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## Exploring the Holy Land Tour

June 5-17, 2020

**COST:** Israel: \$3,200 for ground arrangements. Italy: \$1,600 for ground arrangements. Airfare is \$2,000 for Israel-only, \$2,300 for Israel and Italy (you may secure your own flights). Cost per person for double occupancy accommodations

*A tour of the Holy Land can be a life-changing experience. We have a wonderful experience during the tour and help set the stage for a lifetime of benefit after you return home. Our visit to the Holy Land is full of fun and adventure, insight and understanding, experience and exercise. We hope to visit up to a dozen additional sites not listed on this itinerary. Get ready for an adventure of a lifetime!*

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## Planned Itinerary

### **DAYS 1–2: Friday and Saturday, June 5-6**

USA • Transatlantic Flight • Tel Aviv, Israel

We will take a morning flight from our various USA homes and change planes on the East Coast. We arrive the following day at the Ben Gurion Airport on the plains of Lydda between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. We will drive through the modern city of Tel Aviv and hope to stop in **Joppa**, where Peter had a remarkable vision. After driving up through the largest all-Jewish city in the world as it closes the Sabbath, we check in at the **Metropolitan Hotel**, just steps from the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. We will have a brief meeting before retiring for the night.

### **DAY 3: Sunday, June 7**

Caesarea • Haifa • Muhraka • Megiddo • Sea of Galilee

You may want to begin the day with a swim in the Mediterranean Sea before breakfast. Our first visit is to **Caesarea**, the Roman New Testament seaside capital built by King Herod. We will explore the ancient **Roman theater, the Hippodrome** and other recently discovered ruins as we study the biblical events that happened here. We will then drive to **Haifa**, modern port of Israel and center of the Baha'i faith, to discuss early LDS Church history in this area. From the top of **Mount Carmel**, we will talk about the Prophet Elijah and his run-in with the priests of Baal. We will drive to **Megiddo** to enjoy a view of the **Jezreel Valley** and talk about the importance of this fortress and the valley of Armeggedon anciently and now. Afterwards, we will pass Cana as we head to a memorable view of the Sea of Galilee from **Mount Arbel** on the way to **Kibbutz Nof Ginnosaur**, adjacent to ancient Magdala. We will stay for two nights at this spectacular location on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee and have time for a swim in the sea after a wonderful meal.

### DAY 4: Monday, June 8

Capernaum • Mt of Beatitudes • Ein Gev • Magdala

After visiting a new display of a boat that dates back to the time of the Savior at **Nof Ginosar**, the day begins with an exhilarating boat ride across the **Sea of Galilee**. We will visit **Capernaum**, the center of Jesus' Galilean ministry, where He performed many miracles and gave many teachings, including His "Bread of Life" sermon. Then on to the **Mount of Beatitudes**, where the Sermon on the Mount will be discussed. We will travel around the Sea of Galilee and stop at a fish restaurant for lunch. After passing Chorazin, Bethsaida and Kursi, we will pass **Kibbutzim Afikim** and **Deganya**. As we complete the circuit of the Sea of Galilee, we will stop at the remarkable ruins at **Magdala**, which have recently been opened to visitors.

### DAY 5: Tuesday, June 9

Hazor • Tel Dan • Banias • Syrian border • Nazareth

Heading north into the Huleh Valley, we will pass **Hazor** on our way to **Tel Dan**, the ancient northern limits of Israel ("from Dan to Beersheba"). We'll continue on to **Banias** at the foot of Mount Hermon, which is ancient Caesarea Philippi, the site of Peter's testimony of the Savior. After exploring the remarkable Crusader-era fortress at **Nimrod's Castle**, we will travel to the **Golan Heights**, where we will discuss Saul's experience on the road to Damascus and visit the Israeli fortifications at the Syrian border. We will make our way to the beautiful city of **Nazareth**, the boyhood home of Jesus. We will enjoy the view from the **Mount of Precipice** where we can see Mt Tabor, Nain and Tel Jezreel. We will spend two nights at the **Sisters of Nazareth Guest House**.

### DAY 6: Wednesday, June 10

Nazareth Village • Sepphoris • Beth Shean • Gan haShlosha

We begin the day by walking to the ruins of **Nazareth**, including the ruins of the tiny village that existed at the time of the Savior and the Basilica of the Annunciation, which is the largest church in the Middle East. We will visit **Nazareth Village** to learn about His early life. This site was developed to show life as it existed at the time of Jesus. Driving north from Nazareth, we will see the ruins at **Sepphoris**, the Roman capital of the Galilee. Afterwards, we will visit the impressive ruins of **Beth Shean**. We will also enjoy the wonderful water at **Gan Hashlosha**, where Gideon chose the Army of Israel.

