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### In the Footsteps of Jesus Building the Faith Through a Parish Visit to the Holy Land

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*Doctor of Ministry Major Applied Project*. 162.  
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IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS  
Building the Faith  
Through a Parish Visit to the Holy Land

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May 5, 1992

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**IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS**  
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**Through a Parish Visit to the Holy Land**

**W. F. Hischke**

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## The Abstract

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS: Building the Faith Through a Parish Visit to the Holy Land.

This paper shows the busy parish pastor how to arrange a tour to the Holy Land for himself and members of his parish, and how their faith can increase by walking in the footsteps of Jesus. The paper outlines such an actual tour, giving the preparations before departure, the itinerary, the sites visited, the related Scriptures, and post-trip comments. A carry-along booklet for the traveler is included as Appendix B.

## INTRODUCTION

If I had an altogether free choice in the matter, I probably would keep returning to the Holy Land year after year as long as I live. The country fascinates me. My faith in Jesus Christ, however, does not depend on the geography of Israel. It does not rest on my being able to visit those places where he walked while on this earth.

Yet I definitely am richer in my understanding of Scripture as a result of previous visits to the Holy Land. Just one example is this. It is now far easier to picture in my mind the account of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10. I have traveled that road on which "a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho." Having myself seen the wild barrenness of the country in that area, the rocky hills and the deep ravines, it's easy for me to picture what the Lord says of that man, "he fell into the hands of robbers."

What I personally have experienced in visiting the Holy Land is one of my goals to help others experience in leading them on such a tour. I will be serving as the tour

leader for a group of Village Lutheran Church members, members of the church of which I am the pastor. My goal is to help them experience what I have experienced. My hope and expectation for them is that their understanding of the Scriptures will be greatly enhanced. I trust that their faith in Jesus Christ will grow through these ten days, by their seeing the Scriptures so to speak 'come alive' for them.

My goal in writing this paper is along similar lines. I suspect that you, the reader, may be a clergyman as I am, or someone similar. The fact that you are reading this project paper suggests that you may be entertaining the idea of leading a tour group to the Holy Land. What does this all involve? How should a person go about it? What are the benefits to be gained from such a tour? My purpose in writing this paper is to answer some of these questions to assist you in your preparation and implementation.

Or perhaps your circumstances are such that you are not able to visit the Holy Land in person. Then let this paper serve as an arm chair tour for you. With Bible in hand, read through these pages. Consult the various passages in Scripture as they occur, particularly the places that are cited in Scripture. Picture the description of these sites in your mind. See if it doesn't enable you to understand with a clearer vision. See if you don't get a new and better perspective on certain passages.



It has been a faith building experience for me to do the study required and to write the pages that follow. I trust that your reading of this paper will also be of benefit to you, and especially if you decide to walk in the footsteps of Jesus by visiting the Holy Land.

## Chapter I

### THE ARRANGEMENTS AND PROCESS FOR THE TRIP

It is important that making the necessary arrangements for the trip is done carefully and in detail. In this chapter the reader will find the arrangements that I have made for this particular trip. It can serve as a guide for the things that must be done.

#### A. Done By Others

A tour guide, I presume, could do everything himself. It is a waste of time and energy, however, as other people are in the business of arranging trips to the Holy Land and do it on a regular basis. Thus they are generally more knowledgeable and are able to obtain better bargains on pricing than an amateur.

A person can choose from quite a number of companies that arrange Holy Land trips. I chose Nawas International

Travel, Incorporated, based in New York. Their reputation is good. They have been in the business for forty-two years. They often work with Lutherans, arranging tours year after year with people from both the Fort Wayne and the St. Louis seminaries.

Nawas International arranges the round trip air flights from Chicago to Tel Aviv and return. It is done via KLM Royal Dutch Airlines. Nawas makes the reservations needed at first class hotels in Israel. They arrange for meals, two per day, throughout the trip. They see that motorcoaches are on hand each day, together with an English-speaking Christian guide. They pay the various admission fees, necessary portorage, taxes and service charges.

Nawas handles the making of reservations for the people planning to go along on the tour, including the financial end of it (no small task). For this particular tour, Nawas is charging \$1,595.00 per person for the ten day trip,<sup>1</sup> a price somewhat below average. The travel company also handles the printing of brochures for prospective travelers.<sup>2</sup>

It is far simpler and less time consuming for a tour leader to have a travel company make most of the arrangements for the tour. A tour leader could conceivably do it on his own, but I strongly recommend against attempting it.

## B. Done By the Tour Leader

Working with a travel company such as Nawas International still leaves a number of things to be done by the tour leader. There are some basic things he must do. There are also 'extras' that he may or may not include as part of his leadership.

One of the basics that I need to do is to arrange a flight for tour members from St. Louis to Chicago and return, because the tour package originates in Chicago. I plan to do this by reserving the necessary number of seats on a commercial flight. I foresee no problems in this area.

Local publicity is also handled by the tour leader. Nawas provides a promotional brochure, but the tour leader must decide how to use it. In my case, I have obtained permission to publicize this tour in the congregation I serve as pastor. Thus I am doing so by means of the Nawas brochure, through the congregational newsletter, and in personal conversation with members. My personal style is a 'soft sell.' I dislike pushing people to do something, in this case to go along on the trip. I much prefer to make it merely an invitation.

As stated in the previous section, Nawas provides for a Christian guide for the group while in the Holy Land. I as tour leader am providing something extra in this regard. I am making a study of the various sites to be visited, and

relating them to the section of Scripture in which the sites are mentioned. I plan to offer the results of this study in the form of a booklet to each traveler.<sup>3</sup> Then daily during the tour, I plan to conduct a group meeting with the travelers and go through the section with them for that day. This procedure will make the tour more meaningful to the tour members, enabling them to connect the various sites visited with the Scriptural reference.

Another extra, which I may or may not do depending on various factors, is this: I may offer in a Sunday morning Bible class a preview of the trip in a series of Bible studies. My intent is similar to the booklet idea, that is, to enable each traveler to correlate various passages in the Bible with the sites to be visited.

### C. Some Traveling Tips

You need a passport to travel overseas. Applications are available at larger post offices. It may take up to a month for the passport to actually arrive in your mailbox after you have mailed the application. A word of caution - should you plan to visit any Arab country during the next ten years, be sure to have the Israeli customs agent put his stamp on a separate piece of paper, NOT IN YOUR PASSPORT. You are not allowed to enter an Arab country with an Israeli stamp in your passport.

Pack lightly. Particularly for traveling to the Holy

Land where the weather is warm already in April (the scheduled departure date of this trip), you will need little in the way of heavy clothing. You are allowed two suitcases on the airplane, with a maximum of sixty-two inches each (the length of a tape measure going around the suitcase). Both suitcases together may weigh not more than forty-four pounds. Anything additional will cost you more.

When you pre-pay your trip, the major expenditures are taken care of by the travel company. You will need some extra spending money, however, for souvenirs and snacks. You may change some dollars into shekels while still here in the States. My recommendation, however, is to make the change in Ben Gurion Airport upon arrival in Israel.

Jet-lag is a problem for some travelers, a general feeling of tiredness and wanting to do nothing. This particular trip has a half day 'built in' after arriving in the Holy Land, a time for catching up on needed rest, so that you will be ready to go the next morning on the first day of actual touring.

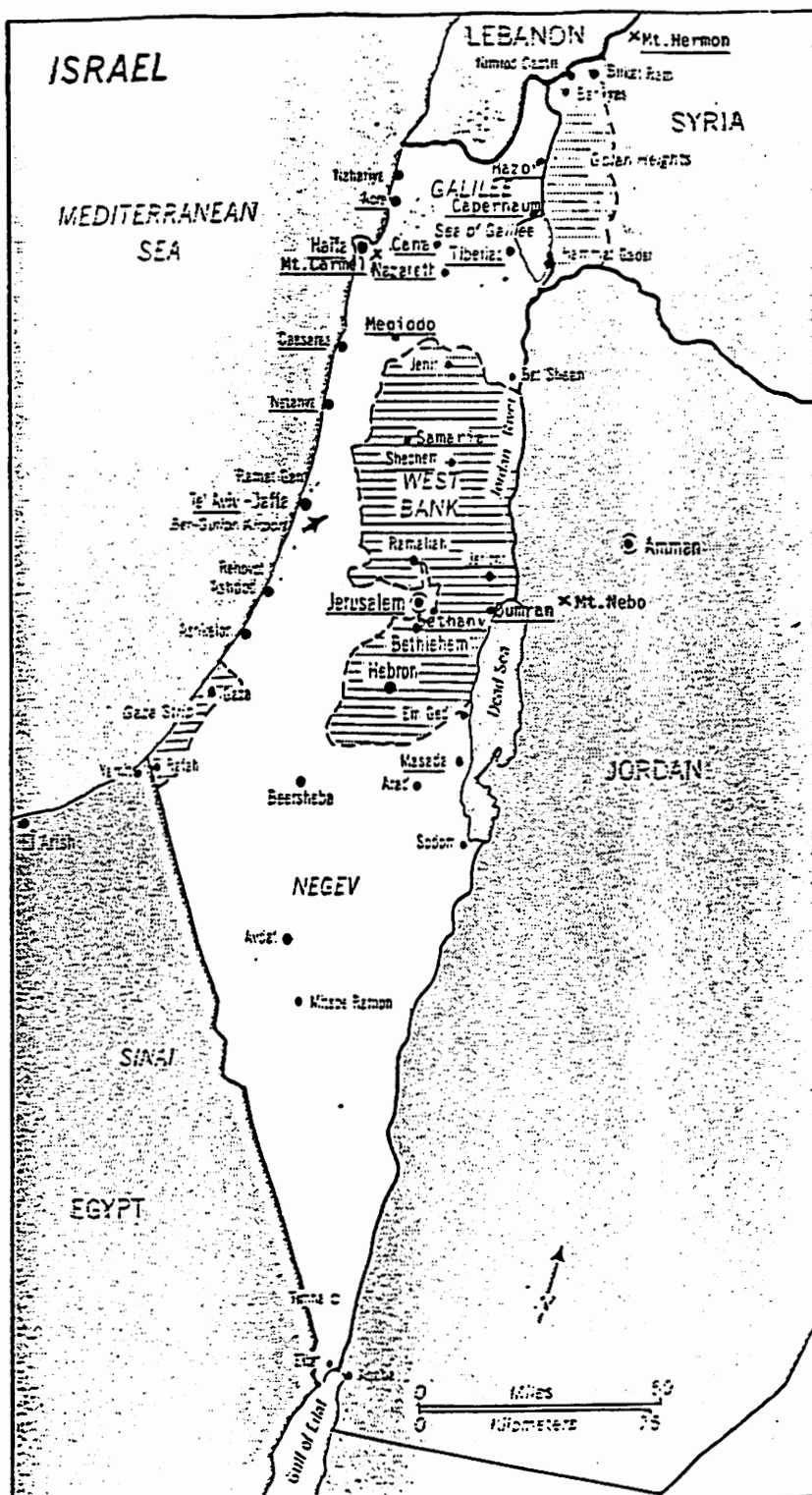


Fig. 1. Map of the Holy Land, with itinerary.

## Chapter II

### THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE HOLY LAND

My intent in this chapter is to give some idea of the geography of the Holy Land. It helps a person to understand the country when he<sup>4</sup> knows something of the topography and its borders, even something of the history of the land.

#### A. A Land of Milk and Honey?

"A land flowing with milk and honey"--that is the way God describes the Holy Land when he calls Moses to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt (Ex. 3:8).<sup>5</sup>

The two spies, Joshua and Caleb, use the same expression to describe the Promised Land, and even expand on it. "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good... a land flowing with milk and honey" (Num. 14:7-8).

A visitor to the Holy Land may well question that description. Although sections of the country are well



suited to agriculture, much of the land is barren and hilly, too dry to be used for the growing of crops except with extensive irrigation. A number of years ago I heard a plausible explanation for the seeming discrepancy between the Scriptural description and the land as it is today. It was given by "Ruth," a tour guide in the Holy Land. I have been unable to document her explanation. I offer it from memory here, however, because the explanation seemed to me at the time, and still does today, to be a credible explanation.

In both Old and New Testament times, so the explanation goes, the Holy Land was largely covered with forests. When the Ottoman Turks invaded and conquered the country in the Middle Ages, they supposedly cut down these forests almost completely. They despoiled and denuded the land. As a result, as also happened in the Great Plains of the United States in the nineteen twenties and thirties, a kind of great "dust bowl" effect developed.<sup>6</sup> Thus still today large areas of the Holy Land are barren and dry. A huge reforestation program has been launched in the Holy Land in recent years. Visitors are encouraged to "plant a tree" by donation of ten dollars per tree. But it will take centuries before the land is restored.

#### B. The Land and Its Borders

Howard Vos is not overstating the case when he writes,

"It is difficult to be specific about the borders of Palestine."<sup>7</sup> Many of the place names given as borders in the Old Testament are still not identifiable to this day. There is much conjecture by various scholars, but little agreement on some of the places. The broad outlines of the ancient country, however, are generally agreed upon. Even the borders of modern day Israel are a matter of much dispute. For purposes of this paper I will be using primarily the modern-day borders, those which the present state of Israel itself claims as its borders.

The western boundary has been the most inflexible through the years. It is the Mediterranean Sea. The northern border is about twenty miles north of the Sea of Galilee, running east and west. The eastern border at its northern end is east of the Sea of Galilee, including, since 1967, the Golan Heights area. From the Sea of Galilee, the eastern border is the Jordan River and the Dead Sea, and continues southward for a hundred miles to the city of Eilat, located on the northern tip of the Red Sea. The southern border runs in a north-northwesterly direction from Eilat to the Gaza Strip on the Mediterranean.

In length from north to south, the country is about 250 miles long. That is the same distance as from St. Louis to Kansas City, or somewhat less than the distance from St. Louis to Chicago. In width from east to west, the country averages about fifty miles. The current population

is nearing five million, of whom approximately four million are Jews.<sup>8</sup>

The four land regions include first, the Mediterranean coastal plain. Secondly, there is a mountain area in the northeast, including Mount Hermon and the Lebanon mountains. Thirdly, there is a large semi-arid section in the south called the Negev. The fourth region is the so-called Great Rift Valley. It includes the Jordan River and the Dead Sea, which at almost 1,300 feet below sea level is the lowest point on earth.

#### C. A History of the Holy Land

In chapter twelve of Genesis, God commands Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you" (Gen. 12:1). Abram obeys the command and travels to Canaan. There God speaks to him again with a promise, "I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it" (Gen. 15:7). Abram, whose name God later changes to Abraham, is the forefather of the present day Jewish people. The Canaanites were living in the land during the time of Abraham, and for another four centuries while the Jews were in Egypt.

The book of Exodus in the Bible tells how God delivered his chosen people from slavery in Egypt under Moses. The book of Joshua gives the account of the people entering

the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua. There they lived then, with a seventy-year exile beginning in 587 B.C., until the time of Christ and the Romans. After that the country was in control successively of the Persians, the Arabs, and the Ottoman Turks until the time of the British Mandate in 1917.

The State of Israel was proclaimed in May of 1948, with neighboring countries immediately attacking, but without success. Further attacks, more on the order of mini-wars, took place in 1967 (the Six Day War), in 1973 (the Yom Kippur War), and in 1982. The Israelis may be said to have won each of these wars, enlarging or further securing their borders each time. At the time of this writing, the Secretary of State of the United States is attempting to arrange some type of peace conference between Israel and its enemies, who live both inside and outside the country. The word at this time is that the first conference is to be held in Madrid, Spain.

## Chapter III

### DAY 3 - THE CITY OF JERUSALEM

The main body of this paper is comprised of chapters three through eight. In these chapters I will describe the sites to be visited each day, describe them physically, historically and Scripturally. Days 1 and 2 of the trip, as well as days 9 and 10, are used in traveling and passing through customs, in getting situated in the hotel, overcoming jet-lag, and for a little leisure time. The chapter now following is a study of the city of Jerusalem, but restricted to the places which will be visited on this particular tour.

#### A. The Pool of Bethesda - John 5:1-9ff.

The Pool of Bethesda (also 'Bethzatha,' meaning "house of the olive") is "located in the NE side of the city near the Temple..." by the Sheep Gate "where sheep were sold for

sacrifice in the Temple."<sup>9</sup> The pool is fifty-five feet long. The Crusaders regarded this particular pool as the one mentioned in the John 5 passage, and according to their custom built a church over the site with an opening in the floor to get down to the water. It is called the Church of St. Anne. Robert Ullian in Frommer's Israel states that "the church is just a few blocks east of the Sanctuaries of the Flagellation and the Condemnation, at the beginning of the Via Dolorosa."<sup>10</sup>

In John 5:1-9ff., the textual apparatus of the Greek New Testament strongly suggests omitting part of verse 3 and all of verse 4.<sup>11</sup> The NIV also consigns the above to a footnote, rather than as part of the regular text.<sup>12</sup> The disputed portion reads, "and they waited for the moving of the waters. From time to time an angel of the Lord would come down and stir up the waters. The first one into the pool after each such disturbance would be cured of whatever disease he had." Edersheim states rather flatly, "This bubbling up of the water was, of course, due not to supernatural but to physical causes."<sup>13</sup> He mentions that to this day the Fountain of the Virgin exhibits the same phenomenon.

Technical matters aside, it is at the Pool of Bethesda where Jesus heals a man who has been an invalid for thirty-eight years. Jesus tells him, "Pick up your mat and walk." At once the man does so; he is healed. This healing takes

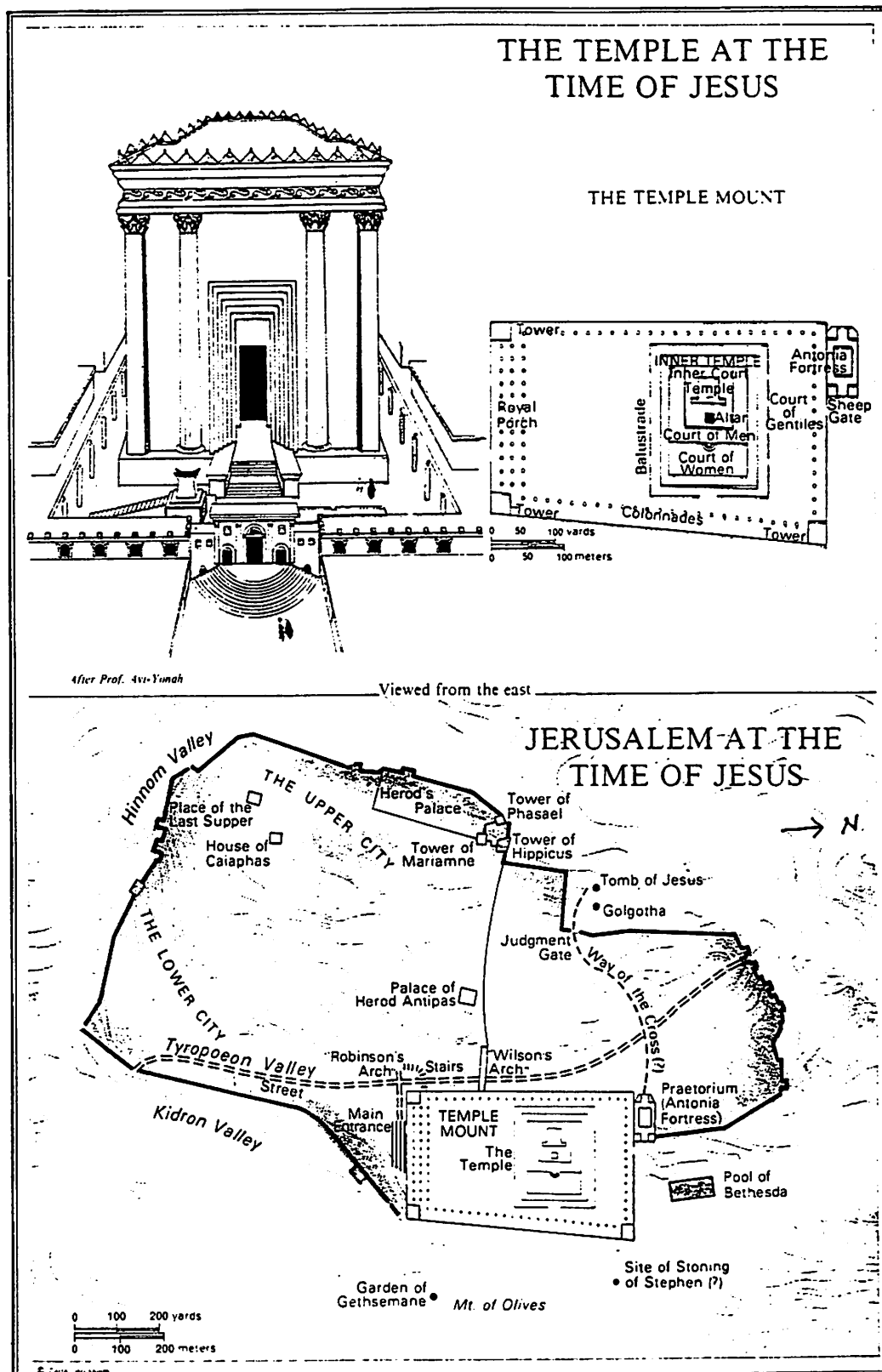
place on a Sabbath. Following the account of the healing in St. John, therefore, comes further narrative about people complaining in regard to Jesus and the Sabbath.

The fact remains, however, that this particular place in Jerusalem is well attested as the site of a miraculous healing by our Lord. It's a good place to begin a tour of the Holy Land. The tourist is reminded that our Lord was indeed and still is the Great Physician. Our Lord is concerned about our spiritual needs, and also our physical problems.

#### **B. The Temple Area - Matthew 24:1-2**

A temple is no longer to be seen on the site where the Scriptural temples once stood. The present day Muslim Dome of the Rock (see next section) stands on the site today. It nonetheless gives a Christian a feeling of awe and reverence to enter the larger temple area.

This is the Biblical Mount Moriah, many scholars believe, where Abraham obeyed God's incomprehensible command and nearly offered up his son Isaac, Genesis 22:1ff. This is the site which King David purchased to build an altar to the Lord. David would not accept the site as a gift but said, "I insist on paying the full price. I will not take for the Lord what is yours, or sacrifice a burnt offering that costs me nothing," 1 Chronicles 21:24. This is the site where King Solomon



Figs. 2 & 3. The Temple, and Jerusalem.



built that magnificent and expensive temple to the Lord, regarding which the Lord promised, "My name shall be there," 1 Kings 8:29.

Solomon's temple was constructed about 950 B.C. and destroyed in 586 B.C. Zerubbabel's temple was built after the Jews returned from the Exile, about in 500 B.C., and was both desecrated and remodeled through the years that followed. Herod's temple seems to have been an almost complete remodeling of Zerubbabel's temple. This is the one in which Jesus spent many hours, already as a twelve-year-old boy.

In Matthew 24:1-2, the disciples of Jesus are impressed by the buildings of the temple. They call Jesus' attention to them. This is the occasion on which the Lord makes the prediction, "Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down." The prediction came true about forty years later in 70 A.D., when the Roman army commander Titus besieged and conquered Jerusalem. H. G. Stigers writes in the Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia, "Against the desire of Titus... a soldier tossed a firebrand through a window into one of the side chambers... that set ablaze the sanctuary."<sup>14</sup> It calls to mind the warning of God through the prophet Jeremiah, "Reform your ways and your actions... Do not trust in deceptive words and say, 'This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord!'" (Jer. 7:

3-4).

