwashed vegetables, but still got sick. Our driver Mollie and guide Bayuh took me to a drugstore and got some medicine for me - I guess it worked because I've been ok today.

I called my sister in Chicago last night - just touched the button for her number in my contact list, and she answered! Her letter yesterday had been unreadable so I wanted her to resend it. I can call the U.S. with no problems, but can't call Steve who is nearby - need a Sim card to call inside the country.

We then drove to Simen Mountain National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We stopped on the way to pay the entrance fee and pick up a guide and a guard (with rifle). We then drove about 15 miles to the park - the road in the park was gravel and very bumpy. The park is at 17,000'. 6000 people still live within the park, but they are trying to get that population down. We soon came to a troop of baboons - these were "friendly" ones vegetarians (some in other parts carnivores are aggressive). We got out of the van (a Toyota Land Cruiser) and took photos.

We drove on, then stopped and got out for a "trek" (hike) for an hour. I was fine most of the time but was really huffing and puffing when we climbed the hills over 10,000 ft. We stopped for views overlooking a deep gorge - think Grand Canyon. We didn't encounter any leopards, so our guard did not shoot his gun. When we arrived where the van was, we were offered another 2 hour trek, but we figured we were ok at that point, but 2 more hours would be too exhausting. We saw an ambulance heading toward the park exit.

We drove back to the Simen Lodge where we had lunch - it's a fixed menu - we chose the vegetable soup, Steve had fish cutlet (he hoped it wouldn't be fried, but it was), I had the spaghetti with tomato which was delicious, wish I could have found out what spices they used. We had the caramel flan which had maple syrup on it for dessert. It was much too much food, should have shared a meal.

We looked at the baboon troop across the street from the lodge - we had stopped to see a baboon troop earlier. There were goats near that troop. The ambulance was headed back into the park as we left. Then we drove back to the hotel. We stopped at Fahshe Village (It had been Jewish for many centuries. About 1984 Israel snuck most away to a secret airstrip in Sudan and flew them out. Local Christians moved in and kept doing the local crafts.) We purchased some souvenirs. The lady invited me to come into her house - the front room had about 8 living room chairs lining the walls. The next room had a bed (the daughter said that was



where they slept) and some cabinets. The room to the left (L-shaped house) had a couple of chairs and appeared to be where they ate.

Some random thoughts: There were many sheep around today, many at the market (Easter is on Sunday), saw a man carrying a sheep on his shoulders. At the market, the sheep stand close together and don't run away. Barley is grown at high altitudes. It is used in making injera and beer. The roads here are 2 lane - you must stop/slow down for tuktuks, burros, goats, sheep, horses pulling wagons, people in the roads, potholes, missing pavement. I saw several futsal tables in the villages we passed. Mollie said he's driven us about 900 km so far. There aren't too many bugs here, but we have had mosquitos in our room when we left the window open at night. Ethiopian artists show people with large eyes with white around the brown - I really paid attention tonight and noticed that that's the way the people look (except their eyes aren't quite as pointed at the corners).

It is sunny, about 74 I guess. (I brought my raincoat today, so it didn't rain!)

Hello again!

8:30 p.m.

We just came back from supper. Bayuh and Mollie (male) took us to Four Sisters Restaurant which is run by 4 sisters and caters to tour groups - there were 5 tour groups at the restaurant. When we arrived a man blew a horn to welcome us. As we walked into the restaurant, a man played a tune on a small single string cello. We had honey wine, a local wine. It is poured into a glass shaped like a flask with a very thin neck. The youngest sister brought coffee grounds around to welcome us. Then we had the buffet - all of the food was identified as to what it was and as to whether it was spicy or not. All was very good. Both Bayuh and Mollie ate with us - the first time they ate with us.

I try to send the photos each night, but at times the program revolts and I give up until it works better, so today's photos may come at 1 a.m. your time which is 8 a.m. Ethiopian time.



goats in Simen Mountain National Park



baboons





more of the troop of baboons



Simen Lodge





ramp at a construction site





roadside shot



house where we bought souvenirs and I went inside



typical logging truck in Ethiopia with one horsepower! the 25'+ eucalyptus logs drag on the road as the horse pulls them





Ethiopian countryside



baboons in Simen Mountain National Park





view along our trek





another look down



poisonous tomato plant





a different view in Simen Mountain National Park





Lynne at the edge!



Lynne with honey wine, Bayuh at Four Sisters Restaurant which is at the dead end of a dirt road in Gondar



Four Sisters' Restaurant - buffet in center





buffet



ceiling of Four Sisters



the man who played the small cello to welcome us - sorry it's blurry



April 6

Greetings from Lalibela! el. 8333 ft

This morning after breakfast we finished packing. Mollie and Bayuh picked us up at 8:30 and we started driving east. We drove and drove, stopping for lunch at 11:30 (that was the only restaurant for non-Ethiopians on our trip today). I ordered the spaghetti with tomato because it wasn't supposed to be spicy. You guessed it, it was very spicy! Steve's scrambled meat dish which was supposed to be mildly spicy wasn't spicy at all. Our dishes, which had been ordered before Mollie's and Bayuh's arrived much after theirs. They finally replaced my dish with spaghetti with vegetables which was not spicy.

Shortly after that we came to a part where there were deep valleys 5000 ft on both sides of the road, elevation @ 9300 ft and the mountain ridge was about 10' wider than the road - God made the two valleys so that they did not meet, until they join the Great Rift Valley 1500 ft, with just the narrow mountain in between. The end of the plateau is 11,500 ft. and drops quickly to 5000 ft. I saw at least 4 vehicles which had gone off the road in that winding road section - one must have happened shortly before we passed it - the front part of the double truck was hanging off the side of the road, the back section still on the road - there were rocks on the pavement to warn of the road being blocked.

We continued on our way, stopping for coffee (which I don't drink) - I usually stand and look around while they drink coffee. I was feeling exhausted (even though I slept fairly well), so spent much of the drive with my eyes closed, which helped a bit. At 64 km to Lalibela we turned on to a dirt/gravel road which was really bumpy. At one point Mollie stopped and got out to check the tires. There was one section which had been paved. For several kms we rode on the wrong side of the road because the right side was closed - fortunately we didn't meet anything going the other way.

