

“THE HOLY LAND”

A Study-Tour of the Land of ISRAEL

June 10-23, 2011

**with an optional add-on of
Turkey and Greece,
June 23-July 1, 2011**

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We are now finalizing the details for the next study tour of the land of the Bible in June, 2011. The main trip will be to Israel, to trace the biblical and historical roots of the faith as fulfilled in Jesus the Messiah; we will use the Gospel of Matthew—and the text will come alive in a new way as we travel in the holy land. But we will also meet many believers along the way, discover current ministries, and experience first-hand some of the ideas and issue that plague the area.

The trip is arranged in conjunction with *Shoresh*, located at Christ Church, Jerusalem, the oldest Protestant Church in the Middle East. *Shoresh* means “root”; and this name signifies the purpose of the organization, which is to introduce visitors to the biblical and historical roots of the Christian faith. And so our focus as we journey from place to place will be on the historical, cultural and literary background of Christianity through to its fulfillment in the person of Christ Jesus. In short, this is a Bible Study tour, in the setting of the land of the Bible. So in the evenings we will have informal discussions and Bible studies scheduled—which are purely optional.

Shoresh is part of CMJ, the Anglican Church’s Mission to the Jews and other people of the land. Christ Church is located just inside Jaffa Gate in the old city, a very short walk to all the important sites in the old city. Besides the church, Christ Church compound has its own guest rooms, classrooms, dining room, museum, book store, lounge and relaxing courtyards. We will be staying in the guest rooms there when we are in Jerusalem. There are fancier (and more expensive) hotels in Jerusalem, but we stay here for three reasons: 1) location—location is everything for seeing old Jerusalem; 2) Middle Eastern experience—it is a period piece, with

much of the Turkish influence evident; 3) Support–Christ Church is a ministry–here we learn of their work and encourage them.

We will stay in a lovely hotel in the Galilee, owned and managed by the Church of Scotland. And we will spend one night in a Kibbutz by the Dead Sea, a must experience on a trip to Israel, but also convenient for us in saving much travel time from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea.

The tour is open to anyone who is interested in seeing the land and learning more about the Bible, the Christian faith, Judaism, and Islam. As is the case with most tours, we accept applications in the order of their submission. We do have a limit of how many people we can take (how many places there are at Christ Church), and so it is wise to sign up early. <mailto:drapross@aol.com>.

The following itinerary is what we have planned, but in the Middle East such plans always have to be flexible. We might find something closed for a religious purpose the day we wanted to be there, and so have to re-arrange the schedule (such as when the temple mount area might be closed suddenly). Or we might find a new arrangement that makes it difficult to do what we planned at the time (such as now crossing a border to go to Bethlehem). Or we might find something is now available that we did not plan to do, and it is better than something we did plan (such as visiting Samaria and Shiloh in the West Bank). So the important thing to remember is that we have to be flexible. We usually complete all the planned itinerary and more, but sometimes in a different order.

The Planned Itinerary

Friday, June 10

Overnight flight from the gateway city in the USA; everyone must make their way to Atlanta in plenty of time for the departure. Delta Flight 152 leaves Atlanta at 10:15 p.m.

Saturday June 11

We will arrive in **Tel Aviv** at Ben Gurion Airport about 5:00 p.m. (there is a 7 hour difference in time from the East Coast to Israel, so our arrival is 10:00 a.m. Atlanta time). The airport will still be very quiet and empty because it will be the end of the Jewish Sabbath (at sunset). When everyone has arrived we will meet our guide Mickey, and our bus driver with G. B. Tours Bus Company out of Nazareth, for the trip. We will go to our hotel on the **Mediterranean Coast** to spend the first night, have a good meal, and get over the flight a bit. After dinner we will meet briefly for introductions, some orientation, and prayer.

