

## Section B: Topography

### Chapter 8

#### Old Ancient Core

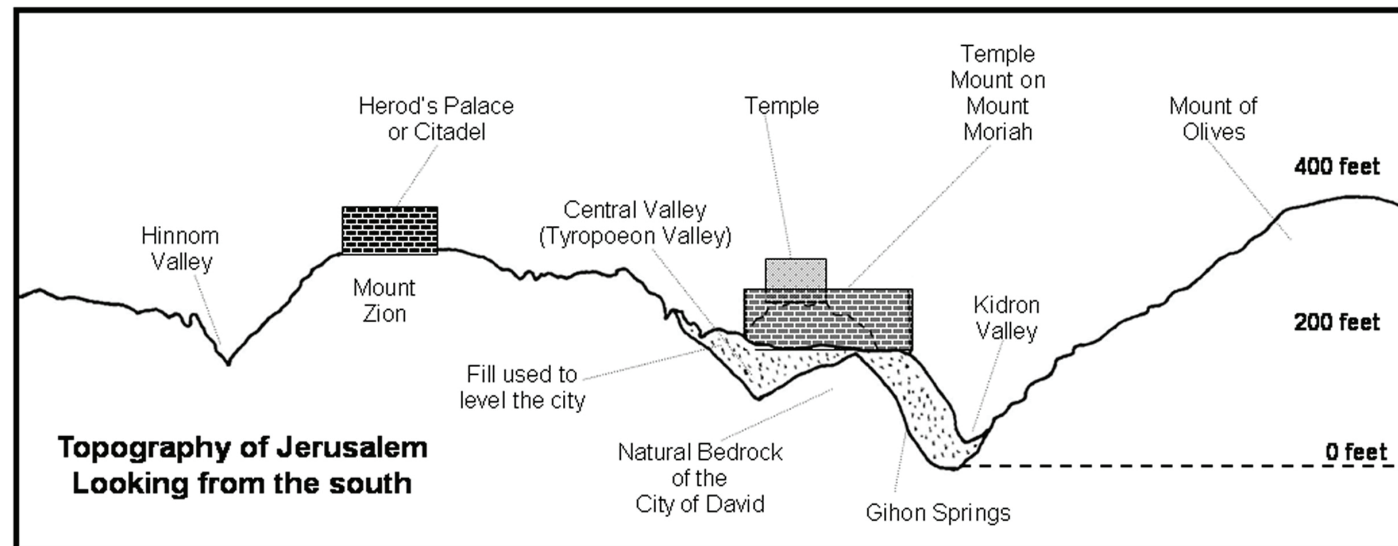
The city of Jerusalem today has a population of over 950,000. The current population in the Old City is about 37,000, of which 80% are Muslim. There are 3,000 residences plus 1,500 students in the Jewish Quarter; 500 in the Armenian Quarter; 5,681 in the Christian Quarter; and 30,000 in the Muslim Quarter.

*Great is the Lord, and most worthy of praise, in the city of our God, this holy mountain. It (Jerusalem) is beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole earth. Like the utmost heights of Zaphon is Mount Zion, the city of the Great King.* - Psalm 48:1-2

Jerusalem's original location was not chosen because of its proximity to major roads. In fact, it is far from the international highways of the coastal plain and Transjordan. The closest major local roads in Old Testament times were located a half mile to the west (the southern Ridge Route) and more than 5 miles to the north (running from Gezer to Jericho). The most desirable feature of the site was the natural defense provided by hills and valleys to the south and east

combined with a difficult approach from the west due to climbing elevations and the deep rugged valleys of the Judean hill country. Jerusalem sat on a rugged hill at the height of the hill country of Judea on local roads going nowhere and surrounded by the natural defense of valleys. This meant foreign invaders traveling through the land would often bypass Jerusalem entirely.

The original city of the Jebusites, which became the City of David, is located on a ridge south of Mount Moriah known as the Old Ancient Core. This ridge of rock (also called the Eastern Ridge) which became the city of Melchizedek, the Jebusites, and David was lower than Mount Moriah to the north, lower and smaller than the Western Hill to the west, and lower and smaller than the Mount of Olives to the east. Yet, it was here on the western edge of the Kidron Valley, on the Old Ancient Core, that Jerusalem was settled. This particular location was chosen because it has the largest water source in the area. Water was continually supplied to this area through the gushing of the Gihon Springs located along the eastern ridge of the Kidron Valley.



Topography and elevation of Jerusalem as viewed from the south. Today's "Mount Zion" sits on the Western Ridge (Western Hill) and the City of David sits on the Old Ancient Core called the Eastern Ridge (Eastern Hill).