Herod's temple was never rebuilt. Thus God himself brought to an end the Old Testament sacrificial system. God had already done so in principle through the sacrifice of his Son, "once and for all." Now God forcibly put that principle into practice - no more animal sacrifices, because the great temple was no more.

I have heard rumors over the years of secret plans to rebuild the Jerusalem temple on the site where it once stood. Some of the rumors sound fairly plausible, one mentioning a wealthy group of American Jewish businessmen who are reportedly even assembling materials for a new temple. I put little credence in such rumors.

For a tourist, however, viewing the temple area is still one of the highlights of a Holy Land Tour. It will remind him that God's people have worshiped him down through the ages, in accordance with his will. It will help the tourist meditate on the fact that the old sacrificial system culminated in Christ, the "Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), including also his (the tourist's) sin.

#### C. Dome of the Rock (no Scripture references)

The golden-domed Dome of the Rock today stands on the site which the temple once occupied. Frommer's Israel makes the observation, "Anyone intrigued by Arabic art and

architecture will go into ecstasies here."<sup>15</sup> This Muslim sanctuary was constructed in 691 A.D. This particular spot is a holy site to the Muslims because they also regard Abraham as their spiritual father, but through his son Ishmael rather than through Isaac. The Muslims believe that from this rock (30 feet by 30 feet and 6 feet high, all enclosed under the golden dome) Mohammed ascended to heaven, leaving behind footprints which are supposedly his (slight depressions in the rock).

Also within the enclosed temple mount area is the El Aksa Mosque, south of the Dome of the Rock. It is a broad open building with lofty ceilings, embellished in Byzantine design. You need to remove your shoes in order to enter the mosque, whether you are Muslim or not. It's interesting to see the hundreds of pairs of shoes outside by the door. One wonders whether he will ever find his own shoes again when coming out. The Columbia Encyclopedia states that "Islam is little dependent on ritual," that a mosque's "basic elements are space to assemble and some orientation so that the faithful may pray toward Mecca."<sup>16</sup>

For the Christian traveler, viewing the Dome of the Rock may well call to mind the words of Jesus, "Go and make disciples of all nation..." (Matthew 28:19). There are many in the world like the Muslims who may be quite sincere in their religious belief, yet who are without hope because they are without Christ.



Fig. 4. The Wailing Wall.

#### D. The Wailing Wall (no Scripture references)

At the western side of the temple mount area, outside the temple mount enclosure, is the so-called Wailing Wall. It is called 'wailing' because Jews have traditionally come here to bewail the loss of their temple. The Bible Almanac mentions that this wall "represents part of the western wall that Herod's builders erected in connection with rebuilding the temple."<sup>17</sup> What remains is not part of the

temple itself, but rather a foundation wall of the courtyard formerly surrounding Herod's temple.

In June of 1967, after the Israelis won the Six-Day War and captured East Jerusalem, the Jews were once again able to pray at this Wall, forbidden to them for many years. On the occasions when I have visited the Wall, both day and night, I have heard a distinct wailing or murmuring sound as I approached the site of the Wall. It was the people at the Wall, praying out loud, swaying from side to side as they go through their ritual incantations. Black-robed Orthodox Jews seem to be always present at all hours. On many a day a visitor will find hundreds and even thousands of other people there also.

In contrast to the Wailing Wall of the Jews, the Christian tourist may well rejoice that he has the promise of answered prayer in Christ. The apostle Paul assures him in Romans 8:32, "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all - how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?"

#### E. The Valley of Gehenna Jer. 7:31, Matt. 23:33

The word 'Gehenna' is a corruption of Ge-Hinnom, or the valley of Hinnom. It is a valley on the southwest side of Jerusalem, linked with the Kidron valley to the east of the city.

In one of the Old Testament references, Jeremiah 7:31,

God states through his prophet, "They have built the high places of Topheth in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to burn their sons and daughters in the fire." The Concordia Self-Study Bible comments on this verse in regard to the valley, "It was used as a trash dump and also as a place for sacrificing children to pagan gods."<sup>18</sup> The valley was the boundary between the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

In the New Testament, 'gehenna' is consistently translated in most English versions with the word 'hell.' In Matthew 23:33, for example, Jesus is speaking in some of his harshest language to the Pharisees and teachers of the law. He cautions, "You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?" Here, as often in Scripture, the word 'hell' (gehenna) means the place of eternal and fiery punishment for all who die without trust in Christ as their Savior. Alan Richardson in his word study book of the Bible endorses the above view when he states, "The opposite of Paradise is Gehenna, that part of Sheol reserved for the wicked."<sup>19</sup>

For the tourist today there is not much to see. The valley is now part of larger Jerusalem. But for the person who pictures in his mind the continuous smoke and fire that used to be there, it can remind him that there is not only a heaven, but also a hell, that sin and the judgment of God are real. Praise be to God, the tourist can say, that God has delivered us from his deserved judgment through his Son

Jesus Christ.

F. The Pool of Siloam - 2 Kings 20:20, John 9:7

The present-day village of Silwan (Siloam) is located as a suburb southeast of Jerusalem. Here is the Gihon spring, the only water source for ancient Jerusalem. The problem at that time was that the spring was located outside the city walls.

The problem was corrected by King Hezekiah in about 700 B.C. King Sennacherib of Assyria was beginning to threaten Israel. In preparation for a likely siege of Jerusalem, King Hezekiah directed that a long underground tunnel be built. Its purpose was to bring water from the Gihon spring inside the city. 2 Kings 20:20 sums up the achievements of Hezekiah during his reign and states, "He made the pool and the tunnel by which he brought water inside the city."

The tunnel is 1,750 feet long. It is cut through rock. The workers began at both ends and met in the middle with only a slight correction. Amazing! Hershel Shanks writes about the tunnel at length in his book about ancient Jerusalem. He says, "Hezekiah's tunnel was a remarkable engineering feat for its time and was clearly recognized as such."<sup>20</sup> Still today a tourist may walk through the tunnel. It is on average about two feet wide, six feet high, and usually has nearly a foot of water running through it.



Fig. 5. Inside Hezekiah's Tunnel.

The Pool of Siloam is at the other end of Hezekiah's tunnel, where the water emerges inside the city. One needs to descend about twenty-five feet and there is the pool, in an area about twenty by thirty feet.

The one New Testament reference to the Pool of Siloam is in the ninth chapter of John. Jesus encounters a blind man. He (Jesus) "spit on the ground, made some mud with



the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. 'Go,' he told him, 'and wash in the Pool of Siloam'" (vv.6-7). The man of course was healed.

As a tourist comes away from viewing the Pool of Siloam, let him give thanks to God that he has the gift of sight, that he is able to take a tour such as this and see so many interesting sites. Let him thank God even more that he has been given the gift of spiritual vision, that he is able to see in Jesus his Savior and Lord.

#### G. The Via Dolorosa John 19:16-17

There are a number of Scripture passages pertaining to Jesus on his way to the cross. The so-called Via Dolorosa is prominently pointed out to tourists today. Thousands of people follow along these streets each year, and especially during Holy Week. Yet it must be kept in mind as B. Van Elderen points out in the Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia, "The present streets are many feet above the streets of 1st-century Jerusalem and the present-day Ecce Homo arch dates from a time after Christ."<sup>21</sup>

In his account of the way to the cross, St. John writes in John 19:16-17, "Pilate handed him over to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha)." There is a forty-foot-high rounded hill just outside the present-day Damascus

Gate. It gives one the distinct impression of being a large skull. Is this Golgotha? In my opinion it may well be. There is much controversy, however, as to the actual site of the crucifixion. The exact spot may never be fully determined.

Many people today are of the opinion that the cross Jesus (and other prisoners) carried was only the horizontal beam, not the entire cross. John states rather clearly, though, of Jesus "carrying his own cross" (19:17). Also when Simon of Cyrene was impressed into service to help Jesus on the Via Dolorosa, Luke uses the word 'cross' rather than 'beam,' "and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus" (23:26). In his Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Alfred Edersheim devotes many pages to Jesus on the Via Dolorosa. According to Edersheim, what Jesus bore was an actual cross. In fact, Edersheim is even more specific and declares that it was probably a Latin cross.<sup>22</sup>

Another incident that took place on the Via Dolorosa is mentioned by Luke. He states that "a large number of people" followed Jesus on the way. Then Luke quotes Jesus speaking to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children" (23:28). The Gospel writers also speak of the two 'criminals' who were led out with Jesus to be executed.

Even though the Via Dolorosa is not precisely the way

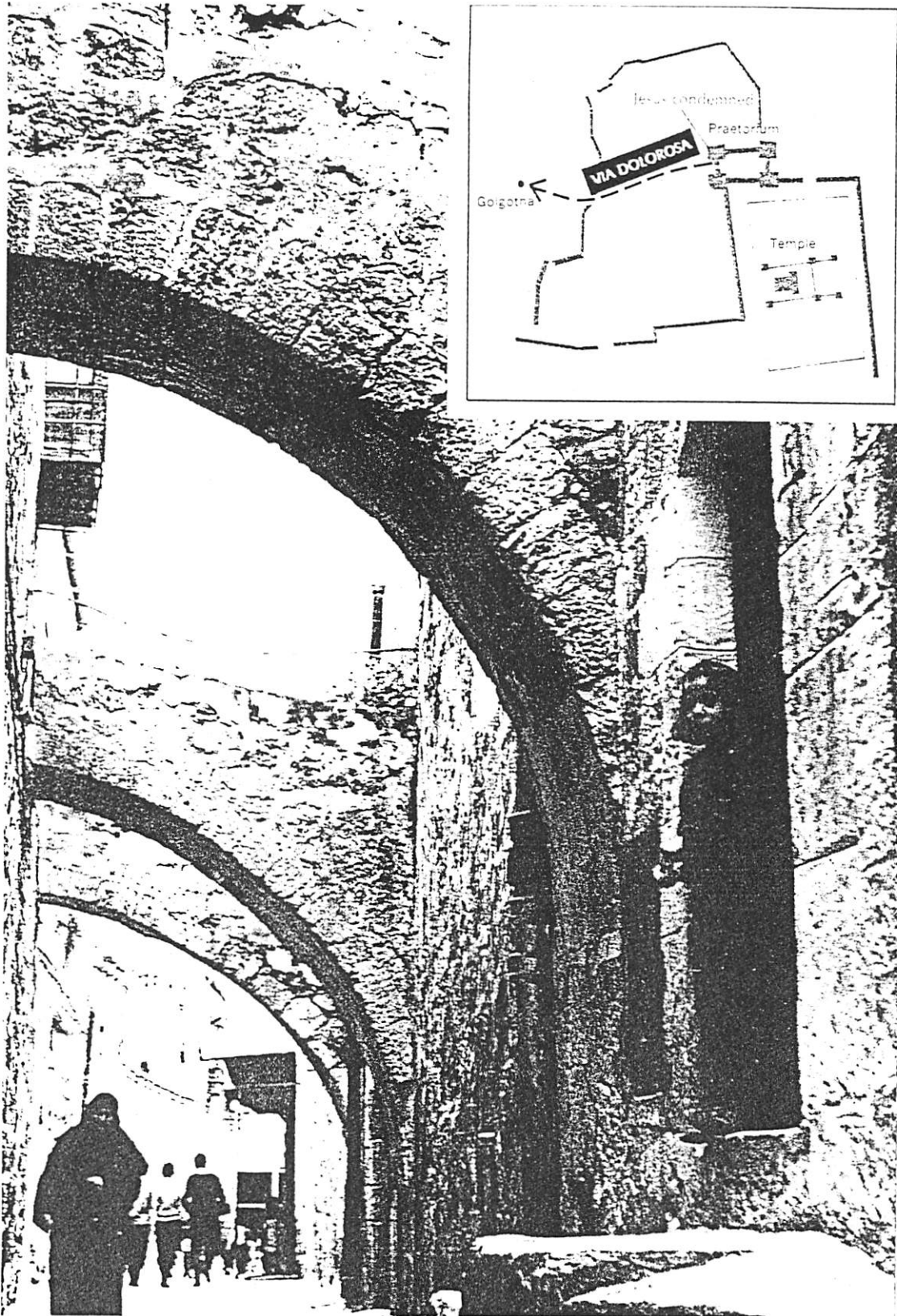


Fig. 6. The Via Dolorosa.

on which Jesus walked two thousand years ago, for a Christian today to wend his way along those streets does give a sense of walking on 'holy ground.' The Via Dolorosa is leading to the heart and center of our Christian faith.

#### H. The Holy Sepulchre John 19:41-42

The scholar who searches the Scriptures for exact information as to the burial site of Jesus will find little. Each of the four evangelists has something to say in regard to the entombment, but little that will help identify the site with any precision today. John is perhaps the most helpful in this regard. Yet even he states merely, "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... they laid Jesus there" (19:41-42).

Emperor Constantine built the original Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the fourth century after Christ. His mother, Queen Helena, searched out the area and supposedly found the site of the tomb. Eleventh-century Muslims destroyed the church, but the Crusaders rebuilt it in the twelfth century. The church today is a hodge-podge of compartmentalization. Six different denominations have their own space in the church, their own traditions, and their own architecture, with much resultant confusion. Perhaps other people find meaning in it all. I do not, or

at least very little. I recommend moving on to the next section of the paper. Also for the tourist, I strongly recommend moving on to the so-called Garden Tomb, an alternate site.

#### I. The Garden Tomb Mark 16:1-8

The Garden Tomb is definitely more satisfying to the tourist than the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Neither spot may be the correct one, and the precise spot pales in importance when compared with the actual death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Yet it is possible that the Garden Tomb may be the actual site.

Dr. Conrad Schick discovered this tomb in 1867, a typical rock-hewn tomb of the first century A.D. The place is often referred to as Gordon's Calvary. General Gordon, hero of China and Khartoum, visited the site in 1883 and pronounced it 'real' after supposedly having a vision confirming the authenticity of the site. Facts favoring his pronouncement include that the tomb is near the site of the crucifixion; it is hewn from rock; it is a new tomb, not a re-used one; and the gardens surrounding the tomb correspond with the Scriptural record.

When a Christian stoops and enters into the empty tomb, he almost expects to see "a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side" (Mark 16:5). A Christian can nearly hear these words of the angel sounding

in his ears: "He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him" (Mk. 16:6). On my first visit to the Holy Land, visiting the Garden Tomb was, for me, the most impressive, the most emotionally satisfying, the most faith-building of any of the sites that I visited. God builds faith through his word, by the working of his Spirit. Visiting this tomb, however, made that word of the Lord somehow more 'alive' to me than before.

This first day of actual 'touring' centered on the sites in the Holy City, Jerusalem. It's a good place to begin, since much of the Gospel record centers in Jerusalem. There is more to be seen here tomorrow.

## Chapter IV

### DAY 4 - MORE JERUSALEM, AND BETHLEHEM

A tourist could easily spend weeks in Jerusalem and still not see all the sites and areas related to the life of Jesus. The Columbia Encyclopedia estimates the 1980 population of Jerusalem at 398,000 inhabitants.<sup>23</sup> It was difficult to find an estimate of the population at the time of Jesus. Meir Ben-Dov, a present-day archeologist, states in his book, In the Shadow of the Temple, "Jerusalem was then one of the largest cities in the world with a population of 150,000 - 200,000."<sup>24</sup>

This chapter encompasses Day Four of the scheduled tour. It covers several more Biblical sites in and around Jerusalem. Then the tour moves on to Bethlehem and the 'manger.' My goal on Day Four is to help the traveler relate what he sees in the Holy Land to what he reads in Holy Scripture, and thus to become more convinced than ever

that the word of the Lord is true.

A. The Mount of Olives 2 Kings 23:13, Acts 1:9-12

"The Mount of Olives," according to Harper's Bible Dictionary, "is a Biblical site about which there are no arguments."<sup>25</sup> He means that it is a well-attested site; people do not disagree about its location. The same article observes, "The Mount of Olives is the most conspicuous landmark of Jerusalem." It is not a mountain as such. It is rather a long range of hills, with elevation averaging 2,600 feet above sea level. It runs north and south along the eastern side of the city of Jerusalem. The Kidron Valley lies between the Mount of Olives and Jerusalem. Standing on the summit of the Mount of Olives and looking west, a tourist gets a panoramic view of the Temple Mount and much of Jerusalem.

One of the few references to the Mount of Olives in the Old Testament is Second Kings 23:13. The chapter is describing the reforms of King Josiah. The writer states in verse 23, "The king (Josiah) also desecrated the high places that were east of Jerusalem on the south of the Hill of Corruption - the ones Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the vile goddess of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the vile god of Moab, and for Molech the detestable god of the people of Ammon." It is amazing to me that Solomon could have those temples built for false gods, and



especially so near the majestic temple for the true and only God.

Most of the Scriptural references to the Mount of Olives in the New Testament concern the last week before Jesus is crucified. Luke particularly points out, in his account of that week, that Jesus was teaching in the temple area during the day, "and each evening he went out to spend the night on the hill called the Mount of Olives" (21:37).

Luke gives a fuller account of Jesus' ascension, both in his Gospel and in the book of Acts. It is in Acts, after telling of the ascension of Jesus and the other events surrounding it, that Luke specifically identifies the site of the ascension in these words: "Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives" (1:12). The spot from which it is believed Jesus ascended is today marked by a Russian Orthodox Church, with its tall Tower of the Ascension that can be seen from long distances.

Quite a number of Biblical (and extra-Biblical) sites are located on the slopes or on the summit of the Mount of Olives. The town of Bethany is situated on the eastern slope. The village of Bethphage likewise is presumed to be to the east, perhaps a little to the north of Bethany. The Garden of Gethsemane is on the western side, located farther down in the Kidron Valley. The church of Dominus Flevit is said to mark the spot where Jesus wept over

Jerusalem. A Muslim shrine has a footprint which is reputedly the last footprint of Jesus on earth. R. L. Alden makes the observation, "Apart from the city of Jerusalem, there is probably no greater concentration of shrines than on the Mount of Olives."<sup>26</sup>

The entire southern end of the Mount of Olives ridge is one vast cemetery, with hundreds and thousands of gravestones dotting the slope. A recent notable person to be buried there was billionaire Robert Maxwell, whom the news reports called 'Jewish.' I have been told (unsubstantiated) that many people believe that when the 'Messiah' comes, he will appear on earth first on the Mount of Olives, and bring back to life those buried there. Robert Ullian makes passing reference to this belief when he writes, "Others have held that here, on the Mount of Olives, the resurrection of the dead will occur."<sup>27</sup> Such a belief would indeed account for the many burial sites on the Mount. There could of course be other reasons.

What is the Christian tourist to make of all these things, as he walks here and there on the Mount of Olives? One caution - he needs to be on his guard here, as well as elsewhere in the Holy Land, against people who are overzealous in their marking of sacred sites. Many of the places where significant events in Jesus' earthly life occurred remain unknown to us. It simply cannot be determined with any precision where they took place.

This is not to say, however, that the site of the Mount of Olives is questioned. When the tourist stands on this Mount, he can do so with the certainty that also Jesus stood on this same Mount. He can reflect on the numerous passages in Scripture referring to this site and what the Lord did here. The tourist can again voice his thanks to God for what the Lord has done for him. It is from the Mount of Olives that his Lord ascended to heaven. Yet he also promises, "I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20).

#### **B. The Garden of Gethsemane Matthew 26:36-46**

The exact site of the Garden of Gethsemane is somewhat in question. J. C. DeYoung writes, "Different sites are identified by Western, Russian, Armenian and Greek Orthodox Church authorities."<sup>28</sup> Yet the Scriptural accounts give more than merely a general idea of where Gethsemane is. Luke locates it on the Mount of Olives (Luke 22:39). John states that Jesus and his disciples "crossed the Kidron Valley" (John 18:1) from Jerusalem to reach it, thus of necessity placing it on the Mount of Olives to the east of Jerusalem. Also Mark places Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives.<sup>29</sup>

The name Gethsemane means "oil press." John writes that Jesus and his disciples went into an olive grove (18:1). He notes that "Jesus had often met there with

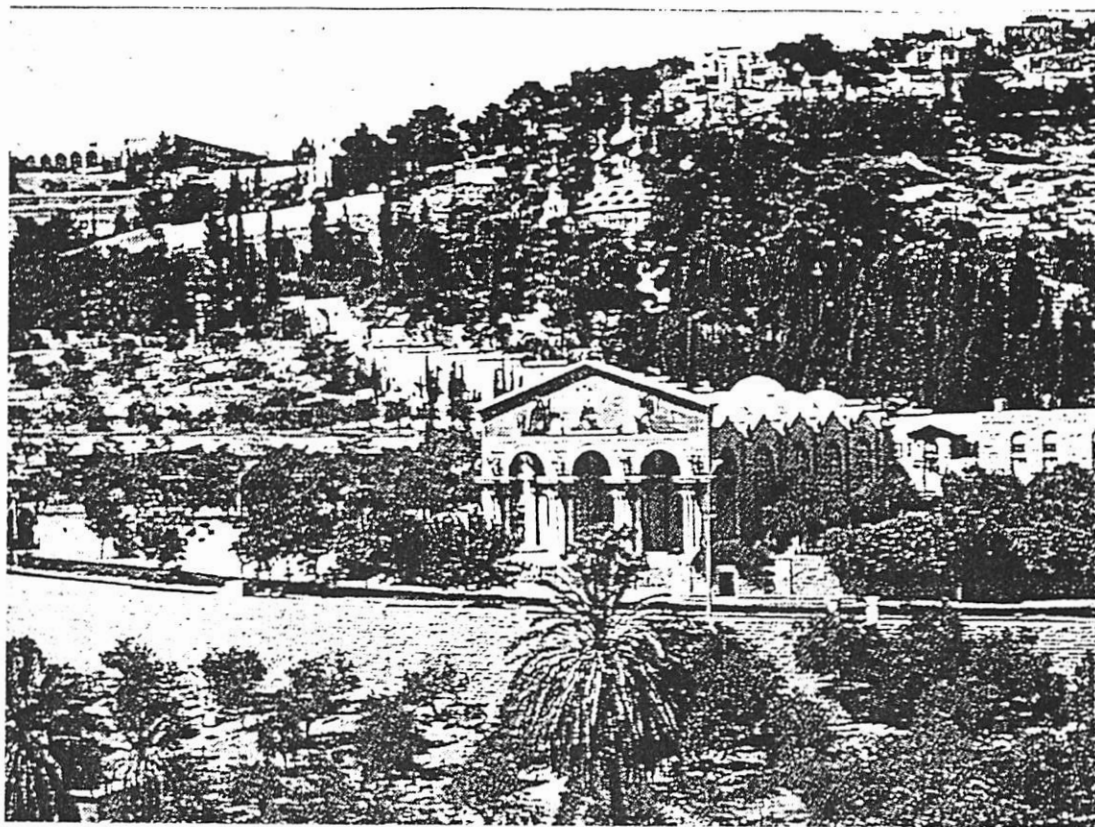


Fig. 7. The Garden of Gethsemane.

his disciples" (18:2). Still today, olive trees are to be seen in Gethsemane and throughout the country. On a previous trip I took to the Holy Land, our guide informed us that one good olive tree could support one person financially, and thus four trees support a family of four. That claim seemed somewhat dubious to me at the time, and still does; but it is possible, I suppose, and perhaps more so in Bible times. The Archeological Supplement in the Thompson Chain Reference Bible says, "Josephus states that Titus cut down all the trees around Jerusalem at the time of the siege in A.D. 70."<sup>30</sup> If true, new trees have been

planted since then.

