

# Tabor & Nichols Israel Tour, March 2018

## New Discoveries in the Holy Land

*"Hearing the Voice"*

*See the Sites, Go Behind the Scenes*

*Experience the Holy Land on a Level that Most Tours Miss*

Israel – March 2 – March 13, 2018

### Tour Highlights



Prof. James D. Tabor and Biblical teacher Ross Nichols are teaming up again for an exclusive tour of the Holy Land the first week of March, 2018. Even if you have traveled to Israel before, or specifically traveled with Tabor or Nichols, this is the tour for you.

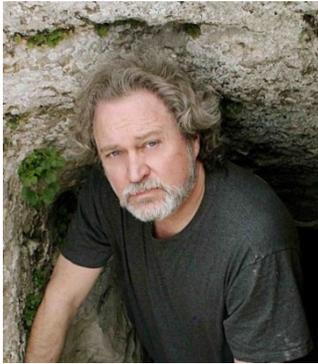
Our emphasis on this tour will be on **New Discoveries in the Holy Land**. We will take you *behind the scenes*, exploring new archaeological and textual discoveries as they are related to the key Biblical sites we will visit. No tour can cover everything but we will take you, quite literally, from “Dan to Beersheba” (*1 Samuel 3:20*). Our special theme in choosing our sites for this particular tour is that of “Hearing the Voice.” We refer here to the particular experiences of key figures of the Bible who have responded to a special spiritual calling.

Anyone interested in biblical history and literature will find this tour refreshing and educational from beginning to end. We have no expectations regarding belief systems, politics, or faith orientations. All that is required to go on this tour is a strong orientation toward learning more about the Bible and its history and archaeology.

The tour will transform the way you read and understand the Bible. Throughout the tour, we will share the stories that you know well from the texts, in the very places where the

events actually took place. We are limiting the number of registrants to 40--one busload—because we want each person to have time to interact directly with Dr. Tabor and Ross Nichols.

### **Tour Leaders – Dr. James D. Tabor and Ross K. Nichols**



**Dr. James Tabor** is professor of Christian origins and ancient Judaism in the [Department of Religious Studies](#) at the University North Carolina at Charlotte. Since 1990 Tabor has made 65 trips to Israel pursuing research, doing archaeology, and leading students and other adult groups who want a unique Holy Land Experience. His Ph.D. is from the University of Chicago in Christian Origins and Ancient Judaism. Tabor has combined his work on ancient texts with extensive field work in archaeology in Israel and Jordan, including work at Qumran, Sepphoris, Masada, and Wadi el-Yabis in Jordan, the Suba “John the Baptist” cave, the “Tomb of the Shroud,” and the Talpiot “Jesus” tombs. Among his publications are *Things Unutterable* (1985); *A Noble Death* (1992); *Why Waco: Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America* (1995); [Restoring Abrahamic Faith](#) (2008); and the New York Times bestselling [The Jesus Dynasty: A New Historical Investigation of Jesus, His Royal Family, and the Birth of Christianity](#) (2006). His two latest books are [The Jesus Discovery: The New Archaeological Find that Reveals the Birth of Christianity](#) (Simon & Schuster) and [Paul and Jesus: How the Apostle Transformed Christianity](#) (Simon & Schuster). You can visit his blog at: <https://jamestabor.com>.



**Ross K. Nichols** is a Vice-President and an ordained minister and teacher for [United Israel World Union](#). He directs the United Israel Center South in St. Francisville, Louisiana. Each Sabbath, people from all over the world join in for a live stream of his teachings via our [United Israel Facebook Page](#). Ross has toured Israel extensively – leading and co-leading tours for both Jews and Christians. He has participated in archaeological digs at Dig Mount Zion in Jerusalem, and at Biblical Tamar. Ross has also performed volunteer projects in the desert region of Israel. Ross is an ardent Zionist, and is active in the Anti BDS movement working on many fronts to present the Jewish State in a positive light. He was recently part of a six-person delegation from United Israel at the United Nations, Ambassadors Against BDS conference learning ways to counter those who seek to promote boycotts, divestments, and sanctions against Israel through propaganda and other false media efforts. Ross is a student and teacher of biblical Hebrew, is knowledgeable about the historical Jesus and late 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple Judaism, and has spent

many years seeking to understand and interpret earliest Christianity from its original and thoroughly Hebraic perspective. You can visit his blog at: <http://rossknichols.com/>.

# Tour Itinerary

## Day One

**Friday – March 2 – USA to Israel**

We will depart on Friday, March 2, flying overnight and arriving in Israel on Saturday, March 3. (**We must be at the airport three hours prior to international flight departures.**) Flights should be arranged to arrive in Tel Aviv before 5:00 pm. Our charter bus will leave the airport at 6:00 pm. If your flight arrives after this time, you will need to take a private taxi or Neshar van to Jerusalem to our Jerusalem hotel.