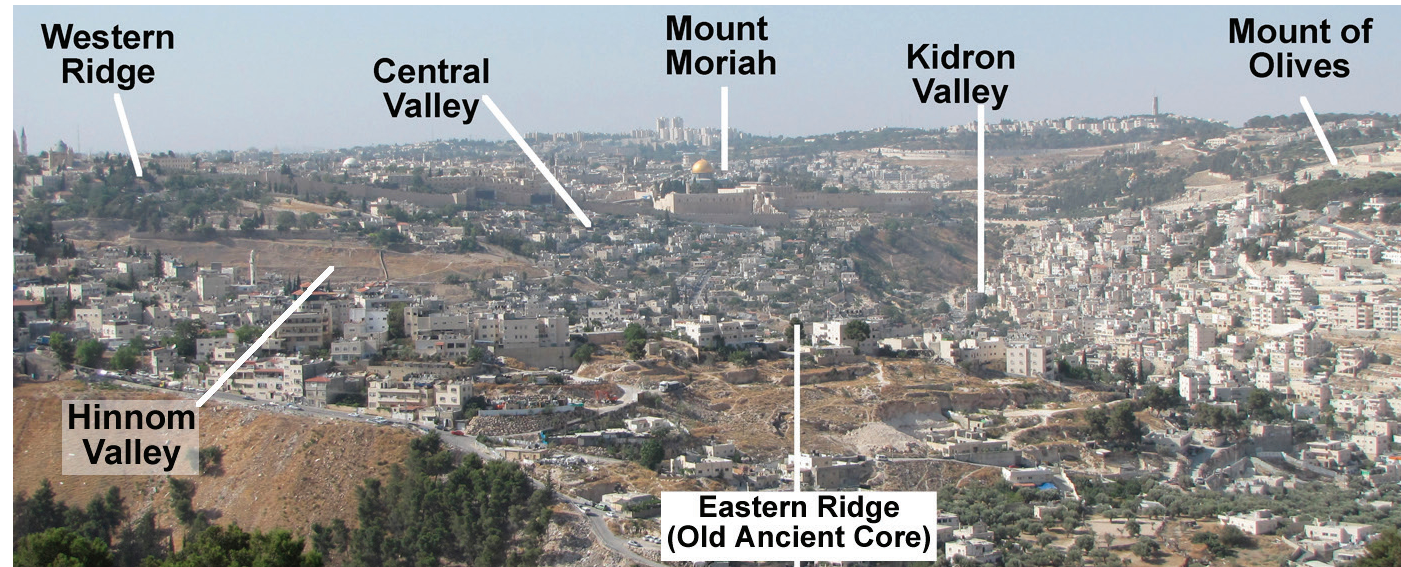


Looking from the south, this is a view of the Old Ancient Core (the Eastern Hill) in the center of the photo, outside today's city walls. The steep Kidron Valley can be seen to the right of the Old Ancient Core. The Dome of the Rock (located on the Most Holy Place on Mount Moriah) can be

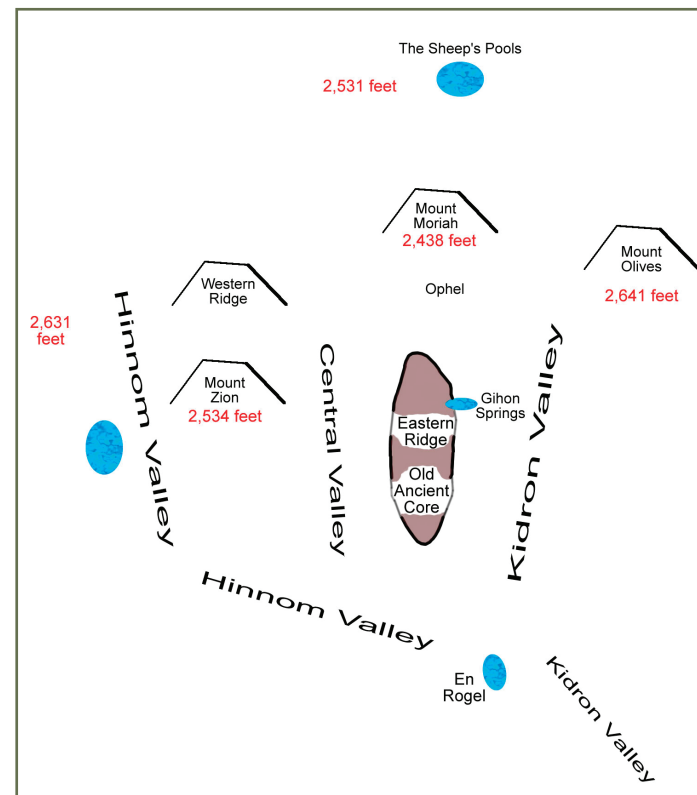
seen higher up the Eastern Hill inside the city walls. The Central Valley has been filled in for 2,500 years, but the rise of the Western Hill can be seen on the left edge of the photo. The southern wall of today's Old City can be seen climbing up the Western Hill.

#### Some Facts about Jerusalem

- Ancient Jerusalem sat on several hills
- The eastern border is the Kidron Valley
- The Kidron Valley separates Jerusalem from Mount Scopus (aka, the Mount of Olives)
- The western border is the Hinnom Valley, which turns to run along the south side also, and meets the Kidron Valley
- The spring of En Rogel is located at the meeting place of the Hinnom and Kidron valleys
- The northern border is not defined by valleys, but is easily approachable and was the most difficult area to defend against approaching armies; thus, fortresses and towers were built on the north side of the city
- The Central Valley (or, Tyropoeon Valley, which means "Valley of Cheesemakers") runs through the middle of the city; this valley was filled in to level the city between the Hinnom and Kidron valleys
- The Central Valley today runs from just north of the Damascus Gate along ha-Gai Street; it separates today's Temple Mount from the Jewish Quarter
- The Central Valley distinguished the Eastern Hill (City of David) from the Western Hill (which is where the city expanded to during the time of the Kings)
- Mount Zion sits on the south end of the Western Hill, and the Hinnom Valley bends around Mount Zion's west and south sides
- The City of David sits on the eastern hill
- The Gihon Springs are on the eastern slopes of this eastern hill and provide water for the city while also watering the Kidron Valley
- Mount Moriah sits immediately to the north of the City of David and is, in a sense, part of the eastern hill
- The area between the City of David and Mount Moriah on the eastern hill is called the Ophel
- The city of David covers 15 acres; three of these acres are located on the slopes leading down into the Kidron Valley
- Jerusalem is 33 miles east of the Mediterranean Sea and 14 miles west of the Dead Sea
- Jerusalem is 3,800 feet above the level of the Dead Sea and 2,550 feet above sea level



A view of Jerusalem from the south.

