

# *Behold, the Bridegroom!*

## **A Photo-Journal of Our Trip to the Holy Land**

### **Volume I: From (A)nne to (Z)acchaeus**

In 2016 I had the opportunity to work with my sister on a book for a Messianic Rabbi; we were tasked to write a chapter about Jerusalem in the context of the biblical prophecies regarding the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. In researching this topic I came to an understanding that Israel, and Jerusalem in particular, is a nexus of both spiritual and temporal import. Partly inspired by this, my wife and I agreed that a pilgrimage to Israel was the next step in our spiritual journey of faith. It was shortly after our decision that our parish's priest, Father Joel Davida, announced that he was planning what would be perhaps his last pilgrimage to Israel in the spring of 2018. We knew we had to go. After months of planning and two days of travel we finally arrive in Tel Aviv, Israel on March 13, 2018. With over seventy pilgrims in tow Father Joel led us on a journey that would change our lives forever.



**Kevin and Jan arrive in Tel Aviv, Israel March 13<sup>th</sup> 2018\***



**The Golden Crown Hotel in Nazareth, Israel**

We spent the first three days of our seven-day trek in northern Israel, that is, in the region of Nazareth. The Golden Crown Hotel was our base of operations. It made sense logistically that we visited holy sites in a way that utilized our time most efficiently. So on our first day of travel we visited the Mount of Precipice, the Wedding Church in Cana, the Mount of Transfiguration, the Church of the Annunciation, and Saint Joseph Church. The events that transpired at these locations occurred at various times during the earthly life of our Lord. I have decided to arrange this journal so that we are following the footsteps of our Lord starting with the birth and early life of His Mother, Mary, to His accession (and His return in glory).

My original intent was to journal every evening after returning from our day's experiences. That didn't work out as I had planned. The physical, mental, and spiritual intensity of these experiences left me so exhausted that I was unable to focus sufficiently to write so much as a word in my journal. Nevertheless, I was at peace because I felt assured by the Lord that He was planting seeds at each of the places we visited, and that they would germinate and grow as I reflected on these experiences with the aid of the photos that we took along the way. I trust that this will be evident in this photo journal of Jan and mine pilgrimage through the Holy Land.



**At the Hotel Nazareth. Getting ready to leave for Cana.**

\*Captions in blue are photos that Jan or I took. Captions in red I downloaded from the Internet.

## About Us

If you happen to be reading this Photo-Journal of our trip to Israel after a while you might begin to wonder, “What type of Christians are these people?” That’s a good question and we believe you deserve an answer. However, my wife tells me I should always give people the option between a short answer and a long answer (I think the implication here is that I can get a bit verbose). Since there is no way for me to know which you would prefer I think I’d better go with the short answer.

I was raised a Catholic and Jan, a Lutheran. In High School and College both of us began to explore Christianity beyond our original roots and we ended up in the same nondenominational Protestant-Charismatic Christian community. We got married there and had our two children while we were a part of this community. After about twenty years in this church we both had the “witness” that the Lord was leading us elsewhere. That elsewhere was the Catholic Church. We spent a great deal of time learning about our faith, things that we both felt we should have learned earlier in our lives. This learning led us down some very interesting theological and philosophical paths including eight years in Eastern Christendom, specifically the Byzantine Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church. We eventually came back to the Roman Catholic rite, never really feeling that we had ever left it.

I understand that some may feel that our “journey of faith” is a confused one—we do not. I am thankful for the journey we have experienced together and we believe our faith has been enriched by it. Our Christian worldview has been shaped by our Western Christian experience (Catholic, and Protestant) and our Eastern Christian experience (Byzantine Catholic and Eastern Orthodox). This will be evident in our writing. I do not believe that a faithful Catholic or Protestant has anything to fear from reading our reflections that may have an Eastern Christian influence, nor do I believe that an Orthodox needs to be concerned that we have strayed into heterodoxy.

Before we left on our journey to Israel I felt that I was taking this trip not just for myself, but also for others. Another thing I have come to believe is that God had buried a treasure in each of the places we visited, and that if we were willing to dig into the scripture and the Tradition of the Church we could uncover these treasures. For Jan and myself these hidden treasures have given us invaluable insights and graces in our walk with the Lord. This is the reason Jan and I have spent (and will continue to spend) so many hours working on this photo-journal. We hope it is as much of a blessing to you as it has been for us.

