

While Jerusalem has tremendous Old Testament treasures, it also is the place of many New Testament events, including the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This alone makes it a highlight of any journey to Israel.

### THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

The Mount of Olives is a significant location in both the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament, it is mentioned as the location where King David fled in 2 Samuel 15:30 and where he worshiped in 2 Samuel 15:32. It is also mentioned in Zechariah 14:3-4 as the place where the Lord will stand on the day of judgement.

In the New Testament, the Mount of Olives is mentioned numerous times. It is the location where Jesus often went to pray, as in Luke 21:37 and John 8:1. It is also the location where Jesus gave his Olivet Discourse, where he prophesied about the destruction of the temple (Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21). Finally, it is the location where Jesus ascended into heaven after his resurrection (Acts 1:9-12).

### THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

The Garden of Gethsemane is an important site in Jerusalem, as it was the place where Jesus prayed on the night before his crucifixion. According to the New Testament, Jesus and his disciples went to the garden after their last supper together. While there, Jesus prayed to God, asking that if it was possible, he would be spared the coming ordeal. However, he ultimately submitted to God's will, saying "not as I will, but as you will" (Matthew 26:36-46).

Today, the Garden of Gethsemane is still a popular destination for visitors to Jerusalem. The garden is located at the foot of the Mount of Olives and contains several ancient olive trees, some of which are believed to have been present during Jesus' time. The garden also contains the Church of All Nations, which was built in the early 20th century and is also known as the Basilica of the Agony. The church is named for the fact that it is said to be built on the site where Jesus experienced agony in prayer before his arrest.

It is worth noting that the Garden of Gethsemane is a significant site not only for Christians, but also for Jews and Muslims. In Judaism, the garden is believed to be the location of the tomb of the prophet Zechariah. In Islam, the garden is believed to be the place where the Prophet Muhammad prayed during his Night Journey. This can make the Mt. of Olives area somewhat troubled from time to time, but generally not for tourists, but rather for local residents.

### THE POOL OF BETHESDA

The Pool of Bethesda is mentioned in the New Testament in the Gospel of John, chapter 5. According to the story, the pool was located near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem and was surrounded by five covered colonnades. People who were sick or disabled would come to the pool and wait for an angel to stir the waters. It was believed that the first person to enter the pool after the waters were stirred would be healed.

The word "Bethesda" means "house of mercy" or "house of grace" in Hebrew. It is not mentioned in the Old Testament.

The Temple of Serapis was a religious building constructed in the Roman period near the Pool of Bethesda. It was dedicated to the Egyptian god Serapis, who was worshipped as the god of healing and fertility. The temple was used for ritual practices involving the sick, who would sleep in the courtyard in the hopes of being healed by the god. This is likely the "mystery" behind the strange "healing lottery" that takes place in John 5. It is possibly related to the Temple of Serapis rather than the Pool of Bethesda.

While the current ruins of the temple are post-biblical era, there is a possibility that it dates back to the Greek period of domination in Jerusalem. The temple was likely destroyed during the Jewish revolt against the Romans in 70 AD. Today, the site of the temple is a popular destination for tourists and visitors to Jerusalem, who come to see the remains of the ancient building and learn about its history and significance in the city's past.

### THE VIA DOLOROSA

The Via Dolorosa is the traditional path that Jesus is believed to have taken from the Praetorium to the place of his crucifixion. The path winds through the narrow streets of the Old City and is marked by nine stations of the cross, which are traditionally associated with different moments in Jesus' journey.

The Catholic Church observes the Via Dolorosa through the Stations of the Cross, which are a series of images or sculptures that represent the different events of the journey. These stations are used as a devotional tool, to allow the faithful to meditate on the suffering and sacrifice of Jesus.

Most evangelical groups also walk the Via Dolorosa, but they generally do not stop to observe each station in the way that Catholics do. Instead, they use the path as a way to experience the geography and history of the Holy Land and to reflect on the significance of Jesus' journey.

It is worth noting that the exact route of the Via Dolorosa is not known with certainty, and different traditions have placed it in slightly different locations. However, the path that is currently marked as the Via Dolorosa is widely accepted as the most likely route, and it is a popular destination for visitors to Jerusalem who are interested in retracing Jesus' steps.

#### THE CONVENT ON THE VIA DOLOROSA

The Convent of the Sisters of Zion is a Roman Catholic convent located along the Via Dolorosa. It is believed to have been built (in 1857) on top of the remains of the Antonia Fortress, where Jesus was likely held prior to his trial. The most interesting feature of the convent is the "lithostratum," or "pavement," which is a section of the original Roman road that ran through Jerusalem and is believed to be the spot where Jesus carried his cross.

The lithostratum is made up of large paving stones that have been worn smooth by the passage of time and footsteps of pilgrims. It is located in the basement of the convent and is accessed by a narrow staircase. Visitors can see the stones up close and imagine the weight of the cross that Jesus carried on his way to Golgotha.

Although the authenticity of the lithostratum as the actual site of Jesus' journey is debated, it is still a powerful and moving experience to stand in the same place where Jesus may have walked. The convent is also home to a small museum that contains artifacts from the Roman period, including a section of the original pavement from the Antonia Fortress.

