



A Tour of the Holy Land

March 03 - 11, 2018



Bible Land Tourist Bureau

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INTRODUCTION

Your tour of the Holy Land will be guided by Dr. Tom McCollough. I am the Nelson and Mary McDowell Rodes Professor of Religion at Centre College in Danville, Kentucky and director of the archaeological excavations at Khirbet Qana (Cana of Galilee).

I have been involved in archaeological excavations in Israel for 35 years serving as the associate director of the excavations at the ancient city of Sepphoris and now direct the excavations at Cana of Galilee. In addition to my archaeological work, I have led study tours to Israel for more than 30 years, and am well prepared to serve as your guide, educator, and facilitator of interactions with the local communities.

This tour will include daily lectures on the sites to be visited, evening discussions about what we encountered and explored during the day and conversations with Israelis and Palestinians and in particular Palestinian Christians. It is my hope that you will return not only filled with memories of this ancient and glorious land, but also with insights into the complex world of modern Israel and the West Bank gained from our travels and our meeting with the local population.

ITINERARY

Saturday March 3rd

Depart New York for flight to Tel-Aviv.

Sunday March 4th

Upon our arrival at Ben Gurion airport (near Tel Aviv), we will be met and driven to our hotel in Jerusalem. We should arrive in time for dinner and after dinner go for a short orientation walk.

Monday March 5th

We begin each day with a meeting of the group with time for an overview of the day's activities and a preview of the places both in terms of historical context and archaeological interest. We will structure our time in Jerusalem and environs roughly in chronological terms from the origins of ancient Israel to the coming of Islam. In that spirit these will be the focus of our morning:

- The archaeological park associated with the City of David
- The tunnels along the Western (or 'Wailing') Wall and the Wall itself.

After lunch, we will explore that part of the Old City known as the Jewish Quarter to include visits to:

- The opulent houses of the first century Priestly quarter
- The remnants of a burned house from the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD
- The magnificent ruins of the Byzantine cardo built to bring pilgrims to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre
- An introduction to the ancient souk or market areas of the Old City where you will find everything from those wonderfully aromatic spices of the Middle East, to bakeries producing pita that melts in your mouth, to shops filled with olive wood creations that might someday fill your home at Christmas or Hanukkah.

We will return to the hotel for dinner. Each evening just before dinner, we will have time to meet and share a glass of wine or other beverage and talk about the day.

Tuesday March 6th

Our morning begins on the Mount of Olives (via a bus ride to the top) with a panoramic view of Jerusalem. We will then visit several sites (and associated churches) that mark the final days of Jesus to include:

- The Chapel of the Ascension of Christ
- The Church of Pater Noster that marks the teaching of the Lord's Prayer
- Walking down the Palm Sunday Road and stopping at Dominus Flevit, the church that marks the spot where Christ wept
- The Garden of Gethsemane
- The Church of All Nations, also known as the Church of the Agony marking the place where Jesus agonized over his fate
- The Tomb of the Virgin Mary.

After lunch, we will walk the Via Dolorosa (the path that took Christ to his crucifixion), stopping at:

- St. Anne's Church, a beautiful Romanesque Church next to the site of Pools of Bethesda
- The Church of the Flagellation
- The Church of the Holy Sepulchre. This is the most important site for Christian pilgrimage and we will spend the remainder of the afternoon in its mysterious midst.

Wednesday March 7th

Our day begins early as we head to the Temple Mount (the Haram al-Sharif). As this area is under control of Muslim authorities, the times for non-Muslims to visit are limited to early morning and a short time in the afternoon. After descending from the Mount, we board our bus to travel to Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus. On the way to Bethlehem we stop at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Memorial and Museum – it is profoundly moving experience. Continuing on to Bethlehem, this will also be our first venture into the West Bank (or Occupied Territories). The sites to be visited in Bethlehem include:

- The Church of Nativity and Manger Square
- The Shepherd's Fields (in nearby Beit Sahour) and the olive wood shops

On the way back to Jerusalem, we will stop at the newly opened archaeological park connected with the excavations of Herod's palace complex known as Herodium.