We finally arrived here at 4:30 <http://harbehotel.com>. Our room is on the second floor (which is really the third floor - the ground floor is floor 0) at the end of the outside corridor. We have a balcony overlooking the mountains. We arrived just before it started thundering. It poured for a while, not sure if it's still raining. The wind is blowing - quite a wind noise - I just checked and closed the balcony door tightly, hopefully that will solve that problem. We also have roosters crowing in the neighborhood and I can hear goats baaing.

Some random observations: larger villages have health centers, only large cities have hospitals. A couple of the farm villages we passed had 2 story houses - a stone basement with the mud and straw covered sticks above. In the larger villages with apartment houses there were numerous satellite discs on each one. We passed 2 lowland baboons along the road. We often had to stop and wait for animals to get out of the way so we could pass.

It's now 8:18 p.m. We ate dinner in the hotel restaurant (only customers - we eat around 6:00, much earlier than people in other parts of the world). Steve had the lamb stroganoff, I had the roasted lamb, both came with rice, carrots (which was really cabbage, kale, and one piece of carrot), and potato chips which they made.

I spend about 2 hours writing to you and sending photos each day. Steve said this letter was lost, but fortunately it turned up again - I'm glad! Sometimes the photo app acts wonky, so you get some photos one day, the rest another day. Sometimes the outbox says the e-mail is not sent and then it gets sent more than once.

Answers to some questions posed by some of you (there are 96 who receive my e-mails). \*The horizontal lines on the one hill in a photo appear to be terraces which are manmade. Each farmer knows which one is his plot, though they appear the same to us. \*The gorge in Simen Mt. National Park is not part of the East Africa Rift Valley. \*Cathy commented that her father made the ring from the palm each year on Palm Sunday. \*Arvis said that the injera bread is also a Caribbean staple called Jera, which is very flakey and light. Injera bread is not flakey, more spongy. \*We're sorry to miss Parkville Senior Center's anniversary celebration, but they planned it on the wrong date! \*Irene reminded us that we are in a Third World country and it is so different from the blessings we have in the United States. The church we attended last Sunday was a Lutheran church, located next to the Lutheran seminary. \*I'm not sure of the significance of the birds in front of the Coptic church, Rosie, but I found them interesting.

From Steve: There is much rich farmland and pasture, with no mechanization. Ending farm animals in the US and elsewhere much more than doubles the food for people. Adding modern agricultural practices might enable Ethiopia to increase populations 4 times. The US could do much more than that. The great forest of the East and South used to be crop land until the Mid and West out competed them in the U.S. Eastern Europe has vast forest that could be crop land. The World population could be well fed at more than a four fold increase. Doomsayers make their income by doomsaying. There is little market in truth. btw the US is a low tax nation especially for the rich and corporations. No one gets paid saying that.

Please continue to pray for us for safety and for health. Thank you!

Have a good weekend!

God bless you.  
Lynne and Steve



Photos along the way - typical house, maybe 12' x 20'





along the way



out the side window



another view





view from our hotel room



Lynne is unpacking in Lalibela - larger room than the last 2 hotels



sunset from our hotel outside corridor

April 7

Greetings from a dark hotel!            8 p.m.

The electricity went out in this area about 40 minutes ago - we were eating at a restaurant around the block when suddenly it went black,. I had my flashlight in my pocketbook, so had it out in moments. Some people turned on the flashlight in their cell phones. Eventually the waitresses got some candles out. We were finished, just waiting for our ride, which was very late (they're always early!).

Supper wasn't that great - I ordered roast veal, got beef instead, spinach which didn't taste at all like our spinach (tasted more like kale), cabbage, carrots, and potatoes that were so hard I couldn't mash them at all. Steve ordered the buffet which started at least 30 minutes later (late). Oh, well!



Supper didn't agree well with me, so I chose to come back to the hotel. I'm also having difficulties with the altitude - at least I guess that's why I'm not feeling up to par (besides not sleeping well).

Steve went with our guide and driver to the Easter worship at one of the stone churches ( MedhaniAlem). The Coptic Christians celebrate Easter a week later than we do. They have been fasting for 55 days, they have had nothing to eat or drink for a day and a half. They are there to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ and there will be prayers and candle light ceremonies accompanied by chanting and dancing of the priest until 3:00 in the morning. It's only after the ceremony is over that everybody goes home to break the fasting with the special Easter meal and the feast which has begun at the church continues all day long and the weeks to come. I just didn't feel up to going and standing for 3+ hours - only the Coptic are allowed to stay after midnight when the sacrament of Holy Communion is celebrated.

This morning we went to visit the rock-hewn churches including: Bete Gabriel, Bete Mercorios, Bete Emanuel, Bethlehem and Bete Aba Libanos. We started above Bete MedhaniAlem. Bete means house. It is a Semetic language same as Hebrew where beth means house. The churches were carved down into the rock between 1000 and 1270 (when you build, you build up from the bottom). They had to be excellent architects to carve through the stone and have the pillars in the right place to hold up the roof (there are arches between the pillars to support the roof), to make everything look perfect. These churches now have a roof covering them because rain water was starting to leak through the roof. I have a fear of heights and we were 3+ stories above the church, looking down at it with no guard rail, etc., to keep you from falling.

We walked down the steps to walk around the church and then to go in. You take off your shoes before you enter a church. Medo was hired to watch our shoes, to help me take them off and he put them back on at each church. He was really helpful to me, holding my hand as we walked over many uneven rocks, up and down uneven steps, etc. - I would have never made it without his help. He told me that the poor people assist others so that they will get money for him to take home to his mother. (Yes, he will receive a good tip.)

Back to Bete Medhani Alem. We walked around inside the church - there are rugs covering the floor which makes walking a bit easier. This is the only church with external pillars - it's also the largest one. It's a free standing church, not attached to the rock walls. It's cut from basaltic scoria. The sacrament is prepared in a cave near the church. The church is built on a slight angle (side to side) to follow the geology of the rock. The churches are carved below the ground so that an enemy won't see it from a distance. First the water drainage had to be figured out before carving began.

There is a fertility pool outside the church - it's as deep as the church is high. A barren woman would be lowered by rope into it and supposedly she would give birth within a year. There's also a baptism pool where King Lalibela's nephew and another king were baptized.

