

The **Christadelphian Advocate**

SPECIAL ISSUE



2018 TOUR OF ISRAEL

APRIL 2019

A monthly magazine in defense of the "Things Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ" as embraced in The Hope of Israel with a view to "Taking Out A People For Yahweh's Name"

PUBLICATION TEAM & CONTACT INFORMATION

Postmaster: Send address changes to *The Christadelphian Advocate*, 1934 Taylor Rd. Crozier, VA 23039-2325. Published monthly by The Christadelphian Advocate Publishing Committee (members designated by *). Periodical postage paid at Richmond, Virginia. ISSN 710450.

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES 2019			
U.S.A. - US \$24		Canada - C \$29	Rest of World - US \$38

A three month trial subscription may be requested without charge or obligation.

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The Christadelphian Advocate

He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully.

Jeremiah 23:28

VOLUME 134

APRIL 2019

NUMBER 04

Introduction

September 2018 Tour of Israel

Brother Harold Lafferty organized a “Tour of Israel and Petra” for September 3-14, 2018. This Special Issue features tour sites visited within Israel.

Excitement was high as our group of 28 persons embarked on our tour of Israel at 6 p.m. on September 3, 2018, from our gateway city of New York. As is always the case for first time visitors to Israel, this was the “trip of a lifetime” for the 25 persons who had not visited Israel previously. From the moment of aircraft boarding, we were virtually already in Israel as we found our assigned seats in our Boeing 787 Dreamliner – designated *El Al Flight #2* – eastbound from New York for Ben Gurion International Airport near Tel Aviv. Even during dinner, most of us were absorbed with our personal video screens and the moving electronic map depicting our ship on its journey across the northeastern United States, the Canadian Maritimes, and into the open Atlantic Ocean, visibly following “the great circle route” directly to Israel.

After about seven hours dawn broke, and those lucky few who had window seats could view the moving map of southern Europe as we sped toward our destination at about 600 nautical miles per hour, non-stop. At hour eleven of the journey, the plane was skirting the coast of Lebanon approaching Ben Gurion Airport from the north. Upon landing, we deplaned into a new section of the terminal, and began to observe such unusual sights as huge clusters of ripening dates clinging to date palms in the gardens alongside the terminal building. Shuttles were already snapping dozens of photos of every unusual vista! Soon we had collected our bags and were met by our tour representatives in Israel who escorted us to our tour bus and guide, Mr. Nachum Yardeni, who would be our mentor and conductor for most of the coming days. We were delighted to become acquainted with our spanking-new Mercedes tour bus and its (Arab) driver, and to find our seats for the beginning of our journey of discovery.

Our flight had arrived at Ben Gurion Airport at noon. Our hotel for the next few nights was in Tiberias, but as we could not access our rooms at the hotel until evening, we began to visit our scheduled sites as we journeyed northward. I do not intend to detail every site visited in this short introduction, although several of them will be described in greater detail within the successive articles. But our first site was perhaps one of the most memorable and significant on our itinerary – Caesarea Maritima (as distinct

from Caesarea Philippi) located on the Mediterranean coast south of Haifa. It is an active archaeological “dig” and contains some stunning features, including a large Roman theater (now well-restored and in weekly use), the extensive ruins of King Herod’s seaside palace, the spacious, ingenious harbor with its submerged breakwaters, the extensive Crusader City with intact moat (now dry), and perhaps most remarkable of all – the system of aqueducts which furnished water for the entire population, bringing it some 30 kilometers southward from Mt. Carmel to the north.

After dinner and a good night’s rest, we boarded a Galilee boat which transported us to Kibbutz Nof Ginosar on the north shore of Kinneret, where we viewed the ancient fishing vessel dug from the shore of the Sea some years ago – an excellent example of the ancient fishing boats of Jesus’ day, and authenticated as such. Then we moved on to such well-known places as Capernaum, the site of the Sermon on the Mount, and Jesus’ distribution of the loaves and fishes.

The next few days were occupied with stops at the re-created Nazareth Village of Jesus’ day, Tel Megiddo, and Caesarea Philippi where we viewed one of the main three sources of the River Jordan, and the Shrine of Pan among other absorbing archaeological sites. Then on to the Golan Heights where we were able to view the no-man’s-land between Israel and Syria and the abandoned city of Quneitra, as well as the working UN encampment located nearby. We could see Mt. Hermon in the haze to the north with its long, prominent ridge, which in any other season would be snow-capped. Then Nachum treated us to a unique visit to an Israeli Tank Corps base where we saw, at close-quarters, numerous Merkava tanks and their crews which would later embark on patrol of the border.

Our short visit to Jordan included a comprehensive introduction to that country by our Jordanian guide, including a visit to Amman where we toured the ancient Citadel with its ruins and museum. We then drove directly to Petra, where the next day we explored the ruins extensively. After over-nighting in Amman, we motored to Mount Nebo where we surveyed the vast panorama (Moses’ first and only view) of the Jordan Valley, the Dead Sea and the Wilderness of Judea, with Jerusalem in the hazy distance. We then crossed the Allenby Bridge and stopped for a short visit in Jericho, and then “up to Jerusalem,” ascending nearly 4,000 vertical feet.

Our approach to Jerusalem was via a new road which went directly to the spectacular overlook on Mount Scopus – an entirely new route for this veteran visitor. Our hotel, the Shalom Rimonim, located in the northwest suburbs of the City, was central to most of the sites we were to visit in the coming days.

The following narratives in this series will give much detail of the venues we were scheduled to visit, so I will simply enumerate some of them here: the Old (walled) City with its Temple Mount (Dome of the Rock and Mosque Al-Aqsa); the Western Wall and Plaza; the Arab *souk* [market]

of the Old City; the Jewish Cardo [main shopping street]; the Israel Museum (Shrine of the Book); the Via Dolorosa and its Church of the Holy Sepulcher (a site designated “Calvary” by Constantine’s mother, Helen); the Jewish Quarter with its Damascus Gate and Tower of David; the other Gates of the City; Mount Zion with its residence of Caiaphas the High Priest; David’s Tomb; and a Crusader loft which has been designated the room of the Last Supper (it of course isn’t, but may be similar).

The Garden Tomb was the highlight of one day, and the Holocaust Memorial (Yad Vashem) another. We did briefly visit the grave of Oskar Schindler, the German national who during the Holocaust saved the lives of more than a thousand Jews. Some of our folks placed an appreciative and traditional stone of remembrance upon his grave slab. We spent part of a day in Bethlehem (the place of Jesus’ nativity), where we enjoyed lunch at a local eatery. We had an opportunity to see the graffiti covered separation wall close-up, and also to view “Palestinian” life.

On day nine we motored to Masada and explored its sad ruins, including the assault ramp, the restored baths, granaries, administrative buildings and its extensive carved cisterns. The cable car ride to the top was a concern for some (acrophobia?). Later, we floated in the Dead Sea for a while; we popped in at Kibbutz Ein Gedi to view the caves where David hid from Saul, and of course, Qumran – site of the Dead Sea Scrolls’ discovery.

Perhaps our most unusual day was spent in Beersheva (Well of Abraham) at Sderot, and at the famous Erez Crossing. At this northern edge of the Gaza Strip we approached the Wall within 100 meters, realizing that just on the other side there was a rabid, hostile population of some of the most intractable enemies of Israel (Hamas). Israeli jets were buzzing the Strip during our visit, and we could see an actively-burning field-fire (orchard? forest?) to the east.

An unexpected treat this day was a visit to the Israel Air Force Museum nearby, where we walked among many of the archived aircraft of the IAF’s history (including Messerschmitts and Spitfires). Also, we were able to sit in the passenger seats in the actual El Al Boeing 707 that returned the hostages from Entebbe to Israel, and to view a video of the rescue at Entebbe.

Though the cities and places we toured were all Biblically referenced, the structures and sites we visited for the most part (aside from the excavated ruins) were not those of the first century, nor will they endure into the Kingdom Age when the *Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof* (Zechariah 14:4) and the *LORD’s House exalted above the hills* (Isaiah 2:2). Yet, our conclusion is that this tour had adequately given each member of the group deeper insight into the “lay of the land” of our future inheritance under our coming King Jesus Christ, and would in future days lend an appreciative and deeper understanding to our continuing studies in God’s Word.

Harold Ed Lafferty, Hagerstown, MD

The Sea of Galilee and the Kinneret Boat

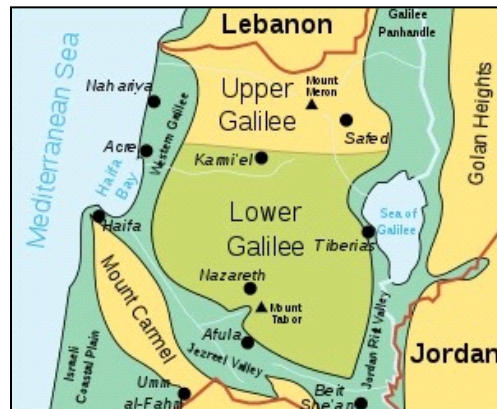
And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him (Matthew 4:18-22).



Sea of Galilee

The Sea of Galilee is the largest fresh water lake in Israel as well as the lowest elevation freshwater lake on earth – some 700 feet below sea level. It is currently about 65 square miles in size and about 13 miles at its widest point (to give an idea of the size: that is roughly 1/10 the size of Lake Michigan and more like one of the larger NY Finger Lakes). The importance of the Sea of Galilee as a backdrop for much of Jesus' preaching, teaching, and healing makes sense, as it was the focal point of the area's economy and community.

The Scriptures record that at least a third of the apostles were fishermen, and more than 40 verses in the Gospels mention ships and sailing. Josephus records that regularly 230 boats would work the lake for fishing.



