

THE SCHOOL OF ARCHAEOLOGY, VERITAS INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
AND
THE COLLEGE OF ARCHAEOLOGY, TRINITY SOUTHWEST UNIVERSITY

Bible Land Expedition 2018

Israel & Jordan October 25–November 8 (12 touring days + 3 travel days)

Lecturer/Guides: Dr Steven Collins*, Dr Craig Olson**, & Dr Phillip Silvia***

ITINERARY:

Travel Day 1 (Thu, Oct 25) Depart USA and other points of departure. Travel day; arriving in Amman, Jordan on Oct 26.

Travel Day 2 (Fri, Oct 26) Arrive Amman, Jordan; We'll all meet at the Olive Tree Hotel in Amman. A brief welcome and orientation meeting is scheduled for 7pm after dinner.

Tour Day 1 (Sat, Oct 27) Edom: Petra. We'll visit the amazing rose-red, Nabatean city of Petra carved out of surrounding sandstone cliffs. From the 2nd century BC to the 2nd century AD, the Nabateans controlled regional caravans from their Petra headquarters. Aaron was buried on a mountaintop near Petra. This is a great day for some serious hiking, or just casually enjoying the wonders of Petra, recently voted one of the Seven Wonders of the Modern World. It is truly amazing! Overnight Amman.

Tour Day 2 (Sun, Oct 28) Transjordan Highlands, Ammon: Mount Nebo; Machaerus; Aroer; Dibon; Heshbon. We'll pass through the lands of the Edomites, Moabites, and Amorites, and many of the cities conquered by Moses and the Israelites. We'll view the spectacular Arnon Gorge (Wadi Mujib) from Aroer, which became the southern border of the tribe of Reuben. We'll trace the steps of Moses to Mount Nebo where he viewed the Promised Land, and later was buried. From Nebo you'll see a dramatic panorama sweeping from the Dead Sea northward up the Jordan Valley, and the Jordan Disk, home of the infamous Cities of the Plain. Overnight Amman.

Tour Day 3 (Mon, Oct 29) Jordan Valley, Gilead, Decapolis, Galilee: Jerash; border crossing to Israel; Beth Shean; Tiberias. We'll travel through the heart of the kingdom of Gilead conquered by Moses, which later became Solomon's Gilead District. We'll enter the "Ten Cities" (Decapolis) area visited by Jesus, and the home town of the Gaderene Demoniac, first missionary to the Roman world of the Transjordan. We'll take in an incredible view of the Yarmuk River Gorge with views of the Sea of Galilee and the Golan to the north. We'll pass near Ramoth Gilead and cross the Jordan River into Israel, visiting Beth Shean where Saul's body was hung from the city wall. It's also the site of Scythopolis, a remarkable example of a Roman city. We'll enter Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee through a little-known Early Bronze Age city, home to a little family of Hittite potters with interesting ties to the story of Abram centuries later. Overnight Tiberias, Scots Hotel.

Tour Day 4 (Tue, Oct 30) Galilee, Golan: Hazor; Dan; Caesarea Philippi (Banyas); Jordan River. Get ready for an unbelievable day. We'll pass through areas frequented by Jesus and his disciples. We'll visit Caesarea Philippi, Jesus' favorite northern city built by Herod Phillip. We'll glimpse Mount Hermon, probably the Mount of Transfiguration. We'll meander up to mammoth Hazor, "chief among all the Canaanite cities," conquered and burned by Joshua. We'll visit Middle Bronze Age Laish/Dan of Abram's time, and later Dan of the Israelites. We'll see the altar built at Dan by Jeroboam (site of the "sins of Jeroboam"), and stand against the huge walls of the Iron Age city. We'll finish the day with a view of the Sea of Galilee from the Golan in which you'll see its entire shoreline at one time. Overnight Tiberias.

Tour Day 5 (Wed, Oct 31) Galilee: Bethsaida; Capernaum; Korazin; boat ride on the Sea of Galilee. On this day we'll walk the streets, paths, and trails followed by Jesus and his disciples. We'll stroll through the hometown of Peter, Andrew, and Phillip, and see the views witnessed by a blind man healed by Jesus near Bethsaida. We'll walk through the gates of Zer/Zed, capital of the Kingdom of Geshur overlooking Lake Kinneret, hometown of Absalom's grandparents (the King and Queen of Geshur, allies and in-laws of King David). We'll visit the three cities of the "Evangelical Triangle," cursed by Jesus and destroyed by the Romans a generation later, as predicted. We'll finish the with a boat ride from Ginnosar to Tiberias. Overnight Tiberias.