We went into another church (I can't remember the names of each) which is a semi attached church, the front of it is open to the corridor, the sides, back, and roof are attached to the rock wall. It has 4 pillars and 2 naves. Each church has a Holy of Holies which only the priest and deacons can enter.

The Bete Mariam (church of Mary) on one sidewall has 3 crosses for the Trinity. Below that is one cross to symbolize Jesus coming to earth. The next symbol down was Mary's womb. The bottom 3 crosses were for Calvary, to symbolize Jesus in the center, the repentant thief with an arrow facing up above it, the other cross had an arrow pointing down, all of this is carved in the stone wall. This church has 3 porches. There are frescos painted above the arches (such as the flight to Egypt, a fight between Good and Evil), and symbols on the arches (the Star of David is one of them). There is a second floor in this church with 7 galleries which contain the treasures of the church.

We walked up the uneven rock to have a look down at these churches. We could have visited the Market, but it was extremely crowded and it was warm (85+), and I wasn't feeling well so we didn't do that. We could see thousands of people in the market.

We then went to the Bete Giorgis (George) which is the most famous one because it is the most frequently pictured one. We observed it from above - it has a stone cross carved on the roof. Then we walked down the uneven steps/rocks to enter it. The last 3 steps up to it are probably at least 16" high - not too bad going up, but not easy to go down. The guard priest sits in front of the Holy of Holies to be sure you aren't tempted to enter it.

We drove a couple of blocks, stopped at a open air coffee "house" - a thatched roof, no sides to it. There was a pool table in the similar "house" next to it. The men had coffee, I got coke since I don't drink coffee. We were dropped off at the hotel. We didn't want to eat the buffet, opted to eat some of the snacks we had as our lunch - we've been eating too much! Steve worked on the computer, I worked on counted cross stitch and took a rest. There's constant noise (roosters crowing, sheep baaing - they've been separated from where they grew up, don't know what's going on, that they will be dinner tomorrow).

(I can hear someone chanting - I'm guessing it's from one of the rock hewn churches which are only a few blocks away.) The electricity just came on! It's been off for more than 2 hours.

Then we were taken to the Nakutelab Monastery which is like a cliff dwelling. We walked down the uneven steps to it. Some people were already "camping out" inside to get a spot for this evening's service (6 hours early). The priest showed us some of the treasures of the monastery, including the king's cross, an Axumite cross, frankincense (which only grows in the lowlands), and a parchment book (the Book of Saints). It rained for a few minutes while we were in the monastery.

We came back to the hotel and rested for a couple of hours before going to the restaurant.

Sorry about the sometimes multiple e-mails - the computer says it wasn't sent, then sends it several times. Most of our photos from today have not come from our cell phones yet, so will have to send them at another time.



Lynne commented that we see the truth of the sheep / ox know their master. They follow, obey and when out on their own to graze come back home. After they are sold the new owner has to lead them away by a rope. We stay in fine hotels without AC and heat or screens. Basically not necessary, rare fly or mosquito.

What I attended could be called an Easter Vigil. It began with the lighting of a large candle. Later all were given a candle (a piece of rope dipped in wax) 2 ft long. Since people are intelligent they do not need to be told to be careful. The detailed instructions we give about candles I find insulting. "Hey stupid, too dumb to keep from burning yourself and others."

The young man, our guide commented that the last song was especially beautiful since it was about how the blood of Christ brought salvation to the world. I could hear little difference in any of it. Actually reminded me of Native American chant, drums and actions. At times the people stood and at others, they curled up on the floor while the clergy 20 + chanted and read. Very long readings, very long chants. A phone records an hour for 3 GB so I recorded sections. The clergy were seated at the narthex, entrance end of the nave, opposite from the Holy of Holies - beyond the curtain. I stood in the center so close to the lead clergy I could have touched his back. The most excellent place possible to record and see.

Have a good Lord's Day!

God bless you.  
Lynne and Steve



Lynne and Steve with St. George church



taking off shoes in front of St. George church





priest guarding Holy of Holies inside St. George Church, painting of St. George killing the dragon on left



monastery under the cliff





Lynne and Bayuh in front of monastery - under black pepper trees





men waiting in monastery church for Easter vigil to start in 4 hours



priest showing monastery treasures





monastery parchment book





monastery treasures



In the Easter vigil



Easter vigil





People sleeping on floor during Easter vigil



gutting the Easter lamb

April 8

Happy Easter!

Steve went to the Coptic Easter Vigil last night - he said that standing on the uneven, sharp stones without shoes was very hard. He came back shortly after midnight. Mollie and Bayuh went back for the service until 3 a.m. They said that the people who had been curled up like balls on the floor resting during the Easter vigil wanted to be able to stand for the final 3 hours of the service after midnight.

After breakfast we relaxed until we were picked up at 10:30. We could see the Ethiopian neighbors had killed their lambs and hung them on a tree in their yards to clean them and prepare them to be roasted for dinner today.

We were driven to the site of the Monolithic Cross. One of the kings created a pilgrimage site here in Ethiopia because it was dangerous to go to the Holy Land. He had a "Jordan River" created to show where Jesus was baptized - a cross marks the spot. During the rainy season it is filled with water but now it is dry - it is part of the water drainage for the churches.

We walked up a hill to visit the other Lalibela's remarkable churches. First we went to Bete Gebriel and Raphel which is two churches which share a roof. The restoration is partially sponsored financially by the U.S. Embassy. There was a long narrow path to it to remind us that the path to heaven is narrow. Bayuh gave us each a branch of the black pepper tree to wave to keep the insects away. It is a very roughly hewn church, not as well done as the other churches. It may have been a secular building since it is the only one which does not have an east/west orientation. There was a bakery nearby where the Eucharist (Communion) bread was made. We went into each of these churches, walking sock-footed on the very rough stone floors. Even with carpets over the rocks, it hurt to walk at times.

We then walked a 30' tunnel which was narrow and low - kept our one hand on the left side and one hand on the ceiling so as to not bump our heads. It was stone (at least we had our shoes on for this) and very uneven stones - we walked in the dark, so I walked very slowly, feeling my way with hands and feet.

