

Twins Tours & Travel LTD

Tour Organizer Preparation Guide

2017 - 2018



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
ABOUT TWINS TOURS	3
GETTING STARTED	5
PLANNING & PROMOTING YOUR TWINS TOUR TRIP	6
WHILE IN ISRAEL	10
WHEN YOU RETURN	10
STUDY RESOURCES	11
FAQ'S	12
APPENDIX	17

INTRODUCTION:

We invite you to join us on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land that will enrich and deepen your faith in the land where Jesus walked, died and rose from the dead. A trip to Israel is much more than just a vacation or sightseeing trip, it is a life transforming experience that will enable you, and your group to encounter the land of the Bible, and the ministry of Christ in its historical and geographical context. As God leads, we hope that you prayerfully consider partnering with Twins Tours in leading a group to Israel.

ABOUT TWINS TOURS:

Twins Tours & Travel LTD specializes in building customized tour packages to the Holy Land, allowing travelers to explore the Land where Jesus once walked and experience the Bible's living history first-hand. As you retrace the path of the patriarchs and walk in the footsteps of Jesus, it is our aim that you and your fellow travelers will gain greater insight into the Scriptures, and a new understanding of the Land where Judaism and Christianity were born. It has been both humbling and a privilege to see the numerous lives transformed as our groups experience the God of Scripture personally through the intentional interaction with the land of the Bible while on tour.

Andre & Marie Moubarak, the managing owners of Twins Tours, have a combined total of 25 years in the tourism industry. Married for 8 years, their relationship blends together the East and the West. Initially an American tourist, Marie returned to Israel as a volunteer and ultimately married Andre. Andre is a licensed tour guide, operator and a gifted Bible teacher. Twins Tours is dedicated to teaching the language, culture and traditions of the biblical text to Christian pilgrims from all over the world. One of our specialties is creating a tour where you see amazing Biblical sites and at the same time see what God is doing today through various ministries and organizations. The fusion of these two elements creates an encounter that will extend your understanding beyond a traditional tour. This can range from a day or two of volunteer or service projects or as short of a time as a few hours of hearing from the 'living stones'.

In our experience, most people leave this land changed forever. For those who have never been to Israel, it is hard to describe how much of a difference it makes when you come and stand in the land of the Bible and see it for yourself. We have often heard it described as suddenly seeing in color after living in a world of black and white. There is no doubt that coming to the Holy land will inject new life into the walk of your tour participants with Jesus of Nazareth and unveil new appreciation for His Word.

In addition to offering biblical study tours, we also offer a variety of tours, each with a different focus:

- Biblical Study Tours
- Faith Pilgrimages
- Service/Volunteer Projects
- Intercessory Prayer Journeys
- Personally Customized/Specialized/Themed or Concept Tours
- Conferences/Concerts

Part of the vision of Twins Tours has always been to build up the local believing community by building bridges between Messianic Jews, Arab Christians, and the worldwide church. A service tour is an excellent opportunity for your group to take part in the day-to-day ministries of the 'living stones' of this land to experience first hand what God is doing today in Israel and the Palestinian Territories.

Twins Tours specializes in ministry - church group tours. we are here to assist you building a customized tour package that best suits your group type and budget. All of our guides are believers and fully licensed by the State of Israel, who are equally committed to providing your group with solid biblical teachings as well as service and/or prayer opportunities during your trip to Israel.

GETTING STARTED

1. Your commitment to come. One of the best ways to begin planning a trip to Israel with Twins Tours is to take a step of faith and to firmly decide to come yourself. When your friends, peers, and congregation see your commitment to this trip, people are more likely to respond enthusiastically and join you.

2. Involve tour participants in a preparation study group. Meeting on a regular basis together will not only allow for everyone to get to know each other, but will establish a strong spiritual foundation of prayer, learning and discipleship within the group. We encourage our tour leaders to take a practical, hands-on role in the spiritual preparation of the group.

3. Prayer Support. We strongly suggest that you enlist prayer support from your home church during your preparation and your trip to Israel. We believe that having spiritual covering during a trip is an essential element in preparing your group for what the Lord has in store for them during their tour.

