

GOING DEEPER

ACTS Israel Tour 2018

DAY TWELVE: PETER, PAUL, AND MINISTRY TODAY

We begin our day today by travelling into the West Bank region of Samaria where we will visit JH Ranch Israel in the Israeli settlement of Ariel. Then we will return to visit sites significant to the ministry of the Apostles Peter and Paul.

Key Thought for Day Twelve

Today is our last day in Israel and a great time to reflect on what we have seen. Toward the end of the afternoon we will sit on the benches of an ancient theatre in the port city of Caesarea, the port from which Paul set sail on his journey to Rome and imprisonment. As you sit looking west across the sea toward Greece, Italy and Europe, consider that it was from this place that Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, took courage to carry the gospel beyond Israel and the Jewish world. From the port the gospel went around the world, wrapping us into God's great plan of salvation.

JH Ranch Israel

The team at JH Ranch has extended an invitation to our group to visit and learn more about their ministry with Israeli and Arab youth. JH Ranch was founded in 1980 as a Christian youth ministry in Northern California.

After years of success in California, JH extended its ministry to Israel in a unique partnership with Israel's Ministry of Education.

A former colleague of Guy's from Campus Crusade now works with JH Ranch, and he has made it possible for us to visit this unique ministry.



JH Ranch Israel

Tel Aviv

We will pass through the stunningly beautiful modern city of Tel Aviv, a city of commerce and recreation. Tel Aviv is Israel's hub for finance and technology.

Joppa

We stop at the ancient port of Joppa. Joppa is mentioned in Scripture as the place to which Jonah fled.

The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me." But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD. (Jonah 1:1-3)

Later, in the New Testament times, the Apostle Peter was prompted to visit Joppa.

There was a believer in Joppa named Tabitha (which in Greek is Dorcas). She was always doing kind things for others and helping the poor. About this time she became ill and died. Her body was washed for burial and laid in an upstairs room. But the believers had heard that Peter was nearby at Lydda, so they sent two men to beg him, "Please come as soon as possible!" (Acts 9:36-28)



Joppa

Caesarea Maritime

The highlight of our travel today will be the magnificent ancient port of Caesarea on the

Mediterranean coast. It is often called Caesarea Maritime to distinguish it from Caesarea Philippi that we visited earlier in the north of Israel. (Pronounce it as “Sees-uh-rhea.”)



Caesarea Maritime

Caesarea was yet another of the massive public works projects initiated by King Herod the Great.

Columns from Herod's palace at Caesarea

It was a marvel of engineering in its day. Herod's engineers pioneered the use of an early type of hydraulic concrete that could be poured and hardened under water. In the aerial view below you can see the arm of the old port extending into the sea.

Herod even had a fresh water swimming pool that he had constructed out into the ocean. Some histories report that a large statue of Caesar Augustus, for whom the city was named, stood in the center of the swimming area.

Herod's swimming pool at Caesarea

Caesarea is an extensive site that includes an ancient outdoor theatre, hippodrome where there were chariot and horse races.

Aerial view of the hippodrome where chariot races were held (from Bible Walks)

Stands where dignitaries would sit to watch the chariot and horse races

The remains of the city are fascinating with areas that were palaces and shops.

Caesarea bath tub

Many homes public buildings had mosaics in the floor. Here is a mosaic from the floor of a building that has been identified as a tax archive.

For rulers are not a terror to good conduct (Romans 13:3-4 ESV)

THE PONTIUS PILATE STONE

At Caesarea you can see a stone found there with an inscription bearing the name of Pontius Pilate. It is of great interest because it provides specific evidence of Pilate's governorship in the region. The stone you see is a replica. The valuable original is in the Israel museum.

Stone bearing the name "Pilatus"

CORNELIUS

Caesarea was the home of Cornelius, the centurion of the Italian cohort (Acts 10:1) who sent to Joppa for Peter.

THE APOSTLE PAUL AND CAESAREA

Paul knew Caesarea well. Early in his ministry a group of Jews, offended by this preaching, sought to murder him. The believers took him down to Caesarea for safety.

He debated with some Greek-speaking Jews, but they tried to murder him. When the believers heard about this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus, his hometown. (Acts 9:29-30)

Returning from his second missionary journey Paul passed through Caesarea on his way back from Ephesus.

