

CHRISTIANS UNITED FOR ISRAEL



ISRAEL

IN BRIEF



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The State of Israel, although it seems larger than life due to its biblical history and frequent appearance in the news, is actually quite small. Roughly the size of New Jersey, it is only 85 miles across at its widest point, and a journey of just 90 minutes will take you from the Mediterranean Sea to the Dead Sea. Going north to south, it only takes about nine hours to drive the 290 miles from the Lebanese border to Eilat on the Red Sea.

Nearly nine million people live in Israel. About 74% of the population is Jewish and close to 21% is Arab. The rest of the population identifies as non-Arab Christians and other minorities. Regardless of ethnicity or religion, Israelis report being among the happiest people in the world due to their freedoms and opportunities to improve their lives.

For Christians, there is no safer place in the Middle East than Israel. While the ancient Christian communities of Syria, Iraq, and Egypt have been devastated by terrorism and persecution in recent years, Israeli Christians are protected and thriving. Along with every other religious minority group, Israeli Christians are free to worship as they choose and participate in every sphere of society as full citizens.

Israel's capital is Jerusalem, just as it was when King David established his government there 3,000 years ago. What is known as the Old City of Jerusalem is surrounded by walls built by the Ottoman Turks during the 16th century. The Old City is divided into four quarters: the Jewish Quarter, the Muslim Quarter, the Christian Quarter, and the Armenian Quarter.

The most famous landmark in the Old City is the Temple Mount, where the Jewish Temple stood during biblical times. Destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D., all that remains is the Western Wall (Kotel in Hebrew). This wall was not part of the Temple itself, but rather part of the foundation. It is the most holiest site of the Jewish faith, and millions of visitors each year leave their written prayers tucked into its ancient stones.

Just outside the Old City is the biblical City of David, the largest archaeological excavation in Israel. Open to visitors, the City of David has revealed many treasures that prove the Bible is historically accurate. Some of the most exciting discoveries include Hezekiah's Tunnel, recorded in 2 Chronicles 32, and the recent excavation of the Pilgrimage Road that runs from the ancient Pool of Siloam up to the Temple Mount.

Nearly every square inch of Israel is filled with historical and biblical significance. There are too many fascinating sites to cover in this brief introduction, and far too many to see in just one trip to the Holy Land. From the place where Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River to the many places Jesus traveled and ministered around the Galilee, up to Mount Carmel along the Mediterranean where the prophet Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal, and to the caves and waterfalls of Ein Gedi where David hid from Saul – you will find yourself walking in the footsteps of our biblical heroes.



CAESAREA

Caesarea on the Mediterranean Sea coast is located midway between Haifa and Tel Aviv. The city was built by Herod in dedication to the Roman Caesar and served as capital of the Roman province. Many wonderful archaeological finds include the theater (which is still used today), the hippodrome, aqueduct and Herod's palace. Philip settled in Caesarea at the close of his ministry (Acts 8:40). Paul, to avoid Grecians who wished to kill him, was taken to this city for embarkation to Tarsus (Acts 9:30). Here lived Cornelius the centurion, to whom Peter came and preached (Acts 10). Paul visited here several times (Acts 16, 18:22, 21:8). He was also sent there by the Roman commander at Jerusalem to be heard by Felix (Acts 23:23, 33).



SEA OF GALILEE

The Sea of Galilee is most famously known in scripture as the site where Jesus walked on the water and summoned Peter to walk on the water to him, as well as the site where Jesus calmed the storm that threatened to sink the boat He and his disciples were on. It is Israel's largest fresh water lake and is also called Lake Tiberias. It sits 680 feet below sea level and its depths range from 60-180 feet. Of the ten major cities (Decapolis) that surrounded the Sea of Galilee at the time of Jesus' ministry, only Tiberias remains.

Much of Jesus' ministry occurred along the Sea of Galilee. Eighteen of the thirty-three recorded miracles of Jesus performed were in this area; ten of which were in the small fishing village of Capernaum.



NOF GINOSAR

Kibbutz Nof Ginosar houses an ancient fishing boat found embedded in the muddy shores of the Sea of Galilee. The wooden structure has been dated from approximately the first century A.D. It was preserved in the muddy sediment of the lake floor and was found by two brothers from the kibbutz in 1986 when the lake receded to record low levels because of drought. The boat was immediately evaluated by local scholars, excavated and removed within 11 days of its original discovery.