PLANNING & PROMOTING YOUR TWINS TOUR TO ISRAEL

1. Establish a leadership team, set goals, and enlist prayer support & spiritual covering

Although you do not need any prior experience to lead a tour to Israel, you may want to enlist other individuals to help in coordinating details of the trip.

Establishing a leadership team of two or three people (especially if you are coming with a large group) can help drive the overall process and get the word out about the trip. This needs to include a group treasurer, who will handle the financial responsibilities for the trip from beginning to end, as well as a tour logistics administrator (getting from their home, to the flight and all the way here to Israel).

The leadership team will ideally be responsible for:

- Communicating with potential tour participants
- Sending promotional materials and information to churches or individuals
- Creating and maintaining a list of people who have expressed interest in going to Israel (this is also helpful for organizing future trips to Israel).
- Coordinating regular meetings, prayer groups or bible study for tour participants.

More importantly, we urge group leaders and participants to ask for prayer covering before, during and after your tour. Prayer for strength, safety and spiritual openness is crucial for the Holy Spirit to bring about life-changing growth.

2. Requesting the Tour Itinerary

This is where the ‘nuts and bolts’ planning of the tour begins. You will communicate your vision to Marie, the Program Director, and together customize a meaningful tour that accomplishes your goals.

3. Tour Price Quotation

After the tour itinerary is finalized, a Tour Price Quote will be given by Twins Tours. At this point, the Group Leader will have all the information necessary to plan and make decisions. As the quote is being developed, there are several factors to keep in mind. (1) – prices are higher during Jewish holiday times. (2) – The number of participants will

determine how many free places you receive (3) – prices quoted are for double occupancy. There is a single supplement fee for single occupancy rooms. (4) – type of hotel will affect prices.

4. Reserving the Tour

The Tour Organizer will then make a reservation with Twins Tours for the Tour which will result in a final contract with a payment schedule. At this point your flight details must be final.

5. Prepare marketing materials

Now that your Tour is designed, priced and air portions are final, having up to date and effective marketing materials is an excellent way to promote it. Contact Twins Tours to receive a complimentary video and brochures that are specific to your Tour. You may find that setting up a simple website or Facebook page, or online group is an easy and efficient way to distribute the trip's promotional materials and any other information.

6. Reach out & register participants

The upcoming Tour is now ready to be presented to potential participants in your circle of influence. This would include your church community, ministry partners and friends as widely as possible by making announcements, short presentations, or hosting an informal 'Israel Orientation Meeting' to answer questions, show photos and promote the tour.

7. Payment Terms & Conditions

The Tour Payment Terms & Conditions are as follows:

- Payment Schedule: 50% of the entire amount should be transferred to our bank 60 days prior to arrival to Israel. Please add any additional sending fees. (\$40 Varies with each bank & depends on the amount to be wired). For example, if the 50% down payment is \$25,000, please send \$25,000 + your banks' sending fees. Twins Tours will absorb the receiving fees on our end. The remaining balance should be transferred 3 weeks prior to arrival, again, adding any additional sending fees. After the transfers are made, immediately notify Twins Tours so we can confirm with our bank. Most international wire transfers take 2 days to one week to receive, depending on holidays, weekends, etc.
- Each payment will generate a receipt from Twins Tours with a final invoice showing all payments and any refunds, if applicable.

- Any additional costs accrued (such as an additional person added to the tour, etc.) can be paid in cash to Twins Tours upon arrival and a receipt will be given.
- Group Cancellation: If the group cancels less than 60 days prior to arrival, refunds are not guaranteed and cancellation fees may be applied. However, if the cancellation is due to the unlikely event of war or national emergency, then Twins Tours will retain a small administration fee, and return the bulk of the monies paid. It will depend on each hotel's willingness to waive the cancellation fee.
- Individual Cancellation: If an individual participant cancels less than 14 days prior to arrival, then full refunds cannot be guaranteed and cancellation fees may be applied. The situation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Travel insurance that includes trip cancellation due to illness, injury or medical emergencies is highly advised.
- Tips: Tips must be given in cash (in three separate envelopes, labeled 'tour guide', 'bus driver' and 'hotel tips') with *one set of envelopes per hotel*. These monies go directly from the Group Organizer to the service providers and cannot be included in the wire transfer to Twins Tours & Travel Ltd. Customarily in Israel tips for tour guides, bus drivers and hotel workers are received independent of their salary. Below is the tip chart to use when calculating tips.