Sunday June 12

After Morning Prayers (for those who are up) and breakfast, we will drive north to visit **Caesarea Maritima**, Herod's gem of a harbor city, and review all its connections to the New Testament: Peter's visit to Cornelius (Acts 10), Herod Agrippa's death on stage (Acts 12), Paul's trial and imprisonment (Acts 23-26), and several connections to the early Church. Then we will drive up through the **Mount Carmel** range, have an overview of the Jezreel Valley, and consider the account of Elijah and the prophets of Baal. After lunch nearby, we will visit the ruins (the

tel, “a mound of ruins”) of an ancient city, **Megiddo**, where we will see what an archaeological site is like and what archaeologists have found here. We will also talk about “*har* [mount] *Megiddo*,” or “Armageddon” in the New Testament (Rev. 16). Our last stop of the day is in **Nazareth** to visit the Church of the Annunciation and the grotto from the village of Joseph and Mary and Jesus (Luke 1; Matt. 2). Then, to our hotel in Tiberius, the Scots Hotel, on the shores of the sea of Galilee for the next few nights.

Evening: For those who are interested and able, we will have a short review of the day and the biblical significance of Nazareth based on Isaiah 11.

Monday June 13

We will be in “Lower Galilee” today, that is, down around the lake. There will be a short stop at the excavations of **Bethsaida**, on the north side of the lake, the home of some of the disciples; and then a longer visit to the ruins of **Chorazin**, a city Jesus cursed (Matt. 11), where we can see and discuss Jewish Ritual Baths and Synagogues. We will drive down to the Church of the **Beatitudes** overlooking the lake, a traditional sight of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7); and then we will go all the way down to the edge of the lake to see **Tabgha**, a church commemorating the multiplication of loaves and fish (Matt. 14), and the Church of **Peter’s Primacy** (John 21) next door, where Jesus met the disciples after the resurrection. Lunch will be nearby at **Gennesaret**. There we will see the “**Jesus Boat**,” a fishing boat that had been preserved in the muddy shore for two thousand years. We will take a boat ride on a modern (and larger) replica, traveling up the coast to visit **Capernaum**, a major center of Jesus’ ministry (Matt. 8, etc).

Evening: There will be another optional gathering after dinner to review the day, and to consider the words and works of Jesus from Matthew 9 and 11.

Tuesday June 14

Today is “Upper Galilee.” We will drive around to the other side of the lake, to the site of **Kirsi**, to recall the account of the demoniac and the pigs (Mark 5). Then we will wind our way up to the top of the plateau, the edge of the **Golan Heights**, for an overview from the eastern side of the lake of the main areas of Jesus’ Galilean ministry. From there we will head north in the heights; our first main stop will be at a Talmudic village called **Qatzrin**, where the archaeologists have put back together an early house and synagogue among the ruins of the ancient village. Here we will take some time to discuss several events and teachings in the Bible because the place will provide the perfect setting for them. Farther north we will drive to a lookout spot near the border with Syria and the area of the **road to Damascus** (Acts 9). Our lunch stop will be in a **Druze** Restaurant in the mountains. After that we will descend to **Banias**, one of the sources of the **Jordan** and a site for temples to the pagan god **Pan**. Here we will have a brief Eucharist service and recall Peter’s great confession, Jesus’ revelation of building his church, and the transfiguration (Matt. 16, 17). Then we will see the cave and reconstructions of the temples that are by the ruins of **Caesarea Philippi**. The rest of the afternoon will be relaxing and illuminating. We will walk alongside the edge of the water rushing down to the Jordan, until we come to **Tel Dan** (first mentioned in Gen. 14:14), one of the most amazing archaeological sites in the land; it has the Israelite city gates with seats for the elders for court, the ancient high place that brought idolatry into Israel (1 Kings 13), and the ancient “Abraham Gates” from the old Canaanite part of the city (Gen. 14). On the way out of the area we will stop at a waterfall

where the waters come rushing together to flow toward the **Jordan** (Ps. 42).

Evening: The Transfiguration and what it meant to Jesus, the disciples, and us.

