

Triennial Torah Study – 1st Year 07/08/2010



sightedmoon.com /triennial-torah-study-1st-year-04042015 /

By Joseph F. Dumond

This week's Triennial Torah reading can be found at:

<https://sightedmoon.com/files/TriennialCycleBeginningAviv.pdf>

Gen 22-23	Judges 20-21	Ps 48	Mat 27
------------------	---------------------	--------------	---------------

Gen 22-23

As you read this week's Study about the Mountains of Moriah to which Abraham took Isaac, keep in mind that back in chapter 14 Abraham gave a tenth to Melchizedek King of Salem. Melchizedek was King of a city and that city was Salem. Jeru is Canaanite for city. The JeruCity of Salem or city of peace; Jerusalem. This city already existed when Abraham took Isaac to the Mountains plural of Moriah.

I have just realized that once again as we study Genesis a similar teaching comes from Mathew. Again in Mathew we are focusing on the Mount of Moriah.

In verse 8 we get another example of the faith of Abraham, when he states that Yahovah will provide His own lamb for a burnt offering. In verse 13 we read of the Ram being caught in a thicket. So now you know the area was not a city but a forested area. But the Ram was symbolic of Yahshua the Lamb of Yahovah.

In Exodus 12 we are told that they should take a lamb for the Passover sacrifice. It is a Male lamb otherwise known as a Ram.

1 And ????? spoke to Mosheh and to Aharon in the land of Mitsrayim, saying, 2 "This month is the beginning of months for you, it is the first month of the year for you. 3 "Speak to all the congregation of Yisra'el, saying, 'On the tenth day of this month each one of them is to take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. 4 'And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next to his house take it according to the number of the beings, according to each man's need you make your count for the lamb. 5 'Let the lamb be a perfect one, a year old male.

We also can read in John about Yahshua being that male Lamb.

John 1: 29 On the next day Yoh'anan saw ?????? coming toward him, and said, "See, the Lamb of Elohim who takes away the sin of the world!

We are told right from the beginning that Yahshua was to deliver us from sin.

Mt. 1:21 21 "And she shall give birth to a Son, and you shall call His Name ?????? for He shall save¹ His people from their sins." Footnote: ¹This is the precise meaning of the Hebrew of His Name.

This is the symbolic purpose of the sin offering, to save us from our sins. Yah-shua means God Save us. And this is why I use the name Yahshua and not the name Jesus. Jesus has no meaning to it when you try to translate it.

Titus 2: 11 For the saving Gift of Elohim has appeared to all men, 12 instructing us to renounce wickedness and worldly lusts, and to live sensibly, righteously, and reverently in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed expectation and esteemed appearance of the great Elohim and our Saviour ????? Messiah, 14 who gave Himself for us, to redeem us from all lawlessness¹ and to cleanse for Himself a people, His own possession, ardent for good works.² Footnotes:

¹Lawlessness is a synonym for sin (1 John 3:4), Mt. 1:21, Acts 3:19 & 26, Acts 26:18, Rom. 6:1-22, Eph. 2:1-10, 1 John 3:8, Titus 3:5. ²Mt. 16:27. ¹⁵ Speak these matters, urge, and reprove¹ with all authority. Let no one despise you.

¹ John 3:5 & 8. ⁵ And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. ⁶ Everyone staying in Him does not sin. Everyone sinning has neither seen Him nor known Him.¹ Footnote: ¹See 2:4 & 3 John v. 11. ⁷ Little children, let no one lead you astray. The one doing righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous.¹ Footnote: ¹See 2:29. ⁸ The one doing sin is of the devil, because the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of Elohim was manifested: to destroy the works of the devil.

Now where was the place for the sin offerings to be made?

Exodus 29:14 But the flesh of the bull, with its skin and its offal, you shall burn with fire outside the camp. It is a sin offering.

Hebrews 13:10 We have an altar from which those serving the Tent have no authority to eat. ¹¹ For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the Set-apart Place by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. ¹² And so ????? also suffered outside the gate, to set apart the people with His own blood. ¹³ Let us, then, go to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

For this reason each time I go to Jerusalem I go to this place outside the camp to pray.

There was an area for burning the bodies of the sacrifices outside of the city gate. This location is referred to in the Old Testament as a place “without [outside of] the camp” of Israel. After the Temple was built, this place for burning the bodies of the sacrifices had a specific location outside of the city. According to the Mishnah, a second-century Judean commentary, a bridge had been built over the Kidron Valley from the Temple area eastward to the Mount of Olives leading to this location for burning the bodies.

“They made a causeway from the Temple Mount to the Mount of Olives, an arched way built over an arched way, with an arch directly above each pier [of the arch below], for fear of any grave in the depths below. By it the priest that was to burn the Heifer, and the Heifer, and all that aided him went forth to the Mount of Olives.” – Herbert Danby, trans., *The Mishnah* (Oxford University Press, 1933), p.700.

The bridge led from the east Temple gate to a place near the summit of the Mount of Olives. The priest could pass over this bridge uncontaminated by the graves below in order to burn the bodies of the animals outside the city. Yahshua was crucified near the Temple.

John 19:20 ... for the place where Yahshua was crucified was nigh to the city:...

According to John 19:20, “the place where Yahshua was crucified was nigh to the city.” This is a mistranslation. The word place in the Greek is associated with “the city,” so that this verse should be translated, “Yahshua was crucified near the place of the city.” “The Place of the city” was the Temple, which is also called “the place.”

Ezekiel 43:21 – Thou shalt take the bullock also of the sin offering and he shall burn it in the appointed place of the house, without the sanctuary. (The house is also a term used for the Temple.)

John 11:48 If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

“The text reads – take away the place and the nation. By the place – the Pharisees meant the Temple. The area of burning on the Mount of Olives east of the city was considered part of “the place.” This location was outside the city and yet near (and part of) the Temple proper.

“Golgotha” refers to a place of registry where heads were counted and not a place that looks like a skull as the King James version implies.

John 19:17 And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha.

Ezekiel 43:21 – Thou shalt take the bullock also of the sin offering and he shall burn it in the appointed place of the house, without the sanctuary.

The words “appointed place” in the Hebrew is the word “miphkad.” Miphkad comes from the verb paqad which means to number. The gate of the city that led to the “appointed place” was called the Miphkad Gate.

The Miphkad Gate (referred to in Nehemiah 3:31) was located on the east wall just north of the east gate leading to the Temple.

