

# **Tour Tips for Israel 2023**

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**Acknowledgement**

I wish to thank Dr. Randall Price, President of World of the Bible Ministries, and Dr. H. Wayne House, Distinguished Research Professor of Biblical and Theological Studies, Faith Evangelical Seminary for permission to adapt their tour tips for our tour.

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## INTRODUCTION

The excitement is already building in anticipation of our trip to the lands of the Bible. As your director, I am thankful for each of you who have decided to come on this trip and pray that it will be a time that will stimulate you intellectually, refresh you spiritually, and strengthen your faith in the inerrant, infallible Word of God. Much that we see on this trip will give you a fresh perspective on the Bible, as well as current events in the Middle East. Never again will you read the Bible, or the “news” the same. When you read of events in *Joshua*, *Judges*, *Samuel*, *Kings*, the life of Christ, and *Acts*, you will have accurate images in your head of the geography and spatial relations between landmarks and towns. Your appreciation for the grace of God toward Israel, and the provision of a sufficient salvation through the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will be greatly enhanced.

Beyond that, you will never listen to current events in the Middle East quite the same. Above all, I hope that this will focus your attention even more on the future return of our Lord Jesus Christ who will come back to the Mount of Olives even as He left (Acts 1:11). I encourage each of you to do as much Bible reading, historical reading, and map study as you can before we depart. The more of this you are able to do, the more you will gain.

Some travel suggestions are given later in these instructions. Antonio Futterer, who explored the Holy Land in the 1920s during the period of the British Mandate, gave some comments in his book *Palestine Speaks*, which should provide some chuckles for you as you plan for traveling to the Holy Land. Futterer was one of the early British adventurers searching for the lost Ark of the Covenant (long before Indiana Jones!). In his book he recounts not only his experiences in Israel but shares some “travel tips” with his readers. Before you get into the preparation for our trip that you might enjoy hearing about what it took to get there some ninety years ago. You will be glad to know that you will no longer need to be subjected to a chemical bath or have your clothes fumigated, you can also skip the use of the deck chair and woolen underwear! However, Futterer is still accurate when he advises us to prepare for inconveniences and to learn to be content under all conditions. That advice is as sound today as it was when the Apostle Paul, also a traveler in the Holy Land, wrote it to the saints at Philippi (Philippians 4:11–12).

Those involved in planning our tour have worked hard to schedule things as carefully as possible. I, along with your tour guides, the airlines, the hotels, and the travel agencies all want you to have a marvelous adventure and to return home safe and happy. Remember, however, that some circumstances are beyond anyone’s control, and there might be minor changes in the itinerary, airplanes that are late and/or overcrowded, and people who are neither grace-oriented nor have a relaxed mental attitude! Yet, culture shock, jetlag, the language barrier, food, and the many other new situations we will encounter may help expand our horizons (and develop our spiritual lives) if we decide to receive them as opportunities rather than difficulties. I have found, though, that the unexpected challenges are often the stuff of stories we tell for the remainder of our lives.

In the Grip of the Lamb,

Robert Dean, Jr., M.A., Th.M., D. Min.  
Director, DBM Bible Lands Tour

Two very important items to get done now.

1. Make sure your passport is up to date and does not expire within six months of your return from Israel.
2. Get [TSA Pre-check approval](#), this will be critical to facilitate your going through US security as rapidly as possible when we return from Israel. We have a very short time window.

## DRESSING FOR THE TRIP

You will be dressing for a desert climate in the summer (see next page for weather expectations). Do not over burden yourself with unnecessary or excessive items on the tour but prepare for the difference between Judea and the Galilee and Dead Sea area. In the area of dress, two rules apply: *casual and comfortable*. No formal clothing will be needed. The countries we tour generally dress very informally. Travel as lightly as possible! In most places where we visit, laundry may be washed and pressed overnight in the hotel room (or you can get an extra charge by having the hotel do it but use this service at your own risk). The following are suggestions for items to include. However, the final decision is your own. In Jerusalem we can have a laundromat service come to the hotel one morning to collect dirty laundry and return it in the evening.

1. A good comfortable, sturdy pair of (broken-in) walking shoes: no high heels or boots. (One summer I wore a strong pair of walking sandals the entire trip; on one trip to Israel, I wore a pair of Crocs the entire time, except for the walk up Masada, when I wore a good pair of cross-trainer running shoes, another time I wore a pair of Vibram 5-fingers).
2. Waterproof footwear for wading or during a baptism (flip-flops, boat shoes, rubber Crocs, most Keen sandals are waterproof, or sneakers).
3. Light (not bulky) bathrobe (optional) (I've never taken one).
4. Some of the churches and other sites require the ladies to not have bare shoulders or legs; no bare legs for the men either. You will be advised ahead of time if we are visiting any of these sites during the day. *Women*: large scarf is optional (for covering of shoulders and arms), ankle-length wrap-around or pull-on skirt (for covering legs, if wearing shorts), or shorts with legs that zip on/off; *Men*: long pants: required at some religious sites. *Best*: khaki shorts with zip-on trouser legs.
5. Swimsuit (for those who wish to swim when & where possible) & cover-up (for sun) or to wear *if you wish to be baptized*.
6. Large hat, cap, or scarf, sunscreen (get highest protection rating) for sun protection. Sunblock for all is highly recommended.
7. Pair of sunglasses (the middle eastern sun is intense and the reflection on sand and stone is very bright). Bring an extra pair if you are prone to losing them!

8. A pair of slippers or sock-type slippers (for overnight plane flight and long motor-coach travel).
9. Loose-fitting clothes like jogging suits, jeans, khakis, light pants/skirts & t-shirt, etc. (for comfort on plane trips and daily touring). Shorts may be worn almost every day. Finally, choose what best suits your taste, but keep in mind that they should be light, comfortable, and easy to care for.
10. Extra batteries, any cold or sinus medication you prefer, anti-bacterial wipes are among other suggestions. \*\*Pack medications in a bag that goes into the cabin with you, not in checked luggage.
11. Weather expectations:

The Middle East has a climate similar to that of California, central Texas, and Florida. In June the average high in Jerusalem is in the upper 80s to lower 90s °F (or hotter) and in the upper 60s to low 70s during the evenings. In the Galilee, the temperature will be about 5 degrees warmer, but in the Dead Sea area and Negev, the temperatures may run to the upper 90s to low 100s in the daytime. It is a dry heat, so you will not feel the heat as much as in Houston. The lows at night at the Dead Sea average around 70 °F. The humidity is usually low (i.e., dry heat), so you will find that dehydration, not perspiration, is the problem. It is very important that you drink lots of water or fruit juices throughout the day. Bottled water is usually available on the bus for a nominal fee of about \$1 a bottle, and canned juices will be available at rest stops. (Don't forget the Magnum bars—☺). Generally, dress for leisurely activity in a temperate zone remembering that modesty is a must in the Middle East (see comments below). The following are recommendations for men and women respectively concerning dress.