Thursday March 8th

We depart Jerusalem today, heading down through the Judean Desert to Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered. After Qumran, we will continue along the Dead Sea passing through to Ein Gedi to Masada where Herod the Great built another magnificent desert fortress and where the Jewish Zealots held out against the advancing Roman Legions. On our return, we will stop for those who would like to take a dip in the Dead Sea before driving to Jericho where we will spend the night at the Jericho Resort Hotel.

Friday March 9th

After a morning visit to the archaeological site of Jericho, the most ancient city in the world, we travel to the Mediterranean coast to visit the magnificent ancient city of Caesarea built by King Herod the Great. We then head east into Galilee stopping in Nazareth for lunch and a visit to the Church of the Annunciation and the new center dedicated to Mary of Nazareth. We travel on to Sepphoris, Herod Antipas' capital and a site I excavated. We will end our day with a short drive to Tiberius, staying in a hotel on the Sea of Galilee.

Saturday March 10th

We begin the day with a morning cruise on the Sea of Galilee to visit Capernaum, the village that served as the center of ministry of Jesus and the home of several apostles. The rest of the day will be spent traveling along the shores of the beautiful Sea of Galilee and stopping to visit:

- Tabgha, the chapel dedicated to the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes.
- The Mount of Beatitudes, the traditional site of the Sermon on the Mount.
- The newly excavated site of Magdala, the home Mary Magdalene. This will give us a view of well-preserved first century village and allow a visit to the splendid new chapel built by the Roman Catholic Church.

We will drive south back to Jerusalem and spend our last night there.

Sunday March 11th

This is the day of departure to return to the U.S. There should be time for some final site visits as well as shopping before we head to the airport.

Tour Price

\$3875.00 Per person in double-bedded rooms.

Price Included

- Round trip Economy air fares out of NYC.
- Half Board accommodation (bed, breakfast and dinner) daily in twin bedded rooms at tourist first class hotels.
- All airport transfers and transportation for sightseeing visits in a modern private heated/air-conditioned deluxe bus with WiFi.
- Entrance fees to sites and places indicated in the program.

Price Excludes

- Travel / Health insurance.
- Tips (\$100.00 to be paid in advance).
- Items of personal nature.
- Single rooms supplement is **\$495**.

Payment / Cancellation Terms

- A non-refundable deposit of \$500.00 is required to secure space on the tour to be paid upon registering for the tour.
- Registration deadline is Dec 10th, 2017.
- Balance of payment to be paid by Dec 15th, 2017
- No refund will be made within the last 90 days prior to departure date.

RESPONSIBILITY & TOUR CONDITIONS

The *presenters, organizers and operators* of this tour act only as agents in making arrangements for hotels, transportation, sightseeing, restaurants, or any other services in connection with the itineraries for the individual tour member who by acceptance thereof, agrees that they and/or their agents shall not be liable for any injury, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity, liability or expense to person or property due to any act or default of any hotel, carrier, restaurant, company or person providing or rendering any of the services included in the tours. The coupons, tariffs, rules or contracts currently in use by any carrier, hotel, restaurant or other contractor rendering or providing service shall constitute the sole contract between such contractor and the tour member. Further, the *presenters and organizers* and/or their agents, tour operators and suppliers accept no responsibility for damage, delay, or irregularity, expense or liability arising from sickness, pilferage, labor disputes, machinery breakdown, quarantine, government restraints, war, disturbances, weather conditions, defect in any vehicle or transportation or for any misadventure or casualty or any other cause, or for any additional expenses or damage due to changes in advertised schedules of services or any other cause. Any and all losses and expenses will be borne by the tour member, the rates being only for the time period and places specified. All accommodation, services and facilities are rendered. The right is reserved to cancel or change itineraries or substitute services without notice and to decline to accept or retain any tour member at any time. All schedules shown herein are subject to change without notice. The *organizers and presenters* and / or their land tour operators reserve the right to cancel, withdraw or change the tour, in whole or in part, at any time. In the event of a change deemed necessary by the *organizers and presenters* and / or their land tour operators, THE SOLE AND EXCLUSIVE OBLIGATION of the organizers and / or their presenters is to refund any payments received in connection therewith.

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY THE ABOVE. ENROLLMENT, AND PAYMENT FOR THE TOUR PROGRAM, CONSTITUTES YOUR ACCEPTANCE OF THE RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT & THE TOUR CONDITIONS.