



Australian Government
Refugee Review Tribunal

Country Advice

China

China – CHN38349 – Christianity –
Jerusalem – Site of The Ascension
8 March 2011

1. Is there a site in Jerusalem where Jesus Christ is said to have ascended into heaven?

Yes. According to *The Bible* Jesus Christ is said to have ascended into heaven from the Bethany/Mount of Olives area around Jerusalem. *The Bible* does not identify the exact spot of the Ascension. Luke 24:50-24:53 in the *New International Version of The Holy Bible* writes that Jesus Christ ascended into heaven from the vicinity of Bethany near Jerusalem. Bethany is also known as Azariya, a Jerusalem suburb.¹ Acts 1:1-1:12 identified the location as Mount of Olives, a day's walk from Jerusalem.

Luke 24:50-24:53 mentions Bethany as the site of the Ascension as follows:

When he had led them out to **the vicinity of Bethany**, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them **and was taken up into heaven**. Then **they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem** with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple praising, God.²

Acts 1:1-1:12 refers to the Mount of Olives as the location of the Ascension in the following terms:

Jesus Taken Up Into Heaven

...I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen...

...he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee", they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas

¹ Wilson, Scott 2007, 'Touring Israel's barrier with its main designer', *The Washington Post*, 7 August <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/08/06/AR2007080601661.html> – Accessed 8 August 2007 – Attachment 1.

² *New International Version of The Holy Bible* 1986, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, p.749/ Luke 24:50-24:53 – Attachment 2.

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city...³

2. Please provide information about the site in Jerusalem said to be where Jesus ascended into heaven, its location, whether it is indoors or outdoors, whether it is in a church or chapel setting.

Sources refer to two locations which are believed to mark the site where Jesus is said to have ascended into heaven – the Chapel of the Ascension and the Russian Orthodox Church of the Ascension,⁴ both located in Al-Tur [A-Tur; Et-Tur] village/suburb in the Mount of Olives area of Jerusalem. Photographs of the “Chapel of the Ascension” building on the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem website show, however, that the two Church of the Ascension buildings are the same. This suggests that the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission also considers the Chapel of the Ascension to be the site where Jesus is said to have ascended into heaven. Also on the Russian church site there is a rock which, according to tradition, is the place where the Virgin Mary stood when Jesus ascended into heaven. A number of photographs of the Church of the Ascension shows that the spot of the Ascension is indoors. The Chapel of the Ascension has been described both as a chapel and a church.⁵

According to the BibleWalks website the chapel is in a small courtyard adjacent to a mosque.⁶ Another travel website also states that in the Arab village of Et-Tur and within the precincts of a mosque is the Chapel of the Ascension. The village lies on the road from Jerusalem to Bethany.⁷ The Russian Orthodox church is nearby.⁸ An aerial view of both the Chapel of the Ascension and the Russian Orthodox church follows:⁹

³ *New International Version of The Holy Bible* 1986, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, p.770/ Acts 1:1-1:12 – Attachment 2.

⁴ ‘Chapel of Ascension’ (undated), BibleWalks.com website

<http://www.biblewalks.com/Sites/AscensionChurch.html> – Accessed 2 March 2011 – Attachment 3.

⁵ ‘Chapel of the Ascension, Jerusalem’ (undated), Sacred Destinations website <http://www.sacred-destinations.com/israel/jerusalem-chapel-of-ascension> – Accessed 2 March 2011 – Attachment 4.

⁶ ‘Chapel of Ascension’ (undated), BibleWalks.com website

<http://www.biblewalks.com/Sites/AscensionChurch.html> – Accessed 2 March 2011 – Attachment 3.

⁷ ‘Jerusalem – Chapel of the Ascension’ (undated), Planetware website

<http://www.planetware.com/jerusalem/chapel-of-the-ascension-isr-jr-jca.htm> – Accessed 2 March 2011 – Attachment 5.

⁸ ‘Chapel of the Ascension’ (undated), Where Jesus Walked website

<http://www.wherejesuswalked.org/sightseeing/jerusalem/chapel-of-the-ascension> – Accessed 2 March 2011 – Attachment 6; ‘Chapel of Ascension’ (undated), BibleWalks.com website

<http://www.biblewalks.com/Sites/AscensionChurch.html> – Accessed 2 March 2011 – Attachment 3.

⁹ ‘Chapel of Ascension’ (undated), BibleWalks.com website

<http://www.biblewalks.com/Sites/AscensionChurch.html> – Accessed 2 March 2011 – Attachment 3.



The following photographs of the Chapel of the Ascension show the building is octagonal and dome-shaped:¹⁰



11

¹⁰ 'Chapel of Ascension' (undated), BibleWalks.com website
<http://www.biblewalks.com/Sites/AscensionChurch.html> – Accessed 2 March 2011 – Attachment 3.

¹¹ 'Chapel of Ascension' (undated), BibleWalks.com website
<http://www.biblewalks.com/Sites/AscensionChurch.html> – Accessed 2 March 2011 – Attachment 3.



