

GOING DEEPER

ACTS Israel Tour 2018

DAY ELEVEN: ANCIENT AND MODERN TRAGEDY

Today we dip into history, both ancient and modern, in both cases with some experience of tragedy as well as life.

In the morning we will dig deeper into the background of Jewish life in Jerusalem in the time of Jesus. We will learn more about the rebellions that ripped through the first century, eventually resulting in the complete expulsion of the Jews from Jerusalem.

In the afternoon we will visit Yad Vahsem, the world Holocaust memorial museum and place of remembrance. Our afternoon will end early when we return to our hotel, and you will have the balance of the afternoon and evening free to explore as you choose on your own or in groups with others from the tour.

Key Thought for Day Eleven

Yesterday, we completed our visits to sites related to the ministry of Jesus. Tomorrow we will visit sites related to the ministry of Peter and Paul in the years following the resurrection of Jesus. Use today as a space that will help you develop a fuller sense of daily and family life in Jerusalem in those ancient times. This was the world Jesus was born into. The experience in the morning of upper class life in Jerusalem in His time will also give you some insight into the collision between Jesus, the poor and uneducated but enormously popular preacher from Galilee and the educated, wealthy, and elite ruling classes of Jerusalem who controlled the political and religious systems of the city.

The Jewish Quarter and Cardo

We begin with a visit to the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. The Jewish

Quarter today is a vibrant hub of Jewish life in the Old City, filled with houses, synagogues, shops and restaurants. We will walk through this modern but still ancient part of the city.

As part of our tour we will visit the Cardo, an excavated 150 meter stretch of the ancient city that will give us a good visual idea of what the streets were like in ancient times. The Cardo Maximus was designed as a central street of Aelia Capitolina, the name the Romans gave to Jerusalem after the expulsion of all Jews from the city in AD 136.

Some explanation will help. We have referred often to the destruction of Jerusalem after the rebellion of AD 70. That event, however, was not the last of Jewish resistance to the Romans. In AD 136 a large force of Jews under command of a leader named Bar-Kochva once again rose up against Roman rule. Once again, the Romans brutally put down the rebellion but this time they decreed that Jews could no longer live in Jerusalem. All Jews were expelled and the city was renamed Aelia Capitolina, and established as an official Roman Colony. The Cardo Maximus was designed as the main street of that city.

The Cardo in Jerusalem



The Cardo

The Cardo today is also home to many modern shops and vendors.

Modern shops along the Cardo

The Herodion Quarter

The Herodion Quarter is a museum in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City that provides insight into how the upper class of Jerusalem lived in the time of Jesus. We will be able to walk along platforms above the excavations of six upper class homes from the period of Herod's Temple.

Herodion Quarter excavation and visitor platforms

The Burnt House

The Burnt House is an outstanding example of an archeological site linked to a multi-media reconstruction of life in ancient Jerusalem in the time of Jesus up through the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

The Burnt House is also known as the Kathros House after an inscribed stone weight found in the ruins. The Kathros family, in fact, is mentioned in the Talmud as among the priestly families of Jerusalem.



The Burnt House

The name “Burnt House” comes from the evidence that this palatial home was burned down as part of the destruction of Jerusalem. The multi-media presentation will give us insight into the life of wealthy priestly family as the final destruction approached.

An image from the presentation at the Burnt House

Yad Vashem

A visit to Yad Vashem is one of the most profoundly moving experiences in a visit to Israel.

Some people hesitate to visit Yad Vashem out of concern for the emotional impact it may have. While it is true that a visit to Yad Vashem involves close experience with some of the terrible realities of the Holocaust, the museum is done with great care and sensitivity. Although it does not hide the horror of the Holocaust, its emphasis is on history and remembrance more than brutality. The goal is to educate visitors not to shock or traumatize them. In many respects it is a celebration of survival and life more than death, and there are numerous video screens throughout with testimonies of survivors.

During the Holocaust millions of Jews sent to the death camps were stripped of their names and turned into numbers tattooed on their arms. They died and their ashes were

scattered without burial. It was the Nazi's attempt to eradicate the Jewish people forever. Yad Vashem is a place where those who died are remembered and honoured.

The name is taken from Isaiah 56.5

To them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will endure forever.

One of the ways Yad Vashem does this is through its Hall of Names.

The Hall of Names at Yad Vashem

The dome of the Hall displays pictures of some of the victims, but the true purpose of the Hall of Names is found on the circular shelves around the room. On these shelves are volumes that preserve 2.7 million "Pages of Testimony," every page remembering one of the victims — once again given a name and a place of remembrance.

A "Page of Testimony" in the Hall of Names

The main part of the museum that we will visit is the long triangular structure in the centre of the the aerial view of Yad Vashem below. We enter this hall near the bottom of the picture, journey through the history of the Holocaust within, and then emerge at the top where you see a funnel widening out over the valley.

Aerial view of Yad Vashem

Here is a view of the entrance.

Entrance to the main gallery at Yad Vashem

Once inside, you'll find it is impossible to simply walk ahead. Instead, the gallery reflects the confusion and difficulty of those who went through the Holocaust. It is necessary to cross back and forth through the many side galleries, each illustrating a different aspect of the Holocaust experience.

At this stop, for example, the way forward is blocked by a display of books condemned to be burned by the Nazis. After working your way through the gallery, we arrive at the Hall of Names described above, and exit toward a magnificent view of new life and modern Jerusalem.

Jerusalem overlook at Yad Vashem

The grounds outside the gallery are also important. One exhibit is a cattle car used by the Nazis to transport victims to the camps. The car is perched on a track that leads symbolically to a drop into air — a rail car to nowhere.

The rail car to nowhere at Yad Vashem



[Yad Vashem](#)

We will take our time at Yad Vashem and return to our hotel early in the afternoon where you can rest, if you choose, or walk over to the Old City to explore freely.

Passages to Study for Today

Here are some passages to read as you prepare for Day Three.

- The birth of Jesus as Matthew tells it. Matthew 2: 1-18.
- The birth of Jesus as Luke tells it. Luke 2: 1-20.

Jesus and the Family of Herod

Rulers named Herod figure large in the New Testament. Herod had ten wives and many lovers. The result was a vast, sprawling, feuding family. There are so many of them it can be confusing. The New Testament contains references to six different Herod

- His great grandson, Herod Agrippa II, before whom the Apostle Paul appeared to defend himself against the charges of the Jews (Acts 25 and 26).

Day Ten

Day Twelve