	Guide/pp/day	Driver/pp/day	Hotels/pp/day
01-10pax	\$8	\$6	\$3
10-20pax	\$7	\$5	\$3
20-30pax	\$6	\$4	\$3
30-45pax	\$6	\$4	\$3

- Rates could be subject to change due to possible extreme fluctuations in the US dollar and fuel prices
- Rates are based on these dates only; changes to tour dates may require re-pricing
- Check-in to hotels on Saturdays are subject to late check-in procedure (*up to three hours after the end of Shabbat*). We will endeavor to schedule your tours to avoid these late check-in charges on Shabbat.

8. Group Organizer Responsibilities

- Group Organizer Responsibilities – the Group Organizer is responsible for the team that he is bringing. This includes: having a packet of the following information with them at all times on the tour: a copy of each participants' passports, emergency contact info, list of any prescription medications they take, and health insurance information for each participant in case of emergency. If there is a medical emergency, or any other type of emergency, Twins Tours will assist the Group Organizer in making decisions on how to resolve the emergency.

9. Twins Tours Management Responsibilities

- In the event of a security situation such as rioting, unrest or riots, route changes, accidents, weather conditions etc., Twins Tours management is ultimately responsible for making the best decisions that might affect the itinerary and touring schedule.

10. Tour Guide & Driver Working Hours

- Tour Guides are restricted to work 9 hours/day. Any additional hours will be billed to the tour budget. Regarding buses, according to Israeli law, the daily limit is 200 kilometers and 9 hours. Extra fees will apply for any additional kilometers or hours.

11. Administrative

- Name tags – the group organizer will be responsible to print and bring name tags for each tour participant. On the back of the nametags, please include the names and phone #'s of the hotels, guides, etc. You can get this information from our office.
- Song sheets – many groups like to bring a small list of song sheets for the participants to use during times of worship
- Devotional & Prayer Schedule – many groups often welcome the involvement of their participants and create a devotional and prayer schedule for each day of the tour. If you choose to do this, please have it organized before making the trip here.
- Wifi – Most hotels will have areas with free wifi in the lobby, sometimes in the rooms. Buses have limited wifi. Also there are some places in the country with limited cellphone reception, which affects the bus wifi system.
- Hairdriers in hotel rooms – Most hotels have hairdriers, guesthouses do not. So please keep this in mind as you plan your tour.
- Israeli cellphone sim cards – We recommend that the Group Organizer have one for the Tour. Twins Tours can supply each group with one phone line for their time here to receive calls from your home country. We can assist you in obtaining the sims cards. For tour participants who really need to stay connected, it's advised to get an international calling or data plan organized before you arrive.
- Larger Groups – If your group is larger, it's often helpful to have the group broken down into smaller groups with 'small group leaders'. This structure helps information get distributed quickly to the tour participants, and the small group leaders can help be on the lookout for problems the tour participants may encounter, such as feeling of isolation, etc.

- People with special needs – please advise us if any tour participants have mobility issues or special dietary needs.

WHILE IN ISRAEL

- Stay in touch -Before you come, consider creating a list of people (with their contact information) that would like to receive regular updates from the group while in Israel. This is especially important for those who will be praying for the group, so that they can know how and when to pray.
- Take lots of photos and videos - make sure that someone on the trip has a good quality camera to photograph and record the trip highlights.
- Establish contact - Even if your itinerary does not include a meeting with a local ministry or congregation, we encourage everyone to reach out and talk to believers and unbelievers living in the Holy Land. Personal connection with local believers can be an eye-opening encounter.

WHEN YOU RETURN

When you return home you will feel excited to share with your church, school, and community your experience and what God has done in your life during your visit to Israel.

You may want to plan an 'Israel Night' and invite friends or family and share your experiences through stories, pictures or video you took. Some people even serve simple Israeli food to make the night complete!

Twins Tours is always happy to receive individual and group feedback once you are back home and have time to reflect on your Tour.