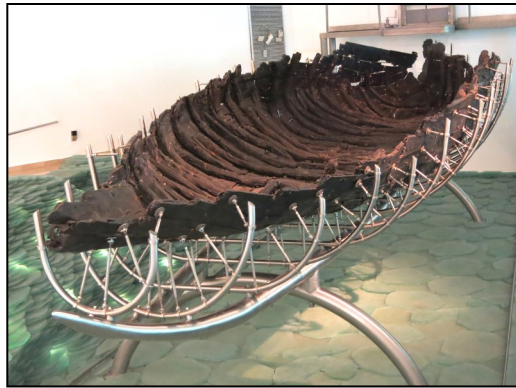
"Galilee" (Upper and Lower) is the name of the northern district in Israel, bordered by Lebanon to the north and Syria and Jordan to the north-east,

extending south beyond Mount Carmel. The modern Hebrew name for the Sea of Galilee is *Kinneret*, which comes from the Hebrew Bible, where it appears as the “sea of Kinneret” in Numbers 34:11 and Joshua 13:27 (spelled *Chinnereth* in KJV). An older name is found in John 6:1 which records, *Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias*.

It was here where Jesus *walked on the sea* (Matthew 14:25); and it was here that Jesus bade the fishermen to *cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find* (John 21:6). Matthew 17:27 records that it was here that Jesus produced the tribute money from the fish’s mouth. This body of fresh water is Israel’s chief surface reservoir for potable water, though due to high usage and sparse rainfall, its water level has receded in recent years. Israel has, earlier this year, taken steps to pump desalinated seawater into the lake to add to its reserves.

The Kinneret Boat

In 1986, during a low water period, people noticed pieces of wood protruding out of the surface of the shore of the Sea Galilee. Subsequent investigation revealed the hull of a 1st century fishing boat – the first actual archaeological example of boats from this time period. The date of the boat (often referred to as the “Jesus boat,” though there is no reason to associate it with our Savior other than timing and location), was confirmed by the design and the pottery found inside the hull. The extraction of the Kinneret boat was an engineering and archaeological feat involving encasing the artifact in a polyurethane-like foam, and floating it to the shore where it could be lifted out.



The Kinneret boat is at the Yigal Allon Museum at a kibbutz on the north shore of Galilee. The remains are 27 ft long and 7.5 ft wide (about two-thirds the length of the average US school bus). Based on Josephus’ account of the Battle of Migdal, each fishing boat held up to fifteen men. Josephus was still a general in the Jewish rebel army at the Battle of Migdal, which occurred in the years before the fall of Jerusalem (later fighting with the Roman army both on land and on the Sea of Galilee by boat).

A fascinating fact about the boat is that researchers have concluded the wood used in its construction came from twelve different species of trees. Making a boat from composites is not surprising, as shipbuilders would

reuse components of salvaged boats. However, twelve is a highly significant number to appear by simply random chance. While ultimately unknowable, maybe the builder was putting his own kind of nod to his faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob when building this boat?

The model in the picture on the right, based on the remains and mosaic depictions of boats from the period, gives a better feel for the shape and layout of the vessel. Particularly clear is the decking and the space underneath. This model helps us picture a memorable event recorded in the Gospels: *And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even*



as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? (Mark 4:36-38) Likely, Jesus was asleep under the stern decking.

The Galilee area is a beautiful location and home to numerous (and very memorable) events in the life of our Lord and Savior. Reflecting upon this natural resource, and the important archaeological finds, provides insights into the daily lives and economy of the first century.

Marijane and Josh Vest, Carmel, IN



The Golan Heights



On day three of our tour of Israel (after experiencing a boat ride on the beautiful deep blue waters of the Sea of Galilee), we headed north along the Hula Valley on our way to Caesarea Philippi. The Hula Valley averages about 230 feet above sea level, extending from the Sea of Galilee to Mt. Hermon. Here melted snow water gushes forth from springs and rock crevices at the base of Mt. Hermon to form the Jordan River.

The lush Hula Valley, some 25 miles long by 6-8 miles wide, has been an important agricultural region for the past 150 years because of the abundant water supply and Mediterranean climate. Apple, pear, date, olive, banana and cherry orchards were seen, along with grape vineyards, and a variety of vegetable crops including tomatoes, cucumbers, and melons. Though drained in the 1950s because of an abundance of mosquitoes that spread malaria, Lake Hula has been recently filled to revive the local ecosystem. Houses along the route all had bomb shelters built on the side of each house in response to rocket attacks from the Golan Heights and Syria.

Caesarea-Philippi was first inhabited as a Canaanite sanctuary for the worship of Baal (possibly Ba'al-hermon – Judges 3:3, 1 Chronicles 5:23; or Ba'al-gad – Joshua 11:17; 12:7; 13:5). In 20 B.C., Herod the Great acquired the territory and his son Herod Phillip named it Caesarea-Philippi to distinguish it from his father's Caesarea-by-the-Sea. It was here where Jesus asked his disciples, *Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?* There Peter confessed, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God* (Matthew 16:13-16, Mark 8:27-29). Six days later, Jesus took Peter, James, and John apart into a high mountain in this area – possibly referring to Mt. Hermon, the “Mountain of God” referenced in Exodus 3:1 and Psalm 68:15. This is also the area where Jesus was transfigured before them (Matthew 17:1-2; Mark 9:2). At Caesarea-Philippi we saw numerous ruins of the city, including a large stone press used for making olive oil.



Banias is the Arabic and modern Hebrew name of an ancient site that developed around a spring once associated with the Greek god Pan and named by the Greeks, Paneas. It is located at the foot of Mt. Hermon, north of the Golan Heights. The spring is the source of the Banias River, one of the main tributaries of the Jordan River. For a short time, we visited the remains of a shrine that had been dedicated to Pan, and the remains of an ancient city

founded sometime after the conquest by Alexander the Great; inhabited until 1967.

The Golan Heights is a region to the east of the Hula Valley and upper Galilee mountains that stretches as far south as the Sea of Galilee. This territory encompasses approximately 690 square miles with the strategic high ground ranging from 1300 to 3000 feet above sea level. The Golan Heights is a plateau of volcanic material called basalt, which accentuates the productivity of the area.

From a historical perspective, this area, first mentioned in Numbers 21:33 as Bashan, which was also called the Land of Giants where Og, King of Bashan, ruled, was given to the half tribe of Manasseh by Moses after they (the Amorites) were “utterly destroyed” (Deuteronomy 3:1-20). Golan, a town just east of the Sea of Galilee in this territory of Bashan, was also one of the six cities that was designated as a sanctuary city, where a man could flee for refuge from the avenger of blood if he killed his neighbor *unawares and hated him not* (Deuteronomy 4:41-43; Joshua 20:1-9).

From Caesarea-Philippi, we headed east across the Golan to Mount Bental and Quneitra on the eastern border. We viewed many battle memorials alongside the roadways of burned out Syrian tanks and gun emplacements. Mt. Bental is a volcanic cone mountain dominating the area and bristles with antennae and satellite receivers, from which Israeli Intelligence officers monitor movement along the border fence and even phone conversations in Damascus some 20 miles away. Mt. Hermon is clearly visible to the north (as we were visiting in September, there was no snow on the mountain that could be seen).



The former Syrian capital of the Golan is Quneitra, which lies just in front of Mt. Bental to the east. From where we parked at the visitors' center, we could see the border fence and road running beside it where military vehicles monitored activity along the fence. Beyond the fence is a DMZ (demilitarized zone) that was heavily mined by Syrian forces during the Six-

Day War. Most of those mine fields still exist today, as our guide indicated that there was no reason to risk removing them as they also acted as a deterrent to anyone trying to cross the area. Around the visitors' center were numerous military personnel including some white vehicles with UN labeling on the doors. UNDOF (United Nations Division of Forces) is the peace keeping force of the United Nations. It was interesting that our guide was incensed about their lack of doing anything meaningful and nicknamed them the "United Nothing."

Since the War of Independence in 1948, Syrian forces sporadically sent rockets into the Hula Valley from the Golan Heights to frustrate Israel. This needling finally came to a head in June 1967 with the Six-Day War / June War (Milhemet Sheshet Ha Yamim), also known as the 1967 Arab-Israeli War and/or the Third Arab-Israeli War with Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria. The Golan Heights was captured during that war, along with the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and the Old City of Jerusalem. Israel's expansion into these areas has become a major point of contention in the on-going Arab-Israeli conflict.

On Yom Kippur – the holiest day in Judaism, an Arab coalition led by Syria and Egypt, launched a joint surprise attack on Israeli positions in the Golan and Sinai; also known as the Yom Kippur War (October 6-25, 1973). Our guide, Nachum, who as a young soldier was stationed in the Golan, gave us a lecture on the Golan portion of the war. He stated that in the beginning of the war Syria had amassed 700 tanks to Israel's 11 tanks defending the border. Initially Syrian tanks made significant encroachments into the Golan, but after three days, with God's help, Israeli forces had pushed the Syrians back to the pre-war ceasefire lines. On October 25th, a ceasefire was imposed and the war was over. Historical documentaries record that it was one of the most significant tank battles of all military campaigns. Nachum then took us to an armor base where IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) were being trained on the "Chariot" – the latest version of Israel's tanks. Our visit to the Golan



Heights being over, we headed back across the Jordan river – thankful for a peaceful and enjoyable visit to this portion of the *glory of all lands* (Ezekiel 20:6).

The Dead Sea

The Dead Sea is one of the prominent land features when we look at the map of Israel. It is a salt lake bordered by Jordan on the east and Israel and the West Bank on the west. We awoke early and left for this promising land feature. Not far down the road we were stopped by a cloud of smoke. We had to wait until the traffic could be released. While we waited, we enjoyed the amazing scenery out the window. When traffic resumed, we saw where evidently a vehicle had burned along the roadside.