Although Jesus often went to the Garden of Gethsemane with his disciples, the most notable occasion was on the evening before his death. Matthew in chapter twenty-six tells what happened: how Jesus urged his followers to "keep watch" with him, how they fell asleep instead, how Jesus agonized with his Father in prayer, how Judas Iscariot led the enemy to Gethsemane to arrest Jesus. Doctor Luke adds in his account, "His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground" (22:44). Luke also mentions an answer to the prayer of Jesus, that an angel appeared and "strengthened him" (22:43).

As the Christian tourist today walks among the olive trees in Gethsemane, he may well spend some time in quiet meditation and prayer. Let him pray to his Father as Jesus did, "Not as I will, but as you will." Let him think about the anguish and suffering of his Savior there in the Garden, that Jesus endured all this in working out forgiveness and salvation for him. Then let him give thanks to the Lord and give thanks for what he has seen and heard.

C. Mount Zion 1 Kings 8:1, Isaiah 35:10

The etymology of the word 'Zion' is obscure. Young's concordance to the Bible lists 154 references to Zion in the Old Testament, the majority of which are in the books of Psalms and Isaiah.<sup>31</sup> Young identifies Mount Zion as the

southwest hill of ancient Jerusalem. This identification is in dispute, whether it is the southwest or the southeast ridge. Hershel Shanks, for example, agrees with Young, and calls the southwestern hill 'Ophel.'<sup>32</sup> The more modern Frommer's Israel, on the other hand, is among those who opt for the southwestern hill as being Mount Zion.<sup>33</sup>

The Bible is not particularly helpful in making a precise identification. 1 Kings 8:1 relates this bit of information, "... to bring up the ark of the Lord's covenant from Zion, the City of David." Perhaps less significant than the identification of Mount Zion in ancient times is what the name Zion came to mean in later years. Frederick Owen states, "This became the Zion - the most significant of all sacred places."<sup>34</sup> He is referring to the site of the temple, north of both the previously mentioned ridges. J.B. Payne notes an even more inclusive use of the name Zion. "It was only a short step until Zion was employed for the whole multi-hilled metropolis, in simple synonymous parallelism with the name Jerusalem... Zion is the whole city."<sup>35</sup>

The name Zion goes on to become even more inclusive. The prophet Zechariah writes, "Shout and be glad, O Daughter of Zion. For I am coming, and I will live among you, declares the Lord" (2:10). Jeremiah writes in the same vein, "They come like men in battle formation to attack you, O Daughter of Zion" (6:23). Thus the name here

refers to the whole people of Israel. When one turns to the prophet Isaiah, the name Zion takes on eschatological overtones. In 35:10, Isaiah foretells the time when "they will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads."

As far as the tourist is concerned, whether he is pointed to the southwestern or the southeastern ridge of Jerusalem as being Mount Zion, it probably makes little difference. Let Mount Zion recall for him how God worked through King David, now almost three thousand years ago. Let the tourist remember how a son was promised to David, and how that Son of David in fact was born and was the Savior. Let the tourist, as he views Mount Zion, ponder the fact and give thanks that through the coming of Christ he (the Christian tourist) will one day "enter Zion with singing," in fulfilment of God's immutable promise.

#### D. The Upper Room     Matthew 26:17-30

Lutherans, far more than other Protestants in general, see in the Lord's Supper a sacrament in which God himself is acting, in which the Lord offers and actually imparts his forgiveness to the believing communicant. Thus there is much significance in the original site of the Lord's Supper, if its location can be determined, and particularly for Lutherans.

Is the Upper Room, pointed out to tourists today as

the site where the Lord's Supper was instituted, authentic? Probably not. Many of the buildings in Jerusalem were destroyed over the years, and a new layer of buildings erected on the debris. Since this process happened a number of times through the centuries, much of New Testament Jerusalem lies more than twenty or thirty feet below present-day Jerusalem. However, this is not always the case. Frommer's Israel, for example, has this to say in regard to the Upper Room, "Although tradition furnishes the only evidence that this was the room, yet tradition is tenacious, and may well be correct (my emphasis)."<sup>36</sup>

The present-day Upper Room is located in that part of Jerusalem pointed out today as Mount Zion, in the southwestern quarter of so-called Old Jerusalem. It is near King David's Tomb (also questionable as to its authenticity). The tourist enters a certain designated building, proceeds up a flight of stairs and there it is - the Upper Room.

Matthew 26:17-30 is one of the Scriptural passages that explains what took place in the Upper Room. It is the night before the crucifixion of Jesus (or in Jewish reckoning, the same day as the crucifixion). Jesus and the Twelve come together to celebrate the Passover. Jesus has much to tell them, probably all of chapters thirteen through sixteen of the gospel according to John. Then toward the conclusion of the Passover celebration, Jesus



institutes the meal of the NEW covenant, thus fulfilling the prophecy in Jeremiah 31:31, "The time is coming... when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." Jesus distributes the unleavened bread (matzoh) to his disciples with the words, "Take and eat, this is my body" (v.26). He offers the cup of wine to them and says, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood..." (vv.27-28). Then follow the words of Christ, "for the forgiveness of sins" (v.28), seized upon by Martin Luther as "the main thing in the Sacrament,"<sup>37</sup> along with the bodily eating and drinking.

The previously mentioned chapters in the gospel according to John, chapters thirteen through sixteen, also give much food for thought to the traveler, as he stands there in the Upper Room. One may ponder the foot-washing incident, in which the Lord teaches that loving means serving. One may concentrate on the opening verses of chapter fourteen, where Jesus speaks of "going to prepare a place for you."

Perhaps recounting my own first visit to the Upper Room will help the traveler today. My thoughts went something like this on that occasion: "Although this may not be the authentic Upper Room, still it IS in the city of Jerusalem. And this room is probably very much like the original. In a room such as this my Lord instituted the sacrament of Holy Communion." It filled me with a sense of

wonder and awe, and also appreciation for the rich blessings I have received over the years through this sacrament.

If the Christian traveler today experiences similar thoughts and feelings, it will have been a worthwhile stop to see the Upper Room.

#### E. Bethlehem and the 'Manger' Luke 2, Matthew 2

Bethlehem is one of the places in the Holy Land where the Christian traveler may experience a feeling of strong disappointment. The place of Jesus' birth simply is not as he may have envisioned it. Sadly, it differs from the way the Bible describes it. Harry Frank puts it well in his Discovering the Biblical World when he writes, "It is difficult today when visiting the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem to reconstruct in the mind's eye those humble events of so many years ago."<sup>38</sup>

The account in Luke 2 is simple and straightforward. Luke points out that "there was no room for them (Mary and Joseph) in the inn" (v.7). Probably Bethlehem was crowded because of the census ordered by the Roman Caesar Augustus. Apparently the Jewish people were required to travel back to their place of origin. There was no room in the inn, which was like the motel of today. Luke then uses these words to indicate where the birth took place, "She (Mary) gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger" (2:7).

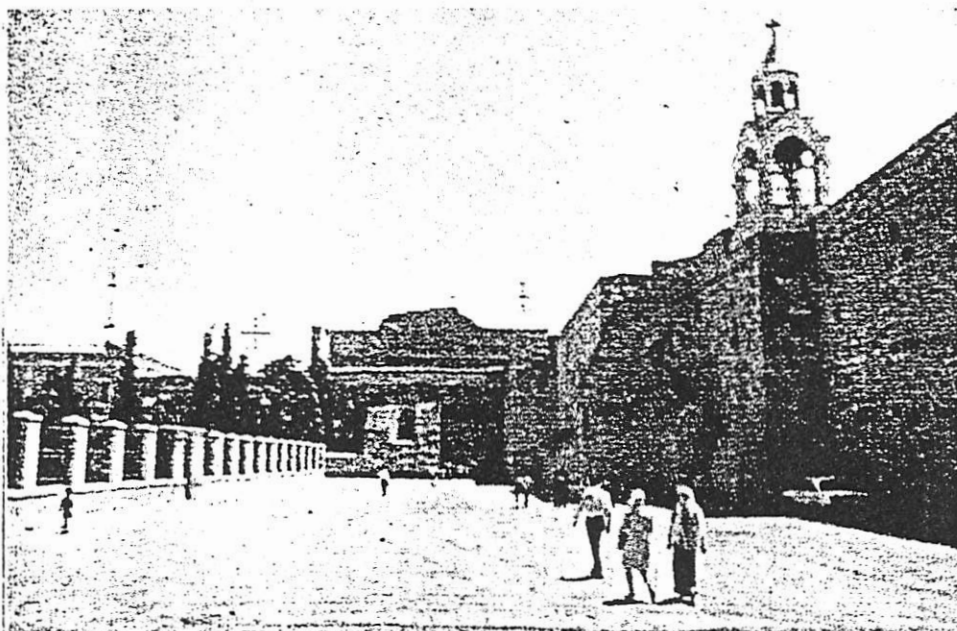


Fig. 8. The Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem.

On that one word 'manger,' many fanciful ideas and traditions regarding Christmas have been built. Kittel defines the word (in Greek, phatne) as 'manger' or 'feeding trough,' but allows also for the extended meaning of 'stall.'<sup>39</sup> Kittel states that "The ox and ass come into the story on the basis of Is. 1:3."<sup>40</sup> That verse reads, "The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand."<sup>41</sup>

What will the tourist today find when he comes to Bethlehem? First of all, it is today a small city, with an estimated population of 25,000.<sup>42</sup> At the time of Jesus' birth the population may have been about 2,000. The tourist today finds a church marking the presumed spot

where Jesus was born. Ullian calls it "the principal shrine of Bethlehem, a fortresslike structure facing the paved expanse of Manger Square."<sup>43</sup> The tourist needs to stoop when entering this church, as the outer doorway was made small reportedly to prevent Muslims from riding into the church on horseback. Although the church is large, it is not physically well kept.

The tourist descends the stairs to the 'manger.' It is not at all anything resembling a manger today. There are many lamps and candles. If my memory is correct, the floor is made of marble. And a star in the floor marks the presumed spot where Jesus was born. I like the way Paul Maier speaks of the spot.

But the dominant question in the mind of any contemporary visitor to the shrine must be this: did it all really happen here - at this spot? Though final proof is necessarily lacking, the surprising answer lurks somewhere between "Possibly" and "Quite probably."<sup>44</sup>

Maier goes on then to explain that the original Church of the Nativity was erected in 326 A.D. by Constantine, the first Christian emperor of Rome.

Today's visitor to Bethlehem will need to use his imagination freely. He will need to almost close his eyes to what he sees in Bethlehem, and remember the stall as he formerly envisioned it. Let him then step outside the Church of the Nativity and look into the distance at the fields of Bethlehem. There, still today, sheep are

generally grazing. Let the visitor call to mind the words of the angel to those Bethlehem shepherds of long ago, "In the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). It is still in the Word, more than in a physical place, that the Christian's faith rests. If the place does not illuminate or 'flesh out' the Word, as is pretty much the case in this instance, then let the Word stand alone.

Perhaps it should be said, however, that even at Bethlehem with its gross overdoing of the manger site, a visitor still gets a sense of being where it happened.

Contrary to popular thinking, most serious Bible readers are aware that the visit of the Magi almost surely did not coincide with the coming of the shepherds to the manger. Matthew specifically uses the word 'house' in connection with the Wise Men, "On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him" (2:11). The tourist will do well, before leaving Bethlehem, to reflect on the devotion of the Magi and to join in worshiping the Lord.

#### F. Rachel's Tomb Genesis 35:19-20, Matthew 22:31-32

Rachel's Tomb is about one and a half miles north of Bethlehem. The Scriptures refer to it in Genesis 35:19-20, "So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). Over her tomb Jacob set up a pillar, and

to this day that pillar marks Rachel's tomb." Rachel was one of the two wives of Jacob. She died in childbirth. The child survived, the last-born of the twelve sons of Jacob (Israel), Benjamin by name. Josephus notes that Rachel "was the only one of Jacob's kindred that had not the honor of burial at Hebron."<sup>45</sup>

Jacob was returning from a twenty-year stay at the home of his uncle Laban in Padan Aram, returning home to his father in Hebron. Yohanan Aharoni, in describing the roads of the Holy Land, makes note of the road on which Jacob traveled: "One longitudinal road of some importance is that through the hill country which runs along the length of the north-south mountain ridge."<sup>46</sup> Aharoni notes that both Bethlehem and Hebron are located on this road.

As the tourist walks around inside the shrine and views the tomb of Rachel, is this perhaps the time to give some thought to his own mortality? Even more, it may be a time to remember how faithful God is to his promises. God had promised to be with Jacob, to care for him and keep him safe. God kept his promise. Even in death, God remains our God. Jesus makes this clear when he tells the Sadducees, "Have you not read what God said to you, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living" (Matthew 22:31-32).

On this day the traveler has again been walking in the footsteps of Jesus. He has viewed Bethlehem where Jesus' earthly life began. He has visited Gethsemane, the site of Jesus' anguish in prayer. He has stood on the Mount of Olives, from where the Lord again ascended to heaven. There is more to come.

## Chapter V

### DAY 5 - THE DEAD SEA AREA

A visitor to the Holy Land could spend weeks in Jerusalem and its environs, and still not see everything that is of Biblical significance. When one's time is limited, however, one needs to move on to other parts of the country.

Day Five of this particular trip takes the tourist to the Dead Sea area. The Dead Sea itself is mentioned relatively few times in Scripture, more so in the Old Testament than in the New. Since the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in the area in 1947, however, this section of the country takes on a present-day Biblical significance. Other nearby sites to be visited on Day Five are likewise important. Visiting them enables the tourist to continue walking in the footsteps of Jesus.



A. Bethany John 11:17-44 Luke 19:28-44

Bethany is a village about two miles northeast of Jerusalem, on the road to Jericho. It "still exists as a settled town today," states the Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia, "its population being something like 1000."<sup>47</sup> It lies on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. Robert Ullian has a rather picturesque manner of describing the village and its surrounding hills - "the arrangement of houses on orange and limestone slopes, the pine groves, the sheep grazing on the hillocks. It's as serene, pastoral, and biblical a landscape as you'll see anywhere in Israel."<sup>48</sup>

Two significant incidents for the Christian are related in Scripture as having taken place in or near Bethany. Both of them mention Jesus weeping. The first is the raising of Lazarus in John eleven. Bethany was the village in which Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus lived. Then one day, as Jesus' earthly ministry was drawing near its conclusion, Lazarus became ill and died. The evangelist John writes in 11:18-19, "Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother."

Jesus also begins walking to Bethany, with his disciples. When he arrives, John notes, "He was deeply moved in spirit and troubled" (11:33). Then follows the

shortest verse in the Bible, verse 35, "Jesus wept." When the Lord orders Lazarus to come out of his tomb, John informs us, "The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face" (v.44). What an amazing miracle!

As the Christian tourist walks down the steps into the tomb of Lazarus and looks around, what is he to think? Obviously a visit to this tomb will imprint John 11 much more clearly in his mind. Let him also, however, recall and meditate on those words of Jesus spoken to Martha in the same chapter, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die" (vv.25-26). Let the tourist be moved by the Holy Spirit to a stronger faith in the resurrected Christ. Let the tourist apply to himself the promise of Jesus, also recorded by John, "A time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out" (5:28-29).

The second portion of Scripture I have chosen to include in this section on Bethany is Luke 19:28-44. It is another occasion on which Jesus wept. The setting is the so-called Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Luke specifically mentions Bethany in verse 29, "As he (Jesus) approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples" to get a colt on which he could ride.

Luke is the only Gospel writer who speaks of Jesus weeping on this occasion, "As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it" (19:41). His tears are in stark contrast to the rejoicing and shouting and adoration of the multitude around him. He weeps not for himself, but for the people of Jerusalem, many of whom would be lost through their persistent unbelief.

When the tourist today recalls these verses in Scripture while standing in Bethany, perhaps he can breathe a prayer of thanks that the Lord has made him a believer. Surely it can heighten his awareness of the many today who are still without Christ, and thus move him to keep reaching out with the good news of salvation won.

#### B. Jericho Joshua 6, Luke 19:1-10

The city of Jericho is a significant place in both the Old and New Testaments. It is "one of the oldest occupied sites in Palestine - perhaps the oldest known city in the world."<sup>49</sup> It lies 825 feet below sea level in the deepest rift of the earth's surface. Compare that to Jerusalem, about seventeen miles southwest of Jericho, which is situated at 3,200 feet above sea level. Because of its warm climate, Jericho over the years has been a popular place to reside, especially in winter.

On a previous trip to Jericho, I noticed a herd of about fifteen camels on the outskirts of the village. When



Fig. 9. Jericho (note old city mound, top center)

I inquired about their purpose, I was informed that they are used in a kind of "rent-a-camel" business. A camel is particularly well suited to the dry and desolate country surrounding the oasis of Jericho. Thus people will rent one, I am told, as a somewhat slower version of a modern-day pick-up truck.

Jericho is located about four miles west of the Jordan River, and six miles west of the north end of the Dead Sea. This is the first city that Joshua and the Israelites needed to conquer in their invasion of Canaan. Joshua 6 tells the story in dramatic fashion, how the people marched

around the walled city for six days in absolute silence, then on the seventh day at the blast of the trumpets and amid loud shouting God caused the walls to collapse.

Today's tourist can easily visualize the scene in his mind, as he can actually see and walk up on the fifty-foot high mound - the six-acre tell (mound) which is the remains of ancient Jericho. Various excavations have been made over the years. Although archeologists do not agree on the exact date, it is generally thought that around 1500 B.C. Jericho was violently destroyed. As the tourist looks about him on the site, he will have little trouble imagining the conquest of Jericho by Joshua and the Israelites. Let the remaining rubble speak to him silently but eloquently of God's help to his people in time of need, of God's faithfulness to his promises.

Another Biblical account connected with Jericho is the story of Jesus and Zacchaeus the tax collector in Luke 19:1-10. Tax collecting in those days was done in collaboration with the hated Romans who were occupying the country. Thus tax collectors were generally despised by the Jewish people. Tax collectors also appear to have regularly cheated the people, and so were doubly despised. Geldenhuis in his commentary on Luke quotes Creed in regard to Jericho, that it "would naturally be an important customs station from its position at the passage of the Jordan from Judaea (sic) to the lands east of the Jordan."<sup>50</sup>

Luke begins the account regarding Zacchaeus by saying, "Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through" (19:1). Then Luke tells how Zacchaeus because he is a short man climbs up into a sycamore-fig tree to see Jesus, how Jesus invites himself to the home of Zacchaeus, and how Zacchaeus promises to reform his life as a result of his encounter with Jesus. Other Biblical incidents that took place in or near Jericho include the healing of blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52), and the ascent of the Prophet Elijah into heaven in a chariot of fire (2 Kings 2).

The Self-Study Bible calls Luke 19:10 "a key verse in Luke's Gospel."<sup>51</sup> The verse reads, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." A tourist at Jericho may well contemplate this verse, and praise God that he is among the lost ones whom the Son of Man came to seek and to save. He may also well learn not to murmur at the Lord's compassion toward sinners as did the crowd (v.7).

### C. The Jordan River     Matthew 3

On a previous visit to the Holy Land, I had the privilege of baptizing someone in the Jordan River, which for me was one of the highlights of that trip. One of the Christian women in my group, when applying for her passport, discovered that in all likelihood she had never been baptized. She asked if I, the pastor of her church, would baptize her when our group arrived at the Jordan River. I

did. And we all rejoiced at her baptism.

Matthew tells how the location of John the Baptizer's ministry was in the desert of Judea, and that the Jordan River was the place where he did his baptizing. "They were baptized by him (John) in the Jordan River" (Matt. 3:6). Matthew also locates the baptism of Jesus by the Baptizer as taking place in the Jordan, "Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John" (3:13). John is at first hesitant when he is requested to baptize Jesus, then consents to it when the Lord urges him, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness"(3:15).

Edersheim calls the baptism of Jesus "the last act of his private life," and states also that "emerging from its waters in prayer, he (Jesus) learned: when his business was to commence, and how it would be done."<sup>52</sup> I think Edersheim is reading more into the text than what is actually there. I believe that Jesus long before this event knew the 'when' and the 'how' of his mission. Note the words of Jesus as a twelve-year-old boy in the temple, "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" (Luke 2:49).

James West in his Introduction to the Old Testament makes an interesting comment on the length of the Jordan River, "only 65 miles as the crow flies, but three times that distance as the river flows."<sup>53</sup> West notes also that the four tributaries of the Jordan are the Yarmuk, Jabbok,

and Arnon Rivers, and the Zered Brook. The sources of the Jordan lie on or near Mount Hermon to the north. The river runs almost due south and empties into the Dead Sea. The sources are 1200 feet above sea level, the emptying into the Dead Sea at almost 1300 feet below sea level. As it flows past Jericho, the river is about one-fourth the size of the Mississippi River in volume of water as it flows past St. Louis.

One of the Scriptural references to the Jordan in the Old Testament is in the book of Joshua, chapter 3, where God stops the flow of the river so that the Israelites can cross over and begin their conquest of Canaan.

The baptism of Jesus was his prophesied 'anointing' by the Spirit (Isaiah 42), the initiation into his public ministry, the 'stamp of approval' on Jesus by his heavenly Father. The traveler to Israel today, standing at the Jordan and letting its waters run through his fingers, may well recall his own baptism, his anointing by the Spirit, his initiation into the family of God, the stamp of approval on himself by a merciful and gracious Father. Let him remember those words in Luther's Catechism that he probably memorized as a child, "In Baptism God forgives sin, delivers from death and the devil, and gives everlasting salvation to all who believe what he has promised."<sup>54</sup>



#### D. The Dead Sea      Genesis 19

Jesus states in Matthew 5:13, "You are the salt of the earth." Then he asks the rhetorical question, "But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?" There is such a thing as salt which has 'lost its saltiness.' It may be found on the shores of the Dead Sea. It looks like salt. It feels like salt. Yet the wind and the sun (apparently) have bleached the salty taste out of it, so that it can be said to have 'lost its saltiness.'

The Dead Sea generally is called the Salt Sea in Scripture. Other names given it in the Bible are the Sea of Arabah and the Eastern Sea. It forms the southeastern border of the Holy Land, lying about eighteen miles east of Jerusalem and running southward for fifty miles. The lake at its widest is eleven miles across, although it narrows down to two miles at the southern end. It is 1300 feet below sea level, has no outlet, and therefore its water is extremely salty. The DEAD Sea is a good name because fish and other forms of living things that enter from the Jordan River soon die. I have floated on its surface, and have found that it is almost impossible for the human body to sink below the surface.

G.R. Lewthwaite, writing in the Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia, states in regard to its origin, "If the geological signs have been read right, the Dead Sea was initially formed when a Miocene 'earth storm' trapped the

fringe of the ancient Mediterranean between the walls of the subsiding Rift."<sup>55</sup> Lewthwaite joins other scholars in postulating that ancient Sodom and Gomorrah lie beneath the water at the southern end of the Dead Sea, and that the 'fire and brimstone' with which God destroyed those cities may have been "an earthquake accompanied by the explosive ejection of gas, bitumen and rock salt that wrought destruction."<sup>56</sup>

The account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is recorded in Genesis 19. It speaks strongly of the wrath of God toward people who are lost in sin. It speaks with strangely modern accents, when one ponders the present-day hue and cry to make the practice of homosexuality an acceptable lifestyle. Yet one needs to remember in our day that Christ died also for people such as this, and that the forgiveness he earned on the cross was (and is) for ALL people.