STUDY RESOURCES

Building a foundation will help orientate your group to the geographical, cultural and historical context of the land of the Bible, and will help tour participants get the most out of their trip. Below are some resources we recommend that can either be studied as a group or individually:

- The Jerusalem Film – an IMAX film by National Geographic
- The Israelis: Ordinary People in an Extraordinary Land – Dana Rosenfeld
- Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels - Kenneth E. Bailey
- Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith - Marvin R. Wilson
- That The World May Know: Faith Lessons (DVD) - Ray Vander Laan
- The Source - James A. Michener

FAQ'S

How far in advance should I begin planning a trip?

We suggest you allow yourself at least nine to twelve months before coming to Israel, although longer may be better, since you may find that you will need to promote the tour. Be aware it will take several weeks to negotiate with the airlines and book your flights, at that point after your flights are confirmed inform Twins Tours to finalize the tour program hotels and prices.

What does a Twins Tour include?

The price of the tour includes all of the base expenses – Half board H/B (breakfasts & dinners at the hotels), trips, transportation, accommodation and entrance fees.

What does a Twins Tour NOT include? Travel insurance, optional trips, activities on free days, lunches, visa application, fees, and souvenir shopping.

Please note: Lunches can also be included, if desired, in most places, during the group touring days.

Do I need a visa?

Individuals holding passports from Europe & North America do not need a visa to visit Israel. Individuals from other countries need to check with an Israeli Consulate or Embassy to determine exact requirements. Here is a useful website to help you determine what Israel's visa requirements are:

<http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ConsularServices/Pages/Visas.aspx>

Note that all visitors to Israel must arrive with a valid passport that does not expire within six months after your arrival in Israel.

When is the best time of year to visit?

It's up to you. Unless you specifically want to be in Israel for Christmas or Easter, you may want to schedule your trip at a time other than these busy holiday seasons. Weather conditions vary; from November to March Israel has cool temperatures and some rain. (January and February have the highest rainfall). From June to August temperatures are very warm, and the country is virtually rainless from April

through October. A Twins Tours representative can help you decide on the best time for you and your group.

<i>month/location</i>	Jerusalem	Tel Aviv	Haifa	Safed	Tiberius	Dead Sea
January	43-54°	48-66°	46-63°	37-50°	48-65°	53-69°
March	47-61°	51-68°	47-70°	43-55°	51-72°	60-78°
July	67-83°	70-87°	68-86°	65-84°	72-98°	83-102°
November	54-66°	55-75°	56-73°	54-66°	59-78°	65-80°

Degrees Fahrenheit

Here is a helpful website to find out the Jewish holidays for each year:

<https://www.hebcal.com/holidays/2015-2016>

Is it really safe to visit Israel?

People who have never been to Israel usually ask us this question - the answer is a clear and emphatic yes! The fact that millions of people visit Israel every year and return safe, fulfilled, inspired and happy demonstrates how exaggerated news reports can be about Israel.

Ask someone who has been to Israel – and then, come and see for yourself.

What about bad news?

If there is negative news out of the Middle East it is important to acknowledge it and communicate with the tour participants. If necessary, host a meeting to address concerns, review trip plans and review Twins Tours safety precautions.

Twins Tours is available to do a Skype meeting with the tour participants to discuss any of these issues. Please note that events in Syria or Iraq generally have little or no impact on daily life in Israel. State Department warnings you may have seen are usually for State Department employees. Twins Tours will adjust the tour itinerary to take into consideration any possible legitimate security concerns. This is why having a native Israeli guide and bus driver is to your advantage.

How much pocket money should I bring for tipping or other things?

Most currencies can be exchanged at the airport, or by authorized money changers which are available in most places your group will be visiting. Visa and MasterCard are accepted throughout the country, however we recommend that you notify your bank and credit card company and inform them of your travel plans to avoid them potentially suspending your account due to irregular activity. Do not bring Travelers Checks, as they are accepted in very few places these days, and there will be little time to get them cashed during your tour.

Do I need travel health Insurance?

The answer is YES. ☺ If your health insurance does not cover international travel, we strongly encourage participants to purchase a basic plan through <https://www.travelinsurancecenter.com>

Do I need trip cancellation Insurance?

The answer is YES, again. Most travel health insurance companies have the option to add trip cancellation insurance.

What should I pack?

