

# ISRAEL

**JUNE 12<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

Our next trip that we have scheduled for the “Holy Land” Bible Study Tour will be June 12<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009. It will be a few weeks before we get all the pricing for the trip, but at this time we are announcing the time that has been blocked out for it and the itinerary that is planned.

This is a tour of the most significant places in the land of Israel for the study of the Bible, both Old and New Testaments; it is arranged through Shoresh, at Christ Church, Jerusalem. Christ Church is the oldest Protestant church in the Middle East; it is located inside Jaffa Gate in the old city, a short walk to all the important sites in the city. We will be staying in the guest rooms at the compound when we are in Jerusalem. The name Shoresh is a Hebrew word for “root”; the ministry of Christ Church includes the education of visitors to the land on the roots of the Christian faith. And so our Bible study from place to place will concentrate on the historical, cultural and literary background of the Gospel.

The tour is open to anyone who would like to participate; and as is the case with most tours, we will accept applications in the order of their submission. We are not ready to sign people up just yet; we need to have it priced and organized before that. But we want to announce it early so that people can consider it. If there are questions or if there are any who want to put their name on an early list, they should contact me, Allen Ross, by email, [drapross at aol dot com](mailto:drapross@aol.com).

## The Planned Itinerary

Fri June 12, 2009

Overnight Flight from the USA, from a gateway city to Tel Aviv. We will know the departure city and times and prices when we choose the airline.

Sat June 13

We will arrive in Tel Aviv in the afternoon; the airport will be very quiet and empty because it will be the Sabbath. When everyone has arrived we will go to our

hotel on the Mediterranean Coast, near Netanyah. After dinner we will meet for introductions, orientation, and prayer.

Sun June 14

After a Morning Prayer service, we will drive north to visit Caesarea Maritima, Herod's gem of a harbor city, and review all the connections to the New Testament, from Peter and Cornelius to Herod dying on stage to Paul's imprisonment. Then we will drive up to Mount Carmel to consider Elijah and the prophets of Baal, and have an overview of the Jezreel Valley. We will have lunch at nearby restaurant. After lunch, our first stop will be the ruins ("Tel") of an ancient city, Megiddo; here we will see what an archaeological site is like and what the archaeologists have found. And we will consider "har [mount] Megiddo," or Armageddon. Our last stop of the day will be in Nazareth to visit the Church of the Annunciation, and if possible, St Gabriel's Church for "Mary's Well." Then we will go to our hotel by Galilee for the next few nights.

Mon June 15

We will be in "Lower Galilee" today. There will be a short stop at the excavations of Bethsaida on the north side of the lake. Then we will go to Chorazin, a city Jesus cursed, and discuss Jewish Ritual Baths and Synagogue services. After that we will drive down to the Church of the Beatitudes overlooking the lake, and then down to the edge of the lake to see Tabgha, a church recalling the multiplication of loaves and fish, and also the Church of Peter's Primacy next door, where Jesus met the disciples after the resurrection. Lunch will be nearby at Gennesaret. Then we will see the "Jesus Boat," a fishing boat that had been preserved in the mud for two thousand years. A boat ride will take us up the coast to visit Capernaum, a major center of Jesus' ministry. Finally, before returning to the hotel, we will drive up to the top of Arbel for a short stop, an overview of the whole western side of the Sea of Galilee.

Tues June 16

Today is "Upper Galilee." We will stop at the site of Kirsi and discuss the demoniac and the pigs on our way up to the top of the plateau, the Golan Heights, for an overview from the eastern side of the lake. Then, our first main stop will be at a Talmudic village called Qatzrin, where the archaeologists put back together an early house and synagogue. Here we will discuss many passages in the Bible

because the place will provide the clear setting for them. We will drive to a lookout spot near the border with Syria, and the road to Damascus; but we will stop for lunch in a Druze Restaurant in the mountains. After lunch we will descend to Banias, one of the sources of the Jordan and a site for temples to Pan. Here we will have a brief Eucharist service and recall Peter's great confession. Then we will see the cave and reconstructions of the temples, and walk through some of the ruins of Caesarea Philippi. The rest of the afternoon will be spent walking alongside the water rushing down to the Jordan to see Tel Dan, one of the most amazing archaeological sites in the land. Finally, we will stop at the great waterfall where the waters come together to flow toward the Jordan. Then we return to the hotel.