Brother Harold Lafferty told us, "You won't want to miss floating in the Dead Sea"! It can't be called "swimming" because it is nearly impossible to become submerged. The intense salinity of the water is toxic to your eyes. There are fresh water showers installed on the beach area so quick rinses could be taken as needed. Serious eye exposure would require that someone lead you to the showers! People have a delightful time floating in the Sea. The suggestion was made that we wear flip-flops which could be disposed of as the pebbly beach is tough on bare feet, but they will be soiled beyond further use by the black mud of the floor of the Sea. (The picture shows the contrast between the blue water and pebbly desolate sand.)



We went to change into our swimsuits as soon as we arrived. The walk down to the Dead Sea was steep and rocky. The sharp rocks could be felt through my flip-flops. We were told to wade out to knee depth and sit down. I took cautious steps, feeling with my toes before proceeding to step so as not to step in a hole. I finally got to knee depth and sat down on the water. To my amazement, I floated effortlessly. The water has a slimy feel. After floating for a while, I proceeded back to shore to apply some mud to my forearms. The ultraviolet rays can't harm your skin because it is below sea level, so no need for sun screen. I scooped up some of the blackish mud and lavishly smeared it on my fore arms. We were cautioned not to put it near

our eyes, so I didn't apply any to my face. I let it dry and then rinsed it off. I was amazed how much softer the skin on my forearms felt as compared to my upper arms!

Walking back up on wet flip-flops was treacherous as my feet were slipping (I would recommend aqua socks for anyone going to venture down to the Dead Sea). There were fresh water showers to rinse off. Jim didn't get to attend so I saved the rocks and sand on the soles of my flip-flops for him to scrutinize [Brother Jim is a soil scientist]. They told us not to take any mud samples home as the sulfur smell would satiate our luggage. We could, however, keep some of the small white stones we found.

The Dead Sea lies in the Jordan Rift Valley. It got its name from the inability of plants and animals to survive there. It appears blue in color, framed by the stark Mountains of Jordan (ancient Moab) on the east. The Jordan River feeds the Dead Sea, but water leaves only through evaporation (it seems more like a lake than a sea). It is 1,412 feet below sea level, which is the lowest elevation on earth. The Dead Sea is almost ten times saltier than the oceans. Cosmetics are made from the water, the mud, and plants from the Dead Sea area. The Dead Sea continues to lose water annually, having shrunk from some 50 miles to 30 miles in length today (the water level dropping approximately three feet per year).



In Scripture, the Dead Sea is referred to as the Salt, East, and Hinder Sea, which are geographical and prophetic references. Genesis 14:3 is the first reference to the *salt sea*. From this reference, we believe that Sodom and Gomorrah were located near the Dead Sea. The next reference is in Joshua 3:15-16, which informs us that the Dead Sea was fed by the Jordan River.

We know that when Christ returns, the Dead Sea will be healed because the topography of the land will be changed as prophesied. Zechariah 14:4-8 declares *living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea* (the Dead Sea). Ezekiel 47:8-9 foretells that *the waters shall be healed ... and there shall be a great multitude of fish ... and everything shall live whither the river cometh*.

Thelma Haagen, Hardinsburg, KY

Why Hebron?

In early September, we were blessed to be able to join brothers and sisters on an adventure to Israel and Jordan. Our trip was a wonderful and exciting experience, but unfortunately, due to increased unrest within the West Bank, we were unable to visit several sites, including Hebron. This was a great disappointment as Hebron and its history have always been of interest to me. *[Editor's Note: Our tour itinerary contained the following statement regarding the planned visit to Hebron: "Except once, on previous tours, we have not been able to visit this site due to political issues (danger from the PLO and militant Arabs) in this area. We understand that it is under better control than formerly, and is now certified safe to visit."]*

The Jewish population of Hebron was evacuated after an attack by Arabs killed nearly seventy in 1929, but after the 1967 war, a few Jewish settlers resettled in the Jewish quarter. Hebron is now a predominantly Palestinian city located in the West Bank, and in 2017 UNESCO declared the Old Hebron town a world heritage site and classified it as an "endangered Palestinian site." It has a population of 220,000 Palestinians and some 500 to 900 Jewish settlers. In 1997 Hebron was divided into two sectors, with sector H1 controlled by the Palestinian Authority (80% of the city); and sector H2 (20% of the city) administered by Israel. There is a ratio of four Israeli soldiers for each Israeli settler, and any travel permits must be coordinated between the Palestinian Authority and Israel.



So, Why Hebron?

The name Hebron is derived from the Hebrew word for "friend." This is reported to be a reference to Abraham who was called *the Friend of God* (James 2:23). Even though we were not allowed to visit Hebron due to local unrest, I would like to explain why it is so interesting to me:

- It is one of the oldest continually occupied cities in the world, rivaling Damascus in age.
- Hebron is a holy city for Jews, Muslims and Christians, and that's why sharing it peaceably is a challenge.

- Hebron is the second most holy city in Israel, second only to Jerusalem, and it is one of Judaism's four holy cities.
- According to Scripture, *Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt* (Numbers 13:22 - referencing the travels of the spies sent to search out the land of Canaan).
- Hebron has been overrun and occupied by many people since its founding, and is of interest because of its history as chronicled in the Old Testament.

We first find Hebron referenced as Abram and Lot separated, *Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord* (Genesis 13:18). Abram was in Hebron when Lot was captured from Sodom by Chedorlaomer king of Elam and his confederates. After rescuing Lot, Abram evidently returned to Hebron where God again encourages him. God renews the promise of the land and promises Abram an heir and seed too numerous to number, and confirms this with a covenant (Genesis 15:1-18).

Abraham was sitting in his tent in the plain of Mamre when he was approached by three strangers (Genesis 18:1-2). After the usual Middle East pleasantries, these "men" informed Abraham that Sarah was to have a son, and then revealed to Abraham they were on their way to destroy Sodom.

After these events, *Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country...and sojourned in Gerar* (Genesis 20:1). We're told, *Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days* (Genesis 21:34). He then returned to Hebron where Sarah died, *And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: these were the years of the life of Sarah. And Sarah died in Kirjatharba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her* (Genesis 23:1-2). After bargaining with the children of Heth, Abraham bought the *cave of the field of Machpelah* (Genesis 23:19). This cave became the burial site not only for Sarah, but also for Abraham, Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob and Leah (Genesis 39:30-33). **This property Abraham purchased in Hebron was the first piece of real estate in the Promised Land owned by a Jew.** This to me is the most significant fact about Hebron. The possession of the land started here, to be completed by God.

If we fast forward:

- We read of Caleb being given Hebron for his faithfulness (Joshua 14:13-14).
- David was crowned king at Hebron and there reigned over Judah for seven years and six months (2 Samuel 2:11); and was anointed King over all Israel while in Hebron (2 Samuel 5:1-30).

- Hebron is mentioned eighty-seven times in the Bible and is the world's oldest Jewish community.
- Hebron is last mentioned in Scripture as one of Rehoboam's fenced cities (2 Chronicles 11:1-10).
- Hebron has a rich history and a dominant role in the story of Israel's growth. It is closely associated with the settlement of the Promised Land, the Patriarchs, and the kings of Israel.
- Herod the Great built a large structure over the cave at Machpelah (Cave of the Patriarchs) in Hebron on top of the traditional burial place of the patriarchs, with an architectural style similar to Jerusalem's Temple Mount. It is constructed of the same type of masonry with large columns and great stones up to 24 feet long, much like those of the western wall. It is the only remaining complete Herodian structure.



These are the reasons why Hebron, in my estimation, is so significant in the history of God's people.

Don Pruitt, La Grange, KY

Jerusalem

After spending the Sabbath in Jordan seeing sights in Amman and Petra, we crossed back into Israel via the Allenby Bridge, or the King Hussein Bridge for those who are partial to the Jordanian name. The remainder of our tour would be to experience Judah and Jerusalem. So on we went to Jericho and then the Jericho road up to Jerusalem. Over the years I had seen many pictures of Jerusalem in various media formats including pictures taken by other Christadelphians, so I didn't think the sight of it would appreciably affect me. But when I first saw it with my own eyes, my heart skipped a beat. It is a beautiful city to behold. Even so, it seems almost silly for me to be writing about Jerusalem. I am only one of millions of people who have visited this place. I have been to Jerusalem just once in my life and will likely never do so again (though I would love to). People have given their impressions of this city over thousands of years, some as travelers and some

as citizens. The value of my experiences in Israel is probably only of value to me, but I volunteered to author this piece, so here goes.



Unlike most of the other Biblical and historical landmarks we visited, Jerusalem wasn't a spot marked by a church (instead there are many spots marked by many churches) or the unearthed ruins of past structures. Jerusalem is alive with people linking to the past, building a future, and navigating the sea tossed by the opposing world forces that operate here. In a political sense, it is the center of the universe. However, to the world the inordinate amount of political attention this city receives is likened to the attention given an unruly and unlovable child. To this traveler Jerusalem is wonderful, but it is hard to say why exactly. To me the most overwhelming feeling was just being there.

To write about Jerusalem requires some sort of definition. What is the city of Jerusalem? Is it the Old City? Is it the cultural and architectural elements left by the Romans, the Byzantine Christians, the Armenians, the Muslim Arabs, the Crusaders, or the Ottoman Turks? Or is it the modern Jewish city that has grown up to the west of the Old City?