- Clothing that is comfortable and lightweight. Layering clothing is the easiest way to prepare for a variety of weather conditions. Also bear in mind that on certain days modest clothing is required to enter certain holy sites. Your guide will let you know in advance when those days are.
- Please bring one special, dressy outfit for attendance at a congregational meeting, synagogue, or special event.
- 'Holy Dress' for women is a skirt reaching below the knee or pants and a shirt which comes below the elbow. Often, especially in hot weather, it's helpful to travel with a lightweight scarf to add to your outfit. That way you can have extra coverage without getting hot from wearing warmer clothing. For men, it is shorts below the knees pants and shirts reaching to the elbow. For either men or women, it's convenient to bring the pants that have legs that

unzip. Please note for women, it's not mandatory for women to cover their heads at any religious site. For men, inside churches, they need to remove them.

- Besides a casual pair of shoes for traveling or evenings, bringing adequate sport or hiking shoes is essential. Please make sure the shoes are broken in. Most Twins Tours itineraries include days with lots of walking or hiking.
- Any medication you take regularly or think you may need while travelling. Check with your doctor before you come to ensure you have everything you need. In addition, we suggest bringing a small amount of Tylenol (or other pain reliever), decongestant and diarrhea medicine as your body adjusts to time difference and new environment. These are generally not needed, but if they are, it's convenient to have them with you not having to stop the Tour to purchase them. In addition, please bring feminine hygiene products and sunscreen, (as they are both quite expensive here) and will take up valuable time looking for them to buy should you need them.
- A three-pronged European 220 volt adaptor for your electronics. Please note the difference . . . a convertor 'converts' the electricity from 110 to 220 (or vice versa), etc. and is larger than an adaptor. An adaptor 'adapts' the shape of the plug so it will fit into the electrical outlets, and is much smaller. It's shown at the bottom of the picture below. Also note that 110 volt, high electricity items such as hair driers and hair straighteners, even when used with a transformer, often burn out. So think about bringing a dual voltage appliance that will need only the adaptor to make it fit into a wall plug. Dual voltage appliances are clearly marked " 100 V – 240 V ".





SAMPLE ITINERARY

Here is a great sample itinerary to give you some ideas.

10 days/9 Nights Pilgrimage in Israel

Itinerary – subject to change according to flight arrival & departure times, inclement weather, security concerns, and the wishes of the group

Day 1 – Arrival to Israel:

Drive to the Tel Aviv area. Check in depends on flight time.

Tour the Old City of Jaffa and explore the home of Simon the Tanner, a light to the gentiles. Learn about the history of Jaffa, visit Tel Aviv and study about the modern state of Israel. Overnight in Tel Aviv.

Day 2 – The Gentile Pentecost:

Travel along Via Maris, the ancient international coastal highway. *Theme: Pagan nations encounter the God of Israel – Romans, Phoenicians, Canaanites and Egyptians.*

Caesarea Maritima – Gateway of Rome to the east – Springboard of Christianity to the west.

Explore the magnificent port city & man-made harbor, built by King Herod to honor Roman Emperor Augustus Caesar, later becoming the seat of Roman governors in 1st c AD. Here the apostle Peter proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a god-fearing Roman centurion named Cornelius, and the whole gentile household was baptized by the Holy Spirit (Acts 10). Here a prisoner named Paul shared his conversion testimony before royalty (Acts 26) and the port of Caesarea became the base for mission trips across the Mediterranean Sea.

Mt. Carmel - Elijah vs. Priests of Baal during the reign of King Ahab & Queen Jezebel. Situated high above the Jezreel Valley, Mt Carmel is where prophet Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18), upon whom God sent the fire down from Heaven. The church at Muhraka is a perfect place to recount the biblical events, and the rooftop observation point provides a panoramic view of the fertile Jezreel Valley and surrounding hills – Nazareth, Mt. Tabor, Mt. Moreh, Mt. Gilboa - “a land of mountains and valleys that drinks rain from heaven” (Deut 11:11).

Megiddo – the Plain of Armageddon . Continuing along the ancient highway that connected Egypt to Mesopotamia, we drive by the most important gateway city of Canaan – Megiddo. Many pharaohs, kings, and emperors have fought bloody battles in the Jezreel Valley to control this strategic pass by Mt Carmel. No wonder this will be the location of the final battle of Armageddon (Revelation). *If time permits, we will explore the layers of civilization on this historic tel – including Solomon’s city gates, a Canaanite altar, and a hidden water tunnel.*

Overnight in Tiberias hotel or a kibbutz guesthouse along the lakeshore.