We entered Bete Mercorios which is dedicated to a Roman martyr. It had paintings of priests with censers (incense burners) in hand on one of the pillars. This was also a monolith (cut away from the rock walls). We entered Bete Emanuel - I can't remember much about it because I didn't take any notes on that one.

The last church was Bete Aba Libanos. It is cut away from the rock walls on the sides but the roof is in the rock, so it is attached to the rock walls by the roof but you can walk around it (think of the the rock churches in Petra). It is considered a cave church. It was constructed of timber and rock - the rest of the churches did not have wooden timbers as part of them. It is very small so the singers and dancers had to be outside the building



between the Church and the back cave wall. It showed much need of renovation. High on the pillars were carved “angel eyes” on all four corners, symbolizing that God is always watching His creation in all directions. Each of the churches was constructed with 3 sections, larger churches had larger sections, but always three. The section for chanting and dancing was outside the structure when small.

We ended at a high point where we could see in many directions, overlooking much of the town and the churches. Many of the houses have corrugated metal roofs, so it's hot inside. I was so grateful to have Medo's helping hand to climb up and down rocks and steps (some were very high) and over the rough terrain. I'm sure I would have fallen many times otherwise.

We came back to the hotel, ate some snacks for lunch, and have been relaxing, trying to read the newspaper online, cross stitching, etc. We heard a lot of thunder earlier, now it's raining.

We missed being part of a Christian Easter service so looked online for one. The services which are online kept breaking up, so Steve googled April 1, 2018 Lutheran worship video and first on list was Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, South Dakota. YouTube worked well so we could feel part of celebrating Easter.

Random observations: I looked out last night in the middle of the night and the stars appeared so close and huge that I could touch them! The Big Dipper was just above the houses. We saw a flock of tiny birds (chickadee size) - their backs were brown with blue underneath. Yesterday we saw some white beak starlings which are endemic to here. Bread is served with no butter. Toast is always burned at this hotel! There was no incense at the Easter vigil or at almost any other place. Steve has only seen one person make the sign of the cross - he expected it to be done quite frequently.

Last night's restaurant was next to the Lutheran World Federation office. It is doing forest restoration here.

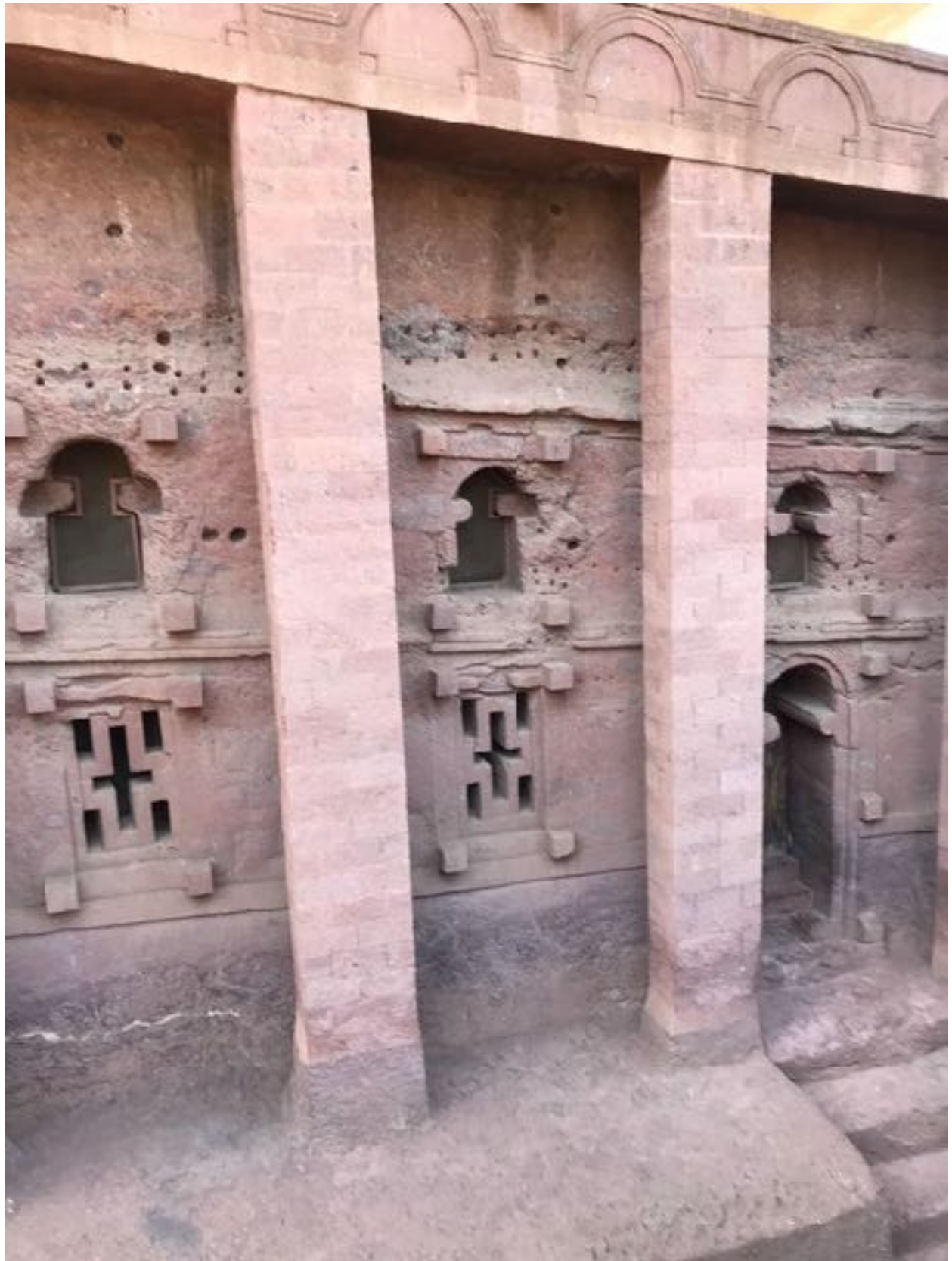
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lalibela>

We just returned from eating dinner in the hotel restaurant. Their rolls are quite good. I had roasted lamb, he had lamb stew - just isn't Easter without lamb! (But I prefer mine with the mint jelly I make.)