### *FOR THE LADIES*

For women, the most important factor in travel wardrobe is a basic color scheme. Shoes and other accessories should be chosen in a color that blends with the entire wardrobe rather than different color sets that add extra weight (always pack less than you think you will need: you will be glad you did!). Above all, clothing should be chosen for comfort, style, and ease of packing. Select garments that serve various purposes. Separates provide for greater flexibility. Sweaters and skirts/pants should be selected to mix and match with bright scarves and novelty belts for variation. Wash-and-wear dresses, blouses, and undergarments are preferable. Shorts may be worn; however, some Arab, Jewish, and Christian sites we will visit require that legs and arms be covered for modesty. If you desire to wear shorts, plan to carry with you a long-sleeved blouse or sweater and a skirt that can quickly and easily be put on at the site location. You will need a wrap, sweater, or warm jacket for the evening cold in Jerusalem, and something lighter for the Galilee and the Dead Sea. The style during the day may be chosen regarding travel convenience, while in the evening chosen in regard to being casual. It is highly suggested that you leave valuables (especially expensive jewelry) at home. If you choose to bring it, you alone will be responsible for its possible loss.

*FOR THE MEN*

For men, it is suggested that you wear jeans, shorts, or some of the cotton-nylon blend travel pants with zip off legs. These breathe easily and dry quickly. You can find these at numerous stores and online sites from REI, North Face, Academy, and stores that specialize in expedition wear. Short-sleeved sport shirts or t-shirts for day wear are a good choice and possibly a long-sleeved casual dress shirt for evening. Shorts also may be worn, but you should carry an extra pair of comfortable trousers that can be slipped on and off as a cover-up or buy the kind of pants that convert to shorts with the ease of a zipper! A cap or hat is highly recommended and will be necessary as a head covering at certain Jewish sites and in the strong sun at Masada and the Dead Sea. Socks should be comfortable, non-slip, and complimentary to your type of footwear. Since you will be doing a considerable bit of walking, be sure your day-time socks are athletic-type, preferably cotton, or with a high cotton blend. It is also recommended that you use a money clip, in your front pocket, rather than a billfold because pickpockets (usually kids) work tourist areas. No dinner jackets, neckties, or suits should be brought. Better casual attire for evening wear is expected in the hotel dining room but not required. Shoes for men can range from good walking tennis shoes to sandals. The rule is comfort and support. I've worn sandals (Keens) 100% of the time.

Bring a pair of plastic or rubber boat shoes, crocs, or flip-flops for wading. Conditions permitting, you will have the opportunity to get in the water in Hezekiah's Water Tunnel, the hotel at Caesarea by the Sea, the Sea of Galilee (fresh water), the Dead Sea (salt water), and the Mediterranean Sea (salt water). The beaches in these areas are not soft, sandy beaches (except Mediterranean Sea), but pebbled with all size rocks! In Israel there are no dangerous fish except in the Red Sea.

NOTE: On this trip which only covers sites in Israel, we visit only a few Eastern orthodox churches, so the cover up factor will be minimal.

**PACKING FOR THE TRIP**

From the U.S. to foreign destinations on most airlines you are permitted one piece of checked luggage per person and one carry on bag (plus a purse or computer bag). Fees assessed for a second bag are currently at \$100. The maximum weight of any one bag is 50 pounds. The dimensions of the first bag may not exceed 62 linear inches, and those of the second bag may not exceed 55 linear inches [to get the linear dimension of each bag add the length, width, and height.] You are also allowed one carry-on bag that must not exceed 45 linear inches and not weigh more than 40 pounds and one personal item such as purse, camera, camcorder, laptop computer, etc.

\*\*

Those flying United to Newark a day earlier on June 5, 2023 to overnight may be required to pay for baggage to Newark. Our travel agent recommends having your flight itinerary to Israel available, and pray the desk agent will understand and not charge for the domestic leg of the flight.

Tour groups usually are treated less strictly than individuals with respect to luggage allotments and weights, and international flights are usually less picky than domestic flights. Even so, you may be charged extra if baggage is excessively heavy, especially on the domestic return when you are loaded down with souvenirs! Luggage should be sturdy, lightweight and have good locks (if you



use locked luggage, this will need to be individually done after security is completed unless you have Home Land Security approved locks). The purpose of locks is to keep a suitcase from opening accidentally, but they are not effective against theft. Therefore, do not put anything in your checked bag on a trip that you cannot afford to lose! I take all my tech stuff and anything valuable in my backpack.

Remember, too, you will have to open your luggage for security! Luggage itself should be given this consideration. Do not take your best set, it may get damaged or lost. Also add something distinctive to the outside of your luggage to make it readily identifiable by you. For the ladies, a conveniently large travel handbag is a must. It should have an easily accessible compartment for passports, currency, and travel documents. A shoulder strap bag is best for touring, while a simple clutch bag will suffice for evenings out. You will want a place for your camera, cosmetics, and the extra scarf and wrap-around skirt, should you include them. You may want to pack extra canvas carry bags for use with souvenirs. For the men, a backpack (if you like them), fanny pack, or tote-bag will work. A large camera bag can double for this purpose also. Also, be sure you have good luggage name/address tags (filled out!) attached securely on your luggage.

**I will supply brightly colored tags to everyone in the group when we prepare to leave either in Houston, Newark, or upon arrival for use in Israel so our luggage can be easily identified at the hotels.**

Group bags are not always loaded together and the tags make it easier for you to retrieve your belongings. Always put your name on the **inside** as well as the **outside** of your luggage. Even the best tags can fall (or be pulled) off. If you have locks, bring an extra suitcase key and put it someplace other than in your suitcase! Airports are notorious for their treatment of baggage, and loss of luggage is not exceptional. For this latter reason, you should have some kind of travel insurance that covers theft for loss of luggage (the airlines will only replace your bag, not contents, unless you have a certified itemized list of all contents). Such baggage insurance coverage is about \$3-5 per day. Any travel agency can supply this kind of trip insurance, which can also include other coverage such as in-flight life insurance, land life coverage, and trip cancellation insurance (or for emergency interruptions of the tour requiring an early return home). Also trip insurance is helpful if something happens and you cannot go due to illness or because the trip is cancelled.

ALWAYS stand by the bus to make sure your bags are put on the bus!

Personally, we take one rollerboard size bag and one mid-size bag for the two-week trip. My experience is most people overpack.

REMEMBER ONCE PAYMENT HAS BEEN MADE TO ISRAEL,  
THERE IS NO REFUND AVAILABLE

### HOW TO PACK

To travel light, and yet carry everything, one must pack correctly. There are two methods that seasoned travelers recommend:

(1) Pack in layers, starting with the heavier and odd-shaped items, then fill in the remaining spaces with smaller items. A layer of tissue or plastic (garbage bags work well) between garments eliminates unnecessary creasing (so they say!).

(2) Roll articles of clothing into a cylindrical shape and set them in rows next to one another. Clothing rolled in this fashion is not supposed to wrinkle (again, so they say!) As in the first method, fill in all space between items with smaller objects. If you have articles which must lie flat, they can be placed on top. If you pack any breakable items, they should be placed between the layers or rolls. It is best, however, to plan to take all breakables (especially souvenirs) in your carry-on luggage. Save room in your bag for an extra carry-on bag for souvenirs. Pack the items you are going to need first in the most accessible places in your bag. Remember that your bags will be inspected, and everything removed. Don't be too meticulous in packing or you will be frustrated by these unavoidable security checks. In packing your carry-on luggage, consider what items you would be lost without and put them into your carry-on. Usually, you and your luggage will arrive at the same time, but it is best to be prepared for the worst! Medications, glasses, a clean shirt, a change of socks and underwear, a hairbrush, and basic cosmetics should go with you into the cabin. Make sure your tickets, passport, and money are always with you (preferably on your person)!