The Miphkad Gate opened onto the road leading up the Mount of Olives just north of the place where the bodies were burned. This road led to the Miphkad, or “appointed place,” where people registered for the Temple tax. Each person [head count] was taxed at this location. The word “Golgotha,” used in the Gospels to describe the place of the crucifixion, is an Aramaic word which suggests this area of registry known as Miphkad. The related Hebrew word bears the same meaning. It is gulgoleth, which means “skull, head, or poll.” It is a head count.

Exodus 38:25-26 And the silver of them that were numbered [paqad, to appoint or number] of the congregation was an hundred talents, and a thousand seven hundred and threescore and fifteen shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: A bekah for every man [gulgoleth, head], that is half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for every one that went to be numbered [paqad]...

In the time of Yahshua, this place of numbering, or registration, for the Temple tax was called Golgotha. This was the Miphkad area on the Mount of Olives east of the Temple and near the place outside the city where the bodies of sacrifices were burned.

Taken from <http://www.cortright.org/locatcru.htm>

Now before I leave this subject take a look at this in Ezekiel.

The glory of the LORD [“Cavod YHVH”] went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house [Temple]; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD’S glory [“Cavod YHVH”].

However, YAHOVAH God was making preparations to REMOVE the “Shekinah” from the Temple and then from the very city itself:

And the cherubim lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight; when they went out, the wheels also were beside them, and every one stood at the door of the EAST GATE of the LORD'S house; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. — Ezekiel 10:19.

Then, in Ezekiel 11:23, we read of the actual DEPARTURE of YAHOVAH's "Shekinah" from the MOUNT OF OLIVES — And the glory of the LORD ["Cavod YHVH"] went up from the midst of the city, and stood on the mountain which is on the east side of the city [Mount of Olives].

Ezekiel 11:22 And the kerub'im lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them, and the esteem of the Elohim of Yisra'el was high above them. 23 And the esteem of YHVH went up from the midst of the city and stood upon the mountain, which is on the east side of the city.

<http://www.hope-of-israel.org/glory.htm>

YEHOVAH's "Shekinah" remained in the Temple all through the life and death of the Messiah and up to the year 66 A.D. — when it was seen leaving the Temple and alighting on the Mount of Olives. Notice!

There is also another reason why Christians in the first century were very interested in the Mount of Olives. This is because it was believed that the Shekinah Glory of God which supposedly dwelt inside the Holy of Holies at the Temple left the sanctuary and went to the Mount of Olives and hovered over that spot at the time of the Roman/Jewish War which ended in A.D. 70. The fact that the Shekinah Glory left the old Temple and migrated to the top of the Mount of Olives was an important event to Eusebius [church historian and scholar A.D. 260-340?]. — Secrets of Golgotha, by Ernest L. Martin. 1988: ASK Publications, Alhambra, CA. P. 83.

In Eusebius' book Proof of the Gospel we find this passage —

Believers in Christ congregate from all parts of the world, not as of old time because of the glory of Jerusalem, nor that they may worship in the ancient Temple at Jerusalem, but...that they may worship at the Mount of Olives opposite to the city, whither the glory [the Shekinah Glory] of the LORD [YEHOVAH, YHVH] migrated when it left the former city. (Book VI, Chapter 18 (288)).

According to Eusebius the "Shekinah" Glory left the Temple and hovered over the Mount of Olives during "the siege of Jerusalem" (66 A.D. to 70). However, Eusebius was not the only observer who mentioned that the "Shekinah" Glory left the Temple before the destruction of the Temple and hovered over the Mount of Olives. A Jewish rabbi named Jonathan — who was an eyewitness to the destruction of Jerusalem — said the "Shekinah" Glory left the

Temple and for three and a half years

"abode on the MOUNT OF OLIVES hoping that Israel would repent, but they did not; while a Bet Kol [a supernatural voice from heaven] issued forth announcing, Return, O backsliding children [Jer. 3:14]. Return unto Me, and I will return unto you [Mal. 3:7], when they did not repent, it said, I WILL RETURN TO MY PLACE [Hosea 5:15]" (Midrash Rabbah, Lamentations 2:11). — Secrets of Golgotha, by Ernest L. Martin. 84.

There was yet another writer who recorded the fact of the "Shekinah" presence of YEHOVAH God moving from the Temple in Jerusalem just before the war with the Romans. Josephus mentioned that in the Spring of 66 A.D. some astonishing events took place within the Temple. He recorded three miracles associated with YEHOVAH's "Shekinah" and the Temple — and each one showed clearly that the "Shekinah" was departing from the Holy of Holies. In War VI, 290 he stated "that a GREAT LIGHT shone over the altar for thirty minutes at 3 o'clock in the morning (a week before Passover in A.D. 66) and then it DEPARTED. He said the sacred scribes interpreted this sign

as a bad omen for the Temple. It was like the Shekinah Glory moving away from the Tabernacle in the wilderness as a sign to disassemble the Tabernacle and transport it to another location" (ibid.).

Josephus goes on to say that "a few days later (during Passover itself) the enormous brass gates of Nicanor, requiring twenty men to open and close them, opened at midnight of their own accord (War VI, 293-295). This was also interpreted as showing a desolation coming upon the Temple. And then, about fifty days later, on Pentecost, the final sign was given which definitely showed that the Shekinah Glory was departing the Temple as the other signs indicated (ibid.):

Moreover, at the festival which is called Pentecost, the priests on entering the inner court of the Temple at nightfall, as their custom was in accomplishment of their ministrations, stated that they first became aware of a commotion and a roar, and after that the voice of a great multitude saying "We are departing hence" (War VI, 299).

When we couple Josephus' information with that of Rabbi Jonathan (also an eyewitness) we can see that the "Shekinah" went directly to the Mount of Olives and remained over the top of the mountain for 3 and 1/2 years — from late Spring in 66 A.D to about December of 69 A.D, some eight months before the Temple was destroyed by the Romans. It then went back to heaven and had not returned to earth up to the time he wrote.

These miraculous events had much more significance to the early Christians than may meet the eye today. Eusebius, as we have just seen, mentioned the importance of this removal of the Shekinah glory. It was clearly a sign that YEHOVAH's physical presence had departed from the Temple on the western hill of Jerusalem and had retreated to the MOUNT OF OLIVES on the EAST as the new place of His divine residence. This event of the "Shekinah" glory leaving the Temple and residing on the Mount of Olives became highly significant to the early Christians because this is the mountain where YEHOVAH's holy "Shekinah" will RETURN in the near future!

Concerning this mountain on the east of Jerusalem we have the following information that the Mount of Olives where Solomon erected all the shrines to the pagan gods of his wives was also known as the Mount of Oil and then you will read below that this Mount of Oil is also the same place where the Red Heifer was sacrificed.

