

Ethiopia of the Old and New Testament

Addis Ababa • Bahir Dar • Gondar • Lalibela • Axum

9 days



Lalibela Church in Ethiopia

YOUR DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

DAY 1 – WASHINGTON DC – Depart Washington Dulles International on morning flight to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

DAY 2 - ADDIS ABABA – Arrive to Addis Ababa in morning. Check into hotel in Addis Ababa, a name which means “new flower.” The city was founded in 1886 by Emperor Menelik II and his consort Queen Taytu. Addis Ababa is the continent’s diplomatic capital with over seventy embassies and consular offices and the headquarters of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. It is a lively city rich with beauty and culture. Begin our tour with a drive up to Mount Entoto. The panorama from the peak is breathtaking. Enjoy a visit to Trinity Cathedral, the largest and most revered of all the churches. Visit the Ethnological Museum, an ideal place to start learning about Ethiopia’s rich ethnic diversity. The museum has an impressive array of religious crosses, triptychs and murals, as well as Haile Selassie’s bedroom and bathroom. Dinner and overnight in Addis Ababa. (D)

DAY 3 - ADDISABABA/BAHIR DAR – This morning fly to Bahir Dar, a pleasant city located on the shores of Lake Tana, the largest lake in Ethiopia. There are 37 islands on Lake Tana and 30 of them have churches and monasteries of considerable historical and cultural interest. Upon arrival in Bahir Dar, check in to hotel. Then enjoy a boat cruise on Lake Tana to visit the 13th century Monastery of Ura Kidane Mihret, the most famous of the Zege peninsula monasteries with a very beautiful painted maqdas. Later in the day, embark on a city tour of Bahir Dar, visiting the market, the palace of Emperor Haile Selassie (view point only—as it is not permitted to enter), Weyto Villages and the deacon school at Trinity. Dinner and overnight in Bahir Dar. (B,D)

DAY 4 - BAHIR DAR/GONDAR – After breakfast we will drive through scenic countryside and arrive in Gondar by late morning. Gondar was the first capital of the Ethiopian Empire, which began in 1632 with the reign of Fasilidas. Gondar is referred to as the Camelot of Africa. In Gondar, there are a dozen castles built by various emperors over the course of 236 years. Visit the royal enclosure containing six castles, a complex network of connecting tunnels, raised walkways and several smaller buildings. Take a tour of the bathing palace of King Fasilidas. Later, proceed to the fascinating Debre Birhan Selassie Church with its walls and ceilings decorated with scenes of Biblical lore and medieval history. Dinner and overnight in Gondar. (B,D)

DAY 5 - GONDAR/LALIBELA – Today we will fly to Lalibela, described as the eighth wonder of the world, for two days of touring what is considered to be one of the holiest cities in Ethiopia. Lalibela, with its beautiful rock hewn churches, is on the UNESCO’s list of World Heritage sites. Start our exploration with the twelve majestic rock-hewn churches. Begin with the breathtaking Bette Giorgis church, carved in the shape of a cross and set apart from the other church groupings. Other churches include Bete Medhane Alem, Bete Mariam, Bete Maskal,

Bete Danaghel, Bete Golgotha and Bete Mikael. Dinner and overnight in Lalibela for 2 nights. (B,D)

DAY 6 - LALIBELA – Today we will visit the church of Yimrhane Kristos. This exquisite church, a masterpiece of Axumite wood and stone construction is renowned for its interior decoration, its beautiful wooden coffer ceiling inlaid with hexagons and medallions with both figurative and geometric motifs. Drive back to Lalibela. In the afternoon, we will visit the remaining rock-hewn churches of Lalibela. (B)

DAY 7 - LALIBELA/AXUM – We will be transferred to the airport for the flight to Axum. Once the center of a great empire, and the seat of learning for the ancient Ge’ez language and literature, Axum is the prime historical site in the North of Ethiopia. Take the city tour of Axum that includes: the Stelae Park, St. Mary’s Church, the Sanctuary Chapel which is the repository of the ‘Ark of the Covenant, the Coronation Yard, Queen of Sheba’s palace ruins, Axum Museum to view its impressive array of regional art crafts—some dating back more than 2,000 years, and the quarry where the stelaes used to be made. Today we will attend a service with our local brothers and sisters. Dinner and overnight in Axum. (B,D)

DAY 8 - AXUM/ADDIS ABABA – Take the return flight to Addis Ababa. Today will be our opportunity to go back to the market to shop, and visit the United Nations Conference Center. In the evening, enjoy a “farewell dinner” where we will taste various national dishes, and watch dances of various ethnic groups of Ethiopia. A traditional coffee ceremony will also be served. We will then be transferred to the airport for our flight home. (B,D)

DAY 9 - WASHINGTON DC – Today our journey ends with memories that will last us forever. Arrival in the USA the same day. (B)

* (B,L,D) = Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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