

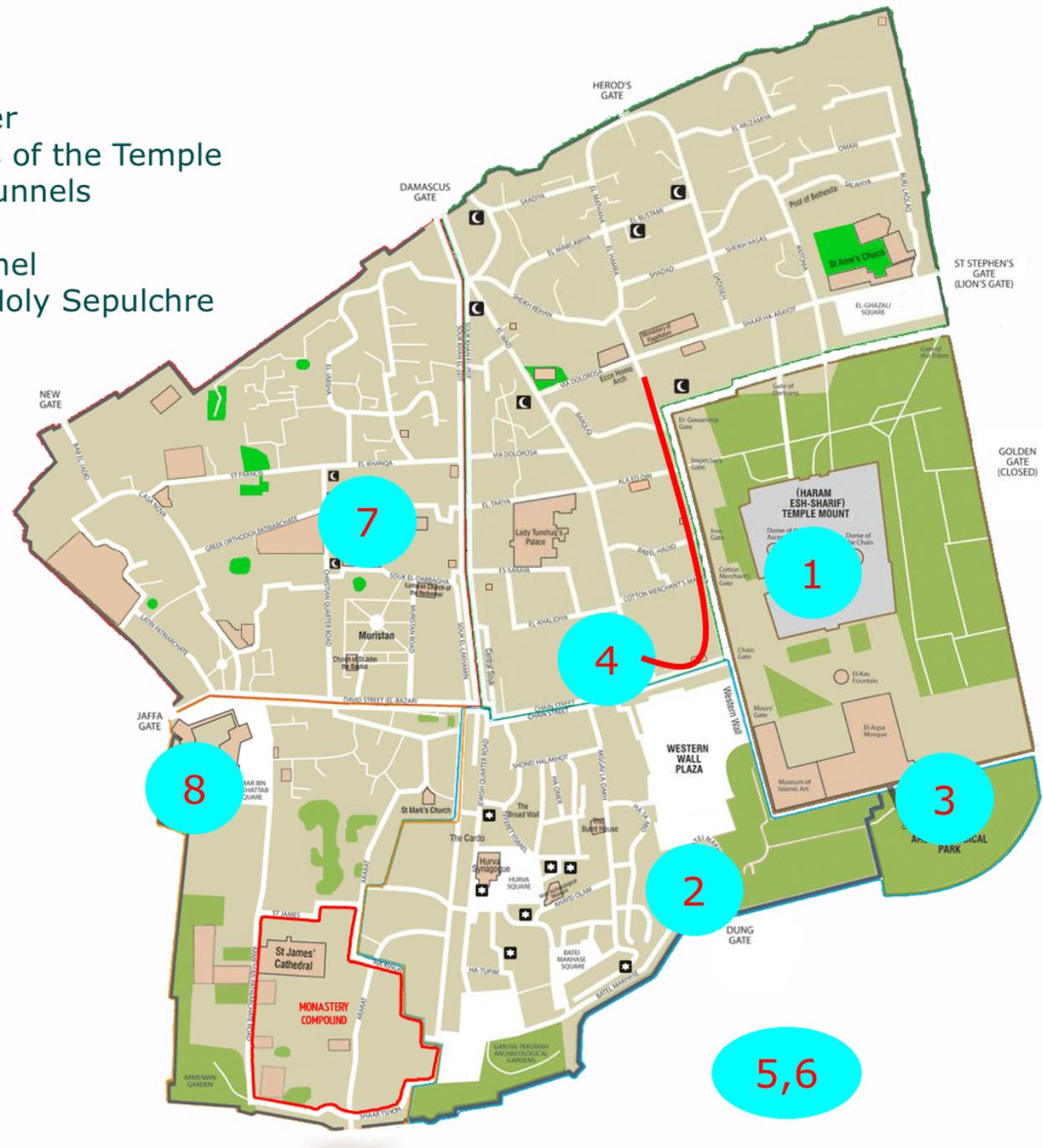
GOING DEEPER

ACTS Israel Tour 2018

DAY EIGHT: JESUS RETURNS TO JERUSALEM, PART 2

Our journey for day eight continues. Hopefully we will have been able to visit the Temple Mount. Next we will move on the Davidson Center (2) and the Southern Steps of the Temple (3) and follow up with visits to the Western Wall Tunnels (4) and the City of David (5) and Hezekiah's Tunnel. In the evening we will visit the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Tower of David.