It is possible to 'over spiritualize' almost anything. Yet I clearly remember a professor from years ago who used the Dead Sea as an illustration of a dead 'Christian.' This professor said: if a Christian merely keeps on receiving and receiving and never gives, never lives his faith, he soon will be as dead as the Dead Sea. How true that is!

### E. Qumran

Qumran is famous as the site where the Dead Sea scrolls were found in 1947. A shepherd boy, so the story goes (probably true), threw a stone at one of his straying sheep on the crags above Qumran. The stone went into a cave opening and the boy heard the sound of something breaking. On further investigation he found clay pots inside the cave, in which were the first-discovered scrolls. After much more extensive investigation by archeologists and scholars, thousands of scrolls and fragments were discovered in neighboring caves. The Columbia Encyclopedia states in regard to their age: "Archeologists have shown that the scrolls stored in jars in the first cave at Qumran were written or copied between the 1st century B.C. and the first half of the 1st century A.D."<sup>57</sup>

At this writing, January of 1992, the entire Dead Sea scrolls are finally being made available to everyone. During the years since their discovery, the scrolls have been assigned to a small group of scholars for intensive study, with the proviso that no one else be permitted to see them (or see photos or copies of them). Hershel Shanks, editor of the magazine Biblical Archeology Review, in recent years has been campaigning for the release of the scrolls to the general public. He has finally succeeded. The January/February, 1992, issue of BAR proclaims in large

print, "THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS ARE NOW AVAILABLE TO ALL!"<sup>58</sup>

The significance of the scrolls to Biblical scholars as well as the whole Christian world is manifold. Among the scrolls are some of the oldest manuscripts of the Bible in existence. For example, there are two copies of the Biblical book of Isaiah, almost one thousand years older than any previously known Hebrew manuscript. What else will be found among the scrolls, now that they are openly available for study, should be known soon.

The traveler to the Holy Land does not see a great deal when he visits Qumran. The location is just off the main road along the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea. (See the map of Israel on page 9.) The traveler will see a number of excavated stone buildings, the remains of a small village. Off in the distance to the west, less than a quarter mile, he will see small, barren mountains rising into the sky. If he looks closely, he can see cave openings in the crags of the mountains, the caves where the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered.

A Scripture passage that I recommend to the traveler for his meditation at this stop is Matthew 24:35 - the words of Jesus about the end of the age: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." God himself, I believe, provided that these old manuscripts of his Scriptures would be preserved and found.

F. Masada Psalm 46:11

The psalmist writes, "The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress" (46:11). Though that is true, yet man continues to provide other fortresses for himself. One such fortress in the Holy Land is Masada, which is not mentioned in the Scriptures. Yet it is a 'must see' site for any visitor to Israel. Masada is located about sixty miles southeast of Jerusalem, and one mile from the western shore of the Dead Sea. The upper plateau of this mountain fortress covers twenty level acres and rises almost vertically some 1300 feet above its surroundings. Today it is a popular tourist attraction and may be reached by cable car.

The story of Masada and its capture by the Romans in the first century has recently been made into a movie for television, called simply "Masada." Herod the Great (37 - 4 B.C.) built an elaborate palace on the northern corner of the diamond-shaped plateau. After the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans in 70 A.D., Jewish Zealots occupied Masada as a place of last resistance against the invaders. Even Masada, however, could not hold back the mighty Roman army. The magazine "Biblical Archeology Review" states, "Despite a tenacious defense, the Zealots finally succumbed to the Roman siege in 73 or 74 C.E. (A.D.)."<sup>59</sup> The Romans encamped around Masada and constructed a huge ramp of earth and stone on the western side of the mountain. They used this

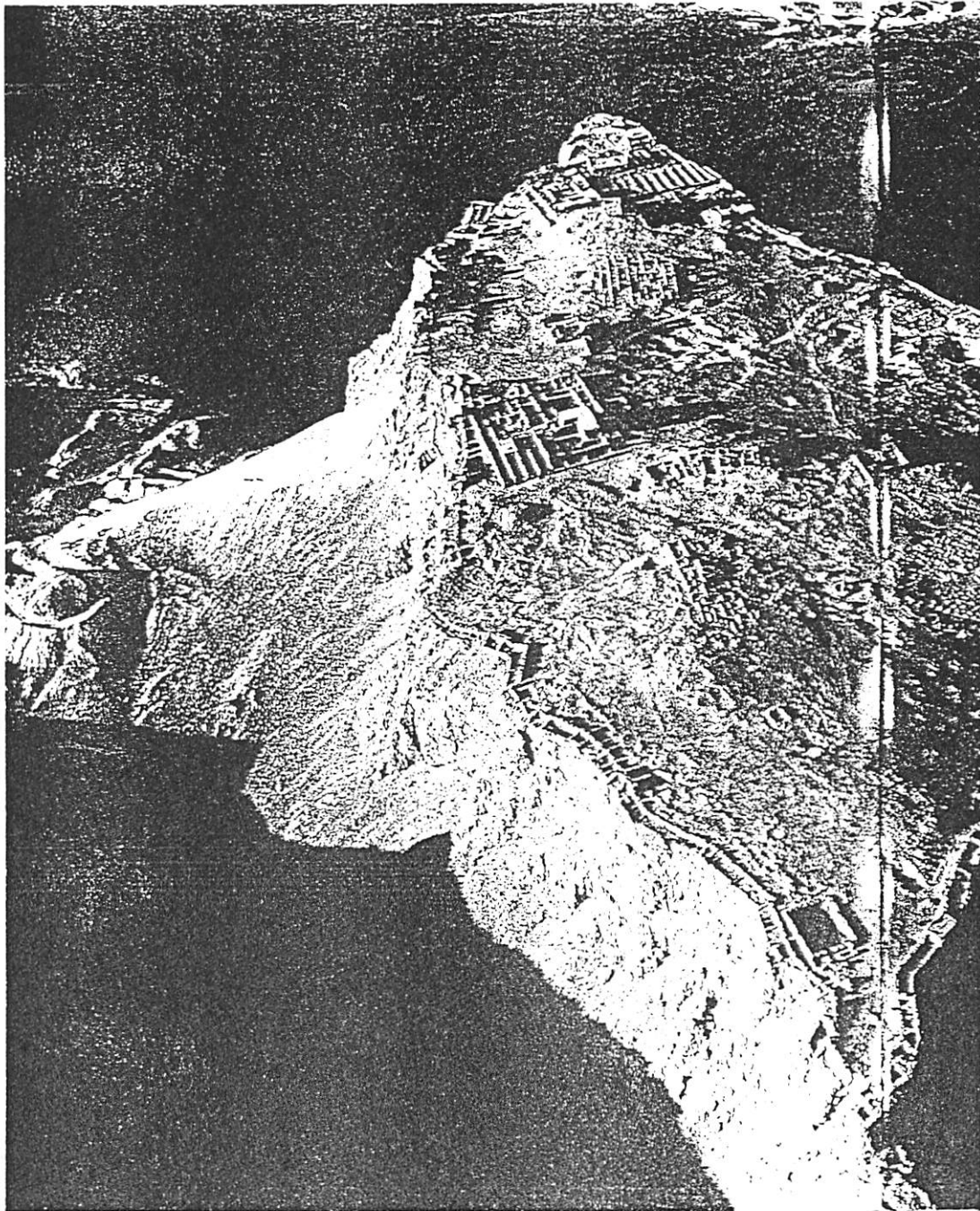


Fig. 10. Masada. A 1300 foot high rock fortress near the Dead Sea; note the huge earthen siege ramp at left, built by the Romans to storm the fortress.

ramp as a means of elevating their battering rams to the wall of the fortress.

According to the Jewish historian Josephus, the 960 inhabitants of Masada committed mass suicide rather than surrender. Each man killed his own family. Ten men then were selected to kill the remaining persons. Finally one of the ten was chosen by lot to kill the other nine, then himself. Josephus describes the scene:

"So, for a conclusion, the nine offered their necks to the executioner, and he who was the last of all took a view of all their bodies, lest perchance some or other among so many that were slain should want his assistance to be quite dispatched, and when he perceived that they were all slain, he set fire to the palace, and with the great force of his hand ran his sword entirely through himself, and fell down dead near to his own relations... Yet there was an ancient woman, and another... with five children, who had concealed themselves."<sup>60</sup>

These survivors then told the Romans what had happened.

What is the Christian to think as he walks around among the ruins of Masada? Let him go back to Psalm 46. Let him remember that although earthly fortresses are subject to failure and capture, "The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress."

On this fifth day then, we have visited Bethany and Jericho, the Dead Sea area and Masada. We return to the hotel in Jerusalem for a night of reflection and rest.

## Chapter VI

### DAY 6 - NORTH TO GALILEE

The Holy Land in New Testament days was divided into three main sections. The southern third of the country was named Judea, the middle third Samaria, and the northern third Galilee. Both in the topography of the land and in the religious character of the people, there were wide differences between Judea and Galilee, belieing the barely one hundred miles that separated them. Much of Judea was hilly and barren, but the religious center was located there in Jerusalem. Galilee was more level and agricultural, and the people had a more characteristically relaxed religiosity, for which the Galileans were looked down on by their more orthodox Judean countrymen.

This particular trip (and this paper) now moves north, leaving Judea. The traveler passes through the central section of the country, Samaria. A stop is made there in



Shechem at Jacob's well. But the remaining part of the trip centers primarily in Galilee, where our Lord and his disciples spent much of their time during his three-year ministry. Eleven of the disciples originally came from Galilee. The lone Judean was Judas Iscariot.

Miller provides a good description of Galilee in regard to the type of land found there. "Well watered by streams, Galilee is extremely fertile, with rich grain and grass fields in the valleys, and pomegranate, olive, and other fruit orchards on the elevations."<sup>61</sup>

Galilee is where Jesus spent the major part of his boyhood. In fact he lived most of his earthly life in Galilee, the so-called 'silent years,' in the town of Nazareth. In Cana of Galilee is where he performed his first miracle. Capernaum in Galilee is referred to by Matthew as Jesus' "own town" (9:1). It is to more peaceful Galilee that the angel at Jesus' empty tomb directs Jesus' followers on Easter morning.

#### A. Shechem & Jacob's Well John 4:1-42

On a previous trip to the Holy Land I have drunk water from Jacob's Well. It tasted cool and good. I also brought some home in a small corked jar that I purchased at the site, but it has long since evaporated.

Harper's Bible Dictionary calls Jacob's Well "one of the most exactly identified sites in O.T. Palestine."<sup>62</sup> One

could add: also in New Testament Palestine. Genesis 33:18-19 tells how Jacob "arrived safely at the city of Shechem in Canaan," and that "for a hundred pieces of silver, he bought... the plot of ground where he pitched his tent." Yet nowhere in the Old Testament is there a reference to Jacob digging a well at that particular place. In fact the one single reference to Jacob's Well in all of Scripture is in the New Testament, in John 4.

Continuing then in the footsteps of our Lord, the traveler pauses at Jacob's Well. The traveler sees first a Greek Orthodox Church, with exterior walls but no roof.



Fig. 11. Jacob's Well.

It is in this unfinished church that steps lead the traveler down to the site of Jacob's Well. Here he may contemplate the Scriptural record in John 4.

John states of Jesus, "He came to a town in Samaria... Jacob's well was there,

and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well"(4:5-6). John's account continues, telling of Jesus' conversation with a Samaritan woman who comes to draw water. As a result of her conversation with Jesus, the unnamed woman comes to believe in Jesus as the promised Messiah, and even becomes the pipeline through which other townspeople receive the 'living water'<sup>63</sup> of which Jesus speaks (v.39).

A paraphrase of John 4:42 serves as a possible paradigm for the tourist in his travels throughout the Holy Land. It serves as a guiding principle for acquiring spiritual meaning during his travels. The woman at the well goes and tells the people of her town about Jesus. As a result, they talk to the Lord personally. Then they are able to tell her (in verse 42), "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves." I would change one word of the verse to make it read - and now the people speaking are those who personally have visited the Holy Land - "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have SEEN for ourselves."

Personally seeing Jacob's Well for oneself is not a prerequisite to believing that such a place actually exists. Yet seeing it with one's own eyes helps a person to see the reality of Jacob's Well and to know that it truly exists. Hopefully it also strengthens the tourist in his belief that other portions of Scripture are equally

true and real. Hopefully it brings to mind the message and meaning of the Lord in a personal way, a message for people of all cultures and customs.

#### B. The Valley of Jezreel

This is one of the areas of the Holy Land often referred to by people who presume to 'know' and interpret in their own fashion Scriptural prophecies regarding the end times. Hal Lindsey, for example, in his popular book The Late Great Planet Earth, states with no reservations, "As Armageddon begins with the invasion of Israel by the Arabs and the Russian confederacy, and their consequent swift destruction, the great period of Jewish conversion to their true Messiah will begin."<sup>64</sup> But let the reader turn to the Scriptures and see who the true Israel is: "Not all who are descended from Israel are Israel... It is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring" (Rom. 9:6,8). Lindsey predicts further, and again with seeming certainty, "As the battle of Armageddon reaches its awful climax... in this very moment Jesus Christ will return and save man from self-extinction."<sup>65</sup>

John F. Walvoord is another author purporting to reveal "what the Bible says about the future of the Middle East and the end of Western civilization."<sup>66</sup> Like Lindsey, Walvoord also predicts quite specifically that the battle

of Armageddon - he refers to it as Armageddon and calls it World War III - will take place in the Valley of Jezreel, at Megiddo. (Chapter VIII deals further with Megiddo.)

The passage of Scripture on which many of these fanciful predictions are based is Revelation 16:16, "Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon." I would hardly mention the above predictions in this paper except for the fact that they are so numerous in our day. Almost any traveler to the Holy Land will be somewhat acquainted with them. Now he can see the site these 'predicters' are speaking about in their writings.

The Valley of Jezreel IS a place where many important biblical battles were fought, and battles in more modern history. Here is where Gideon defeated the hordes of Midianites and Amalekites with his three hundred soldiers, and God (Judges 7). Here is where King Saul and his sons lost their lives in a battle with the Philistines (1 Samuel 31). The Valley of Jezreel has been a battleground also in some of the more recent Arab-Israeli conflicts. In 1948 the Israeli forces used Megiddo as a base of operations against the entrenched Arab armies.

The valley lies on the border between Samaria and Galilee. It is approximately twenty-five miles in length. Ullian notes that "about 60 years ago this was a breeding swamp of malaria," and that in the early 1920s "each and

every square foot of swampland was drained and every mosquito killed."<sup>67</sup> What the traveler sees today is an agriculturally fertile plain where modern tractors and machines work the soil.

As the traveler looks out over the Valley of Jezreel, let him not be concerned about questions regarding the future to which the Lord has not given the answer, such as when or where the great Judgment will take place. Let him leave such things in the hands of his Lord. Let him give heed rather to the words of the Lord, "Keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour" (Matthew 25:13).

#### C. Nazareth Luke 4:16-30

The deprecating comment of Nathanael in John 1:46 supposedly expresses the popular attitude of people toward Nazareth during the time when Jesus lived on earth. When Jesus invited Philip to 'follow' him, Philip first found Nathanael and informed him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote - Jesus of Nazareth" (John 1:45). It is at this point that Nathanael replies in a rather disparaging manner, "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" As he soon discovered, however, Supreme Good can come from Nazareth.

The Columbia Encyclopedia places the present day population of Nazareth at 63,000.<sup>68</sup> The author of Frommer's

Israel states, "Today the city houses Israel's largest Arab community outside Jerusalem - more than 50,000, half of them Christian, half Muslim - and shares with Jerusalem its position as headquarters of the Christian mission movement in Israel."<sup>69</sup>

Nazareth lies almost in the center of lower Galilee, halfway between the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean, partly secluded in the hills. This is the city where Mary and Joseph made their home, the city where Jesus lived after his birth in Bethlehem until he began his public ministry. Joseph was a carpenter by occupation. Jesus apparently followed in his steps until he reached the age of thirty, since the Gospel writer Mark records people of Nazareth asking each other in regard to Jesus, "Isn't this the carpenter?" (Mark 6:3).

"The most authentic site of Nazareth," notes Frederick Owen, "connected with the holy family is the Virgin's Well. It has always been the only source of water in the town."<sup>70</sup> As the traveler stands by this well, he can easily imagine Jesus' mother Mary coming to draw water, or even the boy Jesus himself. The traveler may ponder such Scripture passages as Luke 2:51-52, "Then he (Jesus) went down to Nazareth with them (Mary and Joseph) and was obedient to them... And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

For further spiritual edification, the traveler while

in Nazareth may desire to turn to Luke 4:16-30 in the Bible. Luke tells how Jesus after his baptism and temptation in the desert returns to his hometown of Nazareth. He writes, "And on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom" (v.16). Jesus reads from Isaiah 61: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind..." Then he preaches a sermon, the essence of which is, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21). At first the people are amazed at Jesus. Then their amazement turns to fury (v.28). They take Jesus outside the town and plan to throw him over a cliff to kill him. "But he walked right through the crowd and went his way" (v.30).

What is the lesson here for the Christian traveler? Accept the Lord as he is. Don't attempt to reshape him into a mold of your making. He is the Lord.

#### D. Cana John 2:1-11

There is some question as to the location of Biblical Cana. According to Heicksen in the Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia, the "best identification" is a site some eight or nine miles north of Nazareth, a village (Cana) that "still retains the appearance of New Testament times."<sup>71</sup>

Cana is mentioned in three places in Scripture, all in



the Gospel according to John. The disciple Nathanael, John writes, is "from Cana in Galilee" (21:2). John states in chapter four that Jesus visited Cana, and healed a royal official's son from a distance. In chapter two John relates the first miracle ('sign') of Jesus as taking place at a wedding in Cana, the changing of water into wine.

John states that "Jesus and his disciples had also (in addition to Mary, Jesus' mother) been invited to the wedding" (2:2), leading one to speculate that perhaps someone in the immediate family of our Lord was getting married. Mark 6:3 gives the four brothers of Jesus by

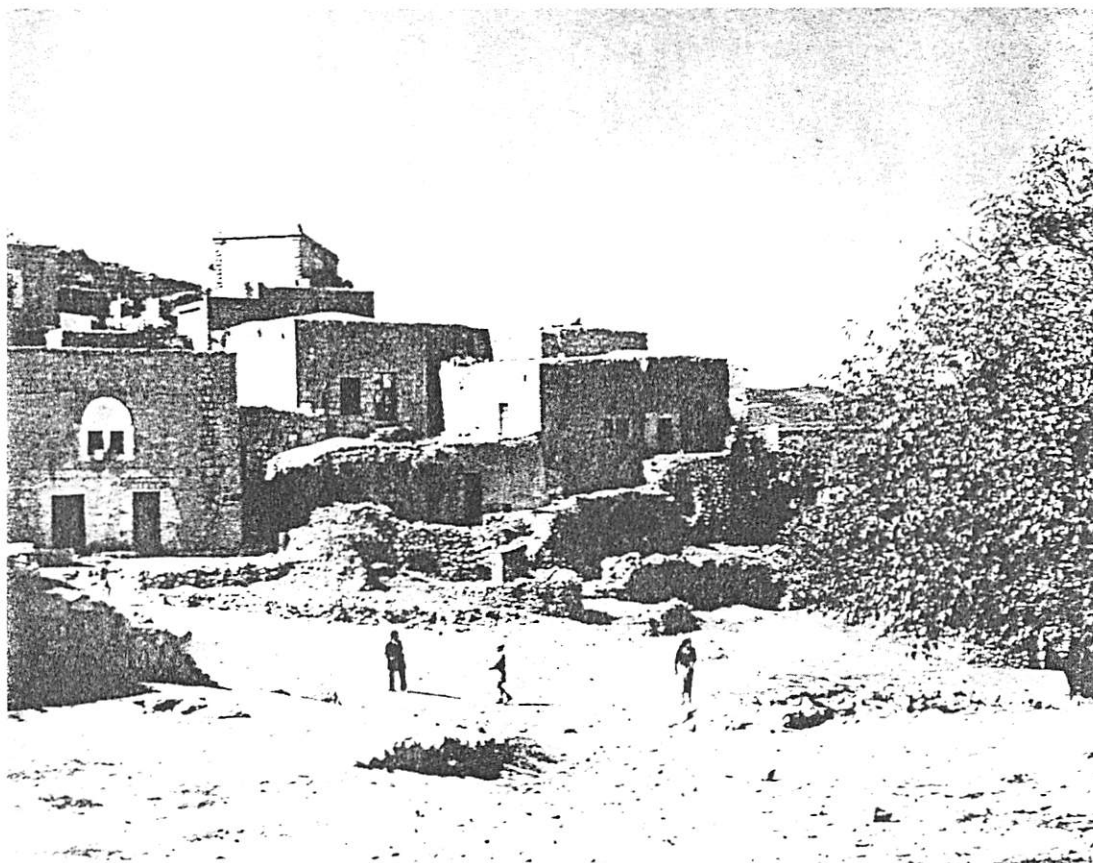


Fig. 12. Cana in Galilee (the favored site).

name, and mentions that he also had sisters. Was it perhaps one of these, especially since Cana was so near in distance to Nazareth?

In general the two main purposes for Jesus' miracles are pointed out by John in this account of the wedding of Cana. First, Jesus performed miracles in order to help people. Here in Cana it is such a mundane matter as a couple needing more wine at their wedding festivities. Yet our Lord helps them. The second purpose of Jesus' miracles was to authenticate who he was. Thus here John states at the end of his account, "He (Jesus) thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him" (v.11).

As Christian travelers today visit the village of Cana, let them learn from the example of the disciples and "put their faith in him." Let the word of the Lord telling of his miracles also serve to authenticate him in whom they believe.

#### E. Tiberias      John 6:23

The one reference to this city in Scripture is in John 6:23, "Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place." In two indirect references the Sea of Galilee is called the Sea of Tiberias. There is no record of Jesus ever visiting the city of Tiberias. Yet much of his ministry in Galilee was in the area around this city. Miller states, "Tiberias was in Jesus' time shunned by

pious Jews."<sup>72</sup> Supposedly an ancient Jewish cemetery lay under the site of the city, and that is why Jews avoided it.

Herod Antipas, the Herod who had the Baptizer beheaded, founded Tiberias between the years 18 and 22 A.D.<sup>73</sup> In the same article in the Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia where the above dates are given, it is noted that Herod included a large synagogue among the 'amenities' he constructed in Tiberias, but that the synagogue "appears never to have been used, for a Jewish boycott compelled Herod to populate Tiberias with aliens."<sup>74</sup> Interestingly enough, however, after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., "Tiberias became a Jewish metropolis and center of rabbinic learning; by the 2nd century A.D. it was recognized, with Jerusalem, Hebron, and Safed, as one of the four sacred cities of the Jews, the seat of the great Sanhedrin."<sup>75</sup>

Tiberias today, according to Ullian in Frommer's Israel, has a population of 35,000.<sup>76</sup> The city lies on the western shore of Lake Galilee, about midway between the northern and southern ends of the lake. It was famous for its hot baths in Bible times, and still today attracts people to its popular spa.

Because in the Biblical record Jesus never visits Tiberias, its religious significance for the Christian traveler today is minimal. The people of Tiberias in the days of Jesus were mainly aliens, non-Jews. Perhaps, then,

the prayer of King David gives words for the traveler to ponder while visiting there, "We are aliens and strangers in your sight, as were all our forefathers. Our days on earth are like a shadow" (1 Chronicles 29:15).

On the sixth tour day the tourist has seen something from the Old Testament at Jacob's Well, as well as more from the New Testament at Nazareth and Cana. He has also departed somewhat from the footsteps of Jesus by stopping at Tiberias.

