



Study Tour in God's Land..Israel

Nov 1 to 14, 2023

With Pastors Tim Helland and Doug Kaheri

Our Guide is Yehuda Hecht

You will be responsible for arranging your flights to and from Israel. This will allow you to choose your favorite airline, travel class desired, perhaps even use your air mileage, and depart from the major city of your choice. We will all meet prior to the first overnight at the Ramada Resorts Hadera. We will need your arrival time in Tel Aviv. Expect to come to the hotel on our bus. If for some reason you are delayed we will give travel instructions by cab.

Arrive on Nov 2 and prepare for the adventure to begin!

Welcome Home to God's land--Israel!

In Route to your hotel you drive north, skirting Tel Aviv, the "beautiful new" 100 year old city. One could easily spend a month in the museums of this incredible Jewish city, but since ours is a Biblical tour, you must make such an arrangement on your own.

We overnight at Hadera near the beautiful Mediterranean sea....Eat and rest well

Please be aware that there may be some minor changes to the following agenda

Highlights of Israel Tour

MEDITERRANEAN COAST / MT CARMEL / LOWER GALILEE

~ After an enormous Israeli breakfast buffet on the Mediterranean, we visit ancient Roman Caesarea Maritima **(the Roman Capital of Israel) for over 500 years.** This was the city of **Peter's "Gentile Pentecost"** and **Paul's** imprisonment. You sit in the same amphitheater where Paul was tried, then stroll through Caesarea's amazing Roman ruins. You visit **Herod the Great's palace (later Pilot's Palace)** built beside the Roman hippodrome on the Mediterranean. After viewing the Roman aqueduct...

~ We drive to the "horn" of **Mt Carmel** to visit Muhraka, where Elijah had his contest with Jezebel's Baal prophets. Here Israel's drought was broken and Ahab raced his chariot through the valley to his summer palace at **Jezeel.**

~ Driving to ancient Megiddo, we recall the 21 battles from the Hebrew Scriptures that were fought in this valley. The view is an unforgettable panorama of prophecy, as the Armageddon battlefield of Revelation spreads before our eyes. Here we view the Canaanite ruins, their cultic altar (for human sacrifice), visit the chariot stables of King Solomon and Ahab, and descend to the ancient water tunnel of Megiddo.

~ Crossing the Valley of Jezreel/Armageddon, we view Mt. Tabor to the East. Here King Saul visited the witch of Endor by night, and learned of his fate the next day. On the eastern slope of Mt. Moreh, Jesus raised the widow's son to life at Nain.

On the western slope of Mt. Carmel Elisha raised a widow's son to life. On the far western side of this historical valley stands Mt. Gilboa, where Saul and Jonathan died. David lamented their death in II Sam. 1:19-27.

~ Traversing the Valley of Jezreel, our bus climbs the hills of Lower Galilee to Nazareth. Here we visit Nazareth Village. This replica of Nazareth's farming community and village has been reconstructed to resemble a portion of the boyhood town of Jesus. Here in the synagogue we will recall Jesus' childhood and early manhood.

~ Directly North of Nazareth lies the well-watered Netofa Valley, where we believe Cana of Jesus' day was located (Cana means "Place of Reeds"). It was here that Jesus changed the water to wine. However, the traditional Crusader Kefar Cana lies to the south, conveniently on the Pilgrim's Highway between Nazareth and Capernaum.

~ Descending to the Sea of Galilee (686' below sea level) we proceed to our seaside Hotel. Welcome to our "home on the Sea of Galilee". Enjoy the incredible view, neat rooms, and some of the best food in all Israel. Enjoy the beginning of Shabbat.

"Shabbat Shalom!" Overnight Ron Beach (1st night) on the Sea of Galilee.

SEA OF GALILEE BY BOAT ON THE SABBATH - In the Footsteps of Jesus

~ We bus to Nof Ginnosar to view the "Jesus Boat". Then, we embark by boat for our unique Shabbat worship services on the Sea of Galilee and the North Shore. From the Sea

we will recall the “sightings of Jesus”, consider the sudden storms, Jesus’ miracles, the Disciple’s fishing experiences, His teachings by the Sea, and His ministry at the Cove of the Parables.

~ Debarking at Capernaum Park, if time allows, we will view the Capernaum Greek Orthodox Church, unexcavated Capernaum, and then proceed to the Roman Catholic excavations of New Testament Capernaum.

