

# Ridley Abroad

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## A New Dimension to Learning

Study tours leave a deep impression on every traveller, says **Vice Principal, Tim Foster**, who has been leading study tours for many years.

### WHY STUDY TOURS?

I hadn't realised that Judah could be so arid. As we drove through the parched desert towards the Dead Sea the words of King David struck me,

*As the deer pants for streams of water,  
so my soul pants for you, my God.*

*My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.*

*When can I go and meet with God? (Ps 42:1-2)*

We may have been in an air conditioned bus with cold water at hand, but I could imagine the Psalmist fleeing from Saul, clambering up the steep hillsides, hiding in the ravines, desperately thirsty. As I reflected on these words the imagery took on a depth and richness that it never had before. Study tours to biblical sites in Israel, Jordan, Turkey, Greece and Italy bring whole new dimensions to learning.



Above: Ephesus

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**1. Ancient Culture** When we read the Bible we bring our imagination to the text, forming images in our minds and interpreting the words through our own experience. The problem is that we have limited resources for our imagination to draw on. This can mean that we read the text anachronistically through our twenty-first century eyes. A study tour provides a window into the ancient world. Visiting partially reconstructed cities like Ephesus gives a dramatic insight into the lives of the early Christians and the contexts in which the Scriptures were written. You almost feel that you are among the first century citizens as you visit the theatres, agoras, gymnasiums, public latrines and temples of their cities. You begin to recognise the place of government, the power of paganism and the sophistication of the Greco-Roman culture sitting behind the biblical text.

**2. Geography** A student reflecting on a recent trip to Israel told me that she will never read the Bible in the same way again. Whereas she used to skip over geographical references because they were meaningless she now can trace the movement in her mind and often finds some significance in it. Her imagination is fired up as she reads the Parable of the Good Samaritan and pictures the isolated, arid road up from Jericho to Jerusalem with its narrow pathways, treacherous cliffs and numerous places to set an ambush. Of course, we can read and understand the Bible very well without ever stepping foot in the biblical lands.

Yet once we have done so, we will never read the Bible in the same way again.

**3. Modern Culture** The gospel is for the whole world, and Ridley wants its graduates to have a global perspective. Travel is a great way to broaden students' perspectives, and envision them for engaging cross-culturally. Foreign lands and foreign people feel less threatening once you have travelled and experienced their cultures first hand. Inevitably we leave a place like Turkey burdened for those who do not know Christ.

**4. Community** Learning in community, developing relationships and building networks are important values at Ridley. As an increasing number of students study part time and online forming community becomes more of a challenge. But, during a study tour a temporary community forms. The intense nature of travel, sharing meals and experiences, brings people together and deep relationships can form. Often the reflection of group members is that the best part of the tour was the group itself.

**5. The Power of Place** As Protestants we tend not to find great significance in so called 'holy places', nor do we see travel to these lands as a pilgrimage. Yet there is something thrilling about walking where Jesus walked through the narrow streets of Jerusalem, or following in the footsteps of Paul on the main road of Philippi. Sometimes it really does raise the hairs on the back of your neck!

A study tour leaves a deep and lasting impression on every traveller. Some even call it life changing.



Study tours run each year for students and supporters of the College. Visit our website for details of forthcoming trips to Israel (Dec 18 & April 19), and Greece and Turkey (June 19). [ridley.edu.au/tours](http://ridley.edu.au/tours)

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## 2018 Events

## March 5

Anglican Institute Annual Public Lecture

*Finding Common Ground:*

*A Contemporary Challenge for the Church*  
with Dr Kate Harrison Brennan

## April 14

Graduation and Commissioning  
with David Williams

## April 19

Peter Corney Lecture in Youth Ministry  
*Forming Youth Ministers for a Complex Future*  
with Graham Stanton

## April 19 – 21

IASYM Australian Regional Conference  
with Chris Ryan, Ruth Lukabyo,  
Rowan Lewis and Graham Stanton

## April 30

Charles Perry Biennial Lecture  
*Anzac Rituals: Sacred, Secular and Christian*  
with Darren Mitchell

## May 10

Annual Leon Morris Lecture  
*Papyrology, Prayer and the Gospel of Matthew*  
with Michael Theophilus

## May 25

Faith and Work Award Dinner  
with Glenn Stevens, former Governor  
of the Reserve Bank of Australia

