

# HOW TO PREPARE FOR A HOLY LAND TOUR

By Wayne Stiles

## 4 Ways to Get Ready That Will Make All the Difference

You've finally decided to take a spiritual [journey to the Holy Land](#)—to the land of the Bible. I can promise you, you won't come home from Israel the same! But there's something else you need to know.



The aqueduct at Caesarea

You already realize you are investing a lot of money this trip, and you want to make the most of your time. But you will get twice as much out of your Holy Land tour if you'll also *invest some time preparing for it*. Here are some ways that will help you maximize your trip—by preparing mentally, practically, physically, and spiritually.

### MENTAL PREPARATION FOR A HOLY LAND TOUR: LEARN SOME BASIC GEOGRAPHY

This may seem academic and even unnecessary, but believe me; it will make a *huge* difference.

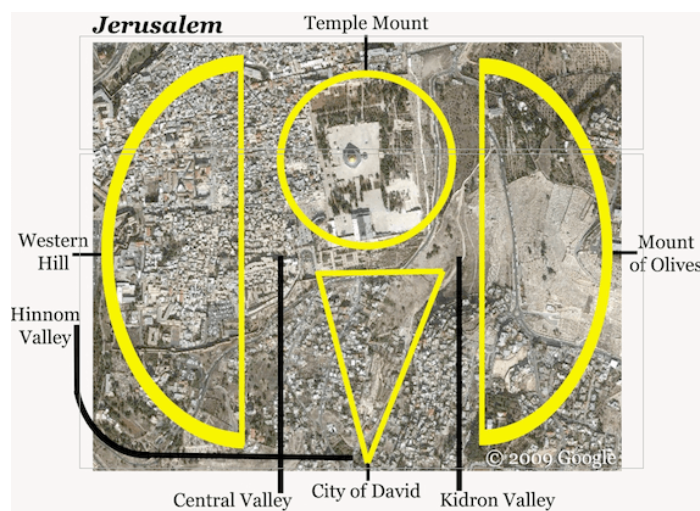
- If you determine to know where you are, you will better appreciate (and remember) the sites and their biblical significance.
- Not only that, but your Bible reading will make more sense for the rest of your life.

**Basic Israel Geography.** If you don't have one already, *buy a good Bible atlas*. Before your trip, use your atlas and learn the names of Israel's geographic areas as well as their locations:

- Galilee (including the Golan Heights)
- Samaria (Including the Jezreel Valley)
- Judea (including the Shephelah)
- Negev and Wilderness
- **Be sure to read "Must Have Resources For Bible Lands Study"**

**Basic Jerusalem Geography.** You can learn the basic geography of Jerusalem in about 5 minutes. Dr. Charlie Dyer taught me to *visualize Jerusalem as an ice cream cone inside two hamburger buns*. (See my graphic below.)

- The ice cream and cone are the Temple Mount and the City of David.
- The two buns represent the Western Hill and the Mount of Olives.
- The three major valleys of Jerusalem lie in between the cone and the buns.



Visualize Jerusalem as an ice cream cone inside 2 burger buns.

Get a road map of Israel and follow along your journey. Once I even highlighted the roads we took. If your bus has Wi-Fi, and you have a Smart Phone, you can use the [Google Maps app](#) to find your location. I love doing this. (Just make sure you're only accessing the Web via Wi-Fi and not over an expensive overseas network.)

## PRACTICAL PREPARATION FOR A HOLY LAND TOUR

**Take a Small Bible or a Digital Tablet.** You probably don't want to take your three-pound study Bible to Israel. It's too heavy for the suitcase and for your daily journey, but you also don't want it to suffer any damage from travel.

- Get a smaller Bible you can easily carry. Years ago I bought a [smaller Bible](#) that allows me to easily read on site.
- For future trips, I plan to use my [iPad mini](#). Not only does it have my whole Bible on it as well as my teaching notes, it also allows me to journal in the mornings, take pictures, and Skype with family back home. If you do take a digital tablet, you might consider applying a [matte film](#) to the screen. It's great not only for protection, but it cuts down on the glare from the bright sunlight.



Studying the life of Christ, overlooking the Jezreel Valley

**Don't Forget the Basics. Hopefully, you've thought of these. But just in case:**

- **Hat and Sunscreen:** You'll be in the sun a lot, and you'll need protection. Especially down by the Dead Sea.
- **Good Shoes:** Be sure to get some comfortable walking shoes and (important!) break 'em in before you get there.
- **Modest clothing:** A few holy sites require "modest" clothing—which includes pants or skirt that cover the knees and shirts that cover the shoulders. Without these items, you may not enter the sites.
- **220 Adaptors and/or Converters.** You'll want to charge your camera battery, so be sure and look into this carefully before you go. Most nice hotels provide a hairdryer in your room. (For what it's worth, I've never seen a 110 hairdryer survive a trip. Even with converters, somehow they just struggle.)

## PHYSICAL PREPARATION FOR A HOLY LAND TOUR

**Get in Shape.** Every tour I lead has stragglers. Some lag behind because they're physically unable to climb stairs, walk briskly, or navigate uneven terrain. You'll enjoy the trip much better if you'll get used to walking a lot before you go.



Reading the Word of God in the Capernaum Synagogue

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR A HOLY LAND TOUR

A tour to Israel is far more than a vacation. It's a spiritual journey. I interviewed hundreds of people for my doctoral research, and I discovered that 99% of those who participate in a Holy Land tour will have their spiritual lives affected.

**Here are a couple of ways to prepare for your trip spiritually:**

- **Pray.** Ask God to make you sensitive to what He teaches you and to help you retain it. Pray for your guide, driver, and Bible teacher. Pray for your group to be free of injury, to have no lost luggage, and have a spirit of unity. Also for good weather.
- **Use Your Itinerary as Your Quiet Times.** Before your trip, devote some weeks to connecting the sites you'll visit with their biblical significance. Here's how:

Look over the sites for each day, and make a list of them. Get a good devotional book with a site index and read a devotional about each site. Jot notes and Scriptures down on the list you're making.

Make this list and its devotions your quiet times before your trip—and each day on the trip. Live in expectation of the truths you will re-experience each day.