

100 Off-the-Beaten-Path Sites

The new guide book for a transformative spiritual experience in the footsteps of the Bible

Preface

The booklet you hold in your hands was written with you in mind. It takes you off the beaten path and introduces you to 100 significant sites in the land of Israel that most Christian visitors never get to see.

Pilgrims, pastors, and tour agents will find here invaluable information for planning tours and introducing Evangelicals to seldom-seen sites in the Holy Land. Each entry includes a brief historical and geographical description of the site—including its connection to the Bible—as well as handy information needed for visiting the places. The booklet also features a number of volunteer opportunities and extracurricular activities that Christians visiting Israel would enjoy.

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Galilee and the North

1. Abel-beth-maacah

This strategic site left its mark on the pages of biblical history when it became the hiding place of Sheba, the son of Bichri, who led a rebellion against King David. Israel's General, Joab, besieged Abel-beth-maacah and was preparing to topple the wall when a wise woman offered him Sheba's head in exchange for the city's safety (2 Samuel 20:14- 22). In ancient Israel, this tell had a vital role in watching over the traffic that entered the nation from the north. As a result, it was often one of the first cities to suffer destruction, such as the one that occurred during the invasions of Ben-hadad of Aram and Tiglath-pileser of Assyria (1 Kings 15:20; 2 Kings 15:29). In the upper city, archaeologists have unearthed pottery that dates back to the eighth century BC.

Location: Route 90 between Metulla and Route 99

Hours: unlimited

2. Acco Crusader Castle and Templars Tunnel

Because succeeding powers could not demolish the Crusaders' underground labyrinth of tunnels, visitors today can still enjoy touring many of the subterranean passageways. The Templars' Tunnel is not to be missed, and the Crusader castle, called the Fortress of the Knights Hospitallers, showcases some of the finest

Crusader architecture in the Holy Land. The ancient tower, kitchen, refectory, dormitory, “Hall of Knights,” and even the Turkish bath make this a must-see site. Acco was one of the cities not ruled by the Tribe of Asher (Judges 1:31). The Apostle Paul’s ship arrived at Ptolemais (ancient Acco) and stayed there for a day while he was completing his third missionary journey (Acts 21:7).

Location: From Route 85, go west on Ben Ammi Street and turn left on Ha-Hagana

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Friday 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.; Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

3. Mount Arbel

The top of Mount Arbel provides a magnificent panoramic view 1,300 feet above the Sea of Galilee, revealing the sites where Jesus spent most of His Galilean ministry. Some speculate that Mount Arbel could also represent “the mountain” on which Jesus issued the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16- 20). The ancient International Highway passed right below Mount Arbel, on the Plain of Gennesaret, roughly where the modern highway is located. Archaeologists have discovered a fourth-century synagogue and signs of occupation in the nearby caves, which date back as early as the second century. Josephus wrote of Herod the Great’s cruelty to his enemies, who sought refuge on the caves in the cliffs. He pulled them out with a grappling hook and they plummeted to their deaths (Antiquities 14:423–425).

Location: On Route 7717 west of Tiberias

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (summer); 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (winter); 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (holidays)

4. Mount Bental

Providing one of the most picturesque views in Israel, the dormant volcano of Mount Bental offers an unrestricted view of Mount Hermon, the surrounding Golan Heights, and the mountains of Southern Lebanon. The strategic lookout point proved its worth in the 1973 Yom Kippur War, when a badly outnumbered Israeli army defeated the Syrian army in the one of the largest tank battles in history. Due to the heavy losses caused by the war, the ground between Mount Bental and Mount Hermon became known as the “Valley of Tears.” The visitor center atop Mount Bental offers an educational experience by means of an automated information system in the network of IDF bunkers and remaining trenches, and humorous scrap-iron sculptures put a smile on visitors’ faces.

Location: Route 959 east of Route 978, take the right after 9881

5. Bet Netofa Valley

Today, the Israel Water Carrier channels its open canal through Bet Netofa Valley, but in antiquity, the vale served as a major passageway for travel from Tiberias to Acco. This beautiful east-west valley connects the Sea of Galilee to the Jezreel Valley by way of the Shimron Pass. In Jesus’ day, Bet Netofa was called the Plain of Asochis. The valley used to have swamps with reeds, and the name “Cana” means “reed.” Josephus identified the town of Cana, where Jesus did His first miracle, as

being in this valley (Life, 16:86, 207; see also John 2:1-11). The Mekorot Eshkol Visitor Center allows guests to learn about the water purification process.

Location: Route 77 (visitors center on Route 784)

Hours: unlimited (visitor center by appointment only; call 972-4-6500664)

6. Beit She'arim

An ancient Jewish town, famous for its magnificent tombs hewn from the hills, Bet She'arim reached its heydays in the second to fourth centuries AD. Many of the beautiful caves and tombs are available for guests to explore, including the Cave of Coffins with its splendid façade, the Cave of Rabbi Judah the Prince, and the Lulavim Cave. Interpretive signs help clarify the Jewish motifs and Greek inscriptions. The leader of the Sanhedrin in the third century, Rabbi Judah Hanasi, relocated to Bet She'arim. His tomb remains one of the most beautiful tombs there. The interior of the tombs includes dramatic lighting that highlights the elaborate carvings on the sarcophagi and on the walls surrounding them.

Location: On Route 722 between the Hatishbi and Hashomrim junctions of Route 75

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (summer); 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (winter)

7. Bethsaida (Et-Tell)

Most signs point to ET-Tell as being the biblical Bethsaida, but archeologists have found little evidence of a first-century city. Interpretive signs, shaded shelters, and rocky pathways allow visitors to meander through ET-Tell's ruins. Lead weights, a fishhook and a curved bronze needle were found inside one of the ancient houses, called the "House of the Fisherman." Bethsaida means, "House of Fish," and it was the hometown of three famous fishermen—all disciples of Jesus—Peter, Andrew and Philip. Near Bethsaida, Jesus healed a blind man and also miraculously fed thousands of people with only a few loaves of bread and some fish (Mark 8:22). Bethsaida was one of the three cities Jesus cursed for not responding to His miracles (Luke 9:10-17; 10:13).

Location: Route 87 to the Bethsaida Junction at Route 888

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (summer); 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (winter, Fridays, and holidays)

8. Cana (Khirbet Qana)

Khirbet Qana is the most likely site of the biblical "Cana of Galilee" since it fits the location given by Josephus (Life, 16:86, 207). Archaeologists and explorers at Khirbet Qana have found caves, cisterns, stone vessels, a Roman public building, houses and a dovecote. Located eight miles northeast of Nazareth, Cana was the hometown of Nathaniel, one of Jesus' disciples (John 21:2). Perhaps he was the reason Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding at Cana, where Jesus performed His first miracle, turning water into wine (John 2:1-11). Jesus also healed the son of a royal official from Cana (John 4:46-54).

Location: Accessible by foot or SUV through a dirt road, 1.5 miles east of Yodfat on Route 7955. Hours: unlimited

9. Tel Chinnereth

The oldest name of the Sea of Galilee is “Chinnereth,” called this perhaps because it is shaped like a “harp” (chinnar in Hebrew means “harp”). A town by the same name sat alongside the sea by the ancient International Highway that led to Syria. So significant was Chinnereth’s location that it found its way into Pharaoh Thutmose III’s list of conquered cities, along with Laish (Tel Dan), Hazor, and Pella. Joshua listed it as one of the fortified cities of the tribe of Naphtali (Joshua 19:35). Finds at Tel Chinnereth include a ninth-century BC gate, an Egyptian granite stela dating back to the time of the exodus, and a scarab with the name of Tiy, Amenhotep III’s queen.

Location: Route 90 north of Route 8077

Hours: unlimited

10. Chorazin

Chorazin was one of the three Galilean cities Jesus rebuked for failing to respond to His miracles (Luke 10:13-15). The basalt ruins of the city include a synagogue dating back to the second century (some date it to the fourth century) featuring carved images of animals, flora, and people. Other finds include a ritual bath, a large oval cistern, and a decorated seat that represented “the Seat of Moses”—the place where the synagogue’s teacher would sit to read the Torah. There is a replica in the synagogue’s doorway. Jesus referred to this seat as the seat of authority in Matthew 23:2-4. The Talmud mentions Chorazin’s wheat as worthy of providing the Temple’s first fruit offering (Menahot, 85a), but the city’s distance from Jerusalem proved to be too distant for the honor.

Location: Route 989 between Mount Hermon and Kiryat Shmona

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (summer); 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (winter); 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Fridays and holidays)

11. Cove of the Sower

On the same day that Jesus performed a healing in the Capernaum synagogue, He changed His teaching method to include parables (Matthew 13:1-3). The location of Jesus’ initial parable—told from a boat—is likely to have occurred in a cove of the Sea of Galilee close to Capernaum. A study of the natural acoustics of the site revealed that nearly 14,000 people could fit above the cove, on a slope that forms a natural theater, and clearly hear a lone voice on the shoreline. In this instance, Scriptures, science, and geography combine to point to the “Cove of the Sower” as the probable location of this event. Best experienced in the morning before traffic begins, visitors can scatter on the hillside to listen to a single person standing at the shoreline.

Location: Route 87 between Tabgha and Capernaum, where the road bends

Hours: unlimited

12. Tel Dor and the Ancient Harbor

Dor was originally assigned to the tribe of Manasseh, but Israel only ruled over it from David's day until the Assyrian invasion in 734 BC. Dor's Phoenician influence was pervasive. A keen eye can make out three ancient boat slips hewn from solid rock in the central bay facing the Mediterranean Sea. These slips offer the only visible evidence that ancient Dor was an important harbor on the east coast of the Mediterranean. A visit to Dor and its harbor today allows one to see the remains of a Roman theater, a Roman warehouse, a Byzantine church, an eleventh-century quay, a well-preserved purple dye factory, and numerous other finds within a glass factory renovated into a museum.

