

ISRAEL TOUR 2027

June 10-18

TOUR STUDY COMPANION

[NAME]

ISRAEL: WHERE JESUS WALKED

Members and Friends of

- ☺ Tree of Life Lutheran Church, Cary, North Carolina
- ☺ Living Hope Lutheran Church, Midlothian, Virginia

HOW TO USE THIS COMPANION

This booklet runs alongside the five-session presentation that meets in the fall of 2026. On-screen media will carry the maps, photographs, and site views that will give participants a peak into what will be experienced in June. These pages hold the passages, biblical essentials, and the space for your own notes. Please bring a Bible to each session. Scan the QR code to access the entire Media Series.



Five sessions will cover 8 days of travel. Each “stop” lists an anchor passage to read, other cross-references for the given location, and a memory-hook line of orientation. Every session is back-ended with a full page open for extended notes.

Disclaimer: This pastor has never visited the Holy Land. I will give an effort of good faith to help you grasp the significance of these places ahead of time, but am excited to experience these places with you first-hand. Some site identification is not for certain and likely the result of tradition. Such places are indicated plainly in this companion.

We may not know exactly where each event happened or which stone marks the spot. Yet, none of this makes the events any less certain, or changes what our Savior did when he lived among us to accomplish our salvation. He still dwells with us by his sure and certain Word.

THE FIVE SESSIONS

1 – Arrival & the Coast

Days 1-2 • Tel Aviv, Jaffa, Caesarea Maritima,
Muhraqa, Megiddo

2 – Nazareth and the Valley

Day 3 • Sea of Galilee, Mount Precipice,
Caesarea Philippi

3 – Galilee & the Road Up

Day 4 • Magdala, Tabgha, Capernaum,
Cana, Beatitudes

4 – The Jordan & Bethlehem

Day 5 • Jordan River Valley, Bethlehem, the
ascent to Jerusalem

5 – Jerusalem

Days 6-8 • Mount of Olives, Gethsemane,
Via Dolorosa, Holy Sepulchre

NOTES

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SESSION 1

ARRIVAL & THE COAST

Days 1-2 • Arrive Tel Aviv; the old port of Jaffa (Joppa) en route north

JAFFA (JOPPA)

DAY 2

Read: Acts 9:36-43 (*Peter at the house of Simon the tanner*)

Also: Jonah 1:1-3 (*Jonah flees*) 2 Chronicles 2:16 (*temple supplies port*)

The natural harbor that served Jerusalem for centuries. Jonah boarded a ship here running the other way. Peter lodged here, in a tanner's house by the sea, when men from Caesarea came for him.

CAESAREA MARITIMA

DAY 2

Read: Acts 10:1-48 (*Cornelius - the gospel goes to the Gentiles*)

Also: Acts 8:40; 12:19-23; 21:8-16; 23-26 (*Paul's Trials*)

Herod the Great's Roman port city and the provincial capital of Judea—where governors, including Pilate, were based. A 1961 inscription found in the theater here is the only archaeological attestation of Pilate's name and title.

MUHRAQA, MOUNT CARMEL DAY 2

Read: 1 Kings 18:20-40 (*Elijah and the prophets of Baal*)

Also: 1 Kings 17:1; 18:41-46; 19:1-18; James 5:17-18

A ridge 1,580 feet up the Carmel range, overlooking the Jezreel Valley and the Kishon brook below.

Note: The specific site is long tradition; 1 Kings only names "Mount Carmel".

MEGIDDO DAY 2

Read: 1 Kings 19:15 (*Solomon fortifies the city*)

Also: Judges 5:19; 2 Kings 9:27; 23:29-30; Zechariah 12:11; Rev 16:16

A 35-acre mound guarding the pass on the Via Maris, the ancient world's main north-south route. Solomon fortified it. King Josiah died here (609 BC) in battle. "Armageddon" comes from Har Megiddo, "mountain of Megiddo."

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SESSION 2

NAZARETH AND THE VALLEY

Day 3 • Nazareth, Caesarea Philippi

NAZARETH

DAY 3

Read: Luke 4:16-30 (*Jesus reads Isaiah as its embodiment + fulfillment*)

Also: Isaiah 61:1-2; Matthew 2:19-23; Luke 1:26-38; Luke 2:39-52

“Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Jesus grew up in this unremarkable village, read Isaiah in the synagogue here, and was nearly thrown off a cliff (Mount Precipice) by the people who had watched him grow up.

