



## 2024 ISRAEL CHRISTMAS TOUR

*Escorted by Gerrit Dirkmaat • December 27, 2024 - January 7, 2025*

Come join BYU Professor Gerrit Dirkmaat in 2024 and let Israel come alive for you as you travel your own personal journey through the Holy Land. Israel means different things to different people. Whether looking for answers to life's challenges or to solidify your testimony of Christ's life and the Atonement, a visit to the Holy Land will change you forever. Walking in the footsteps of the Savior will bring you peace, hope, and understanding. You can bring your scripture study to life as you visit sites such as the Garden of Gethsemane, Bethlehem, Qumran & Masada, Caesarea, the Mt of Beatitudes & many important sites on the Sea of Galilee to name a few.

Date	Daily Schedule
12/27 - Fri	Depart USA to Tel Aviv
12/28 - Sat	Tel Aviv
12/29 - Sun	Caesarea, Mt. Carmel, Megiddo, Cana
12/30 - Mon	Mt Tabor, Nazareth, Beit Shean
12/31 - Tue	Banias, Sea of Galilee, Jordan River
01/01 - Wed	Mount of Beatitudes, Tabgha, Capernaum, Magdala
01/02 - Thu	Bethabara, Qumran, Dead Sea, Masada, Jerusalem
01/03 - Fri	Western Wall, Dome of the Rock Old City, Old Jerusalem
01/04 - Sat	Sacrament Services at the BYU Jerusalem Center, Bethlehem, Free Time in the Old City
01/05 - Sun	Sifting Project, Israel Museum, Davidson Center Archaeological Park, City of David, Hezekiah's Tunnel
01/06 - Mon	Mount of Olives, Gethsemane, Garden Tomb
01/07 - Tue	Travel from Israel to Home City

**Price from \$3,095**  
per person/double occupancy  
(12 Days/11 Nights)

**Highlights of the Tour:** 1 tour-bus experience for the whole tour! • Morris Murdock LDS tour Director for the whole trip along with local guides • We include all tipping for hotels and restaurants where meals provided • Licensed, insured, and bonded travel agency with 60 years of experience! IT MATTERS! • VERY INCLUSIVE rate -Tour, transportation, Tips for Israeli guide and driver, taxes, breakfast & dinner daily!

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QR code for a  
full detailed  
itinerary!



## Your Tour Host: Gerrit Dirkmaat



Gerrit J. Dirkmaat is an assistant professor of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University. He received his PhD in American History from the University of Colorado in 2010 where he studied nineteenth-century American expansionism and foreign relations. His dissertation was titled "Enemies Foreign and Domestic: US Relations with Mormons in the US Empire in North America, 1844–1854." He currently serves as Editor of the academic journal *Mormon Historical Studies*, published by the Mormon Historic Sites Foundation, as the Co-Research Director for the Religious Studies Center, on the Executive Council for the Brigham Young Center, and on the Church History editorial board for *BYU Studies*. He and his wife Angela have four children.

### What is Included:

- Accommodations tourist class 4/5-star hotels
- Meals as indicated on the itinerary
- Entrance fees and all activities as specified in itinerary
- Hotel portorage (1 bag)
- Whisper technology headsets to be used throughout tour
- Experienced LDS guide and services of a bilingual licensed Israeli tour guide throughout tour
- Minimum prepaid gratuities for your Israeli guide and driver
- Transfers via deluxe air-conditioned motor coaches
- Group transfers
- Destination study and informational book
- Travel bag and document package

### Price does not include:

- Round-trip air to and from Tel Aviv - Group airfare TBD
- Additional transfers when not arriving or departing with the group
- Items of a personal nature
- Travel insurance
- Meals not specified in itinerary
- Gratuities for MMET tour leader

### Payment options:

- Double Occupancy: \$3,095 per person
- Triple Occupancy: \$3,095 per person (limited availability)
- Single Occupancy: \$3,956 per person
- \$100 cash discount

### Other pricing:

- \$500 per person deposit due at the time of booking
- Final payment due September 27, 2024

**Call Morris Murdock Escorted Tours at (800) 809-9910**  
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### **Day 1: Friday, December 27, 2024**

*Depart USA to Tel Aviv*

Today we will board our flight to travel to Israel. See you in Tel Aviv soon!