Tour Day 6 (Thu, Nov 1) Jezreel Valley, Harod Valley, Coastal Plains: Jezreel (city); Megiddo; rolling stone tombs; Caesarea Maritima. On this day we'll head up the Jezreel Valley past Jezreel, the city of Ahab and Jezebel. We'll get views of Mount Gilboa (of Saul and Jonathan), En Harod (of Gideon), Mount Tabor, Endor (of witch fame), Nazareth, and the Jezreel Valley, the fertile bread basket of ancient Israel. Solomon's guardian city, Megiddo (also referred to as "Armageddon"), awaits us with many stories to tell, and amazing views. Along the way we'll stop at a fine example of a rolling stone tomb. When we get to Caesarea on the Sea, we'll sense the remarkable abilities of King Herod as a builder extraordinaire. We'll drop by Paul's place of "imprisonment" for an unforgettable appointment with New Testament history. Overnight Jerusalem, David Citadel Hotel.

Tour Day 7 (Fri, Nov 2) Judean Wilderness, Jordan Valley, Dead Sea: Masada; Ein Gedi; Qumran; Western Wall, Old City Jerusalem. Many Old Testament prophets, Jesus, and John the Baptist spent time in the wilderness we will drive through on this day. We'll visit Qumran, the "home" of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and view the battleground where Kedorlaomer fought against the army of Sodom and Gomorrah over one and a half millennia earlier. We'll see Ein Gedi (Hazazon Tamar) where Kedorlaomer defeated the Amorites, and see why it was also one of King David's favorite haunts centuries later. Masada, the mountaintop

fortress of Herod the Great, is spectacular from every angle, and the tram ride up is great fun. You'll marvel at the "last stand" of the First Jewish Revolt. Bringing in Shabbat at the Western Wall is an experience you'll always remember. Overnight Jerusalem.

Tour Day 8 (Sat, Nov 3) Central Highlands, environs of Old Testament Jerusalem: Haas Promenade overlook; the Jerusalem of Melchizedek and the Jebusites; City of David (Area G, Gihon water works and walls of OT Jerusalem); Broad Wall; Israel Museum. We can stand above the defensive walls of Melchizedek's city, walk through the tunnel dug by King Hezekiah, stand at the place where Abram met with King Melchizedek and see the very spot where Solomon was anointed king of Israel! You're in for quite a day. Overnight Jerusalem.

Tour Day 9 (Sun, Nov 4) Central Highlands, environs of New Testament Jerusalem: Mount of Olives overlooking the Temple Mount; Wohl Museum; Garden of Gethsemane; SW Temple Mount Excavations; Western Wall Tunnel; Pools of Bethesda; Via Dolorosa. On this day, we'll touch the Passion of the Christ. Later we'll walk down a Herodian street where giant architectural stones crashed down on the stone pavement as the Romans destroyed the Temple complex in AD 70. Overnight Jerusalem.

Tour Day 10 (Mon, Nov 5). Free day in Jerusalem: This is a great day to re-visit places you've wanted to see again, or seek out new sights and experiences in and around the Holy City. Or you may want to participate in a whirlwind visit to the Shephelah and Philistia. You can't do both. Choose wisely! Overnight Jerusalem.

Tour Day 11 (Tue, Nov 6) Jordan Valley; Gilead: border crossing into Jordan; Umm Qais (Gadara). We'll visit the Decapolis lands where Jesus ministered, and take in some amazing views of the Yarmuk River and the Sea of Galilee from the Land of Gilead. Truly an amazing day! Overnight Amman, Olive Tree Hotel.

Tour Day 12 (Wed, Nov 7) Dead Sea, Kikkar of the Jordan River: Sodom (Tall el-Hammam) and Gomorrah (Tall Kufrayn); Abel-Shittim (where the Ark of the Covenant rested before crossing the Jordan). We'll visit the location of the Israelite encampment on the Plains of Moab, and stand where the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant rested before being carried across the Jordan River. We'll walk over evil's "ground zero" at Sodom, stand on its defensive ramparts and in its gateway, and even touch the ashes of its destruction. You'll also have an opportunity to swim in the Dead Sea. You will never forget this day! Overnight Amman.