~ Capernaum was the headquarters of Jesus’ Ministry for 2 ½ years in Galilee. Jesus was the Teaching Rabbi of the synagogue. Here He called Levi/ Matthew, taught many parables, performed miracles, raised Jairus’ daughter to life, and taught on the parable of The Bread of Life in the synagogue. Here we will worship as we recall these events.

~ Your host’s personal “highlight of our tour” is the Natural Amphitheater at the Cove of the Parables (Sower’s Cove). Here Jesus called His Disciples, borrowed Peter’s boat for His teaching, taught many parables and healed the multitudes. Here our Resurrected Lord appeared to His Disciples, provided the miraculous catch and prepared breakfast for His Disciples. Here He told Peter to “Feed My Sheep.” We will only give a brief overview for now, but will return on Monday to go into detail and meditate by the shore.

~ Climbing to “Wilderness Cave” we experience the same view our Lord had when He prayed all night before calling His Apostles.

~ On the lower slope of the Mount of Beatitudes we share Jesus’ Beatitudes (where He spoke them) - then, we will recall His “Word Pictures” from His “Sermon on the Mount”. Then, we will view the Byzantine mosaic of the “Loaves and the Fishes” at Tabgha and Peter’s Primacy.

~ After an incredible lunch of St. Peter’s Fish, we follow the old Roman Road which skirts the North Shore. Crossing the Jordan River, we enter the Gentile Decapolis (on the Eastern shore). Here we will recall Jesus healing the demoniac near Kursi, and visit the cliff where Jesus drove the demons into the swine. They rushed over the cliff and were drowned in the Sea.

~ In the distance, rising above the Sea, is the incredible ruins of Susita/Hippos. Here Jesus sent the healed demoniac as His witness. Years later there were 4 churches and 1 cathedral in that Gentile city. In Jesus’ day, the white pagan temples glistened in the afternoon sun, casting their reflection over the Sea. We propose that this was this city Jesus pointed to and said, “a city set on a hill can’t be hidden...”

~ Near the Jordan we will describe Bethsaida, the seaside home of Peter, Andrew, James and John and Zebedee’s fishing company. Mendel Nun, the authority on first century Sea of Galilee ports and water levels, believed that in Jesus’ day the fishing village of Bethsiada was located where the Jordan River entered the Sea of Galilee. The fishing village was located on that shore, while the city was north at Bethsaida Julius. Jesus healed the blind man from Bethsaida, (but, which Bethsaida, we don’t know.)

After a rest and evening meal, you may want to close Shabbat by strolling the quaint streets of Tiberias, to enjoy dessert and coffee.

Or - Sit with friends by the water's edge, and enjoy the beauty of the evening and the stars over the Sea of Galilee.

Overnight at Ron Beach at the Sea

HULEH BASIN / UPPER GALILEE / GOLAN HEIGHTS

~ Departing the Sea of Galilee, our bus takes us to Upper Galilee for a scenic drive through the Huleh Basin. We pass ancient Hazor, and proceed to the beautiful Dan Nature Preserve. The lush and beautiful Headwaters of the Jordan leaves an indelible impression.

~ The excavations at ancient Dan include the altar where the golden calf was worshiped by Israel under Jeroboam.

~ After viewing the Israel/Lebanon border, we will hike to the new excavation of the Canaanite Gate from Abraham's time. Then, we visit the city gate of Dan, "the "Hill of the Judge" to see the ancient city and the amazing "Cyclops walls".

~ We then drive to Caesarea Philippi, where Jesus brought his disciples on retreat. This was the pagan Roman cultic center, featuring pagan temples and the "gates of hell". Here Jesus asked His Disciples, "Who do YOU say that I AM?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God". One week later, Jesus was transfigured on Mt. Hermon.

~ From the springs of Caesarea-Phillipi, we bus down the Jordan and hike the path to the Jordan's flow. Proceeding on a new boardwalk and path we observe the rushing beauty of the Jordan flowing through narrow canyon walls, forming pools that are filled with trout. The half-mile hike brings us to the most copious waterfall in the Jordan's flow. The view of Banias Falls is stunning! From the falls, we slowly maneuver the steep path, to eat our choice of lunch around picnic tables.

What a blessed morning!

~ After lunch, we view the Jordan Valley from the Golan Heights. Yehuda will explain the Arab/Israel conflicts of 1967.

~ Traveling the Mt. Hermon foothills, on a section of the Damascus Road, we recall Saul's conversion near Damascus.

~ We pass Druze villages, as the snow-capped "granddaddy" of the mountains in Israel, Mount Hermon, towers above. What majesty!