## Day Two

**Saturday – March 3<sup>rd</sup> – Jerusalem, Old City Walk, Western Wall**

Leaving the Tel Aviv airport we will drive from the coastal plain to the mountains of Jerusalem—2600 feet above Sea Level. Time permitting, we will go to the top of the Mount of Olives for a breathtaking view of the Temple Mount at sunset. We will check into our Jerusalem hotel and settle into our rooms. After dinner, we will walk into the Old City of Jerusalem through the Jaffa gate and then to the Western Wall or Kotel, just as the city comes to life as

the Sabbath ends.



## Day Three

**Sunday – March 4<sup>th</sup> – Temple Mount, Western Wall Tunnels, Subterranean Jewish Quarter, City of David and Hezekiah's Tunnel / Pool of Siloam**

We will begin our day with a tour of the Temple Mount discussing its history, past, present and future and why it is the most contested real estate on the planet. We will then tour the Western Wall Tunnels which run along the north side of the ancient Temple Mount. We will pass the spot, believed by many to be the closest one can get to the ancient Holy of Holies. Next,

we will make our way to the Jewish Quarter and descend 20 feet below the present city level to visit the Wohl Museum, which contains the best preserved ruins of 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jerusalem. We will then tour the City of David, again deep below the modern ground level, where we have options to either wade through the flowing waters of Hezekiah's tunnel, or walk the dry tunnel to the Pool of Siloam. We will view all the most recent

archaeological discoveries that are transforming our understanding of ancient Jerusalem. We then return to the hotel where Dr. Tabor will reveal the latest, unpublished archaeological discoveries on Mount Zion that we will visit the following day.



## **Day Four**

**Monday – March 5<sup>th</sup> – *Mount of Olives, Dominus Flevit, Garden of Gethsemane, Church of all Nations, Kidron Valley, Mt. Zion Dig, Zion Gate, Upper Room, Pilate’s judgment seat, Mamilla Mall and Jaffa Gate.***

We will begin our day with a bus ride to the Mount of Olives. From this vantage point will look towards the west and view the Temple Mount. We will walk down the Mount of Olives visiting several places of interest along the way including Dominus Flevit, the Garden of Gethsemane, and the Church of All Nations. Our walk will take us deep into the Kidron Valley, and then up to Mount Zion with a special viewing of the Mount Zion archeology dig site of which Dr. Tabor is co-Director. Dr. Tabor will then take us through the traditional sites of the Upper Room and King David’s Tomb, where recent archaeological excavations have reshaped our understanding of these places. At the end of the day we will visit the newly discovered authentic site of Pontius Pilate’s Judgement Seat with the Gabbatha Pavement and the Praetorium that is rewriting the entire history of our understanding of 1<sup>st</sup> century Jerusalem.



## **Day Five**

**Tuesday – March 6<sup>th</sup> – *Caesarea Maritima, Megiddo, Sepphoris, Sea of Galilee & Tiberias***

Today we head north to the Galilee to Caesarea Maritima, the city built by Herod the Great (25 – 13 BCE). Named to flatter Caesar, this site is situated on the Mediterranean Coast between Tel Aviv and Haifa. We will discuss Paul’s imprisonment here before moving on to Rome to make his ‘appeal to Caesar.’ We will eat lunch on the shores of the Mediterranean sea and those who wish can get their feet wet in the historic waves. From there we will visit the exciting excavation of Megiddo, of Armageddon fame, with a spectacular view of the Jezreel Valley that has played such an important role in both history and prophecy. We will then visit the ancient city of Sepphoris, the urban capital of Herod Antipas, where Dr. Tabor has excavated. There we will learn about the latest unpublished discoveries at that site. We will continue towards Tiberias, founded sometime around 20 CE by Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, who made it the capital of his realm in Galilee. We will check into our rooms in the Leonardo Hotel in Tiberias on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, where we will stay for the Galilean portion of our tour. There will be time for shopping and plenty of opportunity to take in the beauty of the Galilee.



## Day Six

**Wednesday – March 7<sup>th</sup> – *Caesarea Philippi, Tel Dan, Golan Heights, Lunch in Druze Village, Mt Hermon, Wine Tasting and Chocolate at Ein Zevan, Boat ride on the Sea of Galilee***

We begin our tour of the Galilee with a stop at Caesarea Phillippi, mentioned in the synoptic gospels as the place where Jesus ask his disciples, “Who do men say that I am?” Next we will visit the site of Tel Dan, where according to II Kings 10:29 and II Chronicles 13:8, Jeroboam led the northern kingdom of Israel away from the true faith and even Abraham visited! We then travel to up into the Golan to the borders of Syria and Lebanon, where we have lunch at a Druze Village. From there we will see the foot of Mount Hermon and we will discuss the prophetic significance of this holy place (Psalm 133). On our way back to Tiberius we will make a delightful stop at Kibbutz Ein Zivan, for wine tasting as well as visit a chocolate factory. We will go to Gennesaret, where the first century fishing boat was found in 1986 and then finish the day with our own boat ride on the Sea of Galilee where we will watch the sun set. We will spend the night in Tiberias.



