



The Beauty and Complexity of Israel:
Holy Lands, Religious Crossroads,
Cultural and Political Tapestry

Led By The Very reverend Dr. James A. Kowalski

February 3 – 13, 2019







Dear Prospective Travelers:

As Dean Emeritus of the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine in New York City, I am no stranger to transnational hospitality, cross-cultural respect and inter-religious dialogue.

For more than 15 years, I have traveled to various countries and seen the good religion facilitates in communities and the chaos religious and political conflict can foster.

Israel remains one of my favorite destinations – even after more than a dozen trips there. It continues to fascinate me – as an experiment in democracy, as the meeting place of the Abrahamic Faiths, as a safe haven for all Jews from anywhere in the world, as a preserver of some of civilization's most important antiquities and treasures, and as a young nation of world-class creativity and entrepreneurship in a very tough global neighborhood.

If you have imagined going to the Middle East, consider drawing on the relationship I have honed with Da'at (daatravel.com) - a premier travel agency whose educational programming has made it an interfaith pioneer. I can promise you safety and comfort, marvelous food, one of the very best guides I have ever worked with, and a spiritual and political encounter that will likely make this a trip of a lifetime. We will reach as far back as Biblical times and touch the challenges and accomplishments of the present and future.

Airfare has changed in the twenty-five years I have led such pilgrimages to Israel. The internet makes it possible for people to search various deals – even business class. Groups no longer want to sign up for group airfare, especially as they often are not as competitive as what you can find on the internet, given constant changes and competition. If you'd like help in arranging your air travel, Da'at is readily available and will make certain that you book correct flights.

Please explore the opportunities this itinerary offers you to engage Israel. The price provides an infrastructure that ensures a pleasant and encouraging time together, with all costs, except the few exclusions – such as travel insurance, tips and lunches – included.

If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to me by email and I'll respond directly or call you, if you prefer, and then let's embark – on a journey into the past, present and future.

Sincerely,

The Very reverend Dr. James A. Kowalski

israel

"Israel's wilds bring me back to my roots, my craving for understanding and the answers that appear when I am by myself, in God's open country, the place where the Hebrews wandered and the world seems to stand still..."



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DAY ONE ↘ SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2019 DEPARTURE

- Depart the U.S.A.

Overnight: Flight

DAY TWO ↘ MONDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2019 ARRIVAL

- Arrive at Ben Gurion International Airport.
- Transfer to the city of Tel Aviv, known as the “city that never sleeps,” with its centers of culture, recreation and national history, great beaches and fine stores.
- Check into the hotel.
- Welcome dinner at the hotel, followed by an orientation with Rev. Kowalski and your tour educator.

Overnight: Tel Aviv

DAY THREE ↘ TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2019 STRUGGLES FOR INDEPENDENCE AND PEACE

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Check out of the hotel.
- Visit the Old City of Jaffa and stroll through the renovated artists' colony and the ancient port, including a stop next to the house of Simon the Tanner and a visit to the Church of St. Peter where he raised Tabatha from the dead.
- Visit the Peres Center for Peace & Innovation, an organization focused on developing and implementing unique and cutting-edge peacebuilding programs in Innovation, Peace Education, Medicine, Business, and Environment, reaching tens of thousands of participants over the last 20 years.
- Stroll along the Nachalat Binyamin pedestrian mall, with its bi-weekly crafts fair and eateries. Alongside is the colorful Carmel open-air market and across the way Sheinkin Street, with its hip cafés and funky chic shopping; stop for lunch on own.
- Against the Odds - Building a State: Visit Independence Hall, where David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the State of Israel on May 14th, 1948.
- Depart Tel Aviv and drive along the Coastal Plain to Haifa.

- Check into the hotel.
- Dinner at the hotel.

Overnight: Haifa

DAY FOUR ↘ WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2019 A MOSAIC OF THE GALILEE

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Visit the Baha'i Gardens and gold-domed Shrine of the Bab, one of the holiest sites of the Baha'i religion, on the slopes of Mount Carmel.
- Continue to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Mosque in Haifa and meet with local clergy and residents. The motto of the Ahmadiyya Community is “Love for All, Hatred for None”.
- Visit a Druze village for a window into the unique world of the Israeli Druze community, with lunch on your own.
- Stop at Precipice for a grand view of the Jezreel Valley and its many Biblical stories.
- Continue to Nazareth and walk through the colorful marketplace, including a visit to the Church of the Annunciation.
- Visit Sindyanna of Galilee, a female-led, fair-trade NGO promoting the concept of “business for peace” in Israel by selling Arab producers' olive oil in the international marketplace and channeling all of the profits back into Arab women education while bridging cultural divides, encouraging sustainable agriculture, and supporting organic farming.
- Return to Haifa.
- Dinner at the hotel.
- Dialogue with Asaf Ron, CEO of the Beit Hagefen Arab-Jewish Center. The center was established in Haifa in 1963 for the purpose of bringing together Arabs and Jews and educating towards coexistence, neighborliness and tolerance by means of cultural and artistic activities, festivals, meetings and community activity.

Overnight: Haifa

DAY FIVE ↘ THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2019 SPIRITUALITY, TRADITION, AND SECURITY IN THE NORTH

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Drive east to the Sea of Galilee (Lake Kinneret) and begin with a viewing of the spectacular 1st-century AD boat.
- Enjoy a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee in a replica of an ancient fishing vessel, much like those used in the time of Jesus.
- Visit some of the Christian holy sites around the Sea of Galilee, including:
 - The Mount of Beatitudes, traditional site of Jesus' 'Sermon on the Mount,' overlooking the Sea of Galilee.
 - Tabgha, a traditional site of the Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes; the modern church preserves fine 5th-century mosaics.
 - Capernaum, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, the base of Jesus' Galilean ministry, with its remains of an ancient synagogue.
- Lunch on own en route.
- The Balance of Power on Israel's Northern Border: Field seminar at Bental (overlooking the abandoned Syrian town of Kuneitra) and dialogue with Maj. (Ret) Sarit Zehavi, a former senior intelligence officer.
- Return to Haifa and dinner at the hotel.