The radiocarbon dating of the boat dates back to the time of Jesus and fits the description of boats from the Holy Scriptures as the one mentioned in the Gospel of Luke. Although it may be typical of fishing boats from the time of Jesus, there is no evidence that ties it to any specific persons.



MOUNT OF BEATITUDES

The Mount of the Beatitudes, which overlooks the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee, believed to be the site of the Sermon on the Mount which contains the passage known as the beatitudes. (Matthew 5-7).

This sermon has nine verses, each starting with “Blessed are the...” or in Latin “Beati...” The Latin word gave this hill its name - Beati-tudes...

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

*Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” (Matthew 5:3-12)



CAPERNAUM

When Jesus began His ministry he moved from Nazareth to Capernaum, a fishing and trading village located along the northern side of the Sea of Galilee. Capernaum is mentioned in the New Testament, once as the home of Peter, Andrew, James and John, as well as the dwelling place of Matthew the tax collector. The second time Capernaum is referred to is as one of the three cities damned by Jesus for its inhabitants' wrong doings and lack of faith in God.

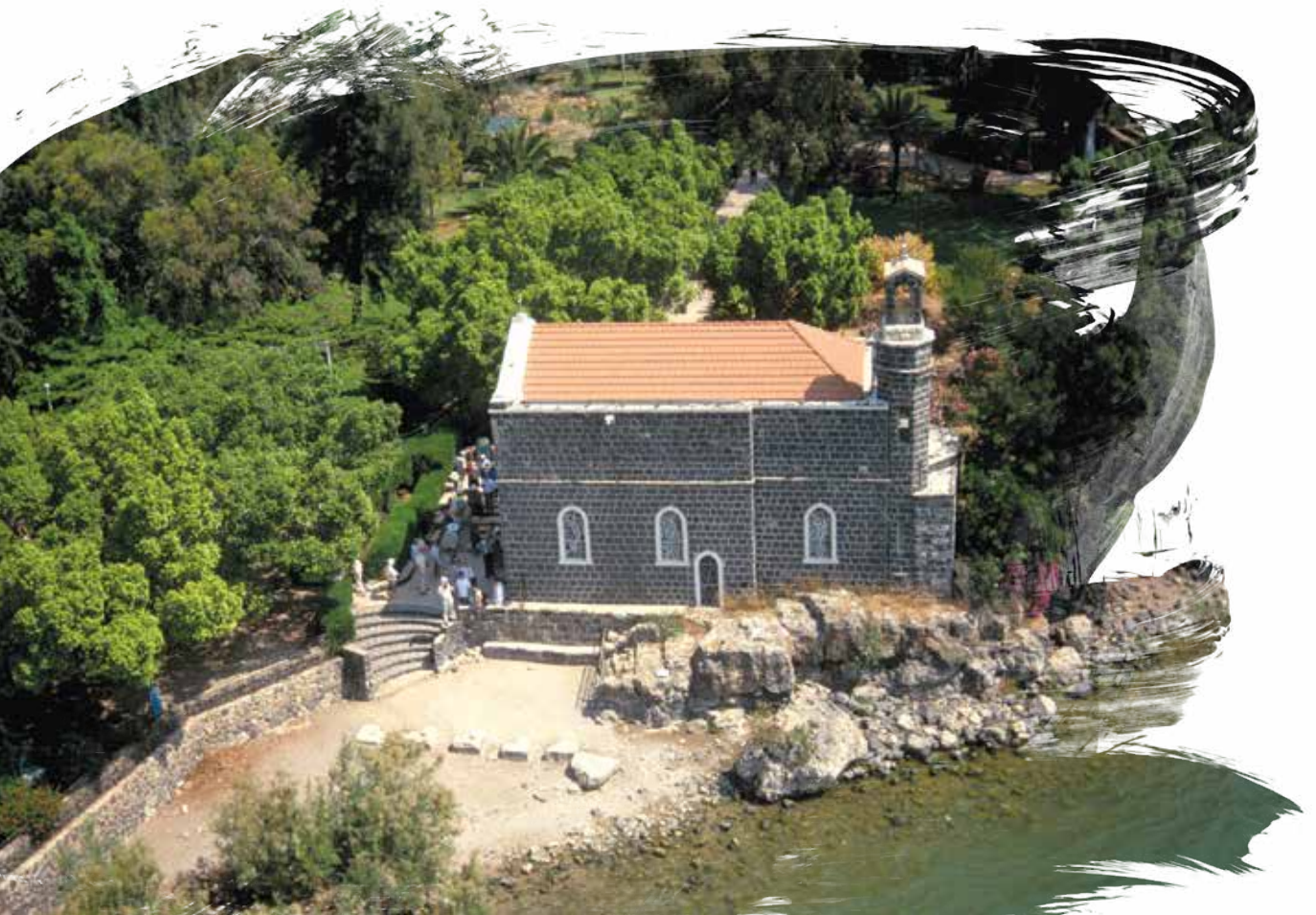
Capernaum is important for the study of the New Testament because of its central role in Jesus' ministry around Galilee. Many of Jesus' miracles, healings, and sermons are described by all four Gospel authors as taking place at Capernaum. Matthew even goes so far as to call Capernaum Jesus' "own city." Jesus worshipped and taught in the synagogue of Capernaum and it is Capernaum where He declared the promise of the Holy Communion. Despite this, Jesus is described as cursing the town because of their rejection of Him.