### A Note on the Chronology

Arranging the Photo-Journal in the chronological order of Jesus’ life was not as easy as I was expecting. This is due to the fact that the four Gospels do not arrange the events and teachings of our Lord’s public ministry in the same order. Since I am not a bible scholar I relied upon the “Chronological Index of Gospel Parallels” which can be found in the back of the [The Orthodox New Testament](#) (ISBN-13: 978-0-944359-38-9). I’ve included a copy of this chronology on the pages which follow.

### Acknowledgements

First, Jan and I want to thank Father Joel, our pastor at Our Lady of the Sierra parish. He was a “good shepherd” throughout our journey through Israel, providing us with insights and sacramental blessings along the way. We also like to thank Nurit Bar-am, our Israeli guide, for her knowledge, insights, patience, and respectful attitude towards us, and also the diverse communities we encountered in our travels. Lastly, I want to acknowledge my fellow pilgrims who helped to make this trip both a spiritual encounter and just plain fun.

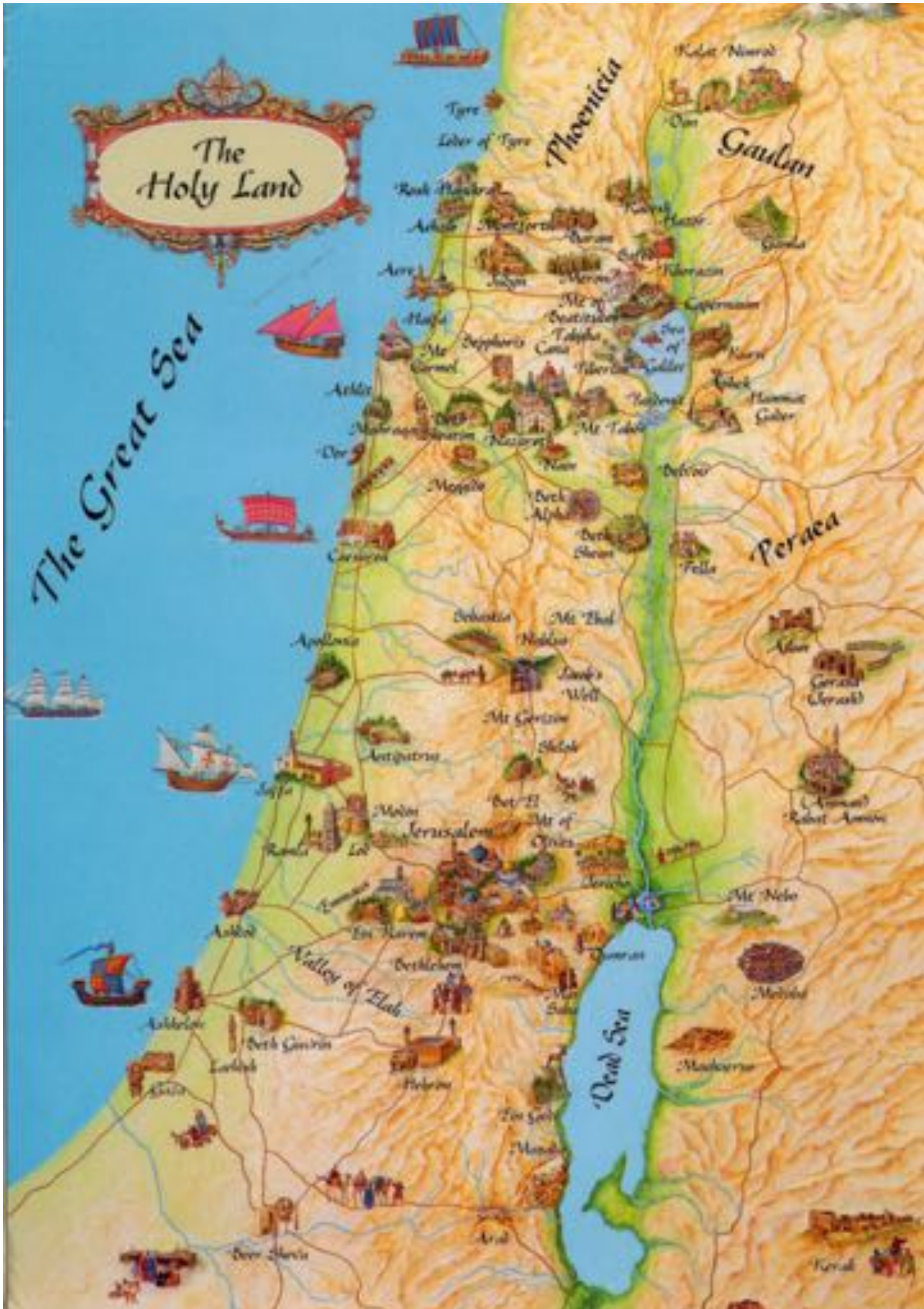
### A Note on the Title

The title of this Photo-Journal, [Behold, the Bridegroom!](#), comes from Matthew 25:6, *But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’* I chose this title for several reasons, (1) this photo-journal is about following the footsteps of our Lord Jesus, who is our Bridegroom, (2) that sometimes it is necessary to “come out” of our usual routines and expectations in order to meet Him, and (3) it’s a nice segue to the book that follows, [Come, Let Me show You the Bride](#), which I will be adding to the website soon (I hope).



Our wonderful tour guides:  