#### *EXTRA ITEMS NICE TO HAVE ALONG*

The following are extra items that you may find useful, but might not remember to include: Travel alarm clock, Kleenex, prescribed medications, small flashlight (to be used in Hezekiah's Tunnel)—a small headlamp is best, Band aids, favorite shampoo (hotel brands are poor) towelettes/anti-bacteria gel, sewing kit/safety pins, zip-lock storage bags, shower/swim cap, address book, Q-tips, water bottle carrier, multiple vitamins, extra batteries.

*Video recorders/cameras:* In these times of cell phone cameras and recorders people have many different options for filming and recording. Most tour guides are happy to have their lectures recorded, and the tapes will help you organize and review the trip photos and notes when you get home. Much filming or recording causes your battery life to degrade rapidly, so make sure you have extra battery packs and rechargers so you can have plenty of power.

*Hair dryers, curling irons, and other U.S. appliances:* As a reminder, you might need a transformer but usually an adapter plug works for laptop, CPAPs, and other appliances. However, some brands make hair dryers and curling irons with built-in converters. For these, you must flip a switch on the appliance for use in Israel (move switch from 110 to setting closest to 220). If you have these types, you may need only an adapter plug (the two-prong, small, round type). Better Israeli hotels usually have an outlet in the bathroom that will operate U.S. electric razors; however, other appliances will not operate with these outlets. Israel uses the same plug as in eastern Europe. Hotel hair dryers often do not work, so bring your own!

*Toiletries and cosmetics:* Most toiletry items can be purchased at the hotel or a shop near to the hotel, however, keep in mind that U.S. brands can be more expensive in Israel. Time to buy these items may be provided in the evenings, however, most drug stores close before our touring day ends, so again, be prepared, we cannot stop for items along the way as we are on a strict schedule, and such delays may force us to miss touring certain sites! It is best to bring an ample supply of

your favorite brands, and maybe even some luxury brands—spoil yourself a little on this trip (it helps reduce the stress of other unavoidable inconveniences).

*Hangers for clothing:* The hotels will supply these, but they are usually permanently fixed in the closet, so if you want to hand-wash clothing and hang them up for drip-dry, you will need to include some from home.

*Sleep masks and ear plugs:* Bring these if you are sensitive to light or noise when sleeping. We do everything we can to minimize these issues in our room assignments, however, sometimes it is impossible to totally eliminate bothersome sounds (such as Moslem calls to prayer on loudspeakers at early hours of the morning). Also, these will be useful for in-flight comfort, as you will encounter sunlight (and probably an in-flight movie!) during your normal nighttime hours as we move across time zones.

*A one-size-fits-all stopper for bathroom sink:* While our hotels will have such, if we were to use a Kibbutz it may not (not applicable unless you have been informed at the time you sign up for your trip that we will be in Kibbutzim). If you plan on washing clothes in your room, you may need this. It is my practice to wash clothes at least a couple of times during the tour.

*Extra pair of eyeglasses or a copy of your prescription:* There are optometrists available; however, you will have to miss part of the tour to secure their services. Better to be prepared! Also include any equipment needed to clean contact lenses or to repair glasses (hinges, nose pieces, etc.).

*Any medication you take regularly:* As well as standard pain and nausea/diarrhea control items such as aspirin, Kaopectate, Lomotil, Pepcid, Advil, and cough drops. There is no cause for concern about food or water in Israel, but some people have a bit of discomfort from any change in water. Note about packing liquids: If you plan on taking any items that contain liquid, remember that liquids tend to expand at high altitudes. Put liquids in plastic containers, filled only 3/4 full, and use screw on lids instead of pop-on or cork lids. For greater safety, put all liquid containers in plastic bags (just in case of spills). The plastic bags will also be useful for storing damp washcloths, bathing suits, and shoes. Remember that in the US, you may not have liquids in your carry-on bags exceeding 3 oz.

*Bible:* A small, compact or thin-line edition (with your name in it). You will want one with both Testaments. Or if you have a cellphone or iPad, then you should download one that you can reference along the way. If you have a smart device, download a Bible on your device that you can access **while offline**.

*Notebook:* Many people like to bring a notebook or travel diary to keep daily notes or jot down facts along the way. Be sure to include pens and/or pencils.

*Other useful items:* Zip-lock bags (noted above) have 1,001 uses, so bring a bunch along. Also bring super glue, which fixes many various breakdowns. We've used it on everything from glasses to teeth! It can also help repair rubber soles that may split from the shoe during walking. Consider bringing scotch tape, small tools, an extra toothbrush, extra shoelaces, and nail polish for runs in nylons.

*VOLTAGE CONVERTERS:* Because of the difference in electrical current, if you are taking a shaver, travel iron, hair dryer, contact heat-cleaning unit, etc., you may need a converter and adapter in your hotel and/or guesthouse room. I don't think I have ever had to use a converter, only the plug adapter that has two round plugs. Sometimes the hotel can supply you with one just ask the Concierge at the front desk. However, for convenience you can buy your own in the States (a small one that works well might cost around \$20–30). Ask for an adapter plug set and transformer that can be used with 50 cycle–220 voltage circuits (ours is 60/110). Voltage converters are available at most discount electronics stores or Amazon. The converter converts the 220 voltage of the Middle East to 110 for American electronics and the adapter fits the plugs in the Middle Eastern walls.

*MEDICATIONS:* Please remember that it is your responsibility to take all medications as prescribed! If you are taking medication that is necessary for your health, be sure to get a separate written prescription from your doctor and take it along in addition to the bottle of medication you are carrying. Keep all medication in your flight or carry-on bag, as your stowed luggage may be kept for inspection, checked through to your ultimate destination, or delayed in transit.

*HEALTH REQUIREMENTS:* No vaccinations, shots, or inoculations are required for travel to Israel. However, if you are behind on your basic inoculations (especially your DPT shot) you might want to update them. A good stress-formula vitamin supplement is also suggested.

### FLIGHT INFORMATION

\*\*Travel insurance is mandatory. You can get this through your insurance provider. Recently I have used Redpoint (<https://redpointtravelprotection.com>), however, I think that you might want to investigate a policy that allows for cancellation for any reason. In this world of Covid mandates, I think I would prefer to spend the extra money in case at the last minute the airline or Israel makes a policy change. As of now, all Covid restrictions have been lifted for several months.

You will be notified separately of our flight itinerary. The main group will depart Houston to Newark the morning of June 6, 2023 at 9:35 AM arriving in Newark at 2:13 PM. We have a very short 2 hours to change planes and go through a second security for the Israel-bound flight departing at 4:20 PM.

We will arrive in Israel at 9:55 AM the next day at Ben Gurion Airport. We will meet our tour guide as we exit with our bags and then proceed to the bus. We will travel to one site before heading north toward Caesarea by the Sea. Lunch will be around 1 PM.

1 UA1524Q 06JUN TU IAHEWR\*HK40 935A 213P  
 2 UA 84Q 06JUN TU EWRTL\*HK40 420P 955A  
 3 UA 91Q 18JUN SU TLVEWR\*HK40 1125P 415A\  
 4 UA 492Q 19JUN MO EWR IAH\*HK40 600A 836A\  
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*Time differential:* The time in Israel is 7 hours ahead of Eastern Daylight Time, 8 hours ahead of Central Daylight Time, and 10 hours ahead of Pacific Daylight Time. Remember this when calling home! Flying time non-stop to Tel-Aviv from Newark takes a little more than 10 hours, and because of the change in time zones and the speed of the plane, there will only be 2 to 2-1/2 hours of night sky! Some say that Melatonin (available as tablets at most store pharmacies) helps with jet lag if

you take it for 3 days before departure and 3 days after arrival. Also, in order to minimize the affects of jet lag, we will not allow you to sleep immediately when we get to Israel. It is always best to follow the country's time schedule to properly adjust!