## Chapter VII

### DAY 7 - SEA OF GALILEE & SURROUNDINGS

The Galilean ministry of Jesus was a more tranquil time for him than the more overt opposition he experienced in Judea. Here he chose his twelve disciples. Here he preached his Sermon on the Mount. Here he spent time on the quiet waters of the Sea of Galilee (although the lake also could become quite rough and stormy at times). The city of Capernaum was located on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. It served as a kind of hometown for Jesus after he was rejected at Nazareth.

In this chapter we are concentrating on the ministry of Jesus during his so-called 'year of popularity.'<sup>77</sup> He was indeed popular during this time and among these Galileans, doubtless due largely to his miracles of healing and helping, but also because of the words of life that he spoke. We shall hear again some of those words for our own edification.

A. The Sea of Galilee Luke 5:1-11

The Sea of Galilee is a heart-shaped fresh-water lake, approximately thirteen miles long and eight miles wide, and is 685 feet below sea level. The Jordan River empties into its northern end, and again exits on the southern end. It is known by various names in the Bible, in addition to the

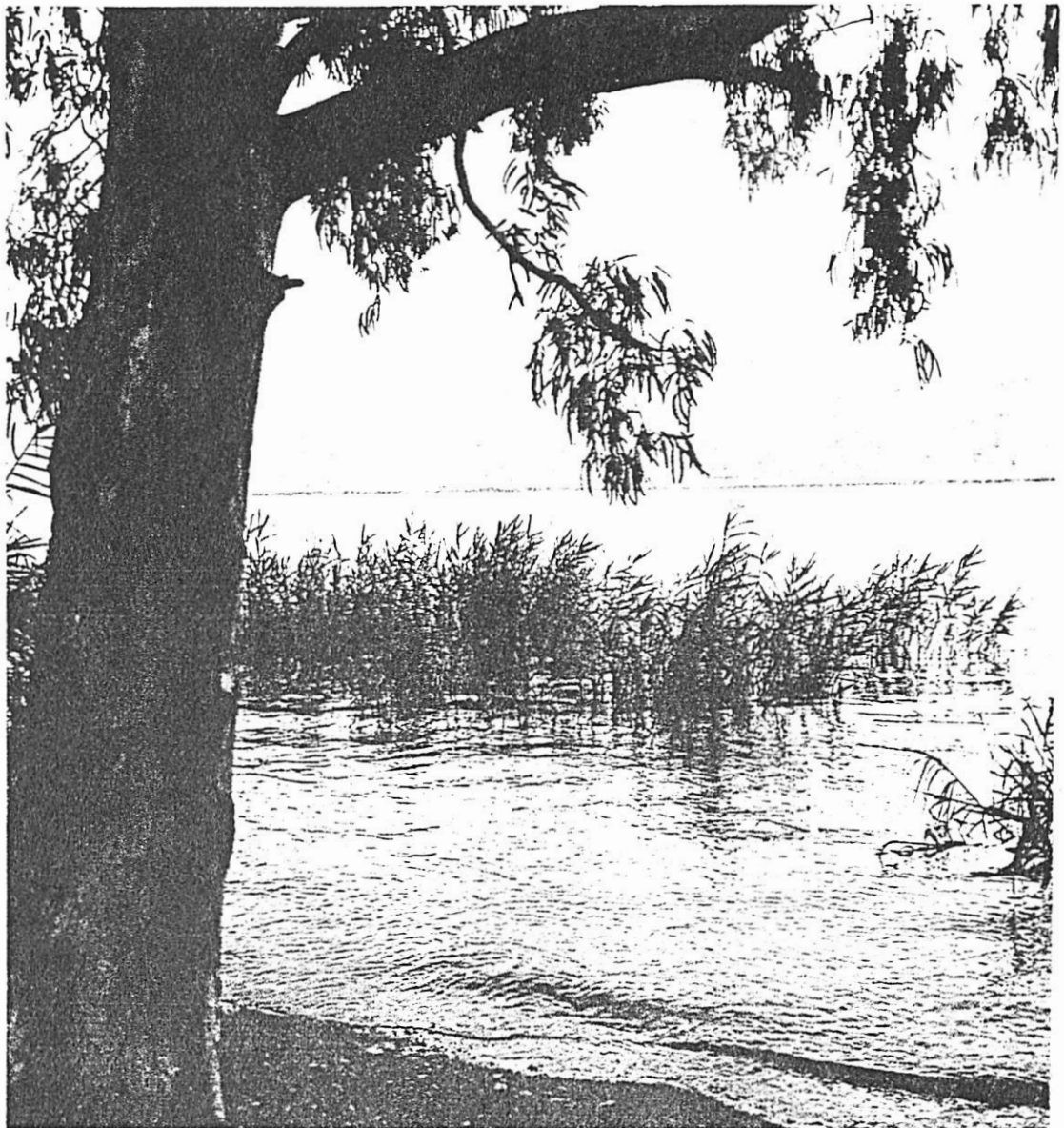


Fig. 13. The Sea of Galilee.

more popular 'Sea of Galilee': the Sea of Tiberias (John 6:1), the Lake of Gennesaret (Luke 5:1), in a number of instances simply 'the lake' or 'the sea,' and in the Old Testament 'the sea of Chinneroth' (Numbers 34:1).

Galilee is a beautiful, deep, blue lake. R.H. Alexander in the Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia notes that the ancient rabbis used to say, "Jehovah has created seven seas, but the Sea of Galilee is his delight."<sup>78</sup> Miller waxes even more rhapsodic in saying, "Modern pilgrims to the Holy Land find words inadequate to express the spiritual impact of a visit to the Sea of Galilee and its sacred shores."<sup>79</sup> I personally have found this to be true. The impact perhaps lies in the fact that although cities such as Jerusalem and Bethlehem have changed over the two thousand years since Jesus was there, yet the Sea of Galilee remains much the same now as then.

Of the many references to the Sea of Galilee in the New Testament, I have chosen Luke 5:1-11 for closer study. In verse two Luke speaks of fishermen washing their nets on the lake shore, a common sight in those days and still today. Jesus gets into one of the boats, "the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat" (v.3). This is also the occasion when Jesus urges Simon to "put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch" (v.4). When they reluctantly do so, they catch

"such a large number of fish that their nets begin to break" (v.6).

Then Jesus tells Simon Peter, "From now on you will catch men" (v.10). Luke continues by sharing how Peter, James and John "pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him" (v.11).

It is that last verse on which the traveler may wish to meditate as he stands on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. The traveler is following in the footsteps of Jesus in his travels on this particular trip. He may well praise the Lord for giving him such delight in tracing the steps of Jesus.

#### B. Capernaum Matthew 8:5-13

Our Lord performed many miracles in and around Capernaum. Matthew in fact refers to it as "his own city" (9:1). Note also, however, Matthew 11:20, "Then Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent." Note further his actual words of denunciation in verses 23-24, "And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths... I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you." Miller links together this denunciation of Capernaum by Jesus with the fact that the site of Capernaum today "is a tumbled mass of stones."<sup>80</sup>



When Jesus was on earth, Capernaum was a thriving lake port on the northern shore of Lake Galilee, with a population of about 5,000. It was a fishing town, which accounts for the fact that it was the hometown of the fishermen disciples Simon Peter and his brother Andrew (Mark 1:29). Mark 9:33 seems to indicate further that Jesus made his headquarters in Capernaum at Peter's house.

What may the tourist see today as he visits the site? E. Blaiklock replies, "By far the most impressive ruin at the site is that of an ancient synagogue."<sup>81</sup> A Scripture passage that immediately comes to mind is Mark 1:21, "They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach." It would be particularly interesting for the tourist if the ruins he sees today are of the same synagogue mentioned in Mark 1. Ullian, however, dashes that hope in stating, "It's not the actual synagogue in which Christ taught, since it dates from around the 2nd or 3rd century A.D., but it may stand on the same site."<sup>82</sup>

I can testify from personal experience, however, that it is quite impressive to stand in the ruins of that synagogue, and 'see' in one's mind Jesus teaching there. Let the tourist at this site give his imagination free rein. Let him consider his own blessedness through the teaching of Christ.

Matthew writes in 8:5, "When Jesus had entered

Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help." A centurion in that day was a Roman officer in charge of a hundred soldiers. This man asks Jesus for help in behalf of his paralyzed servant who is at home. Jesus offers to go and heal him. But the centurion doesn't wish to bother Jesus that much. He states that coming to his house is not necessary; he believes Jesus can help merely by his word of authority. At that the Lord "was astonished and said to those following him, 'I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith'"(v.10). The centurion's servant was healed that same hour.

Let the tourist by the power of the Spirit here be moved to a faith similar to that of the centurion. Let him put his faith in Jesus for all of life.

#### C. Mount of the Beatitudes Matthew 5:1-12

Here we again come to a 'traditional' site, which means it is not authenticated. Since years of tradition, however, hold this to be the site mentioned by Matthew, it may indeed be authentic. In 5:1, Matthew writes, "Now when he (Jesus) saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down." The traditional site is more a large hill, rather than what I would call a mountain. It is located near the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Luke in chapter 6:17ff. is probably speaking of the same occasion. He writes, "He went down with them and



Fig. 14. Mt. of the Beatitudes (traditional).

stood on a level place." The Mount of the Beatitudes indeed has such a 'level place.' The Franciscans have built the Church of the Beatitudes on this mountain. From this church one is able to get an especially good view of the Sea of Galilee. Ullian notes in regard to this church, "One odd fact about this church is the inscription in the sanctuary, which informs you that the entire project was built by Mussolini in 1937."<sup>83</sup>

A popular view of the beatitudes is that the Lord gave them - indeed the whole Sermon on the Mount, of which the beatitudes constitute the opening verses - in order that

people could follow them and thus become Christians. Further study in the Bible, however, reveals that the way to become a Christian is through the Spirit to "believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). A person becomes a Christian not by living a 'good' life. Quite the opposite, living a good life follows after becoming a Christian. Note the clear statement on the relationship between faith and works in Ephesians 2:8-10, "It is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works."

The above digression helps the traveler avoid a popular but incorrect view of the beatitudes. As a person who already is a Christian, he can stand on the Mount of the Beatitudes and meditate on the words his Lord spoke on this hill two thousand years earlier. As a forgiven child of God, he can show his gratitude for what the Lord has made him. He can look once again at the beatitudes of the Lord and renew his commitment to live accordingly, through the working of God's Spirit in him.

#### D. Hazor      Judges 4

In this section we turn to the Old Testament; there is no reference to Hazor in the New Testament. Although in terms of population there is no city there today, W. Coker

states that "Hazor was the largest city ever built in Palestine during the Biblical period," - presumably he means the Old Testament period - "accommodating up to 40,000 inhabitants."<sup>84</sup> The city of Hazor was located ten miles north of the Sea of Galilee.

Today Hazor is an important archeological site. The mound (tell) covers about two hundred acres. The late Professor Yigael Yadin directed the systematic excavation at the site during the years 1955-1958. G. Owen quotes Yadin as saying, "Holding the Bible in one hand and a spade in the other, seemed to be the most successful method of discovering the relics of that biblical city."<sup>85</sup> According to 1 Kings 9:15-19, it seems as though King Solomon made Hazor one of his important horse-and-chariot cities, intended for defense of the country. Hitching posts have been uncovered during excavation.

In Judges 4 the tourist can read of an earlier period in the history of Hazor. One of the Canaanite kings, Jabin, "reigned in Hazor" (v.2). His army commander, Sisera, had "nine hundred iron chariots" (v.3). The Israelites had been "cruelly oppressed... for twenty years" (v.3) by Jabin. When they cry to the Lord for help, it comes in the person of Deborah, a prophetess. She and a man named Barak lead the Israelite forces in battle against the Canaanites, and defeat them with the help of God. In verse 23 it is stated rather pointedly, "On that day God

subdued Jabin, the Canaanite king, before the Israelites."

An interesting sidelight to the story is the method by which Sisera, the enemy commander, is killed. Fleeing from defeat in the battle, Sisera comes to the tent of a woman named Jael. She invites him in and gives him food and drink. Then while he is exhausted and sleeping, Jael picks up a tent peg and a hammer, and drives "the peg through his temple into the ground" (v.21).

What is the tourist to make of this Scriptural account? One point is this: God often uses a woman to accomplish what is considered to be a man's task - note the actions of both Deborah and Jael. Another point the tourist might think about is the fact that when the Lord is on your side, you need not fear. "The Lord is the stronghold of my life - of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1).

#### E. Mount Hermon, Caesarea Philippi Matthew 16:13-17

The tour bus continues ever farther northward, and now reaches the northern-most point of present-day Israel, the city of Caesarea Philippi. Caesarea Philippi lies at the southern end of Mount Hermon, about forty miles northeast of the Sea of Galilee. Mount Hermon is mentioned by Moses in Deuteronomy 3:8 as the northern-most boundary of the Promised Land. The mountain is at the southern end of the Anti-Lebanon range of mountains. It reaches 9,200 feet above sea level, and is snow-covered most of the year. On

clear days it is seen from the Dead Sea, 120 miles south. The melting snows of Mount Hermon are the principal source of water for the Jordan River.

S. Barabas notes that "it is thought by some scholars that the Transfiguration took place on Hermon."<sup>86</sup> Also Miller states in this regard, "Its proximity to Caesarea Philippi is an argument for its being the site of Christ's Transfiguration."<sup>87</sup> In the transfiguration account by Matthew, he states that Jesus led three of his disciples "up a high mountain" (17:1).

Another important event also occurred here and is recorded in chapter sixteen of Matthew. In verses 13-17, Peter's famous confession of Christ is written. Matthew gives a fairly specific location, "When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi" (v.13). It should be noted that the residents of this city at that time were infamous for their worship of the pagan deity Pan. Thus the area was named Paneas. (The deity's name still partially survives today, in that Caesarea Philippi's modern name is Banias.)

Jesus asks his disciples first who other people say he is. Then he asks them, "But what about you? Who do you say I am?" (v.15). This is the point at which Peter makes his famous confession, probably answering for the whole group, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (v.16).

The traveler is given the opportunity at Caesarea Philippi to renew his own confession of faith. Let him again think about Jesus and what Jesus means to him. Then let him acknowledge with Peter, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God, my Savior."

Thus the sight-seeing on the seventh day of the tour comes to its conclusion. The traveler on this day has visited the area around the Sea of Galilee where the Lord spent much time in his ministry. The traveler has also viewed two famous mountains in the Bible. Now he returns to Tiberias for the night.



## Chapter VIII

### DAY 8 - THE MEDITERRANEAN COAST AREA

The one area of the Holy Land that has as yet not been covered on this trip (and in this paper) is the Mediterranean coast. The Great Sea, as it is at times referred to in the Scriptures (Numbers 34:6), played little part in the Bible. As Miller states, "The Hebrews feared it; commerce by water was distasteful to them."<sup>88</sup> There are some references to the Mediterranean in the Old Testament, as when King Solomon had King Hiram of Tyre ship cedars of Lebanon by way of the sea for the building of the Jerusalem temple (1 Kings 5). Another reference is the account of Jonah. God told him to go east to Nineveh. Jonah instead boarded a ship heading west on the Mediterranean.

In regard to following "in the footsteps of Jesus," only once do the Gospel writers speak of him in the coastal area. Mark writes, "Jesus left that place and went to the

vicinity of Tyre" (7:24). Yet there are numerous accounts in Scripture of other people and the coastal area. On the eighth day of the tour we visit some of these coastal sites, still seeking to expand our knowledge of the places mentioned in Scripture, to enhance our understanding, and to have our faith edified.

**A. Megiddo            2 Chronicles 1:14-17**

The first stop is not exactly on the Mediterranean coast, but about fifteen miles inland, at the remains of the city of Megiddo. Megiddo lies about fifteen miles southwest of Nazareth. It is no longer a city today, but a seventy-five foot high mound of rubble, comprising about thirteen acres. Twenty successive cities have been built on this site, the first in about 3,500 B.C., and the last in about 400 B.C.

Rainey explains why this particular site was so popular over the centuries, "Megiddo was one of the most strategic points in Palestine and many crucial battles took place in its immediate vicinity."<sup>89</sup> Miller explains further, "The importance of Megiddo was due to its domination of the intersection of two vitally important ancient trade and military routes."<sup>90</sup> For caravaners or an army to get through the narrow pass, they required the approval of the people in Megiddo - or they needed to capture the city. Such capture and destruction, according to what has been

learned in archeological excavations, occurred time and again.

"Excavation and archeological research at this flat-topped mound... has yielded vast riches of knowledge for the scientist and Biblical student,"<sup>91</sup> states Miller. One such discovery has been the remnants of what is believed to be King Solomon's stables. In 1 Kings 9:15 the writer mentions Megiddo as one of the four cities that Solomon fortified. In the somewhat parallel passage in 2 Chronicles 1:14-17, the writer speaks of "fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses, which he (Solomon) kept in the chariot cities." Authorities presume Megiddo was one of the cities. The chronicler also states in verse 16, "Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and from Kue" (probably Cilicia). Miller writes at length about Solomon's stables in Megiddo, stating that "perhaps 500 horses could have been stabled in this one city in the chain of Solomon's defences."<sup>92</sup>

As the tourist walks about Megiddo, what better verse of Scripture to have in mind than Psalm 20:7: "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God." Someone has paraphrased this passage in Scripture to say, "Pray as if everything depends on God; make provisions as if everything depends on you."<sup>93</sup>

**B. Haifa/Acco Judges 1:31**

Haifa is located on the Mediterranean coast, due west of the Sea of Galilee. The Columbia Encyclopedia estimates its present population at around 230,000, and calls it "a major industrial center, a railroad hub, and one of the main ports of Israel."<sup>94</sup> The history of Haifa as a city is somewhat obscure. It is known to have existed by the third century A.D., was destroyed by Saladin in 1191 A.D., and began its revival in the late eighteenth century.

Haifa is not mentioned in the Scriptures. Today it is the world center of Baha'ism, a religion that emphasizes simplicity and charity, education and world peace. The tour includes a visit to the Bahai Shrine on nearby Mount Carmel. At this shrine, perhaps the Christian tourist should recall the exclusionary (yet inviting) words of the Lord in John 14:6, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

On a previous trip I made to the Holy Land, our guide informed us that military frogmen are in the waters of the Bay of Haifa day and night. Because it is the chief port of Israel, it is constantly in danger of attack.

There is only one reference to Acco in the Bible, according to Young's concordance. In chapter one of the book of Judges, the writer tells how the various clans of Israel were capturing and subjugating the cities of Canaan. Then verse 31 reads, "Nor did Asher drive out those living



Fig. 15. Acco (facing south toward Haifa).

in Acco or Sidon or Ahlab..." The city is located with Haifa on the Bay of Haifa, a few miles distance to the north. On the apostle Paul's third missionary journey, he is heading back to Jerusalem, stopping by ship at cities along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean. In Acts 21:7 Luke writes, "We continued our voyage from Tyre and landed at Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for a day." Ptolemais is a later name for the city of Acco (also called Acre and Accho). Acco today, I remember, is noted for its brass-works. One can purchase there all manner of objects made of brass. As Paul and his compan-

ions traveled on to the coastal city of Caesarea, that also is the next stop on this tour, after visiting Mt. Carmel.

C. Mount Carmel      1 Kings 18:16-39

The story of Elijah's confrontation with the prophets of Baal in First Kings 18 is one of the very dramatic accounts in Scripture. It takes place during the second of what has been called the "three miracle periods" of Scripture: miracles at the time of Moses, miracles at the time of Elijah and Elisha, miracles at the time of Jesus and the early church.

The Carmel range of mountains juts out into the Mediterranean at Haifa, and extends inland for thirteen miles in a southeasterly direction. It reaches a height of 1,742 feet inland, but at Haifa is 470 feet high. Ullian describes the range when he writes, "You'd never know there was anything but utter tranquility up here, because the range is an area of gentle breezes and wooded ravines, its sloping hills dotted with white homes."<sup>96</sup>

Mount Carmel is mentioned twenty times in the Old Testament, but not once in the New. One reference is in the book of Joshua. The country was being divided between the Israelite tribes. In 19:26 the boundary of the tribe of Asher "touched Carmel... then turned east..." A number of the prophets also mention Mount Carmel, e.g., Amos in 9:3 has these words of warning from the Almighty: "Though

they hide themselves on the top of Carmel, there I will hunt them down and seize them."

The most well-known reference to Carmel is in 1 Kings 18. Ahab is the king over 'Israel' at this time (the northern part of the country). He has sinned against God and led the people into many sins, one of which is the worship of Baal. The prophet Elijah requests of Ahab, "Summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel" (v.19). The king does so and the public 'test' takes place. Elijah and the prophets of Baal each prepare an altar with a sacrifice on it, and each call on their God (god) to send down fire to consume the sacrifice. Baal does not respond (he was an idol). God does respond, in a spectacular way.

The reaction of the people who are watching is recorded in verse 39. "When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, 'The Lord - he is God! The Lord - he is God!'"

Studying this account in Scripture and recalling that it takes place on Mount Carmel serves to build up the faith of the traveler. While faith in God is not dependent on miracles, nor on accounts of miracles, they are edifying to the believer. They portray God's power. They show that God is indeed God. He intends that people read them and be strengthened by them. Amen. Let it be so for the traveler on Mount Carmel.

D. Caesarea Acts 12:19b-24

Caesarea Philippi was described in chapter VII of this paper; it is located at the northern-most point in Israel at the foot of Mount Hermon. The traveler needs to distinguish between that city and the one in this chapter. This Caesarea is located on the Mediterranean coast, about seventy miles northwest of Jerusalem, and about twenty-five miles south of Haifa.

Caesarea was the Roman capital of Judea in the time of Jesus and Paul. Though it is not mentioned in the Gospel accounts in connection with Jesus, Caesarea is mentioned numerous times in the book of Acts. The evangelist Philip lived in Caesarea (Acts 8:40). Peter at the direction of God visited the Gentile Cornelius in Caesarea (10:1ff.). King Herod was struck dead by God while in Caesarea (12:19ff.). Paul was imprisoned for two years in Caesarea (23:23), during which time he appeared before Felix, Festus and King Agrippa.