CAESAREA PHILIPPI (BANIAS)

DAY 3

Read: Matthew 16:13-20 (*Peter's confession*)

Also: Mark 8:27-30; Luke 9:18-20; Matthew 16:21-28 (*turn to Jerusalem*)

The northern-most point in the Gospels, at a Jordan spring below Mount Hermon. The cliff face here was carved with niches for the god Pan. In front of it, Jesus is said to have asked “Who do you say I am?”, before telling the disciples plainly that he must go to Jerusalem and die.

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SESSION 3

GALILEE

Day 4 • Magdala, Tabgha, Capernaum, Beatitudes, Cana

MAGDALA

DAY 4

Read: Luke 8:1-3

Also: Matthew 4:23-25

Excavated from 2009. Genuine 1st century synagogue, one of few from Jesus' lifetime in a town at the center of his beginning ministry. The Magdala Stone, carved here, appears to show the Temple as someone had actually seen it.

SEA OF GALILEE & KIBBUTZ GINOSAR

DAY 4

Read: Mark 4:35-41 (*Jesus calms the storm*)

Also: Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 14: 22-33 (*parallel accounts*)

A lake 700 feet below sea level, ringed by ravines that funnel unpredictably violent windstorms. A first-century fishing boat recovered from the lakebed in 1986 is displayed at Ginosar.

MOUNT OF BEATITUDES DAY 4

Read: Matthew 5:1-12 (*the Beatitudes*)

Also: Matthew 5-7 (*full sermon*); Luke 6:17-26

A hillside above Tabgha whose natural slope carries a voice well over the shore below.

Note: The location of the hill is tradition dating back to the Byzantine era.

TABGHA DAY 4

Read: John 21:1-19 (*Peter restored – “Do you love me?”*)

Also: John 18:15-18, 25-27 (*the antithesis*); Mark 6:34-44 (*feeding of 5k*)

Two churches hold the *traditional* location of two events: The Church of the Primacy where Jesus restores denying Peter by the shore; the Church of the Multiplication where tradition has Jesus multiplying the fish and loaves.

CAPERNAUM DAY 4

Read: Mark 2:1-12 (*the paralytic; authority to forgive sins*)

Also: Matthew 4:12-17; Mark 1:21-28; Matthew 8:5-13; John 6:24-59

Jesus' base of operations after Nazareth, and home to Peter, Andrew, James, John, and Matthew. The 4th century synagogue ruins sit on a 1st century foundation; a nearby house has been venerated as Peter's since the 2nd century

CANA

DAY 4

Read: John 2:1-11 (water to wine: the first miracle)

Also: John 4:46-54 (*the second miracle*); John 21:2 (*Nathaniel's home*)

Water set aside for ceremonial washing becomes the best wine at a wedding.

Note: The tour visits Kafr Kanna, the traditional site. Khirbet Qana, eight miles away, has the stronger 1st century archaeology.

DAY 4

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SESSION 4

THE JORDAN & BETHLEHEM

Day 5 • Down the Jordan Valley, Bethlehem, up to Jerusalem

YARDENIT OR QASR EL YAHUD - JORDAN RIVER

DAY 5

Read: Matthew 3:13-17 (*baptism of Jesus*)

Also: Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:29-34

Yardenit marks the Jordan where it leaves the Sea of Galilee. Qasr el Yahud is the traditional place of the baptism, near Jericho, matching the apostle John's account that the Baptizer was at Bethany beyond the Jordan.

Note: Yardenit was built in 1981 for pilgrim access. The traditional baptism site is Qasr al-Yahud near Jerico, about 60 miles south.

BETHLEHEM & THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY

DAY 5

Read: Micah 5:2 --> Luke 2:1-20 (*read side-by-side*)

Also: Matthew 1:18-25; Matthew 2:1-12; Ruth 4:11; 1 Samuel 16:1-18

Six miles south of Jerusalem. Micah named the town as the origin of Israel's rulers some 500 years before Jesus' birth. The church above the grotto is the oldest in continuous use in the land.

ASCENT TO JERUSALEM DAY 5

Read: Psalm 121 (*"my help comes from the LORD"*)

Also: Psalms 120-134 (the Songs of Ascent); Deuteronomy 16:16

Up from the Jordan Valley into the Judean hills, Jerusalem sits some 2,500 feet above the valley floor (1,400 ft below sea level). The Songs of Ascent were likely written for pilgrims making this climb. To present day, the Hebrew term for moving to Israel is still "going up" (הֵיָלַע).