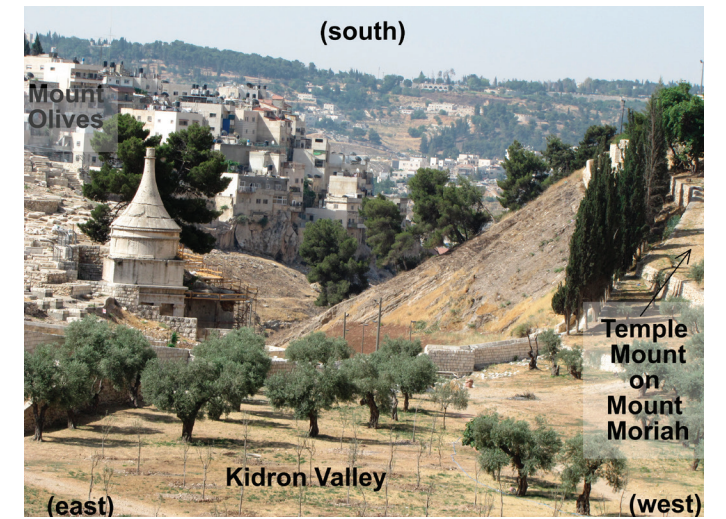


Jerusalem has three valleys: Hinnom, Central and Kidron. There are three ridges or hills: Western Hill (with Mt. Zion), Eastern Hill (with Mt. Moriah) and the Mount of Olives.

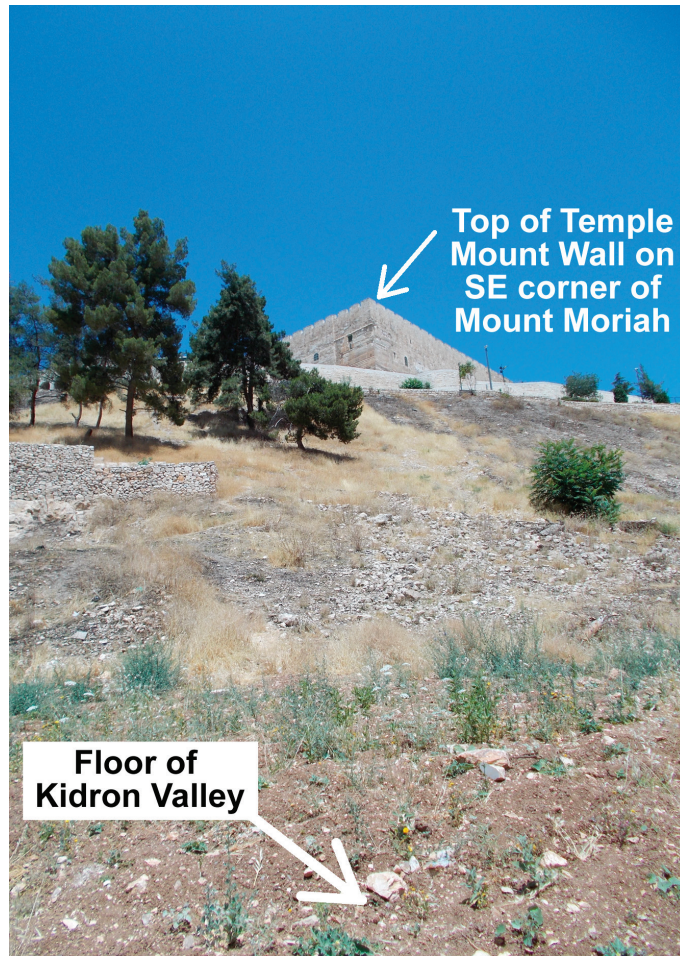
## Chapter 9 Kidron Valley

The Kidron Valley runs north-south between the Mount of Olives and the eastern wall of the Temple Mount and the City of David. This valley actually continues all the way to the Dead Sea. The total length of the valley is 20 miles, and it falls 4,000 feet. The Gihon Springs naturally filled this valley, but the settlers of Jerusalem diverted the water into pools and channels to be used by the city.

The Bible describes David fleeing across this valley and up the Mount of Olives to escape his son Absalom (2 Samuel 15:13-30). King Asa tore down the pagan altars with idols and Asherah poles in the Kidron (1 Kings 15:13). Athaliah was executed here after her evil reign in Judah was brought to a violent end (2 Kings 11:16). Today there are many tombs and graves in the Kidron, since burying people here became a practice in the days of Josiah (2 Kings 23:6).



The view standing in the Kidron Valley looking south. The Mount of Olives is to the left and the Temple Mount is to the right at the top of Mount Moriah.



This photo is looking up from the Kidron Valley at the southeast corner of the Temple Mount Wall. In the days of the New Testament, the building on this corner of the Temple Mount would have been even higher. Josephus describes the view from the roof of the Royal Stoa, or Solomon's Porch, saying:

*It was a structure more noteworthy than any under the sun. The height of the portico was so great that if anyone looked down from its rooftop he would become dizzy and his vision would be unable to reach the end of so measureless a depth.*

It is important to realize that the Kidron Valley was much deeper 2,000 years ago. The bottom of the Kidron Valley has been raised by the rubble and debris of centuries falling into it. This is where Jesus was tempted by Satan to jump:

*Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 'If you are the Son of God,' he said, 'throw yourself down.'*  
-Matthew 4:8



Looking down into the steep Kidron Valley from the City of David located on the Eastern Hill or the Old Ancient Core.

