

ISRAEL 2023



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Why Israel?

For those of you who have never been to Israel, I thought it would be helpful to answer the question of why I believe *every Christian should* go to Israel at least once in their lives. Many of you have heard about my experiences in the Holy Land, but I think Billy Graham says it a lot better. I'll let him take it from here:

"One of the most exciting developments of this century is the rebirth of the nation of Israel. The Bible speaks of a nation that will be "born in a day," and just think, it was born in our time.

This little land, though scarcely more than 150 miles in length, and 90 miles in breadth, is big in history and tradition. Civilization was cradled here. The Ten Commandments were given just to the south at Sinai. Ancient drama was written and played on its plains and valleys.

But, to Christians it is the land where the Master was born, was reared, where He wrought His miracles, where He was crucified, buried, and rose again. It is where His feet last touched before He ascended into heaven, and where He promised to return as Prince of Peace and Lord of Lords.

To visit this land is like a pilgrimage into the past, and walking in the shadow of greatness. But, it is more. Here today one rubs elbows with the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. With Bible in hand one can see the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy, and can sense God's promise for the future--the shafts of hope which portend a brighter tomorrow for the world.

No one can visit Israel without a deeper appreciation and a stronger faith in the Bible. This is where "holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:21). Both the Bible and the Land have been preserved as physical evidences that "He endureth forever." The "places" validate the person of the Scriptures, and when we walk where Jesus walked, somehow He seems to walk beside us, as He walked with the disciples on the Emmaus Road.

Israel is more than sightseeing, however. It is an experience. On a starry night in Bethlehem one can almost fancy the clear voices of angels saying: "Unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." When one walks the shore of Galilee, it is easy to interpret the gently breaking waves whispering the words of the Saviour, "Peace be still."

As one stands on the Mount of olives, it is the perfect setting for the Galilean, who said, as he looked longingly across the Valley of Kidron, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem...how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matthew 93:37)

And as one stands on that low hill outside the city walls called Calvary, the words, "Forgive them; for they know not what they do," come to mind.

Then as one goes to the tomb, the words, "He is not here; He is risen," spell the glorious climax to the New Testament drama.

It is all there. And more! In fact, around every corner in Israel are surprises--history and prophecy leaping out!"

What can I expect?

The following video was prepared by the organization we will be going with called GTI Tours. This will give you a feel for what we'll be experiencing. * <https://vimeo.com/65615049>

Here are two links to travel blogs I kept while in Israel in 2015 and 2017. The 2015 trip is completely different than our trip (I spent a month there studying under an historical geographer with Jerusalem University College). The 2017 trip however, is almost identical to the trip we'll be taking.

- <https://findpenguins.com/pbernard/trip/israel-2015>
- <https://findpenguins.com/pbernard/trip/israel-2017>

** For any trip to Israel, you must be in relatively good physical condition. Every day will include walking to overview points, archaeological sites and points of interest. These walks are not always long, but can include ups and downs on uneven and rocky terrain.*

Do we have a sample itinerary?

Why yes, we do! This is as close as we can get at this point to our actual itinerary. At this point, we will need to arrange our own transportation to O'Hare in Chicago.