<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=8710>

Mount Olivet (Latin, Mons Olivertus .)

Occurring also in the English Bibles as the Mount of Olives (Mons Olivarum), is the name applied to "the hill that is over against Jerusalem " (1 Kings 11:7), that is, "on the east side of the city" (Ezekiel 11:23), beyond the torrent Cedron (2 Samuel 15:23, 30), "a sabbath day's journey" from the city (Acts 1:12). The passages of the books of the Kings show the high antiquity of the name, undoubtedly suggested by the groves of olive trees which flourished there, traces of which still remain. In the Middle Ages it was called by Arabic writers: Tur ezZeitun, Tur Zeita, or Jebel Tur Zeitun, of which the modern name, Jebel et-Tur, appears to be an abbreviation. Mt. Olivet is not so much a hill as a range of hills separated by low depressions. The range includes, from N. to S., the Ras el-Musharif (Scopus; 2686 ft. above the sea-level), Ras el-Madbase (2690 ft.) and Ras et-Te la cah (2663 ft.); south of the latter, between the old and the new road from Jerusalem to Jericho, is the Jebel et-Tur, or Mt. Olivet proper, rising in three summits called by Christians, respectively: the Men of Galilee (Karem es-Sayyad , "the vineyard of the hunter", 2732 ft.), the Ascension (on which the village Kafr etTur is built), and the Prophets, a spur of the preceding owing its name to the old rock-tombs known as the Tombs of the Prophets ; south-west of the new road to Jericho, the range terminates in the Jebel Batn el-Hawa, called by Christians **the Mount of Offence, tradition locating there Solomon's idolatrous shrines** (2 Kings 23:13).

Mt. Olivet has been the scene of many famous events of Biblical history. In David's time there was there a holy place dedicated to Yahweh ; its exact location is not known; but it was near the road to the Jordan, possibly on the summit of the Karem es-Sayyad (2 Samuel 15:32). The site of the village of Bahurim (2 Samuel 3:16) lay no doubt

on the same road. We have already mentioned the tradition pointing to the Jebel Batn el-Hawa as the place where Solomon erected his idolatrous shrines destroyed by Josias (1 Kings 11:7 ; 2 Kings 23:13); this identification is supported by the Targum which suggests in 2 Kings 23:13 , the reading **“Mount of Oil”, a good synonym of Mt. Olivet, instead of the traditional “Mount of Offence”,** found nowhere else. Accordingly the idolatrous sanctuaries were on the south side of Mt. Olivet proper. Finally we learn from the Jewish rabbis **that the Mount of Oil was the traditional place for sacrificing the red heifer** (Numbers 19 ; cf. Maimonides, “Treat. of the red heifer”, 3:1). But to Christians especially is Mt. Olivet a most hallowed place, because it was, during the last days of Our Lord’s public life, the preferred resort of the Saviour. In connection therewith several spots are singled out in the Gospels : Bethania, the home of Lazarus and of Simon the Leper (Mark 14:3 ; Matthew 26:6); Bethphage, whence started the triumphal procession to Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1), identified with some probability by Federlin with the ruins called Habalat el-Amira or Kehf Abu Layan; the site of the Franciscan Chapel of Bethphage, about 1 mile west of El-Azariyeh, is not well chosen; the place where the fig-tree cursed by Our Lord stood (Matthew 21:18-22 ; Mark 11:12-14 ; 20-21); the spot where Jesus wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41); the site where He prophesied the destruction of the Temple, the ruin of the city and the end of the world (Matthew 24:1 sqq.); the Garden of Gethsemani ; lastly the place where the Lord imparted His farewell blessing to the Apostles and ascended into heaven (Luke 24:50-51). All these spots the piety of Christian ages has, with more or less success, endeavoured to locate and to consecrate by erecting sanctuaries thereon.

Brethren I have shared all of this to show you that the place where Abraham offered Isaac, is the same place on the Mountains of Moriah where Yahshua was killed at Passover and where the Shekinah moved from the Temple. It is also the same place where the red heifer was killed and all sin offerings were made. If you meet me in Jerusalem I take people to this exact place.

In chapter 23 we read of the death of Sarah at 127 years and how Abraham bought the cave of Machpelah from the children of Heth. From Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite .

Hittites, Hethites or Children of Heth are English terms used for a people mentioned several times in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament, Tanakh), which apparently lived in or near Palestine from the time of Abraham (presumably between 2000 BC and 1500 BC) to the time of Ezra after the return from the Babylonian exile (around 450 BC).

The following are all occurrences of the word “Heth”, “Hittite” or “Hittites” in the King James Bible (KJB), found through a University of Virginia search service [1]. For more information about those peoples and their conjectured relationship with the Anatolian Hittite civilization, see the Hittites article.

The citations were arranged approximately in chronological order, more precisely according to the epoch in which the events in question are supposed to have occurred. Note that this is not always the time in which the words were supposedly or actually written. (In particular, the covenant with Abraham about the future conquest of Canaan is sorted as if it were contemporary with the latter.) The epochs are indicated by the names of the Biblical characters (Patriarchs, Judges, Kings, or Prophets) prominent at the time.

It must be cautioned that “Heth” in the original (consonant-only) Hebrew script is written with only two letters, HT; and “Hittite” is HTY, the Y being a derivational suffix meaning roughly “people of ...”. Thus it is hazardous to assume that every occurrence of HT refers to the same people or place, across the ten to fifteen centuries of history spanned by those occurrences.

The Biblical view of humanity is set forth in Genesis:10, where various peoples are described as different lines of descent from Noah. In particular, Canaan is one of the sons of Ham, who is also said to be the ancestor of the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, and the Philistine. The sons of Canaan are given as Sidon, Heth, then the

Jebusites, Amorites, Girgasites, Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, Arvadites, Zemarites, and the Hamathites. From Noah's third son Shem descend "Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram".

The Genesis description of mankind is repeated again in 1Chronicles:1, except for a minor spelling differences: Sidon becomes Zidon, the Girgasites become Girgashites, etc. These differences may have been invisible in the original Hebrew.

In this period, which is conjectured to start sometime after 2000 BC and end sometime before 1200 BC, the "sons of Heth" or "children of Heth" (BNY-HT) and the label "Hittite" (HTY) are mentioned multiple times, but referring to essentially only two events.

In Genesis:23:2, towards the end of Abraham's life, he was staying in Hebron, on lands belonging to the "children of Heth", and from them he obtained a plot of land with a cave to bury his wife Sarah. One of them (Ephron) is labeled "the Hittite", several times. This deal is mentioned three more times (with almost the same words), upon the deaths of Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph.