Location: Route 7011 west of Route 2, walk north from the bathing beach

Museum hours: 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.; Saturdays 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

13. Gamla

The site's name means "camel," likely because of its rocky promontories that resemble camel humps. Gamla's steep cliffs provided an effective defense in times of siege. During the Jewish Revolt in AD 66, the occupants courageously defended the city. For this reason, some have called Gamla the "Masada of the North." The site has many hiking trails and picturesque cliffs, affording visitors views of the largest colony of Griffon vultures in Israel. On the way to the Gamla Waterfall (Israel's highest waterfall at 164 feet), visitors can see one of the Golan Heights' many dolmens—large, aboveground burial chambers that predate Abraham. Gamla would have been one of the "surrounding villages" to which the crowds would have had to go in order to find food, had Jesus not provided it to them through the miracle of the fish and loaves (Luke 9:10-12).

Location: Gamla Nature Preserve is off of Route 808

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (summer); 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (winter)

14. Mount Gilboa/ Jebel Fuku'a

The modern mountain range called Jebel Fuku'a is known in the Scriptures as Mount Gilboa, its name preserved in the designation of the village Jelbon. Originally allotted to the tribe of Issachar, Mount Gilboa witnessed a number of battles. At its base, at Ein Harod, Gideon's army drank water before facing the Midianites just opposite them in the Harod Valley. Mount Gilboa's primary focus in the Scriptures appears as the location of King Saul's death, as well as that of his three sons (1 Samuel 28:4, 31). In the springtime, beautiful flowers and verdant forests grace its slopes.

Location: Route 667, take lookout road approx. 1 mile east of Havat Hatavlinim

Hours: unlimited

15. Hadar

Wandering among Tel Hadar's basalt remnants—typical of the ruins in the Golan Heights—a visitor can experience excavations from the Late Bronze I and Iron Age I-II periods, dating from the fifteenth to the eighth centuries BC. The two-and-a-half acre tell rests between En Gev and Bethsaida (et-Tell) by the Sea of Galilee, and may have served as a regional port for Tel Chinnereth.

If so, grain from ancient Bashan in the Golan would have made its way through Tel Hadar's port before arriving at its destination at the Mediterranean Sea. Ruins at the site include two tripartite-pillared buildings (common among Israel's tells), two storehouses, and a grain silo.

Location: Route 92 north of Route 789, go left toward Luna Gal and keep right.

Hours: unlimited

16. Hammat Tiberias

Hammat lay two miles south of ancient Tiberias and was originally considered a separate town. However, after the destruction of the Temple in AD 70, Jews flooded to this area and settled in Hammat, which eventually became part of Tiberias. Inside the third- to fourth-century synagogue, visitors today can see a remarkable mosaic floor, three panels wide, which features the four seasons combined with the Zodiac's twelve signs. Other mosaic panels showcase Jewish images, including a Torah ark, two seven-branched menorahs, a shofar, a lulav, and an etrog. Long admired for the medicinal value of its hot springs, Hammat drew visitors from far and wide beginning in the first century. A modern spa allows visitors to experience some of the same natural amenities even today.

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; Fridays 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Location: Route 90 south of Hamey Tveria

17. Tel Hazor

Before the conquest under Joshua, Hazor stood as the largest Canaanite city of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages (2200-1400 BC) (Joshua 11:10). Archaeologists unearthed a large burnt layer that corresponds with Joshua's destruction of Hazor around 1400 BC (Joshua 11:1-15). Two centuries after Joshua, Deborah and Barak burned Hazor again (Judges 4-5). Because of the city's strategic location, King Solomon fortified it (1 Kings 9:15), and today the tripartite city gate Solomon built still partially stands for visitors to see. Hazor was one of the first cities to fall when the Assyrians invaded (2 Kings 15:29), and after Tiglath-Pileser III destroyed it in 732 BC, it never recovered. By the time Jesus passed Hazor in the first century, it was merely a police fort.

Location: Off route 90 towards Kibutz Ayelet Hashachar

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (summer); 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (winter); 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Fridays and holidays)

18. Mount Hermon

On a clear day, the snowcapped peaks of Mount Hermon can be seen for miles. Its sheer beauty has inspired the worship of both the godly and the pagan, with more than 20 ancient temples located in the area. The highest peak in Israel—at almost 7,300 feet—the Hermon serves as the country's only ski resort. Hermon also has an off-road cycling park, a cable car, numerous Druze villages that offer authentic black coffee and picturesque views year-round. The Scriptures picture Hermon as a metaphor of majesty, blessing, and beauty (Psalm 89:12; 133:3; Song of Solomon

4:8). With Caesarea Philippi at its base, Mount Hermon is most likely the “high mountain” on which Jesus experienced His Transfiguration (Matthew 16:13; 17:1).

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Location: Follow Route 98 to its northern end

19. Hippos

The city’s name means “horse,” and coins with a symbol of a winged horse were found there. Towering 1,150 feet above the distant Sea of Galilee, the hill of Hippos is connected to the hill south of it via a natural rocky saddle that formed a bridge. Everyone entering the city in antiquity crossed this ground. The same is true today. Hippos was one of the ten cities of the Decapolis in Jesus’ day, and it is certain that its citizens heard of His message and miracles as He traveled “in the region of the Decapolis” (Mark 7:31). Numerous archaeological remains from different periods grace the site, and the stunning view of the Sea of Galilee promises guests a rewarding visit.

Location: From Route 92 at Ein Gev, take the road east toward Horvat Susita

Hours: unlimited

20. Horeshat Tal National Park

This extensive park, with its lush surroundings, includes beautiful lawns, rolling streams, stone bridges, and a large swimming pool and water slide in season. But the best parts of the park are the groves of centuries-old Tabor oak trees. At one time, these oaks grew in abundance on the hills of the Galilee, but these are all that remain— saved partly due to a local superstition that claims whoever harms a tree will endure suffering. Horeshat Tal means “The Dew Grove,” a name derived from Psalm 133:3: “It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore (NIV).” The park also offers camping, picnicking, and hiking.

Route 918 just south of Route 99

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (summer); 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (winter)

21. Tel Jezreel

Rich in biblical history and archaeology, Tel Jezreel is not to be missed. Perched on the western edge of Mount Gilboa, Jezreel strategically guarded the passages to the Jezreel Valley from the Jordan Valley and from the hills of Samaria. Saul gathered here before his final fateful battle (1 Samuel 29:1); David’s wife, Ahinoam, hailed from Jezreel (1 Samuel 25:43); Ahab built a palace there, where he also coveted Naboth’s vineyard (1 Kings 21); and Jehu drove his chariot “furiously” to Jezreel and killed Joram and Ahaziah and had Jezebel killed (2 Kings 9). Archaeological finds at Jezreel suggest that it served as a military base for Israel in the divided kingdom during the dynasty of Omri. It was abandoned thereafter.

Location: Route 675 east of Route 60

Hours: unlimited

22. Kedesh

The tribe of Naphtali laid claim to this ancient Levitical city of refuge (Joshua 20:7). The hometown of Barak, Kedesh served as a gathering point for Israel's army prior to Deborah and Barak's battle with Sisera (Judges 4:1-10). Visitors today can explore ruins from the Roman period, including a 60-by-54-foot temple dedicated to the god Baalshamim, meaning "lord of heaven." Dating back to Hadrian's reign in AD 117, the temple and its precincts may have been destroyed by the earthquake of 363. Each spring, lovely wildflowers fill the surrounding fields, framing these Galilean mountains and offering a beautiful overlook of the Huleh Basin.

Location: Route 899 just west of Route 866

Hours: unlimited

23. Kursi

Since the steepest slope alongside the Sea of Galilee is near Kursi, many have identified it as the location where Jesus cast out a legion of demons from a man and into a herd of swine. The pigs then ran down the "steep bank" and drowned in the lake (Luke 8:32-33). A textual error in the Greek manuscripts has kept scholars debating the location of this site for centuries, but many believe Kursi to be authentic. A large Byzantine monastery boasts a stunning mosaic floor, featuring a variety of flora and fauna. The ancient harbor at Kursi represents the first one found at the Sea of Galilee.

Location: Kursi Junction at Route 92 and 789

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (summer); 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (winter, Fridays, and holidays)

24. Magdala

Magdala represents one of the cities Jesus would have visited in the Galilee (Matthew 4:23; 9:35; 15:39). He would have passed by it hundreds of times. The hometown of Mary Magdalene, recent archaeological finds in Magdala (Migdal) include a (probable) first-century synagogue, the oldest known stone carving of a menorah, perfume bottles, ancient coins, and a massive water tower standing 21 feet high, with walls seven feet thick. Magdala also has a monastery with geometric mosaics dating back to the fifth or sixth century. The future Magdala Center plans to provide accommodations for up to 300 pilgrims, as well as lakeside biblical gardens for meditation.

Location: Route 90 north of Route 807

Hours: Currently mornings only. Check

www.magdalacenter.com

25. Nazareth Ridge Overlook

Watching the sunrise over the Jezreel Valley from this spectacular view will prove one of the highlights of any trip to Israel. Many biblical landmarks and their stories lay within sight: Mount Tabor and the armies of Deborah and Barak (Judges 4-5), the conflict between Gideon and the Midianites which took place between the Hill of Moreh and Mount Gilboa (Judges 6-8), the place where Elisha and Jesus raised the dead

around the Hill of Moreh (2 Kings 4; Luke 7:11-17); King Saul's tragic life came to an end on Mount Gilboa itself (1 Samuel 31). With the city of Nazareth immediately behind the observation point, it's easy to imagine the boy Jesus enjoying this exact view many times.

