

THE LAND OF THE BIBLE

A Study-Tour of the Land of ISRAEL June 4-16, 2022 Allen P. Ross

Our next trip to Israel is scheduled for June 4 to June 16, 2022. The design of this study tour is to trace the biblical and historical roots of the faith as fulfilled in Jesus the Messiah; it will include archaeological sites, biblical settings, geography, culture, ministries and missions. It can truly be a life-changing experience – people who go often say they do not read the Bible the same again.

We are constantly aware of the political situation in the land and do everything to make sure it is a safe and enjoyable experience. If serious trouble flared up, we would cancel the trip of course. But even though there may be conflicts from time to time (usually in areas where we never go), things stay settled most of the time. We are very careful when we go and where we go in the land (or anywhere in the world these days).

On a trip like this everyone has to be flexible. We might find that a site is closed for the day with no reason given, so we re-route the trip on the spot. We will not miss things, but may not follow the exact order. So, everyone has to trust us and follow instructions.

The trip is arranged to make it as easy as possible; there will still be a good deal of walking in places, and not usually on smooth pavement; and there will be lots of steps in Jerusalem. But we go at the pace that the people on the trip can handle.

Day 1 Saturday June 4 ARRIVAL IN TEL AVIV

We arrive at Ben Gurion Airport near **Tel Aviv**, where we will be met by our guide and bus driver for the trip. From the airport we will travel to our hotel in Tel Aviv. Time permitting, we may have an opportunity to stroll on the beach. Overnight: Tel Aviv

Day 2 Sunday June 5 “How long will you halt between two opinions?”

This day will be a study of the clash of cultures. We will begin in the morning with a drive to **Caesarea by the Sea**, Herod’s gem of a city built to appeal to the Gentiles. Here is where Philip lived, Peter met Cornelius and the Gospel went to Gentiles, King Agrippa I died after his presumptuous performance on stage, and Paul was imprisoned before being sent to Rome. Then we will drive through the **Mount Carmel** range to lunch and then to visit our first archaeological *tel* (*tel* means “mound of layers of ruins”): **Tel Megiddo (har megiddo**, “Mount Megiddo,” or **Armageddon**); we will recall the major military conflicts that this place has seen over the ages and consider what is yet to come. Our last stop today will be in **Nazareth** to see the Church of the Annunciation, built over the first century ruins of the village in which Mary and Joseph and the child Jesus lived. Then we will go to our

hotel on the shores of Galilee. After dinner we will have a short time of worship and reflection on the ancient conflicts with other cultures and religions.

Overnight: Sea of Galilee

Day 3 Monday June 6 “Who do you say that I am?”

In Upper Galilee we start with an overview of the lake from the edge of the **Golan Heights**. From here we will drive to **Qatzrin**, a Talmudic village where archaeologists have reconstructed and re-furnished an early house (using original parts), providing us with many clarifying settings for the teachings of Jesus. Our drive will then give us a sighting of the way of the **Road to Damascus**. We will stop for lunch at a **Druze** village in the mountains, and then on to **Banias**, at **Caesarea Philippi**. Here against the backdrop of the remains of the temples to the god Pan, Peter made his great confession of faith and Jesus announced the foundation of his Church on a **rock**, before going up **Mount Hermon**, the most likely site of the transfiguration. We will have a short communion service here. Then we will go down to the **waterfalls**, one of the sources of the **Jordan** and the setting for a psalm. We will then walk alongside the rushing stream of “living water” to **tel Dan** to see the ancient Israelite altar and high place (made for the golden calf), an early arched entrance gate to the Canaanite city and the judicial entrance gate where Israel’s king and the elders sat to settle cases. In the evening we will discuss Peter’s confession of faith among other things.

Overnight: Sea of Galilee

Day 4 Tuesday June 7 “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.”

