



ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

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Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem

11<sup>th</sup> Century  
Jerusalem

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First Edition  
2021  
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## INTRODUCTION

### 11<sup>th</sup> Century Jerusalem

The history of Jerusalem during the Middle Ages is generally one of decline; beginning as a major city in the Byzantine Empire, Jerusalem prospered during the early centuries of Muslim control (637/38–969), but under the rule of the Fatimid caliphate (late 10th to 11th centuries) its population declined from about 200,000 to less than half that number by the time of the Christian conquest in 1099. The Christians massacred much of the population as they took the city, and while population quickly recovered during the Kingdom of Jerusalem, it was again decimated to below 2,000 people when the Khwarezmi Turks retook the city in 1244. After this, the city remained a backwater of the late medieval Muslim empires and would not again exceed a population of 10,000 until the 16th century. It was passed back and forth through various Muslim factions until decidedly conquered by the Ottomans in 1517, who maintained control until the British took it in 1917

## Ancient Origins

The earliest traces of human settlement in the city area, found on a hill to the southeast, are from the late Chalcolithic Period (Copper Age) and Early Bronze Age (c. 3000 BC). Excavations have revealed that a settlement existed on a site south of the Temple Mount, and a massive town wall was found just above the Gihon Spring, which determined the location of the ancient settlement. The name, known in its earliest form as Urusalim, is probably of western Semitic origin and apparently means “Foundation of Shalem (God).” The city and its earliest rulers, the Egyptians, are mentioned in the Egyptian Execration Texts (c. 1900–1800 BC) and again in the 14th-century Tell el-Amarna correspondence, which contains a message from the city’s ruler, Abdi-Kheba (Abdu-Heba), requiring his sovereign’s help against the invading Hapiru (Habiru, ‘Apiru). A biblical narrative mentions the meeting of the Canaanite Melchizedek, said to be king of Salem (Jerusalem), with the Hebrew patriarch Abraham. A later episode in the biblical text mentions another king, Adonizedek, who headed an Amorite coalition and was vanquished by Joshua.

According to biblical accounts, Jerusalem, on the frontier of Benjamin and Judah and inhabited by a mixed population described as Jebusites, was captured by David, founder of the joint kingdom of Israel and Judah, and the city became the Jewish kingdom’s capital. This has been dated to about 1000 BC. David’s successor, King Solomon, extended the city and built his Temple on the threshing floor of Araunah (Ornan) the Jebusite. Thus Jerusalem became the place of the royal palace and the sacred site of a monotheistic religion.



### The Second Temple Period

in Jewish history lasted between 516 BCE and 70 CE, when the Second Temple of Jerusalem existed. The sects of Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Zealots and early Christianity were formed during this period. The Second Temple period ended with the First Jewish–Roman War and the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. After the death of the last *Nevi'im* (Jewish prophets) of antiquity and still under Persian rule, the leadership of the Jewish people was in the hands of five successive generations of *zugot* ("pairs of") leaders. They flourished first under the Persians (c. 539 – c. 332 BC), then under the Greeks (c. 332–167 BC), then under an independent Hasmonean Kingdom (140–37 BC), and then under the Romans (63 BC – 132 CE).

On Solomon’s death the northern tribes seceded. About 930 BC the Egyptian pharaoh Sheshonk I sacked the city, to be followed by the Philistines and Arabians in 850 and Joash of Israel in 786. After Hezekiah became king of Judah, he built new fortifications and an underground tunnel, which brought water from Gihon Spring to the Pool of Siloam inside the city, but he succumbed to the might of Sennacherib of Assyria, who in 701 forced payment of a heavy tribute. In 612 Assyria yielded its primacy to Babylon. Eight years later Jerusalem was despoiled, and its king was deported to Babylon. In 587/586 BC the city and Temple were completely destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar II (Nebuchadnezzar), and the Hebrew captivity began. It ended in 538 BC when Cyrus II (the Great) of Persia, who had overcome Babylon, permitted the Jews, led by Zerubbabel, of the Davidic house, to return to Jerusalem. The Temple was restored (515 BC) despite Samaritan opposition, and the city became the center of the new statehood. Its position was strengthened when Nehemiah (c. 444) restored its fortifications.

