

The Society for Biblical Studies  
Holy Land Gold Standard Journey Winter 2023  
10 Day Biblical Survey with Contemporary Studies  
Departing 15, 24 January, 8 February, 1 March 2023 (your choice)  
4 Day Elective: The Wonders of Jordan & Petra  
Syllabus

Objectives:

- To provide an overview of the geographical, social, historical, archaeological and cultural settings of the Bible
- To gain an overview of modern biblical scholarship, including the rudiments of archaeology, and its importance for clergy and lay people
- To become acquainted with the key issues in biblical studies and the study of Christian origins
- To become familiar with the nature of Christianity in the Holy Land and the role of the church today
- To gain understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, its impact on neighboring countries, possibilities for peacemaking

Texts: (Each person enrolled will automatically receive *The Word of God and the World of the Bible* in advance of the program. All participants would find reading one of the following books to be beneficial.)

- 1) Ateek, Naim. *Justice and Only Justice*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989.
- 2) Carter, Jimmy. *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2006.
- 3) Chacour, Elias. *Blood Brothers*. Tarrytown, NY: Chosen books, 1984.
- 4) Miano, Peter J. *The Word of God and the World of the Bible: An Introduction to the Cultural Backgrounds of the New Testament*. London: Melisende, 2001.
- 5) Rousseau, John J. and Arav, Rami. *Jesus and His World*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995.

Itinerary:

Day 1            Depart USA

*Meet your traveling companions at your gateway city for your international departure and flight to Tel Aviv.*

Day 2            Arrive Tel Aviv, transfer to Galilee, touring as time permits

*Upon arrival in Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion International Airport, you will pass through immigration and baggage claim and be met by your SBS guide who will assist you to your coach and escort you for the rest of the journey. Depending upon your arrival time and other factors, you may have time for some touring on the way to your hotel in Galilee. Orientation and introductions will begin right away and continue at your hotel where you will have breakfast and dinners daily.*

Day 3 Theme: Jesus' Ministry in Lower Galilee  
 Field trip: Nazareth (Lk. 4: 16-30), The Basilica of the Annunciation, Sisters of Nazareth Convent (koch tombs), Megiddo (Matt 2: 23, Luke 1: 26- 38, 4:16- 30, 1 Kings 21, John 4: 46-54), Sepphoris or Caesarea Maritima (Acts 8-10, 23-26)

*Your first full day of touring will take you to the region of the Lower Galilee and Nazareth where you will visit some of Israel's most important archaeological sites and Christianity's most important shrines. Themes will include Old Testament backgrounds, the influence of geography on history and the history of Israel and Palestine. In addition to your significant stops, you will be passing by many sites of lesser importance whose names you will recall from your Sunday school days and adult education classes.*

Day 4 Theme: Jesus' Ministry Around the Sea of Galilee  
 Field trip: boat ride on the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum, Tabgha, Church of St. Peter's Primacy (John 21), Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves (Mk. 6:30-44), Mt. of the Beatitudes (Luke 13: 10-21, Matt 5- 7, 11: 20- 24, Mark 4- 6, John 21), Jordan River Valley

*You will spend this day around the Sea of Galilee and visit a variety of sites and shrines commemorating key events in Jesus' Galilean ministry and marking important stories in the Gospels. As usual, your guide will interpret the significance of each site for Christians, Muslims and Jews.*

Day 5 Theme: Beginnings—John & Jesus  
 Field trip: Jericho, Tel es Sultan, Ein es Sultan (Joshua 5-7, Judges 1: 27- 36), Baptismal site—Qasr al Yehud (Mk. 1:1-12; Mt. 3: 1-4:17; Lk. 3: 1-22; 4: 1-13; Jn. 1: 1-42), Qumran

*Today, you will explore the archaeological excavations of the oldest city on earth at Tel es Sultan (Tel Jericho) with its 10,000 years of continuous human habitation. You will also focus on significant people and groups that were contemporaries of Jesus, such as John the Baptist and the "covenanters" who some believe produced the Dead Sea Scrolls.*

Day 6 Theme: Bethlehem and its Environs at the Time of Jesus  
 Field trip: Bethlehem, Old City walking tour, Church of the Nativity (Lk 2; Mt 2), Herodion, Shepherd's Fields, Solomon's Pools (time permitting)

*Flashback to the time of Jesus' birth and consider some of the most revered stories in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. In addition to your visit to the oldest, continuously used church in Christendom, the Church of the Nativity, where history places Jesus' birth, you will also visit historical sites nearby and in Hebron that illuminate the contemporary context of Jesus' birth and Old Testament backgrounds.*

Day 7 Theme: Jerusalem and its Environs at the Time of Jesus  
 Field trip: Mt. of Olives overview and orientation to Jerusalem, Dominus Flevit,