We arrive in Tel Aviv in the morning around 9:55 and after a short time in Tel Aviv will drive north to Caesarea by the Sea. Along the way we will visit a couple of sites before arriving at our hotel in the afternoon. And remember, the time you lose going over you gain coming home, so you will practically get home the same day you leave Israel!

*Returning flights to the United States:* Our return flight from Tel Aviv requires us to be at the airport 3 hours prior to the 11:25 PM departure (thus arriving at the airport at 8:15 PM.). Once at the terminal, be prepared to wait in line for an hour and face a thorough Israeli security check!

\*\*Those not travelling with the main group need to notify Connie of your separate schedule and she will notify our travel agent in Israel to work out those details.

*Domestic returning flights:* Once you arrive in Newark, those continuing on to Houston will need to move fast as we have just under two hours to retrieve our baggage, recheck it through to Houston, and move on through security. I advise everyone to get [TSA PreCheck](#) to facilitate this. Upon arrival in the U.S., you will have to pass through U.S. customs. If you have not purchased more than \$400 (this amount increases periodically) worth of goods you have nothing to declare. You may also have nothing to declare if the items you purchased are for religious or educational purposes. A lot of what you buy on this tour could qualify in this way—but let your conscience be your guide! After you have made this qualification and deduction, you should only list the amount in excess of \$400 (see more below). On this amount you will have to pay taxes, even if they are gifts. If you have another flight within the U.S., you are responsible for transferring your luggage to this flight.

*Security and airport taxes:* Airlines and the airport have an additional charge for taxes, security, and fuel which are beyond my control and uncertain until such time as the tickets are purchased. This was briefly mentioned in the brochure you received. I have estimated approximately \$642 USD per person, which is included in the overall cost. This has increased slightly from our original projection and might increase again. I will inform you as soon as our travel agent informs me, approximately a month to two months prior to departure. If there is an additional charge beyond what you have already paid, please be sure to send this in as soon as possible.

### **ALL ABOUT MONEY**

Only you know your spending habits (and limits!). The tour price provides your basic necessities (breakfast & dinner), but you will need additional money for lunch, snacks, bottled water, soft drinks, and beverages that are not included with meals. This could average between \$20–25 per person per day. In Israel, the local currency is the New Israeli Shekel (NIS) that can be used, although U.S. dollars are acceptable in most shops. When you do use dollars, do not expect to always receive U.S. dollars as change in return. Shopkeepers will do this, if possible, but coin change will always be in local coin (as foreign banks only deal with paper money).

If using traveler's checks (see below) you can also ask for change in U.S. dollars. Traveler's checks are difficult to cash these days. Also, be aware that many merchants do not like traveler's checks because they get less money in conversion from the banks, and at times they are very inconvenient

to use or find a place to cash. If you plan to purchase items such as gold jewelry, diamonds, original art, antiquities, ancient coins, tapestries, carpets, olive wood, brass, or ceramics, you should use credit cards. The merchant pays a higher price to accept the card and may want to pass this on to you, but you could negotiate this into the final price. I have found it more convenient to get cash using my credit card in an ATM, and a better exchange rate. However, you must be on your guard for identity thieves there as in the U.S.

*Extra Expenses:* The following may constitute extra expenses:

Beverages: not included with meals: \$15 per day. This includes bottled water and soft drinks at each meal or rest stop, which cost about \$1–2 a piece (iced tea in some better hotels may cost as much as \$2–4); in Europe, the Mediterranean and the Middle East, drinks at meals are always extra.

Remember that **you will need to drink a lot to avoid dehydration**, so the money will be well spent! These may be charged to your room in the hotel. You will have to settle the bill at checkout. Please do this early, so that you do not delay the tour group at departure!

Lunch/Snacks: Approximately \$15–\$20 per day per person. It is usually recommended that you eat a snack at rest stops mid-morning (and afternoon), and a light lunch. Magnum Bars are ubiquitous!!! This will help you keep up your energy for continued walking. In the evenings at the coffee shops and outdoor cafes you will probably exceed your budget—you just can't help yourself! It is possible to pack something small from the breakfast buffet—but only if you are discreet since the whole group doing this might appear to be pillaging the restaurant!

Taxi fare: Although it is possible to walk to places of interest from most of our hotels and a hotel shuttle may also be available, if we should have a free day in Jerusalem, you may want to use a local taxi to go to distant parts of the city. This is also necessary if you plan to stay out late in the city, the easiest way back to the hotel will be a taxi. There are *specials* which are for private hire for a higher price or *irregulars* which can be called by asking the bell captain for this courtesy or simply hailing one if downtown. It is best to ask the driver to use the meter, though in some cases a negotiated fee for a small group is better, but at any rate a group will split the metered fare. You do not have to tip the driver, and be sure that he gives you correct change.

From our Jerusalem hotel the Old City is a manageable walk. For other locations you can ride the tram. You can use a credit card to purchase tickets. It's a lot easier to do that than feeding coins and paper into the machine with the whole group waiting on you. I will teach all of you how to get your tickets on the first night in Jerusalem.

*Traveler's checks & currency exchange:* I usually **do not** recommend traveler's checks anymore because they have become more difficult to use. If you want to carry traveler's checks for your protection, keep records of your check numbers separate from your checks and leave a list of numbers at home also. American Express, Bank of America, VISA, Citicorp, and Thomas Cook are checks that will be accepted easily. Checks in \$20–\$50 denominations are the best and safest way to carry your money when traveling. You may cash U.S. traveler's checks in some shops that serve tourists. Traveler's checks have become more inconvenient to use in recent years.

For the past 20 years I have found that it is best to get local currency by using an ATM, but do not use a debit card. I have a second credit card which I only use when travelling internationally. In the unfortunate event of attempted fraud, make sure you bring a back-up card.

Remember also that wherever you change currency there is a charge for converting money both into and from the local currency. However, that charge will usually be given in the currency of the country. In addition to cash and traveler's checks, other methods of payment are possible. While not a general policy, personal checks are often accepted, with proper identification, at many shops (always ask first!). Credit cards may also be used. However, a warning about credit cards is in order. Unfortunately, certain stores in the Old City are noted for poor business practices. If you use credit cards, be sure you get and save the receipt. This will protect you in case of a problem. Be sure and check your monthly statement when you receive it to be sure there was no confusion (there rarely is) about the conversion rate and you were charged dollars instead of the local currency (unless the item is quoted and paid in dollars). We will discuss this subject in greater detail in Israel.

*NB: Some banks, notably Chase, put such extreme security controls on their cards that it may not be possible to use them for ATM purposes in Israel. I have had such experiences with Chase specifically in the past, have warned people about this, and been ignored to their great distress. I have horror stories. Chase will tell you it works, but all you need is one experience trapped across town in Kiev in a snowstorm with only large US bills to realize Chase vice-presidents cannot override their security protocols. No one likes to walk miles in those conditions! Unfortunately, I have also had a credit card ID theft occur overseas. I therefore recommend that you take cash or a prepaid Visa card from which you can withdraw cash from an ATM. But verify this before using it. Unfortunately, I have discovered that the only way I can make sure I have cash is to take cash with me.*

### ALL ABOUT SHOPPING

**There will be designated time for shopping. Please shop only during these times,** as the other times are scheduled for seeing sights and by shopping during those times it takes time away from the tour.