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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The Davidson Center

From the Temple Mount we will proceed to the Davidson Center where we will enter the Jerusalem Archeological Park.

Entrance to the Davidson Center and Park at Jerusalem

At the entrance there is some excellent information about the historical timeline of Jerusalem, and then we will move into the archeological site itself. One of the first stops will be in the area of Robinson's Arch.

Robinson's Arch can be seen midway up on the wall

Below the arch can be seen the massive stones hurled from the top as the Romans destroyed the temple.

Giant stones thrown down from the Temple by the Romans in 70 AD

We will walk onto the ancient street that ran under the arch, a place Jesus no doubt walked, too.

Ancient Roman street along the Western Wall of the Temple Mount

Here we will see the stone that marked the place of blowing the trumpet.

The Southern Steps of the Temple

A short walk farther are the Southern Steps to the Temple.

The southern steps of the Temple

It has been said that if there is any place in Israel where you can know for sure that Jesus walked, this is it. The ancient steps lead up the gates into the Temple. The gates

are now walled up, but the outlines can still be seen in the walls.

There are many events in the New Testament that occurred here. Perhaps the first was when Mary and Joseph walked up these steps with their eight-day old baby to dedicate him to the Lord.

Eight days later, when the baby was circumcised, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel even before he was conceived. Then it was time for their purification offering, as required by the law of Moses after the birth of a child; so his parents took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.

Often on these steps I have tried to imagine the parade of proud parents, the wealthy and prosperous of Jerusalem, in their fine dress and accompanied by family members and priests climbing these steps with their new borns.

Mary and Joseph, however, came carrying the son of God but able to afford only two young birds, the provision in the law for the poor.

So they offered the sacrifice required in the law of the Lord— ‘either a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.’ (Luke 2:24)

This is an example of the grace and mercy of God even in the law, a provision for the poor to make an acceptable offering which tells us as clearly as anything possibly could that it is not the value of the offering that matters but the commitment and love for God with which it is given.

It was also on the Southern Steps that Peter and John healed a lame man.

Peter and John went to the Temple one afternoon to take part in the three o'clock prayer service. As they approached the Temple, a man lame from birth was being carried in. Each day he was put beside the Temple gate, the one called the Beautiful Gate, so he could beg from the people going into the Temple. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for some money. Peter and John looked at him intently, and Peter said, ‘Look at us!’ The lame man looked at them eagerly, expecting some money. But Peter said, ‘I don't have any silver or gold for you. But I'll

give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk!” Then Peter took the lame man by the right hand and helped him up. And as he did, the man’s feet and ankles were instantly healed and strengthened. He jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk! Then, walking, leaping, and praising God, he went into the Temple with them. (Acts 3:1-8).

The Western Wall Tunnels

From the Steps we will take a tour of the Western Wall Tunnels. The tunnels are a modern excavation that has recovered access to the ancient streets along the foundation of the Western Wall of the Temple. We will see many details of the engineering of the Temple.

Inside the Western Wall Tunnels

It may comfort some of to know that we walk upright throughout the tunnels. They are well-ventilated and lit.



Western Wall Tunnels

At one point as you walk through the tunnels you will pass an area where women are praying.

Women pray at the closest point to the Holy of Holies

Jews are forbidden by the Muslim authorities to pray on the Temple Mount. This location in the tunnels, is thought to be the closest spot is thought to be the closest a Jew can come today to the location of the Holy of Holies in the ancient Temple.

The City of David and Hezekiah’s Tunnel

At the City of David we’ll see a fascinating 3-D film about the origins of Jerusalem, David’s capture of the city from the Jebusites, and its development into the capital city of his kingdom.

Right that start fix in your mind that the wall of the Old City that you see are from the 15th century. They are not the same as the walls of ancient Jerusalem and definitely not the walls of the city in the time of David. The model we saw at the Israel Museum shows us where the city was in David's time. To reach the City of David today one exits the Old City through the Dung Gate toward the Valley of Hinnom.

Model of the City of David

At the City of David a guide will show us archeological excavations that are finding evidence of King David's palace from 3,000 years ago.

The most fascinating feature of the City of David is called Hezeiah's Tunnel. When we visited Megiddo we saw the tunnel that was dug to connect the city to its water supply. The main water supply for Jerusalem in ancient times was from the Gihon Spring in the Kidron Valley. The source of water became a major gathering point where people from the city would come together.

