

EXPLORATION: BIBLE

#8 Archaeological Sites of the Bible from the Jerusalem Light Rail Train

Jamie and I are currently in Jerusalem, Israel. We thought it would be interesting to show you the many biblical sites that are within walking distance from the Jerusalem Light Rail. We won't say much about the sites themselves; this will be a photo journey through Jerusalem on the train. [NOTE: all photos taken by Chip Thompson, Jerusalem, Israel, 2022]

The first site we will share is at the Beit 'Hanina stop on the Light Rail Train just north of the Old City of Jerusalem. Up the hill from this stop is a biblical city called Gibeah of Saul (1 Samuel 10:26 & 11:4).



This site is interesting because the bombed-out structure that you see on top of the ancient Tell is a palace King Hussain of Jordan built prior the Six Day War, in 1967. He built his palace on the ruins of King Saul's palace –which was an obvious political statement– He was claiming to be “the King of the Hill,” so to speak, defying the occupation of Palestine by Israel.

Next, head south on the train to the Givat-Ha Mivtar (French Hill) station. A short walk from this stop, in the center of a modern apartment complex, are some of the excavated ruins of the biblical city of Nob.



Nob was a city of Israelite Priests. Because these priests helped David escape from King Saul, he slaughtered the priests of Yahweh God living in Nob. However, one priest named Abiathar escaped and joined David's band of renegades (1 Samuel chapters 21-22).

As you continue south on the Jerusalem Light Rail, your next stop will be the Damascus Gate Station.



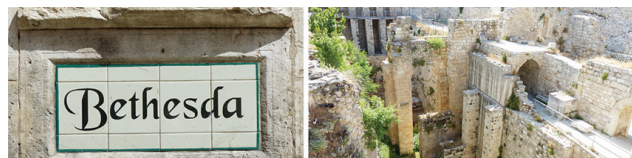
The Damascus Gate, of Old City of Jerusalem, opened onto the road that led to Damascus, Syria, in biblical times.

Before entering the Damascus Gate, if you take a short detour to the left, you will see the entrance to Solomon's Quarries.



This is a huge cave that takes you under the Old City of Jerusalem. In biblical times this cave was used to quarry massive stones used to build Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 5:17-18 & 6:7). It was also the way King Zedekiah tried, unsuccessfully, to escape from the Babylonians in the 586 B.C. siege of Jerusalem (2 Kings 25:1-7).

Next, enter Old City of Jerusalem through the Damascus Gate. Just entering the city is an experience. Inside the gate is an Arab market that is always buzzing with activity. If you then follow the road down and to the left, you will eventually come to the excavations of the Bethesda Pools.



It was at these pools that Jesus healed a man who had been lame for 38 years (John chapter 5).

As you leave Bethesda, you need to backtrack in the direction you came from and take the first road to the left. This will lead you to the focal point of Old Jerusalem – the Temple Mount.



At the base of the Temple Mount is the Western Wall, the holiest place on earth for the Jewish people. On top of the Mount is the Dome of the Rock, one of the holiest places on earth for Muslim Arabs. The Dome of the Rock is built over the exact spot where Solomon's temple once stood (2 Chronicles 3:1).

From here, you need to backtrack to the Damascus Gate and get back on the Jerusalem Light Rail. Once on the Train, go up the hill to the next stop which is City Hall. Then start walking to the South, down to the Jaffa Gate. As you walk you will experience a breathtaking view of the Old Jerusalem City Wall.



This wall was built in 1540 A.D. by an Arab Sultan named Suleiman the Magnificent. It mostly follows the ancient foundations of biblical Jerusalem.

This walk will bring you to the Jaffa Gate, the gate that in biblical times led to the seaport city of Jaffa/Joppa (associated with the story of Jonah and the whale, Jonah chapter 1). Once inside the Jaffa gate, ask for directions to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.



Pictured above is the entrance to the church. Inside this enormous structure is both the hill of Golgotha where Jesus was crucified and the tomb where Jesus was buried and three days later rose from the dead (John 19:41-42). This church, originally built in 325 A.D., is the holiest place on earth for all of Christianity.

There are many more ancient sites inside or near the Old City of Jerusalem, but this is all the space I have for this article. A visit to Jerusalem should be on everyone's bucket list. Ancient Jerusalem is, in our opinion, the most fascinating place on earth.