Nurit Bar-am and Father Joel









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Cursing & Withering of the Fig Tree	Mt. 21:18-22	Mk. 11:12-14, 20-26		
Christ's Authority Challenged	Mt. 21:23-27	Mk. 11:27-33	Lk. 20:1-8	
Parable of the Two Sons	Mt. 21:28-32			
Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers	Mt. 21:33-46	Mk. 12:1-12	Lk. 20:9-19	
Parable of Wedding Festivities	Mt. 22:1-14			
The Question of Paying Taxes	Mt. 22:15-22	Mk. 12:13-17	Lk. 20:20-26	
The Question about Resurrection	Mt. 22:23-33	Mk. 12:18-27	Lk. 20:27-38	
A Question: The Great Commandment	Mt. 22:34-40	Mk. 12:28-34	Lk. 10:25-28	



Jesus Speaks of David	Mt. 22:41-46	Mk. 12:35-37	Lk. 20:41-44	
Woes Upon Scribes & Pharisees	Mt. 23:1-36	Mk. 12:38-40	Lk. 20:45-47	
Jesus Laments Over Jerusalem	Mt. 23:37-39		Lk. 13:34, 35	
The Widow's Mite	Mt. 12:41-44		Lk. 21:1-4	
Coming Events: Signs of the Time	Mt. 24:1-51	Mk. 13:1-37	Lk. 21:5-38	
Parable of the Ten Virgins	Mt. 25:1-13			
Parable of the Talents	Mt. 25:14-30			
Sheep Separated from Goats	Mt. 25:31-46			
Plot to Kill Christ Unfolds	Mt. 26:1-5	Mk. 14:1, 2	Lk. 22:1, 2	
Jesus Anointed in Simon's House	Mt. 26:6-13	Mk. 14:3-9		
Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus	Mt. 26:14-16	Mk. 14:10, 11	Lk. 22:3-6	
Greeks Seek Jesus				Jn. 12:20-36
Jews Reject Christ				Jn. 12:37-50
<b>THE DAY BEFORE THE CRUCIFIXION:</b> Preparation for Passover	Mt. 26:17-19	Mk. 14:12-16	Lk. 22:7-13	
The Betrayer is Identified	Mt. 26:20-25	Mk. 14:17-21		Jn. 13:21-35
The Mystical Supper(2)	Mt. 26:26-29	Mk. 14:22-25	Lk. 22:14-23	
Discussion: Who is Greater?			Lk. 22:24-30	
Washing of Disciples' Feet by Jesus				Jn. 13:1-20
Peter's Denial Foretold	Mt. 26:31-35	Mk. 14:27-31	Lk. 22:31-38	Jn. 13:36-38

