

## CVTS ISRAEL STUDY TOUR

April 14-25, 2009

**Day 1 Tue Apr 14** – Depart the U.S. from Denver.

**Day 2 Wed Apr 15** – Afternoon arrival in Tel Aviv - transfer to our hotel on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea at the Blue Bay Hotel, Netanya.

**Day 3 Thu Apr 16** - *CROSSROADS AND CONFLICTS*

COASTAL PLAINS: After an Israeli-styled breakfast, we will follow one of the main land passages along the Eastern Mediterranean, which connected the super powers of the ancient world. Our study themes will include trade and commerce from the days of Herod the Great and his seaport project at Caesarea. Here we will discuss some of the conflicts between Gentiles and Jews during the first centuries B.C. and A.D. We will reflect on the conversion of Cornelius (Acts 10) and the subsequent emergence of Christianity into the non-Jewish communities. Later we will travel to Mt. Carmel and through the Jezreel Valley and to Nazareth, the boyhood home of Jesus. Our day will end with a scenic overview of the Sea of Galilee. First of three nights on the Sea of Galilee at En Gev Holiday Village, Tiberius.

**Day 4 Fri Apr 17** - *TO THE SOURCES OF THE JORDAN RIVER*

UPPER GALILEE AND GOLAN: This morning we will journey to Israel's border with Lebanon at the base of Mt. Hermon to enjoy the nature along the bountiful springs that form the upper Jordan River. We will consider the extent of Jesus' ministry in this northern part of the country. Sites will include: Tel Dan Nature Reserve, Banyas (Caesarea Philippi, *Matt. 16*), an overview of Lebanon and Syria.

Evening lecture: *The Rabbis and Torah Entertainment*.

**Day 5 Sat Apr 18** - *STRINGING PEARLS WITH JESUS*

AROUND THE SEA OF GALILEE: Today we will explore the deeper teachings of Jesus as he ministered in the Sea of Galilee region. In this beautiful setting we will give attention to various texts and traditions from his day, including the curious rabbinical technique of 'pearl stringing.' Sites will include: Capernaum, Mt. of Beatitudes, Tabgha, an ancient boat museum and a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee and more.

**Day 6 Sun Apr 19** - *OBSTACLES FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN*

JORDAN VALLEY: After breakfast we will leave the Galilee and journey down the Jordan Valley towards the Dead Sea. Along the way we will view the principle city of the Decapolis, Scythopolis (or Beit Shean) where we will experience an impressive Greco-Roman metropolis. Here we will give some thought to some of the major impediments that interrupt the Gospel message from penetrating the Gentile world. At Qumran we will discuss the Dead Sea Sect, their writings (the famous Dead Sea Scrolls) and practices while viewing the curious ritual remains of their community center. Afterwards we will check in to our spa hotel on the Dead Sea at the Novotel Thalassa, En Bokek.

**Day 7 Mon Apr 20** - *THE JUDEAN WILDERNESS: MASADA, EN GEDI, MT OF OLIVES*

JUDEAN WILDERNESS: We will begin our day at Masada; the imposing fortress palace built by Herod the Great. Here in the southern Judean wilderness we will consider one of the greatest disasters of the Zealot Revolt against Rome during the final moments at Masada. We will also visit the area of En Gedi, the region where David hid from Saul (I Sam. 24). As we begin our ascent to Holy City we will view the rugged terrain between Jericho and Jerusalem and finish with an overview from the Mt of Olives. First of 5 nights at the Grand Court Hotel, Jerusalem.

**Day 8 Tue Apr 21** - *THE ENVIRONS OF JERUSALEM*

Today we will journey along some of the scenic heights of the Judean hill country to gain perspectives of important approaches to Jerusalem during biblical times. We will view the Central Benjamin Plateau to the north and the area of Bethlehem to the south. In the Shphelah region (lower Judean foothills) we will see the childhood home of Samson at Beth Shemesh and important battle sites such as between David and Goliath in the Elah Valley (I Sam. 17). We will finish this day with perspectives of Bethlehem and Jerusalem from the southern approaches.

**Day 9 Wed Apr 22 - JERUSALEM THE CAPITOL CITY**

We will begin our morning at Yad ve Shem (Is. 56) the Holocaust memorial to remember the human tragedy and pain which preceded the birth of the modern nation of Israel. We will also view the Knesset building (Israel's parliament) and the nearby famous Menorah. From here we will take time for the Israel Museum and the Shrine of the Book, where many Dead Sea Scrolls are on display. Here we will also view a model of Jerusalem from the Second Temple period. This afternoon we will take an overview of the City of David, and consider some of the archaeological remains from period of the Davidic monarchy (time and weather permitting we will cool ourselves in the 'gentle flowing waters of the Shiloah' (Is 8) also known as Hezekiah's Tunnel.

**Day 10 Thu Apr 23 - JERUSALEM THE HOLY**

Today we will consider some of the most important historic and religious sites to Jews, Muslims and Christians. We will begin our day at the famous Western Wall, which is an open-air synagogue for the modern Jewish community. Afterwards we will ascend the nearby Temple Mount of Herod the Great, now also a sacred site for Muslims. From here we will walk along the traditional Via Dolorosa to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the prize of orthodox Christianity. Sites along this way will include the pools of Beit Zaita (John 5), and some existing portions of the Antonia fortress of Herod the Great. Our afternoon will conclude with a time of reflection in the beautiful Garden Tomb.

**Day 11 Fri Apr 24 - JERUSALEM THAT JESUS KNEW**

During our journey today inside the walled Old City and its enchanting quarters we will inspect several important archaeological sites from Jesus' day. One of these will be a wealthy high priest's home (possible house of Caiaphas). We will conclude our day at the exciting Southern Wall Excavations (Ophel Gardens), where some key New Testament passages are easily reconstructed.

**Day 12 Sat Apr 25 – Return to Denver.**

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The material content and order of sites in this itinerary are subject to change. Price is subject to change according to the flux of the dollar

Price includes round trip airfare from Denver and Albuquerque on United/Luftansa airlines, 4-star hotel accommodations (with half-board meal plan: breakfast and supper daily), luxury coach, driver, JCF guide, all entrance fees (except where mentioned otherwise), all tips and portorage. Price does not include lunches or travel insurance (travel health and trip cancellation insurance strongly recommended).