Overnight: Haifa

DAY SIX ↘ **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2019** **ASCENDING TO JERUSALEM**

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Check out of the hotel.
- Drive south along the Mediterranean to the ancient city of Caesarea, built by Herod the Great in honor of Augustus Caesar, Caesarea is considered to be the traditional site of Paul's imprisonment before his trial in Rome and the home of the first gentile believer, Cornelius and of Philip the evangelist; the theatre, aqueducts, and Hippodrome serve as a backdrop for the events chronicled in the Book of Acts.
- Lunch on own.
- Drive along the Trans-Israel Highway for a close-up view of the 'Security Barrier' along the seam zone between Israel and the Palestinian Territories.
- Welcome to Jerusalem: Enter the vibrant and colorful ancient city of Jerusalem, and experience the convergence of the old and the new.

- Check into the hotel and time to freshen up.
- Experience a traditional family Shabbat dinner with members of Shabbat of a Lifetime.

Overnight: Jerusalem

DAY SEVEN ↘ **SATURDAY,** **FEBRUARY 9, 2019** **IN HIS FOOTSTEPS**

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Set your eyes on the city of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives and then descend to Gethsemane to take time for prayer and worship in the olive grove, where Jesus prayed prior to his arrest and crucifixion.
- Enter the Old City of Jerusalem through Stephen's Gate (aka Lions' Gate). Explore St. Anne's Church and the Pool of Bethesda, where Jesus cured the lame man. Continue along the Via Dolorosa ending at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.
- Lunch on own and then time to walk through Jerusalem's famous Old City Market (shuk).
- Visit the Garden Tomb, the traditional Protestant site of Calvary, including Communion.
- Dinner at the hotel.
- Interfaith Work in Israel: Dialogue with Hana Bendcowsky, Director of the Jerusalem Center for Jewish Christian Relations.

Overnight: Jerusalem

DAY EIGHT ↘ **SUNDAY,** **FEBRUARY 10, 2019** **HISTORY AND SPIRITUALITY** **IN JERUSALEM**

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Services at the St. George Cathedral.
- Return to the Old City and visit the Upper Room on Zion, identified as the location of the house in which Jesus and his disciples celebrated the Passover meal ("The Last Supper") hours before his arrest. It is also believed to be the place where the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus' followers on the Day of Pentecost. Directly below it is the traditional site of the Tomb of King David.
- Walking tour through the Jewish Quarter for visits to



archaeological treasures and other highlights, among them:

- A walk along the Rooftops of the Old City for a behind-the-scenes look at the various communities in Jerusalem and how they live alongside each other.
- The Cardo, the main street of Jerusalem in the 6th
- King Hezekiah's First Temple-period "Broad Wall".
- Hurva Square, the central square of the Jewish Quarter
- Lunch on own in the Jewish Quarter and then stop at the Kotel (Western Wall) to experience the special atmosphere of this holy site.
- Visit the city of Bethlehem and the Church of the Nativity, the traditional birthplace of Jesus.
- Religion & Co-Existence: Meet with Noor Awwad and Rabbi Shaul Judelman from Shorashim, a program bringing West Bank Palestinians and their Israeli neighbors together despite the walls of fear that separate them.
- Return to Jerusalem.
- Dinner at the hotel.

Overnight: Jerusalem

DAY NINE ↘ **MONDAY,** **FEBRUARY 11, 2019** **INTO THE DESERT, MASADA, AND** **THE DEAD SEA**

- Breakfast at the hotel.

- Depart Jerusalem for the Dead Sea Basin.
- Visit Qumran and explore the area where the Dead Sea Sect established a community, view the caves where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found.
- Ascend by cable car to Masada, Herod's mountain palace and the site of the Jewish Zealots' last stand against the Roman Legionnaires. Discuss Masada's role as a symbol of Jewish defense and its current significance in modern Israel.
- Lunch on own at Masada.
- Experience the weightlessness of the Dead Sea as you float in its waters.
- Return to Jerusalem.
- The Labyrinth of Israeli Politics: Dialogue with Reuven Hazan of the Political Science Department at Hebrew University.
- Dinner at the hotel.

Overnight: Jerusalem

DAY TEN ↘ **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2019** **THE POWER OF MEMORY**

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Visit the Hand in Hand School "Yad b'Yad". Hand in Hand is a bilingual school combining peace education and top academic standards. Its mission is to build partnership, coexistence, and equality between the Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel.

- Visit the Yad Vashem complex, the Jewish National Memorial to the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust, including:
 - The Avenue of the Righteous
 - The Historical Museum
 - The Children's Memorial
- Take a multi-cultural tasting journey through the hustle and bustle of Jerusalem's Machaneh Yehudah open-air market: Enjoy the sights, smells, tastes, and sounds of this vibrant area where Jerusalemites shops.
- Return to the hotel and time to finish packing.
- Wrap up and farewell dinner at the hotel.
- Late check-out from the hotel and transfer to Ben Gurion International Airport to check for the departure flight to the U.S.A.

DAY ELEVEN ↘ **WEDNESDAY,** **FEBRUARY 13, 2019** **ARRIVAL**

- Arrival in the USA





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