

10-day Holy Land Tour

DAY 1 **USA/TEL AVIV**
Today we depart from the USA on our overnight journey to the Holy Land. (meals aloft)

DAY 2 **TEL AVIV/TIBERIAS**
We arrive in Tel Aviv, which was founded on the outskirts of Jaffa (biblical Joppa) in 1909 and today encompasses the ancient port city. From the airport we drive north to Tiberias for dinner and overnight at our hotel on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. (meals aloft,D)

DAY 3 **MAGDALA/MOUNT OF BEATITUDES/
CAESAREA PHILIPPI/SEA OF GALILEE/
CAPERNAUM/MOUNT ARBEL/TIBERIAS**

We begin our day at Magdala, home of Mary Magdalene. When excavating the synagogue, archaeologists found a coin minted in Tiberias in AD 29, indicating that the synagogue dates back to the time of Jesus' ministry here in the Galilee. Then we go a short distance to the Mount of Beatitudes. Somewhere on this green hillside overlooking the Sea of Galilee, Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount. From there we drive north into the foothills of Mount Hermon to Banias (Caesarea Philippi) near the headwaters of the Jordan River. In this area, Peter memorably proclaimed Jesus to be "the Messiah, the Son of the living God" and Jesus affirmed this by declaring "...on this rock I will build my church..." From there we drive through the Golan Heights and pass by Kursi, where a herd of demon-possessed pigs rushed into the Sea of Galilee and drowned after Jesus cast the demons out of a man. We continue along the eastern shore of the sea to Ein Gev and enjoy a traditional lunch of St. Peter's fish. After a memorable boat ride on the Sea of Galilee, we visit the ruins of ancient Capernaum. Jesus came here after being rejected by his hometown of Nazareth and adopted Capernaum as "his own town." Peter, Andrew, James, John, and Matthew all lived here, and this area became the center of Jesus' ministry in the Galilee. We conclude our day atop Mount Arbel, taking in the breathtaking view of the Galilee, and then we return to our hotel for dinner and overnight. (B,L,D)

DAY 4 **MEGIDDO/MOUNT CARMEL/
CAESAREA/TIBERIAS**

Today we drive southwest across the Valley of Jezreel to the ruins of Megiddo, the Biblical Armageddon, where we see Ahab's stables and the famous water system. We visit Mount Carmel where we visit the traditional site of Elijah's dramatic confrontation with the prophets of Baal. The summit offers sweeping panoramic views. Then we proceed to the Mediterranean coast to Caesarea, constructed by Herod the Great several years before the birth of Jesus. The massive harbor could accommodate 300 ships, and the hippodrome



could seat over 20,000 people at chariot races. It was in Caesarea that Peter baptized Cornelius the centurion and his household, the first known baptism of a gentile convert to Christianity. Paul visited here between his second and third missionary journeys and was later imprisoned here before being sent to Rome. After our time here, we return to our hotel in Tiberias for dinner and overnight. (B,D)

DAY 5 **CANA/NAZARETH/MOUNT PRECIPICE/
JORDAN RIVER/BEIT SHE'AN/JERUSALEM**

This morning we go to Cana, site of Jesus' first miracle, the changing of water to wine. Then we go to Nazareth, site of the boyhood of Jesus, to visit Mary's Well at St. Gabriel's Church, and the Church of the Annunciation, commemorating the place where Mary was visited by the archangel Gabriel. We drive outside the city to the top of Mount Precipice, traditional site where an angry mob tried to throw Jesus off a cliff following his Messianic proclamation in Luke 4. From this windswept hilltop, we take in spectacular views of Mount Tabor and the Jezreel Valley. Then we go to a baptismal site on the River Jordan located near the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee. From there, we travel south to Beit She'an, perhaps best known as the site where King Saul and his sons were hung from the city walls by the triumphant Philistines. During the Roman era, it was renamed Scythopolis and became the capital city of the Decapolis - the only one of the 10 cities on the west side of the Jordan River. The site offers some of the best-preserved ruins in the Middle East, including the second-century Roman theater. We continue through the Jordan valley and up to the "Holy City" of Jerusalem where we check into our hotel for dinner and overnight. (B,D)