To King David, Jerusalem was a Jebusite city requiring the removal of the Jebusite population. The Temple Mount had no temple because it was a threshing floor at the time. Jerusalem, the City of David, and Mt. Zion were at one time synonymous terms. The City of David today remains where it was, but it is no longer within the walls of the Old City (our itinerary did not include a visit to that part of the city). The term Mt. Zion is somewhat nebulous, initially referring to the City of David (the hill south of the Temple Mount) then to the Temple Mount itself, and finally, Mt. Zion now describes the higher western hill of the city as a more worthy location to bear that name (Mt. Zion is now located adjacent to the city gate called Zion in the southwest wall of Old Jerusalem). As a Bible student, I confess that the first thing that comes to my mind when someone refers to Jerusalem is the Old City; but how significant is the Old City? In terms of area, it is insignificant: Jerusalem is a metropolis. Modern Jerusalem covers more than 48 square miles whereas the Old City is just 0.35 of a mile square. The Old City is thus less than 1% of today's Jerusalem. Yet in political terms that walled area is probably the most hotly contested area on earth.

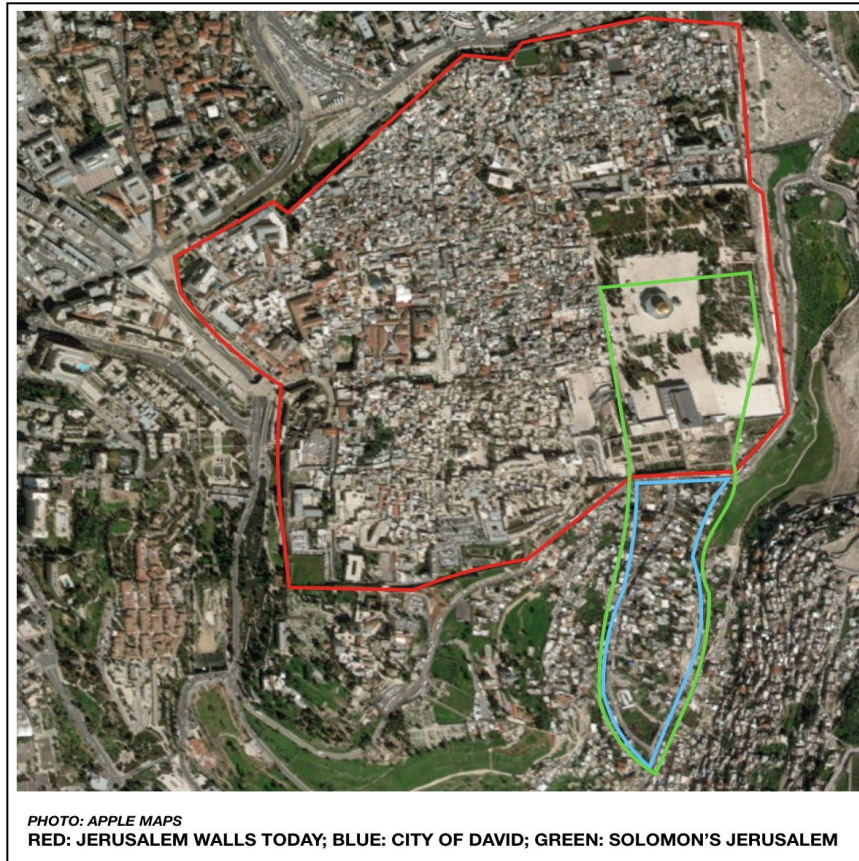


PHOTO: APPLE MAPS

RED: JERUSALEM WALLS TODAY; BLUE: CITY OF DAVID; GREEN: SOLOMON'S JERUSALEM

Succeeding kings made physical changes to the city including enlarging it and building God's house on the Temple Mount. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed or removed anything desirable from Jerusalem. The temple and the city were rebuilt under the Medes and Persians, then the Greeks corrupted Jerusalem during the time between the Old and New Testaments. Finally, the Romans made their contributions, and then utterly destroyed the city and the Jewish way of life in AD 70. From then on Jerusalem was totally downtrodden of the Gentiles until 1967 when the Israelis took control of the Old City. I guess you could say today it is partially downtrodden of the Gentiles.

Because I have grown old, overweight, and have arthritic knees, I often lagged behind the rest of our group. When I caught up to them, the guide had usually said his piece and was ready to move on to the next site of interest. So when our group began to explore the Old City, I was often left to my own thoughts regarding what I was experiencing. What did I think about? It's been many years since I lived where I was born and raised. Each time I go back to visit, I find the old landmarks are hidden or missing: I

don't recognize the place. In like fashion, today's Old Jerusalem would be foreign to Abraham, David, and the apostles. The walls and gates have been demolished, moved, and rebuilt. The Temple Mount is still there but without the temple (not Solomon's, not Cyrus', not Herod's). Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches, mosques, and synagogues have erupted everywhere, being built and rebuilt over the centuries since Jesus walked the land, all in accordance with whoever had control of the territory at the time. The present walls are those of Suleiman the Magnificent, an Ottoman Turk who must have seen himself as a Solomon greater than the Hebrew King from which his name is derived.

Today the Old City is to me a myriad of Gentile construction and influences topped by a Muslim shrine where God's temple once stood.

Even Jewish life in the market place was missing on our visit because our day in the Old City was on Rosh Hashanah. Hoping to hear the "last trump" we instead saw little activity because all Jewish businesses were locked up for the holy day.

The writer to the Hebrews said, *For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come* (Hebrews 13:14); and again speaking of Abraham, *For he*



Jerusalem's Dung Gate: Entrance to the Western Wall and Temple Mount

looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker [is] God (Hebrews 11:10). Jerusalem at best is an interrupted city and not a continuing city, though there is no doubt that the continuing city mentioned in Hebrews is the New Jerusalem, a city yet to be built. The Old City is on UNESCO's World Heritage list as if there is something worth preserving there. In Hebrews there is a

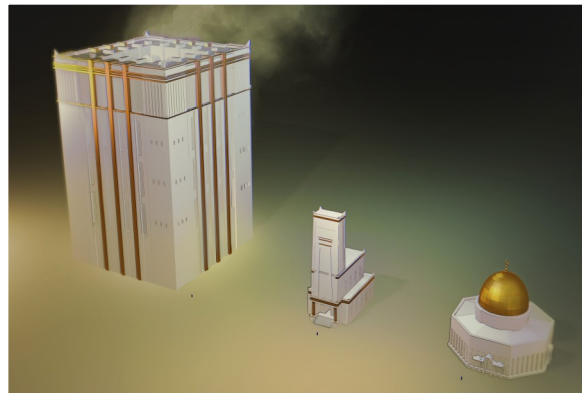
quote from Haggai, *Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this [word], Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain* (Hebrews 12:26-27). Surely this shaking is what is in store for Jerusalem and the nations; for the nations need to be removed from Jerusalem, just like the Jebusites in David's day.

Jerusalem in the Psalms is often expressed as Zion. Pull out your concordance and see how many times the context is future. The Zion

extolled and adored in Scriptures is one awaiting the Lord's return. In Psalm 48:2, it is *beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth... the city of the great king*. This Psalm is the basis for our anthem, "Cry Out and Shout." I thought about how the Psalm continues, *Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell [it] to the generation following* (vss. 12-13). This is certainly not a clarion call with respect to today's Mt. Zion.

Today the Dome of the Rock sits atop the Temple Mount. Though its dome was blackened lead like its neighbor – the Al Aqsa mosque – an upgrade to bronzed aluminum topped with gold leaf in 1962 has made it the focal point of the Old City. Would David consider this a reason to extol and adore Zion?

But what must the city have looked like in the days of the even more imposing height of Solomon's temple with bronze columns and gold covered doors? And then think about the temple described by Ezekiel.



3D Models by Andrew Johnson

L to R: A Corner Tower of Ezekiel's Temple; Solomon's Temple; Dome of the Rock. All to scale (3 small dots are people)

The present Old City walls are approximately 0.6 mile long. The future temple walls (not city walls) will be over 1 mile in length. The towers at each of the four corners will each be much larger than all of Solomon's temple.

We can only imagine the changes in topography due to earthquake and foliage due to the water springing forth from under the temple. Yes, we do look for a city whose builder and maker is God!

On our final day we visited sites in western Jerusalem including the Knesset, the Shrine of the Book, and Yad Vashem (Holocaust Remembrance Center). At lunch time we found ourselves at the corner of King George and Ben Yehuda streets. For lunch, Brother Harold Lafferty treated me to a cool refreshing smoothie. After a little shopping along Ben Yehuda Street, we met back at the smoothie shop. Sitting on a park bench in the warm sun in the midst of Israeli shoppers, this pilgrim and sojourner had the strange feeling of being at home.

Jay Johnson, Roselle, IL

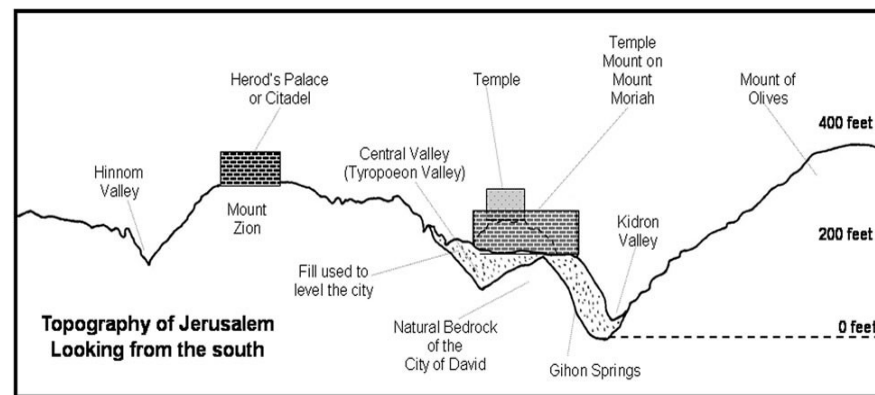
The Mount of Olives: Where Jesus' Feet Shall Stand

The Mount of Olives is one of only a few places named in the Bible whose past and future to our time is revealed.¹ The present-day Mount of Olives plays an important part in the Jews' expectations of the coming Messiah. It also highlights Israel's current struggle with their surrounding Arab enemies. Therefore, a short study of the Mount of Olives can reveal God's plan of salvation through the Jews, centred in the literal land of Israel.