Location: the amphitheater at the Yigal Allon municipal park

Hours: unlimited

26. Nazareth Village

With guides dressed in period costumes, visitors enjoy a tour of what Nazareth would have been like in the time of Jesus. The "village" is designed to portray the agriculture, clothing, and building techniques of the first century and an audiovisual display provides a fine introduction. Sheep, shepherds, fields, reapers, carpenters, millstones, oil lamps, and looms are all part of the real-life demonstrations of century-one Nazareth. Archaeology at the site has produced early Roman pottery shards and a winepress carved from the bedrock. The Nazareth Village combines history, archaeology, and creativity to effectively transport visitors to Jesus' day in Jesus' hometown.

Location: From Route 75, turn left on A-Shuhada Road

Hours: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Closed Sundays. Check www.nazarethvillage.com for other closings times

Hours: unlimited

27. Nimrod's Fortress

Perched on the foothills of Mount Hermon, the ruins of the castle called Nimrod's Fortress rise 2,600 feet above sea level and tower over the Huleh Basin from a beautiful vantage point. The fortress' name mistakenly connects it with the rebel Nimrod from Genesis 10:8-9 (whose name in Hebrew means "to rebel"). But it was the Muslims who actually built the bastion as a fort, after which a number of groups expanded, rebuilt, and refortified it. Today's ruins are mostly remains from the thirteenth century.

Location: Route 989 between Mount Hermon and Kiryat Shmona

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (summer); 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (winter)

28. Omrit

Herod the Great built four temples in Israel to curry the favor of his people and his patron. In Jerusalem he built the magnificent temple for the Jews, and in Sebaste (Samaria), Caesarea, and Panias he raised temples to his patron, Caesar Augustus.

Many believe that the temple at Panias (Caesarea Philippi) was actually “nearby” at Omrit (Josephus; Ant. 15.10.3). Since 1999, archaeologists have unearthed several ornate temple complexes located on the site of an original shrine dating back to Herod’s days. With the help of a guide, visitors can see these successive religious structures at this (currently) undeveloped remote site.

Location: Route 918 near Kibbutz Kfar Szold.

Hours: Organized tours only.

29. Ophrah, Tel Afula

The site of ancient Ophrah bears the modern name Tel Afula. A mere fraction of the ancient, six-acre tell remains, and modern Afula has engulfed the rest. Archaeological findings date back from the Chalcolithic period to the Iron Age, with Stratum III connecting to biblical Ophrah, the hometown of the judge Gideon. Here the Angel of the Lord approached Gideon and commanded him to lead Israel in victory against the Midianites (Judges 6:11-14). After the site was destroyed, at the time of King Saul, it wasn’t occupied again until the late Roman period. Roman stone sarcophagi were used to build the ancient walls visitors see today, which date back to the Crusader and Ayyubid periods.

Location: West of Route 60 and south of Menahem Ussishkin St.

Hours: unlimited

30. Primacy of Peter Church at Tabgha

A narrow footpath leads to a modest Franciscan chapel constructed in 1933. The sign inside reads “Mensa Christi” and refers to the bedrock “table of Christ,” where Jesus served broiled fish for breakfast. The account of the miraculous catch of fish in John 21 is likely to have occurred along this shoreline at the Sea of Galilee. Here Jesus reinstated a guilt-ridden Peter after his threefold denial of Christ. Three years earlier, in the same vicinity, Jesus used another miraculous catch to illustrate Peter’s calling: “from now on you will be catching men” (Luke 5:10). The repetition of the miracle after Peter’s failure revealed that Jesus’ calling on the fisherman’s life had not changed. The site’s Greek name, Heptapegon (Arabic, Tabgha), means “place of seven springs.” Five springs still attract fish today.

Location: Route 87 just east of Route 90

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.; 2:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; modest dress required

31. Quneitra Overlook

The view from this vantage allows visitors to see the border between Israel and Syria, as well as a beautiful view of Mount Hermon. Since the Yom Kippur War of 1973, the border between Israel and Syria has remained relatively calm. In the demilitarized zone between the two nations, visitors can clearly see the United Nations camp. Standing at the Quneitra Overlook allows one to imagine the determination Saul of Tarsus maintained in order to arrest Christians in Damascus, forty miles to the north (Acts 22:5-6).

Location: Route 98 just north of Route 91

Hours: unlimited

32. Rogem Hiri

This mysterious site dates back to 1500- 1200 BC, and also bears the Arabic name, Rujm al-Hiri, meaning, “stone heap of the wild cat.” Looking like something out of a science fiction film, these ancient heaps of stones form four massive concentric circles around a central cairn; the diameter of the largest circle measures 490 feet. The central pile of stones, or cairn, measures 82 feet in diameter and covers a burial chamber topped by two immense basalt slabs. The crumbling walls of Rogem Hiri are up to eleven feet wide and eight feet high. Some have suggested that this mysterious arrangement of stones—whose exact purpose remains dubious—is the tomb of the giant King Og of Bashan (Deuteronomy 3:11).

Location: On Route 808 north of Route 869, park alongside the road and walk the trail east about 1 mile.

33. Rosh HaNikra

Located in the heart of ancient Phoenicia, Rosh Hanikra is located near the border of Israel and Lebanon. The site’s stark white cliffs and lovely seascape are best enjoyed from the world’s steepest cable car ride, ascending 220 feet above the sea. Visitors enjoy the natural wonder that is massive grottos formed by millennia of pounding waves from the Mediterranean. An audiovisual show tells the history of the site, and the “little train” provides a 40-minute tour, showing a railroad constructed during the British Mandate. Visitors can enjoy a lovely promenade that overlooks the sea and follows the track of the old railroad. The waterfront has numerous inlets and pools, some bearing the quarry marks of the ancient Phoenicians.

Location: Take Route 4 to its northernmost end.

Hours: 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (summer); 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (winter, Fridays, Saturdays, and holidays)

34. Sepphoris/Zippori

With its close proximity to Nazareth, Sepphoris may have been built with the help of the craftsmen Jesus and Joseph. Herod Antipas designated the city as his capital after Galilee came under his rule in 4 BC, before he transferred his government to Tiberias in AD 19. Josephus referred to Sepphoris as “the ornament of all Galilee.” Because the citizens surrendered to the Romans during the Jewish Revolt in AD 66, the city was not destroyed. Archaeologists have uncovered a colonnaded street, a Roman theater, and a two-story house from the third century. The stunning mosaics of Sepphoris are a must-see, including the Nile mosaic and the famous “Mona Lisa of the Galilee.”

Location: 4 kilometers east of Hamovil junction on Route 79

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (summer); 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (winter)

35. Shimron

An inconspicuous hill marks the spot of Tel Shimron, the site from which one of many kings and armies came to resist Joshua’s northern campaign of Canaan (Joshua 11:1-9). After the conquest, Shimron was allotted to the tribe of Zebulun. Cited

outside the Bible, in the Egyptian Execration Texts as well as in Thutmose III's list of conquered cities, Shimron represented an important Old Testament site. In 2011, an apparent inscription representing a Sabbath boundary was found a mile northwest of Shimron. Today, the site is called Khirbet Sammuniyeh.

Location: East of the junction at Route 726 and 75, take the first left and stay left

Hours: Unlimited during daylight

36. Mount Tabor

A beautiful panoramic view rewards the visitors to Mount Tabor. Rising from the Jezreel Valley 1,843 feet high, Tabor's unique form is identifiable from any direction. For thousands of years, the International Highway passed at the foot of Mount Tabor, and the hill marks the borders of the tribes of Naphtali, Zebulun, and Issachar (Joshua 19:22). Deborah and Barak rushed with their army down Tabor's slopes to defeat Sisera (Judges 4:14-15). Although biblical context, as well as history, point to Mount Hermon as the location of Jesus' Transfiguration (Matthew 16:13; 17:1; Josephus, War 4:54-61), many have identified Mount Tabor as the site—and the Basilica of the Transfiguration at its summit memorializes this tradition.

Location: From Route 77 turn south on Route 65, then take Route 7266

Hours: Basilica: open 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. (closed Saturdays)

37. Tiberias Theater

Herod Antipas founded the city of Tiberias as his new capital in 20 BC, naming it in honor of his patron, the Emperor Tiberius Caesar. After the city builders unearthed a cemetery during the construction process, the Jews considered the city unclean and resisted living there. The New Testament never records Jesus visiting Tiberias, but a number of His followers did come from there (John 6:23). Tiberias had a distinctly Gentile atmosphere, including a Roman Cardo and a theater for entertainment. Prior to the excavations, the theater was buried underground. Archaeologists have discovered that the theater underwent three different construction phases between the first and fourth centuries, and at one point the theater could hold an estimated 7,000 spectators. Numerous architectural fragments and ornate carvings were found there.

Location: Route 90 in Tiberias across from Sironit Beach

Tel-Aviv and the Center

38. Tel Aphek/Antipatris

The Yarkon River funneled all traffic to the ancient International Highway past Aphek, putting the city in a commanding position for centuries. Archaeologists have discovered Egyptian ruins from the Late Bronze Age, as well as an ancient Cardo ruins that date back to the time when Herod the Great renamed the site Antipatris, in honor of his father, Antipater. The Jews built a fort there during the first Jewish Revolt, and later the Crusaders erected a castle over it. The extensive remains visitors see today date primarily to the Turkish period and the Ottoman ruler Suleiman the Magnificent. Tel Aphek's rich Biblical history includes the battle in which Israel lost the Ark (1 Samuel 4:1, 11), the place where the Philistines refused David to join their ranks (1 Samuel 29:1- 3), and the Roman way station, where Paul the Apostle stayed

during his hurried transport to Caesarea (Acts 23:31). Location: Route 483 south of the exchange of Routes 5 and 6

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (summer); 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (winter); 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Fridays and holidays)

39. Tel Dothan

As the ancient International Highway cut its way through Israel, it created three roads to traverse the Mount Carmel range. The easternmost fork passed through a valley named after the town of Dothan. Joseph's brothers were pasturing their flocks in the Dothan Valley on the day they sold Joseph to Ishmaelites traveling the highway on their way to Egypt (Genesis 37:12-28). In Elisha's day, the Aramean army gathered in the valley and surrounded Dothan. Elisha prayed and his servant's eyes opened to see the angels of God that surrounded the hill, outnumbering the Arameans (2 Kings 6:13-17). Discoveries at Tel Dothan include an ancient cemetery, a Middle Bronze Age city, an Iron Age II storage complex, and Assyrian structures, dating after the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel.