Decades later, in Genesis:26:34, Abraham's nephew Esau is said to have taken two Hittite wives, and a Hivite one. This claim is repeated, with somewhat different names, in

Genesis:36:2. In Genesis:27:46, Rebbecca is worried that Jacob will do the same.

This period is conjectured to start sometime after 1800 BC and end sometime before 1000 BC. In this period (in which can be included the promise made to Abraham, centuries earlier, and its recall by Nehemias half a millennium later), the Hittites are mentioned about a dozen times as part of an almost fixed formula that lists the "seven nations greater and mightier than [the Hebrews]" whose lands will be eventually conquered. Five other "major nations" are mentioned in almost all instances of the formula: Canaanites, Amorites, Hivites, Jebusites, and Perizzites. The Girgashites are mentioned only five times. Abraham's covenant in Genesis:15:18 omits the Hivites but includes the Kadmonites, Kenites, Kenizzites, and Rephaims.

Among the five references to the Hittites that cannot be classified as a variant of that formula, two (Numbers:13:29 and Joshua:11:3) declare that the Hittites "dwell in the mountains", together with the Jebusites, Amorites, and Perizzites, whereas the Canaanites live "on the east and on the west", on the coast of Jordan, and the Amalekhites live "in the south". In Joshua:1:4 the land of the Hittites is said to extend "from the wilderness and this Lebanon", from "the Euphrates unto the great sea". In Judges:1:18, the Bethel traitor who led the Hebrew into the city is said to have gone to live among the Hittites where he built a city called Luz. Finally in Judges:3:5 it is said that the Hebrew lived and intermarried with the Hittites as well as with the other five "major nations".

In this period the Hittites are mentioned as the ethnic label of two military commanders under king David (around 1000 BC), Ahimelech and Uriah; the latter is murdered by David for the sake of his wife Bathsheba.

In Solomon's reign (around 950 BC), the Hittites are listed as people whom the Hebrew had not been able "utterly to destroy" in their conquest of Canaan and who paid tribute to Israel. The kings of the Hittites are mentioned (in two similar passages), together with Egypt and the kings of Syria, as senders of lavish tribute to Solomon. Then Hittites are said to be among the "strange women" that Solomon loved, along with "the daughter of the pharaoh" and women from the other peoples in the region.

In the time of prophet Elisha (around 850 BC) there is a passage in 2Kings:7:6 where the Syrians flee in the night after hearing a terrible noise of horses and chariots, believing that Israel had hired "the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians".

In Ezekiel:16:1, Jerusalem is said to be the daughter of an Hittite mother and an Amorite father, sister of Samaria and Sodom.

The intent is clearly offensive, but it is not clear whether the reference to the Hittites is concrete or only symbolic. However, a century later, Ezra is dismayed to learn, on his arrival from Babylon, that the leaders who had remained on the land had been “polluted” by mixing with other people, including the Hittites.

Now cutting into a great article about the German and Assyrian connections is the following bit of information.

<http://www.rogerswebsite.com/others/Germany-in-Prophecy.pdf>

The ancient capital of the land of Hatti was popularly known among the Romans as “Ninus Vetus — the old Nineveh” (“History of Art in Sardinia, Judaea, Syria and Asia Minor”, by G. Perrot and C. Chipiez, Vol. II, page 272). Nineveh was Assyria’s capital! The Empire of Hatti and the Empire of Assyria were the same Empire — not two empires existing five centuries apart as historians assume.

Excavated records from Bible times PROVE that the great rulers of the land of Hatti were not only contemporary with the famous kings of Assyria, but were also federated with them. All ancient Greek writers agreed that Assyria and Anatolia (the land of Hatti) were allies.

The chief supporters of famous Troy in Asia Minor were the Assyrians. In fact, the Trojan War was a struggle between Greeks and Assyrians for possession of Western Asia Minor. These Hessian or Assyrian kings are even mentioned in the Bible in I Kings 10:29 and II Kings 7:6.

The Hebrews called them “kings of the Hittites.” The Assyrian Hessians were called “kings of the Hittites” because the Canaanite Hittites, driven out by Joshua, migrated into Asia Minor where the Assyrians also dwelt. All historians recognize that there were at least two distinct peoples in Asia Minor who came to be known by the same name — Chatti or Hittite. The first were the Assyrians. The second were the Canaanite sons of Heth. Heth’s sons received the name Hittite or Chatti because they too were warriors. Centuries later, after Alexander the Great conquered Asia, those Canaanites migrated out of Asia Minor — to Europe, and then, across the Atlantic to North America where the colonists rediscovered them as the Chatti Indians of the Central Plains. Is it a mere coincidence that the United States — a birthright tribe of the House of Israel — should have inherited this land from Canaanite Hittites?

Judges 20-21

We now read of the great war between Israel and Benjamin-400,000 against 26,000 plus the 700 left handed of Gibeah who could sling a stone and not miss.

On the first day of the battle Benjamin killed, 22,000 Israelites, and on the second day they killed 18,000 more. On the third day 25,100 Benjamites were killed. After this they destroyed all of Benjamin’s cities and livestock so that only 600 men of Benjamin were left with no women. 2% of the men were left.

Remember that the thing that brought everyone together was the cutting up of the concubine which was sent to all of Israel. It required you to respond to this. But Jabesh Gilead did not respond. They ignored it and for doing so everyone of the people from this city were destroyed, except for 400 virgins to give to the remaining Benjamites.

This is the same Jabesh Gilead that Saul saves in 1 Samuel 11 and the same city that would later go out and retrieve the body of Saul and Jonathan in 1 Samuel 31.

But the Benjamites were still 200 virgins short. The solution because all of Israel vowed they would not give their daughters to Benjamin was to go to Shiloh and kidnap them at the Feast of Yahovah.

There was something special about Shiloh because it was while the Tabernacle was in Shiloh that Yahovah gave His people “rest all around according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood

against them; Yahovah delivered all their enemies into their hand” (Joshua 21:44[42]). This occurred in the place where Yahovah said He was to set His name: Shiloh (Deuteronomy 12:5,11,21; 14:23-24; 16:6,11; 26:2; Jeremiah 7:12), a place designated by Him where He was to be worshipped by His people Israel. It was while the Ark of the Covenant was in the Tabernacle at Shiloh that all the tribes were able to assemble in peace because all the land was subdued before them, and they finally had rest in Shiloh (Joshua 18:1).

The Ark was in Shiloh and we are told to go up to the Place Where Yahovah places his name three times in the year. This is why Benjamin was told to go there to take 200 virgins during the Feast of Tabernacles when they came out to dance.

