

DAY EIGHT: JESUS RETURNS TO JERUSALEM, PART 1

Today we begin our exploration of the Old City of Jerusalem. It will help you understand our day more fully if you pause here and read the page on the Old City of Jerusalem. You will find it [here](#).

Key Thought for Day Eight

Jesus has now finished an extended time of ministry in Galilee. It has been a ministry proclamation, teaching, and powerful signs and wonders. By one count 32 of the 37 miracles recorded in the gospels. Only 4 were done in the region of Jerusalem. Clearly, his ministry in Jerusalem is going to be very different from the time in Galilee.

For some time now Jesus had been teaching that he would be put to death in Jerusalem, and now he was actually leading all them toward that frightening event. If Galilee was a ministry of power, Jerusalem will be a ministry of suffering.

Mark 10 :32 gives us insight into that final trip to Jerusalem. ‘They were now on the way up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. The disciples were filled with awe, and the people following behind were overwhelmed with fear.’

Jerusalem today, as then, is an ethnically, religiously, and politically diverse city always in tension among groups and at risk of protests, demonstrations, riots and even violence. Fortunately, the Israeli police and military keep very close guard over the city. Just as the Roman military kept tight control everywhere.

As you experience this diversity, consider that many of the same tensions were present in Jesus’s time. The city was also diverse with gentiles, Jews, Greeks, and others. Religious and political tensions could boil out into trouble at any time.

Zealots moved secretly plotting overthrow of the Romans.

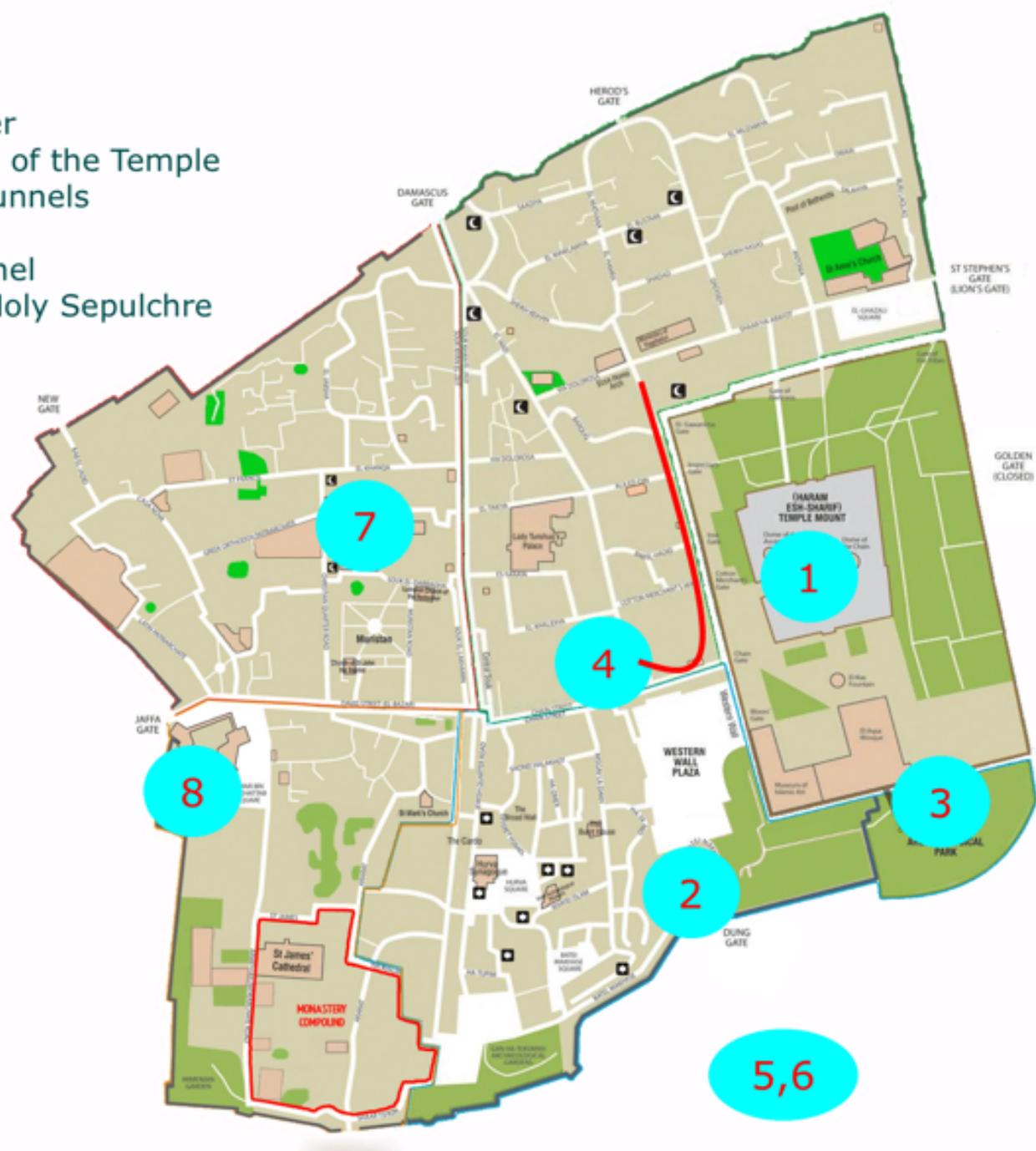
At the centre of the city then, as now, was the enormous temple area. Pilgrims would stream in from around the country to worship, sacrifice, and gawk. Money changers had a keen eye for separating visitors from their cash. Perhaps this sounds like today, too! The crowds could be volatile, erupting in praise and joy one moment and with murderous rage in another.