DAY 6 **MASADA/QUMRAN/JERICO/
QASR EL YEHUD/DEAD SEA/JERUSALEM**

Today we go first to the majestic fortress of Masada, constructed by Herod the Great on top of a rocky plateau overlooking the Dead Sea. We ride the cable car to the top to explore the ruins and learn about the huge storerooms and cisterns that enabled Jewish defenders to stay well-provisioned for several years while under siege by the Romans following the destruction of the Second Temple in AD 70. After riding the cable car back down the mountain, we drive to Qumran to view caves where some of the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. Then we go to the

oasis of Jericho, the world's oldest continually inhabited city. Jesus restored sight to blind Bartemaeus here, and the tax collector Zacchaeus climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus in Jericho. We see the traditional Mount of Temptation, and then we proceed to Qasr El Yehud on the Jordan River, believed to be in the area where Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. It is also traditionally considered to be the place where the Israelites crossed the Jordan River to enter the Promised Land. We conclude our day (time permitting) with the opportunity to float in the Dead Sea and then return to Jerusalem for dinner and overnight. (B,D)

DAY 7 HERODION/BETHLEHEM

This morning we drive south from Jerusalem to Herodion, a cone-shaped hill near Bethlehem where Herod the Great built a fortress and palace, and where he was buried. At the base of the hill, Herod built a kind of royal "country club," including a large pool, a bathhouse, and a roofed pool, surrounded by magnificent gardens. From there we go to Bethlehem, birthplace of Jesus. First we drive along the wall that separates the West Bank from Israel and see some of the poignant artwork that sheds light on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. From there we continue to the Church of the Nativity, built over the traditional site of the birth of Christ and recently restored to highlight the vibrant mosaics on its interior walls. Before departing Bethlehem, we visit the traditional Field of Shepherds, where the angel announced the birth of Jesus to shepherds. Then we return to Jerusalem for dinner and overnight. (B,D)

DAY 8 ISRAEL MUSEUM/YAD VASHEM/ CAIAPHAS' HOUSE/CITY OF DAVID/ MT. ZION/WESTERN WALL/CITADEL SHOW

We drive past the Knesset, the Israeli Parliament building, and visit the Shrine of the Book at the Israel Museum, which houses the original Dead Sea Scrolls. We also view the scale model of Jerusalem in the 1st century. Then we pay a sobering visit to Yad Vashem, Israel's official memorial to the victims of the Holocaust, which preserves the memory of the dead and honors those who worked selflessly to help Jews in need. From there we go to Caiaphas' palace, where Jesus was first brought before the high priest. We then visit the City of David, the original core of the ancient city where Jerusalem was born. Here we explore ancient shafts, view walls and fortresses that protected ancient Israelites, and see the Gihon Spring, a vitally important water source that fed the Pool of Siloam. At Mount Zion, we see the traditional Room of the Last Supper. We spend some time at the Western Wall, the most holy place accessible to the Jewish people. We conclude our day at the Davidson Center and Jerusalem Archaeological Park, where we climb the "Southern Steps" leading to the original main entrance of the Temple Mount in the Second Temple period - stairs that Jesus would have climbed when he visited the temple in Jerusalem. From there we return to our hotel for dinner. This evening we attend the "Night Spectacular" sound and light show at the

Tower of David, where the story of Jerusalem unfolds through giant breathtaking, virtual reality images projected onto the walls of the Citadel. After the show, we are taken back to our hotel. (B,D)

DAY 9 MOUNT OF OLIVES/GETHSEMANE/ VIA DOLOROSA/GARDEN TOMB/TEL AVIV

We begin this morning atop the Mount of Olives, offering iconic views of the Old City. Then we follow the "Palm Sunday Walk," tracing the traditional route Christ took on his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Partway down the hill we pause at the Dominus Flevit chapel which commemorates the Lord's weeping over Jerusalem. We continue on to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus prayed while his disciples slept on the night of his arrest. A garden-like courtyard full of ancient olive trees has been preserved next to the Church of All Nations, also known as the Church of the Agony. After this time of reflection, we return to the Old City and enter through the Lion's Gate to visit St. Anne's Church and the Pools of Bethesda. Then we follow the traditional path of the Via Dolorosa, commemorating the route Jesus took between his condemnation by Pilate and his crucifixion and burial. Along the way we visit Pilate's Judgment Hall in the Antonia Fortress where Christ was imprisoned. The route concludes at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Then we end our day at Gordon's Calvary and the Garden Tomb, where in an inspiring service we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord. From there we return to our hotel with some time to rest and finish packing. Following dinner this evening we transfer to the airport to begin our journey home. (B,D)

DAY 10 RETURN USA

We arrive back in the USA this morning and continue on to our hometown. (meals aloft)

All sites listed in the itinerary will be covered but the sequence and days may be altered to adjust to religious holidays, special closings of sites, air schedules, etc. Hotels listed are subject to re-confirmation. This tour is not recommended for those who have mobility limitations since it includes significant amounts of rigorous walking on uneven terrain. If a passenger is unable to get on and off the bus and walk without the assistance of another individual, the passenger must bring someone with them to assist them. Please note that the Americans With Disabilities Act is not applicable outside the USA and facilities in other countries may be sharply limited.



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