We fly tomorrow morning to Axum to see more stone churches. Please continue to pray for safety and good health for us. We pray for you.

Have a good week.

God bless you.  
Lynne and Steve



first rock hewn church, taken from above





a view of Mary's Church and porch



church of St. George







## St. George Church



view of the market on the far hill - thousands of people there



Open air coffee house, Lynne's in the corner with Bayuh



Bete Gabriel and Raphel - they share a roof, may have been administrative building





inside



taking off shoes outside Bete Mercorios (Roman martyr) - Tedo is taking off my shoes



some of the steps we climbed down





Bete Emmanuel



a baptism pool outside of Bete Emmanuel



Tedo helping Lynne up the steps





Bete Aba Libanos, a cave church



view from near the rock churches, Lalibela



looking toward first group of stone churches (on left in photo)





climbing down over rocks from viewpoint



view from roof of our hotel in Lalibela

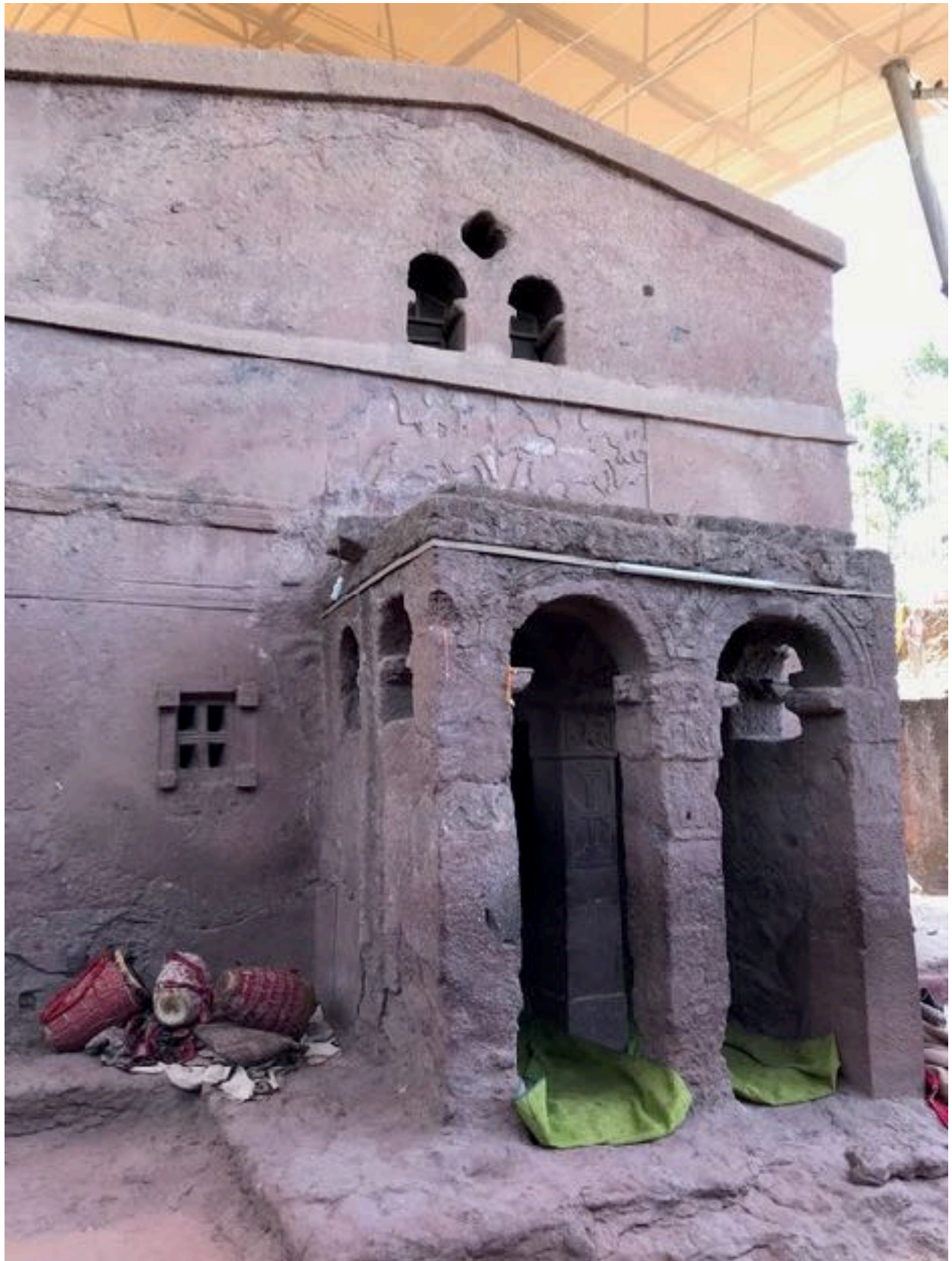


Lynne on roof above our hotel balcony





typical house built of sticks with mud/straw to cover the sticks. There is no interior bracing, so it may lean after a while. The round huts were the original houses.





St. Mary's church and porch. The drums have the small end, a symbol of the Old Testament, the large end, a symbol of the New Testament with a cord connecting the ends together, symbolizing that the Old and New Testaments are connected. You can see the rugs in the porch. Note how rough the stones are.



another shot of the first church, Bete MedhaniAlem where Steve went to the easter Vigil





shot from our outside corridor to the elevator at our hotel (the only elevator in town is in this hotel) - the red flowers are poinsettias



a typical barn





Easter vigil

Harbe Hotel Lalibela <http://harbehotel.com>

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April 9

Greetings from Axum!

This morning we flew from Lalibela to Axum, the original capital of the Kingdom of Aksum, one of the oldest continuously inhabited places in Africa. Its archaeological sites were added to the UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 1980. Its elevation is 6,991'.

We had to go through security, including shoes off to enter the airport, then also to get to the departure area. I watched our plane land before we boarded it - it landed on the runway, turned around on that runway, and came back to the airport - the same thing happened when we landed in Axum after a 25 minute flight. Obviously these are not very busy airports! We flew over a large reservoir. Mollie left us at the airport in Lalibela, then started the 2 day drive back to Addis. We have a different driver here - he's not as impatient as Mollie but he also isn't as gentle in going over the bumps in the roads.