Discourse: Jesus the Way				Jn. 14:1-15
Promise of the Holy Spirit				Jn. 14:16-31
Discourse: The Vine and Branches				Jn. 15:1-17
Discourse: Warning of Persecution				Jn. 15:18-16:4
Jesus Comforts the Disciples				Jn. 16:5-33
Jesus' Farewell Prayer				Jn. 17:1-26
Jesus in Gethsemane, the Disciples Sleep	Mt. 26:30-46	Mk. 14:26-42	Lk. 22:39-46	Jn. 18:1
Jesus is Betrayed and Arrested; Heals Malchus' Ear	Mt. 26:47-56	Mk. 14:43-52	Lk. 22:47-53	Jn. 18:2-11
Jesus Examined by High Priest Annas				Jn. 18:12-23
<b>THE DAY OF CRUCIFIXION:</b> Jesus Tried, Condemned, Mocked, and Buffeted	Mt. 26:57-68	Mk. 14:53-65	Lk. 22:54-65	Jn. 18:24
Peter Denies the Lord Thrice	Mt. 26:58-75	Mk. 14:54-72	Lk. 22:55-62	Jn. 18:15-27
Jesus Condemned by Sanhedrin	Mt. 27:1, 2	Mk. 15:1	Lk. 22:66-71	
Remorse of Judas(3)	Mt. 27:3-10			
Jesus Before Pilate, First Time	Mt. 27:11-14	Mk. 15:2-5	Lk. 23:1-5	Jn. 18:28-38
Jesus Before Herod Antipas			Lk. 23:6-12	
Jesus Before Pilate, Second Time; Release of Barabbas	Mt. 27:15-26	Mk. 15:6-15	Lk. 23:13-25	Jn. 18:39, 40
Jesus Scourged	Mt. 27:26	Mk. 15:15		
Conclusion of Trial: The Mocking and Final Condemnation	Mt. 27:27-31	Mk. 15:16-19		Jn. 19:1-16
Jesus' Path to Golgotha	Mt. 27:32-34	Mk. 15:20-23	Lk. 23:26-32	Jn. 19:17
The Crucifixion	Mt. 27:35-44	Mk. 15:24-32	Lk. 23:33-43	Jn. 19:18-27

The Two Thieves	Mt. 27:44	Mk. 15:32	Lk. 23:39-43	
“Behold thy Mother”				Jn. 19:26, 27
Darkness Covers the Earth; Jesus Dies	Mt. 27:45-50	Mk. 15:33-37	Lk. 23:44-46	Jn. 19:28-37
Jesus’ Side is Lanced				Jn. 19:31-37
Phenomenal Happenings	Mt. 27:51-56	Mk. 15:38-41	Lk. 23:47-49	
Burial of Body	Mt. 27:57-61	Mk. 15:42-47	Lk. 23:50-56	Jn. 19:38-42
<b>THE DAY AFTER THE CRUCIFIXION:</b> The Soldiers at the Sepulcher	Mt. 27:62-66			
The Women Visit the Tomb	Mt. 28:1	Mk. 16:1		
The Stone is Rolled Away	Mt. 28:2-4	Mk. 16:4	Lk. 24:2	Jn. 20:1
<b>THE RESURRECTION:</b> The Message of the Angels	Mt. 28:5-8	Mk. 16:2-8	Lk. 24:1-8	
The Woman Proclaim the Resurrection			Lk. 24:9-12	Jn. 20:2-10
Christ Appears to St. Mary Magdalene		Mk. 16:9-11		Jn. 20:11-18
Christ Appears to the Women	Mt. 28:9, 10			
The Guard Reports to the Jewish Rulers	Mt. 28:11-15			
The Road to Emmaus		Mk. 16:12, 13	Lk. 24:13-35	
Christ Appears to the Disciples(4)		Mk. 16:14	Lk. 24:36-43	Jn. 20:19-25
Christ Appears to Thomas				Jn. 20:26-29
Christ Appears to Seven Disciples, Miraculous Draught of Fish				Jn. 21:1-24
The Great Commission	Mt. 28:16-20	Mk. 16:15-18		

Other Commissions(5)			Lk. 24:44-49	
<b>THE ASCENSION(6)</b>		Mk. 16:19, 20	Lk. 24:50-53	
Many Things Not Told or Written				Jn. 20:30, 31; 21:25

**Endnotes for Parallel Gospels**

- (1) See “The Sermon on the Mount” above with cites from St. Matthew.
- (2) See The Mystical Supper at 1 Cor. 11:23-26.
- (3) See Remorse of Judas at Acts 1:18, 19.
- (4) Christ Appears to 500 brethren and St. Iakovos, the brother of the Lord, cf. 1 Cor. 15:6, 7.
- (5) Other Commissions: See Acts 1:3-8.
- (6) The Ascension: See Acts 1:9-12.