TABGHA

Tabgha is situated on the north-western shore of the Sea of Galilee. Some Christian historians have surmised that Jesus may have come here when looking for solitude to meditate, especially since it was close to the Galilee city of Kfar Nahum (Capernaum). Tabgha is considered the site of two of Jesus' miracles: the Miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, and the place Jesus appeared the fourth time after His resurrection (John 21:1-24).

The Gospels read that when Jesus was told the fate of His cousin, John the Baptist, "He withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place." But the populace followed Jesus on foot from nearby towns and Jesus, who saw the crowd that had gathered, preached all day and healed their sick. "As evening approached, the disciples came to Him and said, 'This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.'" Jesus then performed a miracle, feeding five thousand men "besides women and children" with only five loaves of bread and two fish (Matthew 14:13-21). The serene "Church of the Multiplication" was reconstructed over the Byzantine sanctuary on the site, with part of the ancient mosaic floor on display.



GOLAN HEIGHTS

Geographically, the Heights are bordered on the west by a rock escarpment that drops 1,700 feet to the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River, on the south by the Yarmouk River, and on the north by Mount Hermon, and on the east by a largely flat plain, called the Hauran. The Golan is usually divided into three regions: northern (between the Sa'ar and Jilabun valleys), central (between the Jilabun and Daliyot valleys), and southern (between the Dlayot and Yarmouk valleys). The Golan Heights themselves are between 400 and 1,700 feet high, and are the source of about 15% of Israel's water supply.

In Biblical times, the Golan Heights was referred to as Bashan; the word "Golan" comes from the Biblical city of Golan in Bashan (Deuteronomy 4:43, Joshua 21:27). The area was assigned to the tribe of Manasseh (Joshua 13:29-31). In early First Temple times, (953-586 B.C.), the area was contested between the northern Jewish kingdom of Israel and the Aramean kingdom based in Damascus. King Ahab of Israel (who reigned 874-852 B.C.) defeated Ben-Hadad I of Damascus near the site of Kibbutz Afik in the southern Golan (I Kings 20:26-30), and the prophet Elisha prophesied that King Jehoash of Israel (who reigned 801-785 B.C.) would defeat Ben-Hadad III of Damascus, also near Kibbutz Afik (II Kings 13:17). In the late 6th and 5th centuries B.C., the region was settled by returning Jewish exiles from Babylonia (modern Iraq).

This site includes a military briefing on the ferocity and importance of recent wars here, and the realities of Israel's modern day security challenges.



MAGDALA

Magdala, the home of Mary Magdalene, was a prosperous fishing village at the time Jesus was active in this region. It was fortified and severely damaged during the great revolt against the Romans. Archaeologists uncovered the remains of the village dating from the time of Jesus, and a large Byzantine monastery.

