

December 26-Jan 6, 2011-1012

Monday, Dec 26

Depart USA

Tuesday, Dec 27

After clearing customs in [Israel](#), we will transfer to our hotel located on the [Mediterranean Sea](#) followed by dinner and a brief informational meeting. Overnight [Tel Aviv](#)

Wednesday, Dec 28

Kingdoms and Cultures in Conflict: Living at the Crossroads

Our travel today highlights [Israel's](#) unique geographic location along the major highways of the ancient world and how that physical setting brought kingdoms and cultures into conflict within this land. [Israel's](#) existence throughout its history, as well as its relationship to God, was defined by living along the crossroads of the ancient world. This location brought the Jewish people into social, religious, and political tensions with the foreigners around them. This tension is particularly highlighted in the struggles between the prophet Elijah and the king of Israel Ahab. Our day begins at [Caesarea](#) on the [Mediterranean Sea](#): the port city built by Herod the Great. This was also the home of Cornelius, the Roman centurion, whose conversion (Acts 10) highlights the social challenges posed by Gentile conversion within the Early Church. On [Mount Carmel](#), we reflect on Elijah's confrontation with the prophets of the Phoenician god Ba'al. After lunch, we visit the Old Testament site of [Megiddo](#), which guarded the International Coastal Highway as it passed through Israel making [Megiddo](#) the site of many conflicts during its existence.

Thursday, Dec 29

Galilee: The Cultural Setting of the World of Jesus

The focus of our day is the Galilean culture setting of the world of Jesus. We begin our day at the ancient synagogue of [Arbel](#) with its stunning view of the [Sea of Galilee](#). We will discuss the religious life of the Galileans that Jesus ministered to and encountered. We travel to [Sepphoris](#), the capital of the Galilee when Jesus was a boy and look at the urban culture of the region. From [Sepphoris](#), we journey to [Kefar Kedem](#) where we will experience the life of an ancient Galilean village, its agriculture and livelihood. We will eat lunch at [Kefar Kedem](#) in a first century style. From [Kefar Kedem](#), we travel to [Nazareth](#) to view the boyhood home of Jesus. Dinner and overnight Sea of Galilee

Friday, Dec 30

Today our focus is upon the ministry and teachings of Jesus placing them within their contemporary, first century, Jewish context. By providing the historical, linguistic, and cultural context for the ministry and sayings of Jesus, participants will hear Him speaking into their modern lives in challenging new ways. We begin our morning at [Qatsrin](#), a reconstructed Galilean village, where we gain a unique picture of the village settings of the world of Jesus. On a [Galilean hillside](#), we reflect on the "Three Pillars" of Jesus'

faith and the incredible message of the Lord's Prayer. While we are overlooking the northeast corner of the lake of Galilee, we will examine the life and ministry of John the Baptist and his movement. At [Chorazin](#), we talk about the life of the synagogue and Jewish oral culture and Jesus' place within this world. We will have an opportunity for baptism and then visit the Mt. of Beatitudes. After lunch, we visit the site of [Capernaum](#), center of Jesus' Galilean ministry, and talk about the miracles of Jesus and their role in his ministry. We make our way then to [Kibbutz Nof Ginnosar](#) where we see a first century A.D. boat found in the [Sea of Galilee](#). Our day concludes after dinner, with a relaxing [night boat ride on the Sea of Galilee](#). Dinner and overnight at [Sea of Galilee](#)

Saturday, Dec 31

"Who do men say that I am?"