Exodus 23: 14 “Three times in the year you are to observe a festival to Me: Footnote: 1The Festivals of ??? are grouped in three, for three different times of the year. 15 “Guard the Festival of Unleavened Bread. Seven days you eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of Ab?ib? – for in it you came out of Mitsrayim – and do not appear before Me empty-handed; 16 and the Festival of the Harvest, the first-fruits of your labours which you have sown in the field; and the Festival of the Ingathering at the outgoing of the year, when you have gathered in the fruit of your labours from the field.

17 “Three times in the year all your males are to appear before the Master ???.

Deuteronomy 16: 16 “Three times a year all your males appear before ??? your Elohim in the place which He chooses: at the Festival of Unleavened Bread, and at the Festival of Weeks, and at the Festival of Booths.

What is the moral of this story?

Hosea 9:7 The days of punishment have come, the days of retribution have come. Yisra’el knows! The prophet is a fool, the ‘man of the Spirit’ is mad, because of the greatness of your crookedness, and great is the enmity. 8 Elohim’s watchman over you, Ephrayim, is the prophet, but a trapper’s snare is in all his ways. Enmity is in the House of his Elohim. 9 They have deeply corrupted themselves, as in the days of Gib’ah. He remembers their crookedness, He punishes their sins. 10 “I found Yisra’el like grapes in the wilderness. I saw your fathers as the first-fruits on the fig tree in its beginning. They themselves have gone to Ba’al Pe’or, and separated themselves to shame, and became as abominable as that which they loved.

Hosea the prophet told us that the events of our generation will be just as it was in Gibeah when this Levite passed through and spent the night and was attacked the same way that the Angels were attacked in Sodom and Gomorrah. So as you read the rest of this chapter, we will see a mirror image as our generation will view the world, our nation and those around us today. We will see that the hospitality in this town was not the greatest and we have been reading in recent weeks of how important hospitality was to Abraham and to Lot.

How would you like to drive into our cities today and have to spend the night on the street? You dare not sleep in the city streets today for fear of your life. Now you can compare the events of today, with the things that took place here at Gibeah.

Remember that when you see these things happening, Hosea says that we are very near the return of Yahshua. This was a city of our own people, it was citizens of the tribe of Benjamin.

Even this past week here in Toronto there was a 17 year shot by two 17 year old and one 15 year old, then dumped into the river, another young man was shot in the head on another day, and still another stabbed in broad daylight. A twenty year old woman was thrown from the 11th floor of an apartment building.

Each night, and it is the same for most of your larger cities, but each night someone gets killed, women get raped, things are stolen, and what is the reaction of everyone to hearing this on the news so many times. Complacency!

We no longer care; as long as it does not affect us then life is OK. This is the sin of Gibeah. Complacency. A complete lack of empathy.

Now read what Yahovah says to His angels as they enter Jerusalem; Ezekiel 9:1 And He called out in my hearing with a loud voice, saying, "Let the punishers of the city draw near, each with his weapon of destruction in his hand." 2 And look, six men came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, each with his battle-axe in his hand. And one man in their midst was clothed with linen and had a writer's ink-horn at his side. And they came in and stood beside the bronze altar. 3 And the esteem of the Elohim of Yisra'el went up from the kerub', where it had been, to the threshold of the House. And He called to the man clothed with linen, who had the writer's ink-horn at his side, 4 and ????? said to him, "Pass on into the midst of the city, into the midst of Yerushalayim, and you shall **put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.**" 5 And to the others He said in my hearing, "Pass on into the city after him and smite, do not let your eye pardon nor spare. 6 "Slay to destruction old, young men, maidens and children and women, but do not come near anyone upon whom is the mark, and begin at My set-apart place." So they began with the elders who were in front of the House.

How many of us cry over the abominations that are done in our cities each night? How many of us cry over the wrongs we hear on the news? Those who have lost their compassion, and become complacent, need to start to look for these men of Yahovah who will punish the rest of us who just do not care anymore. We as a society have become like Gibeah and lost all empathy and become complacent with others dying all around us. Shame on us all.

Nearly 3,000 years ago, Isaiah delivered to the rebellious children of Israel prophecies that have clear implications for generations living at the end of the age. Yahovah warned: "I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them... the child will be insolent [rude, disrespectful, defiant] toward the elder, and the base toward the honorable... as for My people, children are their oppressors" (Isaiah 3:4, 5, 12). Jeremiah wrote of children who would not receive correction and have forgotten Yahovah (Jeremiah 2:30, 32). Ezekiel wrote of children who "rebelled against Me" and "did not walk in My statutes" (Ezekiel 20:21). While these prophecies had an initial fulfillment in ancient times, the ultimate fulfillment is erupting in today's headlines!

Do not become complacent!

Psalm 48

<http://www.ucg.org/brp/brp.asp?get=daily&day=17&month=July&year=2005&Layout=>

Psalm 48 locates the Great King's throne in Mount Zion—Jerusalem. It is referred to as God's "holy mountain" (verse 1), yet this should also be understood as figurative of God's Kingdom—a mountain being symbolic of a kingdom in prophecy (compare Daniel 2:35, 44-45; Isaiah 2:24).

Note the phrase in Psalm 48:2, "beautiful in elevation" or "beautiful in its loftiness" (NIV). Neither the original fortress of Zion, David's city, nor the Temple Mount area he later incorporated, formed the highest peak in the area. Today the Mount of Olives looks down over Jerusalem and the Temple Mount—as it did then.[Note in David's Day Zion did tower over the other mountains in the area] However, we should understand that the general area of Jerusalem was of higher elevation than the surrounding land of Judah and central Israel so that people in pilgrimage to the holy city would ascend to it.

Nevertheless, the main idea here concerns Jerusalem's spiritual exaltation. As the city of

God's tabernacle and temple, and of the throne of God's anointed king over Israel and Judah, Jerusalem was the peak spiritual location on earth—and it will be on a much grander scale in the future. Even today, Jewish immigration to the Holy Land from anywhere in the world is referred to as aliyah—"ascent."

In the same vein, another focus of the passage is the physical city of Jerusalem as representative of the city of God now presently in heaven to later descend: "Mount Zion...the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Hebrews 12:22; see Revelation 21-22). The reference to the "sides of the north" in verse 2 could signify the Temple Mount and royal palace being on the north side of David's city. Yet it may also signify the heavenly "mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north...above the heights of the clouds" (see Isaiah 14:13-14).