Israel Study Tour with Crossroads Christian Fellowship Oct 30 - Nov 10, 2023

ORD to IST on TK6	Depart O'Hare on Mon, Oct 30 at 9:40pm (Turkish Airlines) Arrive Istanbul on Tue, Oct 31 at 5:00pm (Duration 11 hours 20 minutes)
IST to TLV on TK864	Depart Istanbul on Tue, Oct 31 at 8:30pm (Turkish) Arrive Tel Aviv on Tue, Oct 31 at 9:45pm (Duration 2 hours 15 minutes)
Tuesday October 31	Late Arrival & Overnight <i>Neve Ilan, Jerusalem</i> Tel: 972 3-919-0669
Wednesday November 1	Shephelah: Yad Hashmonah, Beth Shemesh, Azekah, Beth Guvrin (Maresha) Dinner & Overnight <i>Isrotel Ganim Hotel, Dead Sea</i> Tel: 972-8-6689090 <i>* Yad Hashmonah</i>
Thursday November 2	Negev: Masada, Bedouin Hospitality, Tel Arad, Dead Sea Dinner & Overnight <i>Isrotel Ganim Hotel, Dead Sea</i> Tel: 972-8-6689090 <i>* Down the siege ramp on Masada</i> <i>* Camels and coffee with the bedouin experience</i>
Friday November 3	Negev: Ein Gedi, Qumran, Lower Jordan Dinner & Overnight <i>Ein Gev Kibbutz, Galilee</i> Tel: 972 4-665-9800
Saturday November 4	Galilee: Mount Arbel, Tabgha, Capernaum, Chorazin, Mount of Beatitudes, Ancient Boat (Ginosar), Galilee Boat Ride Dinner & Overnight <i>Ein Gev Kibbutz, Galilee</i> Tel: 972 4-665-9800 <i>* Ancient boat</i> <i>* Boat ride from Ginosar to Ein Gev 5 pm</i> <i>* Fish Dinner</i>
Sunday November 5	Galilee: Katzrin (cultural experience), Mount Bental, Caesarea Philippi, Tel Dan Dinner & Overnight <i>Ein Gev Kibbutz, Galilee</i> Tel: 972 4-665-9800 <i>* Katzrin cultural experience</i>
Monday November 6	Galilee - Jerusalem: Beth Shean, Megiddo, Mt. Carmel, Caesarea Maritima Dinner & Overnight <i>Dan Hotel, Jerusalem</i> Tel: 972 2-533-1234
Tuesday November 7	Jerusalem: Temple Mount, Western Wall, Rabbinic Tunnels, Herodium, Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem Dinner & Overnight <i>Dan Hotel, Jerusalem</i> Tel: 972 2-533-1234 <i>* 9:20 am rabbinic tunnels</i>
Wednesday November 8	Jerusalem: City of David, Hezekiah's Tunnel, Israel Museum, Model of Jerusalem, Shrine of the Book, Yad Vashem Dinner & Overnight <i>Dan Hotel, Jerusalem</i> Tel: 972 2-533-1234 <i>* City of David first entrance into Hezekiah's tunnel</i> <i>* Free time in old city after Hezekiah's tunnel until lunch</i> <i>* Israel museum after lunch</i> <i>* Yad Vashem 3:30 pm</i>

Thursday November 9 **Jerusalem:** Mount of Olives, Gethsemane, Saint Anne's, Pool of Bethesda, Via Dolorosa, Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Ramparts, Southern Steps, Farewell Dinner
Overnight Only *Dan Hotel, Jerusalem*
Tel: 972 2-533-1234
** Finish the trip on the Southern Steps*
** Farewell dinner in Jerusalem*

TLV to IST on TK865 Depart Tel Aviv on Fri, Nov 10 at 8:40am (Turkish)
Arrive Istanbul on Fri, Nov 10 at 12:05pm (Duration 2 hours 25 minutes)
IST to ORD on TK5 Depart Istanbul on Fri, Nov 10 at 3:20pm (Turkish)
Arrive O'Hare on Fri, Nov 10 at 6:05pm (Duration 11 hours 45 minutes)

What will the trip cost?

We expect this Israel trip to cost about \$4500 per person. I've been told we can most certainly keep it under \$5000, but so much of this will depend on factors out of our control (flights to O'Hare, for example). This will include two days of travel to Israel, and two days from Israel via airplane. See below for details...

What's included in the cost?

All travel expenses (starting at O'Hare)

Price will include airfare, accommodations and food for all 14 days of the trip. Also you won't have to juggle cash and haggle over prices. Our Travel Coordinator and Local Guide have prepaid and pre-tipped everything on your trip.