### DAY 7: Thursday, June 11

Sebaste • Jacobs Well • Shiloh • Bethel • Jerusalem

A remarkable day as we travel along the ancient **Way of the Patriarchs**, the highway traveled by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This day will include stops in **Dothan Valley**, where Joseph was sold into Egypt. We will visit the beautiful ruins at **Sebaste**, the ancient capital of Samaria. We will stop at the foot of **Mount Gerezim** in Nablus, where we will drink from **Jacobs Well** and discuss a host of Old and New Testament stories. Continuing south, we will visit sites at **Shiloh, Ai, Bethel**, and **Gibeah of Saul**. As we enter **Jerusalem** for the first time, we will behold a most fascinating city. We check in to the Olive Tree Hotel for six nights in Jerusalem. In the evening, we will see the spectacular **Sound and Light Show** at the Citadel and enjoy the lights on the Old City walls.

### DAY 8: Friday, June 12

Jerusalem • Bethlehem

Our day of touring in Jerusalem will begin on the **Mount of Olives** and a tour of the beautiful **BYU Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies**. On to the Israel Museum, which features the **model city of Jerusalem** and the **Shrine of the Book**. We will drive by the **Knesset** (Israel's parliament) on our way to the **Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial**. The afternoon is in **Bethlehem**, site of the Savior's birth, to visit the **Church of the Nativity**. We will travel to the **Shepherds' Field**, overlooking Bethlehem, and see the Herodium. We may also stop at the **Hass Promenade**. In the evening, we plan to walk to the Western Wall to see Orthodox Jews welcome the Sabbath. On the way, we will see the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Broad Wall

### DAY 9: Saturday, June 13

Jerusalem • Last Week Walk

A day to retrace the last week of the Life of the Savior begins with a visit to the **Mount of Olives** to review events and follow the path of the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. We then proceed to **Gethsemane**, to discuss the Savior's atoning sacrifice and His arrest. During a visit to the **Orson Hyde Memorial Garden**, we will discuss the symbolism of Gethsemane and enjoy a view of Old Jerusalem. After attending services with the **Jerusalem Branch** in the beautiful BYU Jerusalem Center, we will visit the **Upper Room**, a reminder of the Last Supper and the ordinance of the sacrament. At **St. Peter in Gallicantu**, the possible site of the

palace of Caiaphas, we will discuss Peter and the trials of Jesus. We proceed into the Old City through **Lion's Gate** to the **Antonia Fortress** area, where Jesus was sentenced to be crucified. Our day concludes at **Golgotha**, the place of the Crucifixion, and the **Garden Tomb**, where many believe Christ rose on Easter Sunday so long ago. We will hold a group meeting at this site, the culmination of a Sabbath Day never to be forgotten.

### **DAY 10: Sunday, June 14**

The Old City of Jerusalem • Footsteps of the Prophets

Our day of touring in Jerusalem will begin in the Old City to visit a most important site, the **Holy Mount**, which was the site of the sacrifice of Isaac and three temples. At the **Western Wall** we will observe Jews as they participate in morning prayers at Judaism's holiest shrine. We will enjoy the **Rabbinic Tunnels** tour, an amazing walk through centuries of history. We will visit the **Ophel** to examine how it looked at the time of the Savior. We will then travel to the **City of David** ruins, which give us an idea of the Jerusalem that Nephi knew, including **Area G, Warren's Shaft, Pool of Siloam, and Hezekiah's Tunnel**, through which we will wade.

### **DAY 11: Monday, June 15**

Jerusalem • Masada • Dead Sea • Ein Gedi • Qumran

An early drive will take us through the Wilderness of Judea to the **Dead Sea**, the lowest point on Earth. We will visit Jericho and a recently-opened site on the Jordan River where the Savior may have been baptized. Then we will take a cable car to the top of **Masada** to recall the story of the Zealots' last stand against the Romans. We will stop for a quick float in the **Dead Sea** and a hike at **Ein Gedi**, where David hid from King Saul. Then we'll drive on to **Qumran**, home of the Dead Sea Scrolls. On the way back to Jerusalem, we will stop in the historic **Judean Wilderness**, to discuss the story of the Good Samaritan and the Savior's 40-day fast.