## Construction of the Second Temple

Construction of the Second Temple was completed under the leadership of the last three Jewish Prophets Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi with Persian approval and financing.

Based on the biblical account, after the return from Babylonian captivity under Zerubbabel, arrangements were almost immediately made to reorganize the desolated Yehud Province after the demise of the Kingdom of Judah seventy years earlier. The body of pilgrims, forming a band of 42,360, having completed the long and dreary journey of some four months, from the banks of the Euphrates to



## Book of Hagai

also known as the **Book of Aggeus**, is a book of the Hebrew Bible or Tanakh, and has its place as the third-to-last of the Minor Prophets. The book is named after its presumed author, the prophet Haggai. There is no biographical information given about the prophet in the Book of Haggai. Haggai's name is derived from the Hebrew verbal root *hgg*, which means "to make a pilgrimage." It was written in 520 BC, some 18 years after Cyrus had conquered Babylon and issued a decree in 538 BC, allowing the captive Jews to return to Judea. Cyrus saw the restoration of the temple as necessary for the restoration of the religious practices, and a sense of peoplehood, after a long exile. Haggai's message is filled with an urgency for the people to proceed with the rebuilding of the second Jerusalem temple. Haggai attributes a recent drought to the people's refusal to rebuild the temple, which he sees as key to Jerusalem's glory. The book ends with the prediction of the downfall of kingdoms, with one Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, as the Lord's chosen leader.

Jerusalem, were animated in all their proceedings by a strong religious impulse, and therefore one of their first concerns was to restore their ancient house of worship by rebuilding their destroyed Temple and reinstating the sacrificial rituals known as the *korbanot*.

On the invitation of Zerubbabel, the governor, who showed them a remarkable example of liberality by contributing personally 1,000 golden darics, besides other gifts, the people poured their gifts into the sacred treasury with great enthusiasm. First they erected and dedicated the altar of God on the exact spot where it had formerly stood, and they then cleared away the charred heaps of debris which occupied the site of the old temple; and in the second month of the second year (535 BC), amid great public excitement and rejoicing, the foundations of the Second Temple were laid. A wide interest was felt in this great movement, although it was regarded with mingled feelings by the spectators.

The Samaritans, the inhabitants of the capital of what had been Israel, made proposals for co-operation in the work. Zerubbabel and the elders, however, declined all such cooperation, feeling that the Jews must build the Temple without help. Immediately evil reports were spread regarding the Jews. According to Ezra 4:5, the Samaritans sought to "frustrate their purpose" and sent messengers to Ecbatana and Susa, with the result that the work was suspended.

Seven years later, Cyrus the Great, who allowed the Jews to return to their homeland and rebuild the Temple, died, and was succeeded by his son Cambyses. On his death, the "false Smerdis", an imposter, occupied the throne for some seven or eight months, and then Darius I of Persia became king (522 BC). In the second year of this monarch the work of rebuilding the temple was resumed and carried forward to its completion, under the stimulus of the earnest counsels and admonitions of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. It was ready for consecration in the spring of 516 BC, more than twenty years after the return from captivity. The Temple was completed on the third day of the month Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius, amid great rejoicings on the part of all the people although it was evident that the Jews were no longer an independent people, but were subject to a foreign power. The Book of Haggai (see side panel) includes a prediction that the glory of the last temple would be greater than that of the first.

## Hellenistic and Hasmonean Periods

With the coming of Alexander the Great and his victory at Issus in 333 BC, Jerusalem fell under Greek influence. After Alexander's death, Palestine fell to the share of his marshal Ptolemy I Soter, son of Lagus, who had occupied Egypt and had made Alexandria his capital. In the year 198 BC Jerusalem was acquired by the northern dynasty, descended from Seleucus I Nicator, another of Alexander's marshals, which ruled from Antioch (now in Turkey). The growth of Greek, pagan