Day 3 – The Word Became Flesh and Dwelled Among Us

Nazareth is the place of Jesus's childhood (Luke 1 & 2), and today has the largest concentration of Christians in Israel. Its first importance is for angel Gabriel's announcement to Mary that she will bear God's son.

We will briefly visit the **Church of the Annunciation**, where the Word became Flesh, and appreciate how Mary is revered by cultures all around the world. Underneath the church are ancient dwelling places and nearby is a cemetery with a rolling stone from the 1st century AD.

Nazareth Village – a delightful recreation of a Galilean Jewish village in the time of Jesus, illustrating the context of Jesus' parables. Our tour includes a threshing floor, olive press, watchtower over fields and vineyards, shepherds, wine press, homes, carpentry, and a life-sized synagogue. Here we will unroll the scrolls and read in memory of Jesus *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of the sight for the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."* (Luke 4:18-19)

Mt Precipice – rejection of Jesus by his hometown.

Drive east through the Lower Galilee. This is the same route that Jesus traveled on.

Mt. Arbel - overlook of Sea of Galilee region, *where Jesus spent most of this 3-year public ministry, as recorded in the Gospels. Mt. Arbel is first mentioned in Hosea 10:14*
Overnight in Tiberias hotel or a kibbutz guesthouse along the lakeshore.

Day 4 – Becoming a Disciple of Jesus

Capernaum – The Gospels name this fishing town as the headquarters of Jesus' public ministry in Galilee (Mark 1:31-38, Matt 4:13). Capernaum was the home of Peter, location of many miraculous healings, powerful teachings, and yet a town that Jesus eventually cursed for their unbelief (Matt 11:23). *The centurion's faith in Jesus to heal his servant, prompted Jesus to ...* Luke 7:1-10

Tax station along Via Maris – border of political territory Herod Antipas/ Herod Philip.
Jesus calls a tax collector to be disciple – Matthew. Mark 2:14

Primacy of St. Peter, Tabgha - Communion at seashore of lake – Region of the multiplication of loaves & fishes. Jesus feeds his disciples before sending them out.

Boat Ride – enjoy the last moments of Jesus' beloved landscape as we sail around the Sea of Galilee on the "Jesus Boat" - replica of a wooden fishing boat used by fishermen in the time of Jesus. Then see a real one from 1st century recently discovered on lakeshore.

Lunch - St Peters Fish

Mt. of Beatitudes – Kingdom of Heaven teaching. *Ascend the Mt of Beatitudes where we enjoy time for spiritual reflection and meditation on Jesus' teachings from the "Sermon on the Mount" (Matt 5-7)*

Migdal – visit the recently discovered 1st century AD synagogue in the hometown of Mary Magdelene. Discuss the role of female disciples in Jesus' ministry and the early church.

Valley of the Doves – short walk along the Jesus trail, above is Mt Arbel – a zealot stronghold during the Jewish uprising against the Romans and King Herod. What did Jesus teach about this?

Baptisms at Yardenit – a spiritual highlight for every Christian group, we will celebrate our baptism with a full water immersion. This facility is located where the lake feeds into the Jordan River, just before it meanders south through the Jordan Valley. Overnight in Tiberias / kibbutz along lakeshore.

Day 5 – Jordan River – Baptisms & Dead Sea

Depart the Galilee via the **Jordan Valley** – we descend through the Syrian-African Great Rift Valley to the lowest point on earth. Somewhere near Jericho, Joshua led the Israelite tribes into the Promised Land. God stopped the Jordan River for the priests to safely carry the Ark of the Covenant across to the other side.

Region of **John the Baptizer** – in the spirit of prophet Elijah, John boldly declared a message of Repentance in the wilderness, preparing the way of the Lord. In this spirit he baptized Jewish pilgrims before they ascended to Jerusalem for Temple worship & sacrifice.

Qasr el Yahud – traditional site where John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, (Mark 1:9). Nearby monastery on **Mt. Qarantal (Mount of Temptation)** commemorates how the Holy Spirit immediately led Jesus into the wilderness for 40 days of fasting in the face of temptation of Satan.