#### THE PLACES OF CRUCIFIXION AND BURIAL

##### THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

Located in the Christian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is one of the most sacred Christian sites in the world. According to traditions dating back to at least the fourth century, it contains the ground where Jesus of Nazareth was crucified, buried, and resurrected.

The impressive building, an architectural amalgamation of centuries of additions, renovations, and repairs, is a powerful testament to its historical and religious significance. The church houses several important religious sites, including the supposed-site of Golgotha, the Stone of Anointing, where Jesus' body is said to have been prepared for burial, and the small chapel which enshrines the Tomb of Christ.

Inside the burial chapel visitors find a slab of stone, venerated as the place where Jesus' body was laid. The line to the actual tomb is most often very long and so most evangelical tours do not take time to go into in the burial chamber itself.

##### GORDON'S CALVARY AND THE GARDEN TOMB

Just outside the city walls of Jerusalem lies an alternative site associated with the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. Known as Gordon's Calvary and the Garden Tomb, this peaceful garden area offers a stark contrast to the bustling Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Gordon's Calvary, or Skull Hill, received its name due to its skull-like appearance, and some propose it as the biblical Golgotha ("Place of the Skull"). Nearby is the Garden Tomb, discovered in the 19th century. This tomb, cut out of solid rock with a weeping chamber on the right side, corresponds with the biblical description of Jesus' tomb. Many Protestants favor this as the actual site of these momentous events.

#### THE REAL PLACE OF THE DEATH, BURIAL, AND RESURRECTION

Determining the actual location of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection is a complex issue, combining archaeological evidence, biblical scholarship, and centuries of tradition.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre's claim is rooted in early Christian tradition and the investigations of Helena, the mother of the Roman Emperor Constantine, who identified the site during her pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the 4th century AD. The church has been a significant Christian pilgrimage destination since its construction.

Gordon's Calvary and the Garden Tomb, on the other hand, were only identified in the 19th century and lack the continuous tradition of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. However, many find that these sites more closely match the biblical descriptions of the crucifixion and burial sites being outside the city walls and near a garden and a quarry.

Archaeologically, neither site provides definitive proof. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is a plausible location, as it was outside the city walls during Jesus' time, but was incorporated into the city by new walls built later. The Garden

Tomb, while visually aligning more with the biblical descriptions, is believed by many archaeologists to be a typical Jewish tomb from the 7th to 8th centuries BC, much older than the time of Jesus.

In conclusion, the question of the 'real' location depends on one's interpretation of history, archaeology, and faith. Both sites provide a profound sense of connection to the biblical narrative and offer unique ways to engage with the pivotal moments they represent in Christian history and devotion.

## THE HOME OF CAIPHUS

The House of Caiaphas is traditionally believed to be the residence of the high priest, Caiaphas, who played a key role in the trial of Jesus Christ according to the New Testament. It is here that Jesus was brought before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, the Jewish governing council, after his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane.

The house is part of a larger complex known as the Church of Saint Peter in Gallicantu, meaning 'cock-crow' in Latin, commemorating Peter's triple denial of Jesus before the rooster crowed twice. The modern structure was rebuilt in 1931, but Christian churches go back to A.D. 437.

Within this remarkable structure, one descends into a chilling reminder of the past - a dungeon. In the bowels of the House of Caiaphas, carved into the rock beneath, is a series of prison cells. It is believed by many that Jesus spent his last night here before his crucifixion. This tradition would be impossible to verify.

The most noteworthy cell is the 'Sacred Pit', a deep, narrow hole accessible only by a small opening in the ceiling. One can imagine a prisoner being lowered by ropes into this grim space. It is here that Jesus might have spent his final hours, a poignant reflection of his imminent fate. It's a haunting echo of Psalm 88, often referred to as the 'Prayer from the Depths,' adding an emotional depth to this historical narrative.

After leaving the dungeon, one would want to see the set of ancient stairs carved into the hillside, known as the Ancient Stairs. These steps are believed to have been part of a pathway used by Jesus and his disciples as they left the Last Supper en route to the Garden of Gethsemane.

## THE UPPER ROOM

The "Upper Room," also known as the "Cenacle," is traditionally considered the site of several significant events in Christian history: the Last Supper, the appearance of Jesus to his disciples after his Resurrection, and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles on Pentecost.

This room is located on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, in a two-story building that also houses the Tomb of King David (according to Jewish tradition). The present structure, however, is not from the time of Jesus. It's a Gothic-style room that's part of a building complex dating mainly from the 12th to 14th centuries, during the Crusader and later the Mamluk period.

Despite this, the site has a much older tradition as a Christian holy place. Already in the 4th century, the Bordeaux Pilgrim mentions visiting a church on Mount Zion that marked the site of the "Holy Zion, where God ate with His disciples." This suggests an early tradition connecting this location to the Last Supper.

The current room is adorned with beautifully carved pillars and arches, with notable Islamic motifs, indicating that the space was used as a mosque at some point in its history. This happened after the Muslim conquest of Jerusalem in the 12th century when the room was turned into the Mosque of David and remained a Muslim prayer space until the establishment of the State of Israel.