## July 28

Evangelical Women in Academia Conference  
*Finding Her Voice*  
with Katya Covrett and Katy Smith

## August 6

Church Growth & Church Planting Conference  
with Ric Thorpe

## August 21 – 22

Annual Preachers' Conference  
*The Story of God:*  
*Preaching Old Testament Narrative*  
with Paul Barker, Murray Capill and Mary Lewis

Check the Ridley website for times & locations:  
[www.ridley.edu.au/events](http://www.ridley.edu.au/events) or join our events  
mailing list: [j.daw@ridley.edu.au](mailto:j.daw@ridley.edu.au)

170 The Avenue, Parkville, Victoria 3052  
ph: 03 9207 4800 / email: [info@ridley.edu.au](mailto:info@ridley.edu.au)



# Jesus Really Did...

Study tours are a good reminder of the historical veracity and reality of our faith, writes **Brian Rosner**.

## FROM THE PRINCIPAL

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At the Ridley faculty retreat in November each year we have a tradition of asking a few colleagues to share something from their Christian walk. But the question we pose is not how they came to faith in Christ, but rather, how is it that they still believe? There are many challenges to Christian faith in our day, just as there are in any and every age. And life is bumpy ride for everyone.

Why, then, am I still a Christian? In one sense it's because I am kept by the power of God. Ultimately, my perseverance in a life of repentance, faith and stuttering obedience is due to the perseverance of God in saving me through the death, resurrection and intercession of Jesus Christ.

But humanly speaking, God enables me to keep going as a Christian for two reasons: First, Christian faith *rings* true. There are reasons of the heart. My heart, like all human hearts, seeks transcendence, is impressed by antiquity, searches for wisdom, yearns for justice, needs hope, loves beauty, senses its own darkness, is appalled by evil, is repulsed by death and aches for the reassurance

of a satisfying story to make sense of our existence. And the gospel speaks to all of these longings in the most profound and satisfying ways.

The other main reason I keep going is that Christian faith *is* true. There are reasons of the mind. The histories of Israel, Jesus Christ and the early church are not just nice stories; they really happened. The Bible records history and I am convinced that it does so reliably.

So when I find being a Christian hard work, which is not infrequently, I remind myself that Jesus really was born, he really did teach and train disciples, he really did die on a Roman cross, and he really did rise from the dead. And the Bible's accounts of those events can be trusted. We don't follow cleverly devised fables.

“  
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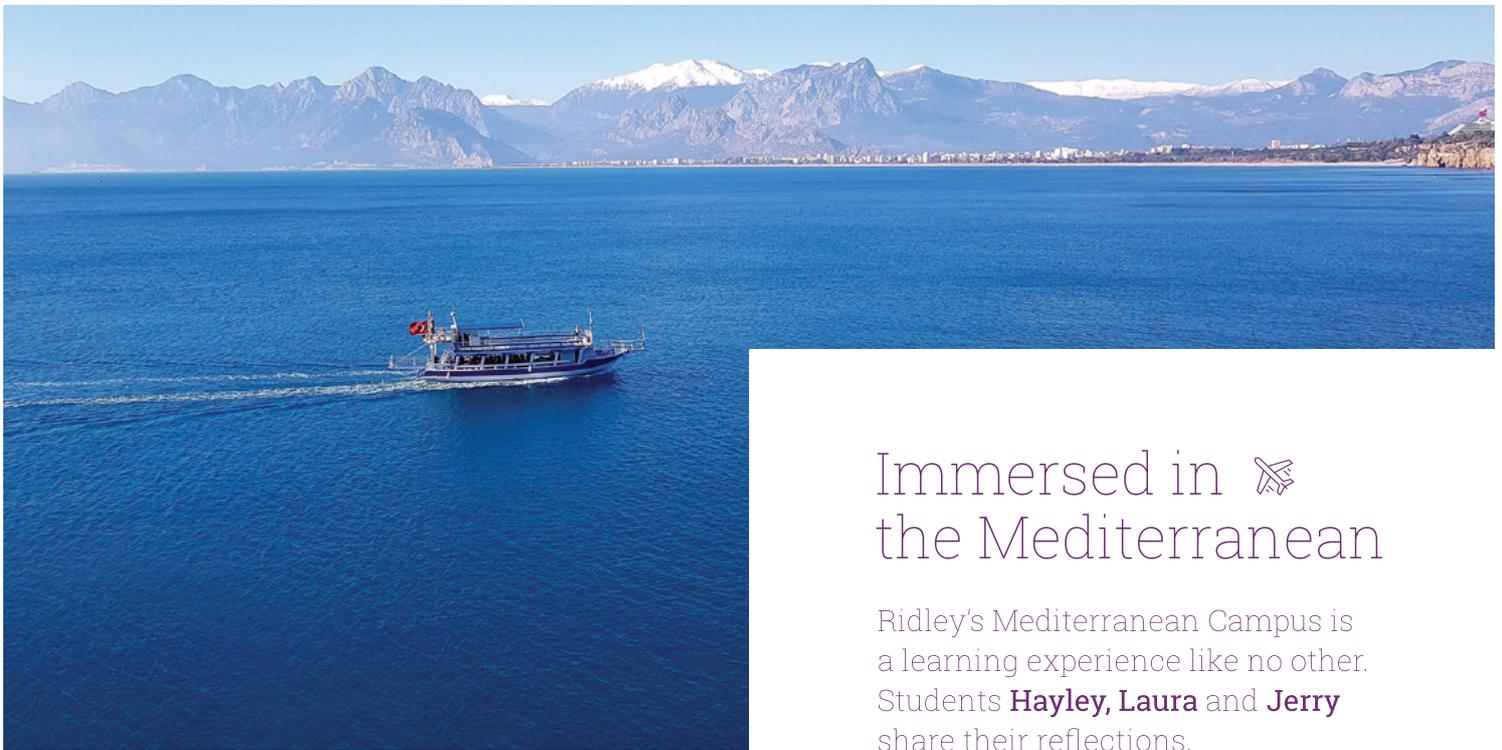