~ Later, in the Golan's "Valley of Death", he will discuss the conflict of 1973. In all her wars, God has led Israel, despite the odds, to incredible victories.

~Descending through the Golan tableland, we come to understand the agricultural and strategic military importance of the Golan Heights to Israel. The Golan must remain in Israel's hands! As time allows we will view the Jordan River in this area of Jesus' ministry.

Overnight Ron Beach (3rd night) at the Sea of Galilee.

GAMALA / KATZRIN / KORAZIN / COVE OF THE PARABLES

~ Gamala is visited by few tourists. Usually, the lack of tour time (half a day) and physical strength of the group prevents tours from climbing the difficult path to the abandoned city. With special arrangements, our tours try hard to make this visit! Enjoy this site, as you are an exception.

~ This unique first century Jewish ruin is often called “The Masada of Galilee”. Here, an estimated 10,000 Jews died in the Roman conquest of Galilee. (Gamala and Masada are two of the highlights on our tour). At Gamala, we visit the mountain synagogue, see where the Romans broke through the wall, and climb to the famous round tower. Eagles above Gamala add to your lingering memories.

~ We drive to the capital of the Golan Heights, Katzrim, to watch a fascinating film presentation on The Fall of Gamala

~ Then, a visit to Katzrin’s reconstructed NT Village offers a view of Jewish life as it was in Jesus’ time.

~ We will have an early lunch at the popular Blueberry Restaurant, and then visit the Olive Processing Factory of the Golan.

~ Bussing up the eastern side of the Mt. of Beatitudes, we climb to the very top to visit the third synagogue where Jesus served as the Teaching. Here at Korazin we view the mikvah, yeshiva, the synagogue of Jesus’ day, and see the Seat of Moses where Jesus unrolled the scroll before reading the prescribed Shabbat Scripture of the week.

~ Returning to the north shore, we hike down to the Cove of the Parables. There we will consider the Positive, Probable and Possible “Jesus Sightings” during His incredible ministry in this area. While we are seated on the lush green grass and basalt stones, we will be led in our meditation by your tour host, Dr. Bob Ross. He has focused the last several years of his ministry and life on this teaching area of Jesus’ ministry. From our meditation time at the Cove, we will hike one mile on the Jesus Trail back to Tabgha, as we follow the beautiful shoreline. Our travel on the Trail will conclude our day at the largest spring feeding the Sea of Galilee, and a visit to Leper’s Pool.

No place on earth offers you such an opportunity to “walk where Jesus walked”.
Overnight (4th night) at Ron Beach. Enjoy coffee and friends beside the Sea.

MIGDAL / SEPPHORIS / ARMAGEDDON / JEZREEL / GIDEON’S SPRING / JORDAN BAPTISM

~ From our hotel, we bus to where Jesus ministered in Migdal. The city, at the foot of Mt. Arbel has been recently excavated, revealing the ruins of the New Testament city. Migdal was the home of Mary Magdalene. Later, the Jewish historian Josephus wrote The Jewish Wars while stationed here. Our architect friend, Matti Avshalomon, designed the quaint and beautiful Reflection Church near the shore.

~ Then, driving through Lower Galilee, just north of Nazareth, we will visit Sepphoris, the Roman capital of Galilee during Jesus’ ministry. We believe Our Lord attended Jewish yeshiva/seminary (near or at the Sepphoris synagogue). He was recognized as a

well-educated, honored Rabbii all over Israel. Evidence suggests that the Galilean Rabbinical Council/Galilean Sanhedrin appointed Him as the Teaching Rabbi for the synagogues at the northern end of the Sea of Galilee.

~ Entering again the Valley of Armageddon, it is as though we are driving through the pages of OT and NT history. We come to ancient Jezreel, where

Ahab and Jezebel had their summer residence. Naboth's vineyard was here, and this was the place of Ahab's demise and Jezebel's death.

~ After lunch, In the shadow of Mt Gilboa, we will visit Gideon's Spring, where God selected Gideon's 300-man army. The spring is one of the ten most beautiful "swimming holes" in the world. Here we will enjoy the park, but it may be a bit chilly to swim.

~ Returning to the southern end of the Sea of Galilee, we baptize those who desire in the Jordan River, at beautiful Yardenit.

This is our last opportunity to enjoy dialogue and coffee in the moonlight at our hotel. Likely, you will leave "a part of your heart" at the Sea of Galilee...Enjoy your last evening in Galilee.

Overnight Ron Beach (5th night) at the Sea of Galilee.

JORDAN VALLEY / WILDERNESS OF JUDEA / DEAD SEA

~ Departing the Sea of Galilee, we drive south through the Jordan River Valley to the incredible OT and Roman ruin of Beit Shean. This Decapolis city was the only Greek city, of the ten, west of the Jordan River. The excavations reveal a first century Roman city with temples, baths, a basalt theater, and an upper hippodrome. Strolling the streets, you will experience the power of the Roman Empire, and the pagan beauty of this incredible city of Jesus' day. The Old Testament tel of Beit Shean rises above the Jordan Valley on the east. Here Saul and Jonathan's bodies were hung on the city gates.

~ We bus south through the Jordan River Valley. The Jordan River and the country of Jordan lie to the East, and the Mountains of Samaria to the West. The hour-and-a-half drive takes us in and out of the "West Bank" territory. See your Discover Israel map on page 169.

~ Due to politics we do not stop, but Jericho spreads out around Elijah's Spring, at the foot of Tel e-Sultan (dating to the Stone Age). Jericho is the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world, inhabited since 10,000 BC. A Neolithic tower, the world's oldest building, dates to 7,000 BC. Here, "the walls came tumbling down" as a result of God's judgement. It was Israel's first conquest in "the Land". Unfortunately, today, the city is in the hands of the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization.) A cable car connects Jericho to the Mt. of Temptation, the traditional site of Jesus' temptations in the Wilderness of Judea. We recall Jericho's Biblical significance, before we descend to the Dead Sea.

~ John the Baptist often ministered in the area where the Jordan River, slightly North of where the Jordan enters the Dead Sea. In this area Our Lord was baptized. If time allows we may visit the traditional site, but don't expect to be impressed.

~ The Dead Sea is 1,300 feet below sea level, and is the lowest place on earth. The rainfall here is less than 4" per year. This area is "a dry and thirsty land". The mountains of the Wilderness of Judea tower above the Sea to the west.

~ We view the area of ancient Gilgal, located just north of the Dead Sea. Gilgal was the largest of all Jewish cities (until today). Here, the Twelve Tribes of Israel first dwelt when they entered the Land of Canaan. Here the tribes of Israel were circumcised, the manna ceased, and here they sacrificed to God. Gilgal lies just south of the first city Israel conquered, Jericho. Between Gilgal and Jericho, Joshua met "the angel of the Lord", who assumed leadership, and then led Israel to conquer the "Land of Canaan".

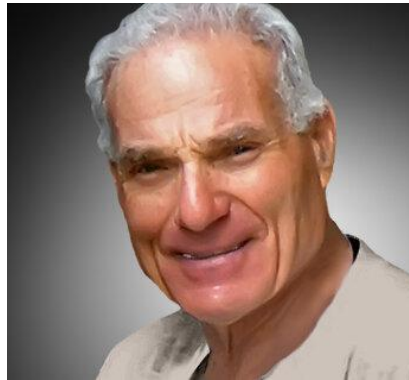
~ Driving along the west side of the Dead Sea, we will point out the cave where archaeologist Vendyl Jones searched for the "Ashes of the Red Heifer" and the Temple Treasures at Wadi ha Kippah. I believe that the fictitious movie, Indiana Jones, was based on Vendyl's experiences, with the usual embellishments by Hollywood. Likely, you will hear the details on our tour.

~ We visit the extensive ruins of Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. Our guide will tell the story of the Sect of the Wilderness of Judea who lived here. Today many believe The sect was a "pre-Christian" community.

~ From the overlook of Ein Gedi/ Spring of the Wild Goats, we recall David hiding from King Saul in the mountain cave behind the waterfalls. We hurry on to our Dead Sea hotel, David Spa at Ein Boqek, for an afternoon of relaxation, massages, floating in the Dead Sea and enjoying the hot spas. Tomorrow we will visit Masada.

~ Just south of our hotel is the area where Sodom and Gomorrah once thrived. In their destruction, God literally turned the earth upside down. Nothing is left today in these cities. Today, the southern end of the Dead Sea is a chemical mining operation.

Overnight David Spa (one night). Relax and enjoy the Dead Sea



Our Guide Yehuda Hecht is a certified tour guide. Although a Jew, Yehuda majored in New Testament studies at the Hebrew University, and minored in the Crusades. He has fought in three wars and is considered a war hero in Israel.. His unique Jewish perspective, deep knowledge of the language and land, and experiences related to his native Jerusalem all bring a unique perspective to our tour. His firsthand knowledge of the conflicts between Israel and her neighboring Arabs has given an insightful behind the curtain view of the Middle East