Then he set sail from Ephesus. The next stop was at the port of Caesarea. From there he went up and visited the church at Jerusalem and then went back to Antioch. (Acts 18:21-22)

Paul also passed through Caesarea returning from this third journey.

The next day we went on to Caesarea and stayed at the home of Philip the Evangelist, one of the seven men who had been chosen to distribute food. He had four unmarried daughters who had the gift of prophecy. (Acts 21:8-8)

While there the prophet Agabus predicted Paul's arrest in Jerusalem (Acts 21:10). Paul went on to Jerusalem anyway.

After this we packed our things and left for Jerusalem. Some believers from Caesarea accompanied us, and they took us to the home of Mnason, a man originally from Cyprus and one of the early believers. When we arrived, the brothers and sisters in Jerusalem welcomed us warmly. (Acts 21:15-17)

CAESAREAN IMPRISONMENT (C.57 – C.59 A.D.)

Paul, under arrest and escorted by seventy cavalrymen (probably of the Ala I Sebastenorum) but without any centurions, was taken from Antipatris to the procurator Marcus Antonius Felix at Caesarea in accordance with the orders of the tribune Claudius Lysias in Jerusalem. Acts 23:23-24.

The room where Paul most likely made his defense can still be seen today.

Audience room at Caesarea. 'I appeal to Caesar.'

THE DEATH OF AGRIPPA

One other biblical event is important to mention.

About that time King Herod Agrippa began to persecute some believers in the church. He had the apostle James (John's brother) killed with a sword. (Acts 12:1-2)

Because this pleased the people Herod arrested Peter, also, and planned to kill him, too. Peter was rescued by God's intervention, however, and Herod eventually left Jerusalem for the sea side city of Caesarea. While there, he entered into a dispute with the people of Tyre and Sidon. Here is what happened next.

They sent a delegation to make peace with him because their cities were dependent upon Herod's country for food. The delegates won the support of Blastus, Herod's personal assistant, and an appointment with Herod was granted. When the day arrived, Herod put on his royal robes, sat on his throne, and made a speech to them. The people gave him a great ovation, shouting, 'It's the voice of a god, not of a man! Instantly, an angel of the Lord struck Herod with a sickness, because he accepted the people's worship instead of giving the glory to God. So he was consumed with worms and died. (Acts 12:20-23).

The Jewish historian Josephus also reports on this event.

“Now when Agrippa had reigned three years over all Judea, he came to the city Caesarea. . . Herod put on a garment made wholly of silver, and of a truly wonderful contexture, and came into the theater early in the morning; at which time the silver of his garment was illuminated by the fresh reflection of the sun's rays upon it. It shone out after a surprising manner, and was so resplendent as to spread a horror over those that looked intently upon him. At that moment, his flatterers cried out [...] that he was a god; and they added, 'Be thou merciful to us; for although we have hitherto revered thee only as a man, yet shall we henceforth own thee as superior to mortal nature.' [Then] a severe pain also arose in his belly, and began in a most violent manner. . . . And when he had been quite worn out by the pain in his belly for five days, he departed this life, being in the fifty-fourth year of his age, and in the seventh year of his reign.”

Note that Josephus says that Herod entered “the theatre” and the sun shone on his garment. Clearly he was outdoors in the theatre at Caesarea which you can see in the aerial shot below. When we visit Caesarea, we will sit in that same theatre where Herod Agrippa, the king whom Jesus called “that fox” met his end.

CAESAREA'S AQUEDUCT

Of course, any large city needs abundant water. Because there was little fresh water nearby, an aqueduct was constructed from Mt Carmel more than 10 kilometres to the

north.

The ancient aqueduct at Caesarea

Today the aqueduct is part of a popular beach and picnic goers shelter under its arches while children climb along the top.

Picnics under the arches of Caesarea's aqueduct



Caesarea Aqueduct

Farewell Dinner

Tonight we will have a special farewell dinner at our hotel where we can share with one another some of what we have learned and experienced.

Passages to Study for Today

The sites we visit today touch on too many passage to mention. There are two, however, that are most relevant.

- The story of Peter raising Tabitha from the dead. Acts 9:32-43
- Paul arrested and in court at Caesarea. Act (22-25).

Day Eleven

Day Thirteen