



6 REASONS TO TRAVEL TO THE HOLY LAND THIS YEAR

FROM SOMEONE WHO JUST RETURNED FROM ISRAEL

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FROM DR. RON JONES

This February, my wife, Cathryn, and I returned from a two-week adventure in the Holy Land with 45 other excited and brave travelers. The Something Good Travel experience we led called Experience Israel 2022 exceeded our expectations. We also learned a lot about traveling in a COVID world.

While the worldwide situation is fluid and changing daily, it is possible to have a safe, exciting, and spiritually enriching experience in the Holy Land this year. In fact, we discovered that now is an exciting and unique time to travel to Israel, and it's an opportunity we might never see again.

If you've dreamed of traveling in the footsteps of Jesus, now is the time to go. Here are six reasons to travel to Israel this year.



1. TRAVELING TO THE HOLY LAND IS SAFE.

Despite ongoing tensions in the Middle East, biblical tourism is safe and welcomed by Israelis, Palestinians, and Muslims. Tourism is a major part of their economy, which motivates them to welcome Christian pilgrims. Not once did any of us feel unsafe. The typical “hot spots” that create concern are far from the biblical sites.

And while the landscape of the COVID-19 virus can change quickly, we have found that international travel is not as risky as many people think. Airlines have done a fantastic job improving ventilation and safety on planes, and Israel is a highly vaccinated country with a strong healthcare system.

I have actually found that people tend to have a heightened awareness and take more safety precautions when traveling than at home, where we must go about our daily lives and have more social contacts.

2. COVID TESTING WAS EASY.

Upon departing the United States and arriving in Tel Aviv, we had to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination, including a booster. A negative PCR test within 72 hours of departure was also required. We tested before departing the United States and upon arriving in Israel.

COVID testing in the Ben Gurion Airport (Tel Aviv) was smooth and easy. After passing through customs and baggage claim, we were escorted to a COVID testing area within the airport, which took our entire group less than 30 minutes to complete. After testing, we checked into our hotel, and within hours we received notification by email of our test results. After dinner and a night’s rest, we began touring the next day.

Other COVID testing was equally easy (for returning to the United States and for entering Jordan). It makes a big difference traveling as a group with an excellent host, guide, and Bible teacher. Our tour coordinator, Imagine Tours and Travel, arranged for testing at the hotel and sometimes on the tour bus. Again, test results arrived in a timely manner and never interrupted our travel.

Throughout the tour, not one of our travelers tested positive for COVID. We recommend carrying both digital and paper copies of your COVID documentation.

3. CROWDS WERE SMALLER.

Crowds are smaller in Israel, at least for now. The reward for not delaying your Israel travel is that you will spend less time in lines waiting to experience a Holy Land site (also the buffet line at the hotel). For example, when visiting the birthplace of Jesus in Bethlehem, we practically had the Church of the Nativity to ourselves, when normally we would stand in line for 90 minutes or more to visit the grotto.

Visiting historic and spiritually significant sites without the chaos of crowds is much more enjoyable and creates a peaceful environment where you can reflect, be present, and take in the experience.

Not only do smaller crowds create a unique experience at the sites you visit, but they also mean you will have time to visit more sites. This was my fifth time to Israel, and I visited several sites I had never seen before, including Chorazin, Qasr Al-Yahud baptism site, Mount Precipice in Nazareth, the most recent City of David excavations, and the newly opened Western Wall Tunnel exhibit.

4. THE LOCALS WILL THANK YOU FOR VISITING THEIR COUNTRY, AND YOU WILL BLESS ISRAEL.

The global pandemic has been hard on all of us, especially on the people in places that depend on tourism like Israel. Israelis, Palestinians, and Muslims equally received our presence with gratitude. They always have, for as long as I have traveled to the Holy Land. But this time, I felt their gratitude even more.

When Christians travel to the Holy Land, we are blessed to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. But we also bless Israel. And when we bless Israel, God will bless us (Genesis 12:1-3).



5. THERE ARE INTERESTING CULTURAL EVENTS HAPPENING IN ISRAEL.

One of the upcoming Something Good Travel experiences we are offering in 2023 is called Experience Israel with Gallelujah, a three-day Christian music and cultural festival in the Galilee, featuring For King & Country, Rebecca St. James, Mack Brock, Brandon Lake, and more special artists. Travelers will enjoy a comprehensive pilgrimage of the Holy Land plus a worship and cultural experience on the same Sea of Galilee shores where Jesus lived, ministered, and performed miracles.

When else will you be able to worship with incredible Christian music artists in the exact same spot where God Himself walked on earth? It give me chills just thinking about it.

6. TRAVELING WITH A GROUP IS EASY AND FUN, EVEN IN OUR CURRENT TIMES.

Traveling always puts us in unfamiliar places, which is part of the adventure, and international travel has become more uncertain due to the events of the last two years. But the global pandemic does not need to destroy or delay your Holy Land travel dreams.

Group travel removes much of the uncertainty when the tour coordinators (Something Good and Imagine Tours & Travel) help you navigate entry and exit requirements, arrange COVID testing, and stay abreast of changes to a country's travel protocols. With those details removed from your worry list, you can relax and enjoy the experience. Besides, you will make new friends and grow your faith by traveling with a group to the Holy Land.

COVID travel protocols are fluid and changing daily. Already, for example, Jordan has suspended PCR testing as of March 1, 2022, and Israel announced a relaxation of restrictions on the same date.

For those reasons and more, now is a great time to travel to the Holy Land. If you are waiting for when things get back to normal (meaning like it was before COVID), you might be waiting for a very long time. Consider how our airport experiences have changed since September 11, 2001, when terrorists attacked the United States. In more than twenty years, we have never gone back to normal.

Now is the time to travel beyond belief to all Bible lands, including Israel, Jordan, Greece, Italy, Turkey, and Egypt. On a Something Good Travel experience, we, along with our excellent partner, Imagine Tours & Travel, take care of all the details so that you can enjoy the travel experience of a lifetime. We partner with Imagine because they bring two generations of experience to Holy Land tourism.

As a pastor and Bible teacher, I will help you understand the biblical context and importance of each site. The trained and professional guide who accompanies us will add other historical and archeological information. Furthermore, Cathryn and I have made lifelong friends on these journeys, and we would love to get to know you.

To learn more and join us for an upcoming Something Good Travel experience to the Holy Land, visit our website, or call 757.276.1099 to speak to someone who can answer your questions.

somethinggoodradio.org/travel

Shalom!

Dr. Ron Jones

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about RON JONES



Ron Jones is a pastor, author, discipleship coach, and radio Bible teacher. For more than two decades, he has devoted his life to leading and preaching in the local church. He currently serves as lead pastor of Atlantic Shores Baptist Church in Virginia Beach, Virginia, where he delivers his Bible teaching for everyday life.

Ron's ministry extends beyond the local church he serves through a daily radio broadcast heard around the world called Something Good with Dr. Ron Jones. Something Good Radio and Television exists to share the gospel of Jesus Christ, make disciples, and strengthen the body of Christ through life-changing Bible teaching.

A lifelong learner, Dr. Jones earned degrees from Purdue University, Dallas Theological Seminary, and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is the author of *Mysteries of the Afterlife: Exploring Its Amazing Secrets* (Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, OR) and multiple eBooks.

Through Something Good Travel, Ron and his wife Cathryn lead spiritual tours to biblical sites in Israel, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Egypt, and Jordan. They have been married for 26 years and live five minutes from their happy place, the beach. They have two adult children.



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