The synagogue in Magdala is currently the oldest excavated in the Galilee. A coin minted in Tiberias 29 AD was found inside the synagogue, proving the synagogue was from the time of Christ. It is most certain the Jesus taught in this synagogue since the Bible tells us that Jesus taught throughout Galilee.



JORDAN RIVER & YARDENIT

To the West, we find the Jordan River, whose source comes from several springs on the side and base of Mt. Hermon in the North. Beginning at an elevation of some 1700 feet above sea level, the river flows to about 700 feet below sea level at the Sea of Galilee and then to the Dead Sea at 1300 feet below sea level. It is the only river in the world which flows for most of its course below sea level. The river meanders through the Jordan valley some 200 nautical miles though only 65 miles as the crow flies.

The Jordan River is noted in the Bible as a place of cleansing and entrance into the Promised Land; it is symbolic of a place of crossing over into newness of life. The waters were held back so that Joshua and the Israelites could enter the land foretold to Moses and given to Abraham (Joshua 3). John the Baptist proclaimed the message of repentance and used the river to symbolize the washing away of sins (Matthew 3:11). Jesus was baptized in the Jordan as He began His ministry of grace and truth. At that divine moment we note the presence of the Trinity of God, The Father proclaiming the affirmation of the Son in the presence of the Holy Spirit seen as the descending Dove (Matthew 3:13-17).

In the days of the Prophet Elijah's disciple Elisha, the special benefits of immersing in the Jordan River first became known (2 Kings 5:10). Since John baptized Jesus in the Jordan, immersion in these waters has been a highlight of Holy Land pilgrimage. It has become a tradition to be baptized at Yardenit. Here, the water flows into the Jordan River, eventually flowing into the Dead Sea located more than 100KM to the south.



JERUSALEM

Jerusalem is the jewel of the ages and the city of David! The Bible records in I Chronicles 11:4-9 that the Lord gave Jerusalem into the hands of King David in 1004 B.C. David and his army took the city from the Jebusites and chose to make it his city. In Jerusalem, Solomon built the glorious First Temple and is also the sight of the Second Temple rebuilt by Nehemiah. Once David conquered the city (with God's blessing) the die was cast for Jerusalem to be central in world events. God chose this city as His own and decided that it would be the capital of Israel, the religious focal point of the Jewish people. Because of this, nations have both revered and reviled this most unique city.

Jerusalem, in the history of God's revelation and in His redemptive plan for man, is by far the most important site on this earth. This royal city is the capital of the only kingdom God has established among men. Here, the temple was erected, and sacrifices legitimately offered to the Lord. This was the place for Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension. To Jerusalem, the Messiah will return. No site noted in all the Scripture received such constant and exalted praise. No other place in the world has the promise of ultimate glory and permanent peace.

Welcome to "the City of our God,"

Jerusalem!



WESTERN WALL (KOTEL)

The Western Wall was built by King Herod in 20 B.C. during his expansion of the Temple enclosure, and is part of a retaining wall that enclosed the western part of the Temple Mount. According to the Roman-Jewish historian Josephus, construction of the walls took 11 years. During this time it rained in Jerusalem only at night so as not to interfere with the workers' progress. In 70 A.D., the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and its Temple. During the Ottoman Period (beginning in the 16th century), the wall became the Jew's primary destination to lament the destruction of the Temple.

The Western Wall (Ha-Kotel Ha-Ma'aravi) in Jerusalem is the holiest of Jewish sites, sacred because it is a remnant of the Herodian retaining wall that once enclosed and supported the Second Temple. It has also been called the "Wailing Wall" by European observers because for centuries Jews have gathered here to lament the loss of their temple. The Western Wall Plaza (the large open area that faces the Western Wall) functions as an open-air synagogue that can accommodate tens of thousands of worshipers at one time. Prayers take place here day and night, and special services, celebrations, and memorials are held here as well.



MOUNT OF OLIVES

The Mount of Olives holds an important place in Christianity. It is the place of some of the most important events in the life of Christ, both past and future. It was here that Jesus taught His disciples during His mission in Jerusalem. Here He was made a prisoner, He wept for Jerusalem, and ascended to heaven. The Church of all Nations has an ornately decorated facade. The Garden of Gethsemane, with its grove of ancient olive trees, dates back to Byzantine times and is cared for today by the Franciscan Brotherhood. Both are important holy sites for visitors.