**Korban** primarily refers to a sacrificial offerings given from humans to God for the purpose of doing homage, winning favor, or securing pardon. The object sacrificed was usually an animal that was ritually slaughtered and then transferred from the human to the divine realm by being burned on an altar. After the destruction of the Second Temple, sacrifices were prohibited because there was no longer a Temple, the only place allowed by halakha for sacrifices. Offering of sacrifices was briefly reinstated during the Jewish–Roman wars of the second century AD and was continued in certain communities thereafter.

influence affronted the orthodox Jews, whose hostility burst into armed rebellion in 167 BC after the Seleucid Antiochus IV Epiphanes deliberately desecrated the Temple. The revolt was led by Mattathias, son of Hasmonaeus (Hasmon), and was carried on by his son Judas, known as the Maccabee (Maccabeus). The Hasmonaeans succeeded in expelling the Seleucids, and Jerusalem regained its position as the capital of an independent state ruled by the priestly Hasmonean dynasty.

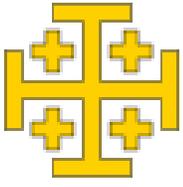
## **Roman Rule**

For some time Rome had been expanding its authority in Asia, and in 63 BC the Roman triumvir Pompey the Great captured Jerusalem. A clash with Jewish nationalism was averted for a while by the political skill of a remarkable family whose most illustrious member was Herod the Great. Herod was of Edomite descent, though of Jewish faith, and was allied through his mother with the nobility of Nabataean Petra, the wealthy Arab state that lay to the east of the Jordan River. In 40 BC Herod, who had distinguished himself as governor of Galilee, was appointed “client” king of Judaea by the Roman Senate. He was the friend of the Roman triumvir Mark Antony and, after the defeat of Antony by Octavian (later the emperor Augustus) at Actium in 31 BC, of Octavian himself.

Herod reigned for over 30 years, during which period Jerusalem reached its peak of greatness, growing in wealth and expanding even beyond the new double line of walls. The Temple Mount esplanade was artificially enlarged with supporting walls (including the Western Wall) to house Herod’s greatest work, the grandly reconstructed Temple, which took more than a generation to complete. The new royal palace, occupying much of the area of the current Armenian quarter, was strengthened by immense towers that were integrated into the older Hasmonean walls, and the Temple was defended by a new citadel. An amphitheater added to the Hellenistic character of the city. Centre of religion, goal of obligatory pilgrimage, and the seat of the ruler and of the autonomous court of the Sanhedrin (Jewish Council of Elders), Jerusalem became a great metropolis of the Hellenistic Age. Herod died in 4 BC and was succeeded by his son Herod Archelaus, who was subsequently deposed by the Romans in the year 6 AD and replaced by the first of a series of Roman procurators. It was under the fifth procurator, Pontius Pilate, that Jesus of Nazareth was put to death.

From 41 to 44 AD the kingdom of Herod was reconstituted for his grandson Herod Agrippa I, upon whose premature death the procurators returned. In 66 the Jews rebelled against Rome, and in 70 the city was besieged and almost wholly destroyed by the Roman forces under the future emperor Titus. The Temple, Herod’s greatest achievement, was reduced to ashes. By 130 the city had been partially repopulated, and the Jews again revolted unsuccessfully against Rome from 132 to 135. Emperor Hadrian decided to plant a Roman city, Aelia Capitolina, on the site. The general layout of his town has lasted into the 21st century.

Christian pilgrims to Jerusalem are not recorded until the 4th century. It was the conversion to Christianity of Constantine I (the Great) and the famous pilgrimage (326) of his mother, St. Helena, who found the True Cross, that made possible the building of the great shrines in Jerusalem, including the Anastasis (“Resurrection”; later known as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre), and inaugurated one of the city’s most splendid and prosperous epochs. Christian glorification carried on into the 6th