The verses here would also appear to portray on some level the spiritual Zion or Jerusalem of today—Israel, wherein God now dwells through His Spirit and which He greatly blesses and protects (compare Hebrews 12:22-23).

Yet the primary focus of Psalm 48 is the future time of Christ's reign over all nations as in the previous psalm, when Jerusalem, as the capital of God's Kingdom, will truly be "the joy of the whole earth" (verse 2). God in the person of Christ will literally dwell bodily in Jerusalem's palaces or citadels—governing the earth from there.

That this is the principal backdrop we discern from the message of the previous two psalms as well as the apparent time setting of Psalm 48:4-7. "This section describes from a different point of view the final battle [at Christ's return] referred to in Ps. 2; 110. Psalm 48 describes the approach and hasty retreat of the errant kings. The connection between this text and Ps. 2 is heightened by the use of an unusual Hebrew word for fear—a term meaning 'trembling' or 'quaking terror'—which is found in both places (2:11)" (Nelson Study Bible, note on 48:4-7). The imagery of God breaking ships of Tarshish in verse 7 is later found in Ezekiel 27, where the figure is meant to symbolize the destruction of ancient Tyre and its commercial system as well as, chiefly, the destruction of end-time Tyre, the international power bloc also known as Babylon—the parallel account of its destruction being found in Revelation 18 (see the Bible Reading Program comments on Ezekiel 27).

[Note- <http://www.rogerswebsite.com/others/Germany-in-Prophecy.pdf>]

Why Germans Call Themselves "Deutsche"

The Germans refer to themselves as DEUTSCHE, and to their country as DEUTSCHLAND. Why? Let's turn back the pages of history for the answer. The Assyrians anciently called their land "Athur" — the Indo-Germanic form of the Semitic word "Asshur" ("Encyclopedia Britannica", article, "Mesopotamia"). Sometimes the name "Athur" was shortened simply to "Tyr" in the Indo-European tongue. Asshur or Tyr was worshipped as the god of war by all the ancient world. His name was placed on the THIRD DAY of the week — called "Tuesday" in the English-speaking world. Tuesday is Asshur's day. Tuesday is from an old Saxon word meaning "Tiw's day." Tiw was the god of war of the Germanic people of Europe. Tiw, or Tiwe, was also known by the name Tyr — that is, Asshur. Tiw is another name of Asshur!

The Assyrians knew Asshur or Tyr was their ancestor. We should expect, therefore, that when they migrated to Europe they would still be known as the sons of Tyr or Tiw, that is, Asshur. And what do we find? When the Germans appeared in Europe, they claimed Tyr or Tiw as their ancestor! But what has the name "Deutsche" to do with Tiw? The modern German word "Deutsche" — as educated Germans know — is derived from the old Anglo-Saxon word Tiw. (See any thorough book on etymology and word derivations.) Whenever a German calls himself

Deutsche, he is saying he is Tiw's or Asshur's son — an Assyrian. And when he terms his country Deutschland, he is saying Tiw's or Asshur's land — Assyria! Even ancient Hindu literature uses both the word "Asgras" and "Daityas" to refer to the Assyrians."Daityas" is but a Sanskrit word for "Deutsch" — a name applied to the Assyrians over 1500 years before the birth of Christ!]

Beyond the wars and assaults, Jerusalem will be safe because God will be her refuge (Psalm 48:3)—repeating the message of Psalm 46. Coming to the splendor and magnificence of God's holy city, and the wonderful way of life proclaimed from there, visiting pilgrims will remark, "As we have heard, so we have seen..." (48:8). These words call to mind the reaction of the Queen of Sheba in visiting King Solomon: "It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. However I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard" (1 Kings 10:6-7). How much more will this be true of Jerusalem during the reign of the Great King, Jesus Christ.

Visitors are encouraged to walk about and enjoy the city's awesome beauty (Psalm 48:12-13). Parents will tell their children that the city, a bastion of righteousness and justice, exemplifies the Everlasting God (see verse 14). Just as God provides evidence that He is the Creator (Romans 1:18-20), in Jerusalem He provides evidence that He is the King. In its note on Psalm 48:9-11, The Expositor's Bible Commentary states that Jerusalem will be "a God-given visual aid, encouraging [visitors] to imagine and to reflect on the long history of God's involvement with Israel and of the evidences of his 'unfailing love' (hesed)."

Though verses 9-14 paint a vivid picture of the future, the words here also applied well to the experience of the Israelites in ancient times as they came to Jerusalem and its temple to worship. Just the same, these words can have immediacy for us today as we ponder being part of spiritual Zion, God's Church, and what that entails—and as we consider what God will yet do for us in the wonderful age to come.

Finally it should be pointed out that some have objected to the last words of this psalm, which in the NKJV state that God "will be our guide even to death." If the interpolated word "even" is left out, this would seem to make God "our guide to death"—as if to say He leads us to death. This may be why the Septuagint translators changed the final words to "forever," which is used earlier in the verse. However, the phrase "even to death" is certainly true—that God is with us and guides us through all our lives even to the point of death. Of course, God will ultimately guide us even beyond death. It may be, as some have argued, that "to death" is actually part of a postscript to this psalm or of a prescript to the next, a cue phrase meaning set to the tune of another song titled "Death"—perhaps an abbreviated form of "Death of the Son," mentioned in the superscription of Psalm 9.

Mat 27

Pilate sat on the judgement seat in verse 19. We will cover just this one aspect in this study and when we get to the other gospels we will cover the rest of the chapter in more detail. But this one bit of information which I show you in Jerusalem will change so much of how you think of the current situation in Israel, so please bear with me.

Matthew 27:19 19 And as he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, "Have none at all to do with that righteous Man, for I have suffered much today in a dream because of Him."

John 19:13 13 Therefore, when Pilate heard these words, he brought ????? out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.

<http://www.askelm.com/temple/t991001.htm>

The Secret Key to the Dome of the Rock

There is a key message found within two inscriptions in Arabic inscribed on the first cornice supported by large columns that encircles the interior region of the Dome of the Rock. One inscription is found on the outside area of the cornice and the other on the inside area. Both writings provide the real secret to the meaning of the significance behind the Dome of the Rock.

Once that secret is known, a whole new understanding of early Islam in its relation to Christianity comes on the scene that greatly enhances our comprehension of the theological history of the period. It reveals religious attitudes that existed between early Muslims, Jews and Christians.