The next elevation to the south is called “The Prophets” because of the presence of tombs, believed to be those of Absalom, James, and Zechariah, father of John the Baptist. The southernmost elevation is called the Mount of Offense, being associated with the places of idolatrous worship, which Solomon built through the influence of his heathen wives. The hill is covered with churches and shrines, most commemorating places where Jesus stopped during His last week before the crucifixion (Passion Week). The mountain has always been a burial ground and pious Jews still hope to be buried here, since Scripture promises the Messiah will return to Jerusalem from this vantage point (Zechariah 14:4).



GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

The Garden of Gethsemane (at the foot of the Mount of Olives) is now a flowering garden where several ancient gnarled olive trees still bear fruit. The name is derived from the Hebrew words “Gat Sgemanim,” meaning “olive press”. The olive trees here are the oldest in Israel. It was here that Jesus loved to come and pray. It was here that He endured the anguish and intense anxiety of foreseeing the cross and yet yielded to His Father’s will in perfect submission (Luke 22:39). Judas performed his act of betrayal in this garden and Peter cut off the ear of the Roman soldier to defend Jesus. Adjacent to the Garden is the Church of All Nations, housing the very rock by which Jesus prayed. The church was so named because 16 nations contributed to its construction.



CHURCH OF ST. ANNE

St. Anne's Church, located west of the Lion's Gate, is believed to be built on the site where the parents of the Virgin Mary (Anne and Joachim) lived. This little Romanesque jewel replaced earlier churches on the spot where Mary was thought to have been born. Successively destroyed by Persians, Caliphs and others, this church was built by the Crusaders in 1140 A.D. and is both the finest and most typical example of their legacy in the Holy Land. Nearby, the double Pool of Bethesda has been excavated. It was here that hundreds of ailing people would come to enter the waters for healing.



POOL OF BETHESDA

Bethesda, meaning “house of grace,” is the location of the spring-fed pool where invalids would wait their turn to step into the mysteriously troubled waters. It was believed an angel stirred the waters, and at the time of the stirring, healing was released to those who could rush in the pool. John chapter 5 tells of Jesus’ miraculous healing of the man who had been an invalid for 38 years. The pool is located next to St. Anne’s Church just inside St. Stephen’s Gate.

Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Hebrew called Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay a multitude of invalids, blind, lame, paralyzed. One man was there, who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him and knew that he had been lying there a long time, He said to him, “Do you want to be healed?” The sick man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is troubled, and while I am going another steps down before me.” Jesus said to him, “Rise, take up your pallet, and walk.” And at once the man was healed, and he took up his pallet and walked.

John Chapter 5



UPPER ROOM OF THE LAST SUPPER

The Upper Room of the Last Supper is a second-story room in Jerusalem that commemorates the “Upper Room” in which Jesus shared the Last Supper with the disciples. It is located directly above the Tomb of David and near the Dormition Abbey on Mount Zion.

The site of the Last Supper is not known and the Gospel accounts provide few clues. It cannot be the present room, which was built in the 12th century, but possibly near the original site of the Last Supper and/or Pentecost.

Beneath the floor of the building are Byzantine and Roman pavements and the foundations go back to at least the 2nd century A.D. It is possible that the “little church of God” that existed on Mount Zion in 130 A.D. (mentioned by Epiphanius of Salamis) was on this site.



MOUNT ZION

Mount Zion is the raised hill adjacent to the southwestern corner of the Old City. This is a sacred place to the Jews; it is believed that this location contains the Tomb of David, which is the place where the prayer requests that fall out of the Kotel (Western Wall) are brought. This is also regarded as the site of the Last Supper and the Upper Room experience of the 12 disciples, who had gathered for prayer awaiting the power of the Holy Spirit to come upon them on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1). In ancient times, a deep valley (The Tyropean Valley, or Valley of the Cheesemakers) separated Mt. Zion from Mt. Moriah. Today, many layers of ruined city and rubble from Jerusalem's many destructions completely fill this valley. In fact, at the Western Wall, the Kotel, or Jewish prayer plaza, about half of the old wall of the Temple Mount lies below the present ground level (sometimes Scripture calls all of Jerusalem "Zion" or "Mt. Zion").