When you travel to Israel with us, we encourage you to get to know the people of the land. One good way to do this is by shopping. You will enjoy talking to shop keepers, absorbing the sights and sounds of the busy streets, roaming through the oriental bazaars, spending some leisure time indulging in a Magnum bar, or a pastry and coffee at a sidewalk café, and seeking out that special gift for a friend or relative back home. Shopping for souvenirs is not only an exciting experience in the culture of the lands we will visit, but can also be an opportunity to buy ahead for birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas, etc. They are special gifts that carry with them not only the exotic, but also the remembrance of the spiritual events associated with the places of their origin. You will find a variety of items to buy that are unique to each country and less expensive than in the U.S.

Biblical period antiquities are now in high demand since there are new government policies (especially in Israel) that are restricting dealers from acquiring new finds, and therefore prices are higher for remaining merchandise. Most shops provide a certificate of authenticity. Even so, you take a chance that the item you purchase is not genuine. Olive wood manger scenes are another item purchased frequently for display at Christmas. Whatever size you buy can be shipped home for you

(most arrive safely). We may also make available for order items such as a necklace with your name in gold or silver in Hebrew or Arabic that will be delivered to our hotel at an appointed time. These are usually good deals, but if you make an order, you should plan on paying for the items, even if you find them cheaper elsewhere. Be extremely careful of vendors on the streets or at sites trying to force items (usually beaded necklaces or picture postcards) on you. Eye contact, even to be friendly, means interest in their product. Ignore them and do not ever open a purse or show them money. Above all, enjoy browsing and buying, but remember some of the best souvenirs are the pictures you will carry home in your head!

Also, there are pick-pocket thieves so keep your cell phones in a protected pocket. Several years ago, two of us had our cell phones stolen, so be very careful. Since then, a vendor has made “pick-pocket proof” clothing, I have one of these in zip-off trousers, which are very good.

*Where and how to shop:* \*\*My policy is for the group to stay together. There will be specific times when we can shop. At other times we need to stick together to maintain our schedule.\*\*

\*\*\* My experience tells me that if you plan to purchase rugs or antiquities, do not do so unless you are an expert and know exactly what you are doing. I know of several people who used reputable antiquities dealers who were still taken in. It is credible that even the antiquities dealer was taken in, counterfeiting antiquities is a major industry in the Middle East and even experts may be duped.

A word must be said concerning the place and procedure of purchases. First, as to the place for souvenirs, it is suggested that you obtain the advice of the tour director or tour guide. While in the Old City you will encounter local bazaars or *shuks* (open-air markets) where you will get better prices on your selections. However, we would not recommend buying serious jewelry or antiquities from these places. From sad experiences we know gold sometimes turns green, stones are glass, antiquities are faked, and the merchant has vanished! For this reason, we will make an opportunity to visit internationally recognized stores for these purchases. Wherever you shop, compare prices. However, if you find something you really want, it is better to buy it than wait for a better price and lose the item if it cannot be found.

In Israel when you purchase something, ask if there is Value Added Tax (V.A.T.). If so, be sure and get a V.A.T. form and receipt that records the amount of V.A.T.! The amount must be at least \$100.00 at the same store for the V.A.T. to count. You will be able to get your V.A.T. back only at the Tel-Aviv airport and only at a bank upstairs after completing security check-in and only if you keep the V.A.T. forms and receipts together. REMEMBER, YOU HAVE BEEN ADVISED!

## **BARTERING**

Bargaining is the expected procedure in shopping in the Middle East. You will have an opportunity to try your skills at this in the bazaars of the Old City. You must learn not to be intimidated or settle for a price if it is not what you want to pay or feel good about paying. If you have found an item at another shop and can record the price and location, you can exercise great leverage in bargaining with this information. Don't be afraid to walk away from something you want. The owner will probably follow you out and offer you a much lower price. When bargaining, you must remember that the merchants will try to make you feel as though you have cost them money while in effect, they have tripled their profit! I have found that in bargaining with Arabs, they will not settle on a



price unless it is the one they have finally suggested (saving face is all important). Once they have made you an offer that is reasonable, you should agree on it with no further argument. Be sure that in every perspective purchase you thoroughly examine the article or object of interest to evaluate its quality. Items may have been broken and glued (especially olive wood objects), poorly stitched together (most t-shirts are of very inferior quality, especially in the Old City), discolored, cracked, missing a part, or uneven. No one will be responsible for the quality of your purchases but you! Inordinately expensive shops, such as those at airports and hotels, have fixed prices. Many of the items found here are imported and the overhead is tremendous. Buy here only if absolutely necessary. It is also recommended that you totally avoid street peddlers. They are a nuisance and a hindrance to the group, generally have nothing of real value, and may actually be pickpockets! NEVER EXPOSE YOUR MONEY TO PEDDLERS!

## WHEN TO SHOP

Your tour has been designed with scheduled shopping at selected places and times. We have planned this trip to maximize our touring; however, we do want you to have FUN! It helps to shop with an experienced shopper (someone who has traveled to the countries before or one of the tour hosts). Compare prices between vendors and then attempt to bargain them down to a lower price. One reason we restrict shopping is because in some places the merchants, and especially young entrepreneurs, will follow you endlessly and hound you when you wish to see the sights. Another reason is that we want time to see the sites; that is what you paid for! Remember that while we are on tour that you must discipline yourself to be quite stern with peddlers and ignore them completely. We will never allow these people inside the bus and be warned again that many of these people (even kids) may be pickpockets!

## CUSTOMS DECLARATION

Upon our arrival in Israel, a representative land operator will meet us. He will help us get our luggage through customs and to our bus. This will not take long, and generally our entire tour group will pass straight through the customs line under the sign that reads *Nothing to Declare*. At this point you will be outside the Ben-Gurion terminal and will proceed directly to our bus to meet our tour guide and driver. When you return to the U.S., you will pass through U.S. customs. You must declare all articles acquired aboard in your possession in excess of \$400 (periodically this increases). A form will be provided on the plane for this purpose (the disembarkation card). Therefore, keep a record of your purchases as you make them.

By law, you are required to open all baggage for inspection if so requested. Try to pack articles that were acquired abroad separately and keep sales receipts handy. You may each legally bring home \$400 worth of duty-free purchases. "Unsolicited Gifts" with a limit of \$50 each may be sent duty-free by mail to the U.S. These gifts must be so marked and have the value listed on the outside of the package. You can send as many parcels as you want, but no more than one per day to the same person. Those gifts do not reduce your \$400 exemption and do not need to be declared to U.S. Customs. Call your nearest U.S. Customs office for information on GSP (Generalized System of Preferences), whereby several countries (over 140, including Egypt and Israel) enjoy a duty-free treatment for certain articles purchased by U.S. citizens, provided they were manufactured in that particular country. These purchases also do not affect your basic \$400 exemption.

