Sacred Sites of Jerusalem: Notes (teacher)

Temple Mount / Haram al-Sharif (Noble Sanctuary)

- Elevated plateau in Jerusalem, covers approx 35 acres
- Sacred to:
  - Jews: sites of Temples (and Holy of Holies)
  - Christians: a place where Jesus would have visited
  - Muslims: the site of Muhammad’s journey to heaven
- Currently under Muslim control
- Non-Muslims visitors may enter Temple Mount complex during non-prayer times. Only Muslims allowed to visibly pray. Sacred Jewish prayer items may not be visible.

Dome of the Rock

- Muslim shrine (not a mosque)
- Oldest Islamic monument in the world; built 688-691 CE
- Built over a sacred stone, the place from which Muslims believe the prophet Muhammad took his journey to heaven. (You can see the stone inside the shrine.) Jews & Christians believe the sacred rock is where Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac.
- Not open to non-Muslim visitors

Western Wall

- Holiest Jewish site in the world--a remnant of a Second Temple retaining wall
- Large area in front of wall is an open-air synagogue
- Anyone may approach and pray
- Men & women have separate prayer areas
- Prayers on scraps of paper are stuffed into the cracks of the wall

Al-Aqsa Mosque (“the furthest mosque”)
- 3rd holiest site in Islam (after Mecca and Medina, both in Saudi Arabia)
- Mosque has been rebuilt at least 5 times, most recently in 1035 CE
- 4000-5000 can pray there (number depends on source)
- Al-aqsa was used as the royal palace of Crusader kings during the time European Christians controlled Jerusalem (1099-1187 CE). During this same period, Crusaders used Dome of the Rock as a church.

Church of the Holy Sepulchre*

- Stands on a sites that includes both Golgotha, or Calvary, where Jesus was crucified and the tomb (sepulchre) where he was buried
- The holiest Christian site in the world
- Constantine was the first to build a church on this site (330 CE)
- According to legend, Constantine’s mother Helena is said to have found the true cross near the tomb

Via Dolorosa* (Latin for “Way of Suffering” or “Way of Grief”)

- The route that Jesus took after being condemned by Pontius Pilate to crucifixion and eventual burial
- Via Dolorosa pilgrimage has been followed since early Christianity, beginning as soon as it became same to do so
- The route covers the 14 Stations of the Cross and ends at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. (The last 5 steps are inside Holy Sepulchre.)

* Outside of Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif