



VIEW NORTH: THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN FROM MT. ARBEL ACROSS THE ISRAELI TOWN OF MIGDAL, LOOKING TOWARD SAFED (TOP CENTER). BELOW SAFED, YOU CAN SEE THE WADI AMUD MAKING ITS WAY TOWARD THE SEA OF GALILEE.

BELOW (VIEW SOUTH): THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN FROM THE CITADEL OF SAFED OVERLOOKING THE SEA OF GALILEE. SAFED IS SOMETIMES USED TO REPRESENT THE "CITY ON A HILL" FROM THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT (MATT. 5:14).





VIEW NORTH: SAFED (UPPER CENTER). THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN WITH A TELEPHOTO LENS FROM THE EASTERN SLOPE OF MT. ARBEL ON A TRAIL DESCENDING TO MAGDALA (SEE “MAGDALA” ON PAGE 211).

SAFED (ZEFAT)

Safed is one of the four holy cities of Judaism. The others are Tiberias (see “Tiberias” on page 163), Jerusalem, and Hebron (for Jerusalem and Hebron, see *Blessed Pilgrimage*, vols. 3 and 4). Safed achieved renown in the sixteenth century AD as the Kabbalah center of Judaism (see the top photo on page 83). Jewish Kabbalah is an attempt to explain the relationship between the infinite and eternal God and His mortal and finite creation (the universe). Today’s Hasidic Jews owe much of their thought to Isaac Luria, who is considered the father of contemporary Kabbalah (see the photo on page 81).

If you visit Safed and have time, you won’t want to miss the video presentation at the Kabbalah Center. What I learned there was similar to my own beliefs about the coming of the Messiah. For me, of course, it will be His Second Coming, not His first.

Our day is the time appointed by God to prepare for His Son’s Second Coming,¹ when all things wrong will be made right and when everyone will have an opportunity to hear the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Those who would have accepted it given a proper chance in this life² are candidates for eternal life and exaltation in the next, which is the greatest of all the gifts of God.³

Although the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ has not always been on the earth, its basic doctrines exist in the heart of every human being. This inner gospel identifies certain behaviors as contrary to God’s plan of happiness. Lying is one because it “is contrary to the nature of our spirits.”⁴ Everyone knows stealing is wrong because no one wants to be stolen from. The same is true of murder and a host of other bad behaviors. As God’s children, we are born knowing right from wrong (i.e., we have a conscience). This is the basic gospel (laws of nature) that everyone accepts or rejects. Wonderful opportunities come to those who strive to live the gospel they have, regardless of when or where they live on earth (see Alma 41:3–6, cf. Acts 17:23–28).⁵



VIEW SOUTH: THE IDF MONUMENT AT THE SAFED CITADEL, OVERLOOKING THE SEA OF GALILEE (CENTER RIGHT), LOWER GALILEE, AND PARTS OF THE GOLAN (NOT PICTURED; SEE THE BOTTOM PHOTO ON PAGE 76).

THE SAFED CITADEL

Safed has been conquered many times over the centuries. The Crusaders built a fortress here in 1168 AD only to have it conquered by Saladin's Muslim forces twenty years later. The Mamluk sultan Baybars expanded the fortress in 1268 AD.

After the Ottoman conquest in 1517 AD, growth and prosperity brought Jews from all over Europe. Safed became the center of both wool production and the mystical Kabbalah movement. Although Jews and Arabs had lived side by side for centuries, it all changed with the 1948 War of Independence. The following information comes from the sign positioned below the monument (*above* photo, center left):

On the eve of the War of Independence the Jewish population constituted one tenth of the total residents. They were concentrated in the Jewish Quarter, in the North-Western part of the city.

Towards the end of the mandate, and upon the withdrawal of the British from the city, Palmach's 3rd battalion arrived in Safed and assumed defensive positions in the Jewish Quarter. . . .

On April 16, 1948, the day of the withdrawal, the British commander in Safed sent a message to Rabbi Moshe Podhorzer, head of the Community Council, stating: ". . . I am extremely worried that you and your children's lives are at stake. We recommend that you at least evacuate your women and children with the protection of our army." After consultation with Hagana Headquarters the residents and the combatants decided to remain in the city.

On the 28th of April, . . . a decision was taken to seize the Arab Quarter of Safed, since it was assumed that the Arab Quarter constituted the central force of the Arabs. The fortress, adjacent to the park and



VIEW NORTHWEST: MT. MERON, THE HIGHEST MOUNTAIN IN UPPER GALILEE, VIEWED FROM THE WEST SIDE OF THE CITADEL. THE COMMUNICATION TOWERS ON THE NORTHERN PEAK WERE TARGETED BY HEZBOLLAH ROCKETS IN 2024.

BELOW (VIEW NORTHEAST): THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN FROM THE EAST SIDE OF THE CITADEL, LOOKING TOWARD THE HILLS THAT MAKE UP THE MODERN CITY OF SAFED.





VIEW WEST: A TYPICAL STREET SCENE IN SAFED WITH AN OPEN-AIR RESTAURANT (CENTER) AND AN ORTHODOX JEW WALKING UP THE STREET, GAZING AT HIS SMARTPHONE.