*'The days are coming,' declares the Lord 'when this city will be rebuilt . . . The whole valley where dead bodies and ashes are thrown, and all the terraces out to the Kidron Valley on the east as far as the corner of the Horse Gate, will be holy to the Lord. The city will never again be uprooted or demolished.'*  
- Jeremiah 31:38-40



A view looking down into the Kidron Valley from the ancient City of David (which was the Jebusite city of Salem) where the large stone structure and David's palace are located. The Mount of Olives is seen in the top right of the photo.



Looking north up the Kidron Valley while standing in the bottom of the Valley near the source of the Gihon Springs where Abraham met Melchizedek the King of Salem in Genesis 14:

*After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.)*  
- Genesis 14:17-18

This is also the location of one of Solomon's Gardens that was irrigated with canals of water from the Gihon Springs:

*I made myself gardens and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. I made myself pools from which to water the forest of growing trees.*  
- Ecclesiastes 2:5-6



Looking south down the Kidron Valley near the source of the Gihon Springs and the location of the irrigated gardens of the kings of Jerusalem. From here this valley winds its way south/southeast through the Judean Wilderness to the Dead Sea. During the heavy rain seasons water fills these valleys and wadis to empty into the Dead Sea. This part of the Kidron may be the general location of the valley where the Lord will judge (as described in Joel 3:2, 12, 14 and Matthew 24:31-32). The two Hebrew words that are combined together in Joel to say "the Lord judges" are **YHWH** (the Name of the Lord) and **shaphat** which means "judge" or "govern". This word **jehoshaphat** means "the LORD has judged":

*I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat (or, Valley of the Lord Judges). And I will enter into judgment with them there, on behalf of my people and my heritage Israel...Let the nations stir themselves up and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat [that is, the Valley of the Lord Who Judges]; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations...Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.*

*When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.*  
- Matthew 24:31-32

Water running from this point in the Kidron Valley south through the wadis to the Dead Sea could potentially also continue on to the Gulf of Aqaba (Red Sea) through the land of Jordan (Edom). The distance from the Kidron Valley to the Gulf of Aqaba would be roughly 1,600 stadia (or 180 miles). This means that if this is in fact the place of the Lord's judgment, there could be a possible connection with Revelation 14, particularly 14:14-20 where it is written:

*So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia (or, 184 miles).*

- Revelation 14:19-20

The winepress could be the Valley of Jehoshaphat which is described as being extended in Zechariah 14 when the Mount of Olives is divided by an earthquake to form a great valley at the Lord's return to the Mount of Olives. The winepress is said to be outside the city which would be Jerusalem. The blood flowing for 1,600 stadia (or, 184 miles) could be the distance from here in the Kidron Valley to the Gulf of Aqaba by way of wadi's, the Dead Sea and the connection made to the Red Sea. That distance today is 214 miles driving on the highway, 155 miles by air, and 160-185 miles cross country as water flows through winding wadi's to the Dead Sea and a new river bed is cut to the Gulf of Aqaba from the Dead Sea. So, from here in the Kidron Valley to the Gulf of Aqaba would be roughly 184 miles (or, 1,600 stadia).

## Chapter 10

### Central Valley (Tyropoeon Valley i.e., “Valley of the Cheesemakers”)

The Central Valley was a rugged ravine, like the Kidron and the Hinnom, that separated Mount Moriah (Eastern Hill) from Mount Zion (Western Hill). Bridges were even built to span the distance between the two hills. The Central Valley began to be leveled off intentionally in the days of Hezekiah, and over the centuries debris from the destructions and rebuildings of Jerusalem have, for all practical purposes, completely filled it in, leaving it level with the incline that rises to become the Western Hill. There may be as much as 70 feet of debris in the Central Valley.

The Central Valley ran along the Western Wall of the Temple Mount just like the Kidron Valley runs along the eastern wall of the Temple Mount. The paved Herodian street seen today along the Western Wall under Robinson’s Arch follows its old course. Presently, the Central Valley runs under the Damascus Gate south, then south-east through the middle of the Old City, to the Pool of Siloam and meets the Hinnom and Kidron valleys south of the City of David.

On only one occasion Josephus refers to the Central Valley as the Tyropoeon Valley which means “Valley of the Cheesemakers.”

## Chapter 11

### Hinnom Valley

The Hinnom Valley is also called “the valley of the son of Hinnom” or “Valley of Benhinnom”. This was shortened to “Valley Hinnom” which in Hebrew is pronounced, “Ge Hinnom” and transliterated into Greek as “Gehenna.” Thus, the Hinnom Valley is the Gehenna of the New Testament, which is associated with fire, judgment, the Lake of Fire, eternal fire and Hell.

The border for the land allotted to the tribe of Judah is partially identified with this valley by Joshua in 1400 BC:

*Then it ran up the **Valley of Ben Hinnom** along the southern slope of the Jebusite city (that is, Jerusalem). From there it climbed to the top of the hill west of the **Hinnom Valley** at the northern end of the Valley of Rephaim.* - Joshua 15:8



*Today the Hinnom Valley is covered with green grass. This photo was taken on the west side of the Mount of Zion near the southwest corner of the Old City walls. An Arab family is resting in the shade of a tree while their children play in the Hinnom Valley.*

At its lowest point the Hinnom Valley is also the lowest point in the city of Jerusalem. If the Temple Mount on Mount Moriah is the highest point in the city and represents the presence of the Lord, then the lowest point of the city would also have illustrative value. This can be seen by comparing Isaiah’s and Amos’ use of topographical typology:

*Come, **let us go up** to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob.* - Isaiah 2:3

*Though **they dig down** to the depths of Sheol, from there my hand will take them.* - Amos 9:2

