

Date: May 22, 2022
To: [REDACTED]
From: Ray Eckman
Subject: Jerusalem Site Synthesis

As requested, here is a write-up based on research done about significant sites around and in Jerusalem. Per your request, the descriptions are concise, conversational, and informational. I imagine they sound something like a tour guide's script would. I was sure to fact-check the various claims made in the descriptions with at least two sources.

I enjoyed getting these sites together for the project and I hope they meet and exceed your expectations. If you have any further needs for tour guide research in the future, please feel free to reach out — I'd love to make the time for these projects.

Regards,
Ray Eckman

Gihon Spring

Sometimes called *Fountain of the Virgin* or *Saint Mary's Pool*, the spring served as a major water source in the region, making settlement in ancient Jerusalem and its surrounds possible. Its water was used primarily for drinking but also found use as irrigation water in gardens.

The spring flows intermittently and reportedly flowed 3 to 5 times daily in the winter, twice daily in the summer, and once daily in the autumn. In modern times, the spring flows less than it once did.

Because of its nature as an intermittent spring, the *Pool of Siloam* was constructed near the spring to act as a water catch when the spring was not flowing.

Damascus Gate

One of the main gates of the Old City of Jerusalem, the Damascus Gate is located on the northwest side of the city and connects to highways that led in ancient times to Nablus or Shechem and then on to Syria's capital, Damascus.

The gate in its current form was built in 1537 AD during the rule of Suleiman the Magnificent. Remains of the earlier gate can still be seen, harkening back to the second century AD when the Roman Emperor Hadrian visited the region. A statue to him was erected atop a Roman victory column which was placed in the square inside the gate.

The modern Arabic name of the gate is *Bab al-Amud*, meaning "gate of the column," referencing the victory column that rested for so long in its square.

Monastery of the Cross

Stories say that this Eastern Orthodox monastery was built on the burial spot of Adam's head from which grew the tree that was used in constructing the Cross of Jesus Christ.

Inside the fortifications of the monastery, visitors can find a church, living quarters, a museum, and a gift shop. The site houses many ancient murals and a library with many unique Georgian manuscripts. In a side chapel, a hole in the ground is maintained where tradition states the tree from which the Cross of Jesus Christ was fashioned once stood.

Yad Vashem - Israel's Major Holocaust Memorial

Established in 1953, Yad Vashem is Israel's official memorial to the victims of the Holocaust. In Hebrew, the name means literally "a memorial and a name." It is dedicated to preserving the memory of the Jews who were murdered, honoring the Jews who fought against their Nazi oppressors, recognizing the aid of selfless gentiles, and researching the Holocaust in depth to better understand how humanity can avoid such events in the future.

The memorial is a complex contained in nearly 45 acres of land with some buildings dedicated to research and scientific study and others acting as memorials and museums to cater to the public at large.

Church of Saint Peter Gallicantu

A Roman Catholic church located on the eastern slope of Mount Zion. It takes its name from a Latin word meaning "cock's crow," in reference to Peter's three denials of Christ following Christ's seizure by Roman officials.

The church is located on what is thought to have been the site of the palace of the High Priest Caiaphus. A Byzantine shrine dedicated to Peter's repentance was erected on the same spot in 457 AD but was later destroyed by the Fatimid Calliphate in 1010. Crusaders rebuilt the site in 1102 and gave it its present name. It fell into disrepair after the fall of Jerusalem and was ultimately rebuilt to its current state in 1931.

Solomon's Stables

Also called the *El-Marwani Mosque* or the *El-Marwani Prayer Hall*, this site is an underground vaulted space that rests under the southeast corner of the Temple Mount. It is now used as a Muslim prayer hall.

It is believed to have been built under the direction of King Herod as part of his initiative to extend the platform of the Temple Mount southward. The upper platform was built on a substructure of vaulted arches and supported by 88 pillars resting on massive blocks. Much of the original interior survives in the areas not renovated for use by the mosque.

Crusaders used the underground portion of the platform to house their horses, bringing about the name “Solomon’s Stables” as the Temple of Solomon first existed on the site they now used for their stables.

Via Dolorosa

Latin for “Sorrowful Way” and often translated as “Way of Suffering,” the Via Dolorosa represents the path Jesus Christ would have been taken on the way to his crucifixion at the hands of Roman soldiers. Extending from the *Antonia Fortress* to the *Church of the Holy Sepulchre*, this popular place of Christian Pilgrimage comprises roughly 2,000 feet. Along its path, adherents make stops at 9 Stations of the Cross (a series of depictions of Jesus on the day of his crucifixion), with an additional 5 stations existing inside the *Church of the Holy Sepulchre*.

Church of Dormition

A Catholic abbey belonging to the Benedictine Order, this site is located on Mount Zion and is said to mark the spot where Mary, the mother of Jesus, died or--as the name suggests in Latin--went to sleep and never woke again.

Some branches of the Christian faith believe that Mary was taken up to heaven in her sleep, an event referred to as The Assumption of Mary. Others believe that her death was as peaceful as sleeping and brooked no suffering.

The current build of the abbey was completed in 1910. It contains a crypt commemorating the Dormition of Mary.

Western Wall Tunnel

The open-air portion the Western Wall is approximately 200 feet long. Its original length was held at roughly 1600 feet, the majority of which is now underground due to years of construction and foreign occupation. The Western Wall Tunnel allows access to this remaining portion of the wall.

Last Supper Room

Also called “The Cenacle” (from the Latin for “dining room”) or the Upper Room, this site is a room in Mount Zion just outside the old city walls of Jerusalem. Traditionally thought to be the place of the Last Supper of Jesus Christ with his Apostles, this site is considered one of the holiest in Christianity.

It is believed that this room continued to be used by the Apostles after Christ’s death and that it was also the location where the Holy Spirit alighted on them on the Day of Pentecost.

Today, it is administered by Jewish authorities who have taken to calling it *David’s Tomb*.