Wednesday June 15

We leave the Galilee and journey south today. We will go by a modern baptismal area of the **Jordan River** and consider the baptism of Jesus (Matt. 3). Then we will visit **Beth Shean** for the morning. This site includes the Old Testament *tel* (1 Sam. 31) on the top of the hill (for those with the energy to go up), and a whole Roman city on the level ground below the *tel*, one of the cities of the **Decapolis**. From there we will go down the Jordan Valley to **Jericho** (Josh. 6), have lunch in a Palestinian restaurant, and see the ruins of the Old Testament *tel*—the New Testament *tel* is close by this place. Afterwards we will go to **Qumran** on the northwest corner of the Dead Sea, and see the caves where some of the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, as well as the remains of the Essene settlement. For those interested, we will have a late afternoon opportunity to swim—i.e., float—in the **Dead Sea**, salty water and mud packs as well! Overnight will be in a **qibbutz** named Khalia, right at the Dead Sea. So we will not have to go far to our rooms.

Evening: Another little study will be offered on the ministry of John in the desert (Matt. 3) and the temptation of Jesus (Matt. 4).

Thursday June 16

We will start our day in the region of the Dead Sea, so we will have a morning walk up the canyon of **En Gedi** (“the spring of the goats”) to the waterfalls, and recall how David hid out in the caves where Saul was sleeping (1 Sam. 24). Here we should see some wild life, the elegant ibex and the little rock badger. Then we drive a little further south to **Masada**, Herod’s fortress palace in the desert, and take the cable car up to the top. This is the place where the Jewish zealots held out against Rome until 73 A.D., about 40 years after the death of Jesus. We will walk down the back of Masada next to the Roman ramp remains, where our bus will meet us and take us to Arad, where we can have lunch and then visit the ancient remains of **Tel Arad** (Num. 21). Here we have the ancient Canaanite city (from about 2700 B.C.), but more importantly to us, the desert shrine that was built by King Solomon (ca. 1000 B.C.), that includes a replica of the temple in Jerusalem, with high altar, altars of incense, and holy of holies. Then we will drive west to **Beersheba**, the ancient home of the patriarchs (Gen. 21, 26), to see the well and the city. Finally, we will make our way up to Jerusalem, to the old city, and to Christ Church, where we will be staying for the rest of the trip.

Evening: There will be a brief evening walkabout for those not too tired, just to orient everyone to the old city so no one will get lost when wandering.

Friday June 17

A half day of leisurely walking around Mount Zion and the Jewish Quarter. We will first walk over to the area today called **Mount Zion** (not the biblical Mount Zion which was the temple area) where the place of the **Upper Room** is located (a later chapel is on or near the site; Mark 14; Matt. 26); then we will walk down to the **Church of Gallicantu (Cock crow)** for a good overview of the city and valleys. After a brief time we will make our way over to the Jewish Quarter to see the **Herodian Villas**, the lavish place of the high priests where Jesus was very likely taken to be tried by Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin (Matt. 27). When we are through, we will be in the area for lunches, and close to Christ Church. The rest of **the afternoon will be free**, places in the Jewish Quarter will begin to close in mid afternoon to get ready for the

Sabbath.

Evening: The significance of the Upper Room in the life of Christ and the early Church.

Saturday June 18

The morning **will be free in Jerusalem**, for wandering, shopping, or resting. Jewish shops and restaurants will be closed until sundown.

At noon we will drive to **Bethlehem** for an authentic Palestinian lunch (the price is a little more, but it is a feast), and then visit the **Church of the Nativity** (Matt. 2) and **Jerome's Grotto**. On the way back there will be a place in Bethlehem to shop for whatever has not yet been bought.

Evening: A discussion of the place of Bethlehem in Scripture.

Sunday June 19

We have the option of worshipping at **Christ Church**, a "low-church" Anglican service, or going to one of the churches nearby. But after church we will visit the holocaust memorial, *Yad w'Shem*, and if time permits the **Zionism** museum nearby.

Evening: A Bible study discussion of "Israel and Prophecy" for those interested.

