

Jordan Extension Pilgrimage with **Bishop Terry Dance** and **Canon Vicars Hodge**

**May 16 – 21, 2022**

*5 Days/4 Nights exploring the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*

## **Itinerary for the Jordan “Prequel” 2022**

Draft 1 as of May 6, 2021<sup>1</sup>



*The amazing archaeological site of Petra*

Many Biblical<sup>2</sup> events took place on the East side of the Jordan River in what is today the *Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*. Of course, today’s political borders in the Middle East are a modern idea<sup>3</sup>. Jordan is a truly fascinating place to visit – safe in every way and very hospitable to pilgrims. Several times I have taken pilgrimage groups on an “extension” or side-trip to Jordan either in conjunction with a primary pilgrimage tour of Israel and Palestine. I also spent time there travelling by auto during my

sabbatical in 2017. Jordan is the land of the ancient **Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites**<sup>4</sup>. In the Byzantine Period the landscape of Jordan was dotted with Churches and the people of this land were virtually all Christians. If you can find the extra time and money – you will be glad you went with us to Jordan.

This year, the *Jordan Extension precedes* our *Living Stones Pilgrimage* to Israel & Palestine – so I am calling it the Prequel. Instead of flying to Tel Aviv on May 20, 2022, we will fly to **Amman, Jordan** (Queen Alia International) on Monday May 16, arriving May 17. On the morning of May 21, as our pilgrimage time in Jordan concludes, our bus will take us to the Allenby Bridge crossing into Israel. There we deal with border formalities, change buses and drivers, and in the late afternoon, join up with the rest of our entourage at the **Legacy Hotel in**

---

<sup>1</sup> Holy Land itineraries are always subject to change – for reasons of local conditions and to take best advantage of our time. Beyond the leadership of Bishop Dance & Canon Hodge, we have expert local guides to accompany our visits. When our guides know that a particular site is crowded – we sometimes change up the sequence and make changes as needed to best utilize our time. Our motor coach is Air Conditioned and usually has Wi-Fi connection.

<sup>2</sup> While most people think of the Holy Land as Israel and Palestine, properly speaking it includes portions of the modern nations of Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt. Ancient borders & territories did not follow today’s political boundaries that have moved many times.

<sup>3</sup> In the today’s Middle-East, most borders were created after WWI when France and the UK divided up the land they had taken from the Ottoman Empire creating Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and others.

<sup>4</sup> Also, the allotted lands of the Jewish tribes of Ruben, Gad, and Half-tribe of Manasseh were in what is today, Jordan.

**Nazareth.** En-route we will have **lunch in Israel**, likely at **Beit She'an**, and we will also explore the fascinating and extensive Roman ruins there.

**The Jordan Prequel requires a good deal of walking.** This country has yet to fully respond to the needs of the mobility challenged. You need to be sufficiently fit for the physical exertion of walking perhaps 10,000 paces some days<sup>5</sup>. It is important to have two pair of good walking shoes in your kit and a change of socks in your day-bag. It is important to travel light – the more you bring, the more you need to lug around and manage.

### **Monday, May 16, 2022 TRAVEL DAY**

We will travel together from Toronto, most likely an early evening flight.<sup>6</sup> Please plan to arrive at the airport by 3 ½ hours before departure. Travel with as little luggage as you find comfortable. This will be an overnight flight arriving mid-afternoon Saturday. While aboard: drink water, stretch your legs once in a while, and do your best to sleep. Our pilgrimage program is demanding so it is a good thing to try to arrive as rested as possible.

### **1. Tuesday May 17, 2022 ARRIVE IN JORDAN & TO AMMAN**

**We will land Queen Alia International Airport, Amman** mid-afternoon – likely at 3:00 PM. After collecting our luggage and clearing customs we will be met by our local guide who will take us to our motor-coach. The drive in to Amman takes a little less than 45 minutes. (Our motor-coach will be Air Conditioned and Wi-Fi equipped.<sup>7</sup>). A brief drive about Amman will help to orient us to this ancient city though we will make no stops today. Afternoon check-in to our hotel for dinner and overnight at the [Century Park Hotel, Amman](#). We will be tired from our long journey so dinner and overnight will be welcome.

### **2. Wednesday, May 18, 2022 08:00 AMMAN, JERASH & to PETRA**

Our day begins with breakfast at our hotel with excellent middle-eastern food and western food to choose from. We then check-out of the hotel and board our motor coach. Today Amman is a city of 4 million and the capital of Jordan. We spend a couple hours exploring highlights of ancient **Amman**, including **the Citadel** and **Roman Theatre**<sup>8</sup>. Amman was called *Rabbath*



---

<sup>5</sup> An example of a high step-count day is Day 3 in Petra. A person can cut down the walking considerably by omitting some of the tour, and by hiring a horse driven carriage for much of the travel, but if you want to see the full site there is no avoiding walking on uneven paving stones and gravel.