For example, when David wanted to ensure that everyone knew Solomon was to be his successor he commanded that an announcement be made at the Gihon Spring.

Then King David ordered, 'Call Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada.' When they came into the king's presence, the king said to them, 'Take Solomon and my officials down to Gihon Spring. Solomon is to ride on my own mule. There Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet are to anoint him king over Israel. Blow the ram's horn and shout, 'Long live King Solomon!' Then escort him back here, and he will sit on my throne. He will succeed me as king, for I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and Judah.' (1 Kings 1:32-35)

However, the Gihon Spring was low in the Kidron Valley and vulnerable to attack. It had to be defended and the flow of its water kept inside the city. From the earliest days of occupation, defenders of the site began to build fortifications and tunnels to protect the water supply supply. King Hezekiah built the most famous of these tunnels and the one through which Gihon water flows today.

Hezekiah was very wealthy and highly honored. He built special treasury buildings for

his silver, gold, precious stones, and spices, and for his shields and other valuable items. He also constructed many storehouses for his grain, new wine, and olive oil; and he made many stalls for his cattle and pens for his flocks of sheep and goats. He built many towns and acquired vast flocks and herds, for God had given him great wealth. **He blocked up the upper spring of Gihon and brought the water down through a tunnel to the west side of the City of David.** And so he succeeded in everything he did. (1 Kings 32:27-30)

Today, Hezekiah's Tunnel still exists, and the waters of the Gihon Spring still flow through it into the Pool of Siloam.

The route of Hezekiah's tunnel

At the City of David, we will have an opportunity to walk through Hezekiah's Tunnel. Later in the fall the water flow can be quite high and vigorous and the tunnel is sometimes closed to visitors for safety reasons. During the season we visit, the water in the tunnel is likely to be no more than about knee high or perhaps a bit higher. It can depend on rains. The water is cold but not freezing.

Here is a picture my son Joshua in Hezekiah's Tunnel.

My son Joshua in Hezekiah's tunnel

If you want to join the walk through Hezekiah's Tunnel you will need three pieces of essential gear. You can see that Josh has all three. There is no lighting in the tunnel so you must bring a flashlight or headlamp. You'll need some shower shoes for walking through the water. And you need a backpack or bag with some dry socks and shoes for when we emerge into the pool of Siloam.

Exiting Hezekiah's Tunnel at the Pool of Siloam



Gihon Spring and Tunnels

There are also dry tunnels for those who do not want to go into the water, and if tunnels are not your thing, we'll take care of that, too.

To Our Hotel to Rest

These adventures have made it a full day. We'll return to our hotel to rest and eat. Tonight we will visit the Old City together and attend an amazing multi-media concert.

Church of the Holy Sepulchre

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre (CHS), in the heart of the Christian Quarter of the Old City, is the site most likely to be where Jesus was crucified and buried. Later will visit the Garden Tomb, which is felt by some to be an alternate location. The crowds at CHS, as you might guess, can be large. For this reason we are hoping to schedule our visit in the early evening when crowds are less.

Entrance to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre

The entrance to CHS seems quite plain, but inside CHS is an enormous structure spread over a large area. Inside are multiple passages, chapels, and altars as you can see in the diagram below. Inside CHS is somewhat dark and cavernous, and the layout can be confusing for visitors. Our guide will keep us on track.

The red line in the diagram below is only an illustration. It shows the path from the entrance, up to the hill of Golgotha, and then back over to the location of Jesus's burial.

Floor plan of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre



[Church of the Holy Sepulchre](#)

At the "Learn More" above you can find more details about the church. Let's consider just a few here.

One reason visitors to CHS can find it confusing is the expectation of seeing a hill where the cross stood and a cave for the tomb of Jesus. Those features have long since been obscured by the structure of the church. Over the centuries guardians of the site

progressively cut away all the surrounding terrain, leaving in place only the spots that they regarded as most holy: the tomb and the location of Calvary. As a result the site bears no resemblance to what it would have looked like originally. In the diagram below, everything you see in tan colour is gone. The hill and the cave were considered unnecessary. Only small areas of rock thought to be touched by Christ have been retained.

Diagram of how the hillside was cut away at Holy Sepulchre

From a modern perspective this has destroyed the historical value and beauty of the site. However, in ancient times construction of a church where priests could conduct worship was the highest value. The original hills were in the way and so they were removed.