Caesarea was built by Herod the Great, beginning in 25 B.C. and finishing in 13 B.C. Herod named the city Caesarea in honor of Caesar Augustus. Owen writes, "It was constructed so well and on such a magnificent plan that it was frequently called 'Little Rome.'"<sup>97</sup> Caesarea has a very limited natural harbor. Herod therefore constructed a man-made harbor, moving huge amounts of rock and rubble to create a safe place for ships to dock. He also constructed



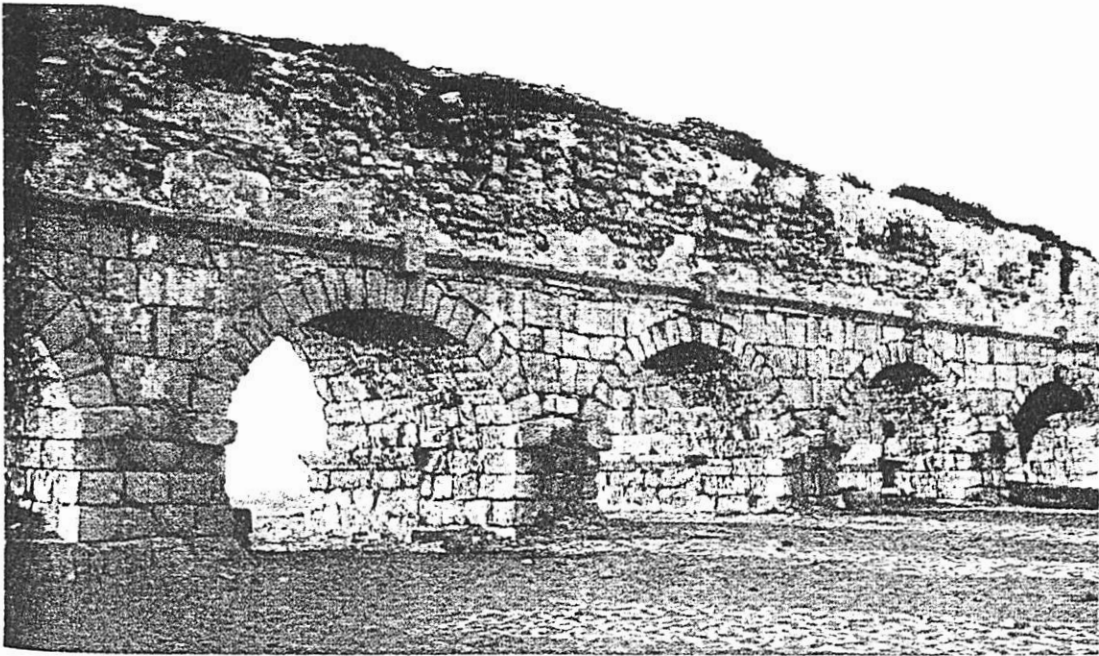


Fig. 16. Caesarea Aqueduct.

a huge thirteen-mile aqueduct to bring fresh water from Mount Carmel. Notice in the picture of this aqueduct (Figure 16) how well preserved it is still in our day, about two thousand years later.

Today the tourist will find no city at Caesarea, only ruins. Much archeological digging has been done over the years, also under the water in the harbor area. Larger finds include a Crusader castle, a Roman theater buried under the sand, and the pavement of a Jewish synagogue. In the uncovered theater archeologists discovered a stone with the name 'Pilate' inscribed on it, the first time Pilate's name has been found inscribed on stone in Israel.

Of the fifteen times the name Caesarea appears in the

Bible, all in the book of Acts, I have chosen Acts 12:19b-24 for further elaboration. Luke writes, "Herod (Agrippa) went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there a while" (v.19b). Luke tells how some people from Tyre and Sidon were seeking to gain favor with Herod, how he appeared in his royal robes before them to give a speech, and how they shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man." Then in verse 23, "Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died."

The historian Josephus adds further details:

"He (Herod) put on a garment made wholly of silver, and of a contexture truly wonderful, and came into the theatre early in the morning; at which time the silver of his garment being illuminated by the fresh reflection of the sun's rays upon it, shone out after a surprising manner, and was so resplendent... his flatterers cried out... that he was a god... Upon this the king did neither rebuke them, nor reject their impious flattery... A severe pain also arose in his belly, and began in a most violent manner... He departed this life, being in the fifty-fourth year of his age."<sup>98</sup>

Luke's concluding verse in this account is significant, "But the word of God continued to increase and spread" (v.24). The lesson for the traveler is obvious: what man does, the things in which man finds his glory, will fade and vanish. At times God will purposely destroy them. But "My word... will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11).

On this eighth day of the tour then, the traveler has visited the Mediterranean coastal area. Rather than following in the footsteps of Jesus as such, he has been viewing sites from the Old Testament era - Megiddo and Haifa and Mount Carmel. They, like the Old Testament accounts to which they attest, are helpful in gaining a deeper appreciation of all that transpired and was written, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now the traveler returns to Jerusalem for the night.

Note:

The reader at this point is urged to turn to Appendix B. Appendix B is a booklet form of the itinerary for this particular trip. It includes material from the preceding chapters on each site to be visited, but in greatly condensed form. The Scripture passage for each site is also printed in the booklet, except where no Scripture reference is applicable.

The booklet is given to each traveler a month or more before the actual trip, for his personal study. The same booklet will be used by me, the tour director, in a daily group meeting of tour members. My intention is to meet together for an hour or so each evening, and go through the itinerary for the following day.

## Chapter IX

### POST-TRIP COMMENTS

"The best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley" (often go astray).<sup>99</sup> When I started this paper, I scheduled an actual trip to the Holy Land for myself and members of the congregation where I serve as pastor. It was my plan to include as part of this paper a personal journal of the trip, comments by fellow travelers, and an overall evaluation. The planned trip, however, did not materialize as scheduled, or at least not in time to be reported on in this paper.

I considered it important and helpful to the reader of this paper, however, to be able to peruse some post-trip comments by actual travelers, by people who have in fact walked in the footsteps of Jesus. Therefore I am reaching back to a similar but previous trip. I am putting down on paper in this chapter either written or simply remembered

comments on the part of people who took that trip.

The method I shall use is to include such comments by others in quotes, normally not identifying the speaker in order to protect their privacy. Material not in quotes is by the writer of this paper.

### **First-Time Travelers**

"As the plane comes down low over Tel Aviv and the lights of the city twinkle in the evening twilight, I can hardly believe that I am about to set foot on 'holy ground,' in the actual country where my Savior lived while he was here on earth.

A bus takes our group from the airport to our hotel in Jerusalem, about an hour's ride. The next morning I eagerly look out the window in the daylight, and there it is - the holy city! Somewhat later we have our first breakfast in Israel, a sumptuous meal with eggs and baked goods and a variety of fruits and vegetables. We learn that breakfast in Israel is normally a large meal."

"One of my first impressions in the Holy Land was that it is a land of strong contrasts. On our first day near the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, some rubble was being cleared away in a certain area. Several workmen were using donkeys. They loaded what seemed to me an extra large amount of rubble in canvass bags on the donkey's back, then

walked the donkey to a ravine and dumped the rubble. In the same area was another workman, clearing rubble with a thoroughly modern Caterpillar bulldozer.

Another sharp contrast was to be seen in the method of conveying materials from one place to another in the city. Modern trucks shared the streets with donkeys pulling 1930s type of wagons. Still another contrast could be seen in the fields outside the city. One farmer would be plowing a small plot of ground with a single horse and an old WOODEN plow. In the neighboring field would be a farmer doing his work with a bright green and yellow John Deere tractor."

"I am not what you would call a world traveler. In fact, this trip to the Holy Land is my first time outside of the United States. Are there beggars in other parts of the world like here in Israel? This is one of the things that first struck me. Whenever our bus stops and we step out to look at something, there are always these children accosting us for a handout. Or they try to sell us those junky souvenirs. I think they should do something to stop all these kids from bothering us tourists."

#### Dinner One Evening

"We had dinner one evening at an Arab restaurant - very interesting. Low seats, almost like sitting on the

floor, and a low table. Flat pancake-type bread which you pull apart like a pocket, and a variety of meats and vegetables you put into it. Strange tastes. People at our table were picky and left much of their food. I traded my bland potatoes for their delicious flavored meat - very spicy. Shikabobs for dessert, a small tart soaked in honey. I got someone's extra."

### Security in Israel

"The security in the Holy Land seemed quite strong. At the airport in Tel Aviv, my husband and I were in a very small room with a customs agent. He was going through our luggage and asking us many questions. Suddenly red lights began flashing and two soldiers came running to our booth with their machine guns at the ready. Apparently my husband, because we three were so crowded in that tiny room, unknowingly had brushed against an emergency switch. It was scary, until we understood it was merely an accident.

"There were soldiers with guns lining the rooftops near the Wailing Wall. I saw jeeps full of soldiers at Jacob's Well. They were on guard also in Bethlehem, when we stopped to see where Jesus was born.

"After a few days I got somewhat used to it. Our guide told us that the soldiers were there to protect US, so it was good to see them around."

### **A Funeral Procession**

"We were sitting and relaxing in our hotel room one afternoon with the windows open. We were on the second floor, and our room had a little balcony almost overhanging the street. Suddenly we heard a mournful trumpet sound from outside, playing about three or four notes over and over, together with the beating of a drum. We stepped out on the balcony, and there was a funeral procession coming down the street below us.

"There were about fifty people in the group, all walking. First came a man carrying the cover of the coffin, with a large cross on it. Children followed with flower wreathes and more crosses. Then came the men and boys, six of them carrying the coffin on their shoulders. From our vantage point we could easily see down into the coffin. The corpse was that of a man, perhaps forty years old.

"All traffic came to a halt as the group proceeded down the middle of the street. It was especially gratifying to us to see the crosses, and thus to assume that the dead man had been a Christian."

### **The Golan Heights**

The Golan Heights is the far northeastern section of Israel, a high plateau overlooking the Sea of Galilee. This is where the Six-Day War began in June of 1967. The



Syrians at that time occupied the Golan Heights, and began bombarding the Israeli settlements below them on the eastern shore of Lake Galilee.

When the war began, first the Israeli air force destroyed the combined air forces of three Arab countries. Then Israeli planes, tanks and troops moved to the Golan for a few more days of fierce fighting, eventually capturing and occupying the area. In another war in 1973, the Israelis nearly lost this area again.

"Sections of the road in the Golan Heights were terrible... huge holes, etc.... bunkers dug out quite often... huge mounds of dirt with vents on top... many rusted war vehicles to be seen... a bombed out village... an army tank memorial dated September 10, 1973... much tangled and barbed wire lying around."

#### A Hazard In Flying

"A TWA plane had been hijacked to Algiers several days before our flight home. Because of the hijacking, our plane had to stop in Rome instead of flying straight to Paris. We had to accommodate another plane load of people. TWA was short two planes because of the hijacking. Something else - we didn't realize it at the time, but three passengers flying with us were among the people who had been in the hijacked airplane earlier."

### Theological Reflection - "God Let Us Down"

"God let us down," stated an Israeli woman, about forty-five years of age. She had been born and raised in New York City. At the age of sixteen she moved to Israel and has lived there ever since. Now she serves as a guide for travelers to the Holy Land.

"God let us down," she said. "God made so many promises to us Jews. But he is not at all faithful to his promises. Look at the Holocaust. Look at the way we Jews have been persecuted over the centuries. God has not been very good to us." She was not strongly bitter in what she said. She said it more in a matter-of-fact way, as though it was a well-known truth.

Another minister and I tried to set her straight. We attempted to show her that PEOPLE fail God, both Jews and non-Jews; but that God is always faithful to his word. In the brief time available to us, however, we seemingly were able to accomplish little in changing her false perception of God.

### Theological Reflection - Why go to the Holy Land?

I like the way Laine Rosin reflects in a Lutheran Witness article. "There are always some Holy Land travelers who want to know the exact location where Biblical events occurred. 'Was this his (Lazarus') grave?' Maybe. Perhaps. For some people, pinpointing the place lends an

sense of certainty, as if seeing the spot makes things true...

"Tour guides in Palestine point to a room, a house, or some other locale as though proving geography proves everything. We know better... We point to Baptism... We point to the Word... We point to Christ's Supper...

"Did all these events really happen in this place? It is enough for me to know that all this indeed happened. The other details are interesting, but they are not life-giving."<sup>100</sup>

The above-mentioned article in the Lutheran Witness gives good examples of false expectations by people who visit the Holy Land. Unaddressed though by that article is the question: Why, then, go to the Holy Land? Aside from the obvious benefits of simply becoming better acquainted with another area of the world, why go to the Holy Land? Theologically speaking, why spend time and money to walk in the footsteps of Jesus?

It is the means of grace through which the Holy Spirit engenders a saving faith in one's heart, and through which the Spirit causes that faith to increase and grow. Obviously this is not a mechanical or automatic process. The Spirit employs a person's thought processes, a person's feelings and emotions, a person's intelligence; in brief - the whole person. Thus as a Christian grows in his knowledge of Holy Scripture, he increases in his capacity

or potentiality for greater faith. His faith will not necessarily grow stronger as his Bible knowledge increases; yet the capacity for greater faith is there.

This as I understand it is one of the chief benefits of taking a trip to the Holy Land, of walking in the footsteps of Jesus. A person's knowledge of Holy Scripture normally increases greatly. He becomes much more aware of the geography of the Bible, the actual topography of the country, the villages and the countryside where many of the biblical events originally took place. Thus his understanding of Holy Scripture increases. Therefore also his faith in the Lord has opportunity to grow.

## CONCLUSION

I saw an advertisement some years ago, urging seminary students and pastors to undertake a tour to the Holy Land. The advertisement gave as one of the reasons for taking such a tour, "You will learn as much as in a whole year of studies at the seminary." That is quite an overstatement of the case, unless some seminaries teach far less in one year than the one which I attended.

Yet there is some truth to the statement. One does learn much from walking in the footsteps of Jesus, from visiting those places in the country of Israel where the Lord himself spent time during his earthly ministry. This is particularly true when a person "walks in the footsteps of Jesus" with Bible in hand, correlating the Scriptures with the sites where certain events took place. That is what I in this paper have attempted to make possible for the traveler. Especially when he travels with my "Booklet for the Holy Land Traveler" (Appendix B) in hand, he will be able to see the Scriptures 'come alive' in his mind.

In the twenty centuries since our Lord walked on this earth as a man among men, many changes have taken place in the Holy Land. The present-day population, for example, is much greater. Cars and buses now occupy the streets and byways along with donkeys and sheep. Some villages in Bible times have today completely disappeared, and their former location can be only surmised.

Nevertheless, many things today remain as they were two thousand years ago. The Sea of Galilee is still there as formerly, with fishermen still to be seen washing their nets. The Jordan River is still there. Although its precise course keeps changing with the passing of the years, the Jordan today remains much as it was in the day when Jesus began his public ministry there by being baptized. Jew and Arab still are at enmity with each other, even as their forefathers Isaac and Ishmael could not live under the same roof. Because so many things are the same today as in Biblical times, it does not take an overly-active imagination on the part of a traveler today, to imagine himself back in the days of the Bible.

If you, the reader, are contemplating such a Holy Land trip, my congratulations to you! I can state with almost an absolute certainty that should you go, you will understand the Bible in certain parts better ever before, your faith in Jesus Christ will be strengthened, and you will enjoy the people and the country. Bon voyage!

## END NOTES

1. The ten days include travel time over and back.
2. See the brochure printed for the trip, included as an appendix to this paper.
3. The booklet is appended to this paper under the title, "In the Footsteps of Jesus."
4. The generic 'he' is used throughout this paper, intended to include both male and female.
5. This paper uses throughout, unless otherwise noted, the New International Version of THE HOLY BIBLE, East Brunswick, N.J.: International Bible Society, 1984.
6. Something similar is taking place in northern Africa. As forests are being removed to make way for agriculture, the Sahara desert continues to move southward year after year.
7. Howard Vos. Introduction to Bible Geography (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), p.22.
8. The ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH, October 28, 1991, section B, p.1.
9. Merrill C. Tenney, ed. Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), vol. 1, p. 551.
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12. Holy Bible, New International Version (East Brunswick, N.J.: International Bible Society, 1984), p.1653.
13. Alfred Edersheim. Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950), vol. 1, p.463.
14. Tenney, op. cit., vol.5, p.653.
15. Ullian, op.cit., p.84.
16. Concise Columbia Encyclopedia (New York: Avon Books, 1983), p.566.

17. James I. Packer, ed. Bible Almanac (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1980), p.104.
18. Robert G. Hoerber, ed. Concordia Self-Study Bible (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), p.1137.
19. Alan Richardson, ed. Theological Word Book of the Bible (New York: MacMillan Company, 1950), p.107.
20. Hershel Shanks. The City of David (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Archeological Society, 1975), p.48.
21. Tenney, op. cit., vol.5, p.880.
22. Edersheim, op. cit., vol.2, p.584.
23. Columbia Encyclopedia, p.431.
24. Meir Ben-Dov. In the Shadow of the Temple (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1982), p.75.
25. Madeleine S. Miller. Harper's Bible Dictionary (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1956), p.506.
26. Tenney, op. cit., vol.4, p. 300.
27. Ullian, op. cit., p.90.
28. Tenney, op. cit., vol.2, p.706.
29. Compare Mark 14:26 with verse 32, and one can hardly help but conclude that Gethsemane, according to Mark, is located on the Mount of Olives.
30. Frank Thompson. Thompson Chain Reference Bible, Archeological Supplement by G. Frederick Owen, (Indianapolis: B.B. Kirkbride Bible Co., 1983), p. 1660. I checked, but was unable to substantiate this statement attributed to Josephus.
31. Robert Young. Analytical Concordance to the Bible (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970), p.1089.
32. Shanks, op. cit., p.17.
33. Ullian, op. cit., p.37.
34. Frederick Owen, in the Archeological Supplement of the Thompson Chain Reference Bible, p.1698.
35. Tenney, op. cit., vol.5, p.1065.
36. Ullian, op. cit., p.87.
37. Luther's Small Catechism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), p.29.
38. Harry F. Frank. Discovering the Biblical World (Maplewood, N.J.: Hammond Incorporated, 1975), p.202.
39. Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1985), p.1251.
40. Ibid., p.1252.
41. That this Bible verse is somehow connected with the birth of Jesus seems far-fetched to me. Except for the use of the word 'manger,' I do not see any connection.
42. Columbia Encyclopedia, op. cit., p.84.
43. Ullian, op. cit., p.115.
44. Paul L. Maier. First Christmas (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1971), p.55.
45. Flavius Josephus, translated by William Whiston. The Life and Works of Flavius Josephus (Philadelphia: The



- John C. Winston Co., 1957), p.59.
46. Yohanan Aharoni. The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1979), p.57.
  47. Tenney, op. cit., vol.1, p.529.
  48. Ullian, op. cit., p.108.
  49. Miller, op. cit., p.311.
  50. Norval Geldenhuys. Commentary on the Gospel of Luke (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1952), p.471.
  51. Hoerber, op. cit., p.1585.
  52. Edersheim, op. cit., vol.1, p.281.
  53. James K. West. Introduction to the Old Testament (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1971), p.23.
  54. Martin Luther. The Small Catechism of Martin Luther in Contemporary English (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), p.14.
  55. Tenney, op. cit., vol.2, p.50.
  56. Ibid., p.50.
  57. Columbia Encyclopedia, p.222.
  58. Hershel Shanks, editor. Biblical Archeology Review (Washington D.C.: Biblical Archeological Society), vol.18, no.1, p.63.
  59. Ibid., vol. xvii, no.6, p.21.
  60. Josephus, op.cit., p.854.
  61. Miller, op. cit., p.212.
  62. Ibid., p.300.
  63. Jesus' remark about 'living water' in vv.10 & 14 may have been prompted by the fact that much of the water in Jacob's Well comes from the surface, as in a cistern.
  64. Hal Lindsey. The Late Great Planet Earth (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), p.167.
  65. Ibid., p.168.
  66. John F. Walvoord. Armageddon, Oil and the Middle East Crisis (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), the subtitle of his book.
  67. Ullian, op. cit., p.240.
  68. Columbia Encyclopedia, p.587.
  69. Ullian, op.cit., p.243.
  70. Owen, op.cit., p.1681.
  71. Tenney, op.cit., vol.1, p.700.
  72. Miller, Op.cit., p.757.
  73. Tenney, op. cit., vol.5, p.745.
  74. Ibid., pp.745-746.
  75. Miller, op. cit., p.757.
  76. Ullian, op. cit., p.251.
  77. I am here using the popular division of Jesus' three-year ministry into the years of obscurity, of popularity, and of opposition.
  78. Tenney, op. cit., v.2, p.643.
  79. Miller, op. cit., p.214.

80. Ibid., p.91.
81. Tenney, op. cit., v.1, p.747.
82. Ullian, op. cit., p.267.
83. Ibid., p.266.
84. Tenney, op. cit., v.3, p.50.
85. Owen, op. cit., p.1662.
86. Tenney, op. cit., v.3, p.126.
87. Miller, op. cit., p.254.
88. Ibid., p.433.
89. Tenney, op. cit., v.4, p.164.
90. Miller, op. cit., p.434.
91. Ibid., p.435.
92. Ibid., p.436.
93. The saying in its original form is, "Pray as if everything depends on God; work as if everything depends on you." I am unable to find the source of this saying.
94. Columbia Encyclopedia, p.359.
95. Young, op. cit., p.10.
96. Ullian, op. cit., p.228.
97. Owen, op. cit., p.1640.
98. Josephus, op. cit., p.582.
99. By the poet Robert Burns, as quoted in Roget's International Thesaurus (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1955), p.431.
100. Rosin, Laine. From an article in The Lutheran Witness (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), April, vol. 111, no. 4, pp.1-3.

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### Appendix A - NAWAS Brochure

The brochure on the following pages was printed and furnished free of charge by NAWAS International Travel, a travel company in New York. This is one of many such companies which make arrangements for Holy Land tours.

The brochure is intended to be used as a promotional piece, to be distributed among people who may be interested in going to the Holy Land. It gives the itinerary in some detail, the costs involved, and certain conditions and responsibilities of the traveler.



# 10 DAYS THE HOLY LAND

visiting

Jerusalem • Bethlehem • Nazareth

Tiberias

with

Rev. W. F. Hischke

April 27-May 6, 1992

\$1595 from Chicago





*You are herewith invited to come along with me to the Holy Land.*

*I can promise you that it will be an interesting and exciting trip. The Bible will come alive for you as never before.*

*We will be walking in the footsteps of Jesus. We will be viewing many of the same places where our Lord himself spent time while on this earth: Bethlehem and Jerusalem, the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River, Nazareth and Capernaum, and much more.*

*Each day of our tour, I will be pointing out to you the Bible references in regard to the places that we visit.*

*If you've ever considered visiting the Holy Land, doing so with fellow members of Village Church should make it even more enjoyable.*

*W.F. Hischke*

### TOUR FEATURES

- Round trip airfare from Chicago
- Accommodations at First Class Hotels
- Breakfast and Dinner Daily
- Services of Christian Guides
- Comprehensive Sightseeing Throughout
- All Service Charges and Local Taxes

### YOUR DAY-TO-DAY ITINERARY

#### MON, APR 27 — ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

Begin your exciting journey as you depart on board your overnight transatlantic flight to the Holy Land.

#### TUE, APR 28 — ARRIVE JERUSALEM

Afternoon arrival in Jerusalem. Your inspiring visit of the Lands of the Bible begins.

#### WED, APR 29 — JERUSALEM

This morning proceed on a walking tour of the Old City of Jerusalem. Enter St. Stephen's Gate. Visit St. Anne's Church and the Pool of Bethesda where Jesus healed the crippled man. Continue to the Temple Area. See the Dome of the Rock, the El Aqsa Mosque and the Wailing Wall. Exit via the Dung Gate to St. Peter's in Gallicantu. View the Valley of Gehenna and the Pool of Siloam.

This afternoon enter Herod's Gate to the Roman Praetorium, beneath the Sisters of Zion Convent, and the Ecce Homo Arch. Follow in the footsteps of Jesus as you walk the Via Dolorosa, the traditional way of the Cross to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Leave the Old City through the Damascus Gate. End your inspiring visit at the Garden Tomb, believed by many to be Golgotha.