Monday June 20

Today we will do a walking tour in the old city; we will be close enough to Christ Church for people to return when they have done enough walking. We will first 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 (if permitted), and the southern steps with the old entrances to the Temple and all the ritual baths below. After lunch in the **Jewish Quarter**, or at Christ Church, for those who are still energetic there will be a walk down to the **city of David** to see the remains of the city and the water **tunnels**, and even to walk through **Hezekiah's tunnel** (in water) to the pool of **Siloam**.

Evening: Our study tonight will consider the Temple and Holy Week (Matt. 21-25).

Tuesday June 21

Taking a break from the busy old city, we will have a day away. We will stop first to see a **model of the city of Jerusalem** at the time of Jesus, then make a brief 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 of olive presses, a threshing floor, and scribal work. After a healthy lunch there (which will cost a little more than normal lunches, but it is worth it) we will head back, briefly stopping at the caves of **Mareshah**, the valley of **Socho** where David and Goliath met, and **Tel Gezer**, if it is accessible, to see samples of standing stones—if not, we may have time to stop at *Yad Hashmoneh*, a *moshav* (community or settlement) near Jerusalem where Jewish believers in Jesus thrive. We will get back early enough to rest up and clean up for the Passover meal.

Evening: We will have a **Passover Seder** meal and talk about the events of the Last Supper.

Wednesday June 22

A day about the Passion of Christ and the Resurrection (from the many chapters in the

Gospels). We will visit the **Mount of Olives** for a good 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 see the remains of the Pool of **Bethesda**, the troubled water—and to sing in the crusader Church of St. Anne. We will then walk up the **Via Dolorosa**, stopping at several of the stations of the cross (those mentioned in the Bible), to the **Church of the Holy Sepulcher**, the traditional place of the crucifixion and garden tomb. (We often do this walk in reverse to avoid crowds in the Church and have a less strenuous walk—this way it is all downhill).

After lunch somewhere on the Mount of Olives we will go over to the **Garden Tomb** and **Gordon's Calvary**, another site suggested for the crucifixion and burial of Jesus. Here we will have our closing Communion service in the garden by the tomb and be done about 3:00 p.m. Then we will make our way back, either by our coach, or walking if that is preferred. The couple of hours before dinner will be free for wandering a bit, talking, or finishing any **packing**.

Our scheduled flight home will leave Tel Aviv at 11:35 p.m. (Delta 153). We need to be at the airport 3 hours before flight, so we shall be leaving Christ Church at about 4 hours before departure, or just after dinner.

The **flight** will arrive in **Atlanta** 5:50 a.m. on June 23, giving us daytime to get home.

Or, for those going to **Istanbul**, the flight will leave about nine hours later, after a night's sleep, at 10:45 a.m. on the 23rd of June, and arrive in Istanbul at 1:00 p.m.

The Cost of the Trip

We calculate the “Land Cost” and the “Travel Cost” separately in case people want to make their own arrangements for the flights.

The “**Land Cost**” includes the hotels (based on double occupancy), breakfast and dinner, transportation, entrance fees, and tipping (for hotels, drivers, and guides, although we at times take additional collections for the driver and guide above what they get).

It does not include lunches (as we are away from the hotel; but we stop where there are options), special drinks at meals other than what is served, travel and admission fees on a free day (not on the itinerary), and of course personal spending. It does not include the cost of transfer from the airport to the hotel for people who arrive a day or two early, usually to get over jet lag or spend a little private vacation time before the tour starts (we will help arrange the transfer but not cover the cost of the limo-shuttle). Airport transfer to the hotel is part of the package for those who use the same flights as the group, or arrive at the same time. People choosing to arrive or leave at different times may have to arrange their own transfer to the airport, but this is not difficult at all.

The “Land Cost” for this trip is set at **\$1889.00 per person (based on a group of 30); it**

would be \$2063.00 if the group is only 20 people. That is the price for people who fly with the group, and is based on double occupancy. There will be a slightly higher land price for a “land only” price (that is, for people not flying with the group), usually \$200-\$300 higher. This is because the lower land price is calculated in conjunction with the air price.

The price could change a bit if there are major changes in the currencies over the next few months, but this should hold fairly well. The actual price will be settled later this fall.