12

Inside the Chapel of the Ascension is a rock with a footprint identified, according to Christian tradition, as being the footprint that Jesus left as he ascended into heaven.¹³ Photographs of the rock with the footprint are:

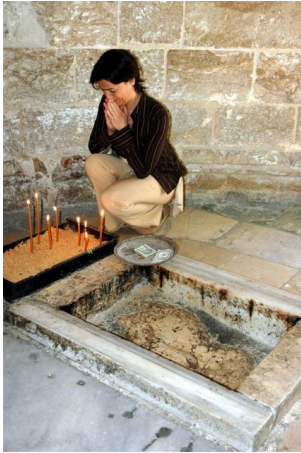


14

¹² 'Outside the Chapel Of The Ascension' in 'Chapel of the Ascension' (undated), Where Jesus Walked website <http://www.wherjesuswalked.org/sightseeing/jerusalem/chapel-of-the-ascension> – Accessed 2 March 2011 – Attachment 6.

¹³ 'Chapel of the Ascension, Jerusalem' (undated), AtlasTours.Net website http://www.atlastours.net/holyland/chapel_of_the_ascension.html – Accessed 2 March 2011 – Attachment 7.

¹⁴ 'Interior with mihrab and footprint of Christ' in 'Chapel of the Ascension, Jerusalem' (undated), Sacred Destinations website <http://www.sacred-destinations.com/israel/jerusalem-chapel-of-ascension> – Accessed 2 March 2011 – Attachment 4.



15

The following photographs of the Chapel of the Ascension on the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem website show it to be the same building as above:



16

¹⁵ “Spot of the ascension (sic)’ in ‘Chapel of the Ascension’ (undated), Where Jesus Walked website <http://www.wherejesuswalked.org/sightseeing/jerusalem/chapel-of-the-ascension> – Accessed 2 March 2011 – Attachment 6.

¹⁶ ‘Chapel of the Ascension’ in ‘Photographs – Mount of Olives’ (undated), Russian Ecclesiastical Mission website http://www.jerusalem-mission.org/photos_mount_of_olives.html – Accessed 7 March 2011 – Attachment 8.



17

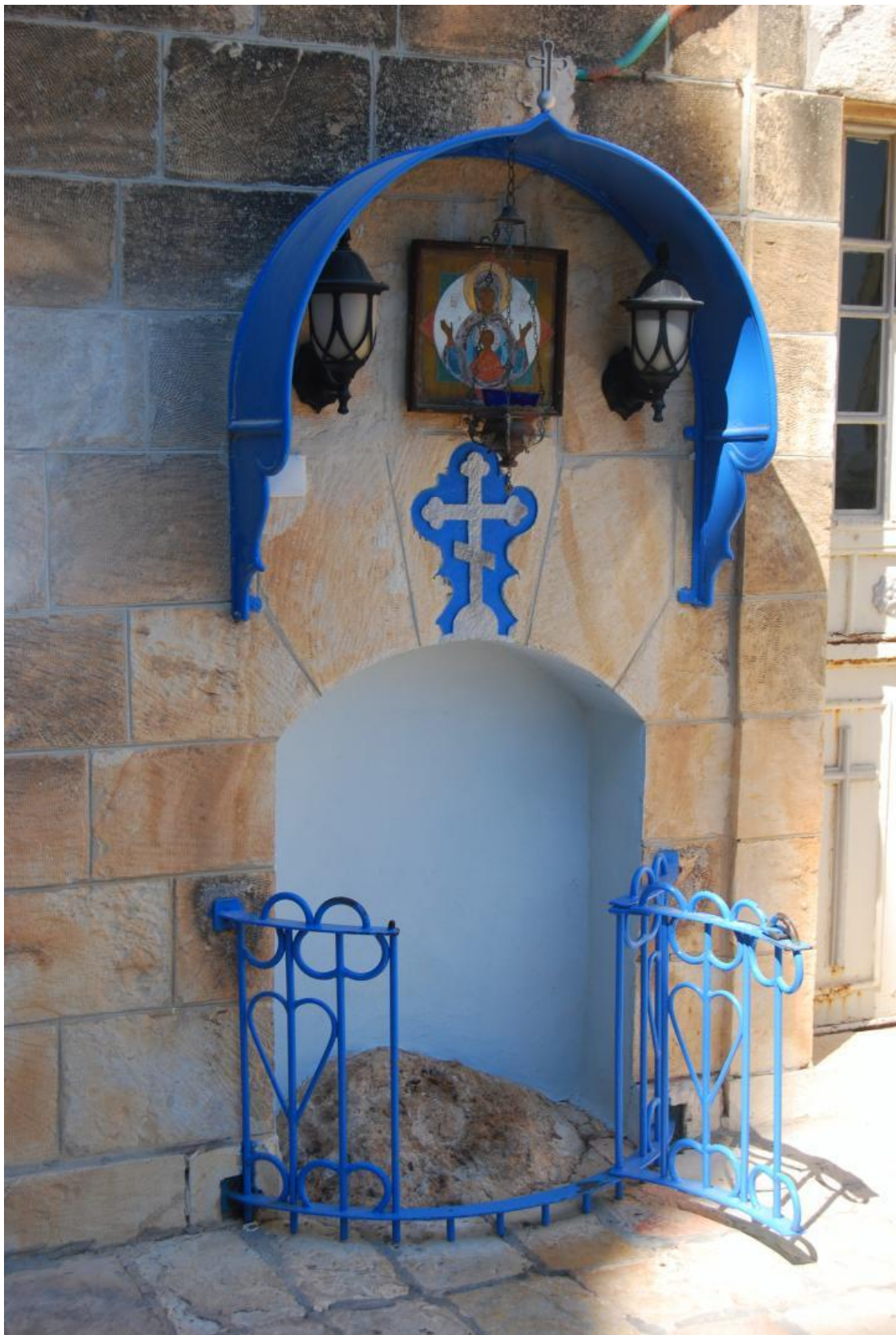
In addition, the BibleWalks website states that behind the Russian church (photograph below) is a rock behind a blue fence where the Virgin Mary is believed to have stood when Jesus ascended into heaven:¹⁸



