

**Lecture 2 – The Christian and Muslim Holy Sites and the Western Wall**

**Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Via Dolorosa**

**Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock – The Noble Sanctuary**

**The Western Wall**

**Circa 33 AD** – Jesus and the Temple – The Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes, and Romans.

**Circa 45** – Wall built enclosing Golgotha within the city.

**130** – Emperor Hadrian puts down Bar Kochba revolt – Jews banished from Jerusalem and Hadrian destroys Jerusalem again – renames it *Aelia Capitolina* after his family and the god Jupiter - - Builds a temple dedicated to the goddess Venus in order to bury the cave in which Jesus had been buried.

**312** – Emperor Constantine adopts Christianity as the religion of the Empire.

**325-326** – Emperor Constantine has the temple of Venus in Jerusalem demolished to construct a church. His mother, Empress Helena visits Jerusalem and identifies the tomb found under the Church as that of Jesus. She identifies also the site of the Crucifixion and finds the True Cross. She orders the Temple Mount to be used as a garbage dump.

Inception of the **Via Dolorosa** under Byzantine rule – Jesus's path to the Cross. (route changes over the centuries as Jerusalem is conquered/destroyed/rebuilt.

**335 – Sept 13. Church of the Holy Sepulchre is consecrated.** Constantine's church was built as two connected churches over the two different holy sites, including a great basilica, an enclosed colonnaded atrium (the Triportico) with the traditional site of Golgotha in one corner, and a rotunda, called the Anastasis ("Resurrection" in Greek), which contained the remains of a rock-cut room that Helena identified as the burial site of Jesus.

**363** – Attempt to rebuild the Temple under Emperor Julian thwarted by earthquake and fire.

**614** – Khosros of Persia conquers Jerusalem from the Byzantines – **Church of the Holy Sepulchre** is damaged by fire, the True Cross was taken away, but in 631 the Byzantine emperor Heraclius negotiates its return.

**629-630** – Byzantines recapture Jerusalem, Emperor Heraclius restores and rebuilds the Church and negotiates the return of the True Cross.

**638** - Caliph Umar and the Muslim Conquest - Cleansing of the Temple Mount and building of **al-Aqsa Mosque**. Umar's vizier identifies the Temple Mount as the Location of the Temple. The most imposing structure the Muslims found in Jerusalem was the **Church of the Holy Sepulchre**.

**684-690** - Caliph abd al-Malik builds the **Dome of the Rock**. The site chosen was the very same rock where previously had stood the Jupiter temple of the Romans and before that, the two temples of the Jews.

**The Church of the Holy Sepulchre** is damaged by fires and earthquakes during the next centuries.

**900s** – Jews in Jerusalem begin to revere the **Western Wall** as a place of worship.

**1009** -The Fatimid Caliph al-Hakim ends religious tolerance and burn churches and synagogues.

**Destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.**

**1028** – Fatimids and the Byzantines negotiate and Fatimids allow the rebuilding of **Church of Holy Sepulchre.**

**1099 – 1100s - The Crusades - Church of the Holy Sepulchre** goes through continuous veneration and renovation during the period of the Crusades (and beyond, during the recapture of Jerusalem by the Ottoman Empire, and thereafter.) Crusaders turn **Dome of the Rock** into a church, **al-Aqsa Mosque, (which they called Solomon's Temple)** became a royal palace. The Knights Templar, active from c. 1119, identified the Dome of the Rock as the site of the Temple of Solomon and set up their headquarters in the Al-Aqsa Mosque adjacent to the Dome for much of the 12th century. The Templum Domini (Temple of God), as they called the **Dome of the Rock**, featured on the official seals of the Order's Grand Masters and soon became the architectural model for round Templar churches across Europe.

**1187** – Salah ad-din (Saladin) (Ayubids) recaptures Jerusalem – **Dome of the Rock** reconsecrated as Muslim shrine and **al-Aqsa** as a mosque.

**1250** Mamluks conquer Jerusalem. Begin to call the Temple Mount the **Noble Sanctuary**

**1517** – Ottomans refurbish **Dome of the Rock**. Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent allows Jews to pray at the **Western Wall**.

**1538 – 40** Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent constructs the existing walls around the Old City.

**1625** – Organized prayers at the **Western Wall** mentioned for the first time.

**1625-1917** (Ottoman Empire); Jewish access to the **Western** Wall area continues through the Ottoman Empire.

**1853** – Status Quo Control of the **Church of the Holy Sepulchre** established by Ottoman Sultan's Firman.

**1917-1948** (British Mandate) Jewish access to the **Western Wall** area continues through the the British Mandate.

**1948** - Creation of the State of Israel and War of Independence. Temple Mount and **Western Wall** remain in Jordan after the War of Independence.

**1955** – **Dome of Rock** refurbished by Jordan.

**1967** – Israel captures the Temple Mount – controlled by the Jewish people for the first time since 70 AD. Creates plaza in front of the **Western Wall** and returns the **Temple Mount** to the Muslim Authority.