DEAD SEA SCROLLS

The Israel Museum was founded in 1965 as Israel's national museum. Among the unique objects on display are the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Shrine of the Book and a model of Jerusalem at the time of the Second Temple.

The Dead Sea Scrolls are a collection of 981 texts discovered between 1946 and 1956 at Qumran.

The texts are of great historical, religious, and linguistic significance as they include the earliest known surviving manuscripts of works later included in the Hebrew Bible Canon. They also include deuterocanonical and extra-biblical manuscripts, which preserve evidence of the diversity of religious thought in late Second Temple Judaism.

The texts are written in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Nabataean, mostly on parchment but with some written on papyrus and bronze. The manuscripts have been dated to various ranges between 408 B.C. and 318 A.D.

The scrolls have traditionally been identified with the ancient Jewish sect called the Essenes, although some recent interpretations have challenged this association and argue that the scrolls were penned by priests in Jerusalem, Zadokites, or other unknown Jewish groups.



JEWISH QUARTER – CARDO

The Jewish Quarter is one of the four traditional quarters of the Old City of Jerusalem. The current Jewish Quarter, which today looks almost brand new and usually sparkling clean, dates to roughly 1400. The quarter is inhabited by around 2,000 residents and is home to numerous synagogues and *yeshivas* (educational institutions that focus on the study of traditional religious texts, primarily the Talmud and Torah study).

The oldest synagogues — the Elijah the Prophet and Yohanan Ben Zakkai — are roughly 400 years old. In the main plaza an arch stretches skyward where one of the walls of the notable Hurva Synagogue once stood. Originally the Great Synagogue, the Hurva was built in the 16th century, but was destroyed by the Ottomans. The synagogue was rebuilt in the 1850's, but was damaged in the War of 1948 and then destroyed after the Jordanians took control of the Old City. Some consideration has been given to rebuilding the synagogue; but, for now, the arch remains as a memorial.

Just off the plaza is the Cardo, which was a Byzantine road; roughly the equivalent of an eight-lane highway running through the heart of the city.



HERODIAN QUARTER

In the time of Herod, the area of the modern-day Jewish Quarter was part of a luxurious “Upper City,” occupied primarily by the families of important Jewish Temple priests. Excavations after the War of 1967 exposed the remains of several mansions dating to this period. This rediscovered Herodian quarter now lies from three to seven meters below street level, preserved in the Wohl Archaeological Museum.

On display are geometrically patterned mosaic floors, colorful frescoes, and costly glassware, stone objects, and ceramics that provide a peek into domestic life at the top in the days of Herod and Jesus. In the first part of the museum (called the Western House) several small stone cisterns have been identified as private mikveh, Jewish ritual baths; holograms depict their use. A small ascending staircase ends abruptly, a reminder that nothing above ground level survived the Roman devastation of 70 A.D.

In the Middle Complex is where archaeologists discovered the remains of two separate houses with a maze-pattern mosaic floor covered in burnt wood. This is believed to be fire damage from the Roman attack on Jerusalem. The largest and most complete of the Herodian houses is the Palatial Mansion, which also has signs of fire damage as well as beautiful mosaic floors and ritual baths.



WESTERN WALL TUNNELS

The Western Wall of the Temple Mount is one of the most significant remnants in Jerusalem from the Second Temple. The Western Wall is nearly half a kilometer but the part visible at the Western Wall plaza known as The Wailing Wall, or Kotel is only 187 feet.

Following the Six-Day War and the reunification of Jerusalem, the Western Wall Tunnels Project commenced as an effort to expose the entire length of the Western Wall. This allowed us to learn more about the wall itself and the various structures in its vicinity. Near the Western Wall are tunnels created by numerous arches stacked side-by-side that support staircases going from the city to the Temple Mount. In ancient times, there was a shallow valley (called the Tyropaeon) running along the western side of the Temple Mount. This is now filled in due to constant demolition and rebuilding, but it once separated the rich Herodian quarter from the Temple. It was the need to bridge this gap that originally caused the arches to be built. These pathways still hold up the streets today, and the tunnel goes directly underneath the Muslim quarter. As you walk through the tunnel along the ancient wall, you can pause opposite the Holy of Holies, see pavement built by Herod Agrippa (Acts 12:21) and foundations from the Praetorium (Matthew 27:27).



