

**CMJ South Africa & Shores Study Tours Presents:**

Israel Tour 29 April - 15 May 2018

Host: The Revd John Atkinson

Saturday, 28 April – 15 May 2018 : *Cape Town/Johannesburg - Istanbul - Tel Aviv*

**Day 1 Sunday, April 29th**

**The Desert World of Abraham & Moses**

After our late morning arrival we begin our journey leaving the coastal plain traveling south in the steps of the Patriarchs to the southern desert region called the Negev in the Bible (a name is still used today). Here we visit Tel Beersheva, one of the most impressive and ancient fortified cities of the Kingdom of Judah. As we travel we will discuss the importance of Moses and the Exodus from Egypt in Jewish religious thinking and its influence on Jesus and the Gospels.

We will then visit the home of one of the founders of Israel David Ben Gurion at Kibbutz Sde Boker. In the afternoon we'll stop at the Carmey Avdat Wine Estate along the ancient Spice Route, before checking into our hotel.

Overnight: Ramon Inn.

**Day 2: Monday, April 30th**

**The Way of the Wilderness: Biblical Spirituality**

We begin today looking over the spectacular Ramon crater. Here we consider the true location of Mount Sinai and study the geology of the area at the Mitzpe Ramon Visitors Centre. Traveling through the wilderness of Zin where Moses struck the rock in disobedience we discuss the lessons we can learn from this incident today. In the afternoon we stop at Tel Arad, a pre-Abrahamic major city and later an Israelite fortress.

Overnight: Ramon Inn

**Day 3: Tuesday, May 1st**

**The Kings Highway**

Today we travel South into the Aravah Valley towards the Israeli port of Eilat. We cross into Jordan and continue North on the Ancient King's Highway from Aqabah to Petra. We rest overnight before exploring Petra.

Overnight in Petra.

**Day 4: Wednesday, May 2nd**

**The Nabateans**

Today we visit the spectacular rose- red city cut from the rock. Petra was chosen as the capital of the Nabateans because it was located in a valley surrounded by sandstone mountains. The main entrance to Petra is called the Siq which has sides as high as 200 m (650 ft.). We will spend the day exploring this ancient settlement.

Overnight in Petra:.

**Day 5. Thursday, May 3rd**

**Moses View of the Promised Land**

Travel North from Petra to the King Hussein Bridge and cross into Israel. On the way we visit the town of Madaba where we see the beautiful mosaic map of the Middle East on the floor of St Georges Church. We stop on the summit of the Mountain from which Moses saw the Promised Land. From there we travel across the border into Israel and travel almost the length of the Dead Sea to reach our hotel at Ein Bokek.

Overnight in Israel: David Resort at the Dead Sea

**Day 6: Friday, May 4th**

**The Judean Wilderness: John the Baptist, the Kingdom of God, and the Parties of Judaism**

We begin the day at Masada, one of Herod the Great's magnificent fortresses and the last Jewish stronghold to fall captive to the Romans. Here we will discuss the nature of the Herodian dynasty and Zealot ideology. We then visit the Qumran ruins where the Apocalyptic Essene Community lived during the ministry of Jesus. Qumran is the home of probably the most exciting

archaeological discovery ever made in Israel – the Dead Sea Scrolls. Here we will discuss the relevance of the scrolls and their impact on Christianity. We return to the hotel to float in the therapeutic mineral rich waters of the Dead Sea and enjoy a relaxing free afternoon.

Overnight: David Resort at the Dead Sea

#### Day 7: Saturday (Shabbat), May 5th

##### The Jordan Valley: Promised Land, Trade Routes, and Power Struggles

Today we journey north through the up the spectacular Syrian African rift to the Galilee. We'll stop for an overlook of Jericho – the oldest and lowest city on earth, then continue on to Beit Shean, to examine the recent excavations of its Roman-Byzantine period when it was the location of Scythopolis, one the ten Hellenistic cities of the Decapolis. We'll stop briefly in Tiberias before continuing on to our hotel along the Sea of Galilee.

Overnight: Nof Ginosar, Galilee

#### Day 8: , Sunday, May 6th

##### Lower Galilee: Prophets and Miracle workers

Today we focus on the political, social and religious turmoil existing prior to and during the first century C.E. We visit the site of ancient Nazareth and see how this climate influenced Jesus' home life, town and early ministry. At the spectacular remains of Sepphoris we will examine Jesus' relationship to Elijah and Elisha. We finish the day with an overview of the Sea of Galilee from Mt. Arbel.

Overnight: Nof Ginosar, Galilee

#### Day 9: Monday, May 7th

##### Lake Kinneret: Rabbi Jesus and His Talmidim

Our day will be spent visiting various sites around Lake Galilee as we try to picture the Galilean ministry of Jesus and the lives of His disciples. We will start the day with a view from the traditional site of the Mount of Beatitudes where we'll study together about the Kingdom of God in Jesus' teachings.