If anyone wants a single room, there is a charge, a single supplement fee of **\$675.00**.

The “Travel Cost” is harder to determine this far in advance. The flight on Delta should run about **\$1718.00**. We will be able to settle the exact cost well in advance of the trip.

The travel price does not include travel insurance.

The air fare is priced from the hub city Atlanta. So the participants in this trip will have to make their own plans to travel to and from the city, probably Atlanta. The most economical and sure way to do this is for a few people to car pool and leave the car in a long term parking lot (roughly \$175-200; but divided by 3 or 4 people that is not bad). The air fare to Atlanta from Birmingham for example, usually on Delta, is very high. And, it is not a sure bet—the last two trips I have tried it and both times Delta canceled the flight. So for the travel to the hub city, plan ahead, leave early, be sure to be there several hours before the flight.

At this time we can say that the Land Cost and Travel Cost appear to make this trip run somewhere in the area of **\$3600.00** (travel to Atlanta and travel insurance not included). We will know the precise cost later this fall when we know how many are going.

Making Arrangements

Sign Up

We work through MTS Travel for these trips, and so if you want to sign up for the trip you will need to contact Trinda at MTS. We will take people in the order they sign up until we have the full number.

Trinda Lim,
MTS Travel
124 E. Main St., 4th Fl.
Ephrata, PA 17522
Phone: 800 418 2929, ext 81305

MTS Travel recommends Travelex Insurance. Please visit www.travelex-insurance.com or call 877 311 7331 for more information. Use code 38-0377

Deposit

The deposit is \$400.00 per person. Check with Trinda at MTS for details about the deposit.

Space is limited since we will be blocking out a number of seats for the group rates.

People making other plans for the flight should work out the details well in advance.

Final Payment

You will be invoiced for the final payment of the balance, which is due April 4, 2011.

Insurance

Insurance should be purchased along with the deposit or within 21 days of receipt of the deposit. The cost is \$215.00 per person.

Cancellations Conditions Per Person

Refund of full deposit (less \$150 administrative fee) by March 4, 2011.

If cancellation occurs from March 5, 2011 to April 4, 2011, a fee of \$400 per person will be charged.

If cancellation occurs between April 5, 2011 and the time of departure, the fee is \$400 plus unrecoverable airline, hotel and tour operator payments. There is no refund for unused tour services.

Land Only

“Land only” participants must be prepared to pay for their own transportation between the Tel Aviv airport and the first and last hotels.

Hotels

1	Sat June 11	Tel Aviv	(TBA)
2	Sun June 12–14	Tiberius	Scots Hotel
3	Wed June 15	Dead Sea Area	Khalia
4	Thurs June 16-22	Jerusalem	Christ Church (11:35 pm flight)

Passports

A passport is required, valid beyond December 26, 2011.

If your passport shows recent travel to Arab countries in the region, you would be wise to get a new passport; it will save you from a lot of questions.

Optional Add-On
TURKEY AND GREECE

We are offering an add-on trip to the Israel study tour that would cover the significant places around the Aegean Sea in Turkey and Greece. There may be some who want to include this since they will already be in the region; others who have been to Israel may do this only.

The **price** for those **adding it on to the Israel trip**: an additional **\$2460.00** (that is \$593.00 additional airfare, and \$1867.00 for the land tour).

For any **going only on this part**, the **air fare** would be a round trip ticket from the USA **plus a land price** based on the above calculation (to be calculated by MTS travel).

The **price** would **include** transportation, accommodations, tour guides, breakfasts and dinners, and gratuities. It would **not include** lunches, special drinks at meals, or shopping of course.

Itinerary

Thurs June 23 Arrive in Istanbul

The flight from Israel will arrive at 1:00 p.m. (a flight from the States TBA). We will arrive in Istanbul and drive to the old town. There we will visit the church of **St. Saviour in Chora** with its beautiful gold 13th century mosaics. Later in the afternoon we will wander through the **Grand Bazaar** and **Nuru Osmaniye District** where there are opportunities for shopping, especially jewelry, leather products and other handcrafted souvenirs. Of course, you can just take in the whole atmosphere of the place. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

Evening meeting to meet and get oriented; and to talk about the places in the biblical and Christian tradition.