The Past

It's remarkable that any ancient places have retained their exact names and identities in Israel given the multiple conquests (among others, Babylon, Rome, Byzantine Empire, Ottoman Empire). The Mount of Olives stands today bearing the same name first mentioned in 2 Samuel 15:30, when David and his loyal followers fled from Absalom. They left the palace in the "city of David" and went east over the brook Kidron (today a valley) towards the wilderness. After crossing the Kidron, David first had to ascend the Mount of Olives, which he did weeping and barefoot. There, atop the Mount of Olives, David worshipped God. From his vantage point he could see the whole city of Jerusalem.

Currently, the elevation of the Mount of Olives is 818 metres (2684 feet) above sea level, but only about 200 metres (656 feet) higher than the Kidron Valley, since Jerusalem is a city of hills. It's slightly higher than the Temple Mount, the hill to its west that the Kidron Valley separates. Its name comes from the olive trees that once grew on its sides. The Mount of Olives is about 3.5 km (2.2 miles) long and 2 km (1.2 miles) wide, with the Biblical town of Bethany lying at its southeast foot.



Here is a list of the other Biblical events at the Mount of Olives. Does any thread connect them?

- Ezekiel saw the glory of God leave the temple and stand over the east gate of Jerusalem (10:18-19), come to rest over "the mount on the east

side of the city” (11:23), and eventually return to the temple via the east gate (43:1-5).

- Solomon built a high place for Chemosh on the “hill that is before Jerusalem,” or, at the “right hand of the mount of corruption.” Josiah later broke down the idols and altars and cast the dust into the Kidron; the Jews believe this mount to be the Mount of Olives (1 Kings 11:7; 2 Kings 23:13).
- Jesus entered Jerusalem via Bethphage and Bethany, and here the disciples praised God with a loud voice for the mighty works they had seen (Mark 11:1; Luke 19:37).
- Jesus delivered the Olivet prophecy here – “What shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world”? (Matthew 24:3; Mark 13:3).
- Jesus often prayed here, and during his last days, spent his nights here (Luke 21:37; 22:39) and maybe earlier (John 8:1).
- Jesus prayed with his disciples at its foot in the Garden of Gethsemane or “oil press”: “Pray that ye enter not into temptation”; Judas betrayed him here with a kiss (Luke 22:39-47).
- Jesus ascended to heaven from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:9-12).

The Mount of Olives was for David a place of prayer and solace as he reacted to Absalom’s usurpation and Ahithophel’s betrayal. Ezekiel saw the glory of the LORD rest upon the Mount of Olives just after he had prophesied first against the wicked princes of Israel (11:8-11); and when he prophesied about Israel’s eventual return and restoration where God said, *I will be their God* (11:17-20). As Jesus spent his evenings on the Mount of Olives, especially as he prayed on the night of his betrayal, surely he would recall and draw strength from two faithful men – David the king and Ezekiel the prophet/priest – whose trials reflected his own, and to whom God delivered promises of future, eternal glory through the establishment of the Kingdom in Jerusalem (cf. Ezekiel 21:27, 36:24-38).

The Present

Today the Mount of Olives is distinctly recognizable by the thousands of Jewish graves that line its hillside. The largest Jewish cemetery in the world and over 3000 years old, it not only shows evidence of the historical continuity of the Jewish presence in Jerusalem, but indicates the Jewish desire to see Messiah. The Jews believe that the resurrection will begin here as Messiah passes into Jerusalem (based on the Ezekiel references above, and Ezekiel 46:2). Therefore, many seek to be buried here. Somewhere between 70,000 and 150,000 graves are estimated, including remains from famous rabbis, the early pioneers of the modern state, Menachem Begin and Benjamin Netanyahu’s mother. Jerusalem Jews customarily send soil from



the Mount of Olives to family around the world to spread on Diaspora graves.²

After the Arabs took control of eastern Jerusalem in 1948, the tombstones and graves suffered desecration. For example, tombstones were used as paving stones in the Jordanian army camp and as flooring for latrines, with buildings erected over the top of the graves. Once the Jews regained control over all of Jerusalem in 1967, they rehabilitated the Mount of Olives cemetery. They remain vigilant to prevent vandalism, which still occurs periodically.

The Future

As seen, the historical Mount of Olives was a place of prayer and a site connected with prophecies of the return of God's glory. Continuing this thread, the Bible, in Zechariah 14, identifies the Mount of Olives as the place in Israel where significant tectonic changes will occur. This will initiate the start of the earth's physical revival when Jesus returns to become king over all the earth (vss. 4, 9). Jesus is David's descendant who will sit on his throne and dwell in Jerusalem (Zion) forever, where the priests will be clothed with salvation and the saints will shout aloud for joy (Psalm 132:11-18).

Zechariah 14:4, 6-8 [ESV] says, in precise language, that in that future day *his* (Messiah's) feet will stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount will be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley. One half of the mount will move northward and the other half southward. Then living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half to the eastern sea (Dead Sea) and half to the western sea (Mediterranean Sea). The land will become a plain from Geba (on the north border of Judah's allotment) to Rimmon³ (56 km or 35 miles southwest of Jerusalem) but Jerusalem will remain aloft between four of its former gates. This elevation will allow the saints to *go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob* (Micah 4:2, cf. Psalm 122). The servants of the LORD will

again pray on the mount in Jerusalem: *even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer* (Isaiah 56:7).

Zechariah's words align with Ezekiel's prophecy of the Dead Sea becoming living waters (47:8-12). The sea will be full of fish and its banks will anchor monthly-bearing fruit trees; as Zechariah says, *it will continue in summer as in winter* (vs. 8). The corruption and death on this earth, as typified in the Dead Sea, will be replaced by life – living waters – whose source is in Jerusalem. The Dead Sea is one of the “waste places” whose wilderness will become like Eden and whose desert like the garden of the Lord, where the Tree of Life resided (Isaiah 51). Through this Mount of Olives prophecy in Zechariah 14, we see where and how the literal revival of this earth will begin.

When the saints shout aloud for joy, they may shout: *Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised in the city of our God! His holy mountain, beautiful in elevation, is the joy of the earth, Mount Zion, in the far north, the city of the great King.* (Psalm 48:1-2)

Sarah Farrar, Beamsville, ON

¹ Others include the Dead Sea, Eden, and possibly the Mount of Esau (Seir), the plain of the Philistines (Gaza), fields of Samaria, Gilead, Geba and Rimmon.

² <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-mount-of-olives>

³ location of Geba and Rimmon is from ESV Study Bible, p. 1769

The Garden of Gethsemane

*Beyond where Kedron's waters flow,
Behold the suffering Savior go
To sad Gethsemane;
His countenance is all divine,
Yet grief appears in every line.*

(Hymn 100 – 1932 Christadelphian Hymn Book)

Gethsemane: Perhaps no other name in Scripture invokes such vivid images of our Savior as he faced his final temptation and suffering. As the end of his mission drew near, Jesus knew what lay ahead, and that he would be obedient unto death. Luke 22:44 gives us insight into his suffering, *...and being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

When I heard that Brother Lafferty was planning a trip to Israel, I contacted him immediately. A trip to Israel was something I had dreamed of, and I eagerly awaited our departure. When I read the itinerary, I was thrilled at the idea of visiting the places that I had read about for years. The idea of visiting the



Garden of Gethsemane was awe inspiring. Was I really going to walk where Christ walked and see where Christ was betrayed and given over to the High Priest? I wondered if I would be overcome by emotion at the thought of being in such a special place; one so special that Christ withdrew himself there on several occasions to find solace and to pray.

The Garden of Gethsemane is only called by name twice in the Scriptures (Mark 14:32 and Matthew 26:36), but we know that it was on the Mount of Olives and that Jesus went there often (John 18:2). The actual Garden of Gethsemane was probably much larger than that which is preserved today. Gethsemane is a Hebrew word meaning “olive press.” It is appropriately named because of the large number of olive trees that grew there. (As the olives were pressed to produce its precious oil, so Christ was “bruised” for our iniquities.)

Geographically, the Garden of Gethsemane is very close to the Old City, easily within walking distance (Acts 1:12 refers to it as a *sabbath day's journey*). It has several olive trees, one or two of them having been carbon dated at around 2600 years old. The garden sits on the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives, just opposite from where the temple once stood and from which the Dome of the Rock is easily in view. It is divided from the city by the Kidron Valley.

The main area for tourists is relatively small, having about ten olive trees in an enclosed area, an amphitheatre-like-area for seating, and a small walking area. There is also, of course, a church. The Church of All Nations – or Basilica of the Agony, is a Roman Catholic church that sits next to the Garden. It enshrines a section of bedrock where Jesus (supposedly) is said to have prayed before his arrest. The church currently there is the third church to be built on that site. A 4th century Byzantine basilica was destroyed by an earthquake in AD 746, and a small 12th century Crusader chapel was abandoned in AD 1345. The current church was completed in 1924. From an



architectural perspective it is very ornate. I think that what affected me most about this site was the contrast between the quiet, serene garden where our Lord and Master could have been, and the ornate, costly structure that occupied some of that same space. The garden where Jesus agonized over what was to come is today shared by what we abhor most, a building representing apostate or false worship.