<sup>6</sup> We will decide which flight in December or January based on price and schedule. Royal Jordanian, Air Canada, Lufthansa, Egypt Air all fly this route. There are no non-stop from Toronto to Amman, so we will end up changing planes in Vienna (or perhaps Heathrow, Frankfurt, or Cairo.)

<sup>7</sup> Wi-Fi is notoriously unreliable on tour-buses. Roaming in Jordan can be expensive – so I suggest you turn roaming off and go ‘unplugged’ for a few days. A good app is Maps.me (install and load Jordan maps before leaving home.)

<sup>8</sup> The Roman Theatre in Amman seated 6000. Built during the reign of Antonius Pius (138-161 AD) when the city was known as Philadelphia.

*Ammon* by the Ammonites. It was later conquered by the Assyrians, followed by the Persians, the Greek Macedonians,<sup>9</sup> and the Romans.

We then drive to the ancient city of **Jerash**, site of the ruins of the Greco-Roman city of **Gerasa**, also referred to as **Antioch on the Golden River**. After the Roman conquest of AD 63, Jerash was included in the Roman province of Syria, and later became part of the **Decapolis league** of cities. After AD 106, Jerash was part of the Roman province of Arabia



5<sup>th</sup> C. Byzantine Church floor at Jerash

of which Philadelphia (Amman) was the capital. Remains in the Greco-Roman Jerash include (numerous Corinthian columns, **Hadrian's Arch**,<sup>10</sup> the **circus-hippodrome**, two large **temples** (dedicated to **Zeus and Artemis**), an unusual **oval forum**, a **long colonnaded street or cardo**, two theatres (the large South Theatre and smaller North Theatre), two baths, a scattering of small temples, and an almost complete circuit of city walls.



Our Day 2 Route

**Jerash flourished in the Byzantine period** – when the vast majority of the residents of the middle-east were Christians. This is evidenced by the many churches found within the walls. From AD 350, a large Christian community lived here, and between AD 400–600, more than **thirteen churches**<sup>11</sup> were built within less than a mile of each other. Many of these had superb mosaic floors. A cathedral was built in the 4th century. Jerash declined rapidly after the Persian invasion of AD 614.

Outside of Italy, Jerash is considered one of the largest and best-preserved sites of Roman architecture in the world. We will enjoy Lunch at the [Jerash Lebanese Restaurant](#) offering traditional Arabic Cuisine.

After lunch we drive south to the village of *Wadi Musa* adjacent to the site of **Petra**. There we check in at the [Petra Guest House](#), for dinner and overnight. (We will stay for two nights at this elegant hotel, perfectly located for exploring Petra.)

<sup>9</sup> Ptolemy II Philadelphus, the Macedonian ruler of Egypt, renamed it Philadelphia.

<sup>10</sup> Built to celebrate the Emperor Hadrian's visit AD129-130.

<sup>11</sup> An ancient synagogue with detailed mosaics, including the story of [Noah](#), was found beneath a church.

### 3. Thurs. May 19 08:00 ROSE-RED ANCIENT CITY OF PETRA

After breakfast at our hotel, we spend our day in **Petra**, an historic ancient city famous for its rock-cut architecture and water conduit system. Another name for Petra is the *Rose City* due to the color of the stone out of which it is carved. Known as the capital city of the *Nabateans* and currently a symbol of Jordan.

Petra, well known in Biblical times, became a 'lost city,' at least to western eyes. In 1812, Petra was "found" by Swiss explorer Johann Ludwig Burckhardt. (Of course, the locals would say it was never lost.) It was described as "*a rose-red city half as old as time*" in a [Newdigate Prize-winning poem](#) by John William Burgon.

UNESCO has described it as "**one of the most precious properties of man's cultural heritage.**"

The impressive eastern entrance leads steeply down through narrow gorge called *The Siq* ("the shaft"), a natural geological feature formed from a deep split in the sandstone rocks and serving as a waterway flowing into *Wadi Musa*. At the end of the Siq stands Petra's most elaborate ruin, *Al Khazneh* (popularly known as "the Treasury"). A little farther from the Treasury is a massive theatre, so placed as to bring the greatest number of tombs within view. At the point where the valley opens out into the plain, the site of the city is revealed with striking effect.



An amphitheatre has been cut into the hillside and into several of the tombs during its construction. Here are hundreds of elaborate rock-cut tombs with intricate carvings. There are **obelisks, temples, sacrificial altars and colonnaded streets**, and high above, overlooking the valley, is the impressive **Ad-Deir Monastery** – a flight of 800 rock cut steps takes the more adventurous of us there.



*The Royal Tombs of Petra*

Lunch is on-site at **Petra Basin Restaurant** offering International Cuisine & Open Buffet. Our day at Petra includes

a guided tour until lunch and free time to explore the site in the afternoon. We will meet up at about 3:30 PM for the walk out, back through the Siq. Some choose to hire a camel or carriage – this is not included and costs about US\$20. Dinner and Overnight at **The Petra Guest House.**

### 4. Friday May 20, 2022 08:00

### KERAK, MADABA, MT. NEBO, AMMAN

Breakfast in the hotel. After check-out, our bus takes us to visit **Kerak**, known for its famous crusaders castle. The ruins of the castle, one of the three largest ever built in the Levant, was erected in the 1140's<sup>12</sup>. Kerak is magnificently situated, with an amazing view, however, in my opinion, the site is rather poorly developed and lacks adequate interpretation. It is still impressive, and worthwhile to visit. The city of Kerak was the home in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century of one of the earliest Christian communities in the world.