Location: Route 585 just east of Route 596

Hours: unlimited

40. Elon Moreh

The modern town takes its name from the "Oak of Moreh," the first location Abraham came to when he entered Canaan (Genesis 12:6). Near ancient Shechem, the overlook at Elon Moreh allows visitors to view significant historical sites, such as Mount Gerizim and Ebal, where Joshua and the Hebrews shouted the blessings and the curses (Deuteronomy 11:29; Joshua 8:33). Ancient Shechem served as the burial site of the patriarch Joseph, as well as the first capital of the northern kingdom of Israel (Joshua 24:32; 1 Kings 12:25). When Jesus journeyed through Samaria, He stopped nearby, at Jacob's Well in Sychar. The woman He spoke to there made reference to Mount Gerizim, from which Jesus drew a lesson (John 4:4, 19-26).

Location: Route 5554 all the way north, near Nablus

Hours: unlimited

41. Jacob's Well

The patriarch Jacob journeyed from Paddan-aram to Shechem and "camped before the city" (Genesis 33:18). Jacob purchased this land (outside modern Nablus) and evidently dug a well, as its location has remained known for thousands of years. In fact, few sites in Israel have a better claim of authenticity. When Jesus came to Sychar, the Samaritan woman He met at the well identified it as Jacob's. Successive churches were built over the well throughout the centuries, and today a Greek Orthodox Church encloses the site. Visitors can still draw cool water from the well, which is deep—just as it was when Jesus stood before it (John 4:11).

Location: Off Route 5487, between Balata and Nablus at the Bir Ya'qub Monastery

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (summer); 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (winter)

42. Tel Jaffa Excavations

Israel remained for millennia the only intercontinental land bridge at the crossroads of Asia, Africa, and Europe. The superpowers of the ancient world—including Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome—all sought to control the International Highway that traversed the land of Israel. Ancient Joppa (Jaffa) lay along this highway and served as Israel's primary port during the Old Testament period. Jaffa's name first appeared in history when the Egyptian Pharaoh Thutmose III captured it in fifteenth century BC; there are signs in Tel Jaffa that tell the story of his campaign. Today's ruins at the crest include an Egyptian fortress that dates back to the end of the thirteenth century BC. A new visitor center allows guests to see ruins from the third century BC as well as from the First Jewish Revolt in the first century AD.

Location: Walk to the top of the Tel Jaffa

Hours: Visitors Center—9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; 9:00 to a.m. 1:00 p.m. (Saturdays)

43. Michmash and Geba

The geographic descriptions given in 1 Samuel 14:4-5 describe two steep crags on either side of a great ravine, separating Geba on the south from Michmash on the north. Here Jonathan and his armor bearer scaled the crags for a surprise attack on the Philistine garrison at Michmash. The modern Arab villages of Mukhmas and Jaba preserve the ancient names, and the cliffs between them leave little room for doubt as to the authenticity of the location. The modern highway traverses the Wadi Suwenit at an ancient, natural bridge the Scriptures call, "The Pass" (1 Samuel 13:23; Isaiah 10:29). Thanks to the unchanging geographic conditions, these natural elements still remain, and visitors can easily imagine the story.

Location: Route 60 north of Route 437; turn toward Mukhmas but park outside the city.

Hours: unlimited

44. Nebi Samwil

The site's name mistakenly marks the tomb of the Prophet Samuel. The panoramic view from the rooftop gives one a commanding view of the Central Benjamin Plateau—a strategic plain where a large portion of the Old Testament narratives occurred. Nebi Samwil may be what the Bible refers to as "the great high place" at Gibeon. If so, this is where God appeared before King Solomon, and where he asked God for wisdom (1 Kings 3:4-9). The Crusaders first saw Jerusalem from Nebi Samwil on their march to the Holy City in July 1099. Hasmonean, Byzantine, and Mamluk ruins surround the hill today.

Location: Route 436 north of Jerusalem 2 miles

Hours: unlimited, though access to the rooftop is unpredictable

45. Samaria/Sebaste

King Omri purchased this isolated hill from Shemer, and named it Samaria (1 Kings 16:24-28). Samaria served as the final capital of the northern kingdom of Israel for 160 years. In its heyday, Samaria accommodated as many as 40,000 citizens and

expanded to the size of 150 acres. It was in Samaria that King Ahab's blood was washed from his chariot (1 Kings 20), where Jezebel killed the prophets of God, and where Jehu killed the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:13; 2 Kings 10:17). The Prophet Amos predicted Samaria's destruction (Amos 6:1-7). The city withstood sieges from Arameans, Assyrians, and Hasmoneans. Herod the Great acquired the site from Caesar Augustus, and renamed it Sebaste, the Greek name for Augustus. Extensive ruins of various eras include Israelite walls, a basilica, a Roman theater and Cardo, Hellenistic round towers, Herodian stylobates, Herod's temple to Augustus, and more.

Location: Route 5715 west of Route 60

46. Tel Shiloh

Archaeologists have identified a large, level area, measuring 400 by 79 feet, which likely represents the place where the Tabernacle first rested after Israel entered the land (Joshua 18:1). For 300 years, Shiloh hosted the annual feasts. Here Hannah prayed for a son, and the Prophet Samuel grew to manhood (1 Samuel 1:1-28; 3:21). After the Philistines took the Ark during a battle in 1104 BC, Shiloh fell into ruins, and God "abandoned the dwelling place at Shiloh" (Psalm 78:60). Jeremiah saw the ruins as representing the First Temple's destruction (Jeremiah 7:12), and Jesus used Jeremiah's passage in prediction of the Second Temple's destruction (Mark 11:15-17; Luke 21:6). Today, an observation tower gives visitors a superb view of the site. Ruins remain from the Middle Bronze, Late Bronze, and Iron Ages.

Location: Route 60 north of Route 4665

Hours: unlimited

47. Yarkon Park

The area from the headwaters of the Yarkon River form near ancient Aphek/Antipatris, and flow westward until they surrender to the Mediterranean Sea in Tel Aviv. In between, the Yarkon Park (Ganei Yehoshua) has hundreds of acres that follow alongside the river and offer tranquility and activity for the visitors of Tel Aviv. The eastern section of the park includes a ten-acre rock garden with interpretive signs that explain the rock formations as one walks the trails among 3,500 species of plants. The park also offers a tropical garden, cycling, paddleboats, a bird sanctuary and a petting zoo.

Location: From Route 20 turn east on Sderot Rokah

Jerusalem and the South

48. Tel Arad

With a commanding view of the eastern Negev basin, it's easy to see why Tel Arad remained continually busy until the Islamic occupation of the seventh century AD. An oasis of archaeology, Arad has two levels that represent two eras. The lower city has ruins from the Early Bronze Period (3000-2300 BC), pre-dating even Abraham's

time. When the Hebrews passed Arad on their way from Egypt to the Promised Land, they defeated the King of Arad in battle (Numbers 21:1-3). The descendants of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, resettled "in the south of Arad" (Judges 1:16). The upper city dates back to the late Iron Age (1000-586 BC), and includes one of the forbidden "high places" referred to in the Scriptures. It is unknown whether it was King Hezekiah or King Josiah who dismantled this temple (2 Kings 23:8).

Location: Route 80 north of Route 31

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (summer); 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (winter)

49. Tel Aroer

Twelve miles southeast of Beersheba lies the Old Testament city of Aroer, the likely hometown of Shama and Jeiel, two of David's Mighty Men (1 Chronicles 11:44). One of the gifts David gave the elders of Judah was the city of Aroer in the Negev (1 Samuel 30:28). Archaeologists excavated the site from 1975 and 1982 and revealed several layers of different cities from the Iron Age and the Herodian period. A large, fortified area encompassed two-and-a-half acres of land, with an additional two-and-a-half acres of settlement outside the fortification. Aroer was rebuilt after five centuries, during the time of Herod the Great, and ruins of a Herodian fortress still remain at the southeastern edge of the tell. Herod's signature margins and bosses grace many of the ashlar masonries, similar to the Herodian stones that still flank the Temple Mount today.

Location: Route 80 east of Route 25

Hours: unlimited

50. Ashkelon

The massive tell of Ashkelon combines the thrill of archeology with the pleasure of the beach. Resting along the ancient International Highway, Ashkelon was the envy of all of the superpowers in the area. It is mentioned in the Execration Texts (c. 1900 BC) and in the famous Egyptian Merneptah Stele: "Carried off is Ashkelon." The city's biblical significance is revealed in the lives of Joshua, Samson, David, and the prophets (Joshua 13:1-3; Judges 14:19; 2 Samuel 1:20; Jeremiah 25:20; 47:5, 7; Amos 1:8; Zephaniah 2:4, 7; Zechariah 9:5). It is best known for being the largest of the five major Philistine cities. Fallen granite

columns from the Roman basilica protrude today through eroded slopes near the sea, giving the appearance of an ancient canon. The beach is beautiful, a joy for swimmers and visitors. The remains on the site date back to the Neolithic period and up to the thirteenth century AD, and the Archaeological Park allows much of it to be seen.

Location: West at Ashqelon Junction, from Route 4; continue on Ben Gurion St; left at dead end.

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (summer); 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (winter); closed on Mondays.

