

# 11-Day Holy Land Tour

including  
two nights at the Dead Sea

## DAY 1

## USA/TEL AVIV

Today we depart from the USA on our overnight journey to the Holy Land. (meals aloft)

## DAY 2

## ARRIVE TEL AVIV

We arrive in Tel Aviv, which was founded on the outskirts of Jaffa (biblical Joppa) in 1909 and today encompasses the ancient port city. We drive north of Tel Aviv and check into our hotel overlooking the Mediterranean, for dinner and overnight. (meals aloft,D)

## DAY 3

## CAESAREA/MOUNT CARMEL/ AKKO/JORDAN RIVER/TIBERIAS

We begin today at Caesarea, constructed on the Mediterranean 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. From here we drive inland, pausing to view the ruins of Megiddo, the Biblical Armageddon. We continue to Mount Carmel and visit the traditional site of Elijah's dramatic confrontation with the prophets of Baal. From the summit we take in the sweeping panoramic view of the Jezreel Valley. Then we proceed to the coastal city of Akko, known in New Testament times as Ptolemais, which was one of the stops on Paul's final return to Jerusalem. Sometimes called the "Gateway to the Holy Land," its location put it at the crossroads of major sea and land routes in ancient times, and its natural harbor served as the main port of the region until Caesarea was built. We conclude our day at a baptismal site on the River Jordan located near the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee and then we continue to Tiberias for dinner and overnight at our hotel on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. (B,D)

## DAY 4

## MAGDALA/MOUNT OF BEATITUDES/ CAESAREA PHILIPPI/SEA OF GALILEE/ CAPERNAUM/MOUNT ARBEL/TIBERIAS

We drive along the edge of the Sea of Galilee to Magdala, home of Mary Magdalene. When excavating the synagogue, archaeologists found a coin minted in Tiberias in 29 A.D., 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, where we 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 afternoon 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 5

## MOUNT PRECIPICE/SEPPHORIS/ NAZARETH/BEIT SHE'AN/DEAD SEA

We begin our day atop 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 the spectacular views of Mount Tabor and the Jezreel Valley. We continue to Sepphoris, traditional home of Mary, mother of Jesus. From there we go to Nazareth, site of the boyhood of Jesus, for a visit to Mary's Well at St. Gabriel's Church, St. Gabriel's Church, the traditional site where the Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and announced that she would bear the Son of God; and the Church of the Annunciation, commemorating the location where Mary was visited by the Archangel Gabriel. We go to Nazareth Village, the only enterprise of its kind dedicated to illuminating the life of Jesus through an authentically constructed, first-century town and restored ancient farm. It is in this venue that the stories of Jesus' childhood, ministry, and teaching are retold with elements of everyday life re-enacted. Following our time here, 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. Then we proceed to our Dead Sea hotel for dinner and overnight. (B,D)

**DAY 6****MASADA/DEAD SEA**

Today we visit 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, including 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 70 AD. After riding the cable car back down the mountain, we return to our hotel, with the remainder of the day at leisure. You may choose to relax on the beach, swim in the Dead Sea, or luxuriate in a massage or treatment at the hotel's spa. Dinner is included at the hotel this evening.

(B,D)

**DAY 7****EINGEDI/QUMRAN/JERUSALEM**

We check out of our hotel late this morning and drive to the refreshing oasis of Ein Gedi, nestled at the base of majestic mountains and cliffs, where David hid from Saul and chose to spare his life. Then we visit Qumran, where some of the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered. We continue past 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 view the traditional Mount of Temptation, and then we begin our ascent to Jerusalem, the "Holy City." On the way, we pause at a viewpoint overlooking the Wadi Qelt, the traditional "valley of the shadow of death," to see the spectacular Monastery of St. George, which was constructed by carving into sheer rock wall. Dinner is included this evening at our hotel in Jerusalem.

(B,D)

**DAY 8****DEAD SEA SCROLLS/YAD VASHEM/  
WESTERN WALL/DAVIDSON CENTER**

We drive past the Knesset, the Israeli Parliament building, and visit the Shrine of the Book, 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. After this time of reflection, we visit the Western Wall, the most holy place accessible to the Jewish people. We explore 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 here we return to our hotel for dinner and overnight.

(B,D)

**DAY 9****CAIAPHAS' HOUSE/CITY OF DAVID/  
MOUNT ZION/BETHLEHEM/JERUSALEM**

We begin today at 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. Then we go to Mount Zion, where we see the traditional Room of the Last Supper. From here 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. Then we go to the Church of the Nativity, built over the traditional site of the birth of Christ and recently renovated to highlight the vibrant mosaics on its interior walls. Before departing Bethlehem, we drive by 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 10****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 begin 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. Then 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. The route concludes at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. 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 for our return journey home.

(B,D)

**DAY 11****RETURN USA**

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