Today we will focus on the locations around the lake. First, the ruins of ancient **Bethsaida**, the home of some of the disciples, and then **Chorazin**, one of the cities Jesus cursed. Here we will talk about ritual baths and synagogue services in the ancient synagogue. Then, in the **Church of the Beatitudes** overlooking Galilee we will recall the Sermon on the Mount, and particularly the beatitudes. We will then descend to the lake to the **Churches of the Multiplication** (of loaves and fish) and of **Peter's Primacy** (where Jesus commissioned Peter to feed his sheep). After lunch at **Gennesaret**, we will see the "**Jesus Boat**" that was discovered when there was a drought and the water receded. Afterwards we will take a boat ride on the lake up to **Capernaum**, the city where Jesus spent so much time ministering; here we will see the remains of **Peter's house** that became a church, as well as the great **synagogue** close by. If time permits we will drive up to the top of **Mt. Arbel** for an overview of Galilee. In the evening for those able and interested, we will gather to discuss faith and righteousness in the teachings of Jesus, focusing on his warnings to these cities.

Overnight: Sea of Galilee

Day 5 Wednesday June 8 "Jesus came from Galilee to be baptized by John in the Jordan."

As we begin down the **Jordan Valley** we will see the place where the Sea of Galilee flows into the Jordan, a place conveniently set up for baptisms. Then, our first major stop will be at **Beth Shean**, to see another Old Testament **tel**, and more significantly a city of the **Decapolis**, the Roman city **Skythopolis**, with its theater, bath houses, temples, shops, public toilets, and streets – a good example of a Roman city, as pagan as they come, the kind that would attract any prodigal. After leaving this place we will have lunch in a Palestinian restaurant at the site of Old Testament **Jericho**, and then have a brief look at the ruins uncovered on the site and talk about the discoveries and the limitations of archaeology. We will be able to look across the valley to the **Steppes of Moab** where the Israelites gathered to fight against Jericho. From here it is a short drive to the remains of **Qumran** at the northwest corner of the **Dead Sea**, where some of the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. After this there will be time for a swim (a float) in the Dead Sea nearby. Our lodging is the nearby **Kibbutz Khalia**. In the evening we will have a time together in an unusual place.

Overnight: Dead Sea

Day 6 Thursday June 9 "The Voice of One Crying, 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD'."

Our day in the desert will begin with a walk up the valley of **En Gedi** to the waterfalls, hopefully seeing some of the wild animals along the way (ibex and rock badgers or conies); this is where David encountered Saul in the cave. Then we will go up **Masada** (by cable car thankfully), and investigate the desert palace and stronghold that Herod built and that was the last holdout of the Jewish zealots until their death in 73 A.D. When we finish we will walk down the Roman siege ramp at the back to our waiting bus and drive to modern Arad for lunch. Then we will visit tel **Arad**, an ancient Canaanite city below (from 2700 B.C.), and above it on the hill an Israelite fortress, built in the Solomonic time, that had a temple of its own, high altar, holy of holies, incense altars and other features. Afterward if time permits we will drive over to **Beersheba** to see the ancient ruins of the city and the

well. Finally, we will have a pleasant drive up to Jerusalem to Christ Church, our lodging for the rest of the time in Israel. In the evening for those who are game, we will have a short walkabout to get our bearings in the old city so people can wander without getting lost or you are welcome to attend the Sunday evening church service at Christ Church beginning at 7:00PM.

Overnight: Yad Hashmona, near Jerusalem

Day 7 Friday June 10 Relaxed day

We will begin the day traveling to the Neot Kedumim Park outside of Jerusalem. We will better understand the Parables of Jesus as we visit ancient agricultural sites seeing how cisterns, oil and wine presses and the threshing floor were used in the 1st Century. Next, we will go to **Yad Hashmoneh** and see how out of the ashes of the holocaust sprang new life in Christ, and, how Jewish believers in Jesus live as a witness.

Overnight: Yad Hashmona, near Jerusalem

Day 8 Saturday June 11 “I will make a New Covenant with the House of Israel”

we travel to **Mt. Gerazim**, the “Mount of Blessing” referred to in Deuteronomy and Joshua. Near the summit we will pass through a **Samaritan village** and then come to a fine overlook of Biblical Shechem. Our next stop will be ancient **Shiloh**, where the Ark of the Covenant rested and the Israelites gathered for Biblical feasts. *If you like* - At the nearby **Shiloh Winery** will have the opportunity to purchase some of the local vintage.