First we went to the National Stelae Park when we saw stelae which are about 1700 years old. The stelae have become a symbol of the Ethiopian people's identity. The largest one (79'), the Great Stele, believed to have fallen during construction, is in five pieces. The Obelisk of Axum and the King Ezana's Stele are the other ones which are extensively carved. There are other smaller ones standing. The stele are believed to mark graves. We saw the Tomb of the Blind Door. It is a mystery how these large stelae were transported from the mountain where they were cut from the granite to the site without breaking and then how they were erected. They weigh many tons!

Then we went into the archaeology museum which is over two graves to preserve them. A guide was provided, he spoke English but wasn't always easy to understand. Unfortunately no photographs were allowed in there. It was interesting, including paintings of bringing Christianity to Ethiopia (the second country to accept Christianity). There was a large (at least 30" high) pottery pot which was made without a potter's wheel. The coins before Christianity had a sun and crescent moon, after the conversion to Christianity they had a cross on them. In 330 AD Frumentius of Tyre was shipwrecked here, he is credited with converting the Emperor Ezana to Christianity. One hundred years later 9 saints from Syria are credited with continuing to convert the Ethiopians. Saint Yared in the 6th century wrote

the music for the liturgy and originated the church school system which made Ethiopia a literate country for more than 1000 years.

We then checked into the hotel and had time to rest.

Bayuh then took us to several sites around the city. We saw a camel walking down the street. First we stopped at the bath of the Queen of Sheba, a huge pool where they celebrate Jesus baptism on Jan. 19. There were people filling their water cans from the muddy water. Their burros waited patiently to carry the full cans home.

Next we stopped at a small building in which was a stone tablet which announced the greatness of the kingdom and the victories in war of King Ezana in Greek, Ge'ez (the Axum written language), and Sabea. It was dedicated to the Triune God. The Kingdom of Axum was at its height in the 4th century under King Ezana. We were mobbed by children selling souvenirs as we got out of the van.

We drove to the site of a large church which is no longer there, but there are tombs under the ground. The builders took large stones and made impressive walls, fitting them so perfectly together without any mortar. We also were mobbed there with souvenir sellers.

We went to the church built by Haile Selassie for men and women, one of the largest domes in the world. Many women were bent over with short 18" brooms, cleaning the floor - we had to leave our shoes outside, but many people walk barefoot so the floor was extremely dirty. Other women were sweeping rugs outside which would be placed back in the church. There were many paintings on the walls, showing Bible stories.

Steve was taken to the monastery then - only men allowed, so I waited with Bayuh. "Ethiopian Orthodox Church claims that the [Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion](#) in Axum houses the [Biblical Ark of the Covenant](#), in which lie the [Tablets of Law](#) upon which the [Ten Commandments](#) are inscribed. The historical records and Ethiopian traditions suggest that it was from Axum that Makeda, the [Queen of Sheba](#), journeyed to visit King [Solomon](#) in Jerusalem. She had a son, [Menelik](#), fathered by Solomon. He grew up in Ethiopia but traveled to Jerusalem as a young man to visit his father's homeland. He lived several years in Jerusalem before returning to his country with the Ark of the Covenant. According to the Ethiopian Church and Ethiopian tradition, the Ark still exists in Axum. This same church was the site where Ethiopian emperors were crowned for centuries until the reign of [Fasilides](#), then again beginning with [Yohannes IV](#) until the end of

the empire. Axum is considered to be the holiest city in Ethiopia and is an important destination of pilgrimages.” (from Wikipedia).

We saw the outside of the building where the Ark is claimed to be. Then we went to the museum on the site - we had to leave all of our bags and cameras in a locker outside and were wanded before we could go in. The guide here spoke some English but I couldn't always understand him. We saw the crowns of the various kings, some of their robes, some of their wive's robes, umbrellas, baskets for communion bread, more.

We drove on a “super highway” - 4 lane divided, no bumps! for about a mile to the ruined palace of the Queen of Sheba. Actually it is a 17th century stone palace, but some believe her palace is under this one - this probably was built by a king. We saw a candelabra cactus - it's actually a tree, the cactus looks like a candelabra. We also saw an acacia tree, also called the African umbrella. A weaver bird had a nest in that one - it looked like a small basket.

It's supper time - some noisy “musicians” have been trying to break our eardrums with their noise - hopefully they will quiet down before bedtime! Our room is right along the main drag through town, so it will probably be noisy. But we may not have roosters crowing, as we have had for the past 3 days. Goats, sheep, burros, horses walk down the streets, some accompanied by someone, some alone. It's sunset (6:30), but can't see it because of all the buildings in the way.

It's now 7:40 and we've finished dinner. We had the choice of vegetable soup or cream of green peas soup, grilled fish or chicken chasson, both with cooked vegetables (cabbage and carrots) and rice, fresh banana. Steve had the veg. soup and fish, I had the other. There was more mushrooms and onions than chicken, I think! It's not quite so noisy outside now, but still not at all quiet.

I asked for prayer because I always pray before traveling. It doesn't seem any more dangerous than any other place.

God bless you.

Lynne and Steve



April 10

Greetings from the Sabean International Hotel in Axum!

This where we stayed last night. There was no wifi. We slept better last night, but I'm still exhausted! We ate breakfast here - the menu in the room listed "tasted bread" as the first option - glad we had a buffet so didn't have to eat that! We took a walk up the road after breakfast. We passed the "Axum No-Name Cafe" which was doing a good business.

We were picked up at 10 a.m. Before we left Axum we had to wait for a camel train to cross the road ahead of us - I'd guess at least 30 camels roped together. Teff, sorghum, wheat, chickpeas, flax are raised in this area. We stopped for a photo of the Adwa Mountains where the Ethiopians beat the Italians who had tried to take them over. Ethiopia is the only country in Africa which was not colonized by a European country.