Above: Ephesus, 1989

Accordingly, when we teach the Bible at Ridley we study the texts not only as works of literature and theology, but also as historical records of events that took place in the ancient Near East and Mediterranean world.

We also offer study and supporter tours to the lands and key sites where those events took place. Such tours offer unsurpassed windows into, and first-hand experience of, the Bible as history. This *Ridley Report* takes a look at what it's like to study with Ridley abroad.

—  
Brian Rosner, Principal



Above: Antalya / Below: Heirapolis

## Immersed in ✈️ the Mediterranean

Ridley's Mediterranean Campus is a learning experience like no other. Students **Hayley, Laura** and **Jerry** share their reflections.

### MEDITERRANEAN CAMPUS ANTALYA, TURKEY

This summer, fourteen Ridley students took the opportunity to study the Book of Revelation amidst the ruins of the Seven Churches to whom it was written, to investigate Islam as the call to prayer rang out right next door, to follow in the footsteps of Jesus through Israel, and to gain new insights about the world of the Bible as they visited ancient sites.

'The trip was based in Antalya, Turkey, thus enabling us to experience community with one another and the local church in ways not possible when continually on the move,' say Ridley students Laura and Jerry. 'This meant that we felt more engaged and involved, and less like passing tourists.'

On campus, classes were held in the mornings with Mark Wilson, followed by either free-time, or a field trip in the afternoons. 'Our classes drew on a variety of disciplines, notably New Testament studies, archaeology, and church history, but also with a continual missiological and practical theology bent,' say Laura and Jerry. 'Moreover, when we went out to experience and explore biblical and historical sites, we always had the opportunity to reflect

on them afterwards in class, which greatly enhanced and cemented our understanding'.

To immerse themselves in the local culture and landscape, students also took the chance to explore Antalya. 'Nestled on the Mediterranean Sea, this mountainous region is spectacular', says Hayley. 'The mild winter temperatures with plenty of sun and clear skies provided ideal conditions to view the distant snow-capped mountains, to walk along roads built in the Roman period, and to take boat trips to see waterfalls that spill into the Mediterranean.' Laura and Jerry were also excited to be part of the local culture. 'We got to learn from and enjoy many various elements of the local the culture – including the food!'

'Since our time at Antalya included weekends, it was a pleasure to attend a local church with an English-speaking congregation,' says Hayley. 'I was encouraged by how unifying the Christian faith is. You can travel half way across the world and have such a bond with those who, despite living in a different context and culture, are following Jesus as well.' Laura and Jerry also found this enriching. 'We grew in our global

vision of God's work in the world by enjoying fellowship and worship with local Christians, seeing what it means to be a follower of Christ in an environment very different from our own.'