Garden of Gethsemane, Israel Museum, Shrine of the Book, 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple Model

*Starting at the top of the Mount of Olives, your day will introduce you to Jerusalem past and present. You will walk the Palm Sunday path and end up in the Garden of Gethsemane.*

Day 8            Theme: Jerusalem and its Environs at the Time of Jesus  
Field trip: Old city walking tour including the Western Wall, Temple Mount/Harem esh Sharif, St. Ann's Church, Via Dolorosa, Lithostratos, Church of the Holy Sepulchre (Mt. 27-28; John 20), free time at your leisure, optional visit to the so-called Garden Tomb

*You will never forget your day in Jerusalem's Old City where you will start at Judaism's most sacred place, the Western Wall and Islam's third most sacred site, the Harem esh*

*Sharif, the Al Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the rock, also the site of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Israelite temples. You will walk the Via Dolorosa, the "way of sorrows," the traditional path leading to Golgotha and the Church of the Resurrection, a.k.a, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Along the*

*way, you will visit St. Anne's Church and the Lithostratos. Throughout the day, you will be immersed in Jerusalem's colorful and historical market places where history meets modern life and tourists mix with everyday activities of the marketplace.*

Day 9            Theme: Free Day or Optional Touring—The Judean Wilderness  
Optional Field trip: Wadi Qelt, Masada, The Dead Sea, Ein Gedi (1 Samuel)

*On your last day in Israel and Palestine, you can enjoy time at leisure, design your own itinerary for the day or choose the optional excursion to Wadi Qelt, Masada and the Dead Sea. You'll view St. George's Monastery, swim in the Dead Sea, and explore by cable car and on foot Israel's most visited archaeological site—the mountain fortress of Masada. At the end of the day, enjoy a farewell dinner, prepare to return home or continue with the fabulous elective to Jordan.*

Day 10            Return to USA

**4 Day Elective: The Wonders of Petra & Jordan (\$1, 465 based on 10 enrolled)**

*Continue your journey with this unique immersion into the stunning desert landscapes of southern Israel and Jordan. Rich with historical and natural wonders, during this elective you will explore the desert civilizations that stand behind the narratives of the Old Testament. You will also discover the route followed by the Israelites during their Exodus experience. The mountains of Edom and Moab will unfold before you and you will imagine them populated with peoples almost unknown to us, except through the narratives of the Old Testament. Your unforgettable experience of discovery will be full of fascination and mystery, as you explore new wonders each day.*

Day 10            Theme: The Negev and Wadi Araba

Field trip: Hebron (Gen 13, 23), Cave of Macphelah/Ibrahimi Mosque, The Negev, Ein Avdat, Maktesh Ramon, Araba crossing into Jordan  
Overnight Aqaba (dinner on your own at a choice restaurant near the hotel)

*Today, you will travel the way of the Patriarchs to Hebron and visit the burial sites of the Israelite Patriarchs and Matriarchs. From there you will continue to the Negev desert in southern Israel, enjoying some of Israel's most austere and exotic landscapes. By the end of the day, you will be in Jordan and the shore of the Red Sea and your adventure continues...*

Day 11      Theme: Desert Exploration  
Field trip: Wadi Rum jeep safari (optional), Al Beidha (Neolithic settlement), Siq al Barid (Little Petra)  
overnight in Wadi Musa/Petra

*One of our most popular excursions is the jeep safari in Wadi rum, one of Jordan's most stunning landscapes. You will visit sites associated with T.E Lawrence, better known as Lawrence of Arabia and explore natural and historical wonders that will open your eyes to the splendor and majesty of the desert.*

Day 12      Theme: Exploration and Wonder  
Field trip: Full day exploration of Petra  
overnight in Wadi Musa/Petra

*One of the world's most impressive historical and archaeological sites, Petra, the lost city, awaits you. You will have a full day of guided and self directed exploration, depending on your choices and abilities. Also known as the Rose Red City, Petra is mysterious and wonderful. Carved from colorful sandstone, the blend of Nabatean and Roman architecture never fails to impress and never ceases to inspire.*

Day 13      Theme: The Desert Highway & the King's Highway  
Field trip: Shoback Castle (overview), Madaba, Mt. Nebo

*The last day of your Jordanian adventure takes you along the King's highway, the route of the ancient Israelites on the Exodus. The last visit of your day will be Mt. Nebo (Dt. 34), the place where Moses was given a glimpse of the Promised Land and where the Bible tells us he is buried.*

Day 14      Return to USA

- Meetings with indigenous people are subject to change. Appropriate substitutions will be made in the event a speaker is unavailable.
- Daily itinerary is subject to local conditions, including weather, opening and closing hours, holidays, flight schedules, etc. Sometimes the order of the itinerary will change due to such circumstances and sometimes substitutions will be made.
- Morning and evening fora on various topics will be arranged throughout the program.