**Religious significance**

**of Jerusalem, Israel**

The city of [**Jerusalem**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem) is significant in a number of religious traditions, including the [Abrahamic religions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abrahamic_religion) [Judaism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaism), [Christianity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity), and [Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam), which consider it a holy city.

**In Judaism**

Jerusalem has been the [holiest city](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_Holy_Cities) in [Judaism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaism) and the ancestral and spiritual homeland of the [Jewish people](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jew) since the 10th century BCE

The city of Jerusalem is given special status in [Jewish religious law](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halakha). In particular, Jews outside Jerusalem pray facing its direction, and the [maaser sheni](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maaser_sheni), [revai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orlah_prohibition) and [First Fruits](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Fruits) must be eaten in Jerusalem. Any expansion of the city for these purposes must be approved by the [Sanhedrin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanhedrin). Also, when the [Temple in Jerusalem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_in_Jerusalem) was standing, Jerusalem observed special laws regarding the [Four Species](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_Species) on [Sukkot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sukkot), and the [Shofar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shofar) on [Rosh Hashanah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosh_Hashanah).

*“And God said: 'Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah (Jerusalem); and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains (Temple Mount) which I will tell thee of.”* —Genesis 22:2

Jerusalem has long been embedded into Jewish religious consciousness. Jews have studied and personalized the struggle by [King David](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_David) to capture Jerusalem and his desire to build the [Jewish temple](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_in_Jerusalem) there, as described in the [Book of Samuel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Samuel) and the [Book of Psalms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Psalms). Many of King David's yearnings about Jerusalem have been adapted into popular prayers and songs.

Jerusalem appears in the [Tanakh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanakh) ([Hebrew Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_Bible)) 669 times and [Zion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zion) (which usually means Jerusalem, sometimes the [Land of Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Land_of_Israel)) appears 154 times. The first section, the [Torah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torah), only mentions [Moriah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moriah), the mountain range believedto be the location of the [binding of Isaac](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Binding_of_Isaac) and the [Temple Mount](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_Mount) in Jerusalem, and in later parts of the [Tanakh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanakh) the city is written explicitly. The Tanakh (or [Old Testament](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Testament)), is a text sacred to both [Judaism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaism) and [Christianity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity). In Judaism it is considered the [Written Law](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Written_Law), the basis for the [Oral Law](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oral_Law) ([Mishnah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mishnah" \o "Mishnah), [Talmud](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talmud) and [Shulkhan Arukh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shulkhan_Arukh)) studied, practiced and treasured by [Jews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jew) and [Judaism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaism) for three millennia. The Talmud elaborates in great depth the Jewish connection with the city.

**In Christianity**

For [Christians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity), Jerusalem's place in the life of [Jesus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus) gives it great importance, in addition to its place in the [Old Testament](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Testament), the [Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible), as described above.

Jerusalem is the place where Jesus was brought as a child, to be "presented" at the [Temple](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_in_Jerusalem) ([Luke](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Luke) 2:22) and to attend festivals (Luke 2:41). According to the [Gospels](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel), Jesus preached and healed in Jerusalem, especially in the Temple courts. There is also an account of Jesus' "cleansing" of the Temple, chasing various traders out of the sacred precincts ([Mark](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Mark) 11:15). At the end of each of the Gospels, there are accounts of Jesus' [Last Supper](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Last_Supper) in an "upper room" in Jerusalem, his arrest in [Gethsemane](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gethsemane), his trial, his crucifixion at [Golgotha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golgotha), his burial nearby and his [resurrection](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resurrection_of_Jesus) and [ascension](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ascension_of_Jesus_Christ).

In Christianity, the Jewish connection with the city is considered as the account of God's relationship with His [chosen people](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chosen_people)—the original [covenant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Covenant_(biblical))—and the essential prelude to the events narrated in the [New Testament](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Testament), including both universal commandments (e.g. the [Ten Commandments](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ten_Commandments)) and [obsolete](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supersessionism) or Judaism-specific ones.

In medieval times Christians thought Jerusalem was the center of the world (Latin: *umbilicus mundi*, Greek: *Omphalos*), and was so represented in the so-called [T and O maps](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T_and_O_map). Byzantine hymns speak of the Cross being "planted in the center of the earth," and the imagery is tied to the concept of the [Death and resurrection of Jesus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death_and_resurrection_of_Jesus) being for the benefit of all mankind. Medieval maps of Europe usually placed the east ("orient")—Jerusalem—at the top, and this arrangement led to the use of the term "to orient" to mean to align a map with actual compass directions.

**In Islam**

Jerusalem is considered a sacred site in [Sunni](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunni) Islamic tradition, along with [Mecca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mecca) and [Medina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medina). Islamic tradition holds that previous prophets were associated with the city, and that the Islamic prophet Muhammad visited the city on a nocturnal journey. Due to such significance it was the first Qibla (direction of prayer) for Muslims and the prophet Muhammad designated the Al-Aqsa for pilgrimage.

*“The most holy spot [al-quds] on earth is Syria; the most holy spot in Syria is Palestine; the most holy spot in Palestine is Jerusalem [Bayt al-maqdis]; the most holy spot in Jerusalem is the Mountain; the most holy spot in Jerusalem is the place of worship [al-masjid], and the most holy spot in the place of worship is the Dome”* —[Thawr ibn Yazid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thawr_ibn_Yazid" \o "Thawr ibn Yazid), c.770

[Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad) is believed to have been taken by the miraculous steed [Buraq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buraq) to visit Jerusalem, where he prayed, and then to visit [heaven](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heaven), in a single night in the year 610. Jerusalem is not directly mentioned by name in the [Qur'an](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qur%27an) nor is it mentioned by its Arabic translation, "Al Quds". However the [Qur'anic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qur%27an) verse ([17](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Isra):1) is interpreted by Islamic [tafsirs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tafsir) (commentaries) as referring to this journey, with the term "the farthest Mosque" ([*al-masjid al-Aqsa*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Aqsa_Mosque)) referring to the [Noble Sanctuary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noble_Sanctuary) in Jerusalem, where the mosque stands. There he meets other prophets, Abraham, Moses and Jesus in particular.

The Al-Aqsa Mosque is specified of being in Jerusalem as per numerous [hadith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadith):

Narrated Jabir bin 'Abdullah: "Then he heard Allah's Apostle saying, "When the people of Quraish did not believe me (i.e. the story of my Night Journey), I stood up in Al-Hijr and Allah displayed Jerusalem in front of me, and I began describing Jerusalem to them while I was looking at it." Sahih Bukhari: Volume 5, Book 58, Number 226.

Part of Jerusalem's significance and holiness to Muslims derives from its strong association with [Abraham](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham), [David](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David), [Solomon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solomon), and [Jesus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus). They are all regarded as [Prophets of Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophets_of_Islam) and their stories are mentioned in the Qur'an.

Jerusalem served as the first [qibla](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qibla) (direction of prayer) for Muslims. Whilst Muslims were in Mecca, and also for 17–18 months in Medina, Muslims prayed towards Jerusalem. Early mosques in Medina were built to face Jerusalem. In 625, The qibla was changed to the [Kaaba](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaaba) in Mecca.

After Muhammad, many of his [Companions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahaba) lived in Jerusalem, and upon their death they were buried there.