CITY OF KING DAVID

The City of David is one of Jerusalem's most active archaeological sites. The oldest part of Jerusalem, it was a settlement during the Canaanite period. King David captured the city over 3000 years ago and brought the Ark of the Covenant here as a declaration of a united Israel and Jerusalem as its capital.

It is within walking distance from the Old City of Jerusalem and the Western Wall, and is one of the most exciting sites in Israel. Visitors from all over the world come to see the strongest physical connection between the stories of the Bible and reality, the place where the Holy City started.

Today the City of David is an archeological park that tells the history of Jerusalem, its wars and hardships, its prophets and kings, and the history of the Jews during Biblical times. The remains of the city are present in the ancient stones and the thousands of shards that cover the pathways between the buildings. Among the archeological ruins are large elaborate houses that bear witness to the high social status of the city's residents. Warren's Shaft leads to the tunnel that was used to transport water from the Gihon Spring outside the city, next to the remains of one of several towers used to defend the well. It is thought that King Solomon was anointed and crowned king of Israel at this site. Among the ruins found in the city were personal seals for signing letters and documents bearing the names of their owners. These were the effects of people who are mentioned in the Bible.



MASADA

Isolated on a crag rock at the southwestern tip of the Dead Sea looms the ruins of King Herod's fortress called Masada. It was here that nearly a 1,000 besieged Jews voluntarily killed themselves when faced with defeat at the hands of the Roman Army in 73 A.D.

Excavations have revealed the story told by historian Josephus Flavius, who described how 960 people drew lots to establish who should die and who should put them to death. This fortress was built by King Herod as a place of retreat and refuge in the event of a rebellion by the people. It proved to be the last stronghold for the Jewish people as the Roman armies under Titus swept through Israel. The Jewish patriots were able to withstand the Romans for three years, yet Titus was determined to eradicate this rebellion and leave no remnant of hostility. The armies built encampments around the fortress and then constructed a ramp on the western side of the plateau, which literally took years. When the ramp was complete and the fortress doors burned and battered down, the invading armies only found two women alive. The rest had taken their lives rather than live in slavery and bondage.

Masada has become a shrine and a symbol to the new nation of Israel. "Masada shall not fall again!" is the proud oath which cadets swear during the impressive graduation ceremony of Israel's military academy.



QUMRAN CAVES

Qumran is located on the northwest corner of the Dead Sea, some 28 miles southeast of Jerusalem. It is here that a second century Essene community lived. The Essene, meaning “pious ones,” lived here as a community, writing the Scriptures on scrolls and preserving them for future generations. It is believed that while under attack from the Roman armies, this community bound the scrolls in leather and hid them in the caves above the village. The Essene village was probably wiped out and the scrolls became an unfound treasure until 1947. It was then that two young Bedouin shepherds discovered an ancient scroll several yards long bearing the Book of Isaiah. Several other scrolls have been found in these caves, making this archaeological find one of the greatest of the 20th century.

There were 11 caves. The most famous of the Dead Sea Scroll caves, Cave #4, is also the most significant in terms of finds. More than 15,000 fragments from over 200 books were found in this cave, nearly all by Bedouin thieves. 122 Biblical scrolls (or fragments) were found in this cave. From all 11 Qumran caves, every Old Testament book is represented except Esther. No New Testament books or fragments have been found.



DEAD SEA

In Hebrew “Sea of Salt”, the Dead Sea is a hyper saline lake thzat is truly one of Earth’s unique places. It is the lowest spot on earth, (1,290 feet below sea level) and has the highest mineral content of any body of water in the world. Truly a priceless national treasure, the Dead Sea boasts mounds of crystallized salt formations that dot the shoreline creating breathtaking natural sites. Nothing grows in the immediate area. Animal life, as we know it, is impossible; hence its name, the Dead Sea.