All of the “Holy Places” that we visited had a church of some sort on the site. What I expected to be totally Jewish was, in fact, quite Christian; and while I admired the architecture, the irony was obvious. The variety of tourists was also somewhat of a shock for me: Hispanics, Asians and Europeans, etc. A variety of languages could be heard, and there were long lines of tour buses.

My closing thoughts are these. I am so thankful to have been given the opportunity to be on this remarkable trip. My daily Bible readings seem to have “come alive” because I now have a vivid mental image of some of the areas that I read about. I think often of the places we went, of the lay of the land, and the industriousness of the Jewish people who have taken a dry barren land and brought it to life. With this experience comes both solemn reflection and joyful anticipation as I recall Zechariah’s prophecy regarding what is to shortly come to pass, *And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south (14:4).* The Garden of Gethsemane that we visited with its gnarled, aged olive trees will likely

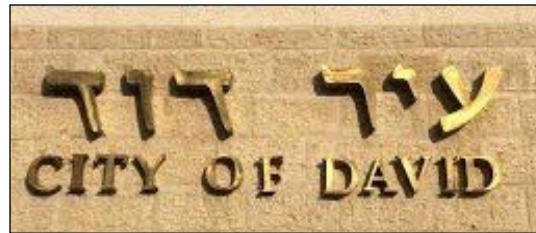
be destroyed, but with that destruction comes the beginnings of what we are waiting for: the cleansing of the earth, the building of the temple, and the kingdom of God. It is our greatest hope to be with our Lord when *...the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord and his name one* (Zechariah 14:9); *Even so, come Lord Jesus* (Revelation 22:20).

Jerri Farrar, Fort Smith, AR

The City of David

Introduction: Biblical Background

The ancient City of David was not one of the scheduled stops for our trip to Israel. However, we did not want to miss seeing this site that lies just outside the walls of the Old City and is of great Biblical significance. In



particular, we wanted to experience walking through Hezekiah's tunnel in the heart of ancient Jerusalem. So, a few of our group ventured out on our own one day to explore the many fascinating sites within the walls of the ancient city that King David founded about 3000 years ago.

We are familiar with the Biblical history of its founding, as recorded in 2 Samuel 5. *David was thirty years old when he began to reign... In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months... and the King and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land... David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David... So David dwelt in the fort [of the Jebusites] and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo [stepped stone structure – see description below] and inward (vss. 4-9).*

But, just how were David and his men able to penetrate and overtake the well-fortified Canaanite city of Jebus, that was situated on a high hill and surrounded by deep valleys? There is a very strong clue in the one verse not quoted above, *Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul, he shall be chief and captain* (2 Samuel 5:8). The word "gutter" in this verse is the Hebrew word *tzinor* (Strong's #6794), translated "water shaft" in other versions. It is believed that Joab, who met David's challenge and became "chief and captain," gained access into the city through the water shaft that becomes a large part of the story of ancient Jerusalem. Others followed and how

surprised the Jebusites must have been when they found Israelite warriors in their very midst! Of course, this was all through the providence of God, giving them the victory.

Modern History and Archaeology

The story of the *City of David* has continued thanks to the efforts of many researchers, archaeologists and countless others who have worked and funded its exploration, excavation and preservation. The ancient city lies at the foot of Mount Moriah and what is now the southern walls of the Temple Mount with the rest of its perimeter bounded by three valleys (Figure 1). It now covers an area of about 60 acres (significantly larger than it was at the time of David) and contains a marvelous collection of archaeological finds that is a testimony to many of the events that took place there during the first temple era (1000 BC). Excavations and artifacts discovered in the City of David are the earliest ancient finds discovered anywhere in Israel, dating back to the early Bronze Age; thus, it has become one of the richest historical sites in the Holy Land.

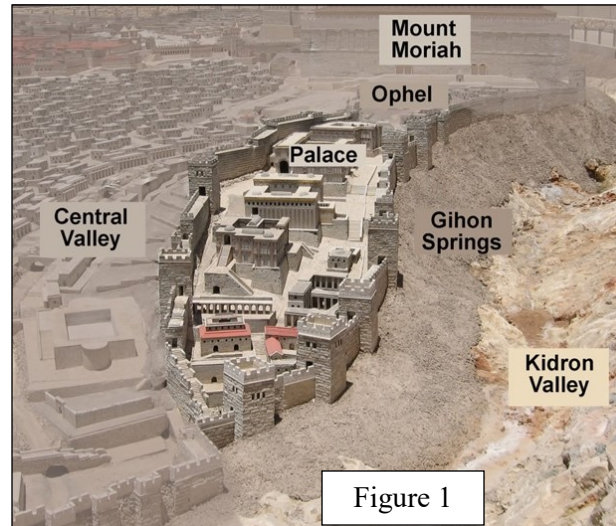
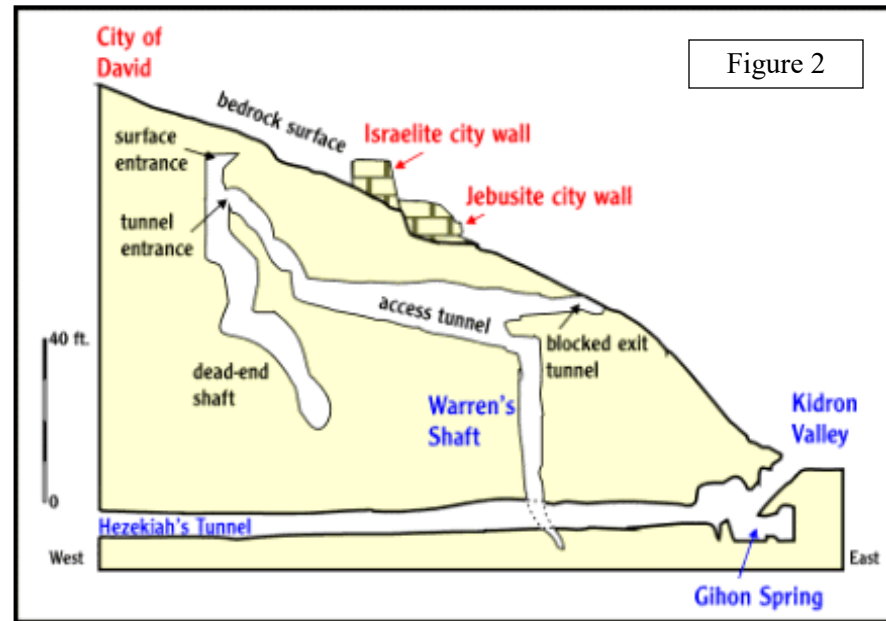


Figure 1

However, the secrets of the past lay hidden under many layers of earth, stone and even tarmac (as some of this ancient city was covered by a large parking lot until relatively recently). For almost 2000 years, the City of David was devoid both of inhabitants and visitors. Even when Jerusalem began to be rebuilt long after the Roman destruction in AD 70, the ancient city was forgotten and unknown to those who came to visit or live in Jerusalem. It was not until the mid-19th century and the beginning of archaeological excavations in the area of Jerusalem that the ancient city of Bible times was rediscovered. Exploration has continued without interruption since then, now under the Antiquities Authority of the State of Israel.

Historical research on the City of David preceded formal excavations. Most significantly, Edward Robinson (19th century Biblical scholar, archaeologist and writer) researched and began mapping what was later known to be Hezekiah's tunnel back in 1838. It was not until 1867 that actual excavation

began, led by Charles Warren, a British officer in the Royal Engineering Corps. He explored the area under the auspices of Queen Victoria and the Palestine Exploration Fund. Warren initially dug shafts around the Temple Mount which soon led to surveys of the tunnels under the City of David. He is best known for discovering the Canaanite water shaft that is likely the same “gutter” used by Joab. To this day, it is famously known as “Warren’s Shaft” (Figure 2).



Following Warren, other researchers and archaeological expeditions from all over the world flocked to the site, which soon became the most excavated mound in the history of archaeology. They soon identified the earliest known settlement traces in the ancient city dating back to the early Bronze Age. However, it was not until this century that some of the most notable excavations were undertaken and discoveries made that witness to events and places of vital importance in Scripture.

Sites of Interest

Today, the City of David is home to a tourist site that is part of the National Park that surrounds the walls of Jerusalem. The Jerusalem Walls National Park is situated within a built-up residential area where Jews and Arabs live side by side in the village of Wadi Hilweh, adjacent to Silwan in the East Bank. Upon entering the Park, we were provided a map with all the points of interest identified. The first stop on the tour is a breath-taking view of the mountains that surround the City, *As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so Yahweh is round about his people from henceforth even*

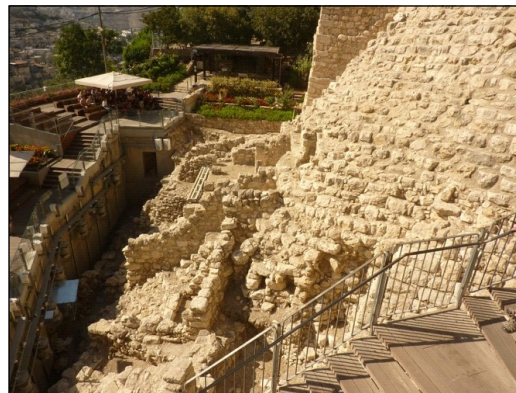
forever (Psalm 125:2). From there, one discovers all the amazing sites and artifacts that not long ago were buried deep underground, such as:

1. Remains of David's Palace and Royal Quarter

In 2005, remains of what became known as the "Large Stone Structure" were discovered beneath ruins of the Byzantine and Second Temple periods. Numerous finds associated with the structure indicate that it was constructed in the early 10th century BC. Based on clues from the Bible regarding the location of King David's house (see Figure 1), it is believed that this structure is none other than his royal palace.



