



Jerusalem-1 (31 October 2016)

For our first day in Jerusalem we entered the Temple area via the Dung Gate, named for the exit to the lower valley for excrement disposal. That put us at the southwestern corner of the Temple Mount. There has been much excavation and restoration here since our visit in 1970. Our initial goal was to visit the Western (Wailing) Wall, sacred to the Jewish faith. The very large blocks of marble are remnants of their Temple area that was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D. So it is a place of worship for them. The top of the present Temple Mount is occupied by mosques and other buildings of the Muslim faith. We toured that top on our second day, using



the wooden ramp at the right that provides new access to the top of the Temple Mount. It was not there in 1970. As we proceeded to visit the southern slopes of the Temple Mount, we passed several groups of Jews who were celebrating the age at which young Jews officially become responsible for their faith.



The southern slopes and steps were the usual pathways to the Jewish Temple two thousand years ago. So many famous people in the Bible walked on these steps, likely including Jesus and his followers. Our group leaders spoke of such history that happened here.



Part of a hoard of Jewish coins found during excavation. I recognize many of them as being minted a couple of years before the Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D.



This is a replica of the gold minora (candlestick) of the former Jewish temple, made ready for use in case the Jews are ever able to rebuild a temple for themselves. Its design was taken from the image in the Titus arch in Rome, shown in a previous report and enlarged here.



After lunch we were taken to an excavation of a former wall of Jerusalem, dated to the time of Hezekiah, more than 2600 years ago. A sign on the nearby modern wall indicated how high this wall originally extended.



Ancient wall remnant

The next stop was to the church documenting the location of the house of Caiaphas, the Jewish High Priest who condemned Jesus to death. It was likely at this house that Peter, out of fear, denied knowing Jesus. He was immediately shamed when



a rooster crowed a third time, just as Jesus predicted only hours earlier. So a rooster is at the top of this church. We descended below into the cells for prisoners, where Jesus was likely held. Returning to the surface, we had views of the Temple Mount and the Mount of Olives from this location.



Then we went back to the ship for overnight, though many stayed in a nearby hotel in Jerusalem.

Dr. Ed Holroyd
12 November 2016



Asian visitors at Western Wall