There is a linguistic key that has great relevance in knowing why the Dome of the Rock was constructed and it provides the true meaning for its existence. Once this is realized, it will help divert Muslim attention away from their present attitude of reverent holiness toward the Dome and it will redirect their attention to the Al Aqsa Mosque located to the south, and it will further emphasize the importance of Mecca in the eyes of all Muslims. This new information will also aid Christians to know that the Dome of the Rock was actually built by Abd al-Malik in 692 A.D. as a rebuilt Christian Church that once stood in its place. The Rock that sanctified the shrine was first an important Christian holy place and NOT an early Jewish sacred spot (nor was it the site of the former Temples).

The first inscription on the outside is meant for all Muslims and the inner inscription is written for Christians ALONE. Jews are not even considered in the context of the inner (or even the outer) inscription. The analysis of these two inscriptions shows that Abd al-Malik built the Dome of the Rock to satisfy Christian religious matters and it shows that the Dome of the Rock HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH JEWISH MATTERS WHATEVER!

The historical evidence shows conclusively that no Jewish person was ever interested in any religious or national manner to the "Rock" under the Dome of the Rock until the time of the First Crusade. The area was NEVER considered a sacred spot of Jews until the time of Benjamin of Tudela in the twelfth century (check other articles on the ASK Web Page on the Internet for proof of this). The site of the Dome of the Rock was ONLY of Christian significance BEFORE the time of Omar and Abd al-Malik. It only became important to Muslims in the eighth century to the eleventh, and only important to Jews in the twelfth century.

In actual fact, Omar (the Second Caliph and the first Muslim leader to enter Jerusalem) and Abd al-Malik about 50 years later actually honored the real site of the Jewish Temple that were shown to them on the southeast ridge and over the Gihon Spring (that is the very thing that Omar came to Jerusalem to accomplish) but these early Muslim leaders did NOT show the same type of reverence to the Rock now under the Dome of the Rock. The Dome was built by Muslims to wean Christians from the site, NOT to make it a more sanctified spot in Islam nor did the building of the Dome of the Rock have anything to do with Jewish religious matters or aspirations. Indeed, the "rock" underneath the Dome of the Rock was specifically and significantly of Christian importance and that the Jews up to the time of the Crusades showed no interest whatever in this former Christian spot that Abd al-Malik rebuilt as a Christian type of building (with its characteristic Byzantine dome) in order to wean Christians (who comprised at least 90% of the population of Jerusalem in the seventh century) from New Testament teachings and to win them over to the doctrines then being taught by Islam in and through the Koran.

Now for a question: What was happening at the time the Dome was built that inspired this display of theological symbolism in the erection of certain buildings in Jerusalem and also in Mecca? The answer has relevance in knowing prophecy for us today.

One of the most volatile geopolitical hot spots on earth today revolves around the national or religious possession of this natural outcropping of an oblong rock located in the City of Jerusalem. That spot is the Rock that is presently

situated under the building now known as the Dome of the Rock. The building itself is without doubt the most beautiful piece of architecture in the City of Jerusalem and it represents the centerpiece of religious importance in the Holy City for both Muslims and Jews. But strange as it may seem, history shows that Christians also have a stake in its symbolic relevance. Little do Christians know, but that “Rock” was at first considered by both Muslims and Jews (in the early days of Islam) as being a Christian holy place and NOT one that Muslims or Jews thought as having high religious value. That’s right! The spot is actually of Christian importance. The real story behind the significance of the site of the Dome of the Rock will cause Muslims and Jews to reevaluate its meaning in relation to their own belief systems that they have erroneously accepted over the centuries since the beginning of Islam.

The proper identity of the “Rock” under the Dome of the Rock will truly be a revelation to all modern religious groups when they discover the truth of its biblical relevance. They will be amazed when they realize that the area was NOT the site of the former Temples of Solomon, Zerubbabel and Herod. It was a “Rock” purely of Christian importance and it was formerly recognized by Christians until the seventh century (and even historically until the time of the Crusades) as a most prominent Christian site that was singled out in the Gospel of John as a “Rock” that dealt directly with the mission of Christ Jesus to this earth. The early Christians, Jews and Muslims knew this. The reason the Dome was built by Abd al-Malik in 692 A.D. was to direct Christians away from that “Rock” and to orient them toward the newly constructed Al Aqsa Mosque (which they reckoned to be the re-christened Muslim Temple of Solomon) that was located near the south wall of the Haram esh-Sharif. This in turn was intended to further lead Christians directly toward the City of Mecca where Allah (the Arabic for “God”) now had symbolic residence.

To understand why the Dome of the Rock was built by Abd al-Malik, we first have to understand how Muslims looked (and still look) upon the significance of their central shrine in Mecca that is shaped as a cube (as was the Holy of Holies in Solomon’s Temple). That holy building of the Muslims contains the black meteorite stone that the ancient Arabs used to worship in their pagan days but which Muhammad placed in the southeast corner of his building called the Ka’aba toward which all Muslims must pray five times a day (and, if possible, visit on pilgrimage at least once). Wherever Muslims find themselves in the world, they must direct their prayers toward the Ka’aba in Mecca. When they go on their pilgrimage, they gather at the southeast angle of the cube-style sanctuary. Though the ground level design is a perfect square, the building is angled so that the corner where the meteorite stone is located is just south of east (at about 100 degrees in direction). The required circumambulation (walking or trotting around) the building begins opposite this stone with the people at first facing north toward the region of the heavens to which all biblical peoples believed God dwelt in His heavenly abode (Psalm 75:6). The Muslim ritual at the Ka’aba has profound astronomical (that is, astrological) significance and it is designed to mimic the motions of the inner and outer planets within our solar system. The Temple at Jerusalem had a similar astronomical basis but with an entirely different liturgical motif. There was in both sanctuaries deep symbolism involved and what was ritualistically accomplished was of religious value.

What did Muslim pilgrims perform at the Ka’aba in Mecca? In the monumental work by Sir Richard Francis Burton in the last century (who was the first Christian or European to clandestinely enter the sacred area of Mecca and describe it in detail), we are informed of the liturgical factors that Muslims were expected to perform when they made their pilgrimage to Mecca. They were to assemble at the southeast corner of the Ka’aba and face northward. Each person’s left shoulder was always to be toward the building housing the meteorite stone (idol) as they circle the structure in a counterclockwise fashion (this is the same manner the Jews entered the Temple and exited it). They are required to circle the building seven times (the first three with a slow pace “like walking in sand” and the last four with a faster pace). This represents the movements of the heavenly bodies. The three outer planets as viewed from the earth (Saturn, Jupiter and Mars) move slowly in the heavens relative to the fixed stars, while the inner celestial bodies (Sun, Mercury, Venus and Moon) appear to move faster. In early

astrological view, the earth was believed to be the center of the universe with Saturn being the furthest planet away from earth, with Jupiter nearer and Mars nearer still. Then came the Sun, Mercury, Venus and the nearest of all was the Moon. Thus, the first circuit of the Ka'aba was in honor of Saturn, the second Jupiter and on through to the seventh, the Moon. The last circuit symbolically confirmed the pilgrims as being true Muslims and their astronomical symbol became the Moon (the Moon was singled out in the seventh circuit of the Ka'aba). At the end of the seventh circling (and after having recited certain prescribed prayers at various points in their seven circlings), the Muslim pilgrims found themselves back at the place they started opposite the black stone and again facing north to where God was actually thought to have His residence in heaven. There was much mimicking by early Muslims of the Temple rituals performed in Jerusalem by the Jews as demanded in the Scriptures and in Jewish tradition. Muhammad kept the same themes in his ritualistic interpretations. This is important to know in viewing the architectural design of the Dome of the Rock and the ritual focus intended by Abd al-Malik.