Add to this the geographical fact that the wilderness began where the Hinnom Valley ended, and we have a perfect illustration of the realm of demons (Leviticus 16:10) and the chaos that was conquered (Genesis 1:2, 3). When the people of Judah began to worship demons and offer their children in the fire they did it in the Hinnom Valley. When Josiah became king he went down into the Hinnom Valley where children were sacrificed to demons and desecrated the altar/image (or, “the burner” called “Topheth”) that the wicked people used to burn their children to the god Molech:

*He (Josiah) desecrated Topheth (“the burner”), which was in the Valley of Ben Hinnom, so no one could use it to sacrifice his son or daughter in the fire to Molech.* - 2 Kings 23:10

When God spoke through Isaiah of the coming judgment he also spoke of “the burner”:

*Topheth has long been prepared; it has been made ready for the king. Its fire pit has been made deep and wide, with an abundance of fire and wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of burning sulfur, sets it ablaze.* - Isaiah 30:33

*The people of Judah have done evil in my eyes, declares the Lord. They have set up their detestable idols in the house that bears my Name and have defiled it (Solomon’s Temple). They have built the high places of Topheth (“the burner”) in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to burn their sons and daughters in the fire – something I did not command, nor did it enter my mind. So beware, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when people will no longer call it Topheth or the Valley of Ben Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter, for they will bury the dead in Topheth until there is no more room.* - Jeremiah 7:31-33

The Hinnom Valley had become a place associated not only with the lowest point and the path to the wilderness of demonic chaos, but also as a place of hideous demon worship that demanded the burning of living children. The prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah had condemned this valley as surely as King Josiah had shut it down. It became a rejected part of the city that was converted to a burning pit to dump the city’s garbage. In 27 AD Jesus made reference to this location calling it by the Greek name Gehenna when he said:

*Anyone who says, “You fool!” will be in danger of the fire of hell (or, in the Greek, “Gehenna”).* - Matthew 5:22

Likewise, James, Jesus' brother, writing from Jerusalem around 48 AD says of the tongue:

*It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell (or, in the Greek, "Gehenna").* – James 3:6



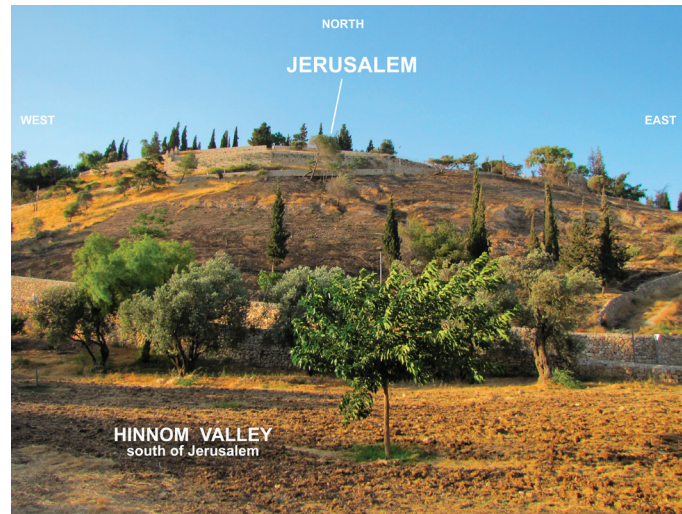
Looking down into the Hinnom Valley from Jerusalem.



Looking south down the Hinnom Valley in the evening outside the Joppa Gate and the west wall of the city. The Citadel can be seen in the top left corner of this photo.

The slopes of the Hinnom Valley were used for tombs by the wealthiest Jewish families in the first century. Josephus says the tomb of Annas the high priest is located in this area and such a monument has been identified. There are over 30 tombs cut and excavated in the lower southern side of the Hinnom Valley by a monastery dedicated to Saint Onuphrius.

*Tombs from the time of the New Testament in the southern end of the Hinnom Valley. Herod's family tomb is located in this area, although Herod's tomb was uncovered at the Herodium in April of 2007.*