Overnight: Yad Hashmona, near Jerusalem

Day 9 Sunday June 12 “Jerusalem, that kills the prophets”

In the morning we will visit the **Temple Mount** itself, and all the areas related to it, especially the **Southern Steps** of the Temple where the disciples preached on Pentecost and thousands were baptized. Then we will walk back to the Jewish Quarter to see the **Herodian Villas**, the likely palaces of the high priests and therefore the place of Jesus' trial by Annas and Caiaphas. Lunch in the area, or back at Christ Church. After lunch we will go to the area the crusaders called Mount Zion, to the place of the **Upper Room**. We will then go to the area of the **Church of Gallicantu** (the "cock crow") for an overview of the city and the valley and **Aceldama**, where Judas hung himself. Finally, for those ready for more, we will go along the road to the **City of David**, and walk through the ancient site and down into the **water tunnel of Hezekiah**, which leads to the **Pool of Siloam** – yes, there is water in the main water tunnel, but there is also a dry tunnel if you wish.

Overnight: Yad Hashmona, near Jerusalem

Day 10 Monday June 13

"Out of Bethlehem will come the ruler"

First we will go just a few miles to the region of **Bethlehem**. We will begin with a stop at **Herodium**, one of Herod's fortresses, and the place where he was buried (his tomb was discovered a few years ago). Then we will pass by the **Shepherds Fields** as we make our way into **Bethlehem** where we will visit the ancient **Church of the Nativity** and the grotto of **St Jerome** next to it. An excellent lunch in Bethlehem follows. If conditions permit, we will go into **Samaria** to visit the ruins of the ancient city, then see **Mount Gerizim**, and also **Jacob's Well**. If time permits, we will make a brief stop at **Shiloh** where the ark of the covenant was during the time of Samuel. If we do not go into the West Bank, we will drive to **Maresha** to see the caves, then visit **tel Lachish**, a Solomonic city and military outpost for Jerusalem, and on the way back stop briefly in the **Valley of Socho**, where David fought Goliath. **"Jerusalem, that kills the prophets"**. In the evening we will have a **Passover Seder**, to be able to think But through the events of the Upper Room and the Passion of our Lord.

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Overnight: Christ Church Guesthouse, Old City Jerusalem

Day 11 Tuesday June 14 "Jesus Wept"

Our day will be focused on the Passion of Christ. We will start with an overview of the city from the top of the **Mount of Olives**. Then we will walk down to the **Garden of Gethsemane** and visit the **Church of All Nations**, designed to make you feel that you are in an olive garden at night. From there we will go up to **St Stephens Gate** and into the old city, stopping first at the place of **Bethesda** where we will recall the healing of the man and the troubled water. Here also is the **Church of St Anne** (the mother of Mary); its acoustics are so fine we have to sing! Then we will begin our journey up the "Way of Tears," called the **Via Dolorosa**, stopping at a few of the designated biblical **stations of the cross** to consider the suffering of our Lord, until we reach the **Church of the Holy Sepulcher**, the traditional place of the crucifixion and burial of Jesus. Lunch will be in the area, or around Christ Church five minutes away. (Sometimes we do this walk in reverse—not the order of the events, but it enables us to miss the crowds at the end, and it is all downhill). The rest of the afternoon and evening is free to pack, visit, or wander. After dinner we may have time to relax, walk about, or finish packing. The night spent in bed will be most welcome in view of the trip home. Flights usually leave Tel Aviv about midnight, so we will leave for the airport about 3 hours before our flight. The exact flights are yet to be determined.

Christ Church Guesthouse, Old City Jerusalem

Day 12 Wednesday June 15 A Final Day in Jerusalem

We start the day at Christ Church, the oldest Protestant Church in the Middle East. After lunch we take the short drive to Bethany to visit the traditional tomb of Lazarus. Our last event will be an afternoon visit to the **Garden Tomb**, the other place suggested for the burial of Jesus; here we will have a closing worship service with communion.

Christ Church Guesthouse, Old City Jerusalem

Day 13 Thursday June 16 TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

After breakfast we check out of the Christ Church Guesthouse. Going to the airport we may be able to make a stop or tour depending what time our flight departs. More on this later.

IMPORTANT - PLEASE NOTE:

- *Most days on this itinerary involve a regular amount of walking and/or climbing. Therefore this trip cannot generally accommodate those who have significant difficulty with climbing stairs or walking a half a mile at a time. Please be in contact with the trip leaders if you have any concerns about this.*
- *Itinerary and accommodation subject to change if conditions necessitate.*
- *It is mandatory for each participant to have travel insurance to cover medical costs or trip cancellations.*