Jericho - the most ancient city in the world, this oasis of natural springs and palm trees was first inhabited 9000 years ago. Conquered by resounding trumpets as Joshua led the Israelites around the heavily fortified walls of Jericho. At an ancient Sycamore Tree we remember the story of Zachaeus climbing up to catch a glimpse of Jesus. Here Jesus healed a blind man before ascending to Jerusalem.

Overnight in the Dead Sea area.

Day 6 – Judean Wilderness – The Desert as a refuge

We begin the day at **Masada**, one of Herod the Great's magnificent fortresses and the last Jewish stronghold to fall captive to the Romans. Here we will discuss the nature of the Herodian dynasty and Zealot ideology. On our way back north we will pass by the beautiful subtropical oasis of En Gedi before making our way to the site of Qumran.

Qumran – Explore the archeology of the Jewish "Essene" sect, which turned away from the Temple worship & sacrifice during the corrupt Hasmonean period. Unique findings are multiple mikveh (ritual purity baths), a scriptorium, and community dining hall, but no individual homes. In the nearby caves, the famous Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1947. They prove the Hebrew Bible has not been altered in 2200 years. Discuss the possible relationship of the Essenes / Dead Sea Sect to the ministry and preaching of John the Baptist in the same wilderness region.

Dead Sea - Enjoy a swim (or rather a float!) in the mineral-rich waters of the Dead Sea, renowned for its minerals and healing properties. If time permits we will view **Byzantine Monasteries** in this wilderness route that once provided accommodation to pilgrim travelers.

Ascend to Jerusalem.

Check into hotel and overnight Jerusalem

Day 7 - Bethlehem & Ein-Kerem

Bethlehem – Birthplace of King David, and later the birthplace of his descendent Jesus – Emmanuel.

Shepherds Fields, where the angels announced the birth of Jesus. We will see actual shepherds grazing their sheep on the hillsides of this modern town.

Church of Nativity - Oldest church in the world, built by Roman Emperor Constantine's mother Queen Helena in 4th c AD. Witness how Middle Eastern Christians preserve the holy site where Christ was born.

Point out the Bethlehem Bible College; discuss the role of Palestinian Christians today.

Proceed to **Ein Kerem**: This picturesque village is full of winding lanes, enchanting architectural features and lush green gardens. There are seven monasteries and convents inspired by various traditions at Ein Kerem. It is said that John the Baptist was born here and that Mary drank from the Spring of the Virgin, still bubbling from a cave at an abandoned mosque near the center of the village.

Overnight in Jerusalem.

Day 8 – God establishes his Temple in Jerusalem

Origin of holy site. Begins with Mt. Moriah, where Abraham almost sacrifices his son Isaac. Believed to be the same rocky hilltop where King David purchased the threshing floor (2 Samuel 24:18-25), intended to house the Ark of the Covenant. His son King Solomon constructed the First Temple and royal palaces on this hilltop overlooking the newly established City of David.

City of David - Hezekiah's Tunnel (optional) - Pool of Siloam - Walk up Herodian steps - Explore the original City of David, a small Jebusite fortified hilltop conquered by King David's men through an underground shaft. We will see evidence of royal occupation here throughout the Biblical periods. Discover the 1st Temple period, building of Jerusalem as political & religious center, and King Hezekiah's projects to protect the Holy City from Assyrian invasion. Option to walk through Hezekiah's Water Tunnel. Our journey ends at the Pool of Siloam where Jesus healed the blind man. Its possible to ascend on the original Herodian steps to the market street of the Temple Complex.

Davidson Center – Jesus and all other pilgrims ascend to the Temple in the same manner. We will stand on the actual **Southern Steps** to the Temple Mount, and learn about requirements of ritual purity, temple tax, and sacrifice. *Importance of Herod's Temple to Christians - Definitely Jesus would have walked on these steps. He was brought to the Temple several times in childhood – after birth – as a young boy, teaching with authority in his father's house. Jesus and his disciples visited the Temple continuously during his last week in Jerusalem before arrest. Overturned the moneychanger tables, in attempt to purify his father's house. Jesus finally prophesied its destruction (Mark 13:1-2).* The Southern Steps are also a possible site of Peter's sermon on Pentecost and baptism of 3000 on festival of Shavuot. *See evidence of the magnificent Temple built by King Herod that was destroyed by the Romans 100 years later. Internal struggles and factions within Judaism led to the Great Revolt and final destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.*

Western Wall – Holiest site in the world for the Jewish faithful. Closest as to where the Holy of Holies once stood. This wall is actually just a portion of retaining wall of Herod's Temple mount platform, the only remains of Temple after destructions by Romans in 70 AD.