Fri June 24 Istanbul to Izmir

After breakfast we will have a day of exploring history and architecture. We first will visit the famed **Hippodrome Square** which was once the sporting and social center of **Constantinople**. Istanbul boasts of its monumental shrines of different faiths, and the **Blue Mosque** is probably the most famous of the Ottoman religious architecture. Standing across from this mosque is the **Basilica of Saint Sophia** that was built in the 6th century by the emperor Justinian. We will then visit the home of the Ottoman Sultans, **Topkapi Palace**. It is located on the cape of the peninsula where Constantinople was founded. Then we will transfer to the airport for a 4:00 p.m. flight to **Izmir**, where we will be met at 5:05 p.m. and transfer to **Kusadasi** for dinner and overnight. Evening discussion about Istanbul, the Byzantine Empire, and the Nicene Creed.

Sat June 25 Smyrna, Pergamum and Sardis

After breakfast there will be an orientation tour of Izmir (**Smyrna**), the place of one of the seven churches in Revelation, which John referred to as poor and persecuted. Then we will drive to Bergama (**Pergamum**), home to the invention of parchment, and another of the seven

churches. Here we will see the spectacular remains of the temple area, the church, and the ancient health spa. Then we will drive to Sart (**Sardis**), the place of the church that had the reputation of being alive, but that God said was dead. Then we will return to Kusadesi. Evening discussion of the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3.

Sun June 26 Ephesus

After breakfast we will drive to Ephesus, one of the New Testament's most significant cities. Here Paul spent a good deal of time ministering, here John wrote his Gospel, and here the Virgin Mary spent her last days. We will visit the archaeological site, including the Basilica of John, house of Mary, library, and theater. Dinner and overnight in Kusadesi. Evening: the Book of Ephesians.

Mon June 27 Patmos

After breakfast we will drive to the Kusadesi pier and depart for Patmos at 7:00 a.m. by private boat. Arrive in Patmos around 11:00 a.m. and visit the site. After the visit and lunch, we will make our return to Kusadesi. Evening: the Book of Revelation.

Tues June 28 Samos

After breakfast we will return to the Kusadesi pier and depart for Samos. Arrive in Samos and check into our hotel (<http://samoshotel.gr/>), and then have the afternoon to explore Samos. Evening discussion of the journeys of St Paul.

Wed June 29 Athens

In the morning we will fly to Athens where we will be met and start our tour of the city, the Acropolis, Mars Hill, where Paul stirred up the idolatrous people with his sermon on the unknown God. We will also visit the marble stadium, Omonia square and the 19th century academy, University and National Library. Later we will see the temple of Olympian Zeus and the Arch of Hadrian. Dinner and overnight in Titania Hotel or similar (<http://www.titania.gr/>). Evening discussion of Acts 17.

Thurs June 30 Corinth

After breakfast we will visit Corinth, the ancient capital of the province of Achaia. We will stop at the canal and learn the history of this work, one of the seven wonders of the modern world. Then on to Corinth, where we will see the Temple of Apollo, the Roman Agora, the Bema Courthouse, the Roman Lechaion Road and the lower Fountain. We will then go to Cenchreae where Pheobe was a servant of the church, and where Paul took a vow and shaved his head, and the old harbor from which he sailed to Ephesus. Return to Athens and overnight.

Fri July 1

Today we depart for home, Delta flight 139 from Athens at 12:30 p.m., to Atlanta, arriving home at 5:25 p.m.

If anyone is interested in this tour of Turkey and Greece, contact Allen P. Ross (drapross@aol.com; or 205 970 3034) so that we can begin to see how much interest there is in it and proceed with plans accordingly. But more importantly, contact Trinda at MTS to sign up, make a deposit, and get deadlines for payment, whether you are doing this with Israel, or doing

this as a separate tour and not going to Israel.