Jesus steps into the middle of all of this tense situation and quickly becomes both the centre action and the flash point that risks full out riot and perhaps even war. His purpose, however, is not war but redemption.

Enjoy Jerusalem old and new today. Drink it in. A city of many tensions, divisions, and possibilities.

Our journey map for today is marked with numbered blue circles on the Old City map below.

1. Temple Mount
2. Davidson Center
3. Southern Steps of the Temple
4. Western Wall Tunnels
5. City of David
6. Hezekiah's Tunnel
7. Church of the Holy Sepulchre
8. Tower of David



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1. The Temple Mount

Our first visit will be to the Temple Mount, the site of the great temple constructed by King Herod.

This visit is subject to security conditions which can change at any time. If there is a concern, Israeli authorities can close or limit access to the Temple Mount. This can happen if there are demonstrations or disturbances. Pray that we can go up today. If the Mount is open it means that the authorities have judged that it is safe and peaceful.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR VISITING THE TEMPLE MOUNT

We will be visiting a holy site this morning when we go onto the Temple Mount. Modest dress is required, especially for women. Shoulders should be covered and arms to the elbows. No shorts above the knee. Pants or jeans are fine. Nothing tight or transparent. No bare midriffs. Men are expected to cover their heads at the Western Wall. Women are not usually required to cover their heads but it may be wise to have something you can use if needed.

*Although Israel supervises security for the Mount, its administration and access is determined by the Muslim authorities. We will have to pass through an extra layer of security to ascend the mount. **You must not bring Bibles, prayer books, religious literature or recording devices, and no musical instruments of any kind.***

Backpacks and purses may be searched so before you go check to make sure you don't have any of these things with you. Cameras are OK, and if you want to record sound you may be able to use your camera to do so but be discrete.

Non-Muslims are not allowed into the Al Aqsa Mosque or into the Dome of the Rock. If you approach the doors of either of these places you will be (usually politely) refused entrance.

There will likely be a number of Muslim groups meeting around the area for study and prayer. You may hear them chanting "Allahu Akbar," which means "God is Great." It can be an unsettling experience for some.

Although these warnings may sound severe, in my experience I have never felt at risk or in danger on the Temple Mount. Security personnel are everywhere present. As anywhere in a foreign city it is good to be alert. respectful. Mainly, simply be respectful. This is a Muslim place of prayer and worship. As tourists we are guests in their "Noble Sanctuary."



The Jews call it the Temple Mount, recognizing that it is the site of the Temple of Solomon, Ezra, and the Great Temple of Herod. Muslims, who today administer the site, call it the Noble Sanctuary.

The Temple Mount in the Time of Jesus

In the time of Jesus, the Temple Mount was the massive construction of King Herod the Great. Herod's Temple was a vast construction. Massive stones were used to create an enormous retaining wall that supported the enormous site. In the photo below of the Jerusalem model at the Israel Museum you can see the overwhelming size of the Temple Mount compared to the rest of the city.