- Two *bullae* (clay impressions used for sealing documents) were recently found that belonged to high-ranking officials in the court of King Zedekiah, indicating that David's Palace continued to serve the royal administration until the Babylonian destruction in 586 BC. The *bullae* bear the names of Jehucal, son of Shelemiyahu and Gedalyahu, son of Pashur, both fierce antagonists of the prophet Jeremiah (38:1, 4). Other *bullae* (51 in total) have been discovered from the same period. They were preserved by a fire that hardened them.



- The impressive "Stepped Structure" also uncovered here is part of a large retaining wall. Some contend that it was built in the late 13th or early 12th century BC as part of the foundation of the Canaanite Fortress conquered by King David. Others believe it was part of the supporting structure of David's palace itself.

- The House of Ahiel: The name Ahiel appears on potsherds in the ruins of this house and may be the name of the owner. The house is a typical First Temple period dwelling, built in the style known as the "four-room house." To the right of the house is a stone toilet that was set over a pit. Its presence reflects the elevated status of its residents.

- Burnt Room: The fire that consumed ancient Jerusalem in 586 BC did not spare the Royal Quarter. Among the ruins is the burnt room of a house that collapsed in the fire. Its floor is covered in a thick layer of ash.

2. Gihon Spring and Warren's Shaft System (see Figure 2)

The tour continues underground to the source of the Gihon Spring that has always been Jerusalem's main water source. The spring is located outside the City walls where it was vulnerable to attack or siege; therefore, a large stone tower (the "Spring Tower") was built as protective fortification. As mentioned above, Charles Warren first discovered the aqueduct that was burrowed beneath the city walls that led to the 40-foot deep shaft that bears his name. The early inhabitants of the Old City would descend the access tunnel and use this shaft to safely draw their water without having to leave the city. In the days of and prior to King Hezekiah, the Gihon Spring emptied into a large open basin at its source, before being conveyed to the City by this aqueduct. This basin was filled in and the spring diverted into another tunnel at the time of the Assyrian siege.

3. The Canaanite Tunnel

The Canaanites directed the Gihon Spring water to the storage pool south of the City through a channel that runs along its eastern slope. They used it for drinking but also irrigation of farmland in the Kidron Valley. This tunnel is dry today as all the water now flows through Hezekiah's tunnel.

4. Hezekiah's Tunnel (see Figure 2)

Walking through the ankle to knee-deep stream flowing through this winding tunnel was an amazing experience and the highlight of our tour of the City of David. We are all familiar with this righteous king of Judah *and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city...* (2 Kings 20:20). Indeed, it was an incredible feat and an engineering marvel that allowed them to survive the siege by the Assyrian army. This tunnel, as we know, channels the water to the Shiloah Pool that he also had built within the southern walls of the City. The height difference between the source of the spring and the end of the 0.33-mile tunnel is less than 12 inches; yet, two groups digging from opposite ends met exactly in alignment (it is believed by following a seeping crack). Their dramatic encounter is



chronicled in an ancient Hebrew inscription that was discovered some 20 feet from the end of tunnel in 1880.

5. The Shiloah Pool

The large basin that was discovered in 2004 stands at the same location as the pool that King Hezekiah had constructed; although the remains that can be seen today are likely from the 2nd Temple period. Steps descend from the sides to this magnificent pool and its floor. It is believed that pilgrims to Jerusalem used it as a ritual bath to purify themselves before ascending to the Temple. Thus, it was a gathering place for the Jews and remained as such in Christ's day, i.e., the *pool of Siloam* where he healed the blind man (John 9:11).

6. The Stepped Roads – Pilgrim's Ascent

Parts of two stepped roads have been uncovered – one leading from the western side of the Pool of Siloam and the other from the eastern side. A flight of steep stairs also went from the pool to a large, paved colonnade. Scholars believe that both roads were part of a thoroughfare that was very wide and used by pilgrims to go up to the Temple Mount. They also believe it was from here that the last surviving Jewish rebels fled from Roman soldiers in AD 70. Josephus records that the pavement was torn up looking for people taking refuge in the drainage channel under the road. Sifting through the debris that had accumulated in this drainage channel, archaeologists have found a wealth of artifacts that fell from the road above.

7. Givati Excavations

Most impressive of the dig areas in the City of David is what is known as the "Givati Excavations." This area has only been explored since 2007, having served as a parking lot until then. Over just the last eleven years, layer after layer has been removed, revealing structures from ten time periods – from the Biblical 10th century BC until the early Islamic period (AD 7th-10th century).

8. The Davidson Center and Archaeological Park

Just outside the City of David, in the area between it and the Western Wall of the Old City, lies a beautiful and inspiring archaeological garden. Our small group spent the rest of the day touring this area, known as "the Ophel" (see Figure 1) and the museum that houses artifacts and displays associated with discoveries from the different periods: 1st and 2nd Temples, Byzantine Muslims, ancient Muslims and Crusaders. There is a 3D model of the area depicting how it looked in the 2nd Temple period and a film to view depicting what took place there at that time.

Adjacent to the Western Wall is the upper part of the same street referred to above where Jews walked for centuries in the final phase of their pilgrimage to the Temple Mount. From there, we climbed the ancient staircase to the "Hulda Gates" at the top of the southern wall (also known as Double and Triple Gates - now closed). Imagining the thousands of faithful Jews who

would have ascended these stairs having made their way from the City of David below as much as 2000 years ago was an awesome experience.

From the base of the Temple Mount, one can look up from the southwestern corner of the Wall to a height of 48 massive stone courses. On the upper part of the wall, you see what remains of the enormous “Robinson’s Arch” that supported the last section of stairs going up to the Temple Mount (note here also an artist’s reconstruction of the original



arched stairway leading to the Temple Mount enclosure). It is named for American Bible scholar, Edward Robinson, who identified it in 1839. Below the remains of the arch are impressively preserved shops used for selling merchandise and money changing.

Most memorable of the remains in the Archaeological Park was the “Trumpeting Place” stone. This stone was among the many that were hurled down from the Temple Mount above when the Romans destroyed Herod’s Temple. Upon this stone, the trumpeter would stand and proclaim the coming of the Sabbath. It is believed to be so, based on the fragmentary inscription that reads: “to the Trumpeting Place to...”.

Conclusion: It was very heartening to be “walking about Zion” and experiencing the City of David through the efforts of so many that have made it possible by digging, sifting, dusting off and documenting their discoveries. More than anything though, it inspired us to yearn and “cry out” even more for the peace of Jerusalem and the day when the greater Son of David will be reigning from there as King of all the earth. May the many prophecies concerning this fateful city be fulfilled very soon!

Shake off your dust! Rise up and sit on your throne, O Jerusalem. Remove the chains from your neck, O captive Daughter of Zion (Isaiah 52:2, Berean Study Bible).

Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever. (Psalm 48:12-14)

Lindsay and Ken Wood, Richmond, VA

Mount Nebo



I see it!... I see it! What a marvelous sight was right before my eyes: beautiful mountains, a kaleidoscope of brilliant colors, deep valleys extending downward, and the sunlight reflecting off the briny water of the Dead Sea. These were the very things Moses viewed in his day. It was as if I was looking through the eyes of Moses, the servant of God, beholding a scene he was not allowed to enter (Deuteronomy 32:48-52).

After 40 years leading the headstrong Israelites in the desert, Moses stood on the windswept summit of Mount Nebo and viewed the Promised Land of Canaan after having been told by God, *thou shalt see the land before thee; but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give to the children of Israel* (vs. 52). On a clear day, today's pilgrims can see the panorama Moses viewed: the Dead Sea, the Jordan River valley, Jericho, Bethlehem, and the distant hills of Jerusalem. As Deuteronomy 34:5-6 recounts, *So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab... but no one knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day*. (Perhaps Moses did in effect eventually reach the Promised Land when he and Elijah appeared with Jesus at the transfiguration – Luke 9:28-31). Mount Nebo is now in western Jordan.

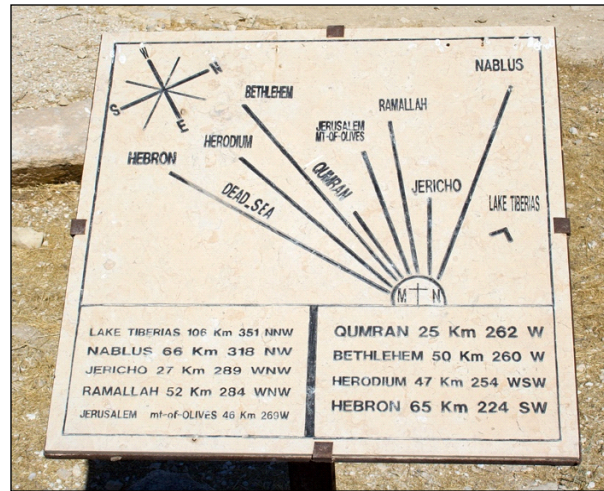
As we departed the bus for our trek up to the very top of Mount Nebo, a steep incline lay before us. My chest was heavy and I was breathing deeply and intensely, but I was motivated by the thought that I was actually walking where Moses might have walked. I wondered how easy it was for

Moses to walk up the mount at the age of 120 years, knowing that *his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated* (Deuteronomy 34:7).

What a thrilling experience! What were Moses' thoughts, prayers, and apprehensions as he climbed higher and higher to view the land, knowing that his feet would not step into the Promised Land; something he had surely looked forward to for 40 years.