## **FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD!**

Leave your American tastes at home and venture a bit! Israeli breakfasts are great; however, don't be surprised to see a salad bar-type spread for breakfast! Water on the airlines and in the hotels is safe to drink, but you should buy bottled water on the bus or from local shops to carry with you at sites. If any place we visit is questionable, we will advise you ahead of time. All mineral water and bottled carbonated drinks, which are similar to those in the U.S., are safe and available most everywhere. Many fruits and vegetables are available and delicious. But be very, very sure to wash these products carefully (with soap & water) if you buy it on the street (you probably do this with similar items bought from your local grocery store). You may want to bring packets of instant coffee or tea from home, or your favorite artificial sweetener (Sweet & Low will be available in Israel) and other things you enjoy, but don't expect to find away from the States. International customs laws forbid you to bring any fresh fruits or vegetables into another country, so stick to packaged snacks. Remember, if you have any special food requirements, let us know in advance as we must make the request known to the airline food providers and hotels.

### **KOSHER FOOD: WHAT IS IT?**

Most hotels and many restaurants in Israel serve Kosher food. Jewish dietary laws prescribe which foods are allowed and which are taboo. They try to follow the Biblical laws as to which animals are clean and how meat is to be prepared. Meat must come only from animals with cloven hoofs that chew the cud, such as cows, sheep, goats, and deer. Fish must have fins and easily removable scales, for instance carp, trout, salmon, or herring. This leaves sea creatures such as shrimp, squid, lobster, and oysters out of the Kosher Jewish diet. The common varieties of poultry, such as chicken, duck, and turkey, are permitted and a popular staple in Israeli diet.

A crucial point in Kosher cooking and serving of food is the strict separation of meat and milk. These must not be cooked together, nor eaten together, and all utensils used in their preparation and consumption must be kept strictly separate. The separation of meat and milk extends to all dairy products as well. The reason for the strict separation of meat and milk is found in Deuteronomy 14:21 which says, "You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk," which Jewish law interprets as a "combination of the two in any form" (such as in the stomach). To assure that this law is not broken, preparation and consumption of meat and milk is kept entirely separate. In practical terms, this means no bacon, ham, or sausage with eggs (although you can have fish!), no cheese on burgers or a burger with a milkshake or grated cheese and meat pizzas! This also means no coffee with cream except at breakfast, since breakfast is always dairy (however, a non-dairy creamer may be provided, or you may bring your own). Kosher hotels either have two dining rooms, one for meat meals and the other for dairy dishes, or alternate meat and dairy at different meals. The advantage of a kosher restaurant is the rich dairy, fruit, and vegetable dishes (of which Israel has an enormous variety) you will experience. Those restaurants that meet the standards of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, where hygiene, cooking, and service are concerned, are listed as such and display the tourism emblem.

## **MEALS IN JERUSALEM**

All of the evening meals in Jerusalem are part of the cost of the trip. On this trip we will stay at the Dan Panorama Jerusalem. I encourage people to take at least one night to eat out and walk around the city. We can make some recommendations for restaurants.

## **MIDDLE EASTERN FOOD**

In Israel you can eat your way around the world. About half of the population has its roots in over 100 different countries. Some of them have brought their original cuisine with them and dish it up in their own distinctive restaurants. The native born (Sabras) are not to be outdone either, and they are represented in restaurants serving the food of the Land.

## **THE MID-EAST FEAST**

At our hotels and outside restaurants, the dining style is a multi-course meal. Before you even have a chance to look at the menu, every inch of table space is taken up by a dozen different salads, give or take a few depending on the season. Some of the more notable are cucumber in yogurt, pumpkin salad, fried eggplant, and eggplant with sesame sauce, and, of course, the Middle Eastern staple, humus—a paste of chick-peas with olive oil. To attack these in true style, you wipe them up with pieces of flat, round bread or pieces torn from a large sheet of thin bread neatly folded on a plate. When the waiter spies a flagging interest in the panoply of salads, he appears once more, balancing a new array of dishes. Now it is the turn of the stuffed vegetables. If you succeed in polishing off vine leaves, eggplant, artichoke stalks, carrots, peppers, and courgettes, all stuffed with rice, you will be stuffed yourself. Leave room for a special delicacy sometimes accompanying this course: kubeh—spheroid meatballs coated with cracked wheat. The meat lovers, who have been neglected up to this point, get their chance now. They have a choice of kebab, shish kebab, roast lamb, lamb chops, and even lamb testicles, all served with steaming rice. Now comes the moment when the gourmards regret their gluttony. More prudent eaters will have kept an eye on the luscious display of sweetmeats and regulated their intake accordingly. Baklava is only one of these delicious confections made with nuts, almonds, dates, and honey. The traditional conclusion of this is a tiny cup of Turkish coffee spiced with cardamom.

## **CAMERA & PHOTOGRAPHIC SUPPLIES**

A good reliable camera is a must! Cameras and video cameras may be used almost everywhere except some museums. You will be able to purchase excellent sets of color slides of the sites we visit in each country (and this may be a consideration to some as to spare money and photographic supplies), however, there is nothing like personalized pictures (i.e., pictures with you in them!), and for these you need a camera. In today's world of digital cameras running on batteries, I find it a smart idea to have at least one extra battery for those long days with lots of picture taking. You may also want to consider taking extra SD or micro-SD memory cards. (You can't have too many batteries or memory cards!) Taking photos on your smart phone is also an option. Just make sure you have enough space in your phone's memory to accommodate all of the photos/videos you want to take! It's a good idea to clear off unnecessary apps, MP3s, and photos from your phone before departing for Israel.

## **TOUR ITINERARY**

The tour itinerary is available in the brochure.

## **PROTOCOL ON THE TOUR**

Conduct on a tour means more than the reputation of a group of people: it affects the image that locals have of our native country. We are representatives of our country, and our actions abroad do determine in some measure foreign opinion. Remember, most Israelis and many Arabs understand and/or speak English, even though some will pretend they do not. Words of criticism concerning differing standards, or careless mocking of cultural peculiarities will surely be heard. Do not say anything that would reflect negatively upon any country we will visit. It would be most indiscreet to judge a people in their own land. Many of these countries have a far greater sense of national and ethnic pride and religious zeal (and far less tolerance) than the majority of Americans. Remember the words of Ecclesiastes 10:12: “Furthermore, in your bedchamber do not curse a king, and in your sleeping rooms do not curse a rich man, for a bird of the heavens will carry the sound, and the winged creature will make the matter known.”

## **PUNCTUALITY IS IMPORTANT**

A word needs to be said about the pace of the tour. In order to accommodate the available time for inclusion of our itinerary sites, we must maintain a strict schedule. We expect you to get off and on the bus when we so direct, because we are watching our time carefully at each location. You will be provided ample time in which to take photographs of the various sites and scenery. Please do not linger behind and continue to photograph while the rest of the group waits for you. Remember that others have also invested in the sharing of this trip, and it is not considerate or fair to delay the tour for one person even for a brief moment. If a particular site warrants a longer stay, we will decide as a group (because this may mean deleting another site).

Please be prompt to every event of the schedule.

Adequate time will be given to allow you to dress and enjoy breakfast (usually group wake up at 6:00–6:30, breakfast from 7:15–7:45), but everyone must be at the front door of the hotel and completely prepared to go (on the bus by 8:00 sharp) or else the entire day’s schedule may be affected, and we may have to forfeit seeing some site or engaging in an activity as planned. If you need more time to get ready, simply call/ask the front desk to give you a personal wake-up call at the time you choose.