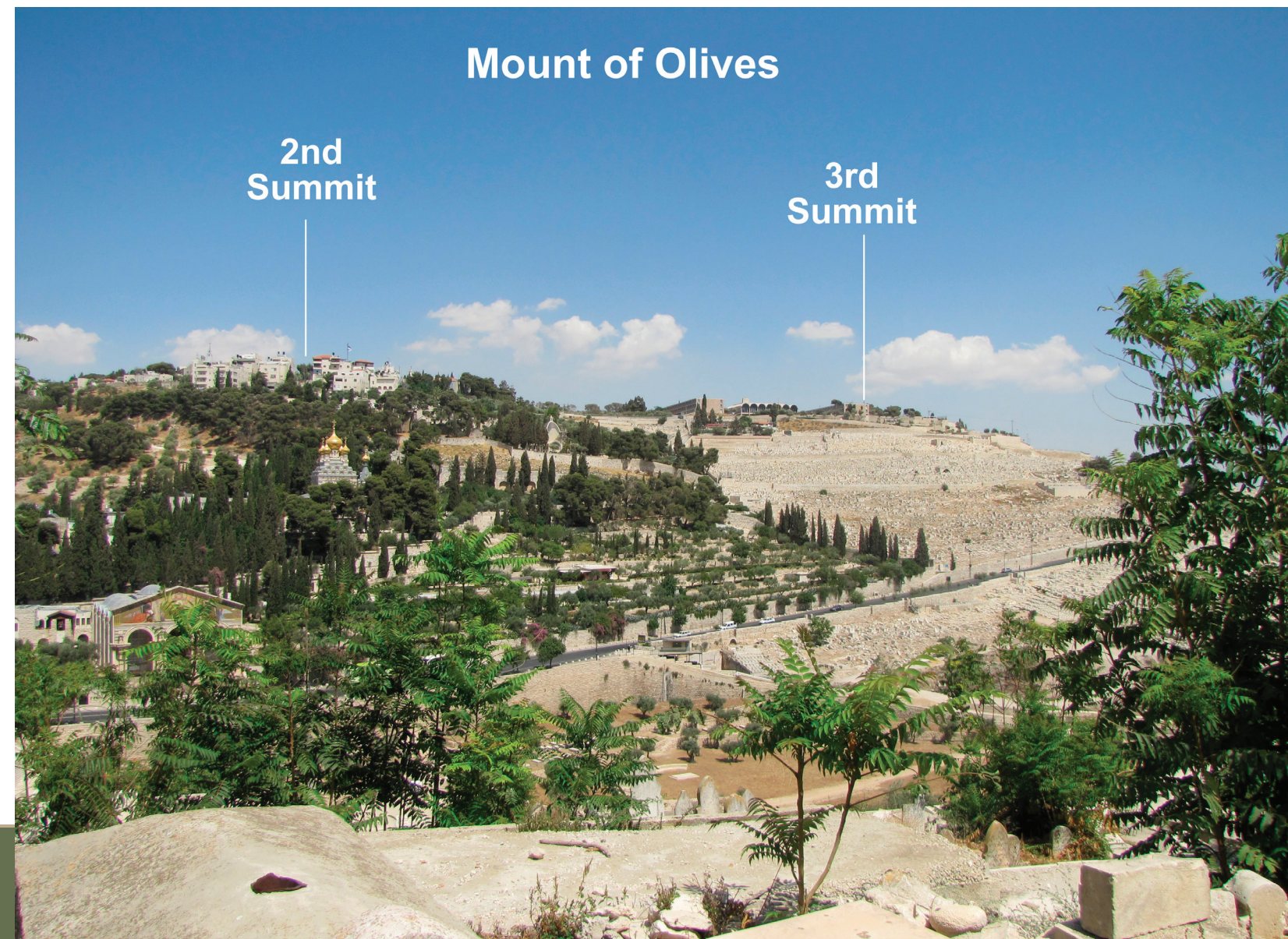
## Chapter 12 Mount of Olives

The Mount of Olives is a two-mile long ridge, or foot hill, with three summits on it. Just to the east of the Mount of Olives is the wilderness (i.e., desert) that leads down to Jericho and the Jordan Valley. It is named after the groves of olive trees that grew there in the Old and New Testament times.

David ascended the Mount of Olives when he fled from his son Absalom (2 Samuel 15:30), and Solomon built temples for foreign gods there on what is called in 2 Kings 23:13 the "Hill of Corruption."

Details of several of Jesus' activities on the Mount of Olives are recorded in the gospels. This has led to numerous churches being built on these "holy" sites from the time of the Byzantine Empire in the early days of the church. When Jesus was in Jerusalem he often stayed in Bethany, a village on the east side of the Mount of Olives, about a two mile walk southwest of Jerusalem. The walk from Jerusalem to Bethany took Jesus through Gethsemane and straight up to the summit of the Mount of Olives (then along the ridge), which is today a modern road to Bethphage. Following another ridge, the road then leads into Bethany.

*A view looking east at the first and second summits of the Mount of Olives. The Garden of Gethsemane is on the left, in the middle of the photo above the road. The Kidron Valley runs parallel to the bottom of the photo.*



# Mount of Olives



The three summits of the Mount of Olives can be seen. The photo in last page was taken in front of the first two summits.

It is believed that the Jewish Messiah will appear on the Mount of Olives. This belief has led centuries of Jews dating back to the Old Testament to place their graves here.

*On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley.*  
- Zechariah 14:4

*The glory of the Lord went up from within the city and stopped above the mountain east of it.*  
- Ezekiel 11:23

*Then the man brought me to the gate facing east, and I saw the glory of the God of Israel coming from the east.*  
- Ezekiel 43:1, 2

Jesus seemed to accept this teaching and testified to it by ascending back into heaven from the Mount of Olives. His ascension was followed by the confirming statement of the angels that Jesus would return the same way he left.