## Kingdom of Jerusalem

also known as the **Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem**, was a Crusader state established in the Southern Levant (approximately modern-day Israel, Palestine, and Jordan) by Godfrey of Bouillon in 1099 after the First Crusade. The kingdom lasted nearly two hundred years, from 1099 until 1291 when its last remaining possession, Acre, was destroyed by the Mamluks. Its history is divided into two distinct periods. The **First Kingdom of Jerusalem** lasted from 1099 to 1187 before being almost entirely overrun by Saladin. Following the Third Crusade, the kingdom was re-established in Acre in 1192, and lasted until the city's destruction in 1291. This second kingdom is sometimes called the **Second Kingdom of Jerusalem** or the **Kingdom of Acre**, after its new capital. Acre remained the capital, except for the two decades which followed Frederick II of Hohenstaufen regaining the city of Jerusalem from the Ayyubids in the Sixth Crusade through diplomacy. The vast majority of the crusaders who established and settled the Kingdom of Jerusalem were from the Kingdom of France, as were the knights and soldiers who made up the bulk of the steady flow of reinforcements throughout the two-hundred-year span of its existence. Its rulers and elite were therefore of French origin. The French Crusaders also brought the French language to the Levant, thus making Old French the lingua franca of the Crusader states.

century when, under the emperor Justinian I, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was rebuilt and many other churches, as well as monasteries and hospices, were established. In 614 this golden age was brought to an end by the Persian invasion, in which the inhabitants of Jerusalem were massacred and the churches destroyed.

## Early Islamic Period

In 638 the Muslim caliph 'Umar I entered Jerusalem and, according to Muslim historians, discovered the Temple Mount in utter decay and disrepair. He immediately set about repairing the site, and in 688–691 the fifth Umayyad caliph, 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān, built the Dome of the Rock. Despite being proclaimed a goal of Muslim pilgrimage, the city lost some of its earlier importance when the caliphate was moved from Damascus to Baghdad by the 'Abbāsids in the mid-8th century. Jerusalem shrank in size, and the new line of walls (11th century) did not include the City of David and Zion. Both the Umayyads and their successors, the 'Abbāsids, pursued a liberal policy toward Christians and Jews. In 969 control of the city passed to the Shī'ite Fāṭimid caliphs of Egypt, and in 1010 the emotionally unstable caliph al-Ḥākīm ordered the destruction of Christian shrines. In 1071 the Seljuq Turks defeated the Byzantines at the Battle of Manzikert, displaced the Egyptians as masters of the Holy Land, and cut the pilgrim routes, thus stimulating the Crusades.

## Crusader Control

Reports of the renewed killing of Christian pilgrims, and the defeat of the Byzantine Empire by the Seljuqs, led to the First Crusade. Europeans marched to recover the Holy Land, and on July 15, 1099, Christian soldiers were victorious in the one-month Siege of Jerusalem. In keeping with their alliance with the Muslims, the Jews had been among the most vigorous defenders of Jerusalem against the Crusaders. When the city fell, the Crusaders slaughtered most of the city's Muslim and Jewish inhabitants, leaving the city "knee deep in blood".

Jerusalem became the capital of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Christian settlers from the West set about rebuilding the principal shrines associated with the life of Christ. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was ambitiously rebuilt as a great Romanesque church, and Muslim shrines on the Temple Mount (the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque) were converted for Christian purposes. The Military Orders of the Knights Hospitaller and the Knights Templar were established during this period. Both grew out of the need to protect and care for the great influx of pilgrims traveling to Jerusalem, especially since Bedouin enslavement raids and terror attacks upon the roads by the remaining Muslim population continued. King Baldwin II of Jerusalem allowed the forming order of the Templars to set up a headquarters in the captured Al-Aqsa Mosque. The Crusaders believed the Mosque to have been built on top of the ruins of the Temple of Solomon (or rather his royal palace), and therefore referred to the Mosque as "Solomon's Temple", in Latin "Templum Solomonis". It was from this location that the Order took its name of "Temple Knights" or "Templars".

Under the Kingdom of Jerusalem the area experienced a great revival, including the re-establishment of the city and harbor of Caesarea, the restoration and fortification of the city of Tiberias, the expansion of the city of Ashkelon, the walling and rebuilding of Jaffa, the reconstruction of Bethlehem, the repopulation of dozens of towns, the restoration of large agriculture, and the construction of hundreds of churches, cathedrals, and castles.



*Figure 1 Temple Mount*

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