

PASSPORT TO ISRAEL

CAESAREA

Herod the Great—the Herod from the Christmas story—was a powerful king who ruled Judea. By the end of his life, he became very paranoid and cruel. When he was younger, Herod was a skilled politician who earned the respect of the Roman Empire. He was well educated and enjoyed debating history and philosophy. The Bible describes Herod as responsible for the Massacre of the Innocents. In archaeology, Herod is also known for the enormous building projects he ordered. Some of his greatest building projects were the expansion of the Temple in Jerusalem, his desert fortress at Masada, and the port city of Caesarea Maritima.

Caesarea Maritima shows how advanced Roman engineering was. The city had one of the largest man-made harbors in the ancient world. It also included temples, aqueducts, a theater, a racetrack, and a palace. These buildings made Caesarea an important center for Roman rule in the region. Roman engineers used a special type of hydraulic concrete in the construction of Caesarea's harbor, portions of which survive underwater today. Herod named the city Caesarea after Caesar Augustus, the Roman emperor mentioned in Luke 2:1.

Caesarea is very important in Christian history. It was the first place where the Holy Spirit was given to Gentiles when the Apostle Peter preached the gospel to Cornelius, a Roman centurion, and those gathered in his home (Acts 10). They were then baptized. Later, the Apostle Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea. While there, he shared the gospel with the Roman leaders Felix, Festus, and King Agrippa II.

In later years, Caesarea became a major Christian city during the Byzantine period. One of its most famous leaders was Eusebius of Caesarea, an early church historian. In 1265, Mamluk forces captured Caesarea from the Crusaders and destroyed much of the city. Over time, sand covered the ruins and helped protect them. Today, Caesarea Maritima is an important archaeological site and a national park in Israel.

Hannah Szenes was a poet who lived in the Land of Israel during World War II. She was trained by the British military as a paratrooper and sent on a mission to help rescue Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe. She was captured by Hungarian authorities and executed in 1944. During her short life, she wrote a poem called “A Walk to Caesarea,” which is still famous today. The poem remembers the beauty of the land and the deep connection people feel to it.

**“My God, My God,
I pray that these things never end,
The sand and the sea,
The rustle of the waters,
Lightning of the Heavens,
The prayer of Man.”**

ARCHAEOLOGY ADVENTURE

FOR THE TEACHER

Description:

Using photos of the city's harbor, theater, aqueducts, and palace, students will examine the ruins, take notes on what each structure might have been used for, and give it a fun or creative name. Finally, they will share their discoveries with the class, imagining what life was like in this ancient city.

Resources Needed:

- Printed images of Caesarea ruins
- Paper and pencils
- Sticky notes or note cards

Instructions:

Give each student a photo of a Caesarea ruin or structure to investigate. Students will write what they think the building or structure may have been used for, who might have used it, and any interesting details or unusual features they notice. Students can create their own name for the ruins they “discover.” When finished, students can take turns presenting their discoveries, interesting observations, and imaginative names.

CAESAREA

ARCHAEOLOGY ADVENTURE KEY



CAESAREA

ARCHAEOLOGY ADVENTURE CHALLENGE