BELOW: THE OWNER OF THE LAHUHE RESTAURANT THAT SERVES ORIGINAL YEMENITE FOOD. IT IS, ACCORDING TO HIM, "ONE OF THE BEST FOOD EXPERIENCES IN ISRAEL." AFTER EATING MY LUNCH (BOTTOM CENTER), I HAD TO AGREE.



the monument, was under the control of the Arabs, and since control of the fortress guaranteed control of the city, the decision was made to seize the fortress.

On the night between May 5th and May 6th [Israel's] forces opened fire on the fortress but failed; its high location and the topographic conditions made its seizure extremely difficult. On May 9, 1948, the fortress was attacked once again. One of the soldiers described the battle: "The climb towards the exposed crest is extremely steep and covered in stones and thorns. The soldiers measure their way in the dark, in the rain, in the mud, with firing shooting past their heads while grabbing thorn bushes to climb upward." This time the attack was a success, and control of the city was completed the next day.

The following report appeared in the *Kol Safed (Safed Voice)* newspaper: "On the morning of the 11th of May 1948, Arab Safed was empty . . . The fleeing of the Arabs left the Jews dumbfounded . . . The resistance of Safed and its heroes has proven that impregnable devotion, will and spirit can overcome the armed mass."

This monument commemorates the 42 soldiers who fell in the battles over Safed during the War of Independence.

The monument (see top photo on page 78) was built by Israel in 1951 as a national memorial to honor the fighters who defeated the Arab forces using the fortress and its towering location, which they used to bomb the Jewish Quarter below the citadel.

BELOW: THE INSIDE OF THE MID-SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ARI-ASHKENAZI SYNAGOGUE NAMED AFTER RABBI ISAAC LURIA (1534–1572), FOUNDER OF LURIANIC KABBALAH.





VIEW NORTH: THE SOUTHERN ENTRANCE TO SAFED'S ARTISTS' QUARTER, WITH SHOPS THAT SELL PHOTOGRAPHY, PRINTS, SCULPTURE, CERAMICS, HANDMADE JEWELRY, PAINTINGS, AND JUDAICA (JEWISH-RELATED OBJECTS).

BELOW: ONE OF MANY ARTIST GALLERIES WITH PAINTINGS THAT DEPICT DIFFERENT THEMES. OFTEN THE SALESPERSON IS THE ARTIST THEMSELVES. SOME GALLERIES FEATURE THE WORK OF MORE THAN ONE ARTIST.





THE ENTRANCE TO THE "TZFAT KABBALAH CENTER," WHERE THEY HOLD CLASSES AND PROVIDE AN EXCELLENT AUDIO-VISUAL PRESENTATION ON KABBALAH.

BELOW: THE SAFED CANDLES GALLERY CONTAINS FAMILIAR BIBLICAL SCENES, INCLUDING THIS ONE OF SAMSON DESTROYING THE PHILISTINE BUILDING IN GAZA, KILLING HIMSELF AND THREE THOUSAND OTHERS (SEE JUDG. 16).





VIEW NORTH: THE BLUE GRAVES IN THE SAFED CEMETERY BELONG TO HOLY MEN, OR TZADIKIM (צדיקים) MEANS "RIGHTEOUS" IN HEBREW). HOLY MEN ARE THOSE WHO DON'T HAVE EVIL INCLINATIONS.

BELOW (VIEW NORTHWEST): MT. MERON (TOP RIGHT) AND THE SAFED CEMETERY. MANY IMPORTANT JEWISH LEADERS ARE BURIED IN THE CEMETERY, INCLUDING RABBI ISAAC LURIA (SEE PHOTO ON PAGE 81).





THIS STORE IS AN EXAMPLE OF ONE OF SAFED'S MANY JUDAICA SHOPS. IN THE WINDOW YOU SEE SILVER CANDLE HOLDERS AND MENORAHS IN VARIOUS STYLES. THE BANNER ON THE RIGHT ADVERTISES OTHER OBJECTS FOR SALE.

ENDNOTES

1 See Russell M. Nelson, “The Lord Jesus Christ Will Come Again,” *Liahona* (Nov. 2024), Gospel Library.

2 “Thus came the voice of the Lord unto me, saying: All who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, *who would have received it* if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God; Also all that shall die henceforth without a knowledge of it, who would have received it with all their hearts, shall be heirs of that kingdom; For I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their *works*, according to the *desire of their hearts*” (Doctrine and Covenants 137:7–9, emphasis added). One sign indicating a person would have received the fullness of the gospel in this life is their willingness to live the gospel they have, which may only be their conscience.

3 “And, if you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God” (Doctrine and Covenants 14:7).

4 Henry B. Eyring, “Going Home,” Brigham Young University Speeches, Nov. 18, 1986, <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/henry-b-eyring/going-home>.

5 Alma taught his son Corinaton that, in the resurrection, every person receives back the characteristics and attributes acquired in mortality. People who learn to follow their conscience in this life, doing as much good as their circumstances allow, will be rewarded in the next with additional opportunities to progress toward life’s goal of achieving perfect happiness. This is, according to Joseph Smith, the “power of godliness” as manifest through gospel ordinances such as baptism, preceded by repentance and a commitment to obey God’s commandments (Doctrine and Covenants 84:19–22, 2 Ne. 31:10–13). See also, Emily Belle Freeman, “Live Up to Your Privileges,” *Liahona* (Nov. 2024), Gospel Library.