DAY 5 NOTES

SESSION 5

JERUSALEM

Days 6-8 • Southern Steps, Western Wall, Garden Tomb, museums,
optional: Dead Sea excursion

MOUNT OF OLIVES + GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

DAY 6

Read: Luke 19:28-40 (*the triumphal entry*)

Also: Matthew 21:1-11; Luke 19:41-44 (*weeping over the city*); Acts 1:9-12

The Mount of Olives is a limestone ridge east of the Old City across the Kidron Valley. Jesus crossed it repeatedly in his final week.

Read: Luke 22:39-46 (*"not my will, but yours be done"*)

Also: Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; John 18:1-11;

"Gethsemane" means oil press, an olive grove on the mountain's western slope, in sight of city walls. Jesus prays here the night before his death.

Note: The exact plot is unverifiable; veneration dates to 4th century.

VIA DOLOROSA & HOLY SEPULCHRE DAY 6

Read: Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Also: Matthew 27:27-56; Luke 23:26-49; John 19:16-37

The traditional processional route through the Old City to the church built over the fourth-century identification of Golgotha and the tomb. Isaiah wrote his prophecy of it some 700 years early.

Note: The route and stations are later tradition; the Gospel give no path.

THE WESTERN WALL DAY 6

Read: Mark 13:1-2

Also: Luke 21:37-38; Matthew 24:1-2; Luke 21:5-6

Not a wall of the Temple itself but the surviving section of Herod's retaining wall for the platform it stood on. The holiest accessible site in Judaism today.

THE GARDEN TOMB

DAY 6

Read: Matthew 28:1-10; John 20:1-18 (*the Resurrection*)

Also: Luke 24:1-12; John 19:38-42; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

A rock-cut tomb in a quiet garen outside the walls.

Note: Many scholars favor the Holy Sepulchre as the likelier site; this identification is from the 1800s.

DAYS 6-8

NOTES

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PENDING SITES

As of this document's printing, Day 7 is unscheduled. Some of the sites below were listed on a previous version of the itinerary. Masada and the Dead Sea is a paid excursion. Almost all other sites are within walking distance of our scheduled hotel. Some may be ticketed sites.

CENACLE - THE UPPER ROOM MOUNT ZION

Read: Luke 22:14-20 (*the Lord's Supper instituted*)

Also: Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; John 13:1-17

The present hall is Crusader-era, on a site marked by a church since at least the 4th century.

ISRAEL MUSEUM & YAD VASHEM

Read: Isaiah 40 (*the Great Isaiah Scroll*)

The Dead Sea Scrolls include a complete Isaiah scroll artifact roughly a thousand years older than any Hebrew manuscript known before 1947. The museum boasts a massive 50:1 model of Jerusalem in 66 AD. Yad Vashem is Israel's official memorial to the victims of the Holocaust, to the west of the city.

THE CITY OF DAVID AND THE PILGRIM ROAD

Read: John 9:1-11

Also: 2 Chronicles 32:1-4; Isaiah 22:8-11

Excavation has uncovered the stepped street that 1st century pilgrims climbed from the Pool of Siloam up to the Temple. Beneath it runs the drainage channel where refugees hid during the siege of 70 AD. Hezekiah's Tunnel, cut around 700 BC to bring water inside the walls before the Assyrian siege, can be waded end to end in about half an hour in knee-deep water; a dry parallel tunnel exists for anyone wearing pants.

SOUTHERN STEPS AND THE DAVIDSON CENTER

Read: Psalm 122

Also: Matthew 21:12-17; Luke 2:41-52

Original Second Temple stonework, one of the few places in Jerusalem where you can say with confidence that Jesus walked. The steps are deliberately uneven, forcing a slow ascent. Teachers taught on these landings as crowds passed. A scaled model at the Davidson Center reconstructs the whole temple platform.

QUMRAN, MASADA & THE DEAD SEA

Qumran is where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in 1947. Masada is Herod the Great's clifftop fortress (1st c. BC), later the site of a rebel last stand at the end of the First Jewish-Roman War (70s AD). The Dead Sea, 1,400 feet below sea level, is the lowest point on the earth's surface, and about 10x as salty as the ocean.

Note: Masada's fall is attested only by Josephus, writing decades later.

NOTES + PRAYER JOURNAL

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WELS

Christ's Love, Our Calling.