



October 20, 2016



Jaffa, the Bedouin driver we caught a ride with back to Madaba, careened along at a high rate of speed on what seemed like the only desert road in sight. I looked back and saw Teresa “white knuckling” an interior roof handle that we formerly would call a name that would warrant our mother washing our mouth out with soap. Her glance told me that although a bit stressed as I was, she was okay. Periodically stopping with the same velocity as he accelerated, Jaffa would yell out some random, undecipherable Arabic phrase and point at a lonely camel or some other desert creature along the way.

Oh, by the way, the amount of English Jaffa spoke – zero, zilch, nada. The amount of Arabic we spoke – *less than zero*, zilch or nada. The thing is, even as new as we were to the region, I knew this was not a direct route back. I will admit that, for a second or two, thoughts of every bad situation in the world raced through my mind. The typical time for this trip was 35 minutes. Our current elapsed time riding in Jaffa’s “clean, one-owner” car - 1.5 hours!

After that amount of time riding around the Jordanian countryside, I attempted to expedite our passage home by using a well-known, time-honored method. I would make the English language more understandable to Jaffa by yelling and utilizing wild hand gestures. I mean, how could this not work? Well, it *didn't*. As we pulled into Madaba, I glanced at my watch – elapsed time: 2 hours. It was an unexpected and relatively stressful adventure, but in the end we were safe and even received an invitation to eat mansaf, the traditional Jordanian dish, with Jaffa’s family – at least I think that’s what he was inviting us to. Suffice it to say, it all worked out well and we didn’t end up captives of radical extremists, as most media television channels would have predicted.

By the time you get this, we will have been in country for about ten weeks. Our wild ride you just read about occurred right after week one, so we attribute the tiny bit of fear to ignorance on our part. It all comes down to getting to know someone or something. Knowing and understanding someone or something tends to erase the preconceived fears that have developed over time. At the same time, that new understanding teaches us what actions will either be culturally wise or unwise to carry out. Aside from primarily learning to speak, read and write Arabic, that is why we are here - **to understand**. Yes, we could have learned Arabic back in the U.S., but

PO Box 103  
Woodbine, GA 31569  
project1forty2@gmail.com



exposure to this culture has brought a level of knowledge and understanding that has so far proved priceless. Language class is going well as we are now well into learning basic Arabic grammar. We did very well and passed our first two examinations in reading and writing this past week. It's funny, after the oral portion of the exams, Teresa and I both agreed that never before have we actually had beads of sweat form from reading a language.



Our days stay busy with classes in the morning, walking to the food markets on the way home, and then studying for a few hours until the evening. We have heard it said so many times that Arabic is the second hardest language to learn, with Chinese being the first, but study and hard work are paying off and the Arabic is coming along well.



In bringing this letter to an end, we want to mention one more thing. If you are familiar with the *Lord of the Rings* series of books and movies, a seemingly impossible task is presented to a gathering of leaders. It's an arduous task of carrying a special ring to an evil place called Mordor. Amidst the arguing and debating of who will go - because none of them actually want to go - Frodo Baggins, a small character called a Hobbit, quietly steps forward and speaks: "I will take the ring to Mordor, though I do not know the way." The humble offering to "go" brings the chaotic debating to silence. Taken alone, Frodo's enormous task is sure to bring certain doom -- **unless a special fellowship is formed.** A fellowship created so that he doesn't endure the hardship alone. **Brothers, sisters, family and friends, you are our fellowship. Thank you for all of your support. We could not do this without you!**

Sincerely,

Pat + Teresa

Patrick and Teresa Houghteling

ولد الطويل  
وصف وصفة  
→ The boy of the tall man  
→ The tall man's

الولد الطويل  
The tall boy  
adjective should match with noun at definite-gender-number

الولد (طويل)  
subject  
The boy is tall  
-1 subject should be definite.  
-2 predicate should