**Meals: In-flight**

### **Day 2: Saturday, December 28, 2024**

*Tel Aviv*

Welcome to Israel! As you begin your journey in this ancient land, you will notice that the mountains have hidden secrets, and the old ruins have legends. For 3,000 years on this small patch of land, men have toiled and battled; prayed and worshiped; and added their own small humanity to the history of this country. Listen and let the land of Israel tell you the stories of its past. **Meals: Dinner**



### **Day 3: Sunday, December 29, 2024**

*Caesarea - Mt. Carmel - Megiddo - Cana*

And on the morrow, they entered into Caesarea; Cornelius thy prayer is heard." Enter Caesarea, the remains of a city founded by Herod, the residence of Pontius Pilate, and a prison for Paul. Sit in the well-preserved amphitheater overlooking the blue sea and hear the story of Paul's conversion of the Centurion. The scenery begins to change to the beautiful green pastures and high rolling hills of the Jezreel Valley as we approach Mt Carmel where the prophet Elijah and the priests of Baal contested their faith. Not far away is Megiddo, the tragic site of ancient bloody battles where nations were won and lost. Upon these same tragic fields, the great and terrible last battle of Armageddon will be fought. As we make our way toward the Sea of Galilee, we will stop by the church in Cana that celebrates the 1st miracle performed by Christ when he turned water into wine at the wedding.

**Meals: Breakfast, Dinner**

### **Day 4: Monday, December 30, 2024**

*Mt Tabor - Nazareth - Beit Shean*

Shabbot Shalom - This is the official Jewish greeting on the Sabbath, and we have a great day planned.

"And he lifted up his hands and blessed them while he blessed them; he was carried up into heaven." Mount Tabor is one of the mountains traditionally claimed to be the site of the transfiguration of Jesus Christ. You will thrill by the almost hair-raising taxi ride up the mountain, but once at the summit, you will feel the peace and calm of the surrounding valley. We journey next to Nazareth, the quaint town where Jesus Christ spent his childhood, learned his earthly vocation as a carpenter, and grew and waxed strong in spirit. We will visit a recreated town from Christ's time and visit with the villagers to learn what life was like for Jesus as a boy. This afternoon we will travel to the ancient tel of Bet She'an, where 6,000 years of civilization seem to unfold among the ruins. It is believed to be the very Bet She'an of the Old Testament where the former King of Israel, Saul, was fastened to the city wall without his head by the conquering Philistines. We will end our day with a visit to the beautiful state park Sahne. **Meals: Breakfast, Dinner**





### **Day 5: Tuesday, December 31, 2024**

*Banias- Sea of Galilee - Jordan River*

Besides a place of great natural beauty Banias is the site of ancient Caesarea Philippi, where Jesus demanded to know of His disciples who people were saying He was. As we make our way back south towards the Sea of Galilee you see to see some of the rich farmland that has made Israel one of the leading agriculture leaders of the world.

This afternoon you will sail upon the Sea of Galilee to view the area of Jesus Christ's early ministry. As the wind carries your boat, note the halo of mountains that surrounds its shores. Our last visit will be at the Yardenit Baptismal Site on the banks of the Jordan River. It is here that people from around the world, representing diverse denominations, still come to be baptized.

**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**



### **Day 6: Wednesday, January 1, 2025**

*Mount of Beatitudes - Tabgha - Capernaum - Magdala*

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!! The Mount of Beatitudes where Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount is always a highlight to visitors. Here you can see how it was possible for Jesus to teach the multitude all at the same time. From here we will visit Tabgha, the site of the miracle of the loaves and fishes. There is a beautiful Byzantine mosaic on the floor of this miracle that you will not want to miss. Next, we visit Capernaum, where Jesus lived and recruited his first followers among the fishermen. The well-preserved city will amaze you as you sit in the synagogue and imagine Jesus' teaching and performing miracles for the masses. Our last stop of the day is Magdala. Here one can find a first-century synagogue, a complete first-century city, and remains of a once prosperous fish processing industry.

**Meals: Breakfast, Dinner**

### **Day 7: Thursday, January 2, 2025**

*Bethabara - Qumran - Dead Sea - Masada - Jerusalem*

As we leave the fertile valleys of the Galilee, we enter the strange and barren desert of the Dead Sea. Once the Biblical Lands of Moab and Edom, the Dead Sea basin has been a refuge to prophets, zealots, and outcasts throughout time. Our first stop is Bethabara the site where the Savior was baptized by John the Baptist. Buried in the beige limestone bluffs, the ruins of Qumran still tell the story of the essences, a reclusive Jewish sect that buried the now famous Dead Sea Scrolls. From the desert floor, ascend by cable car to the spectacular cliff-top fortress of Masada, where a community of 960 Jews preferred death at their own



hands to the indignity of surrender to the overwhelming Roman forces. While at the Dead Sea, you cannot miss the opportunity to enjoy a dip in the buoyant waters and bathe in the wonderful medicinal mud! Even Cleopatra sent her slaves to retrieve this magical mud to preserve her legendary beauty. This evening we will journey to the beloved city of Jerusalem. **Meals: Breakfast, Dinner**