Outdoor model of ancient Jerusalem at the Israel Museum

Below is an architectural drawing that shows many of the most important features. On the right toward the back you will see wide steps going up to doors into the Temple. Through these doors tunnels and stairs led up to the main level. These are the Southern Steps, and they were the main entrances used by visitors to the Temple. Down the hill from these steps were areas for bathing and purification.

At the corner on the right front is a large arched stairway that could be used by priests and others. This is called Robinson's Arch. The Roman destruction of the Temple in 70 AD destroyed this archway, but when we visit the Davidson Centre archeological park, you will see the remains of the arch extruding from top of the wall.

Architectural drawing of Herod's Temple

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The photo below shows the Southern Steps from the Jerusalem model.

The outdoor model close up of the southern steps

The Temple could also be accessed from the Mount of Olives with a bridge over the Kidron Valley.

Drawing of how the Temple may have appeared in the time of Jesus

Diagram of the Temple in Jesus's Time

The diagram below will help you understand the Temple in the time of Jesus. You can view the entire diagram larger by clicking below, but I'll divide it into parts for discussion.

Key features of the Temple Mount

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More key features of the Temple Mount

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- 1.** Numbers 1 and 4 are together called the Hulda Gates. Number 1 “Triple Gate” or Beautiful Gate” that Jesus would have used to enter the Temple.
- 2.** The Hulda and Triple Gates went through tunnels and up stairs into the temple court inside of the Soreg. These gates allowed Jewish visitors direct access into the main court.
- 3.** The Soreg (Hebrew for “fence”) marked the boundary beyond which gentiles were not allowed.
- 4.** Another gate provided for exiting the Temple. A Jew who wanted to avoid impure contact with gentiles, therefore, could go in and out using these “Hulda Gates.” The gates are walled up today, but we will see the outlines.
- 5.** These are the Southern Steps that we will visit. A very large number of people could gather and meet on the Southern Steps.
- 6.** The Royal Basilica or Stoa ran along the southern edge. This is where money changers would have been located.
- 7.** A trumpet was blown from this location to announce the start of Sabbath. A large stone embedded in the wall was inscribed “To the place of the blowing of the trumpet.”

This stone was thrown down to the street below by the Romans in 70 AD. It still lies where it fell and where we will visit it.

8. As we stand under this place you will be able to look up and see the remains of Robinson's Arch projecting from the wall.

More key features of the Temple Mount

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9. This area is the Western Wall (Kotel) that visitors see today.

10. These are the inner courts of the Temple where only priests were permitted.

11. When we visit the Western Wall Tunnels today we will see this large stone, 400 tons, which has been trimmed and cut neatly into place. How was this done?

12. These are the stairs where a murderous mob tried to kill the Apostle Paul.

Then the commander arrested him and ordered him bound with two chains. He asked the crowd who he was and what he had done. Some shouted one thing and some another. Since he couldn't find out the truth in all the uproar and confusion, he ordered that Paul be taken to the fortress. As Paul reached the stairs, the mob grew so violent the soldiers had to lift him to their shoulders to protect him. And the crowd followed behind, shouting, 'Kill him, kill him!'" (Acts 21:33-35)

The Temple of God Constructed by Herod the Great

The view we have today of the Temple Mount is impressive. Consider for a moment that what we are seeing is merely the foundation for the Temple itself. If the foundation is grand, imagine what the Temple must have been like!

Drawing of Herod's Temple

[Click to View Full Size](#)

The Temple Mount Today

For more information on the Temple Mount today see the [page on the Old City of](#)

Jerusalem. I'll add a few brief comments here.

The “Noble Sanctuary” as the Muslims call it is a vast garden-like area with walk ways and trees. A very large central plaza has the Golden Dome of the Rock in the centre and the Al Aqsa Mosque at the south end.

Trees and Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount

There are many olive trees planted around the grounds.

Passages to Study for Today

The Gospels provide vivid descriptions of the critical moment in the ministry of Jesus when He wrapped up His ministry in Galilee and turned toward Jerusalem to fulfill the purpose for which He came.

- Peter's confession of Jesus's identity and Jesus's response. Matthew 16:13-28.
- Great crowds follow Jesus toward Jerusalem but the disciples dread the journey. Luke 14:25-35.

Day Seven

Day Eight, Part 2