51. Avdat

The Nabateans were masters at water conservation, and in the barren Negev every drop was precious. Founded in the second century BC, Avdat was a stop along the “Spice Route,” a caravan highway where merchants transported spices, herbs and perfumes from Arabia to the Mediterranean. The Nabateans designed elaborate systems to catch every ounce of moisture, and their methods were so effective that they even grew vineyards and built winepresses; in fact, the remains of four winepresses have been discovered. Avdat’s heyday came during the Byzantine period (dating from the fourth through the seventh centuries), and the remains of two splendid churches allow visitors to imagine the luxurious atmosphere built there for worship.

Location: Route 40, 9 miles south of Sede Boker

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Fridays)

52 Tel Azekah

Standing atop Tel Azekah, visitors can enjoy seeing the Elah Valley where David fought Goliath (1 Samuel 17:1). Joshua defeated five Amorite kings at Azekah (Joshua 10:10-11), Rehoboam later fortified the site (2 Chronicles 11:9), and some returning exiles repopulated the city (Nehemiah 11:30). Jeremiah 34:7 lists Azekah and Lachish as the only two remaining fortified cities during the Babylonian invasion in 586 BC, a detail supported by the discovery of the Lachish Letter #4 which reads: “We are watching over the beacon of Lachish, according to the signals which my lord gave, for Azekah is not to be seen.”

Location: On Route 383, just west of Route 38

Hours: Unlimited

53. Tel Beersheba

The city’s name means, “Well of the Seven,” or “Well of the Oath,” named after Abraham and Isaac’s conflicts with the locals over the rights to water— the Negev’s most precious commodity (Genesis 21:25-34; 26:26-33). The phrase, “from Dan to Beersheba,” delineated the practical north-south borders of ancient Israel (Judges 20:1; 2 Samuel 24:2; 1 Kings 4:25). Some of the Jews returning from the Babylonian exile resettled in Beersheba (Nehemiah 11:27- 30), and following the Statehood of Israel in 1948, Jewish immigrants resettled the area again. Today, modern Beersheba is the fourth-largest city in the nation. An ancient horned altar, from the time of Josiah, was discovered in Tel Beersheba (it rests today in Jerusalem’s Israel Museum). Visitors can observe the remains of a typical Israelite four-room house, a pillared building used as stables, and a set of large, circular stairs leading underground to a major water system. Location: Route 40 and Route 60 Junction, take road toward Tel Sheva

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (summer); 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (winter)

54. Bet Guvrin Bell Caves

The ancient stomping ground of the Prophet Micah, this area lays rich with archaeological finds, including a Roman amphitheater, a Roman and Byzantine

public building and bathhouse, and a Crusader church, fortress, and moat. The Guvrin Valley has a hard, nari crust on its surface—as does most of the Shephelah—and as a result, the area surrounding Maresha is honeycombed with caves. These subterranean caverns include numerous tombs, cellars from Idumean homes, dovecotes, and “Bell Caves,” named after their shape. Below the nari crust, layers of chalk were removed by quarrymen, broadening the walls of the cave as they dug deeper. Modern visitors can walk through these caves (with hard hats), illumined by the sunlight that penetrates the surface’s holes. The ancient quarry marks can still be seen on the cave’s walls.

Location: Route 35 west of Route 38

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (Fridays)

55. Beth-Shemesh

Tel Beth-Shemesh in the Sorek Valley echoes with biblical history, for the site guarded all traffic traversing the valley. After the Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant, they returned it to Beth-Shemesh, where the local residents made the fatal mistake of looking inside it (1 Samuel 6:13-19). Standing on the tell and looking northeast, visitors can spy the sites of Zorah and Eshtaol, where the judge Samson grew up. Samson journeyed down the valley many times, passing Beth-Shemesh on his way. Archaeological finds at the site include ruins from the Middle Bronze Age through the Iron II period, including Israel’s largest Iron Age water reservoir.

Location: Route 38 south of Route 3835 .Hours: unlimited

56. Bethphage

Bethphage, along with its sister city, Bethany, would have been familiar to Jesus and His disciples. Bethany was the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus—the home where Jesus stayed when He came to Jerusalem for the annual feasts. It was Bethany, on the Mount of Olives, from which Jesus ascended to Heaven (Luke 24:50). Jesus would have passed through Bethphage every day on His way to Jerusalem during the annual feasts. It was in Bethphage that Jesus cursed a fig tree (which represented fruitless Israel), and where He mounted a donkey on which He rode down the Mount of Olives during His Triumphal Entry (Mark 11:1-10). Bethphage’s main attraction is a Franciscan chapel with colorful medieval paintings that portray the resurrection of Lazarus and the Triumphal Entry.

Location: Route 3686 east of Bethlehem

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.; 2:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (summer); 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.; 2:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (winter)

57. Broad Wall in the Jewish

Quarter An ancient broad wall was discovered in the Jewish Quarter after the reunification of Jerusalem in the 1960s. The wall dates back to the time of King Hezekiah and corresponds with the biblical record, which says that he: “built another outside wall” (2 Chronicles 32:5). The king constructed this wall to accommodate the many refugees who fled south after Assyria invaded the northern kingdom twenty years earlier. Although only a small portion of this wall has been unearthed,

archaeologists estimate that it encompassed the entire Western Hill. Interpretive signs today tell visitors about the massive size of the original wall. Location: Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem
Hours: unlimited

58. Burnt House

On Tisha B'Av (the 9th day of the month of Av), according to tradition, both the First and Second Temples were destroyed, in the years 586 BC and AD 70, respectively. Along with destroying the Second Temple, the Romans also “set fire to the houses” on the Western Hill, according to Josephus (Wars of the Jews, VI 8.5). In 1967, archeologists found one of those homes. Seven basement rooms can be found in the “Burnt House,” which made up what would have been a much larger home. Some of the findings in the Burnt House include inkwells, cooking utensils, a female’s skeleton, a spear, and money dating to AD 69. Much of these are on display, along with a seal attributed to the family of Kathros. An instructional video educates visitors about the story of the Burnt House.

Location: Tiferet Israel Street, Jerusalem Hours: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Sunday);
9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Monday - Thursday);

59. Cardo Street in Jerusalem

At the southern end of the ancient Cardo Street in Jerusalem's Jewish Quarter, an enlarged replica of the Medeba Map mosaic depicts the Holy Land as it looked in AD 580. It shows Jerusalem divided into four quarters. These quarters largely represent the four quarters of today’s Jerusalem, and the Cardo Street is the north/south division. Excavated in the 1970s, this section of Cardo dates back to the sixth century—the same century as the Medeba Map. Visitors can walk through the restored street where shops once thrived. As the street continues north, modern shops replace the ancient ones. The road stretches to the Damascus Gate to a section of Cardo Street that dates back to the Roman period, when Hadrian originally quartered the city. The gate from Hadrian’s day is still visible below the modern Damascus Gate.

Location: Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem
Hours: unlimited

60. Eilat Underwater Observatory Marine Park

For those who want to view Eilat’s beautiful coral reef—but also stay dry—the marine park provides a large underwater observatory, 330 feet from the beach. Guests get to watch a plethora of marine life on the seabed. A large aquarium replicates a coral reef and provides a home to a stunning array of 400 species of fish. The sea’s predators and herbivores swim alongside bright reef fish. Every day at noon a diver feeds the aquarium fish for all to see. The park also features a massive shark pool, a habitat for large herbivore Green Turtles, Hawksbill Turtles and stingrays, and 40 rare fish aquariums. The whole family will enjoy the underwater dive simulator, as well as the Coral 2000 glass-bottomed cruise boats.

Location: Route 90 south of Eilat’s center

Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Fridays and holidays)

61. Eilat Coral Beach

Those who journeyed to Eilat in biblical days had no idea what beauty lay hidden just below the surface of the Red Sea (Numbers 33:35; 1 Kings 9:26). The coral reef at the center of the modern underwater nature reserve extends for one mile, parallel to the shoreline. The massive reef includes a mixture of inlets, shallow bays, and gaps that provide a rich habitat for a large variety of colorful sea life. Divers from all over the world come to explore the reef and enjoy its colorful inhabitants. With advanced reservations, groups of 30 or more can enjoy a guided snorkeling tour. Guests can also snorkel in the reef on their own and appreciate the marvels below the surface.

Location: Route 90 and Yahalom St.

Hours: 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (summer); 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (winter); Fridays close 1 hour earlier

62. Ein Avdat/ Nahal Zin

Moses and the Hebrew nation—traveling in the wilderness of Zin (Numbers 20:1)—would have stood speechless as they reached the precipice of this breathtaking canyon. The Nahal Zin, or Ein Avdat, drains the northeastern Negev highlands to the Dead Sea, dropping 500 feet in a series of waterfalls. The Ein Avdat spring surfaces at the base of a spectacular 50-foot waterfall to create a saltwater pool 25 feet deep. The origin of the spring remains an enigma. In 1956, a hiking trail was constructed in the area, which later became part of the Israel National Trail running from Eilat to Dan. Visitors can park at a beautiful overlook and hike down into the canyon.

Location: Route 40, 7.5 miles south of Sede Boker

Hours: unlimited

63. Ein Bokek

There are very few fertile places in the Judean desert, and the Ein Bokek Nature Reserve is one of the most beautiful ones there. A fresh spring flows down Brook Bokek through the wilderness, offering hikers of all ages a delightful path on which to enjoy the natural beauty, including tropical flora, waterfalls, and clear water pools. An occasional leopard can be spotted there, so visitors are advised to hike in groups. The medicinal benefits of the Dead Sea have been well known since antiquity. Ancient ruins include a fourth-century Roman fort used until the seventh-century Muslim invasion.

