

Due to the large number of sites in Jerusalem, we will break the city into several "stops" in our virtual journey. We will do an overlook, and then look at "Old Testament Jerusalem," "New Testament Jerusalem" and "Modern Jerusalem."

ENTERING JERUSALEM

In my opinion, the most impressive entrance into Jerusalem is from the east on Israel's Highway 1. The route from the eastern entrance rises from the Dead Sea to the Judean mountains, providing a magnificent view of the landscape. As you travel along this route, you will see the eastern suburbs and ancient villages, which offer a glimpse into the rich history of the region. The eastern entrance offers a unique and unforgettable experience that truly captures the essence of Jerusalem and its surroundings. The western approach through Highway 1, starting from Tel Aviv, also offers its unique landscapes, including the ascent from the coastal plain into the Judean mountains.

One of the most unforgettable experiences a person can have is exiting the main tunnel on Highway 1 (eastern entrance) that goes through the mountain and coming out just north of Temple Mount. This moment is nothing short of dramatic and awe-inspiring. As you emerge from the tunnel, your eyes are met with a breathtaking view that is hard to beat. On the left side of the entrance, you can see a panoramic view of the city that is truly remarkable. The view is even more stunning if you are lucky enough to have a beautiful song like "The Holy City" playing in the background. It's a moment that you will cherish for years to come.

MOUNT SCOPUS OVERLOOK

If you're looking for a panoramic view of Jerusalem, then the Mount Scopus overlook should not be missed. From here, you can take in the stunning vistas of the Old City, the Temple Mount, and the surrounding hills. Mount Scopus has a rich history that dates back to ancient times, including being the site of a major battle during the Maccabean revolt.

When you visit the Mount Scopus overlook, be sure to take your time and enjoy the view. Take pictures and have your guide point out the major points of interest in the world's most famous city. The overlook is a perfect spot to start your tour of Jerusalem, as it provides a bird's eye view of the city and its surroundings. Don't underestimate the importance of this spot, as it offers a unique perspective that will stay with you long after you leave Jerusalem.

Today, Mount Scopus is home to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Hadassah Medical Center. It is also significant to modern Israel as it was the site of a major battle during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. After the war, Mount Scopus was cut off from the rest of Jerusalem, and the university had to operate in makeshift buildings until the area was reunified in 1967. Today, the university and medical center are thriving and have become major institutions in Israel and around the world.

OLD TESTAMENT JERUSALEM

Jerusalem, which is also known as Zion, is mentioned in the Bible for the first time in the book of Genesis. In Genesis 14:18, it is mentioned that Melchizedek, the king of Salem, met with Abraham after Abraham's victory over the kings. Salem is believed to be an early name for Jerusalem. Later, in 2 Samuel 5:6-10, it is mentioned that David captured the city from the Jebusites and made it the capital of his kingdom.

Jerusalem became the unified capital of the Kingdom of Judah after it was captured by David from the Jebusites. The temple was built during the reign of Solomon, and the city became the most prominent city in world affairs at that time. Following Solomon's death, the kingdom divided, and Jerusalem remained the capital of Judah until it was destroyed by the Babylonians in 587 BC.

After 70 years of captivity in Babylon, the Jews returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt their temple. However, sovereignty never fully returned except for a period of about 100 years during the Hasmonean era. At the close of the Old Testament, the Persians were sovereign over Jerusalem, and at the beginning of the New Testament, the Romans ruled over the city, while in between, the Greeks and the Hasmoneans each ruled for a time.

THE CITY OF DAVID

The City of David, located south of Temple Mount and east of the Mount of Olives, is a small section of the Old City of Jerusalem. It is believed to be the original city of Jerusalem captured by King David in the 10th century BC.

The "City of David" section stretches from the southern end of Temple Mount to the Pool of Siloam. It is known for its archaeological excavations that have uncovered many important artifacts and structures, including the remains of the ancient city walls and the palace of King David.

The City of David is a popular tourist destination and is often visited as part of a tour of the Old City of Jerusalem. It is a National Park and best explored with a tour guide to learn its archeological wonders.

While exploring the City of David, you will come across "Warren's Shaft," a vertical shaft that was used to bring water up to the surface. Discovered by British explorer Charles Warren in the 19th century and named after him, it is believed to have provided water to the city's residents during times of siege. At one point, it was suspected that Joab made entrance to the city at the first siege at this spot, but this is not considered to be true.

Hezekiah's Tunnel is an ancient water tunnel that was built during the reign of King Hezekiah in the 8th century BC. The tunnel was built to provide the residents of Jerusalem with a reliable source of water during times of siege. The tunnel runs from the Gihon Spring to the Pool of Siloam, a distance of over 1,640 feet.

The wet section, where water flows through the tunnel, is approximately 1,750 feet long and is mentioned in 2 Chronicles 32:30 as part of King Hezekiah's preparations for the Assyrian siege. The dry section is where visitors can walk through the tunnel and is approximately 575 feet long.

The Gihon Spring is the main source of water for the City of David. It is located on the eastern slope of the city and is mentioned several times in the Bible. The spring was an important source of water for the residents of Jerusalem, and it was heavily fortified during times of war.

Visitors to Jerusalem can explore Warren's Shaft and Hezekiah's Tunnel as part of a tour of the City of David. Walking through Hezekiah's Tunnel is a unique and unforgettable experience, as visitors can walk through the tunnel in the same way that ancient Jerusalemites did thousands of years ago.

The Pool of Siloam is located at the southern end of the City of David and was fed by the waters of the Gihon Spring (it no longer receives the waters of the spring). The word "Siloam" is derived from the Hebrew word "Shiloach," which means "sent" or "flowing." In the New Testament, the pool is mentioned in the Gospel of John, where Jesus heals a blind man by putting mud on his eyes and telling him to wash in the pool.

Visitors to Jerusalem can explore the Pool of Siloam as part of a tour of the City of David. The pool is accessible through both the wet and dry sections of Hezekiah's Tunnel. Since the walk through the City of David was downhill with many steps, tours often meet their driver at the Pool of Siloam to avoid the difficult walk back to the entry point.

THE DAVIDSON CENTER

The Davidson Center is an archaeological museum located just inside the "Dung Gate" and at the southern end of Temple Mount. It is named after William Davidson, a Jewish philanthropist who helped fund the museum's construction. The museum is dedicated to showcasing the archaeological finds from the Temple Mount and the surrounding area, including artifacts from the First and Second Temple periods as well as the Byzantine and Muslim eras. The Davidson Center also has an impressive multimedia presentation that provides visitors with an in-depth look at the history of the site and its importance to Jews and Christians alike.

Be sure to see the remains of the destruction of the Temple in AD 70 located at the southeast end of Herod's "retaining wall" upon which the Temple sat. Look for the stone that once stood atop that was the place where the trumpeter would stand to blow the shofar. Additionally, within the Davidson Center grounds are the southern steps to Herod's Temple, still in existence from the time of Jesus (though the temple above was destroyed). As you stand on these steps, imagine the throngs of Jewish pilgrims coming to the Temple at Passover, Pentecost (Shavuot), and the Feast of Trumpets (Sukkot) during the times of the First and Second Temples.