## Day Seven

**Thursday – March 8<sup>th</sup> – *Arbel Cliffs and ancient Synagogue, Horns of Hattin, Magdala, Mount of Beatitudes, Capernaum***

We begin our day with a breathtaking view of the Sea of Galilee from the Arbel cliffs, ancient synagogue, and the historic Horns of Hattin—which might be the authentic site of the “Sermon on the Mount.” We then travel to Magdala, on the shores of the Sea, the home of Mary Magdelene, visting the recent archaeological discoveries that are transforming our understanding of 1<sup>st</sup> century Galilee. Finally we will travel to Capernaum where Jesus made his HQ and moved his family. Here we will also tour a third Century synagogue, built upon the visible remains of a first century synagogue and see the recently uncovered remains of the first century Port. We will then spend our last night in Tiberias.



## Day Eight

**Friday– March 9<sup>th</sup> – *Bet Shean, Jordan River, Tel Salim, Qumran, Biblical Tamar Sabbath dinner followed by relaxing and visiting in the Sukkah***

After our tour of the Galilee, we will begin our journey to the south, visting the spectacular ancient ruins of the ancient Roman city of Bet Shean. We will then continue parallel the Jordan River stopping

at Tel Salim, where John the Baptizer began his work and the authentic area where Jesus was baptized. Finally, we will visit Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered. There Dr. Tabor will tell us about his own excavations and discoveries and we will visit the ruins of the settlement and see the famous caves where nearly 800 ancient scrolls were discovered. We will continue on to the southern Biblical border of Israel, to Tamar (Ez. 47-48) and move into our rooms at Biblical Tamar Park. The Park Supervisor and volunteer workers will welcome us with an American style Kosher meal in the dining room. After dinner we will relax and visit together before an open fire in the Sukkah next to the dining room. This is a special place that will allow us to experience the wilderness regions of Israel.



## **Day Nine**

**Saturday – March 10<sup>th</sup> *Sabbath Experience at Tamar, Prayer Mountain, Torah Study***

We awaken to a peaceful Sabbath, feeling the stillness of the desert as the sun rises over the Jordanian mountains. Those who want to rise early, can climb “Prayer Mountain” and watch the sun rise. We will have a Sabbath morning Bible study after breakfast, talking about the historic area where we are staying and the role it played in the lives of Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah, Jesus, and even Paul. After dinner, Dr. Tabor will lead us on a walk into the desert to the gravesite of Simha Pearlmuter, and share stories of this desert rabbi who founded Kibbutz Ir Obot, now renamed Biblical Tamar Park. Everyone will be welcome to sit around the sukkah fire before going to our rooms.



## **Day Ten**

**Sunday – March 11<sup>th</sup> *Biblical Tamar Tour, Masada, Dead Sea***

We will begin our day with a tour of Biblical Tamar. Next we will board our bus and go to visit the ancient fortress of Masada, known today as the site where 960 revolutionary Jewish holdouts died rather than surrender to the Romans. Some will choose to run or hike the famed “snake path” up the side of Masada, while others will take the cable car to the top. We will learn that Masada was originally built by the Maccabees, and fortified by Herod the Great between 37-31 BCE as a refuge for himself in the event of a revolt. From the top of Masada you will be able to look down upon the ruins of Roman encampments. We will visit an ancient “synagogue without walls” atop Masada. We will then stop at a public beach along the Dead Sea where we will be able to shop and float in waters of the Dead Sea, after which we will go back to Tamar for dinner and then pack for our return home tomorrow.



## **Day Eleven**

**Monday – March 12<sup>th</sup> – Beer Sheva, Valley of Elah, Talpiot Tombs, Promenade, Shopping and free time in Jerusalem, flights home**

We will depart Biblical Tamar Park on our journey back to Jerusalem through the heart of southern Israel, passing Beer Sheva and stopping along the way in the Valley of Elah where David

encountered Goliath. We will walk the stone filled brook marking the location just below the ancient ruins of Khirbet Qeiyafa, dating to the time of David and Solomon.



Just south of Jerusalem Dr. Tabor will lead us on a rare and special visit to the sites of the “Talpiot Jesus Family tombs” that some think belonged to Joseph of Arimathea and he will reveal the very latest regarding their discovery and research, as well as future plans at the site. We will also have a spectacular view of the city of Jerusalem from the south, along the historic Promenade, experiencing the vantage point Abraham would have had in coming up to Mount Moriah. We will have some free time after lunch for shopping and walking about the Old City of Jerusalem before we catch our bus back to the airport at 6:30pm for our overnight flights back home.