

SHALOM Yeladim (children),

One of the most colourful and exciting places to walk through in the Old City of Jerusalem is the Cardo. Winding, twisting, narrow streets meander through the buildings of the Old City creating a narrow alleyway of shops. All five of your senses seem to be overwhelmed as you smell spices competing with the humidity in the air. Head coverings of every shade of each colour hang, there tassels swaying in the breeze. The cacophony of sellers calling out their prices, the unending tapping of quick feet and the shuffle of older ones, coffee being made, leather sewing machines piercing both the material and your ears. One second you run your hand over soft luxurious silk shawls and the next you feel the brittleness of the grains of the spices. No matter when you've eaten, the smells of freshly baked pita, shawarma, Turkish coffee and sweet, sticky pastries instantly make you hungry again. The smoothie stands with their fresh pomegranate and orange juices are hard to walk past without ordering just a small one at least.



Thankfully at some point they decided to add directional signs for the tourists. These guide the moving throng to their desired destination out of this wonder of sights and smells. We are heading into the Jewish quarter, and in turning off and down a less congested alleyway, the cacophony of languages eases.



We are walking from the modern cardo, to the one at the time of Christ. The Cardo was not just an important street, but also a vital part of the design of a Roman city or town. The Cardo was a street lined on both sides with shops, and served as a center of business. The main cardo was called cardo maximus, and usually went North-South.



Sections from the Cardo from the time of the New Testament can be seen in a few different areas in the Jewish quarter. This has helped archeologists understand how the streets would have been laid out in Jerusalem at that time.

Can you imagine walking down the Cardo with the women that helped to serve Christ and the disciples, as they looked for the best deals on fish and vegetables. Just like today, there would have been stands where fresh breads and pitas were being sold. We made two more turns. Then, suddenly, we were standing right there at the base of pillars that lined the Cardo. There is something so neat and special about touching items from Bible times, don't you think? Leaning in the cool shade of the pillars, I tried to imagine what it would have been like when those we read about living in the New Testament walked on this road. I wondered if one of the disciples paused and leaned against the same pillar that I was, taking a break from the fierce summer sun.

Looking up at the mural that showed what it would have looked like then, really helped me to picture it. I have always loved looking at reconstruction drawings and models of what life was like in Bible times. Continuing down the street to the pizza shop for lunch, we passed a water cistern and another house from the time of Jesus. It seems that at every corner of the old Jewish quarter there is more proof of the Bible mixed in with the modern city.

The pizza shop is in the Hurva Synagogue courtyard, and it was the perfect place to stop, sit, and think about the history these stones have seen, and the amazing prophecies that we are waiting for Christ to return and fulfil in this very city. This tree lined square has always been a popular place for people to congregate. For years, the synagogue lay in ruins. The Jordanians destroyed it in the capture of Jerusalem in 1948. In fact Hurva means Ruin, and so the synagogue was given this name when the Ottomans destroyed the previous one on the same spot. It was left as a ruin until it was finally rebuilt in 2010. Like so much in Israel it holds history spanning from the Bible to the revival of the nation. In the lower portion, you can see the remains of a ritual bath from the time of Christ, a Byzantine arch leading to the cardo, and street stones from both time periods. In the reconstruction, they even discovered an arms cache from 1938 that had been hidden from the British. Ironically, the defenders of Jerusalem in 1948 didn't know of it's existence, so it was there for the construction workers to find! Inside they have built the new synagogue walls around the old stones. Right at the front is an empty chair waiting for a very important visitor. They have this chair for Elijah, when he comes to teach them the coming Messiah. We ended our day on the rooftop overlooking the Temple mount, longing for the day when Christ will return as King of Israel. Then they will finally recognize him as their Messiah and King!



Shalom;
Crazy Auntie Lindsay