As you enter the church you will see directly in front of you a large flat stone. This is held to be the place where Jesus's body was prepared for burial. The location could perhaps be authentic, but the large stone is modern. It was placed there during a reconstruction in 1810.

The Stone of Preparation

From the location of the anointing stone, if you can look up and to the right, you will see the arched entrance to the Chapel of Calvary and the location of Golgotha.

View across the Stone of Preparation to the Chapel of Calvary

A narrow staircase leads up to the chapel. The stairs are worn and there is no sign.

Stairs up to the Chapel of Calvary

In the photography below the Rock of Golgotha can be seen on either side of the altar. Pilgrims kept trying to chip away pieces to carry home, and so it was protected

Inside the Chapel of Calvary

The site of Jesus burial is actually a small church called the Edicule underneath the dome of the larger church. Inside this tiny church is the stone said to be where the body of Jesus was laid. That stone, however, is covered with a marble slab to protect it and cannot be seen by visitors. The chamber inside is quite tiny. Only two or perhaps three people can be inside at one time. One of the priests who care for the church sits inside to hurry pilgrims in out an quickly.

The Edicule with the tomb of Jesus inside

Off to the side of the rotunda with the Edicule is a small chapel that will give you a much more authentic view of first century tombs and perhaps a much more accurate view of the kind of location where Jesus was buried.

First century tombs in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre

Vistors have different reactions to visiting the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Some, like myself, find the trappings of the church, the altars, the incense burners, and the crowds distracting. For others, however, the church evokes a sense of closeness to Christ that is meaningful. You can judge for yourself when we visit.

Tower of David Night Spectacular

After our visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre we will walk on to the Tower of David. The Tower of David is an ancient fortress near the Jaffa Gate to the Old City. There have a been fortifications on this site since Old Testament times. The walls and tower you see today was constructed for the most part in the early 1300s. The tower of David contains a museum with many artifacts from the history of Jerusalem.

The Tower of David



Tower of David

We will visit the Tower of David in the evening for its amazing multi-media concert called the “Night Spectacular.” As we sit inside the courtyard of the tower an array of projectors turn the walls into an immersive display teaching the history of Israel from

ancient times.

The two images below will give you a small and limited idea of how the fortress walls are used to paint scenes from history. In addition to the visuals, there is amazing surround sound music. You'll enjoy the show.

Two views of the Tower of David Night Spectacular

The Night Spectacular is an outdoor event so pray for good weather. The show moves from The Creation to the eternal city of Jerusalem, showing Jerusalem as the inner heart and the center of the world.

The history of Jerusalem is an amazing record. a city that had been fought over sixteen times in its history. During its long history, Jerusalem has been destroyed twice, besieged 23 times, attacked 52 times, and captured and recaptured 44 times.

The Night Spectacular story moves through 20 of these phases of Jerusalem's history.

- King David plays music on the roof tops of the city
- The Queen of Sheba visits King Solomon's palace.
- The City of Jerusalem is destroyed
- The Jews go into exile in Babylon
- By the rivers of Babylon they live and raise families
- The Jews return to Zion
- The Temple is rebuilt
- The 2nd Temple is destroyed
- Rome comes to Jerusalem and the era of Aelia Capitolina
- Early Christianity takes root
- Jerusalem becomes a city of churches and monks
- Muhammed takes a night journey to meet Allah
- The Crusaders arrive
- Jerusalem becomes a Mameluk City
- Suleiman the Magnificent arrives at the gates of Jerusalem

- Jerusalem becomes and Ottoman City
- The City opens to the world
- Modern times
- Jerusalem as the capital of Israel
- “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem”

Passages to Study for Today

Read some passages of events that likely occurred on the Southern Steps of the Temple.

- The dedication of Jesus. Let your mind and heart reflect on Mary and Joseph with their new son climbing the steps to present Jesus to the the Lord. They were far from home, probably alone, and had only the gift of the poor to present for sacrifice but God provided Simeon and Anna to welcome them. Luke 2:22-40.
- Peter and John heal a lame man. This happened on the Southern Steps near the place where we visit today. Acts 3:1-11.
- Peter’s speech in Solomon’s portico and the arrest by the Temple authorities. Acts 3:11-4:4.

Day Eight Part 1

Day Nine