Location: Route 90, opposite of the Ein Bokek hotels

Hours: unlimited

64. Ein Feshkha

Few places around the western edge of the Dead Sea seem as charming as this oasis. The fresh streams and saltwater surfacing from crags in the cliffs form a nature reserve tourists can enjoy, and provides protection for flora and fauna. The archaeologist's spade has revealed that Ein Feshkha was occupied from the first

century BC. Findings include a massive two-story building identified as a villa with a Roman courtyard. The public section of the reserve allows visitors to hike the trails, picnic in the shade, and swim in the natural mineral pools. With advanced reservations, guests can enjoy a guided tour of the reserve's southern section, which includes native flora and fauna.

Location: Route 90 six miles south of Route 1

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (summer); 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (winter)

65. Ein Hatzeva/Tamar

Archaeologists have connected the site of Ein Hatzeva with biblical Tamar, the Iron Age city that dates back to tenth century BC. King Solomon rebuilt Tamar, along with numerous other strategic sites (1 Kings 9:18). The ruins of the ancient fortress walls stand as high as 15 feet, and they were twice as high in Roman times when the city was called Tamara. Archaeological finds include incense altars, bowls and pedestals, chalices, stone statues, and numerous vessels, all of which could all be reassembled. This suggests their destruction was deliberate, and was likely a part of a spiritual reformation required by a king of Judah—perhaps Josiah (2 Kings 23:1-25).

Location: Route 90 south of Route 227

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily

66. Ein Prat

The King James Bible and some modern translations refer to the Hebrew term, prt, in Jeremiah 13:4, as the “Euphrates River.” A better translation is “Prat,” which refers to a spring that flowed only a few miles east of Jerusalem. The Lord commanded Jeremiah to buy a garment and bury it in the cracks of Prat as a teaching lesson for Israel. The beautiful oasis of water and shade trees at Ein Prat offer an excellent example of King David’s famous Psalm 23: “He leads me beside quiet waters.” It is possible that David was writing of Ein Prat. Through the centuries, Ein Prat provided water to a number of ancient aqueducts and monasteries, some of which have remains still visible today.

Location: Route 437 west of Route 1 about 4 miles; turn toward Almon

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (summer); 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (winter); 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Fridays and holidays)

67. Eshkol National Park

Before he became king, David came to this area with his band of 600 men in pursuit of their stolen wives and children. The 200 men who were too weary to travel further remained “at the brook Besor” (1 Samuel 30:9-10; 21- 22). The modern 875-acre national park lies near the Besor Stream, and offers a feast for the eyes. The Nahal Besor drains the western Negev basin into the Mediterranean Sea. The park offers fine-trimmed lawns, shady picnic areas, and a lovely freshwater pond. At the crest of

the hill, named Shalala Ruins, visitors enjoy a magnificent view of the western Negev. The park takes its name after Israel's third Prime Minister, Levi Eshkol.

Location: Route 241, between the Gilat Junction and Ma'on Junction

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (summer); 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (winter); 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Fridays and holidays)

68. Tel Gezer

Gezer stood watch over the crossroads of the International Highway and the road to Jerusalem through the Aijalon Valley. Vast archaeological finds can attest to the strategic importance of this city in the days of the Old Testament. A massive defense tower and large wall from the Middle Bronze period (2000- 1500 BC) guarded the city. The standing stones of Gezer date to this general era as well. The city likely fell as a result of Thutmose III's invasion around 1477 BC, just prior to Joshua entering the land. The Bible's statement that King Solomon built "Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer" (1 Kings 9:15) has overwhelming attestation at each of these sites—as they all have similar tripartite gates that date to Solomon's day. Another important find occurred in 1908 with the discovery of the "Gezer Calendar," a limestone agricultural tablet dating to Solomon's time and representing the earliest example of Hebrew script. An enlarged replica can be found at Tel Gezer for visitors to see today.

Location: Route 44 east of Route 6

Hours: unlimited

69. Tel Gibeon

The terraced slopes of Tel Gibeon rise on the western edge of the Central Benjamin Plateau. The nearby Arab village, el-Jib, preserves Gibeon's ancient name. At this site, Joshua made an unwitting treaty with its inhabitants (Joshua 9:3-22), King Solomon asked God for wisdom at "the great high place"—perhaps nearby Nebi Samwil (2 Chronicles 1:13), and Abner and Joab let their men kill each other at the pool of Gibeon (2 Samuel 2:12-15). Excavations at the tell have revealed 63 wine cellars from the eighth to the seventh centuries BC, as well as two water systems, one of which had a large cylindrical shaft that may be the "pool of Gibeon" referred to in the Scriptures (2 Samuel 2:13; Jeremiah 41:12).

Location: Route 436 north of Jerusalem by el-Jib

Hours: unlimited

70. Good Samaritan Inn

The primary road in antiquity from Jericho to Jerusalem was known as the "Ascent of Adummim." Its name means "ascent of the red places" and likely refers to the red rocks in the area. Others identified the road as Tal' at ed-Damm—"ascent of blood"—because of the blood spilled there by thieves. This well-known road served as the setting for Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30- 39). The modern "Good Samaritan Inn" memorializes Jesus' story, but because the journey between the cities took only a day, it's unlikely any inn actually existed there in antiquity; the inn of Jesus' parable was probably in Jericho. Nevertheless, visitors of the Museum

of the Good Samaritan can see one of the largest collections of mosaics in Israel—some of the most rare and beautiful mosaics in the world.

Location: Route 1 just east of Route 458, below Khan Al-Hatruri

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (summer); 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (winter); Fridays close 1 hour earlier.

71. Hai-Bar Yotvata Wildlife Preserve

The goal of this center is to provide a place for the protection and breeding of animals that existed in biblical days, as well as other endangered species of the desert. Several sections make up this nature reserve. A dark space eliminates all sunlight and allows visitors to observe the nocturnal habits of animals like the barn owl, the fruit bat, the sand rat, and the gerbil. An enclosed area allows guests to see reptiles and wild carnivores such as the caracal, the leopard, the wolf, and the fox. Every hour a guided tour in private vehicles leads visitors through an open area of seven square miles. From the comfort of one's car, a visitor can see herbivores like the onager, the oryx, and the ostrich in their native habitat.

Location: Route 40 between Kibbutzim Yotvata and Samar

Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Friday and Saturday)

72. Haas Promenade

Named after Daniel Haas, a fallen soldier from the first Lebanon war, the Haas Promenade offers the best view of Jerusalem from the south. The City of David, the Temple Mount, and the Mount of Olives all contribute to this wide panorama. A lovely garden with terraced walkways and benches provide visitors with a relaxing atmosphere. Tradition states that the Sanhedrin met on this hill to conspire to turn Jesus over to Roman officials; hence the hill bears the name, "Hill of Evil Counsel." Ironically, the hill also hosted the headquarters of the British Mandate and, more recently, the United Nations building.

Location: Volter and Elis HaZ Promenade, Jerusalem

Hours: unlimited

73. Herodium

Herod the Great constructed a 200-foot double wall around the top of this hill that overlooks the landscape southeast of Bethlehem. Fill dirt supported the wall all around and made the hill appear larger, giving it a flattop profile. Herod named the hill after himself to serve as a memorial of a battle he had won there in 40 BC. Ruins from the site include a massive round tower, three semicircular towers, a dining room, a ritual bath, a furnace, a full-sized Roman bath, frescoes, and black and white mosaics. The opulent fortress served as more than just a summer leisure spot for Herod. It also gave the paranoid monarch a secure place to flee to in close proximity to Jerusalem. Herod chose the Herodium as the place of his burial, and his tomb was finally discovered there in 2007. Jewish rebels used the fort during the AD 132 Bar-Kokhba revolt, and the site served as a monastery during the fifth century. Christian symbols still grace the chapel.

Location: Junction of Route 398 and 356

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (summer); 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (winter)

9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (Friday); closed Saturday.

74. Hinnom Valley

The Church of St. Peter in Gallicantu has a balcony with a superb overlook of the Hinnom Valley. Today the valley is a place for concerts and for family recreation. But in the days of Judah's kings, the gorge saw horrific acts of child sacrifice and idol worship (2 Chronicles 33:6; Jeremiah 7:31). In antiquity, the city dump lay in the Hinnom Valley, and Jesus used the gorge as an illustration of eternal torment (Matthew 18:9). From the church balcony, visitors can see the simple Greek Orthodox Convent that marks the place where Judas, the betrayer of Jesus, took his own life. Hence, the site took on the name "Hakeldama," or "Field of Blood" (Acts 1:18-19). It is suspected that the valley's floor holds the monument of Annas, the High Priest associated with the trial of Jesus (John 18:13; Josephus, War 5:506).

Location: Malki Tsedek Road, Jerusalem

Hours: the balcony at the southeast corner of the church is accessible at all hours of the day.

75. Israel Museum - Biblical Archaeology

The Israel Museum is rich with history, but these ten finds all have biblical connections. The Ketef Hinnom Amulets have the etched benediction of Numbers 6:24-26 and represent the earliest copy of Scripture. The Tel Dan Inscription represents the only extra-biblical text referring to the "House of David" (2 Kings 8:12-13). Sennacherib's Prism lists his boastful triumph over the cities of Judah. The Trumpeting Inscription noted where the priest would stand to announce the Sabbath and holidays during the Second Temple period. The Heel Bone of a Crucified Man represents the only

archaeological evidence of that practice. The Pontius Pilate Inscription proves him as a historical figure (Matthew 27:22). The Caiaphas Ossuary held the bones of the High Priest who condemned Jesus (Matthew 26:57). Other finds include the Epitaph of King Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26:23), the altar at Tel Beersheba, and of course, the marvelous Dead Sea Scrolls (in another building.) Location: Ruppin Blvd, POB 71117, Jerusalem

Hours: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; 4:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. (Tuesday); 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (Friday and holidays); 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Saturday and holidays);

76. Jericho Hasmonean and Herodian Palaces

Jericho's warm climate made it an ideal place for monarchs to winter, a fact supported by the vast ruins of the Hasmonean and Herodian palaces 1 mile south of modern Jericho. Likely built by Alexander Jannaeus in the first century BC, the three-acre Hasmonean palace had three sections, including a pavilion, swimming pools, and bathhouses. King Herod built his ornate winter palace with lavish gardens, aqueducts, swimming pools, bathhouses, and a vast reception hall, complete with

mosaics, frescos, and gold and marble columns. Herod died here in 4 BC. The palace straddled the ancient road that led up to Jerusalem, and Jesus would have walked on it on His final journey to the Holy City (Luke 19:1-11).