#### THU, APR 30 — JERUSALEM

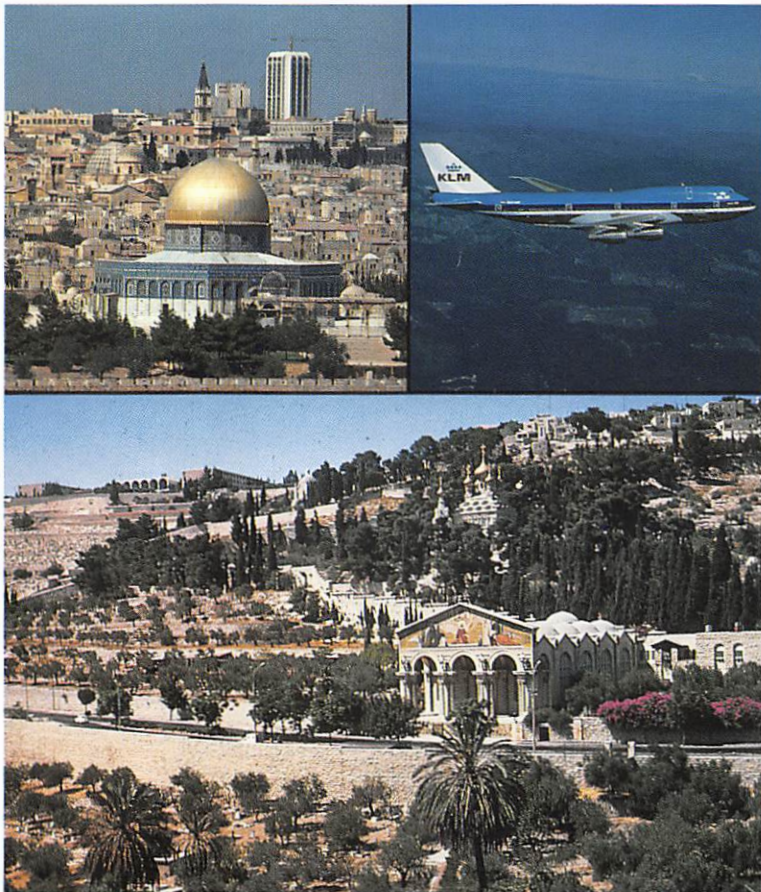
Drive to the top of the Mount of Olives for a panoramic view of Jerusalem. Visit the Chapel of the Ascension and the Church of Pater Noster. Descend Mt. Olivet to the Garden of Gethsemane and walk along the ancient olive trees, viewing the Kidron Valley. Visit the Church of All Nations on the Rock of Agony. Ascend Mount Zion to see the Upper Room, traditional site of the Last Supper. Drive to Bethlehem. Stop at Rachel's Tomb. Visit the



Church of the Nativity. See the Manger where Jesus was born and Shepherd's Field. Time to shop for wood carvings before returning to Jerusalem.

#### **FRI, MAY 1 — JERUSALEM**

This morning we drive to Bethany to visit Lazarus' Tomb and the village of Mary and Martha. Then on to Biblical Jericho, believed to be the oldest city in the world. View Elisha's Spring and the Mount of Temptations. Continue to the Dead Sea, 1288 feet below sea level, site of ancient Sodom and Gomorrah. Stop at the Caves of Qumran where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered and visit the excavations. On the east side of the Dead Sea are the Moab Mountains and Mt. Nebo where Moses viewed the Promised Land. Continue to the citadel stronghold of Masada. Ascend by cable car to the fortress where 967 Zealots made their last stand against Rome in 73 A.D.

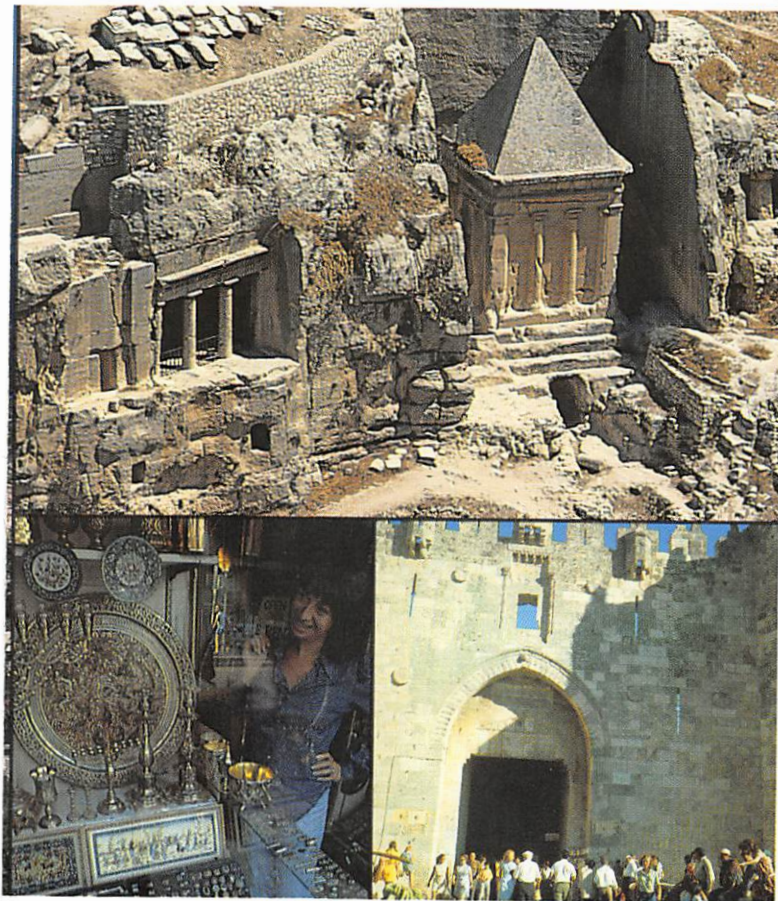


**SAT, MAY 2 — JERUSALEM/NAZARETH  
CANA/TIBERIAS**

Drive through the hills of Samaria and the Valley of Jezreel. Stop at Shechem where you see Jacob's Well. View the mountains of "Good and Evil" as you continue to Nazareth. Visit the Church of the Annunciation and the Grotto, Assumed to be Joseph's carpentry shop. Continue to Cana and then to Tiberias.

**SUN, MAY 3 — TIBERIAS**

Today, cross the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum, center of Jesus' Ministry in the Galilee. Visit the ruins of the Second Century Synagogue. Continue to Tabgha, site of the Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes. Then on to the Mount of Beatitudes where Jesus preached the famous Sermon on the Mount and chose the Twelve Apostles. Drive north via Hazur and view Mt. Hermon. Return to Tiberias for the night.



**MON, MAY 4 — TIBERIAS/HAIFA/CAESAREA/  
JERUSALEM**

This morning travel to Megiddo located on the Plain of Esdraelon. Visit the museum and Solomon's Stables. Continue to Haifa. Ascend Mt. Carmel to view the Bahai Shrine and its beautiful Persian Gardens and Elijah's Cave at the Carmelite Monastery. Drive south through the Plain of Sharon to Caesarea. See the Crusader's Castle and the Roman Amphitheater. On to Jerusalem for the night.

**TUE, MAY 5 — JERUSALEM**

Enjoy a day at leisure in Jerusalem.

**WED, MAY 6 — JERUSALEM/CHICAGO**

Your exciting visit of the Holy Land is over as you board your flight to Chicago, arriving the same day.

**RESERVATION FORM**

Please read the all-inclusive tour features and conditions. Then complete this handy form. *Book early!*

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO:

**NAWAS INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL**

MAIL TO: W. F. Hischke  
9237 Clayton Road  
St. Louis, MO 63124  
Tel: (314) 993-1834

Accommodation desired:

- double room sharing with .....
- single room (\$175) extra per person

Enclosed is my check for \$ ..... as deposit  
(\$300 per person) for ..... persons

Name(s) (Mr., Mrs., Ms.) .....

Address .....

City .....

State ..... Zip .....

Home Phone .....

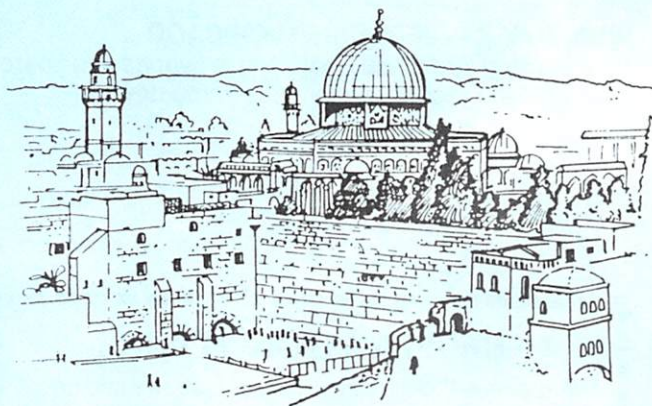
Birthdate .....

## A word about NAWAS . . .

NAWAS INTERNATIONAL has pioneered Christian Tours to the far corners of the world for over 43 years. We offer you the essential ingredients for a successful tour.

**EXPERIENCE:** There is no substitute for 43 years of planning tours. Our contacts, guides, knowledge of the area, and background guarantee you the highest quality service at affordable prices.

**RELIABILITY:** In 43 years, we have won an international reputation for reliability. We deliver what we promise. And that is essential for a successful trip.



## CONDITIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Deposits and Final Payments:** A deposit of \$300 per person is required at time of booking. Full payment is due 45 days prior to departure.

### THE TOUR PRICE INCLUDES:

**Air Transportation:** By any IATA/ARC jet carrier, in economy class based on 7/21 days non-refundable Apex air fare. Airlines reserve the right to impose full cancellation penalties.

**Surface Transportation:** By deluxe motorcoach.

**Hotel Accommodations:** In first class hotels (as classified in the OHRG) based on 2 persons sharing a twin bedded room with a private bath. A person taking a single room (subject to availability) must pay a supplement of \$175.

**Meals:** Continental Breakfast and table d'hote dinner daily.

**Sightseeing:** As specified in the itinerary using motorcoach transportation or other conveyances as required. Entrance fees and the services of local English-speaking guides are included.

**Transfers:** Assistance and transfers from airports to hotels and vice versa in private motorcoach.

**Service Charges and Taxes:** Service charges and taxes normally included in bills, government taxes on hotel bills, taxes on sightseeing and excursion trips.

**Baggage:** Allowed free of charge to your first overseas destination and from most points of return to the U.S.A.: a maximum of two bags per person with a combined length, width and height of 106 inches (economy class) and 124 inches (first class), provided no bag exceeds 62 inches plus "underseat" baggage, with total dimensions of 45 inches. Beyond the first overseas stopover point, as well as from some points of return to the U.S.A. a free weight allowance of 44 lbs. (economy class) and 66 lbs. (first class) applies. Excess baggage will be charged at the established rates. Maximum care will be taken to safeguard baggage, but the organizers accept no liability for loss or damage. Baggage insurance is recommended and available upon request.

**THE TOUR PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:**

U.S. departure tax (\$18), Tel Aviv departure tax (\$15), airport taxes abroad, passport and visa fees, phone calls, valet/laundry service, wines, liquors, mineral water, after dinner coffee or tea. Sightseeing or other services not specifically mentioned, tips to guides, drivers and waiters, excess baggage and all other items of a purely personal nature.

**Cancellations:** For written cancellations received up to 45 days prior to departure, refunds will be made less a \$50 non-refundable fee. Cancellations received within 45 days prior to departure are subject to any actual penalties as charged by airlines, hotels and ground operators. **Trip cancellations insurance is available to all tour members and is strongly recommended.**

**Passports:** A passport valid six months after date of re-entry to the U.S.A. is required, (Non-U.S. Citizens may require other visas in addition to a valid passport.)

**Important Notice:** The airfare used is based on the non-refundable Apex fare in effect on March 1, 1991 and is subject to change by the airlines without prior notice. Tour members will be required to pay any airfare increases as imposed by the airlines prior to departure.

Land costs are based on a minimum of 16 participants, estimated 1992 tariffs and the value of foreign currencies in relation to the U.S. dollar as of March 1, 1991. The right is reserved to adjust the land costs consistent with normal increases as well as fluctuations in exchange rates. Any increases in land costs or airfare that may subsequently occur will be collected from each passenger prior to departure.

**Responsibility:** NAWAS INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL Inc., NITOURS, Inc., and their agents act only in the capacity of agents in all matters pertaining to hotel accommodations, sightseeing tours and transportation, whether by railroad, motor bus, motor car, steamship, boat, air or any other means, and as such, are not responsible for any damage, expense or inconvenience caused by late train, plane or ship arrival or departure, or by any change of schedule or other condition, nor the loss of, damage to or of any person or property from any cause whatsoever. The sponsoring organization reserves the right to withdraw the tour at any time, to decline or retain any person as a member of the tour for any cause at any time, or to make changes in the published itinerary whenever in their sole judgment conditions warrant, or if they deem it necessary for the comfort, convenience or safety of the tour. All prices are based on current rates of exchange and while every effort will be made to hold them firm, they are subject to change. The airlines concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission or event during the time passengers are not on board their plane or conveyance. The passage contract in use by the airlines concerned, when issued shall constitute the sole contract between the airlines and the purchasers of these tour and/or passengers. The services of any IATA/ARC carrier may be used on connection with the tour.



Travel Arrangements by

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### Appendix B - Traveler Booklet

The booklet in Appendix B is for the traveler to take along on his trip to the Holy Land. It contains the various sites to be visited, with a map. It contains also a passage from the Scriptures, when applicable, relating to each site.

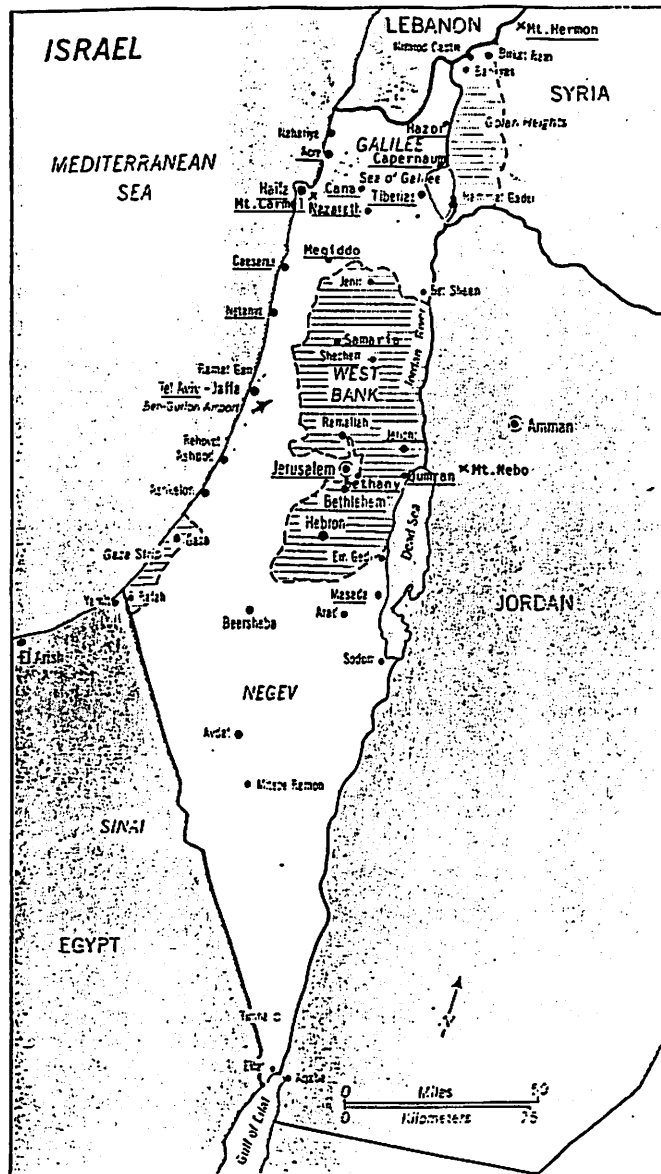
This booklet is much less bulky than a complete Bible, for the tourist who wishes to travel 'light.' Yet it has many of the Scripture passages relating to the places covered by this tour.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS

A Booklet

for

Travelers to the Holy Land



Map of Israel

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## INTRODUCTION

This booklet is a companion piece for your visit to the Holy Land. You are invited to read and study it before you leave. It is intended also for your use on the trip itself, as you progress from one place to another.

The booklet contains a Scripture passage for each site, telling what happened at that place. The booklet gives also a brief description of each place to be visited, to help you understand better what you see. The cities and towns to be visited are shown on the included map.

May the Lord enrich your knowledge and understanding of the Bible by means of this booklet, and through your visit to the Holy Land. May he lead you to greater faith in Jesus as you retrace the steps he walked.



sacred sites. Thus they built St. Anne Church to mark the Pool of Bethesda.

## DAY 3 - THE CITY OF JERUSALEM

### A. The Pool of Bethesda

#### Scripture - John 5:1-9

Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie--the blind, the lame, the paralyzed.

One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?" "Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me."

Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was a Sabbath.

#### Description of Site

The Pool of Bethesda is located in the northeast section of walled Jerusalem, near the temple. The Crusaders (1100f. A.D.) in their quest to recover the Holy Land from the Muslims, built churches at many of the

### B. The Temple Area

#### Scripture - Matthew 24:1-2

Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings.

"Do you see all these things?" he asked. "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."

#### Description of Site

A temple is no longer to be seen on the site where the Scriptural temples once stood. Today the Muslim Dome of the Rock stands on the site. The temple area is enclosed by a wall. It is a sacred place to Muslims and Jews and Christians.

This probably is the site where Abraham obeyed God's incomprehensible command and nearly offered his son Isaac as a sacrifice. This is the site where Solomon's magnificent temple once stood, and the temple of Jesus' day built by Herod the Great where the Lord spent many hours. Herod's temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. according to the prediction of Jesus, and never rebuilt.

### C. The Dome of the Rock

Scripture - (no reference in the Bible)

#### Description of Site

The golden-domed Dome of the Rock stands on the site of the biblical temple. It serves as a landmark in the city, as it can be seen from various vantage points. Constructed in 691 A.D., this sanctuary is a holy site to the Muslims, because they regard Abraham as their spiritual father.

They believe that from this rock Mohammed ascended to heaven. Just to the south is the El Aksa mosque, a place of worship for the Muslims.

#### D. The Wailing Wall

Scripture - (no reference in the Bible)

#### Description of Site

The Wailing Wall is located outside the temple mount enclosure. It is the western wall of the enclosure, but on the outside of the wall. In June of 1967 the Israelis won the Six-Day War and captured East Jerusalem. Thus they once again were able to revere the outside wall as a sacred site, although Muslim shrines are inside the enclosure.

People stand at the Wailing Wall and pray. The praying is done with audible voice. From a short distance away, one can hear a kind of wailing sound - thus its name. Normally there are people standing at the wall and praying day and night, swaying from side to side as they go through their ritual incantation.

#### E. The Valley of Gehenna

Scripture - Matthew 23:33

You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?

#### Description of Site

The word 'Gehenna' is a corruption of Ge-Hinnom, or the valley of Hinnom. It is a valley on the southwest side of Jerusalem, linked with the Kidron valley to the east of the temple mount.

The Valley of Gehenna was used as a garbage dump for the city of Jerusalem in Bible times. Thus one could see continually burning fires in the valley, with the ascending smoke. For this reason the word 'gehenna' came to mean 'hell,' and is consistently translated in that manner in English versions of the Bible (also in the reference above).

There is not much for today's tourist to see. The valley is now part of larger Jerusalem and is no longer used as a garbage dump.

#### F. The Pool of Siloam

Scripture - John 9:1-7

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

"Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. As long as it is day, we must do

the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

#### Description of Site

The Gihon spring, the only source of water for ancient Jerusalem, was located outside the city walls on the southeast corner of the city. King Hezekiah corrected this problem in about 700 B.C. He directed that a long underground tunnel, 1,750 feet long, be cut through the rock. 2 Kings 20:20 states of Hezekiah, "He made the pool and the tunnel by which he brought water inside the city." The workers began at both ends and met in the middle with only a slight correction, an amazing engineering feat for that day.

The Pool of Siloam is inside the city walls, at the opposite end of the tunnel from the Gihon spring. Still today a tourist may walk through the tunnel, which is on average two feet wide and six feet high.

#### G. The Via Dolorosa

##### Scripture - John 19:16-17

Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in

Aramaic is called Golgotha).

#### Description of Site

After Pontius Pilate gave the order that Jesus be crucified, the soldiers took Jesus, who at first carried his own cross, to the place of execution. They proceeded from the Tower of Antonia, at the northeast corner of the temple mount, and walked along the city streets till they arrived at Golgotha outside the city. The street on which they walked is called the Via Dolorosa, meaning the Way of Sorrows.

The tourist today should be aware that the present city streets are higher than their level at the time of Jesus, due to the fact that Jerusalem has been destroyed and rebuilt several times since then. Yet the tourist may well consider himself on 'holy ground' as he walks along the Via Dolorosa.

#### H. The Holy Sepulchre

##### Scripture - John 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. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

#### Description of Site

Emperor Constantine built the original Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the fourth century after Christ. Was it built on the site of the original tomb of Christ? One tradition answers 'yes,' another 'no.' It

is difficult to know precisely.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is inside the present city walls of Jerusalem. It is a hodge-podge of compartmentalization, with six different religious groups each claiming their own space, their own traditions, and their own architecture, with a resulting confusion. I recommend turning to the next section.

### I. The Garden Tomb

#### Scripture - Mark 16:1-8

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.

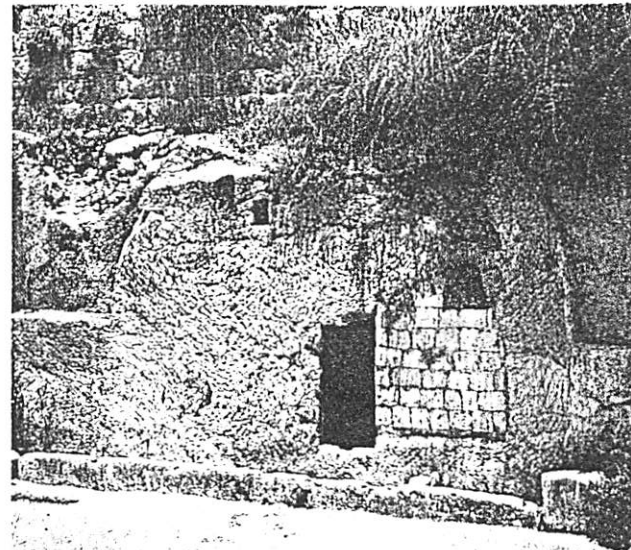
As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"

Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

#### Description of Site

The Garden Tomb is much more satisfying to the tourist than the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Neither site may mark the place of the original tomb of Jesus. Yet a number of scholars believe the Garden Tomb to be the original site because it is near the place of the crucifixion, it is hewn from rock, and the gardens surrounding the tomb correspond with the Scriptural record.

The tourist can stoop and actually enter into the tomb. When he does, a Christian almost expects to see "a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side" (Mark 16:5). A Christian can almost hear those words of the angel sounding in his ears, "He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him" (16:6).



The Garden Tomb

## DAY 4 - MORE JERUSALEM, & BETHLEHEM

### A. The Mount of Olives

#### Scripture - Acts 1:9-12

After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city.

#### Description of Site

The Mount of Olives lies due east of the temple mount, east of walled Jerusalem. It is not a mountain as such, but rather a long range of hills. The Kidron Valley lies between the Mount of Olives and Jerusalem.

Standing on the summit of the Mount of Olives and looking west, a tourist gets a panoramic view of the temple mount and much of Jerusalem. This is the site from which Jesus ascended to heaven.

### B. The Garden of Gethsemane

#### Scripture - Matthew 26:36-46

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled.

Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing. Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

#### Description of Site

The exact site of the Garden of Gethse-

12

mane is somewhat in question. Yet both Mark and Luke place Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. Thus the traditional site may well be authentic, on the western slope of the Mount of Olives.

There are numerous olive trees in the Garden. As with many other biblical sites, a church has been built on the supposed place where Jesus prayed on the night before his death, the Church of All Nations.