We drove to Yeha, the birthplace of Ethiopian civilization, Cush, in the Horn of Africa. In the 7th century B.C. a temple here was dedicated to the highest deity of Saba, the god Alnrah (spelling uncertain). The temple still stands - it had 6 stone pillars. Its wall stand 14m high @ 50', is the oldest standing building in Africa. The builders were quite precise in putting the stones in place with no mortar. A newer church has been built since this one has no roof or second floor. There was an opening in the roof - you can see the water drainage rocks. Steve stood between where 2 of the pillars would have stood - he figured that was how Sampson brought down the temple on the Philistines in the Old Testament story. The usual placement of pillars spaced them too far apart for Sampson to do what he did.

We walked through the surrounding cemetery, both very ancient and new - most tombs have 20-25 bodies in them, there is no coffin, body is wrapped in a shroud and placed in the family tomb.

A priest showed us the treasury room. He offered homemade beer - Steve tasted it, but I didn't want to take a chance on it. He took out a parchment

book (1000 years old) with a wooden cover which had notes over the words so you can chant them - he chanted a section for us. there were some paintings on the walls - one showed one of the 9 saints with a python around his middle - he wanted to place a monastery on a high mountain but couldn't climb the cliffs to it - the snake supposedly picked him up and put him on the top. Today men can visit the monastery by climbing ropes up (no women). The Ethiopians claim that one of the Wise Men who visited the baby Jesus was Melchior from Ethiopia who brought frankincense which is raised in Ethiopia.

We then walked to the ruins of a palace, built of wood, mud, and stone. It burned in the 4th century B.C.

### Yeha - Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yeha>

We saw an African hoopi (I'm not sure of the spelling) - it's a bird (larger than a blue jay) with a brown head with spots on it and black and white body - you can see the black and white stripes when it flies.

We passed red hot poker plants and aloe vera plants along the road. There are occasional green fields. We've seen almost no solar panels.

We came back here to eat lunch just before 2 p.m. We shared spaghetti with meat sauce (very dry sauce, not much sauce) and each had a large roll. Steve walked down the street, so I've had time to write to you. He just came back - he stopped for a cup of coffee - first she had to roast the beans over a charcoal fire, grind them in a mortar pestle then mix them in water and put in a tall thin necked flask and boil over the fire, checking several times that it was done, finally 10-15 minutes she served a demitasse cup with a container of course refined sugar. It was very good.

At 4 we will be picked up and taken to the airport. We fly to Addis Ababa just after 6.

Hope you are well.

God bless you.

Lynne and Steve



Yeha





temple at Yeha from the 7th century B.C.



detail from corner of 7th century B.C. temple corner - no mortar used



view from Yeha





Steve pretending to be Samson, pushing the pillars down on the Philistines He is standing between two column bases



inside the temple



is it a lion? a Saint Bernard? rock formation seen from the newer church

I am having a great time sharing these.





camels crossing street in Axum



mountains of Adwa where the Ethiopians won the war with the Italians



countryside near Axum





view of mountains near Axum



another view of the countryside



Queen Sheba's bath





Queen Sheba's bath - later we saw people filling cans of water from this pool (at the left top corner)



Stele with telling about the war victories in Greek, Sabean, and Ge'ez



Haille Selaise church for both men and women





inside the church, one of the largest dome church in the world. Women are sweeping the floor, removing the dirt the people brought in on their bare feet (all shoes removed before entering church), many people walk barefoot



picture of St. George and the Dragon in a parchment book in church



African bird





Monastery on right, old church where the Ark of Covenant is supposed to be locked away in center, new church where it is to be moved



another pretty African bird



inside the church treasury - Sabeen language on stones, crosses, parchment books





parchment book with notes above the words for chanting



parchment book - what bright colors for a centuries' old book!



African hoopie





queen's palace at Hela



making coffee along the road in Axum



Ethiopian Cultural Experience - singer and band





Lynne and dinner for 4 - injera is around the edge of the platter

Greetings from our Ethiopian airplane!

11:35 a.m.

Officially our plane took off 5 minutes ago, but we're still on the ground and loading. We didn't even get on the bus to come to the plane until almost 11:20 and our plane was to take off at 11:30. Oh, well! We're in the very, very last row of the plane, seats 33A and 33B. It's a full plane! We are flying to Nairobi, Kenya, for a 3 day safari. There was a mother and daughter (about 3), both dressed alike in matching long white and gold dresses with white trousers underneath.

Yesterday our plane departure was moved an hour and a half later. Our 25 minute flight was uneventful. We didn't land until almost 8 p.m. My one suitcase, which was supposed to be a carry-on was checked, we waited and waited and waited for it - afraid it was lost - but it finally showed up (it

had our meds in it). Bayuh took off with our suitcases instead of going through the x-ray machine, and found the driver waiting for us.

He took us to Ethiopian Cultural Experience “Yod Abyssinia Traditional Restaurant” - it was very loud! We had reserved spots just inside the door. A band was playing, ladies and men dancing on the stage. This was our farewell celebratory dinner. Bayuh ordered honey wine (but it was very smoky, not as tasty as we had at the Four Sisters). Then he ordered a special national dinner combination of national fasting and non fasting dishes plus gomen besega (“local cabbage with chopped meat cooked with garlic, onions and seasoned butter, comes on fire” - the description of the meal) - it came in a pot with a heater under it. Bayuh told me which foods were not spicy and I had plenty to eat. A man came with a dispenser to put soap on our hands, then had a fancy pitcher from which he poured water on our hands - he had a fancy bowl held under our hands as he washed the soap off. We ate with injera (bread), so were eating with our hands. After we were finished, he came back and washed our hands again. There were several children present, all dressed up - it’s Easter week, so they are doing special things. One of the boys, about 6, was dressed like his father, all in white with an embroidered red belt.

Several different groups performed on stage, including a group of older male teens. We heard flute, stringed instruments, drums, saw several dances. The women all had floor length dresses on, very pretty. It was very interesting.

We finally got to our hotel (Jupiter Bole) where we stayed before while in Addis. We were welcomed back. We were one floor up in the same room. When Steve looked over the construction site this morning, he noticed 5 women working on it (in skirts), doing construction work.

More random thoughts: Neither military or police carry weapons. The fire truck came to meet each incoming flight in Axum and stayed until we departed. If our daughter Stephanie’s fire truck met every flight at Reagan Airport (where she is a paramedic/fireman), the fire truck would never be in station! The Chinese are building a major expansion to the airport in Addis. There are direct flights to 5 Chinese cities from Addis. However, we saw very few Chinese, compared to the hordes of Chinese travelers in

other countries we've visited (for example: St. Petersburg, Russia, Sweden, Finland last fall).