¹⁷ 'View of the Chapel of the Ascension from the Mt. of Olives Hotel' in 'Photographs – Mount of Olives' (undated), Russian Ecclesiastical Mission website http://www.jerusalem-mission.org/photos_mount_of_olives.html – Accessed 7 March 2011 – Attachment 8.

¹⁸ 'Russian Ascension Convent' (undated), BibleWalks.com website <http://www.biblewalks.com/Sites/RussianAscensionChurch.html> – Accessed 2 March 2011 – Attachment 9.

Another photograph from the BibleWalks website shows the spot where the Virgin Mary is believed to have stood when Jesus ascended into heaven as:¹⁹



¹⁹ 'Russian Ascension Convent' (undated), BibleWalks.com website
<http://www.biblewalks.com/Sites/RussianAscensionChurch.html> – Accessed 2 March 2011 – Attachment 9.

3. If possible please provide an image of the site of the stone in Jerusalem said to be where Jesus ascended into heaven.

See question 2 above for various images of the stone in the Chapel of the Ascension where Jesus is said to have ascended into heaven. No images of such a stone were found in the Russian Orthodox church.

A further image of the stone in the Chapel of the Ascension is:



20

Attachments

1. Wilson, Scott 2007, 'Touring Israel's barrier with its main designer', *The Washington Post*, 7 August <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/08/06/AR2007080601661.html> – Accessed 8 August 2007. (CISNET Israel CX182495)
2. *New International Version of The Holy Bible* 1986, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. (MRT-RRT Library)
3. 'Chapel of Ascension' (undated), BibleWalks.com website <http://www.biblewalks.com/Sites/AscensionChurch.html> – Accessed 2 March 2011.
4. 'Chapel of the Ascension, Jerusalem' (undated), Sacred Destinations website <http://www.sacred-destinations.com/israel/jerusalem-chapel-of-ascension> – Accessed 2 March 2011.

²⁰ 'Inside the Chapel of the Ascension' (undated), Travelpod website http://www.travelpod.com/travel-photo/dancejill/1/1234808160/img_8114.jpg/tpod.html – Accessed 2 March 2011- Attachment 10.

5. 'Jerusalem – Chapel of the Ascension' (undated), Planetware website
<http://www.planetware.com/jerusalem/chapel-of-the-ascension-isr-jr-jca.htm> –
Accessed 2 March 2011.
6. 'Chapel of the Ascension' (undated), Where Jesus Walked website
<http://www.wherejesuswalked.org/sightseeing/jerusalem/chapel-of-the-ascension> –
Accessed 2 March 2011.
7. 'Chapel of the Ascension, Jerusalem' (undated), AtlasTours.Net website
http://www.atlastours.net/holyland/chapel_of_the_ascension.html – Accessed 2 March
2011.
8. 'Chapel of the Ascension' in 'Photographs – Mount of Olives' (undated), Russian
Ecclesiastical Mission website [http://www.jerusalem-
mission.org/photos_mount_of_olives.html](http://www.jerusalem-mission.org/photos_mount_of_olives.html) – Accessed 7 March 2011.
9. 'Russian Ascension Convent' (undated), BibleWalks.com website
<http://www.biblewalks.com/Sites/RussianAscensionChurch.html> – Accessed 2 March
2011.
10. 'Inside the Chapel of the Ascension' (undated), Travelpod website
[http://www.travelpod.com/travel-
photo/dancejill/1/1234808160/img_8114.jpg/tpod.html](http://www.travelpod.com/travel-photo/dancejill/1/1234808160/img_8114.jpg/tpod.html) – Accessed 2 March 2011.