Location: Take the road west of Jericho toward the Wadi Kelt

Hours: unlimited

77. Jordan River near Jericho

A new facility allows visitors to experience the Jordan River at a point where significant biblical history occurred. Here, across from Jericho, the Jordan River parted as Joshua led the Hebrew nation into the Promised Land (Joshua 3:16-17), and it parted again before and after Elijah ascended to heaven (2 Kings 2:5-14); and the skies parted after John the Baptist baptized Jesus there (Mark 1:9-10). Today, agricultural interests divert about 90 percent of this part of the Jordan River, which causes it to flow only about 20 feet wide—a fraction of its width in antiquity. However, after heavy rains the river swells significantly and often envelops the wooden visitors' platform.

Location: East of Jericho, Route 90 north of Route 1; follow signs to Baptism Site

Hours: Visits require military permission but are not hard to arrange.

78. Judean Wilderness Overlook/ St. George Monastery

A place of getaway, seclusion, and sanctuary, the Wilderness of Judea was what King David described as a “dry and weary land where there is no water” (Psalm 63:1). Here the paranoid Herod the Great built fortifications, John the Baptist baptized and preached as a “voice crying in the wilderness,” and Jesus faced temptation (Isaiah 40:3; Matthew 3:1; 4:1). After Judas Maccabeus died, his brothers positioned their insurrection near Tekoa in the Wilderness of Judea (1 Maccabees 9:33). Thousands of Christian monks flooded to the wilderness and formed monasteries—the height of which occurred in the Byzantine period. Visitors today can see the monasteries of Mar Saba and Saint George. A nearby overlook near Saint George's Monastery allows visitors an unspoiled view of the wilderness as it has looked since biblical days.

Location: Route 1 from Jerusalem, turn left at Mizpe Yericho until opposite Cypros

Hours: unlimited

79. Kidron Valley Tombs

Visitors can see a number of monuments and tombs in the Kidron Valley. One structure looks like an upside-down funnel, known as “Absalom's Pillar,” or “Absalom's Tomb”—a misnomer associated with the event that occurred in 2 Samuel 18:18. The structure actually represents funerary monument from the time of Jesus. Further south, another monument with a pyramid-shaped top is called, “Zachariah's Tomb”; attributed to Saint James, the tomb bears a Hebrew inscription that connects it to the priestly family of Hezir (1 Chronicles 24:15). Further south, the village of Silwan has the alleged “Tomb of Pharaoh's Daughter,” and the Tomb of Shebnah, Hezekiah's scribe (2 Kings 18:18).

Location: Cross the street opposite Jerusalem's Church of All Nations and walk the valley south. Hours: unlimited

80. Kiriath Jearim

For nearly a century, the physical symbol of God's presence in Israel was located on this hill near modern Abu Ghosh. The Ark of the Covenant was in "the house of Abinadab on the hill" (1 Samuel 7:1). King David came here to bring the ark to Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 13, 15; 2 Chronicles 1:4). A beautiful church named "Our Lady of the Ark of the Covenant Church" is located over the ruins of a fifth-century Byzantine church. Visitors can stay overnight at the nearby Moshav Yad HaShmona. The community provides guests with biblical examples of a wheat field, a threshing floor, grapevines, a watchtower, olive trees, an olive press, winepresses, Bedouin tents, a Galilean synagogue, and even a burial cave. Lunch at the nearby Elvis American Diner is sure to bring a smile to every visitor.

Location: Route 425 off of Route 1

Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. (closed Sunday and Thursday); Feast days open one hour longer

81. Tel Lachish

Except for Jerusalem, Tel Lachish was the most important city in the southern kingdom of Judah because of its access to the Hill Country. The Assyrian king Sennacherib commemorated his 701 BC victory over Lachish with a series of stone reliefs, which can be seen today in the British Museum. King Hezekiah sent tribute to Sennacherib at Lachish (2 Kings 18:14) but later put his faith in God and received protection from the Assyrians. When Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon laid siege to Lachish, Jeremiah recorded that only "Jerusalem . . . Lachish and Azekah . . . remained as fortified cities among the cities of Judah" (Jeremiah 34:7). The 1935 archaeological discovery of eighteen ostraca—called the "Lachish Letters"—support Jeremiah's verse. Ruins include the Assyrian siege ramp, the sacred area, the palace area, an ancient well, and a Canaanite temple dating from when Joshua destroyed Lachish (Joshua 10:31-32).

Location: Route 35 east of Route 6, turn at Lachish Junction. Hours: unlimited

82. Cave of Machpelah

Other than the Temple Mount, there is no other place more significant to Jews, Christians, and Muslims. The large building in Hebron covers the Cave of Machpelah, the burial place of the Hebrew patriarchs and their wives (Genesis 23:19; 25:9; 49:30; 50:13). Herod the Great constructed the massive edifice with stones that rival the size of Jerusalem's Western Wall. Inside, a Crusader ceiling graces the space, as does a beautiful ornate wooden pulpit that Saladin donated in 1191. Visitors can see the cenotaphs of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Rebecca, Leah, and Sarah. A padlocked door guards a shaft that descends to the Cave of Machpelah below. God promised all the land of Canaan to Abraham, but this plot is the only piece of land he ever owned. Such a promise demands a resurrection.

Location: Route 3507 west of Route 60

Hours: visitors are advised to check whether or not a visit to Hebron is currently safe.

83. Mar Saba Monastery

Mar Saba remains the only monastery in Israel that boasts a continual occupation since its origin. Founded in AD 483 by Sabas, Mar Saba was the most elaborate of the laura monasteries—it had separate cells connected to each other and to the common building by a complex network of paths, alcoves, and steps. Its heyday occurred between the eighth and ninth centuries, and following an earthquake in 1834, much of it had to be rebuilt. The monastery clings to the cliffs of the Kidron Valley, which drains down to the Dead Sea. There is no running water, electricity, nor hardly any sounds, except for the weekly concert of church bells played by a monk. Women are not permitted inside, but they may view it from the Women’s Tower.

Location: Route 398 east of Route 66, turn east and then past Theodosius Monastery

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily

84. Mei Niftoach Nature Reserve /Lifta

Just outside Jerusalem, the deserted Arab village of Lifta likely preserves the ancient biblical name, Nephtoah—the location of the “waters of Nephtoah” (Joshua 15:8-9). The site served as a landmark to help designate the border between the tribes of Judah and Benjamin: “the border went westward and went to the fountain of the waters of Nephtoah” (Joshua 18:15). The abandoned village is surrounded by numerous crumbling structures, whose only residents are wild vegetation and orchards. The “waters of Nephtoah” still flow from the spring that emerges from a narrow tunnel, which guests can explore with flashlights.

Location: Just south of Route 1 on Sderot Menachem Begin

Hours: unlimited

85. Mitzpe Ramon Observatory

Israel contributed to geology the term makhteshim—which represent craters that exist only in Israel. Erosion from a single waterway creates a valley with anticlines that enclose the crater on all sides, creating a makhtesh or “bowl. The Makhtesh Ramon is the largest of three makhteshim in the Negev, measuring twenty-five by five miles and plunging 1,300 feet deep. During their 40-year wilderness wandering, the Hebrews included the Wilderness of Zin in their journeys—and likely beheld these canyons (Numbers 20:1-2). The Mitzpeh Ramon Observatory gives a spectacular view of the Makhtesh Ramon. The Makhtesh effectively offers an open-air museum, featuring volcanic rock, variegated clays, and rough hunks of quartzite. The area represents the largest national park in Israel and the most beautiful parts of the Negev Highlands.

Location: Route 40, 27 miles south of Sede Boker

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (summer); 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Friday and winter)

86. Mount of Temptation

The gospels reveal that Jesus was tempted by the devil in an unspecified location in the Judean Wilderness, as well as on the pinnacle of the Temple in Jerusalem (Luke 4:1-13). Byzantines assigned a tall cliff in the wilderness west of Jericho as the

traditional place of the temptation. The Greek Orthodox monastery of Jebel Quarantul seems to tempt gravity as it clings to the cliffs. The monastery's name comes from the Latin word for "40" and memorializes the number of days Jesus fasted prior to His temptation. A cable car gives visitors easy access to the mount from Jericho, and the crest rewards each person with a tremendous panoramic view of the Jordan Valley. In His temptation, Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy, the book Moses penned on the Plains of Moab, just across the Jordan River Valley to the east.

Location: Jericho Cable Car on Elisha's Spring Street, Jericho

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. daily

87. Moza Illit

Moza Illit is a rural community outside of Jerusalem where the observing eye can enjoy many biblical flowers and plants in their native habitat. Armed with a good plant identification book, one can see and photograph a variety of species, including the Aleppo pine, crocus, snapdragon, thyme, toadflax, barley, storax, Star of Bethlehem, sage leaf, purple vetch, pomegranate, Persian cyclamen, Oriental viper's grass, Navelwort, white umbilicus intermedius, Narcissus, mustard plant, Mulberry tree, *Micromeria nervosa*, hyssop, holy milk thistle, grapes, and much more.