*The view from Kerak is breathtaking.*

We continue to drive north to **Madaba**,<sup>13</sup> best known for its spectacular Byzantine and Umayyad mosaics. Here we will visit the Archaeological Park which encompasses several Byzantine Churches. Nearby is the **Greek Orthodox Church of St. George**,<sup>14</sup> with the famous 6th century [mosaic map](#) of the Holy Land covering the floor of the sanctuary.<sup>15</sup> As time permits we may visit other sites in Madaba. **Lunch** at local restaurant in Madaba offering traditional Arabic Cuisine.

We then drive to **Mount Nebo**. The Bible tells of the Israelites, near the end of their desert wandering, looking down into the promised land from Mt. Nebo in Moab. Because of its altitude of 700 m, from here you can see captivating views of the Jordan Valley, and on clear days, to Jerusalem and beyond. At the summit is the mountaintop memorial of Moses<sup>16</sup> and a Franciscan Church, built atop ancient ruins. The mosaic floors are magnificent and a good example of typical Byzantine immersion font is preserved. In one of the chapels on Mt. Nebo we will celebrate **Holy Communion**. We then proceed to the **Century Park Hotel in Amman** for check-in & overnight.



*Our route on Day 4*



**5. Saturday, May 21, 2022 07:15 (On the bus) AMMAN, ALLENBY & NAZARETH**



*Looking West across the Jordan from Mount Nebo*

<sup>12</sup> Kerak was built during time of Fulk, King of Jerusalem to secure the eastern border of his Crusader Kingdom.

<sup>13</sup> Once a Moabite border city, referred to in scripture: Numbers 21:30 and Joshua 13:9

<sup>14</sup> Ruins of so many churches make clear that Madaba was home to a flourishing Christian Community in the Byzantine period. Indeed, the Bishop of Madaba attended the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451.

<sup>15</sup> The map dates to the 6<sup>th</sup> C and is comprised of about two million pieces of coloured stone.

<sup>16</sup> From here, Moses was granted a view of the Promised Land that he would never enter. Deuteronomy 34:1-12 tells of Moses on Nebo just before his death.

After breakfast we check-out of the *Petra Guest House* and drive to the **Allenby Bridge** border crossing into Israel. At the Jordanian side we say farewell to our Jordanian guide, and once border procedures have been completed, we will meet our Israeli bus and driver.<sup>17</sup> We will not have a local Guide on for the rest of today, but Vicars is familiar with the border procedures and our route and visits for the day. We will proceed up the Israeli side of the Jordan River Valley – stopping at **Beit She’an**. We will have lunch at a local restaurant and then visit the extensive ruins of the large Roman City including a hippodrome, cardo, viaduct, and public baths. Beit She’an sits astride the ancient highway known as the *Via Maris* or *Way of the Sea*. This ancient trade route, followed the Mediterranean coastal plain up from Egypt, turned inland following the **Jezreel Valley** and then here, at Beit She’an, turned to follow the **Jordan Valley** north toward Syria and Mesopotamia. Beit She’an figured in the Biblical story as well, as this is the location of the battle of **Mt. Gilboa** between the Philistines and Israel.<sup>18</sup> In Roman times this was the leading city of the **Decapolis** league of 10 cities in the Levant.



*Beit She’an is a well preserved Roman City from the time of Jesus*



We then continue to **Nazareth** (the town of Jesus’ childhood) where we will check into the **Legacy Hotel** for dinner and overnight. The rest of our entourage, travelling directly from Canada, will arrive here today as well. **Tomorrow morning our “Living Stones Pilgrimage” will begin.**

**Please Note:** This itinerary sets our plans as of the above date. Further amendments are to be expected as we continue the ongoing task of fine tuning the itinerary. Check our website regularly for updated information. [www.trinitytour.org](http://www.trinitytour.org) On our flight to Amman (if not sooner) you will receive a booklet with an updated itinerary, maps, and other information. **Also, due to local circumstances or situations, changes sometimes are necessary – switching days around or adding or substituting one site visit for another.** Every night during our pilgrimage, as we arrive at our hotel for the evening, we aim to review the itinerary for the following day.

<sup>17</sup> As this is a Saturday, and the border closes after lunch, we need an early departure today. My goal is to get to the Allenby Bridge border crossing by 8:30 AM. Once across, we enjoy a more leisurely pace.

<sup>18</sup> After they were killed in fighting with the Philistines on Mt. Gilboa, the bodies of King Saul and three of his sons were hung on the city walls of Beit She’an. 1Sam31:10-12). Years later, King David’s troops defeated the Philistines here, driving them back to the southern coastal areas.