



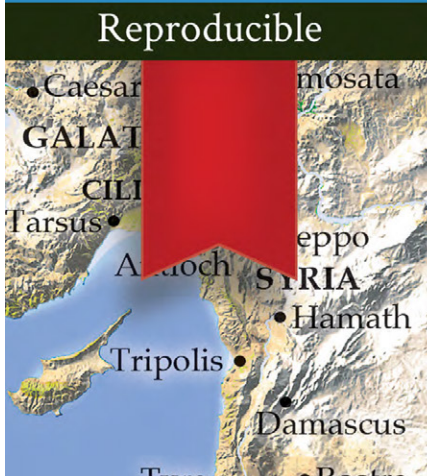
CHRISTOPHER D. HUDSON

# SELF-GUIDED TOUR OF THE BIBLE



MAPS • CHARTS • TIME LINES • SIMPLE OVERVIEWS

## Reproducible



Christians talk an awful lot about Jesus. But that's only because the Bible talks an awful lot about Jesus. His life and teachings are at the heart of the Bible and thus at the center of this *Self-Guided Tour of the Bible*.

Let's briefly review his incomparable life, remembering that we are only scratching the surface. As the apostle John said at the end of his Gospel: "Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written" (John 21:25).

## Jesus is born.

**"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord." —Luke 2:11**

Of the four Gospels, only Matthew and Luke provide accounts about the infancy of Christ. Both of these Gospels tell us that Jesus was miraculously conceived through the Holy Spirit and born to a virgin named Mary. This fulfilled an Old Testament prophecy that the Messiah would be born of a virgin and would be called *Immanuel*, which means "God with us" (Isaiah 7:14). Jesus' birth in Bethlehem (the "town of David") also fulfilled a prophecy made centuries earlier that the Messiah would be born in that small town (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1–6).

Luke paints for us the beautiful picture of Jesus' birth with details such as the manger Jesus sleeps in, the shepherds watching their flocks and rushing to see the newborn Savior, and the angels praising God.

Matthew focuses on the visit of the Magi (or wise men) who arrive to worship the newborn "king of the Jews" several days, weeks, or possibly even months after Jesus' birth, when Jesus and his parents are living in a "house" (Matthew 2:2, 11).

*Read about this in Matthew 1:18–2:23; Luke 1:26–2:39.*



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## Southern Israel

### About

The southern region of Israel is roughly the area west and south of the Dead Sea. Unlike northern Israel, which features snow-capped mountains, the southern region is dominated by the Negev, a desert of some 6,100 square miles (about 15,799 sq km).

### What Happened Here

- In 1406 BC the twelve tribes of Israel, under Joshua's leadership, invaded Canaan at Jericho. Three of the tribes settled southern Israel: Judah, the largest of the twelve tribes; Benjamin; and Simeon, the smallest.
- After the reign of King Solomon, the kingdom of Israel split (931 BC). The two large tribes in the south (Benjamin and Judah) took the name of the larger tribe, "Judah." The other tribes in the north took the name "Israel."
- The people of Judah were taken captive by the Babylonians (605–586 BC).
- Though Jesus spent most of his life in northern Israel, key events from his life—his birth, baptism, crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and ascension—happened in southern Israel, mostly in and around Jerusalem.



Jordan River

### Biblical Significance

- The story of Mary and Joseph connects northern and southern Israel. Commanded to return to his hometown for a Roman census, Joseph took his pregnant wife and left their home in Nazareth, in the lush green north, and headed south to Bethlehem, with its more arid environment. This 80-mile (129 km) trip is a four- to five-day walk. Mary and Joseph may have followed the Jewish tradition of skirting Samaria on the east, going along the lush Jordan Valley and going through the historic city of Jericho. From Jericho, which lies at an extremely low elevation, travelers must endure a steep climb to reach Jerusalem. The ascent rises about 3,500 feet (1,067 m). This would be exhausting for anyone and would have been even more so for a woman

#### Factoid

Jerusalem is on the same latitude as El Paso, Texas.

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in the latter part of her pregnancy. It is likely that from here, Mary and Joseph would have headed farther south to Bethlehem. Here, Jesus was born (Luke 2:1–21).

- The prophet Zechariah foretold about a significant event occurring in this region: “On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south” (Zechariah 14:4).

**“But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”**  
—Matthew 2:6

Next, let’s zero in on Jerusalem, the geographical epicenter of the biblical narrative.

Negev Desert



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## Northern Israel

### About

Israel is bound on the west by the Mediterranean Sea and roughly on the east by three bodies of water: the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River, and the Dead Sea.