Location: Amir Garden on Route 3985 off of Route 1

Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (Friday); 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (Saturday and holidays)

88. Tel Nessana

Today an old Turkish military hospital dominates the hill of ancient Nessana, but the site's history reaches much further back than the Turks. Built in the third century BC by Nabateans, Nessana was located at the crossroads of a highway that stretched from Eilat on the Gulf of Aqaba to Gaza on the Mediterranean Sea. The city reached its zenith in the Byzantine period, serving travelers, traders, and even pilgrims bound for Mount Sinai. Visitors to Nessana today can see the "Central Church" from the sixth century, with its restored columns and cross engraved in the church's stone threshold. The "South Church" on the crest was dedicated to St. Mary just before the Arab invasion. Its remains rest alongside the skeleton of the Ottoman hospital.

Location: Route 21 west to the border of Egypt

Hours: unlimited

89. Ophel Excavations

Although visitors can peer over the railing from Derech HaOfel Street and see the excavations for free, a stroll along the exhibit's new walkways offers a much better view. Although the conclusions from the dig are debated, the findings may include an Iron Age gatehouse and a royal structure. The "Ophel Walls" park opened in 2011, and its elevated walkways and interpretive signs guide visitors around its ruins. Visitors can also see where 12 large stone jars were found, as well as replicas of the original vessels that held either oil or wine. Also visible is a "Small Tower" that dates back to the Iron Age with a Byzantine wall built on top of it.

Location: Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Sunday - Thursday); 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (Friday); closed Saturday and holidays

90. Ramparts Walk in Jerusalem

A unique way to see the Old City is from atop the walls built more than four centuries ago by Suleiman the Magnificent. A frequently open section of the ramparts begins at the Jaffa Gate and circles counterclockwise to the Dung Gate. Some of the sites from this unique vantage include the Citadel, built by Herod the Great, where Pontius Pilate condemned Jesus (John 19:9-16), the beautiful Dormition Abbey outside the walls, and the Armenian Quarter. The Zion Gate and its pockmarked façade echo of the violent struggle to liberate the Jewish Quarter in the 1948 War of Independence. Walking the ramparts gives the visitor the unnerving feeling of a defender on the walls during a siege or battle. At some point during the walk, a visitor may want to pause and pray Psalm 122:6–7: “May they prosper who love [Jerusalem]. May peace be within your walls.”

Location: Ascend at the Jaffa Gate

Hours: 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Saturday - Thursday); 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (Friday)

91. Mount Scopus/Nob

A marvelous lookout located in the campus of the Hebrew University allows visitors a view of the Old City from the northeast. Mount Scopus corresponds with the biblical city of Nob, which served as a city of priests in King Saul’s day. Here Doeg the Edomite slaughtered all the priests but the one who escaped and fled to David (1 Samuel 22:19-23). During the reign of Hezekiah, it was in Nob that the Assyrian king halted and shook “his fist” at Jerusalem after the Angel of the Lord destroyed his army (Isaiah 10:18, 32; 36:36-37). Although the Assyrian Sennacherib had decimated much of Israel and Judah in his rampage, the most he could boast over Jerusalem in his infamous prism was that his siege imprisoned Hezekiah “like a bird in a cage.” From the slopes of Mount Scopus, after the Six-Day War in 1967, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra played a concert celebrating the newly reunified Jerusalem.

Location: At the Hebrew University, follow Binyamin Mazar Rd. around to lookout

Hours: unlimited

Hours: 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.; Fridays close at 1:30 p.m.; Saturdays close at 3:30 p.m.

92. Sde Boker

The modest home of Israel’s first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, is now a museum that memorializes his legacy. This visionary saw future in the vast and barren Negev, seeing the potential for a new society for Israel. Leading by example, he settled in kibbutz Sde Boker in 1953. Because the Negev receives barely eight inches of rain per year, many saw Ben-Gurion’s dream as a fantasy. But water piped from the Sea of Galilee helped the desert bloom. Ben-Gurion and his wife are buried nearby, overlooking the Negev they helped to tame. The patriarch, Isaac, also dwelt in the Negev, and faced the challenge of finding water as well. The Scriptures say

that because “The Lord blessed him” (Genesis 26:12), Isaac sowed and reaped a hundredfold in the Negev.

Location: Route 40 south of Route 204

Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (Friday); 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (Saturday and holidays)

93. Shepherd’s Field by Bethlehem

East of Bethlehem seems the most likely location for the field in which angels announced the birth of the Messiah to lowly shepherds. The fields east of the city had the best access to the wilderness, and the fields west of Bethlehem were cultivated for farming. A small settlement of first-century shepherds was discovered in Beit Sahour, near the traditional field of the Shepherds outside of Bethlehem. Caves puncture the hillsides still, and visitors today can stand in the field and imagine the sky filled with angels saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased” (Luke 2:14). Today, local children offer tourists the opportunity to pet and hold lambs for photographs. Tips are expected.

Location: Route 3686 east of Bethlehem

Hours: unlimited

94. Solomon’s Pools

The massive bedrock and masonry pools three miles south of Bethlehem join the ranks of other sites that bear King Solomon’s name—and yet have no connection with the monarch. These reservoirs were likely constructed during the time of Herod the Great, or shortly thereafter, in order to collect runoff rainwater and transport it via aqueduct to a number of Jerusalem destinations. In the sixteenth century, Suleiman the Magnificent (the Turk who built Jerusalem’s present Old City walls) constructed a fortress called “Castle of the Pools” in order to guard the water supply. Today locals use the pools when they fill up.

Location: Route 60 south of Route 375

Hours: unlimited

95. Stalactite Cave / Nahal Sorek

Below the Sorek Valley, where Samson once roamed, a treasure lay hidden from human eyes for thousands of years. In 1968, dynamite blasting at the Hartuv quarry, near the city of Bet Shemesh, revealed a cave full of stalactites and stalagmites. Rainwater dripping for millennia into this cave slowly dissolved the limestone into beautiful formations— some of which are still growing. Visitors can walk planked pathways and stairs down through the 45-acre cavern to enjoy stunning rock formations with dramatic lighting. A constant temperature of 72 degrees Fahrenheit keeps the cave comfortable year-round. It’s hard to believe such beauty lay hidden below the surface for so long.

Location: Route 3866 east of Beth- Shemesh

Summer hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Monday - Saturday); 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Friday and holidays); Winter hours: close 1 hour earlier each day

96. Timna Park/Tabernacle Model

The beautiful Nubian sandstone formations called “Solomon’s Pillars” are Timna Park’s best-known attraction. Fun for hikers of all ages, this park is one of the best attractions in Israel’s Arabah Valley. The park also includes ruins of Egyptian idol worship customs, information about ancient copper mining in the area, and a full-scale replica of Tabernacle model— reproduced exactly according to the specifications outlined in Exodus 40:34- 38. The tabernacle lets visitors experience what the ancient Hebrews saw, as they wandered here in the Wilderness of Zin. Touring the model educates guests on its various pieces of furniture, as well as the rituals involved in the annual Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, when the sins of God’s people fell upon a sacrifice. The book of Hebrews likens these elements to the Messiah (Hebrews 10:19-23).

Location: Off Rout 90 about 2 km. north of Eilat See sign posts to the park

September - June hours: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Saturday - Thursday); 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Friday and holidays); 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Opening hours: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Saturday - Thursday); 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Friday and holidays); 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

97. Timna Valley Copper Mines

The Lord promised the Hebrews that after they entered the Promised Land, they could dig copper out of the hills (Deuteronomy 8:9). There is no better example of that in Israel than the Timna Valley. Here are some of the oldest copper mines in the world, dating back to the Chalcolithic period (3500 BC). The copper slabs dug from these pits and caves were made into bronze tools and weapons. Some archaeologists believed that Solomon dug copper here, but it’s more likely that he mined at Punon, or modern Feinan. Until the 1970s, the Timna Copper Mines—an Israeli company—quarried copper from the Timna Valley. Visitors today can see the quarries and carefully explore them.

Location: Off Rout 90 about 2 km. north of Eilat See sign posts to the park

Hours: See Timna Park

98. Tombs of the Kings

Jerusalem’s large and magnificent “Tombs of the Kings” was actually built for a queen—Helene of Adiabene. The misnomer came about by those who first excavated it. The entrance to the first-century tomb complex boasts a massive monumental 29-foot-wide staircase that descends into the main courtyard. The stairs drain rainwater into adjacent ritual baths, called mikvot, used for purification after contact with the dead. The ancient writers, Josephus, Pausanias, and Eusebius mention the tomb of Helena. The tomb complex is large—a main chamber with eight burial chambers—and features an excellent example of a rolling stone entrance, as well as an arcosolium-type burial place, which is the type of tomb in which Jesus was buried.

Location: Salah ad Din Street in Jerusalem

Hours: None—just knock hard on the door and have 3 NIS ready

99. Red Canyon

Hikers of all ages will enjoy the trail along the edge of this canyon. The native Nubian sandstone contains oxidized minerals that create varying shades of red. The result is a beautiful walk through the Red Canyon, where creation itself has painted the walls. The pleasant walk down the gorge is relatively easy, a distance of less than 1000 feet. Flashfloods have swept chunks of limestone into the path, creating obstacles along the way. The journey down the crevice is made easy with the assistance of ladders affixed to the rocks. The best times to enjoy this hike during the summer are the mornings and evenings, as the temperatures are pleasant and the shifting shadows change the appearance of the colors of the rocks.

Location: Route 12 north of Eilat 9.3 miles

Hours: unlimited

100. Wilderness of Paran

Any visitor to Israel who wants a taste of the environs the Hebrews experienced during their wilderness wanderings, needs to visit the Wilderness of Paran. The ground is composed of flint and sharp rocks, gravel, deeply cracked soil— and no water. The Hebrews wandered the Wildernesses of Paran and Zin for four long decades (Numbers 10:12; 12:16). From Paran, Moses dispatched the spies to examine the Promised Land (Numbers 13:1-3). Four centuries earlier, this wilderness saw Hagar and Ishmael, after they left Abraham (Genesis 21:20- 21).

Location: Route 40 south, anywhere past Makhtesh Ramon

Hours: unlimited