Wed June 17

Our journey south begins today. We will stop briefly at the baptismal area of the Jordan River, and then proceed to Beth Shean for the morning. This site includes the Old Testament Tel on the top of the hill, and a whole Roman city down below, one of the cities of the Decapolis. From there we will go down to Jericho, have lunch and see the ruins of the old Tel. Afterwards we will go to Qumran and see the caves where some of the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, as well as the remains of the settlement. For those interested, we will have a late afternoon time to swim–float– in the Dead Sea. Overnight will be in a qibbutz right nearby, by the Dead Sea, Khalia.

Thurs June 18

We will start our day with a walk up the canyon of En Gedi, to the waterfalls, and consider how David hid out in the caves where Saul was sleeping. Then we go south to Masada, Herod's fortress/palace in the desert, and take the cable car up to the site. This is also where the Jewish zealots held out against Rome until 73 A.D. We will have lunch, and then drive west to Tel Dan to see the ancient Canaanite city, and the desert shrine built by Solomon, a replica of the temple in Jerusalem. Finally, we will drive over to Beersheba, the ancient home of the patriarchs. Then we will make our way to Jerusalem, to the old city, and to Christ Church, where we will stay for the rest of the trip. There will be an evening walkabout for those not too tired, just to orient everyone with the old city.

Fri June 19

Today is a free day in Jerusalem, for wandering, shopping, or resting. We

will make recommendations for those who just have to be doing something.

Sat June 20

Today we will do a walking tour in the old city and study the Temple area, some of the places of interest around it, the western wall, the first century streets and shops, perhaps the Temple platform itself, and the southern steps with the old entrances to the Temple and all the ritual baths below. After lunch in the Jewish Quarter, for those who are energetic there will be a walk down to the city of David to see the remains and the water tunnels, and to walk through Hezekiah's tunnel (in water) to the pool of Siloam.

Sun June 21

Church in the morning, either at Christ Church or a church nearby. In the afternoon we will visit the holocaust memorial, Yad weShem, and the Zionism museum nearby. In the evening will discuss these things along with biblical prophecy.

Mon June 22

Taking a break from the busy old city, we will go out west today. We will stop first to see a model of the city of Jerusalem at the time of Jesus, and stop at Nevi Samwel (the prophet Samuel) for a panorama of the hills around Jerusalem. But our main destination will be Neot Kedunim, a garden reserve for biblical studies where the trees, plants, and crops of the Bible are planted. We will have demonstrations fo olive presses, threshing floors, and even scribal activity. After lunch there we will work our way back, stopping at the caves of Mareshah, the valley of Socho where David and Goliath met, perhaps Tel Gezer if it is accessible, and then Yad Hashmoneh, a Moshav near Jerusalem where Jewish believers in Jesus thrive. Their story is encouraging to hear.

Tues June 23

A day about the Passion of Christ. We will visit the Mount of Olives for an overview of the holy city, and then walk down to Gethsemane and the Church of All Nations. From there we will walk up to Stephen's Gate, and into the Church of St Anne to sing. This is next to the remains of the Pool of Bethesda and the troubled water. We will then walk up the Via Dolorosa to the Church of the Holy

Sepulcher, stopping at a number of the stations of the cross on the way. After lunch we will go over to the Garden Tomb and Gordon's Calvary, another site suggested for the death and burial of Jesus. Here we will have another communion service in the garden. In the evening we will have a Passover Seder meal at Christ Church and talk about the Last Supper.

Wed June 24

In the morning we will walk over to the area today called Mount Zion where the place of the Upper Room is located; then we will walk to the Jewish Quarter to see the Herodian Villas, the probable place where Jesus was taken to be tried by Caiaphas. After that we will drive to Bethlehem for an authentic Palestinian lunch, and then visit the Church of the Nativity and Jerome's Grotto. On the way back there will be a place in Bethlehem to shop for whatever is not yet bought; and then we will return to Christ Church. The rest of the afternoon and evening is free for packing and wandering.

We usually leave for the airport later that evening (depending on the time of the flight) for a middle of the night or early morning flight. We will arrive in the USA on the 25th.