

# Reflections from the **HOLY LAND**

Pastor Josh & Pastor Jerry



## ISRAEL

Modern Israel is surrounded by Muslim countries on three sides and the Mediterranean Sea to the west. Israel is bounded on the north by Lebanon, on the east by Syria and Jordan and on the south by Egypt.

Israel is further surrounded by a total of 20 Arab countries and, while each of these countries is struggling under various forms of oppression, Israel is surging ahead as the only democratic society in the Middle East.

## BETHLEHEM



The name "Bethlehem" means house of bread, coming from the two Hebrew words: "Bet"(house of and "lehem" (bread). The village of Bethlehem has been and is a very significant location. It was here that Naomi and her daughter-in-law, Ruth, came at the beginning of the barley harvest and where Ruth later met and married Boaz and became the grand- mother of King David (Ruth 1ff, Samuel 17:12).

Bethlehem was the home of Jesse and his son David who was to be the King of Israel (I Samuel 16:1-17).

It was to this city that Joseph came with Mary, and Jesus was born (Matthew 2:1-6). It was here that the shepherds heard the angels proclaim the birth of the Messiah (Luke 2:8-20). And, it was here that all male children two years and under were ordered massacred by King Herod (Matthew 2:16).



## JERUSALEM

Many claim Jerusalem to be the most important City in the world!

Jerusalem has been, is, and always will be at the very heart of the issues of the world. It is God's city! This city, whose name means "peace," has had more wars fought over her than any city in history. David made Jerusalem the capital of Israel when he moved from Hebron and brought the Ark of the Covenant to dwell here (2 Samuel 5:6-16; 6:1-2). Solomon, his son, made the city beautiful by building palaces, strengthening her walls, and building The Temple, the dwelling place of God! The Romans appointed Herod the Great to rule over the Jews in 37 B.C., and he set about building great cities and harbors and beautifying the Temple in Jerusalem even more than Solomon. Herod the Great died in about 4 B.C., thus the Jerusalem Jesus knew was the one beautified by Herod.

# GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

The Garden of Gethsemane, which means garden of the wine press, is located at the base of the Mount of Olives and is maintained by the Franciscans. This beautiful garden contains eight ancient olive trees, claimed by botanists to be over 3,000 years old. It was to this area Jesus came often and prayed. Especially on the last night of His life on earth. Gethsemane was a garden across the Kidron. (John 18:1). It was across from the Golden Gate. (Luke 22:39). Here Jesus took upon himself the sins of mankind. (Matthew 26:36-56; Luke 22:39). The site of betrayal of Jesus and His arrest. (Matthew 26:47-56; John 18:1-13).



## PETER'S DENIAL

This site is also where Saint Peter heard the cock crow, and where Peter denied Jesus three times before the rooster crowed--the courtyard area where Peter most probably warmed himself by the fire and was confronted as being one of Jesus' followers.

Here Peter denied the Lord three times (John 18:15-18, 25-27)



## THE WAILING WALL

The Wailing or Western Wall is a portion of the retaining wall Herod built around the western side of the Temple Mount and is the holiest shrine in the Jewish world today. The wall today is holy to the Jews because this portion is all that was left of the Temple compound from 70 A.D. when Titus of Rome destroyed the Temple and the City of Jerusalem. The portion of the wall that is today exposed is 60 yards in length and about 60 feet high. Each Friday evening, as the Sabbath begins, one can see great crowds of Jews gathering at the wall to pray. In addition, almost any time of the day or night one can see people at the wall praying. They believe the Spirit of God is in the wall. We believe the Spirit of God is in each of us.

## Applications:

1. How may the Holy Spirit serve as your "Iron Dome" of protection?
2. Is there a special place in your past (like the wailing wall) to which you cling—preventing you from being a living sacrifice today:
3. How might you be an oasis like Ein-Gedi in the spiritually dry environment where you live?
4. As you receive from God, are you like the Sea of Galilee or more like the Dead Sea?