The northern part of Israel is about the geographical size of New Jersey. This region (which includes Galilee and Samaria) offers a diverse climate and varied landscape. The landscape is lush with vegetation, far different from the arid and hostile regions to the south.

### What Happened Here

- In the Old Testament, the prophet Elijah confronted 850 false prophets at Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:16–40).
- Hosea the prophet warned the inhabitants of northern Israel to turn back to God. This was around 750 BC, the same time as the founding of Rome, some 1,300 miles (2,092 km) west.
- The northern kingdom of Israel fell to the invading Assyrian army in 722 BC. When the Assyrians resettled foreigners in this conquered area, the Jews still residing there intermarried with them, producing the people known as the Samaritans.

### Names for Israel

In the Bible and in history, the land of Israel (in part and/or in whole) has been referred to by many names:

- Canaan (Exodus 6:4)
- The Promised Land (Deuteronomy 6:3)
- Judah (southern part) and Israel (northern part)
- The Holy Land (Psalm 78:54)
- Palestine

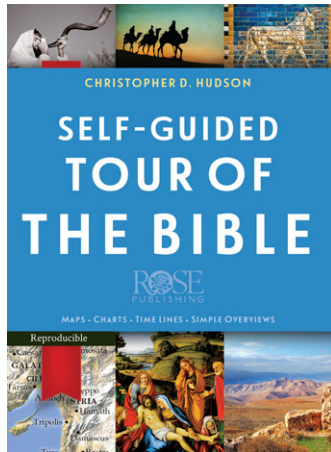
- Jesus grew up in Nazareth, a town in northern Israel.
- Jesus ministered in Galilee, exactly where the prophet Isaiah said the Messiah would be “a great light” to the people there (Isaiah 9:1–2; Matthew 4:13–16). Jesus taught the masses in this region and miraculously fed over 5,000 people with a boy’s lunch (Mark 6:33–44). He calmed a storm on the Sea of Galilee (Mark 4:35–41) and walked on its waves (Mark 6:45–52).

**Biblical Significance**

- When Jesus began his public ministry, he went to the local synagogue meeting in Nazareth and read an explicit prophecy about the coming Messiah from the book of Isaiah; he then said, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21). This is *the* big question of the Bible: Is Jesus who he claimed to be? And if so, how will we respond?

**“Philip found Nathanael and told him, ‘We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’” —John 1:45**

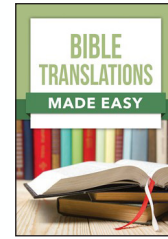
Place	Elevation	Average January Temperature (highs to lows)	Average July Temperature (highs to lows)	Average Annual Rainfall
Nineveh (in ancient Mesopotamia), near modern-day Mosul, Iraq	732 feet (223 m)	54–36°F (12.4–2.2°C)	109–77°F (42.9–25°C)	14.3 inches (363.6 mm)
Cairo, Egypt	75 feet (23 m)	66–48°F (18.9–9°C)	94–72°F (34.7–20.1°C)	.97 inches (24.7 mm)
Nazareth, Israel (northern Israel)	1,138 feet (347 m)	59–44°F (15–7°C)	88–69°F (31–21°C)	22.8 inches (580 mm)
Jerusalem, Israel (southern Israel)	2,474 feet (754 m)	53–43°F (12–9°C)	84–67°F (29–19°C)	21.8 inches (554.1 mm)
Iconium, Turkey (ancient Asia Minor), now called Konya	3,900 feet (1,200 m)	40–25°F (4.8–3.9°C)	86–61°F (30.2–16.1°C)	12.6 inches (319.7 mm)
Rome, Italy	69 feet (21 m)	53–37°F (12–3°C)	86–64°F (30–18°C)	31.66 inches (804.3 mm)
Sea of Galilee (Tiberias, on the western shore)	–696 feet (–212 m)	65–49°F (18–10°C)	100–73°F (38–23°C)	17 inches (431.8 mm)
Mount Nebo (in modern-day Jordan)	3,300 feet (1,000 m)	54–38°F (12.3–3.6°C)	89–65°F (32–18.5°C)	10.6 inches (269.2 mm)
Judean Desert (Kalya, by the Dead Sea)	–1,181 feet (–360 m)	68–53°F (20–11°C)	102–83°F (38–28°C)	2 inches (50.8 mm)



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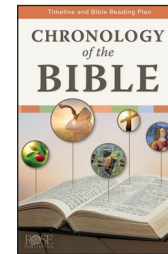
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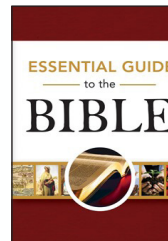
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