Because a tour must stop at many places in the course of the day, we cannot always allow browsing in tourist shops or snack breaks at any stop. Please come directly to the bus when the general call is made! Please stay with our group at all times during the tour, especially in crowded areas. Be aware of the other members and keep track of friends or family. This is especially important when traversing the narrow winding streets of the Old City. We will have a tour host in the lead and the

rear to assist you along; however, if you get left behind because of straggling, it will be your responsibility to locate and rejoin the group or to return to the hotel! You can get help from Israeli soldiers, police, or shop vendors to order a taxi to take you the next stop on the itinerary or to the hotel.

Our tour features the use of docent mics throughout Israel. Each traveler is provided a headset operated by a battery pack. The speaker will have a headset with a microphone. These headsets allow us a bit more freedom so we can space out a bit more and still hear the speaker. However, do not use this freedom to wander away from the group. It will be your responsibility to keep up with the group.

When the tour director, tour guide, or tour host is speaking, please give him your undivided attention. He may have to compete with other tour guides speaking to other groups at the same spot, though the docent mics/headsets will reduce this interference considerably. Also consider the other members of the tour who will want to hear what is being said. The tour is a learning experience, and we all want to receive the maximum benefit!

## **TOUR GUIDE AND BUS DRIVER**

We will meet our Israeli guides upon arrival in Israel. They will attempt to ensure that every hour spent touring is quality time and a valuable experience. Local guides are proficient in biblical backgrounds as well as the geography, sociology, art, history, archaeology, Middle Eastern culture, as well as Jewish, Muslim, and Christian traditions.

### **Tour Director**

Your tour director is Dr. Robby Dean, Pastor of West Houston Bible Church. Robby has been in the ministry since the mid-seventies. This is his sixth time to lead a trip to Israel and his tenth trip to the lands of the Bible. Since his first trip in 2004 he has spent a large amount of his study time on the history of Israel, the history of the Jews, the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict and many other studies which have been stimulated by and which also enhance these trips to Israel. It is his desire that this trip will stimulate you to a deeper, richer study of God's Word the Bible and especially God's plan for the people of Israel. Robby's co-leader for this tour is Dr. Clay Ward from Tullahoma Bible Church. He is sure to offer additional biblical insights as he teaches lessons at some of the sites.

### **Tour Guide**

Our tour guide will be Amos Garbatski. Amos has worked with Robby on all of our tours. Together they decide the itinerary. One aspect of their relationship they both value is their flexibility. Often and for various reasons, the daily itinerary must be changed on the fly. This is one reason a strict itinerary, especially in the Jerusalem area, is not published beforehand.

## **ADDITIONAL TRAVEL INSTRUCTIONS**

### **Passports and Visas: You Cannot Travel Outside the United States Without a Passport!**

U.S. passports are good for ten years. If you have one, please check to see that it will not expire before our tour ends! It is your responsibility to check your passport to see if it is up-to-date, or to obtain a valid passport. You will need a copy of your birth certificate for this procedure, and some people run into difficulties at this point. If you do not have a birth certificate, for whatever reason, an affidavit signed by qualified witnesses (doctors, clerks, etc.) that have known you since birth (and can testify to citizenship) is required (always check with the Passport Office about the proper procedure). Start the procedure as soon as you think you may be going to travel. Notify your tour host if you are having trouble. Make sure you have it with you when you leave home. Passports should be always kept on your person, not in your luggage, while en route. You will need to show it several times during the travel to and from our destination. Most passports can be replaced if you are prepared. You need the number of your passport and two photos. It is best to make a photocopy of your passport, preferably color, or write down all of your passport information and store in a safe place on the tour (usually with the tour director). If you lose your passport, with this photocopy you can get a new one in about 24 hours from the American Embassy in Israel (Jerusalem). If officials have to wire Washington to get your number from a file, you could easily end up spending most of your trip waiting for the new passport. An entrance visa will be stamped on your passport upon your arrival in each country. Israeli passport control also stamps a separate paper which you can carry in your passport while in Israel and must be surrendered upon your exit from Israel, so keep it in your passport at all times! If you have your passport, we would appreciate your sending us a photocopy of the inside pages (those with your picture and typed information).

On the days we travel into Samaria and Judah (West Bank) we will need to carry our passports with us.

### **Before the Trip**

For those still waiting for passports, please bring a copy to us at the airport on the day of departure. If you want to mail us your copy you may send it to: Dean Bible Ministries, attention Brice Burtch, 1500 W. Sam Houston Pkwy. North, Suite 104, Houston, Texas 77043. Please make sure you allow sufficient time for it to arrive prior to departure. Or you can scan or photo a copy and e-mail it to us.

### **For Your Protection**

Preparing to travel to any place other than home always presents concerns, but when the travel is to a foreign land, and especially an unknown and often troubled land, it is important to realize how much has been invested for your complete protection. In this section we will describe the security procedures that Israel constantly enforces to ensure every visitor a safe trip.

### **Security Procedures**

As a passenger traveling in the Middle East, you must be prepared to pass through a security clearance before entering each country and perhaps even at your domestic check-in in the states!

You will certainly have such an inspection on your departure from Tel Aviv. The purpose of these security checks is to make sure that your flights are safe, which is something you surely want! The security agents are not employees of the airline, but law enforcement officers. Their manner is very business-like and may seem stern to you. They don't smile a lot but are usually courteous. Their job is to keep people with evil intentions off the aircraft that you are about to board. Therefore, be prepared to answer their questions and assist them in every way. At times, their questions may seem irrelevant or repetitious, but don't get irritated, and don't offer unnecessary information—just answer and remember they are trying to protect you. You will be asked if you have accepted gifts to bring to the country as well as other questions. Don't be nervous; just say yes or no and give only necessary information, and only when asked. The security person asking you these questions will then go talk with another security person who has talked to others in our group or a central officer, to compare statements. This, again, is for your safety. So, enjoy your trip and consider your security checks as part of the adventure of traveling abroad. They usually make great stories when you get home!

### **Is it Presently Safe to Travel to the Middle East?**

Tens of millions of tourists over the last several years have walked where you will walk. Traveling to Israel is incredibly safe! On every tour I hear surprised exclamations from people who feel more safe and secure than they do at home. The security in Israel is universally recognized as the best in the world. It should be remembered that travel anywhere is a risk and in our own country we have had terrorists acts in Waco, Oklahoma, Texas, Colorado, the World Trade Center in New York, San Bernadino, and at many post offices, churches, and schools. Furthermore, our own big cities are much less safe than most of the cities in Israel that we will visit.

Still, this is a troubled region. Rest assured that if any significant danger should erupt before the tour, we will not be allowed to travel. However, travel at the present time is considered safe in normal touring regions, and our local land operators will be monitoring our itinerary and the local conditions daily to maximize our safety in travel.

Since tourism is a major economy in Israel, the government takes great pains to take very good care of their tourists! Every precaution is taken to guarantee your safety and comfort. We will have a private coach that is locked at all times with the driver guarding it. We never allow unauthorized persons on board. Because we do want to preserve a safe climate for the whole group, we may have to deviate from our planned itinerary at times, but only if necessary and then with suitable substitutions. With these safeguards, there should be no safety concerns in making this trip.

Most tourists often come expecting anxiety and are amazed at the measure of peace and the sense of God's presence they feel. If family or friends are still concerned, tell them to try reading through some of the Psalms and lay all fears aside. You can almost depend on some unsettling news being aired just before you leave for Israel (it always seems to happen!). But if you feel led to come to the Promised Land, then trust God's promises, follow His Will and let nothing discourage you. Give thanks for the protective security procedures, and plan to enjoy yourself! You will travel and return from Israel glad you made the trip and feeling that it had been most relaxing and secure throughout.