Travel Day 3 (Thu, Nov 8) Departure day.

PRICE AND REGISTRATION:

The cost of the trip (exclusive of airfare) is \$4,250. However, there are two **early-bird sign-up dates** that will get you a significant discount: the early-bird price of the trip is **\$3,850 if you sign up by 5 February 2018**. The almost-early-bird price of the trip is **\$4,050 if you register between 6 February and 5 April 2018**. After 2 April 2018 the cost is \$4,250. For a couple, the early-bird rate saves \$800, which is about the price of one roundtrip plane ticket to Amman. That's a huge savings!

BLE 2018 is filling up, so don't delay if you want to join us! Registration cost is \$750 (balance is due by 15 July). For details and answers to your questions, contact Glenda in our Albuquerque office by email (admin@tsu-edu.us) or phone (505-33-BIBLE; 505-332-4253).

*Steven Collins, PhD, is the world's leading biblical archaeologist. He directs the PhD program in archaeology and biblical history in the School of Archaeology, Veritas International University (Santa Anna, CA), and is Consulting Research Professor in the College of Archaeology, Trinity Southwest University (Albuquerque, NM). Also a Bible scholar, Dr Collins teaches Old and New Testament history, biblical languages, biblical interpretation, and Christian apologetics. He is also Director and Chief Archaeologist of the Tall el-Hammam/Sodom excavations in Jordan, now in its 13th season. His previous fieldwork includes the excavations at Bethsaida and Kursi (Israel), and Khirbet el-Maqtar/Ai (Palestine). Recent books include *Let My People Go: Using Historical Synchronisms to Identify the Pharaoh of the Exodus* (TSU Press 2005), *Discovering the City of Sodom* (Simon & Schuster/Howard Books 2013), and the *Harvest Handbook of Bible Lands* (Harvest House—release in 2018/2019). He has personally led over 35 study tours of Israel and Jordan, and is Head Curator of the TSU Museum of Archaeology (Albuquerque, NM). He holds degrees from the University of New Mexico, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Luther Rice University, Trinity Theological Seminary, and Trinity Southwest University.

**Craig Olson, PhD, has taught the Bible to lay people, undergraduates, and graduate students for over 30 years in New Zealand, Singapore, and the USA. His areas of expertise include archaeology, apologetics, Bible backgrounds, Bible exposition, and an intimate knowledge of the biblical sites in Israel and Jordan. His passion is to train students who can confidently interpret and communicate biblical truths with conviction. Dr Olson is uniquely qualified to relate the geography, history, and archaeology of important biblical sites to the biblical narratives. This includes equipping students with answers to common questions about the intersection between Scripture and history or archaeology. He holds a ThM and PhD from Dallas Theological Seminary. He is Dean of the College of Biblical Studies, Trinity Southwest University, and a Visiting Professor in the School of Archaeology, Veritas International University. Dr Olson is also a Research Fellow with the Tall el-Hammam Excavation Project, Jordan, and the world's top authority on the Torah patriarchal chronology.

***Phillip Silvia, PhD, is Director of Scientific Analysis for the Tall el-Hammam Excavation Project, Jordan, and Research Professor in the College of Archaeology, Trinity Southwest University (Albuquerque, NM). He also serves as Adjunct Professor of Archaeology for the School of Archaeology, Veritas International University. He is also Director of Publications for TSU Press, which publishes scholarly books in both biblical studies and archaeology. He is a Field Supervisor for the Tall el-Hammam/Sodom excavations, and wrote his doctoral dissertation on the cosmic airburst event that destroyed Sodom and the Cities of the Kikkar. Dr Silvia is an expert in OT catastrophic language. His books include *The Destruction of Sodom: What We Have Learned from Tall el-Hammam and Its Neighbors* (TSU Press 2016; currently available from author only), *The Middle Bronze Age Civilization-Ending Destruction of the Middle Ghor* (doctoral dissertation; TSU Press, 2015; currently available from author only), and *Revelation: What Did John Really See?* (TSU Press, 2013). He holds degrees from Northwestern University, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and Trinity Southwest University.