*When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven.*  
- Luke 24:50

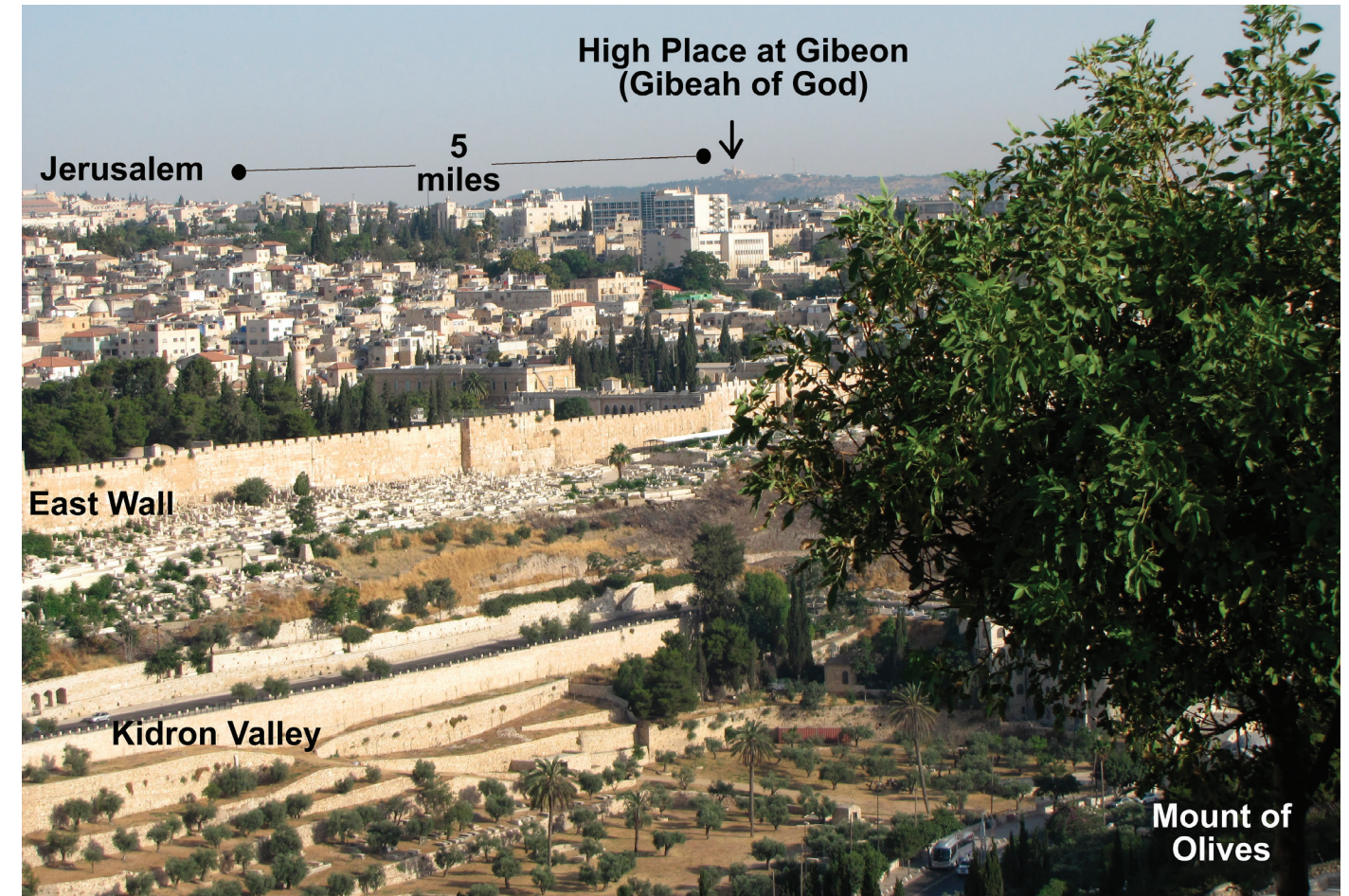
*After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly to men dressed in white stood beside*

*them. 'Men of Galilee,' they said, 'why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.' Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives.*  
- Acts 1:9-12

Considering 1) the support of Old Testament prophecy, 2) the confirmation of Jesus by his ascension, and 3) the words of the angels, it is clear that Jesus, the Messiah, will return to the Mount of Olives and enter the new Temple in Jerusalem.



The third summit is covered with Jewish Graves because of verses like Zechariah 14:4 and Ezekiel 43:1-2 that indicate the Messiah will appear on the Mount of Olives.



## Chapter 13 Mount Moriah

Mount Moriah is the mount on which Abraham offered Isaac in Genesis 22. In 1 Chronicles 21 it is identified as the location of Arunah (or, Ornan) the Jebusite's threshing floor which David bought for 600 shekels of gold. This purchase is an important fact since it demonstrates that the Jews received this area through a legal transaction. They have never sold the rights to Mount Moriah.

*King David said to Ornan, 'No, but I will buy them for the full price. I will not take for the Lord what is yours, nor offer burnt offerings that cost me nothing.' So David paid Ornan 600 shekels of gold by weight for the site. And David built there an altar to the Lord and presented burnt offerings. - 1 Chronicles 21:24, 25*

Mount Moriah is where Solomon built his Temple.

*Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to David his father, at the place that David had appointed on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. - 2 Chronicles 3:1*

Mount Moriah is a ridge of rock that rises from the junction point of the Hinnom and Kidron valleys. It rises through the City of David and reaches its highest elevation just northeast of the Damascus Gate in the Old City. The Temple Mount today covers about 45 acres and is built around the outcropping of the bedrock under the Dome of the Rock. It is about 118 feet lower than the highest point of Mount Moriah.



*The top bedrock of Mount Moriah just outside the Dome of the Rock. This is the same bedrock where the Ark of the Covenant sat in Solomon's Temple here on Mount Moriah. This bedrock is covered by the Muslim's Dome of the Spirits about 285 feet north of the location where the Ark of the Covenant sat in the Most Holy Place. This very spot of exposed bedrock is one of the highest places on Mt. Moriah, so it is the likely location of the threshing floor belonging to Arunah mentioned in 1 Chronicles 21:15-30 where the Angel of the Lord stood. David bought this for 600 shekels of Gold.*

