

Holy Land Trip Reading List

Summaries are from Amazon

The Lemon Tree: An Arab, a Jew, and the Heart of the Middle East, by Sandy Tolan

In 1967, Bashir Khairi, a twenty-five-year-old Palestinian, journeyed to Israel with the goal of seeing the beloved stone house with the lemon tree behind it that he and his family had fled nineteen years earlier. To his surprise, when he found the house he was greeted by Dalia Eshkenazi Landau, a nineteen-year-old Israeli college student, whose family left fled Europe for Israel following the Holocaust. On the stoop of their shared home, Dalia and Bashir began a rare friendship, forged in the aftermath of war and tested over the next half century in ways that neither could imagine on that summer day in 1967. Sandy Tolan brings the Israeli-Palestinian conflict down to its most human level, demonstrating that even amid the bleakest political realities there exist stories of hope and transformation.

Jerusalem: The Biography, by Simon Sebag Montefiore

Jerusalem is the epic history of three thousand years of faith, fanaticism, bloodshed, and coexistence, from King David to the 21st century, from the birth of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam to the Israel-Palestine conflict. How did this small, remote town become the Holy City, the “center of the world” and now the key to peace in the Middle East? In a gripping narrative, Simon Sebag Montefiore reveals this ever-changing city in its many incarnations, bringing every epoch and character blazingly to life. Jerusalem’s biography is told through the wars, love affairs, and revelations of the men and women who created, destroyed, chronicled and believed in Jerusalem. As well as the many ordinary Jerusalemites who have left their mark on the city, its cast varies from Solomon, Saladin and Suleiman the Magnificent to Cleopatra, Caligula and Churchill; from Abraham to Jesus and Muhammad; from the ancient world of Jezebel, Nebuchadnezzar, Herod and Nero to the modern times of the Kaiser, Disraeli, Mark Twain, Lincoln, Rasputin, Lawrence of Arabia and Moshe Dayan.

The Other Peace Process: Interreligious Dialogue, a View from Jerusalem, by Ronald Kronish.

The book describes the message and the methods of interreligious dialogue and action in the context of the political peace process as well as the peace-building processes and cutting-edge programs which occur in Israel and the region, by drawing on personal experiences and offering inspirational stories derived from involvement in the field for more than twenty-five years.

Blood Brothers: The Dramatic Story of a Palestinian Christian Working for Peace in Israel, by Elias Chacour

As a child, Elias Chacour lived in a small Palestinian village in Galilee. When tens of thousands of Palestinians were killed and nearly one million forced into refugee camps in 1948, Elias began a long struggle with how to respond. In Blood Brothers, he blends his riveting life story with historical research to reveal a little-known side of the Arab-Israeli conflict, touching on questions such as:

- What behind-the-scenes politics touched off the turmoil in the Middle East?
- What does Bible prophecy really have to say?
- Can bitter enemies ever be reconciled?

Now updated with commentary on the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as a new foreword by Lynne Hybels and Gabe Lyons, this book offers hope and insight that can help each of us learn to live at peace in a world of tension and terror.

My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel, by Ari Shavit

Ari Shavit draws on interviews, historical documents, private diaries, and letters, as well as his own family's story, illuminating the pivotal moments of the Zionist century to tell a riveting narrative that is larger than the sum of its parts: both personal and national, both deeply human and of profound historical dimension.

We meet Shavit's great-grandfather, a British Zionist who in 1897 visited the Holy Land on a Thomas Cook tour and understood that it was the way of the future for his people; the idealist young farmer who bought land from his Arab neighbor in the 1920s to grow the Jaffa oranges that would create Palestine's booming economy; the visionary youth group leader who, in the 1940s, transformed Masada from the neglected ruins of an extremist sect into a powerful symbol for Zionism; the Palestinian who as a young man in 1948 was driven with his family from his home during the expulsion from Lydda; the immigrant orphans of Europe's Holocaust, who took on menial work and focused on raising their children to become the leaders of the new state; the pragmatic engineer who was instrumental in developing Israel's nuclear program in the 1960s, in the only interview he ever gave; the zealous religious Zionists who started the settler movement in the 1970s; the dot-com entrepreneurs and young men and women behind Tel-Aviv's booming club scene; and today's architects of Israel's foreign policy with Iran, whose nuclear threat looms ominously over the tiny country.

As it examines the complexities and contradictions of the Israeli condition, *My Promised Land* asks difficult but important questions: Why did Israel come to be? How did it come to be? Can Israel survive? Culminating with an analysis of the issues and threats that Israel is currently facing, *My Promised Land* uses the defining events of the past to shed new light on the present. The result is a landmark portrait of a small, vibrant country living on the edge, whose identity and presence play a crucial role in today's global political landscape.