## U. S. Travel Advisories

The U.S. State Department issues advisories for travel to different parts of the world. Conflicts erupt suddenly and much as we would like to forewarn you, details may escape us, or due to time constraints, may prove difficult to communicate to you. The State Department always is issuing travel advisories for Israel. (Same thing for the last 8 years in Ukraine).

## Security Suggestions

Leave at home an extra photocopy of your passport that includes the number, date, and place of issue. If you lose your passport and your photocopy, this back-up copy can be faxed to your hotel or the American Embassy from the States. Also, you might leave a copy of your itinerary, your insurance policy, and a list of hotel addresses and telephone numbers with family or friends. In addition, leave at home any fears about traveling abroad! God is in control, and there is little more that we can do than we have done to assure our safety and comfort. Look forward to getting to know the people in our group and enjoying the wonderful experience ahead in the world of the Bible.

## COMMUNICATION WITH HOME

Our travel agent in Jerusalem is Lindy Lazarow, with Blue and White Travel, and she can assist your business or family in contacting you should an emergency arise. **Please remember Israel is 8 hours ahead of us in Houston and do not call when it is 2 or 3 in the morning there.**

Lindy's phone number is: Cell: 972-50-8873227  
Fax: 972-2-5333471; [www.blueandwhitetours.com](http://www.blueandwhitetours.com)

If you use e-mail, you may contact Lindy at: [lindy@bluewhiteisrael.com](mailto:lindy@bluewhiteisrael.com). But please only use this for emergencies. **If you have questions, please e-mail Dr. Dean via Connie Balthrop ([cjs.balthrop@gmail.com](mailto:cjs.balthrop@gmail.com)) rather than Lindy so that Lindy does not get overwhelmed with e-mails.** They are our agents for the entire trip so someone will be able to get in touch with us at all times. While in Israel they will be in constant radio and cellphone contact also. The hotels that you will be staying in Israel are as follows, along with their phone numbers. Breakfast and dinner are included at ALL hotels on the trip.

### Main trip:

Ramada Hadera	972-9-886-6700
Kibbutz Nof Ginosaur (near Tiberius-2 nights)	972-4-6700-320
Dan Panorama Jerusalem (Jerusalem-8 nights)	972-2-659-9999

## CAN I USE MY CELLPHONE IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

Yes, you can use your cellphone. At some point you might be able to purchase an Israeli SIM card for your phone. But most of the buses have Wi-Fi<sup>®</sup> on them. And most places also have Wi-Fi<sup>®</sup> you can use. Otherwise, if you don't want to run up huge cellphone bills, **keep it in airplane mode.** Once you board the plane in Newark leave it in airplane mode until you return to Newark. While at



the hotel or on the bus, you can turn on the Wi-Fi® feature of your phone and you'll be able to send/receive text messages and e-mails (if you have that capability) while traveling around Israel. You can even make phone calls (or Facetime calls) back home from the hotel using the Wi-Fi® connection from the hotel (remember—leave the phone in airplane mode!).

Sometimes the hotels are crowded with other tour groups and Wi-Fi access is very limited and/or sporadic. Just don't count on that Wi-Fi access always being available.

At Nof Ginosar, Wi-Fi is only available in the lobby, not in the individual rooms.

### **“LANDLINE” PHONE CALLS HOME**

You can dial “18” for overseas information. It is cheaper to arrange to have those at home call you, but warn them of the time difference. Phones will be available in your room at the hotel (calls from rooms are very expensive), and during our tour in the field at most of our sites. Public telephones in Israel are operated by phone cards with pre-set amounts (as in the U.S.), available from hotel gift shops. If you use your own calling card, ask for an AT&T operator or calling card company from the local operator. Hotel calls will be added to your bill and will often charge their own per minute fee in addition to the toll call charge. It is always best to ask the hotel's policy and costs on charges to avoid misunderstanding at checkout.

### **ACCESSING E-MAIL FROM THE MID-EAST**

Some e-mail providers block access to your e-mail account when trying to access it from the Middle East. Verizon is one. Others may do the same. If you **need** to communicate via e-mail from the Middle East, it would be advisable to check with your e-mail provider before departure to see if this might be an issue. If you have a provider like Verizon, you may want to set up an e-mail account with Google, Yahoo, etc. and conduct your e-mail communications through them rather than your regular (Verizon-type) e-mail account. We didn't have a problem with Comcast or Gmail last trip. Another option is to utilize a VPN app that allows you to select a USA-based server. Then it looks as if you're signing into your e-mail from the U.S.

### **LANGUAGE**

Almost everyone speaks English, so Israel is easy on American visitors. You will have to listen a bit more carefully as accents differ. Remember your regional American accent is not necessarily “right,” it is just with which you are familiar. You will hear Hebrew, Arabic, Russian, and maybe even some Yiddish, and Amharic. Try to master some of the Hebrew phrases you will be taught and practice them when you have opportunity. Natives will appreciate your efforts and will help you by correcting your pronunciation. Be sensitive to the social and cultural differences inherent in these languages! If in doubt just say, “hello!” The tour director and guide will teach you useful phrases and expressions on the tour. Use these in greeting the guide and driver daily, and they will be quite impressed by your diligence, and you will learn this small part of the language much more quickly (use it or lose it, as they say!) A key word is *todah*, i.e., Thank you. Remember that English is often well understood, even when someone does not speak it very well. This will be helpful to know when trying to communicate and also to safeguard you from saying something in front of someone

you shouldn't! On this and below you will find Beatitudes for Travelers and Ten Commandments for Travelers. Read these and take them to heart! You might add an eleventh commandment: "Every day of thy tour thou shalt do at least one kind thing for thy roommate or for a fellow traveler!" May we all abide by this advice, which is quite biblical (Gal. 6:10; Eph. 2:10; cf. Phil. 2:3–7, 14; Col. 3:12–15; Heb. 10:24; 1 Jn. 3:16–18).

### **BEATITUDES FOR TRAVELERS**

Blessed are those who do what the natives do, but remember to use American friendliness. Blessed are those who can wait and smile, for they shall surely enjoy themselves. Blessed are the ones who seek to speak in the local language, for they will be remembered. Blessed are those who keep on time, for they will not be left! Blessed are those who pray each day for their trip, for they will find His peace.

### **TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR THE TRAVELER**

Thou shalt not expect to find things as thou hast them at home for thou hast left home to find things different!

Thou shalt not take anything too seriously, for a carefree mind is the beginning of a fine vacation.

Thou shalt not let the other tourists get on thy nerves, for thou art paying out good money to enjoy thyself!

Remember thy passport so thou knowest where it is at all times (never in thy luggage), for a person without a passport is a person without a country!

Remember to take only one-half of the clothes you think you will need and twice the amount of money!

Remember if we were expected to stay in one place we would have been created with roots!

Thou shalt not worry. He that worrieth hath no pleasure. Few things are ever fatal.

Thou shalt not judge the people of a country by the one person with whom thou hast had trouble!

Thou shalt not make thyself too obviously American when in Rome (Israel), do somewhat as the Romans (Israelis) do!

Remember thou art a guest in every land and they that treateth their hosts with respect are treated as honored guests!