Despite the incline of the walk, my burden seemed light and insignificant. Unlike Moses, I wasn't leading a nation of people who grumbled at the slightest problem. I just wanted to see what Moses saw and experienced that fateful day, knowing he was going to see the Promised Land, but also that he was going to die. Obedience was in Moses' heart, and he blessed the children of Israel before his death (Deuteronomy 33:1).

I was fortunate to experience that awesome moment when my right foot (a Jewish tradition) touched the earth of the Lord's blessed Promised Land. What a thrill it had been; a shiver went through my body. On Mount Nebo, I did my best to put myself in Moses' sandals, to feel his pain as well as his gratitude and dedication to his Father who had made him the deliverer of His people from Egypt, and guided him for 40 years in the wilderness of Sinai. I tried to form a picture of his frustration with the task of leading three million people out of Egypt and into the wilderness. The mixed multitude complained and grumbled about everything (Exodus 15:24; 16:2-3; 17:2-3; Numbers 14:1-3), never understanding God's purpose and intent for them (Deuteronomy 28:2-6). There's a lesson for us in Israel's grumbling in the wilderness.



Can we emphasize with this great man, this blessed servant of God, the man Moses? Can we place ourselves into his sandals, into his mind, into his heart? During his 40 years of trial, leadership, and service to his God, can we imagine these last days of his life? Think about how he felt on that fateful day of obedience. Surely his love and appreciation was greater than his pain (Deuteronomy 8:2-10). What a lesson for us. We too must be thankful and responsive to the Divine presence in our lives (Psalm 16:8-11).

As I walked back to the bus a moment of intense sadness came over me. My tears flowed thinking about the people in my life who hadn't experienced what I did that wonderful day. My precious, best friend, husband-brother Charles Stephens, awaits the return of Christ in the grave. I pray he, like Moses and others in the Truth, will one day live and move about in this wonderful Land of Promise. What precious hope, what profitable lessons, and what wonderful blessings we have been given.

And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face (Deuteronomy 34:10).

Glenda Stephens, Fort Smith, AR

How to Visit Israel on Your Own

Over the beginning of the year 2018, four friends visited Israel for a first-time eight-day self-planned visit. Very feasible, a self-planned trip allows you to personalize your itinerary, find accommodations in non-traditional places that allow for meeting Israelis, and build in flexibility for travel based on local recommendations. All four of us were inexperienced international travellers, but we agreed that our trip was incredibly faith-confirming and special. We encourage anyone remotely considering a visit to Israel to go – even if for a short stay like ours – and to think about going with a small group on a self-planned trip. We solicited and received helpful advice when we planned, and now offer our recommendations to others:

1. **Book accommodations at least 8 months ahead.** In the cities, we chose Airbnb stays over hotels because they cost less and offer an opportunity to experience citizen life. Good Airbnbs get snapped up in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, but if you book far ahead you can find excellent private accommodations. We also booked at two wonderful kibbutz guest houses – low-key inns – that we found reviewed on Trip Advisor. These kind of places allow you to meet and learn from local Israelis. For example, our Airbnb in Jerusalem was a private apartment housed next to the owners, a Toronto-born couple who invited us to join them for Shabbat dinner and took us to their synagogue service. Staying at places with kitchens allowed us to purchase food at times for economy.
2. **Spend lots of time planning and it will pay off later.** We spent about twenty hours researching and reserving aspects of our trip. Planning included soliciting advice from other previous Christadelphian visitors, communicating with our Airbnb host, and reading reviews on websites. This process equipped us with background knowledge, helped stave off tourist pitfalls, and generated questions to explore while in Israel. For example, by pre-booking an English language tour of the Knesset, we were able to organize an effective walking-around-museums day in

Jerusalem, walk three minutes from the Knesset to the Israel Museum, and then take a short taxi trip to **Yad Vashem** – the World Holocaust Remembrance Center (pictured below). We also saved pre-loaded Google Directions to a phone for our major commutes before we left home. The up-front time commitment is allayed by large cost savings.

3. **Plan your itinerary around the Sabbath day.** Since most tourist attractions (including national parks and historic sites, depending on their location) are closed on the Sabbath day along with restaurants and taxi services, we started by planning a trip to the Dead Sea, En Gedi and Masada, which are all open on the Sabbath day. This determined the direction of our travel around Israel. Conversely, on Sunday, places are open.



4. **Buy a tourist-only parks pass.** In Israel, a national park or historic site is not necessarily a large place like you'd expect in North America. Sites like Caesarea and Megiddo are included (65 sites in all – probably all the ones you'd want to see as a visitor). You save money with a pass, which you can easily buy at your first stop; the parks website is also great for describing each site in detail. In eight days, we visited several on the Orange Pass; in fact, the pass alerted us to possible sites that we would not otherwise have found (e.g., Amud Stream, a beautiful trail near the Sea of Galilee). We did not know about this pass until arriving in Israel and were happily surprised to realize its existence.
5. **Rent a car.** A rental car is a good option for flexible travel and getting around on the Sabbath day. If you're okay with incessant horn-honking in the cities, and you don't drive into any areas of Judea or Samaria (West Bank) or Gaza, you should have no problem driving around. Plus, Israelis drive on the right-hand side of the road. Parking is difficult to find in Jerusalem, but an Airbnb host should be able to assist, like ours did. We recommend reserving a diesel car for gas efficiency. We learned the hard way that the Israeli branch of an international rental company does not honour a legitimate third-party insurance policy and required a separate policy. Last, if a traveller has internet service on their phone, then you can rely heavily on live Google Directions—necessary outside the main cities when the road signs are only in Hebrew.

6. **December - January is a good time to visit.** Our work schedules dictated our travel window, but we enjoyed this time of year even though the rainy season began during our trip. We came prepared with waterproof gear, and if you don't mind being outdoors during wet weather, you'll enjoy less tourist traffic at some of the more popular sites. As well, the cooler weather permitted outdoor ventures not possible during hot times, such as climbing up a steep path at Masada.
7. **Buy a Frommers.** Despite our heavy reliance on helpful Internet-sourced advice (such as TripAdvisor), we found the Frommers Guide concise and helpful in important matters such as how much a taxi should cost. Plus, if your WiFi or internet is down, the maps work.
8. **Save money on guided tours.** We priced out and explored several one-day tours to various places but in the end, decided to rely on our rental car and were satisfied. As well as saving money, we could stay as long as we wanted at a given site and visit hole-in-the-wall restaurants. Israeli cuisine is delicious and the tiny (non-tour-group-sized) restaurants were our favourite. Our only exception to tours was a walking tour of Jerusalem. We hired a private licensed tour guide, which we recommend because of the complexity of the place. We were able to share our wishes (along with our Christadelphian background), so that the tour was personalized and avoided the church and commercialized scenes, and we were able to ask our own questions. A second day of seeing Jerusalem would have been even better. A licensed Israeli guide is guaranteed worthwhile since passing the license course is arduous.
9. **Buy your shekels in Israel.** We brought a few shekels but mostly US currency with which we purchased shekels (NIS) at the local post office for a better rate.
10. **Don't stress about safety.** The most common question our friends asked was, "Are you worried about safety?" Israel monitors its borders, skies and streets for enemy attacks (sadly), but there is still the risk of danger; a month after our return the Israelis shot down an Iranian drone flying into Syrian airspace at a place approximately twenty minutes away from the kibbutz where we stayed. However, we felt safe at all times in the cities, airport, and on the roads in any Israeli locale and noticed an obvious but not obtrusive security presence. As Sabbath ended on a Saturday night, the night-lit streets of Jerusalem came alive with young people singing and dancing in a manner that inspired welcome more than walking some North American streets after dark.

To conclude: we found that self-planning yielded a meaningful, life-changing experience worthwhile and doable for any person: those inexperienced with trip-planning, new to international travel, limited to a tight budget, limited to a short stay in Israel, nervous about safety, or just neutral about the general idea... GO!

Sarah Farrar, Beamsville, ON

About the Front Cover

The Knesset Menorah

The menorah is a national symbol of Israel. Upon the foundation of the State of Israel, it was chosen as its emblem to symbolize the continuity and eternity of the Jewish People. The menorah that stands in the area in front of the Knesset gates was designed by the Jewish English sculptor Benno Elkan. He spent almost ten years on the project, much of it in research, because he wanted to create a unique work which would tell the millennia-old history of the nation of Israel. The menorah was donated to the Knesset by the members of the British Parliament in April 1956, symbolizing their admiration for the new state and its government. It originally was set on a pedestal in a lot next to Frumin House in the center of Jerusalem (the seat of the Israeli parliament from 1950 to 1966). In 1966, the menorah was transferred to a site opposite the new Knesset building in Givat Ram (where Israel's most important national institutions are located).

The Knesset Menorah was modeled after the golden candelabrum that stood in the temple in Jerusalem. The outline of the Knesset Menorah – and that appearing on Israel's state emblem – are both based on the menorah from the Arch of Titus in Rome. The Arch bears a relief depicting captured Jewish rebels from the Jewish revolt of AD 66-74, presented in triumph to the people of Rome while bearing the treasures of the Second Temple after its destruction in AD 70, including the temple menorah. (The Arch is dated to AD 81, and so the depiction of the Temple Menorah is considered by some to be accurate, assuming that the artist who created the relief must have seen the Menorah with his own eyes.)



A series of bronze reliefs on the Knesset Menorah tell the story of the struggles of the Jewish people to survive, depicting formative events, images and concepts from the Bible and Jewish history. The engravings on the six branches of the Menorah portray episodes since the Jewish exile from *Eretz Yisrael*. Those on the center branch portray the fate of the Jews from the return to the land to the establishment of

the State. It has been described as a visual “textbook” of Jewish history.



Jerusalem's Golden Gate