



VIEW NORTH: INSIDE THE BARAM SYNAGOGUE, THE PILLARS SUPPORTED THE CEILING AND SECOND STORY. BENCHES WOULD HAVE LINED THE INNER WALLS.

BELOW (VIEW SOUTHEAST): THE INSIDE OF THE SYNAGOGUE, FACING THE CENTRAL AND EASTERN ENTRANCES. AN INSCRIPTION ABOVE THE EASTERN ENTRANCE IDENTIFIED THE MAN WHO BUILT THE SYNAGOGUE.





VIEW NORTHWEST: THE MAIN ENTRANCE TO THE SYNAGOGUE, WHICH DATES TO THE LATE FOURTH OR EARLY FIFTH CENTURY AD. SIX PILLARS SUPPORTED THE PORTICO THAT ONCE STOOD IN FRONT OF THE SYNAGOGUE ENTRANCES.

KEFAR BARAM

(SEE BOTTOM MAP ON PAGE 46)

Baram was a Jewish settlement during the overlapping Mishnaic and Talmudic periods. The former lasted from 10–220 AD and the latter from the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD to the Arab conquest in 637 AD. The Mishnah contains the views of rabbinic sages, including Judah ha-Nasi and his school, who compiled it around 200 AD. It's the written version of the oral law taught by Jewish Pharisees from the period of the Second Temple, also known as Herod's Temple. The rabbis compiled the oral law traditions because they feared the people would forget them because of persecution and the passage of time.

The Mishnah is the foundation document for the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds. Like the Mishnah, the Babylonian Talmud is a set of rabbinic writings compiled between the third and eighth centuries AD. It also contains rabbinic debates on Torah teachings (religious laws) from the second through the fifth centuries. The Babylonian Talmud comprises the Mishnah and the Babylonian Gemara, which contains three hundred years of Mishnaic analysis from the Talmudic Academies of Babylonia.

The Baram synagogue faces south toward Jerusalem from under a six-column portico. It contains three portals, or entrances. The lintel above the main one has a wreath carving. Over it is a reconstructed arch, which archaeologists think helped support the weight from the upper part of the structure. The original lintel is displayed at the Louvre Museum in Paris, France. An inscription above the eastern portal identifies the synagogue's builder as "Elazar, son of Yodan."

The prayer hall inside the synagogue contained three rows of columns that held up the ceiling and second story. It was lined with benches that are no longer visible today. The synagogue is where discussions about the law took place before the destruction of the Second Temple (see "Ancient Synagogues" on page 31).



VIEW SOUTHEAST: THE MARONITE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND BELL TOWER NEAR THE SYNAGOGUE. THE MARONITES WERE EXPELLED IN 1948 DURING THE WAR. THEY STILL USE THE CHURCH ON SUNDAYS, HOLIDAYS, AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS.

BELOW (VIEW NORTHEAST): THE BARAM FOREST IS A NATURAL WOODLAND THAT CONTAINS THE BEAUTIFUL ISRAELI COMMON OAK TREE, WHICH GROWS LARGER HERE THAN ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE COUNTRY.





VIEW EAST: THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN FROM BARAM NATIONAL PARK'S EASTERN EDGE, LOOKING AT UPPER GALILEE'S MOUNTAINS. THE CITY OF SAFED IS VISIBLE FROM THE HILLTOP (UPPER RIGHT).

BELOW (VIEW SOUTH): THE BARAM FOREST IS SOUTHEAST OF THE SYNAGOGUE. HERE, IT LOOKS TOWARD MT. MERON (UPPER RIGHT) AND NAHAL DISHON ("ANTELOPE STREAM"; CENTER), WHICH DRAINS INTO THE JORDAN RIVER.