Someone asked: Steve plans our trips, including hotels, flights, etc. This was the easiest trip he planned because he used a couple of companies which offered tours. Except for our trip to China where we had tours, we usually venture on our own. Since China and Ethiopia and Kenya are so different from our culture, we are using tours for them. We used the Grand Holidays Ethiopia Travel & Tours [www.holiday-to-ethiopia.com](http://www.holiday-to-ethiopia.com) and were very satisfied with them - they went out of their way for us, meeting us at the airport when we arrived a day early, taking us to the airport to leave, taking good care of us in the meantime. Tomorrow we go on a 3 day Safari. Steve is scheduled to preach here Sunday. We met the General Secretary at a conference in Birmingham last summer and he is meeting us at the airport. We will return to Addis on Monday, fly back Tues. evening, arriving Wed. 8:45 a.m. at Dulles Airport with an 18 hour flight. All our flights are on Ethiopian Airlines.

Hello, again!

It's now 8:30 p.m. Our flight was uneventful. Since we were in the last row, we were the last ones off the plane. We got on the bus, then went to the terminal. Many of the people were stopped at one point to check their passports but we were motioned on. We had only about a minute's wait to get our visa to enter the country. Our suitcases came in a few minutes.

Then we waited outside for a long time to meet the man who was picking us up. He was at Terminal 2, we were at Terminal 1-A, it took a long time for him to check his messages and to realize he was at the wrong place. He and his son picked us up and drove us to the hotel. He is the Secretary General of the Lutheran Church in Kenya. Steve visited with them for the rest of the afternoon and we treated them to dinner. Those three had the buffet, but I wasn't very hungry, so ordered off the menu (chicken/pasta dish). It took them at least 45 minutes to prepare it - not very happy about waiting so long!



It was sunny, probably close to 80 when we landed around 2 p.m. There was an afternoon shower - it poured for several minutes, maybe a half hour. I don't know what the temp is like now, since we haven't been out. Most of the days for the last several, we have had a shower, but it's been in the upper 70s.

This is a luxury hotel. You must use your room key to make the elevator go up. You must use your room key to open the doors to your corridor. Of course you need the key to enter the room. You must put the key in a special device next to the door to turn the electricity on. Our tv was set for English and turned on with a welcome message to Funck. Outside each doorway are 2 narrow mirrors.

Tomorrow at 7 a.m. we leave on safari for 3 days. Don't know what the wifi situation will be there.

Thank you for your prayers. I appreciate hearing your comments and questions.

God bless you.  
Lynne and Steve



the Chinese are constructing the Addis Ababa airport additions



inside the monastery





inside the monastery



candelabra tree





nest in tree - made by weaver bird?





Queen of Sheba palace - probably not her's (dated too late, but one of a king



another view of the stone palace



African umbrella tree

April 10

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We finally got to our hotel (Jupiter Bole) where we stayed before while in Addis. We were welcomed back. We were one floor up in the same room. When Steve looked over the construction site this morning, he noticed 5 women working on it (in skirts), doing construction work.

More random thoughts: Neither military or police carry weapons. The fire truck came to meet each incoming flight in Axum and stayed until we departed. If our daughter Stephanie's fire truck met every flight at Reagan Airport (where she is a paramedic/fireman), the fire truck would never be in station! The Chinese are building a major expansion to the airport in Addis. There are direct flights to 5 Chinese cities from Addis. However, we saw very few Chinese, compared to the hordes of Chinese travelers in other countries we've visited (for example: St. Petersburg, Russia, Sweden, Finland last fall).



Someone asked: Steve plans our trips, including hotels, flights, etc. This was the easiest trip he planned because he used a couple of companies which offered tours. Except for our trip to China where we had tours, we usually venture on our own. Since China and Ethiopia and Kenya are so different from our culture, we are using tours for them. We used the Grand Holidays Ethiopia Travel & Tours [www.holiday-to-ethiopia.com](http://www.holiday-to-ethiopia.com) and were very satisfied with them - they went out of their way for us, meeting us at the airport when we arrived a day early, taking us to the airport to leave, taking good care of us in the meantime. Tomorrow we go on a 3 day Safari. Steve is scheduled to preach here Sunday. We met the General Secretary at a conference in Birmingham last summer and he is meeting us at the airport. We will return to Addis on Monday, fly back Tues. evening, arriving Wed. 8:45 a.m. at Dulles Airport with an 18 hour flight. All our flights are on Ethiopian Airlines.

Hello, again!

It's now 8:30 p.m. Our flight was uneventful. Since we were in the last row, we were the last ones off the plane. We got on the bus, then went to the terminal. Many of the people were stopped at one point to check their passports but we were motioned on. We had only about a minute's wait to get our visa to enter the country. Our suitcases came in a few minutes.

Then we waited outside for a long time to meet the man who was picking us up. He was at Terminal 2, we were at Terminal 1-A, it took a long time for him to check his messages and to realize he was at the wrong place. He and his son picked us up and drove us to the hotel. He is the Secretary General of the Lutheran Church in Kenya. Steve visited with them for the rest of the afternoon and we treated them to dinner. Those three had the buffet, but I wasn't very hungry, so ordered off the menu (chicken/pasta dish). It took them at least 45 minutes to prepare it - not very happy about waiting so long!

It was sunny, probably close to 80 when we landed around 2 p.m. There was an afternoon shower - it poured for several minutes, maybe a half hour. I don't know what the temp is like now, since we haven't been out.

Most of the days for the last several, we have had a shower, but it's been in the upper 70s.

This is a luxury hotel. You must use your room key to make the elevator go up. You must use your room key to open the doors to your corridor. Of course you need the key to enter the room. You must put the key in a special device next to the door to turn the electricity on. Our tv was set for English and turned on with a welcome message to Funck. Outside each doorway are 2 narrow mirrors.

Tomorrow at 7 a.m. we leave on safari for 3 days. Don't know what the wifi situation will be there.

Thank you for your prayers. I appreciate hearing your comments and questions.

God bless you.  
Lynne and Steve