Temple Institute – illustrates the evolution of Jewish worship from the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, Solomon's Temple, Nehemiah & Ezra's Temple, Herod's Temple from the time of Jesus. Then the plans for building of 3rd Temple in future can be seen.

Biblical Archeology in Jewish Quarter – see the "**Broad Wall**" built by King Hezekiah to protect Israelite refugees from Assyrian attack, warnings of Prophet Isaiah. Destruction of city 120 years later by Babylonians, then exiled Jews return to Zion with Nehemiah & Ezra. Rebuild walls & temple and reestablish worship & reading Torah.

Rooftop view to Temple Mount today – 35-acre platform featuring golden Dome of Rock & Al Aqsa Mosque. 3rd most holy site in Islam. Discuss how each religious group through history has revered the Temple Mount area.
Overnight in Jerusalem

Day 9 – Mt Olives to Calvary – the Last Week of Jesus in Jerusalem

First stop - **Pater Noster Church** - it was on the Mt Olives that Jesus taught his disciples to pray "The Lord's Prayer." Morning prayer and reflection on the role of Jesus as the sacrificial lamb provided by God during the Jewish feast of Passover.

Mount of Olives observation deck to behold the breathtaking panorama of the Holy City. Recount the biblical events that took place on Mt Olives and Kidron Valley below. Celebrate Jesus' triumphant entrance to Jerusalem as we walk together down the **Palm Sunday Route**. Stop at **Dominus Flevit** church, commemorating where Jesus wept over the future destruction of Jerusalem (Luke 19:41). Continue to the **Garden of Gethsemane**, with its ancient olive grove, and the **Church of Agony** (modern Church of All Nations). This is where Jesus prayed on the night of his betrayal by Judas, and was arrested by Roman soldiers (Matt. 26:36, John 18:1).

Walk across the **Kidron Valley**, also called Valley of Jehosephat – prophesied site for Final Judgment. See all the tombs here, each religious group poised for Resurrection Day. Enter the walled Old City of Jerusalem through **Lions Gate**. This area north of Temple Mount was used for pools to bathe sacrificial animals. In 2nd temple pd, this was known as the colonnaded "**Pools of Bethesda**" where Jesus healed a paralytic (John 5:1-15). The Crusaders built a magnificent church honoring St Anne, the mother of Mary. The excellent acoustics provide the best place to sing in Jerusalem.

Mt Zion - Cenacle / Upper Room – Jesus Last Supper, a Passover meal with disciples, which becomes the Eucharist – body & blood of Jesus Christ shed for us.

Proceed to the area of **Antonia Fortress** (Praetorian) where Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate and was condemned to death by crucifixion (Mark 15:1).

Walk along portion of **Via Dolorosa**, remembering Jesus suffering as he carried the cross to Golgotha / the place of the skull.

Also considered the site of Pentecost, where the praying disciples received the fire of Holy Spirit, and birthplace of the first church. Discuss the growth of early church as it spread throughout land of Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Greece, Rome, Turkey, Armenia, Egypt, Ethiopia...

Discover the remnants of these ancient churches, still worshipping and living in Jerusalem until today. Walk through neighborhoods of **Armenian** and **Christian Quarters**.

Pass by remains of Herod's Palace, a possible site of Jesus' trial. Walk atop the city wall of Jesus time (David Street), then turn north to location of an abandoned quarry just outside this city wall. Explore the **Holy Sepulcher Church** – Traditional site of Calvary/ Golgotha – place of Jesus' crucifixion and burial – 4th c AD "Church of the Resurrection." Discover the historic authenticity of the site, the centuries of religious traditions, and the nature of worship here until today.

End the day at the **Garden Tomb**, we will have a special time of prayer, worship and communion.

Overnight in Jerusalem

Day 10 – Depends on flights departure time.

We return back to the USA, with wonderful memories of our pilgrimage to His land.