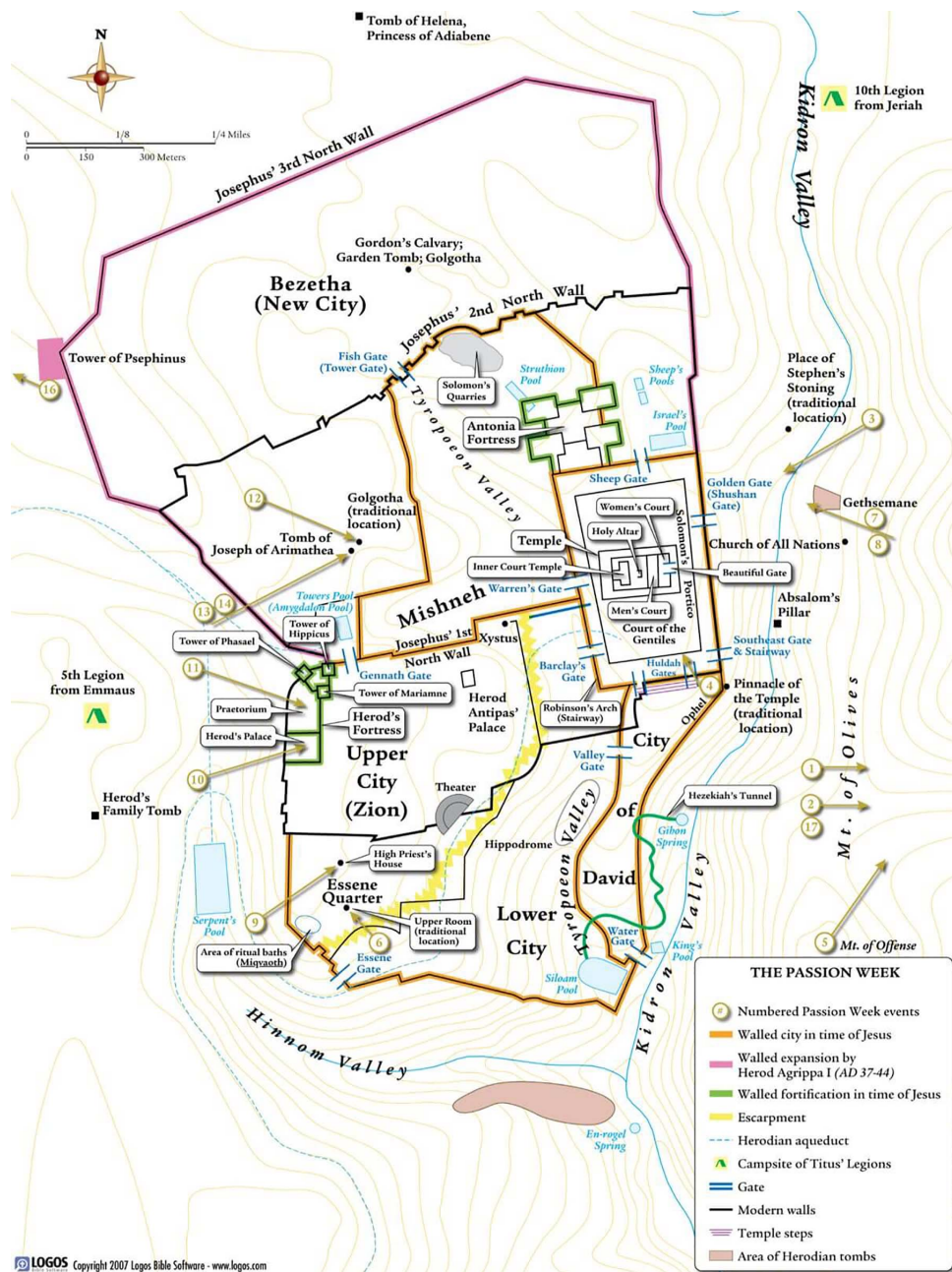


## Moving towards Holy Week

Tomorrow is Palm Sunday - when the crowds came out to praise and shout Hosanna to Jesus - that human adulation and apparent recognition of Who Jesus was and is; but offering a praise which so quickly turned on its heel to derision, hate and destruction. The death and destruction of the one whose only 'crime' was to stand against the power and hypocrisy of the Temple authorities as He healed and taught and talked of God's Kingdom available for all, here and now.

Jesus' statement of who he is, whose voice, the voice of the unheard, he speaks for and for whom he has come, can be heard in *Luke 4:16-19*. His actions all through his ministry find his care and compassion reserved for those who are nothing and have nothing in this life. He lives and works 'on the wrong side' - the slums and shanty towns outside the large and grand city of Jerusalem. We can see this so very visibly through looking at a map of ancient Jerusalem.



The Kidron Valley, the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane are names we hear during Holy week. Jesus approaches Jerusalem from Bethany (which means House of Affliction or Poverty, but also paradoxically also House of Figs) just two miles from Jerusalem by the Mount of Olives

Bethany may well have been a leper colony (it was the House of Simon the Leper in Bethany where Jesus stayed at this time, as well as the place where Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived). One thing for sure, they are all on the very unfashionable side of Jerusalem with a very steep bank up the escarpment as really the only practical access point (just look at the contour lines - it was **very** steep).

So on Palm Sunday, Jesus entered Jerusalem by the 'back door' to get to the Temple, in contrast to the Roman soldiers and cavalry who have come to keep order over the Feast of the Passover. They entered grandly with flags and horses and armour all glinting and noisy and powerful. They came from the other side - the front door as it were - by Herod's palace - into the Upper City; one is tempted to say the Kensington and Chelsea of Jerusalem. What a different picture they present from Jesus and His friends and followers.

Jesus actions during Holy Week speak clearly of who he has come for and for whom he will gladly lay down His life; those who will both praise and condemn Him during this next week when He stands falsely accused by the Powers and Principalities of this world, betrayed by his friends and by the actions of the crowds who, by manipulation and mob hysteria, were ridiculously easily swayed from praise to condemnation,

But in the circumstances would we be any better ?

**Lord, forgive us our weakness and have mercy on us, today, tomorrow and always Amen.**

With all blessings  
Barbie Coulson