Our time in the [Galilee](#) concludes as we confront Jewish messianic expectations and hopes within the first century and discuss Jesus' place among them. Today, like Jesus, we set our faces toward [Jerusalem](#). At [Kuenitra](#) along the Israeli-Syrian border, we have an opportunity see one of the ancient roadways that went to Damascus where we will reflect upon Paul's encounter with Jesus on his way to Damascus. In view of the Lebanese and Syrian borders, we will discuss the complex issues of the modern Middle East and its peoples. On the lower slopes of [Mount Hermon](#), at [Nimrud's Fortress](#), we examine the event of the Transfiguration, from which Jesus "set his face" to [Jerusalem](#). Then, at [Banias](#), ancient [Caesarea Phillippi](#), we discuss Peter's confession about Jesus in light of contemporary messianic expectations. After lunch, we visit one of the headwaters of the [Jordan River](#) at the [Banias Falls](#) where we stand in the setting of Psalm 42 and express with the psalmist, "As the deer longs for streams of water, so my soul longs for you, O God." We conclude our day at the Old Testament city of [Dan](#). A beautiful modern nature reserve, the site of [Dan](#) was the northern boundary of biblical Israel, and during the period of the Divided Kingdom, it became the place of Israelite idolatry. We travel from [Dan](#) to [the Dead Sea](#) via the [Jordan Valley](#), [Jericho](#), and the [Wilderness of Judea](#). Dinner and overnight [Kibbutz Kalia on the Dead Sea](#).

Sunday, Jan 1

"A voice cries, "In the wilderness..."

We travel today into the [Judean Wilderness](#), a place of solitude and refuge. Here prophets, poets, and religious ascetics sought God and found inspiration. Political outcasts used the wilderness as a place of refuge. Our day begins at [Khirbet Qumran](#), the remains of a first century Jewish Sect known as the Essenes, who were the authors of the [Dead Sea Scrolls](#). From the site of [Qumran](#), participants will be able to see some of the caves in which Bedouin and scholars discovered many of the [Dead Sea Scrolls](#). We will examine the Essene movement and the scrolls they produced; we will also explore the relationship between this movement and Jesus, John the Baptist, and the early Christian community. From [Qumran](#), we visit [Ein Feshkha](#) whose fresh water springs have created an oasis in the wilderness along the shores of the Dead Sea. From [Ein Feshkha](#), we travel to [Masada](#), a rocky plateau along the shores of the [Dead Sea](#), where Herod the Great built a magnificent palace-fortress. As we survey the remains of Herod's impressive buildings, we find remains left by Jewish Zealots during the First Jewish Revolt against Rome—a movement that eventually came to an end on [Masada](#). We will hike down the Roman

ramp of [Masada](#) where we will meet our bus and travel to the Bedouin camp of [Kefar HaNokdim](#). At [Kefar HaNokdim](#), we will enjoy a camel trek in the desert, Bedouin hospitality, and eat a Bedouin dinner. Overnight [Kefar HaNokdim](#)

Monday, Jan 2

Beersheva, Beth Shemesh, Elah Valley, Nebi Samuel, Gezer, Beth Shemesh, Azekah, Elah Valley, Lachish. Overnight [Jerusalem](#)

Tuesday, Jan 3

“The City of the Great King”

Today we introduce the participants to [Jerusalem](#) past and present. Our morning begins on the [Temple Mount](#), a site of historical significance and political dispute. After exiting the [Temple Mount](#), we stop briefly at the [Western Wall](#). From the [Old City of Jerusalem](#), we travel to [Bethlehem](#), home of King David and birthplace of Jesus. We will visit the [Church of the Nativity](#) and have an opportunity for shopping in [Bethlehem](#). From [Bethlehem](#), we visit the [Israel Museum](#) and the [Shrine of the Book](#), where the [Dead Sea Scrolls](#) are housed. We return to the [Old City of Jerusalem](#) for a walking tour of the four quarters of the city: Christian, Armenian, Jewish, and Arab. The rest of the day is free for exploration of [Jerusalem](#). Dinner and overnight [Jerusalem](#)

Wednesday, Jan 4

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem...how often I have desired to gather you...”

Today our focus is on [Jerusalem](#) during the biblical periods, both Old and New Testament. By viewing the archeological remains of [Jerusalem](#), [Jerusalem's](#) history within the Bible is brought into three-dimensional focus. The remains of [Jerusalem](#) during the New Testament period set the stage for understanding Jesus' relationship with the city and the challenges that he posed to certain groups in Jerusalem. The archeology of [Herodian-New Testament Jerusalem](#) brings graphic clarity to Jesus' last days and hours. Our morning begins at [Jaffa Gate](#) where [Herod's palace](#) stood in the first century. We proceed on foot through the [Armenian Quarter](#) to the [Byzantine Cardo](#) (the primary north-south road) of [Jerusalem](#). We explore the ancient wall lines of [Jerusalem](#) during the reign of King Hezekiah and those rebuilt by the Hasmonean Dynasty, which stood during the days of Jesus. Tracing the wall lines of ancient [Jerusalem](#) brings us to the [Gennath Gate](#), an important northern gate leading out of the ancient city of [Jerusalem](#). We travel underground, under the modern [Jewish Quarter](#), to view the ruins of high priestly homes from first century [Jerusalem](#). The archeology of these homes underscores the motivations of the enemies of Jesus and the challenges he posed to them. We return above ground to see the captivating presentation of the [First Temple Model](#). Here participants encounter [Jerusalem](#) during the Old Testament period. After lunch, we proceed to the excavations around the southern walls of the [Temple Mount](#) complex. Participants walk on a first century street, see the shops where pilgrims purchased their sacrifices, view the remains of the Roman destruction of the [Temple](#) in which “no stone was left on another,” and sit on the southern steps of the [Temple Mount](#) where ancient Jewish pilgrims entered into the [Temple](#). Our day concludes with a visit to the oldest part of [Jerusalem](#), the [City of David](#). Recent excavations have uncovered a large 10th century B.C. building that the excavator has identified as the [palace of David](#). Other excavations

have uncovered an intricate water system and monumental fortifications from the period of the Canaanites. Several years ago excavators in the [City of David](#) uncovered the first century [Pool of Siloam](#) mentioned by Jesus in the Gospels. Dinner and overnight [Jerusalem](#)

Thursday, Jan 5

“The Son of Man must suffer”

The “Passion of Jesus” provides the central focus for today’s program. At the end of our tour, the groundwork that has been laid throughout our time in Israel comes together as we examine the historical background of Jesus’ crucifixion and the opposition to Him. We explore Jesus’ own perspective of the cross and the hope He expressed of the Resurrection. We **CHECKOUT** of our hotel this morning as we prepare to return home. Our travel takes us to the crest of the [Mount of Olives](#) where we have a stunning panoramic view of the city of [Jerusalem](#), both ancient and modern. As we descend on foot down the [Mount of Olives](#), we stop at the [Church of Dominus Flevit](#), which commemorates Jesus’ weeping over the city of [Jerusalem](#). As we explore this episode in the life of Jesus, participants gain a clear image of Jesus’ message and attitude toward His world, and by extension, what He would say to us in our world. At the foot of the [Mount of Olives](#), we visit the [Garden of Gethsemane](#) and reflect on Jesus’ actions the night before He was crucified. A short trip through the [Kidron Valley](#) brings us to the [Lion’s Gate](#) where we enter the [Old City of Jerusalem](#) making our way to the [Church of Saint Anne](#). Built over the ancient [Pools of Bethesda](#), the Crusader period [Church of Saint Anne](#) provides an incredible opportunity for groups to sing and worship together. After leaving [Saint Anne](#), we begin to walk along the traditional [Via Dolorosa](#) (“Way of Sorrow”) that commemorates Jesus’ agonizing journey to the place of execution. Our tour concludes at the [Church of the Resurrection](#), the traditional location of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. After dinner, our bus transports us to Ben Gurion Airport for our return flight to the United States.

Friday, Jan 6

Participants arrive in the United States with their hearts full, their spirits recharged, and a lifetime of memories.