'I wouldn't say that I have a good imagination,' says Hayley. 'My imaginative struggles were a major reason why I decided to take time this summer to head over to Ridley's Mediterranean campus and also to do the Israel tour. As a result of the trip the physical, cultural, and historical world of the Bible has really begun to take shape in my mind. I experienced the vastness of the desert in which David hid from Saul, and the change from desert to lush greenery when water abounds. I realised just how big the Temple Mount is in Jerusalem, so big that it dominates the city's landscape. I felt the wind blowing across my face as we sailed across the Sea of Galilee. And I became aware of the pervasiveness of the Greek and Roman gods in the public life of the cities which Paul visited.'

Laura and Jerry found the immersive nature of the Mediterranean campus to be 'one of the most holistic and engaging learning experiences we have ever taken part in.' Hayley agrees, 'Through experiencing the geography, topography, and culture of this world, I am now better equipped to understand many of the settings in which the Bible was written', says Hayley. 'I would encourage anyone who has the chance to take part in this amazing experience to seize the opportunity. It has taught me so much in such a short amount of time that is invaluable to my ministry and to my own faith.'



# Compulsory Tours

**Prue and Neale Taylor** are Ridley supporters and think study tours should be compulsory after experiencing four tours with Ridley.

## SUPPORTER TOURS

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Neale and I have always wanted to go and see first-hand the places featured in the Bible and in church history, and what better way to do this than on a Ridley tour – or four! Seeing the sites where Jesus walked and taught, Paul lived and preached, and Abraham walked, stimulated further learning and gave me greater understanding of Bible passages. Visiting such places as Jerusalem, Galilee and Bethlehem reinforced the reality of Jesus' time on earth.

As Ridley supporters, we knew about Ridley tours and were encouraged by our friends Denise and David Clarke to sign up. In fact we understood from them that Ridley tours were almost compulsory! Now we share their view and would encourage anyone to sign up.

Mission Travel expertly organise and plan the tours in conjunction with the Ridley tour leaders. They are able to accommodate individual travel needs of participants, both before and after tours. Accommodation was in three or four star hotels and breakfast and dinner were often included. Lindsay Wilson and Paul Barker, our tour guides for the first three biblical lands tours, led us in prayer and readings associated with each place we visited, kept us in order, and shared their knowledge with us, as did Richard Trist and Rhys Bezzant on our Reformation tour last year. Booklets were given to tour participants outlining dates, information on places visited, and in the case of our Bible lands tours, biblical references to look up and study.

As a librarian, I found this an excellent feature of the tours!

As well as our Ridley leaders, each tour had a local tour guide and bus driver. Hannaniah Pinto, our guide for two of our Bible lands tours seemed so knowledgeable that I became convinced he could join the Ridley Faculty! Not only did he share his knowledge of each area but he went out of his way to make sure we all felt included. Our Austrian guide Carl on the Reformation Tour was a living history book and seemed to know everything about foreign policy and the European Union as well as the towns and places we visited in Germany and Switzerland.



...the library at Ephesus,  
the road Paul walked  
at Corinth...

Highlights of our Bible lands tours included the library at Ephesus, the road Paul walked at Corinth, and the area of Colossae, a big find with remnants of pottery that I found quite moving. In Jerusalem, the Wall, remnants of the Temple, the Via Dolorosa and walking Hezekiah's tunnel were special. Swimming in the Sea of Galilee at sunrise, visiting Bethlehem Bible College and experiencing Masada where in AD 70, nine hundred Jews held out for months



Prue Taylor climbing up to the Anabaptist cave in Switzerland

against the Romans (only seven survived), were other important experiences for us.

Our Reformation tour showed us that Luther was a person in the right place at the right time. John Wycliffe and Jan Hus who predated Martin Luther, had some similar ideas to him. But Luther was able to more effectively disseminate information as a result of the invention of the printing press. He was also protected by his personal prince. A highlight of this tour was our church service in the Anabaptist cave near Zurich.

Ridley tours help bring the Bible to life. The Reformation Tour, sharpened our knowledge of the history of Christianity. We made some great friends and shared new experiences with old friends. Above all, it enhanced our relationship with Jesus. We would highly recommend signing up - in fact we would definitely say that Ridley tours are compulsory!

# Discover the land of the Bible

Ridley Israel Study Tour / 25 Nov – 11 Dec 2018



Download the  
tour brochure:

[ridley.edu.au/israel](http://ridley.edu.au/israel)