

# JERUSALEM SCENES

## The City of David



To the south of the Temple Mount there stretches a tongue of land, bounded on its eastern side by the steep-sided Kidron Valley and on its western side by the Tyropoeon Valley, now only shallow. This was where the original city of Jerusalem was situated, as conquered by David from the Jebusites 3,000 years ago, when it was called Jebus. It was situated here because it was easy to defend and because it sits above the only permanent water supply in the area, the Gihon Spring in the valley below. Much excavation has taken place here in modern times, and a variety of archaeological remains is visible, dating back to various times in Israel's history, including remnants of walls from Jebusite times. Our picture shows part of the excavated area, the numbers relating to an explanatory panel provided for the benefit of visitors. The tower marked '3' in the background is dated to Hasmonean (Macabbean) times, that is, a century or so before Christ.

More interesting to the visitor, however, is the stepped structure in the foreground, numbered '4'. This is not a building in its own right but a retaining wall, enabling building to take place on top of it. Some think it is the Millo of 2 Samuel 5:9 and later passages, it being suggested that the term means 'fill', referring to the material behind the retaining wall. The structure is believed to date back to Jebusite times. At the top, numbered '1', are the remains of a large structure thought to have been originally a Jebusite citadel, the centre of "the strong hold of Zion" of 2 Samuel 5:7 captured by David and made his capital. If this is where David lived subsequently one can readily see how, walking on the rooftop, he had a commanding view of the city, enabling him to see the beautiful Bathsheba washing in the courtyard of a house below, a sight which stimulated him into a course of action that led to adultery and murder, then contrition, forgiveness and a life of subsequent trial and trouble.—*T.B.*