The Dead Sea area has become a major center for health research and treatment for several reasons. The mineral content of the water, very low content of allergens, reduced ultraviolet component of solar radiation, and the higher atmospheric pressure each have specific health effects. The black mud found in vast quantities has scientifically–recognized curative qualities. Biblically, it was a place of refuge for King David. It was one of the world’s first health resorts (for Herod the Great), and it has been the supplier of a wide variety of products, from balms for Egyptian mummification to potash for fertilizers. People also use the salt and the minerals from the Dead Sea to create cosmetics and skin care products.

The Dead Sea does not figure prominently into the biblical narratives. Its most important role was as a barrier, blocking traffic to Judah from the east. An advancing army of Ammonites and Moabites crossed a shallow part of the Dead Sea on their way to attack King Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20). Ezekiel has prophesied that one day the Dead Sea will be fresh water and fishermen will spread their nets along the shore (Ezekiel 47:10).



GARDEN TOMB

The Garden Tomb is just a short walk from “Gordon’s Calvary”. It is believed by many Christians to be the site of the borrowed tomb of Jesus because it closely fits the description of the tomb in the Gospel of John chapter 19:41-42. “At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid.” Between Calvary and the tomb, one will find an ancient winepress and a very large water cistern, indicating this area was used as a garden. The tomb itself has two chambers cut from rock and dates back to the days of Christ. This was not a typical burial site. Joseph of Arimathea was believed to be a rich man and would have prepared an elaborate tomb for himself such as this one.

The Garden Tomb Association of London maintains the tomb and garden area. While you are here, take the time to think of what might have happened in this historic place, - the resurrection of the Son of God. Jesus revealed himself to Mary. Peter and John raced to the tomb, only to find the burial clothes on the slab along with His talit folded neatly (John 20:1-18). This was visible proof of God’s authority over death, hell and the grave, the verification that Jesus Christ was and is our Savior. As you leave this place, be assured as Mary was, that Jesus is alive!



ST. PETER IN GALLICANTU

Few structures combine the ancient with the new as successfully as the dazzling Church of St. Peter on the eastern slopes of Mount Zion. The church takes its name from the Latin word “Gallicantu”, meaning cock’s crow and was erected in 1931 in commemoration of Peter’s triple rejection of Jesus “... **before the cock crows twice**” (Mark 14:30). The church is an amazing blend of contemporary lines, primitive art, and antiquity. Brilliantly fused together to create a superbly-designed masterpiece, this is far more than an ordinary house of worship.

Beneath the church are a series of carved-out chambers from the Second Temple period. Since Catholic tradition positions the palace of Caiaphas on this very site, it logically follows that Jesus may have been imprisoned in one of these very same underground crypts.

A Byzantine shrine dedicated to Peter’s repentance was erected on this spot in the middle of the fifth century, but later destroyed by Moslem invaders. The chapel was rebuilt by the Crusaders and given a new name, St. Peter’s in Gallicantu. Today a golden rooster protrudes prominently from the sanctuary roof.



YAD VASHEM - HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL CENTER

The Holocaust Memorial Center in West Jerusalem honors the 6 million Jews who perished under Hitler between 1933 and 1945. The library of 50 million documents is the world's largest Holocaust archive. The purpose of this magnificent memorial is to safeguard the memory of the victims and the events of the Holocaust by documenting accurately one of the darkest chapters in the history of humanity.

In 1961, Yad Vashem inaugurated the Hall of Remembrance (Ohel Jiskor), the first Holocaust commemoration. Engraved on the mosaic floor are the names of 22 of the most infamous Nazi extermination camps sites that existed throughout Europe.

The Eternal Flame, burning from a base fashioned like a broken bronze goblet, continuously illuminates the Hall, its smoke exiting the building through an opening at the highest point of the ceiling. Before it stands a stone crypt containing the ashes of Holocaust victims, brought to Israel from the extermination camps.

We must never forget!

The story of the Holocaust is one of darkness and despair, questioning humanity itself. But Yad Vashem also beautifully recognizes the actions of non-Jews who took great risks to help Jews during the holocaust at The Righteous Among the Nation memorial. These Righteous came from different nations, religions and walks of life and rescue took many forms. What they had in common was that they protected their Jewish neighbors at a time when hostility and indifference prevailed. Their spirit is an inspirational reminder of the human capacity for love and hope even in the most brutal circumstances.





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