### **DAY 12: Tuesday, June 16**

Jerusalem

Today will be a free day to explore Jerusalem, see some new sites or revisit unforgettable areas of the Holy City. We will have several fun ideas or you can go on your own and explore the Holy City. We pack and prepare for our return home or the optional trip.

### **DAY 13: Wednesday, June 17**

Jerusalem • USA

We will have an early drive to the Ben Gurion Airport near Tel Aviv for our flight to the USA and arrive home in the early afternoon.

## **Optional trip to Italy**

June 1-6, 2020

**COST:** \$1,600 for ground arrangements. Total airfare for combined trip is \$2,300. (You may secure your own flights). This trip departs several days before the Israel-only portion of the trip begins. We will explore Rome and Florence for several days, including a visit to the new LDS Temple in Rome.

### **DAY 1 and 2: Monday and Tuesday, June 1-2**

Depart US - Arrive Rome

On Monday, we depart our US home cities for an overnight flight to Rome. We will be greeted at the airport by our local tour director who will introduce us to **Rome** as we make our way to our hotel. Along the way we will enjoy a panoramic tour of the city seeing many of the historic sites we will be visiting during our visit. After check in, you will have some free time to relax from your journeys. Tonight we will gather together for a welcome dinner at the hotel. Meals: **Dinner**

### **DAY 3: Wednesday, June 3**

Vatican Tour and Free Afternoon

This morning we will tour the **Vatican**, the world's smallest, yet wealthiest, independent state. Our guide will start with an overview of the history of the Vatican museums and **Sistine Chapel** and we will see the Hall of Tapestries and the Maps Gallery. The highlight of the tour will be the Sistine Chapel where the ceiling is covered with Michelangelo's famous paintings of the 'Creation' and 'Last Judgment.' Then we explore **St. Peter's Square**, with Bernini's 284 columns, before entering St. Peter's Basilica, the largest church in Christendom. We will see many treasures including the golden mosaics of the apse, Bernini's bronze baldachin, and the famed 'Pieta' by Michelangelo. This afternoon we are free to enjoy the city of Rome. Meals: **Breakfast**

### DAY 4: Thursday, June 4

### Tour of Ancient Rome and LDS Rome Temple

Today, we will visit the famous sites of **Ancient Rome** as we arrive at the Coliseum, walk underneath the Constantine Arch, then enter the huge arena dating from 79 AD. Later, transfer by private coach to the new **LDS Temple**. Those who wish can attend a session as well as tour the grounds and Visitors' Center of this historic temple. Meals: **Breakfast**

### DAY 5: Friday, June 5

### Full day excursion to Florence

Today we head north to take a break from the bustle of Rome and visit the famous cities of Tuscany on a full-day tour to Florence. In Florence, the birthplace of the Renaissance, we will admire artistic masterpieces like Michelangelo's '**David**' at the Accademia Gallery and walk beneath **Brunelleschi's famous dome**. It's a beautiful day as we travel through the picturesque **Tuscan countryside** to make our way back to our hotel in Rome. Meals: **Breakfast**

### DAY 6: Saturday, June 6

### Ancient Rome Walking Tour

Time today is ours to explore the city at our leisure. You may want to revisit one of the many sites that inspired us or spend the day shopping or trying the many gelato & pizza restaurants. Bidding a fond farewell to Italy, we will travel by coach to the Rome Airport and then board our flights to Israel!. Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**



#### **Price includes:**

- Deluxe motor coach transportation
- Local guide, Entrance fees, Gratuities
- Hotel accommodations in moderate class hotels
- Sightseeing tours as outlined on the itinerary
- Breakfast and dinner meals

#### **Price does not include:**

- Airfare is separate. Price is if we secure your flight arrangements
- Sightseeing not included on itinerary
- Additional hotel accommodations
- Items of a personal nature (i.e phone calls, room service, emails, etc)
- Travel insurance and cancellation waiver
- Lunches



### **About SJR Travel:**

Bill and Lynda Boyle have a deep love and understanding of the Holy Land. They both studied at the BYU Jerusalem Center before meeting as employees of BYU Travel Study. Lynda studied Near Eastern History at BYU and teaches high school history. She is completing a graduate degree in US History and Government at Georgetown and Ashland universities. Bill graduated from BYU and lived, worked, studied and explored in Israel for two years before completing graduate studies at Stanford University. They are the parents of five children.