We will do a contemplative walk down to Tabgha the traditional site of both the feeding of the 5,000 and of Jesus' final breakfast with the disciples. Our next stop will be Capernaum where we will discuss Jesus' relationship to the Pharisees. Along the way we will seek to understand the New Testament fishing industry of these places and their relationship to the miracles of Jesus. After lunch and a contemplative time by the shores of the Lake we will visit Kibbutz Ginossar to see a fishing boat from the time of Jesus. From there we will set sail on the Lake. Before heading back to our hotel we shall visit Beit Bracha, a CMJ centre on the shores of Galilee where we'll hear about the work of the ministry.

Overnight: Nof Ginosar, Galilee

#### Day 10: Tuesday, May 8th

##### The Golan: The Kingdoms of the East

Three major sites will occupy our time together today. We begin at a reconstructed biblical village at Katzrin where we will examine life in New Testament times and everyday imagery in Scripture. We'll then climb up to the magnificent Golan Heights to the Gamla nature reserve we will view an impressive city from the time of Jesus and take a gentle hike to the highest waterfall in Israel. There we will study some wildlife, including one of the world's biggest birds; we will discuss how this bird is depicted in the biblical text. We'll continue nearby to Israel's highest mountain. Here we will discuss the Transfiguration and its relationship to the Hebrew Scriptures. We'll finish the day at the nearby nature reserve of Dan. During a walk through the reserve, we will discuss biblical imagery such as living water and visit the Old Testament city of Dan.

Overnight: Nof Ginosar, Galilee

#### Day 11: Wednesday, May 9th

##### Prophets and Prophecy

Today we travel the route of the ancient Via Maris, first traveling south to Harod Pass visiting Beit Alpha to examine a beautiful mosaic of a very early synagogue floor. Here we will study the reasons of the separation of the early Jewish church from its Gentile siblings. Next we continue through the Jezreel Valley, to Tel Meggido to discuss Jewish apocalyptic literature and the Book of

Revelation. Before continuing down the coast to our new accommodations, we'll finish the day at Mount Carmel for a spectacular view over the North of Israel. Here we will study Elijah's defeat over the prophets of Baal.

Overnight: Olive Tree Hotel, Jerusalem

### Day 12: Thursday, May 10th

#### Herodian Jerusalem: The Second Temple Period

Our day will be devoted to learning about Jerusalem in the Second Temple era. An early start will take us up to the Temple Mount, where we'll consider some of Jesus' activities there. After a visit to the Western Wall, Judaism's most holy site, we will take a trip to the tunnels under the Western Wall plaza, affording us an exciting opportunity to walk in Jerusalem at what was street level in the time of Jesus. We then make our way through the Jewish Quarter of the Old City to palatial mansions that were the home of the Sadducees. Here we study Jesus' attitude toward the priesthood and Sadducee beliefs. We complete our day at the excavations at the southern wall of the Temple Mount where we discuss Pentecost.

Overnight: Olive Tree Hotel, Jerusalem

### Day 13: Friday, May 11<sup>th</sup>

#### The Philistines: Judges and Kings

Today we will spend our day in the lowlands between the coastal plain and the Judean Hills, called the Shephelah. We turn our attention to some of the vast agricultural imagery found in the scriptures by visiting the biblical gardens of Neot Kedumim. Here we will discover some of the rich symbolism for the cedar, hyssop, olive and other trees and plants. We then travel to the Valley of Elah, the location of the battle between David and Goliath, before making the final ascent to the city of the Great King.

Overnight: Olive Tree Hotel, Jerusalem

### Day 14 Saturday, (Shabbat) May 12<sup>th</sup>

#### Jesus in Jerusalem

Today we spend time on the Mount of Olives and consider the last week of Jesus' ministry before His crucifixion. We will recount events from Palm Sunday to Good Friday and the significance of Jesus' actions during this critical period.

Our morning will conclude with a visit to the Garden Tomb.

We will travel to a viewpoint that overlooks the hills of Ephrata. From here we shall see Bethlehem, and the possible location of the fields where the shepherds first heard of the advent of Messiah. We will consider the challenge of the Lordship of the Messiah to earthly rulers then and now.

Overnight: Olive Tree Hotel, Jerusalem

### Day 15: Sunday, May 13<sup>th</sup> (Jerusalem day)

#### The Spiritual and Political significance of the Nativity

We will worship with the local Christians in Christ Church Jerusalem in the Old City.

Free afternoon in Jerusalem

Overnight: Olive Tree Hotel, Jerusalem

### Day 16 Monday, May 14th

#### Rachel Weeping for Her Children

In the morning we will visit Yad VaShem, the Israel Memorial Museum to the Holocaust. Here we examine the spiritual and theological roots of the most notorious genocide in history and the connection between the Church, Jesus and the Jewish people prior to and during this period of time. There we will also visit the Children's memorial and discuss the impact of the Holocaust on Jewish-Christian relations today.

Free afternoon in Jerusalem

Overnight: Olive Tree Hotel, Jerusalem

### Day 17. Tuesday, May 15th

Transit; *flight - Tel Aviv - Istanbul - Cape Town/Johannesburg*

Arrive Cape Town / Johannesburg Tuesday, May 15<sup>th</sup> 2015

NB. *Itinerary may be subject to change at the discretion of the tour leader based on local conditions and time constraints.*