### **Day 8: Friday, January 3, 2025**

#### *Western Wall - Dome of the Rock Old City - Old Jerusalem*

The Western Wall is the most important site in all of Jewish civilization because these rough massive stones are all that is left of the great Second Temple. Revered and honored, the Jews wait and hope for the day they will rebuild their third and final temple upon these sacred remnants. Above the wall is Mount Moriah where the Islamic shrine, the Dome of the Rock, is located. Entering the oldest quarter of Jerusalem, follow the winding alleys and crowded streets to the Pools of Bethesda and learn about their importance. We will discover the ancient city beneath the modern streets where the old paving stones are carved with Roman games



at Antonia Fortress. Located in the old quarter of Jerusalem is the site believed to be the Room of the Last Supper. Devoid of gilded statues or ornate chapels, the quiet simplicity and elegance of this room help one to focus on the words of Christ and the poignant last moments with his beloved disciples. Our last stop will be at the House of Caiaphas, which owns the dark and sad dungeon that once imprisoned the Savior. To experience the cold dismal cells and feel the sorrow and grieving of such a place, brings understanding and gratitude to our hearts. **Meals: Breakfast, Dinner**

### **Day 9: Saturday, January 4, 2025**

#### *Sacrament Services at the BYU Jerusalem Center - Bethlehem - Free Time in the Old City*

This morning begins with sacrament services at the BYU Jerusalem Center. Next, we drive to the town of Bethlehem for it was here that the Light of the World was given life. Pilgrimages, sacred holidays, and festivities occur all year long to celebrate the birth of Christ. Tradition holds that the small humble inn with just a stable for lodging was located where the Church of the Nativity now stands. Shepherds still tend their flocks on the fields overlooking Bethlehem just as they did over 2,000 years ago when the angel appeared bringing them glad tidings of great joy. Gathered on these fields, we sing the beloved hymns and listen to the wondrous story - a moment not to be forgotten. Lunch will be included today in a Bedouin Tent restaurant overlooking the shepherds' field. Later this afternoon we will have some free time to go back into the Old City to revisit sites or to finish shopping for treasures to take home.

**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

### **Day 10: Sunday, January 5, 2025**

#### *Sifting Project -Israel Museum - Davidson Center Archaeological Park – City of David – Hezekiah's Tunnel*

This morning we get our hands in the dirt as we have a special opportunity to participate in a sifting project of dirt taken from under the Dome of the Rock and the City of David. Here we can find bone, pottery and possibly an ancient coin! Next, discover the treasures of the Israel Museum and the Shrine of the Book, the site chosen to house the Dead Sea Scrolls. This unique building is shaped like the ancient pottery in which the precious scrolls lay hidden for thousands of years. While we are there, we will get to see the Holy Land Model, a unique scale model of Jerusalem at the time of Christ. The model visually explains the layout of the ancient city as well as the design and magnitude of the Second Temple. After lunch we visit the Davidson Center Archaeological Park at the base of the Temple Mount to visit the Southern Steps of the 2nd temple. Our last stop will be at the City of David to explore the ancient waterway of Hezekiah's Tunnel! When Jerusalem was preparing defenses against the approaching Assyrian army in the 8th century B.C.E., King Hezekiah decided to protect the water source by diverting its flow deep into the city with an impressive tunnel system. This engineering feat was accomplished by digging a 1,750-foot tunnel into the mountain we can explore today. **Meals: Breakfast, Dinner**

## **Day 11: Monday, January 6, 2025**

*Mount of Olives - Gethsemane - Garden Tomb*

This morning we visit the Mount of Olives on whose slopes the Garden of Gethsemane lies nestled. Feel the powerful spirit in the Garden as you envision the momentous events which took place at this sacred site. We will walk through the Church of All Nations, also known as the Church or Basilica of the Agony, a Roman Catholic church located on the Mount of Olives, next to the Garden of Gethsemane. It enshrines a section of bedrock where Jesus is said to have prayed before his arrest. Following lunch we will stop at the beautiful Garden Tomb, there is a limestone hill, which many revere as Golgotha, site of the crucifixion. Just around that hill is an old cemetery with an ancient tomb that once held the Savior's mortal body and saw its glorious resurrection. There is a sign on the door of the tomb that says, do not look for Him here for He is risen. You will never forget this moment in your life as you look for Him, not in the tomb but within your own life.

Tonight, we will have a farewell dinner together as we prepare to leave the land we have grown to love to travel back home. Following dinner, we drive to the Tel Aviv airport. After clearing immigration and customs, you will transfer to the connecting gate for your flight back home with memories to last a lifetime.

**Meals: In-flight**

## **Day 12: Tuesday, January 7, 2025**

*Depart Tel Aviv - Arrive USA*

Welcome Home!! **Meals: In-flight**

**\*Please note that due to the nature of this tour, you must be able to climb stairs and walk unassisted at a moderate pace. You will walk an average of 4-6 miles each day. The days are full of touring from breakfast to dinner time with "down-time" only in the evening.**

### **Introductory Terms and Conditions**

*(Full Terms & Conditions available on our website and included with each booking)*

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