Travel Coordinator

This dedicated travel professional is available around the clock during our study tour ensuring a smooth and pleasant experience for everything from online registration to the final flight home.

Local Guide

GTI partners with the best local guides who understand history, culture, and more importantly, they understand our participants are not simply tourists, they're people worth educating and investing in.

Pre-Trip Curriculum

GTI provides all participants access to an online course that covers foundational concepts that will equip your followers to soak up and retain your teachings in Israel.

Printed Study Guide

This invaluable printed guide features maps, timetables, Bible references for almost every site in Israel allowing your participants to take notes and journal what you have taught and where you have led.

Online Registration

GTI's staff and the secure registration site handles all document and payment collections.

Preparation Guide

We have a detailed packing list, travel guide, and frequently asked questions section of the site that keeps your participants informed, prepared, and excited for your Study Tour.

Backpacks and Gear

We take care of everything so your participants can stay focused during your Study Tour, including providing them with a hydration backpack, study guide, flashlight, universal plug adapter, and passport/ticket carrier. Post Trip DVD

Online Tour Journal

We facilitate a near real-time audio/video/photo blog for your participants so friends and family can follow along and so you can promote your upcoming study tours to a broader audience.

Extra Resources

Here are some more short videos

- <https://vimeo.com/album/2110059/video/24397208>
- <https://vimeo.com/album/2110059/video/100857231>
- <https://vimeo.com/album/2110059/video/76886474>
- <https://vimeo.com/album/2110059/video/298191296>

Is it safe?

UPDATE: From US Department of State: The security environment remains complex in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. U.S. citizens need to be aware of the continuing risks of travel to areas described in this Travel Warning where there are heightened tensions and security risks. The security situation can change day to day, depending on the political situation, recent events, and geographic area. A rise in political tensions and violence in Jerusalem and the West Bank has resulted in injuries to and deaths of U.S. citizens. The Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority both make considerable efforts to police major tourist attractions and ensure security in areas where foreigners frequently travel. Although these efforts to reduce the threat are not 100 percent effective, hundreds of thousands of U.S. citizens safely visit Israel and the West Bank each year for study, tourism, and business.

What about vaccinations?

Ughh. At this current time, vaccinations are not required for travel to Israel. They are, however, required to return to the United States from Israel. **HOWEVER**, (and that's a big however), we do not know what kinds of twists and turns our world will take before the trip. If you are not interested in being vaccinated, please know that this could radically alter your ability to participate in this trip (or any foreign travel). The refund policies for GTI are fairly stringent and changes in vaccination requirements for countries will likely not result in a refund.

How can I prepare?

GTI has a comprehensive online preparation guide. Everything from packing lists to spiritual preparation. Check it out. <http://gtitours.org/study-tour-preparation-guide/>

What's the next step?

PRAY!

If you are considering a trip to Israel in the fall of 2023, please start now with washing your trip in prayer. **Philippians 4:5-6** *"The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."* May our prayer be, "If the Lord wills, we will be in Israel!"

START WORKING ON PASSPORTS

Everyone who goes on the trip will need a passport. Passports, depending on the season can take up to three months to get. I recommend that the minute you know you are going on the trip, you start working on getting your passport if you don't have one. Currently passports cost about \$130.00. Visit travel.state.gov for more information, and to start your application.

START WORKING ON FUNDING

Of course, this is a huge expenditure for everyone who is considering going. Although we may be able to squeeze in a fundraiser or two over the next year, I would not count on fundraising as your primary source of funding. It will need to come primarily from personal funds. Since this trip is not a "missions trip," we probably won't be sending out support letters en masse, but it is well within reason to seek assistance from close friends and family.

LET ME KNOW!

We will need to start solidifying a list of people who are going on the trip by mid-September. If you know you are going, you'll need to submit your name and a \$500 deposit to secure your spot.

DEADLINE FOR SIGN-UPS WILL BE NOVEMBER 1, 2022

(You'll be getting much more info on this process, but just want to give you a ballpark)