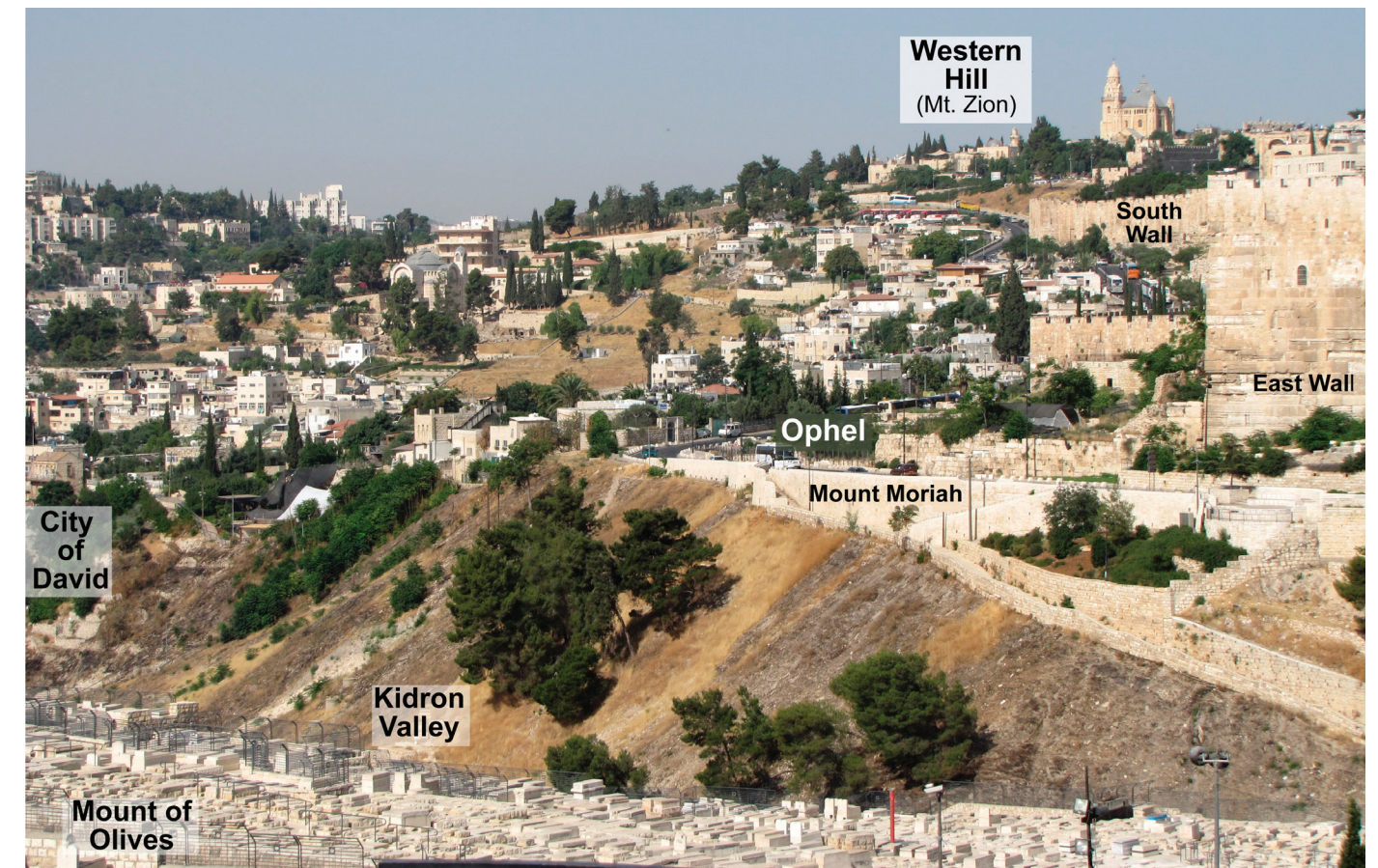
## Chapter 14 Western Hill

The Western Hill was not settled until the area around the Eastern Hill (the City of David) began to fill up. People then began moving outside the walls of the City of David and across the Central Valley to the Western Hill. When the Assyrian Empire invaded northern Israel in 723 BC many of the Jews from Israel fled south into Judah and settled in Jerusalem. They also settled outside the walls of the city on the Western Hill.

Hezekiah eventually built a wall around this new western suburb in preparation for the Assyrian attack of Judah in 701 BC. (Part of this "Broad Wall" can still be seen.) This portion of the city fell in 586 BC to the Babylonians

along with the rest of the city. When the exiles returned it was settled again after the days of Nehemiah.

By the time of the New Testament, the Central Valley had been filled in and the city had again expanded to cover the Western Hill. Herod's palace was built along the west wall on the Western Hill, as were many of the wealthy residences of New Testament Jerusalem, including the mansion of the high priest. Jesus would have been brought to the Western Hill to appear before Annas and Caiaphas. It is quite possible that the Upper Room, used during the Last Supper and on the Day of Pentecost, was also on this Western Hill.



Today the Christian Quarter and the Armenian Quarter inside the walls of the Old City are on the Western Hill. The area south of the Armenian Quarter outside the walls is today called Mount Zion, and it is also part of the Western Hill. (In scripture, Mount Zion originally referred to the Eastern Hill, or the City of David. Mount Zion then began to refer to the northern part of Mount Moriah, or the Temple Mount. Early Christians of the Byzantine and Crusader periods wrongly identified the southern part of the Western Hill as Mount Zion, but it continues to maintain that name today.)

## Chapter 15

# Ophel

The Ophel is part of the Eastern Hill that sits between the City of David and the Temple Mount. The word “ophel” means “swell or rise” and refers to a higher part of the landscape. The Jebusites built their citadel there, as did David, who also added much more fortification to this northern part of his city.

The Ophel is mentioned in 2 Chronicles 27 and 33:

*Jotham rebuilt the Upper Gate of the temple of the Lord and did extensive work on the wall at the hill of Ophel.*  
- 2 Chronicles 27:3

*Afterward he (Manasseh) rebuilt the outer wall of the City of David, west of the Gihon spring in the valley, as far as the entrance of the Fish Gate and encircling the hill of Ophel; he also made it much higher.*  
- 2 Chronicles 33:14

This part of the city was always heavily fortified, as seen in Nehemiah 3:26, Isaiah 32:14 and Micah 4:8. Extensive building took place in this area from the days of David right up to the modern excavation of the Ophel just south of the Temple Mount.