### C. The Upper Room

#### Scripture - Matthew 26:17-30

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?" He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.'" So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.

When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me." They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely not I, Lord?"

Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."

Then Judas, the one who would betray

him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "Yes, it is you."

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."

When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

#### Description of Site

The Upper Room today is pointed out as the site of the original institution of the Lord's Supper. It is almost surely not the precise room, as Jerusalem has been destroyed and rebuilt numerous times over the centuries. Yet it may indeed be at or near this spot where the Lord gathered with his disciples on that first Maundy Thursday.

One proceeds up a flight of stairs and there it is - the Upper Room. The building is constructed of stone, as are most of the buildings in Jerusalem. One can readily imagine the Lord gathered in that large room with his apostles.

### D. Bethlehem and the 'Manger'

#### Scripture - Luke 2:1-7

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the

entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

#### Description of Site

Bethlehem is one of the places in the Holy Land where the Christian traveler may experience a feeling of strong disappointment. The place of Jesus' birth simply is not today as he has envisioned it. Instead of a stable, the large Church of the Nativity marks the site. Instead of a manger, one sees a marble floor and numerous hanging lamps and chandeliers.

Yet when a person steps outside the church and looks around, he can still see the fields of Bethlehem. A fortunate tourist may still today see in the distance shepherds watching over their flocks.

Bethlehem today has a population of about 25,000. It is located five miles south of Jerusalem.

#### E. Rachel's Tomb

##### Scripture - Genesis 35:19-20

So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). Over her tomb Jacob set up a pillar, and to this day that pillar marks Rachel's tomb.

##### Description of Site

Rachel's Tomb is about one and a half miles north of Bethlehem. Rachel was one of the two wives of Jacob. She died in childbirth. The child survived, the last-born of the twelve sons of Jacob (Israel), Benjamin by name.

A tourist can walk around inside the shrine. Because it is a sacred place to Jews, males are requested to wear a furnished head covering. There is not much to see, but it gives the traveler a sense of Old Testament history.

## DAY 5 - THE DEAD SEA AREA

### A. Bethany

#### Scripture - John 11:17-27, 43-44

On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother.

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" "Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."

...When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take

off the grave clothes and let him go."

### Description of Site

Bethany still today is a village, with a population of about 1,000. It is located about two miles northeast of Jerusalem, on the road to Jericho. In biblical times Bethany was the hometown of Mary and Martha, and their brother Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead.

As usual a church marks the site of this miracle. One can walk down the steps into the tomb of Lazarus and contemplate the miracle that took place here. Bethany is also the town from which Jesus began his triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

### B. Jericho

#### Scripture - Luke 19:1-10

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd.

So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.'" But Zacchaeus stood up and said



to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

#### **Description of Site**

The city of Jericho is a significant site in both the Old and New Testaments. It is the first city captured by God's people under Joshua when they entered the Promised Land. God miraculously caused the city walls to fall down (Joshua 6). Jericho is also the place where Zacchaeus climbed into a tree to see Jesus, and where Jesus gave sight to blind Bartimaeus.

The city lies 825 feet below sea level, about seventeen miles northeast of Jerusalem, and about four miles east of the Jordan River. Jericho is a popular winter resort because of its semi-tropical climate.

#### **C. The Jordan River**

##### **Scripture - Matthew 3:13-17**

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water.

At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

#### **Description of Site**

The Jordan River has its beginnings on the Mount Hermon range, over a hundred miles north of where it empties into the Dead Sea. On its way south, it also empties into and again exits from the Sea of Galilee, which is about 65 miles north of the Dead Sae.

The Jordan River is where John the Baptizer did his baptizing, including the baptizing of Jesus at the beginning of Jesus' three-year ministry. Since no specific place on the Jordan River is given in Scripture as the location for John's work, the tourist must be satisfied simply to know that it was somewhere along this river.

#### **D. The Dead Sea**

##### **Scripture - Genesis 19:23-29**

By the time Lot reached Zoar, the sun had risen over the land. Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah--from the LORD out of the heavens. Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, including all those living in the cities--and also the vegetation in the land. But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

Early the next morning Abraham got up and returned to the place where he had stood before the LORD. He looked down toward

Sodom and Gomorrah, toward all the land of the plain, and he saw dense smoke rising from the land, like smoke from a furnace.

So when God destroyed the cities of the plain, he remembered Abraham, and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived.

#### Description of Site

The Dead Sea generally is called the Salt Sea in the Bible. It forms the southeastern border of the Holy Land, lying about 18 miles east of Jerusalem and running southward for 50 miles. The lake at its widest is 11 miles across. It is 1300 feet below sea level, has no outlet, and therefore its water is extremely salty. It is called the 'Dead' Sea because fish and other marine life entering from the Jordan River soon die.

Scholars believe that ancient Sodom and Gomorrah lie beneath the water at the southern end of the Dead Sea. They theorize that the 'fire and brimstone' with which God destroyed those cities may have been an earthquake accompanied by an explosive eruption of gas, bitumen and rock salt.

#### E. Qumran

Scripture - (no reference in the Bible)

#### Description of Site

Qumran is famous as the site where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in 1947. A shepherd boy (according to a probably true story) threw a stone at one of his straying

sheep on the crags above Qumran. The stone flew into the mouth of a cave, and the boy heard the sound of something breaking. On further investigation he found the first of numerous clay pots, in which were stored the ancient scrolls of the Bible.

Qumran is located just off the main road along the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea. A tourist can see the remains of a small village, where the people lived who made the copies of the Scriptures.

#### F. Masada

Scripture - Psalm 46:1,11

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble....

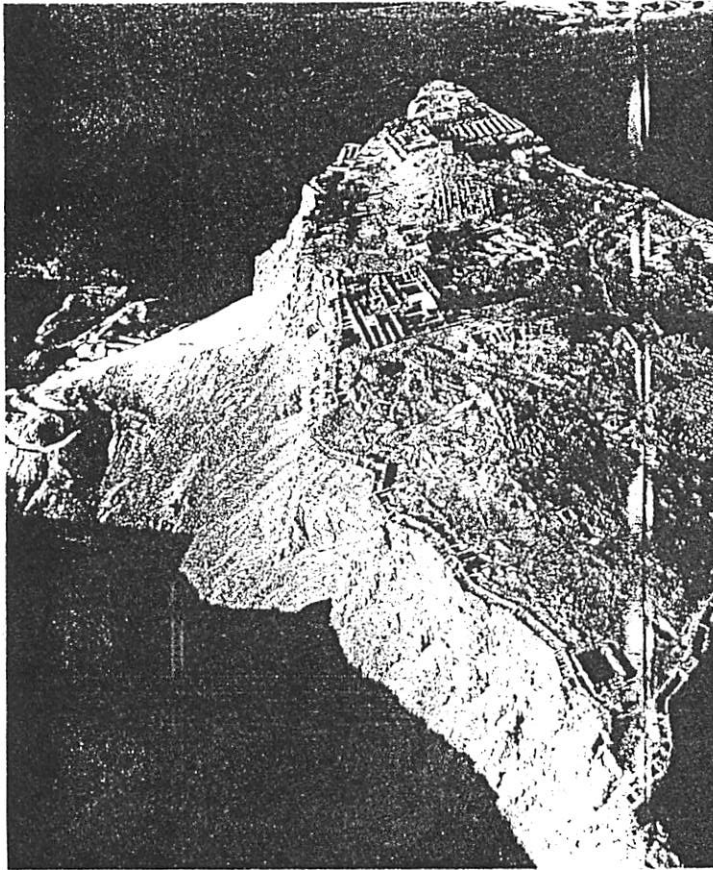
The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

#### Description of Site

Masada is one of the 'must see' sites in the Holy Land because of its sheer grandeur, and the story of Masada. It lies 60 miles southeast of Jerusalem, a mile from the western shore of the Dead Sea. This mountain fortress rises almost vertically 1300 feet above its surroundings. Its upper plateau covers twenty level acres.

After the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., Jewish Zealots occupied Masada as a place of last resistance. The siege by the enemy army lasted three years, during which time the enemy constructed a huge earth and stone ramp up the western side of the mountain, in order to bring their battering rams against the wall of the fortress.

When the Roman army finally was able to break in, all they found was 960 bodies of men and women and children. The besieged had committed mass suicide rather than permit themselves to be captured.



Masada  
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## DAY 6 - NORTH TO GALILEE

### A. Shechem & Jacob's Well

#### Scripture - John 4:5-14

He came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?"

Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up

to eternal life."

#### Description of Site

A Greek Orthodox church has been built over the site of Jacob's Well, with exterior walls but no roof. Inside this church, steps lead down to Jacob's Well. The traveler still today can refresh himself with a drink from this ancient well.

The city of Shechem, in which this well is located, lies in the heart of Samaria, about 30 miles north of Jerusalem. Here Jacob bought a plot of ground, after he returned from his twenty-year absence from home.

#### B. The Valley of Jezreel

##### Scripture - Judges 7:19-21

Gideon and the hundred men with him reached the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just after they had changed the guard. They blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands.

The three companies blew the trumpets and smashed the jars. Grasping the torches in their left hands and holding in their right hands the trumpets they were to blow, they shouted, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!" While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled.

#### Description of Site

The Valley of Jezreel is a place where many important biblical battles were fought,

and battles in more modern history. Here is where Gideon with only 300 soldiers, and the help of God, defeated hordes of Midianites. Here also is where King Saul and his sons lost their lives in a battle with the Philistines.

The valley lies on the border between biblical Samaria and Galilee. It is approximately 25 miles in length, and today is a fertile plain with modern tractors and other machines working the soil.

#### C. Nazareth

##### Scripture - Luke 4:16-21

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him.

Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

#### Description of Site

Nazareth lies halfway between the Sea

of Galilee and the Mediterranean, on a line with the southern end of the Sea of Galilee, partly secluded in the hills. The population today is 63,000, half of them Christian and half Muslim, the largest Arab community in Israel outside Jerusalem.

This is the city where Mary and Joseph made their home, the city where Jesus lived and grew up and worked as a carpenter (Mark 6:3). The one main source of water in the city is the Virgin's Well, the most authentic site in Nazareth connected with the holy family. Jesus was not well received in his hometown after he began his public ministry.

#### D. Cana

##### Scripture - John 2:1-11

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.

When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."

They did so, and the master of the

banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.

#### Description of Site

There is some question as to the location of biblical Cana. The favored site is a village nine miles north of Nazareth, one that is said to "still retain the appearance of New Testament times." One of Jesus' disciples, Nathanael, was from Cana. This village was also the site of Jesus' first miracle.

#### E. Tiberias

##### Scripture - John 6:23

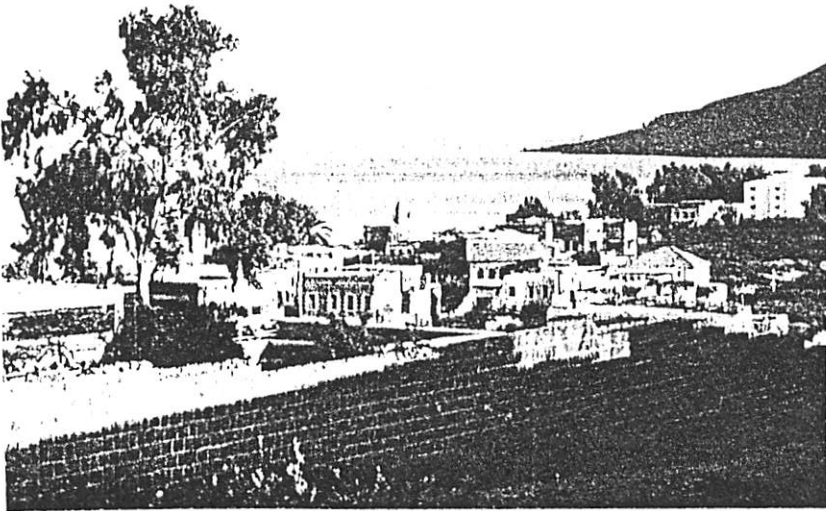
Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks.

#### Description of Site

Tiberias is a city on the western shore of Lake Galilee, about halfway between the northern and southern ends of the lake. In Bible times it was famous for its hot baths, and still today attracts people to its

popular spa. Tiberias was built by King Herod (the Herod who had John the Baptizer beheaded) between the years 18 - 22 A.D. Pious Jews avoided the city, supposedly because an ancient cemetery lay under the site.

Today the population is 35,000. The one reference to Tiberias in the Bible is that given above. In two indirect references, the Sea of Galilee is called the Sea of Tiberias. There is no record of Jesus ever visiting Tiberias, although he spent much of his ministry in this general area.



Tiberias on Lake Galilee

## DAY 7 - SEA OF GALILEE & SURROUNDINGS

### A. The Sea of Galilee

#### Scripture - Luke 5:1-11

One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret (Galilee), with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's

partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

#### Description of Site

The Sea of Galilee is a heart-shaped fresh-water lake, approximately thirteen miles long and eight miles wide, and is 685 feet below sea level. The Jordan River empties into its northern end and exits again on the southern end. It is a beautiful, deep blue lake, noted for its fishing industry in Bible times and still today. Because the lake lies in the midst of hills, storms arise rather suddenly and can become quite violent.

#### B. Capernaum

##### Scripture - Matthew 8:5-13

When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. "Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed and in terrible suffering." Jesus said to him, "I will go and heal him."

The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, "I

tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! It will be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that very hour.

#### Description of Site

When Jesus was on earth, Capernaum was a thriving lake port on the northern shore of Lake Galilee, with a population of 5000. It was a fishing town, the hometown of Simon Peter and his brother Andrew. After Jesus left his hometown of Nazareth and began his public ministry, Capernaum became "his own city" (Matt. 9:1).

Today the tourist can view the remains of an ancient synagogue at Capernaum, dating from about the 2nd or 3rd century. It is probably similar to the one in that city mentioned in Mark 1:21, "Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach." One can also view an ancient olive press near the synagogue, but little remains of the city itself.

#### C. Mount of the Beatitudes

##### Scripture - Matthew 5:1-8

Now when he saw the crowds, he went up

on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them, saying:

"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....

#### Description of Site

This is a 'traditional' site, which means that years of tradition hold it to be the site mentioned by Matthew, but it has not been definitely authenticated. The Mount of the Beatitudes is more a large hill rather than a mountain. It is located near the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

The Franciscans have built the Church of the Beatitudes on this 'mountain,' from which one is able to get an especially good view of the lake. The building of the church supposedly was funded by Mussolini in 1937.

#### D. Hazor

##### Scripture - Judges 4:1-4

After Ehud died, the Israelites once again did evil in the eyes of the LORD. So the LORD sold them into the hands of Jabin, a king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor.

The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth Haggoyim. Because he had nine hundred iron chariots and had cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years, they cried to the LORD for help.

Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time.

#### Description of Site

There is no city today on the ancient site of Hazor, ten miles north of the Sea of Galilee. During Bible times, however, it was one of the largest cities in the land with 40,000 inhabitants. It was one of King Solomon's horse-and-chariot cities, with garrisons stationed there for defense of the country. In Judges 4, one reads of an earlier period when a Canaanite king who lived in Hazor had 900 iron chariots.

Today Hazor is an important archeological site. The mound of the city covers 200 acres. Excavations have been conducted there for many years, with one of the discoveries being a series of hitching posts for horses.

#### E. Mount Hermon, Caesarea Philippi

##### Scripture - Matthew 16:13-17

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You



are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.

#### Description of Site

The northernmost point of ancient and present-day Israel is the city of Caesarea Philippi, lying on the southern slopes of Mount Hermon, about forty miles northeast of the Sea of Galilee. Mount Hermon is mentioned by Moses (Deut. 3:8) as the northernmost boundary of the Promised Land. It reaches a height of 9,200 feet above sea level and is snow-covered most of the year.

Caesarea Philippi is located at a height of 1,150 feet on the southern slope. Today the village is named Baneas. This is the locale where Peter makes his confession of Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God." Most scholars believe that the transfiguration of Jesus took place on Mount Hermon.

## DAY 8 - THE MEDITERRANEAN COAST AREA

### A. Megiddo

#### Scripture - 2 Chronicles 1:14-17

Solomon accumulated chariots and horses; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses, which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem. The king made silver and gold as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as sycamore-fig trees in the foothills.

Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and from Kue --the royal merchants purchased them from Kue. They imported a chariot from Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty. They also exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and of the Arameans.

#### Description of Site

Megiddo is not on the Mediterranean coast, but about fifteen miles inland, fifteen miles southwest of Nazareth. Megiddo was militarily one of the strategic points in the land, with many crucial battles taking place in the immediate vicinity. The city dominated the intersection in a narrow pass of two vitally important roads. Megiddo is one of four cities fortified by King Solomon, and was one of his chariot cities.

Today Megiddo is no longer a city, but

a seventy-five feet high mound of rubble, comprizing about thirteen acres. Excavation has revealed that twenty cities have been built on the site. Remnants of what is believed to have been Solomon's stables have been found, with stalls for 500 horses.

### B. Haifa/Acco

Scripture - Judges 1:31

Nor did Asher drive out those living in Acco or Sidon or Ahlab or Aczib or Helbah or Aphek or Rehob.

#### Description of Site

Haifa is located on the Mediterranean coast, due west of the Sea of Galilee. It is not mentioned in the Bible. Its present population is around 230,000. Haifa is the chief port in Israel, being located on the only natural harbor of the land. Military frogmen are in the waters of the Bay of Haifa day and night to ward off attack.

Acco (Acre) is also located on the Bay of Haifa, a few miles north of the city of Haifa. Acco is mentioned once in the Bible. The writer of Judges tells how the Israelites were capturing and subjugating the people of Canaan, but did not "drive out those living in Acco" (1:31). A later name for Acco is Ptolemais, mentioned as a place the apostle Paul visited on his third missionary journey (Acts 21:7).

### C. Mount Carmel

Scripture - 1 Kings 18:20-24, 36-39

So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him." But the people said nothing.

Then Elijah said to them, "I am the only one of the Lord's prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. Get two bulls for us. Let them choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD. The god who answers by fire--he is God." Then all the people said, "What you say is good."

...At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, O LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again."

Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The LORD--he is God! The LORD--he is God!"

### Description of Site

The Carmel range of mountains juts out into the Mediterranean at Haifa, and extends inland for thirteen miles in a southeasterly direction. It reaches a height of 1,742 feet inland, but at Haifa is 470 feet high.

Mount Carmel is mentioned not once in the New Testament, but twenty times in the Old. One well-known reference is in 1 Kings 18, the confrontation of the prophet Elijah with the prophets of Baal, in which the Lord miraculously sends down fire to consume a sacrifice.

### D. Caesarea

#### Scripture - Acts 12:19b-24

Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there a while. He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon; they now joined together and sought an audience with him. Having secured the support of Blastus, a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the king's country for their food supply.

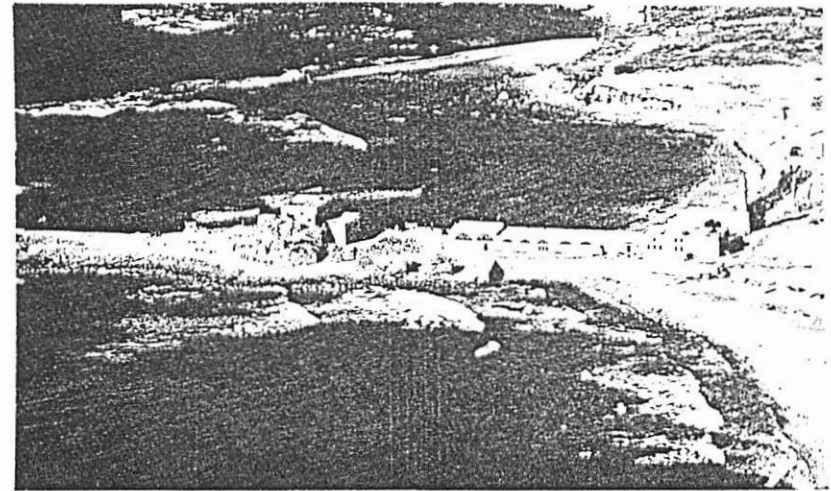
On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man." Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

But the word of God continued to increase and spread.

### Description of Site

The traveler needs to distinguish between Caesarea Philippi, the northern-most point in the Holy Land, and the Caesarea in this section, a city on the Mediterranean coast. Caesarea was located about twenty-five miles south of Mount Carmel. It was built by Herod the Great in the years 25 - 13 B.C. Since Caesarea had a very limited natural harbor, Herod constructed one with huge amounts of rock and rubble.

Caesarea was the Roman capital of Judea in the time of Jesus and Paul. Though not mentioned in any of the Gospel accounts, Caesarea is spoken of numerous times in the book of Acts in connection with Philip, Peter, King Herod, and Paul. Caesarea is not a city today, but archeological excavations are carried on at the site.



The Harbor at Caesarea

## Illustration Credits

- Figure 1, page 9. Robert Ullian, Frommer's Israel on \$40 A Day (New York: Simon & Schuster Inc., 1990), p.3.
- Figure 2 & 3, p.18. Frank Thompson, Thompson Chain Reference Bible (Indianapolis: B.B. Kirkbride Bible Co., 1983), unnumbered page.
- Figure 4, p.22. George Wright & Floyd Filson & William Albright, eds., Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956), p.94.
- Figure 5, p.26. (No author given), The City of David: A Guide to Biblical Jerusalem, (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Archeological Society, 1975), p.50.
- Figure 6, p.29. Harry T. Frank, Discovering the Biblical World (Maplewood, N.J.: Hammond, 1988), p.88.
- Figure 7, p.37. Merrill C. Tenney, ed., Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), vol.2, p.707.
- Figure 8, p.45. Frank, op.cit., p.202.
- Figure 9, p.53. Tenney, op. cit., vol.3, p.453.
- Figure 10, p.63. Hershel Shanks, ed., Biblical Archeological Review (Washington D.C.: Biblical Archeological Society, 1991), vol.xvii, no.6, pp.20-21.
- Figure 11, p.67. Tenney, op.cit., vol.3, p.388.
- Figure 12, p.73. Ibid., vol.1, p.700.
- Figure 13, p.80. (No author given), Good News for Modern Man, Today's English Version: New Testament in Color (New York: American Bible Society, 1974), p.28.
- Figure 14, p.85. Tenney, op. cit., vol.1, p.498.
- Figure 15, p.95. Ibid., vol.1, p.33.
- Figure 16, p.99. Kaari Ward, Jesus and His Times (Pleasantville, N.Y.: The Reader's Digest Association Inc., 1990), p.67.

## EVALUATION FORM

(It will be helpful to the tour leader if you complete this evaluation form, and return it to him. Thank you.)

	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement
1. Prior publicity in regard to the trip, to let you know there would be a trip.	_____	_____	_____
2. Information prior to the trip, to let you know what would be happening.	_____	_____	_____
3. Travel by air.	_____	_____	_____
4. Travel by land in Israel.	_____	_____	_____
5. Hotel accommodations.	_____	_____	_____
6. Meals furnished with trip.	_____	_____	_____
7. The Israel tour guide.	_____	_____	_____
8. The amount of free time.	_____	_____	_____
9. Opportunity furnished for spiritual growth on trip.	_____	_____	_____
10. Actual spiritual growth on your part.	_____	_____	_____
11. Increased knowledge of places in the Bible.	_____	_____	_____
12. The tour booklet, with Bible passages and descriptions of the sites.	_____	_____	_____

Other comments and/or suggestions: