

Israel's Landscapes and the Backgrounds to Jesus' World

With Host: Eddie McClelland, Florida Baptist Foundation

September 6-18, 2009

Day 1 Sun Sep 6 – Depart U.S. (from Atlanta – late evening - flight details to be announced)

Day 2 Mon Sep 7 – Arrival and transfer to our hotel on the Mediterranean Coast (*Sharon Hertzlia Hotel*)

Day 3 Tue Sep 8 – 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 Kibbutz Holiday Village

Day 4 Wed Sep 9 - 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 Falls and Banyas (Caesarea Philippi, *Matt. 16*), overviews of Lebanon and Syria and more. Evening lecture: *The Rabbis and Torah Entertainment*.

Day 5 Thu Sep 10 - 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, Chorazim, the traditional area of the Mt. of Beatitudes, Tabgha (John 21), an ancient boat museum and a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee and more.

Day 6 Fri Sep 11 - 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. Time and weather permitting we will take time for a swim at Sachne at the base of Mt Gilboa, one of the most beautiful oases in the Middle East. We will finish our morning at Qumran with discussions about the Dead Sea Sect, their writings and practices and the contributions of Dead Sea Scroll research today. This afternoon we will check in to our spa hotel on the Dead Sea at En Bokek (Le Meridien).

Day 7 Sat Sep 12 - 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). This afternoon we will begin our ascent 'up to Zion' by way of the Wadi Kelt where we will gain important perspectives of the rugged Judean Wilderness between Jericho and the Holy City. We will finish this day with views of Jerusalem from the Mt of Olives. First of 5 nights at the Grand Court Hotel, Jerusalem

Day 8 Sun Sep 13 - 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 important battle sites such as between David and Goliath in the Elah Valley (I Sam. 17).

Day 9 Mon Sep 14 - 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 and the 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 Tue Sep 15 - 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 Antonio fortress of Herod the Great. Later this afternoon we will visit the beautiful Garden Tomb.

Day 11 Wed Sep 16 - 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 (or Ophel Gardens), where some key New Testament passages are easily reconstructed. Our final themes here will include the possible location of Peter's message and subsequent baptisms mentioned in Acts 2.

Day 12 Thu Sep 17 – FREE DAY FOR REST AND SHOPPING
LATE EVENING RETURN FLIGHT (Details to be announced)

The material content and order of sites in this itinerary are subject to change. The price is subject to change according the flux of the U.S. Dollar.

Land prices include 10 overnights in Israel at 4 and 5 star hotels (2 meals daily), luxury coach, driver, JCF guide, all entrance fees (except where mentioned otherwise), all tips and portorage. Price does not include most lunches or travel insurance (trip health and cancelation insurance recommended).