The "Rock" at the Dome of the Rock Was of Christian Value, NOT Jewish or Muslim The "Rock" under the Dome of the Rock is the most conspicuous natural feature within the whole of the Haram esh-Sharif. For anyone to build a magnificent shrine over it shows that the "Rock" must have had great significance. And it did. The first Christian pilgrim that has left us a record of his journey to Jerusalem was the Bordeaux Pilgrim who in 333 A.D. mentioned that the most significant building east of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (then being built) was the Roman Praetorium where Pilate sentenced Jesus. This structure had its walls centered directly within the Tyropoeon Valley. This was NOT the site of the Temple in the eyes of the Bordeaux Pilgrim. He had already described the Temple site (and several other buildings around it) a few paragraphs before. But only later (after concluding his account of the Temple and its associated buildings) did the Bordeaux Pilgrim mention the imposing structure to the east of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with its walls within the valley which he called the Praetorium where Pilate judged Jesus (see John Wilkinson's excellent translation of the Bordeaux Pilgrim in his book *Egeria's Travels*, p.158).

Clearly, the Pilgrim was describing the Haram esh-Sharif as being the Praetorium. He was looking mainly toward the southwest angle of the Haram and northward toward the spot where the "Wailing Wall" of the Jews is presently located. The Pilgrim said this "walled area" contained the residence of Pilate. It was the Roman Praetorium that also went by the name of "Fort Antonia." In Roman usage, the Praetorium was the headquarters of a military unit and could refer to the whole camp or to the commander's tent. There was associated with the military fort a prominent "Rock" The apostle John was well aware of its significance in Christian history. Within this walled enclosure of the

Praetorium was the "Rock" called in John's Gospel (John 19:13) "the Pavement-Stone" (in Greek, lithostrotos and in Hebrew Gabbatha).

This particular "Rock" within the Praetorium area had a "Pavement" or flagstones around it. The "Rock" was associated with the Praetorium and was part of Fort Antonia, the permanent Roman Camp that was located in Jerusalem in the time of Pilate and Jesus. And what did Josephus say (he was the Jewish historian of the first century and an eyewitness to the early Praetorium of the Romans called Fort Antonia)? He stated that the central feature of Fort Antonia was a major rock. He said: "The tower of Antonia...was built upon [around] a rock fifty cubits high and on all sides precipitous...the rock was covered from its base upwards with smooth flagstones" (*Jewish War*, V.v,8 para.238). Before construction of the fortress, the "Rock" was 50 cubits high (75 feet), but Herod later built a platform around it (when it became the north/south center of the walled fortress) and this made it not as high and it became accessible for judicial purposes. That "Rock" around which Fort Antonia was built (and mentioned by Josephus) was the chief geographical feature of the site. It was near this "Rock" that Pilate had his residence at the time of Jesus'

trial. Later Christians believed that some indentions in that “Rock” must have come from the footprints of Jesus as he stood before Pilate and God supposedly allowed his feet to sink into the “Rock.” Though these indentions were not the actual footprints of Jesus (a great deal of Christian folklore became associated with the “Rock”), early Christians came to believe they were the literal outlines of Jesus’ feet. It is easy to explain how this conclusion came to be associated with the “Rock” under the Dome of the Rock.

The so-called footprints came into vogue when later Christians noticed in the New Testament that a “Judgment Seat” was placed by Pilate on the “Rock” (called in Greek a bema). That word comes from the root word bema that literally means footprint, or by common usage a footstool where a king or a ruler in judgment would place his feet when he sat on a throne in order to sentence people in any official judicial event. Indeed, even the throne of God was reckoned in the Bible as a spot where God placed His feet below the Ark of the Covenant in the Temple when He sat or stood to make His divine judgments (Psalms 99:5; 132:7; Lamentations 2:1). Each military governor of the Romans carried his official bema or bema with him in order to make his judgments on behalf of the emperor, and Julius Caesar carried one with him everywhere he went in order to render official judgments (see “Praetorium,” Hasting’s Bible Dictionary). Later Christians simply confused the literal meaning of bema [footprint] and the indentions they saw in the natural outcropping of rock became “Jesus’ footprints.” Though this was error, the reckoning became an indelible identifying mark associated with the “Rock” where Pilate made his judgment against Jesus. This “Rock” (called “the Pavement” by the apostle John) was well known in the time of Constantine. The records show that Helena, the mother of Constantine, ordered that a small Christian Church with the name “St.Cyrus and St.John” be built over that “Rock” (see Life of Constantine in Wilkinson’s Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades, p. 204). This small church was later enlarged probably in the fifth century to become a major church in Jerusalem called “The Church of the Holy Wisdom.” This church is described very well (and accurately) in a sixth century work written by the Piacenza Pilgrim. He said (with words in brackets mine):

“We also prayed at the Praetorium, where the Lord’s case was heard: what is there now is the basilica of Saint Sophia [the Holy Wisdom Church], which is in front [north] of the Temple of Solomon [located] below the street [east and downslope] which runs down to the spring of Siloam outside of Solomon’s porch [the eastern wall of Solomon’s Temple]. In this basilica is the seat where Pilate sat to hear the Lord’s case, and there is also the oblong stone [I emphasize this point about the “oblong stone” to help identify the spot] which used to be in the center of the Praetorium [the Praetorium tent was moveable]. The accused person whose case was being heard was made to mount this stone so that everyone could hear and see him. The Lord mounted it when he was heard by Pilate, and his footprints [italicized for emphasis] are still on it. He had a well-shaped foot, small and delicate.”

This Church of the Holy Wisdom (which the Pilgrim had just described) was built over “the oblong stone” which the people thought had the footprints of Jesus embedded in it. Just as Josephus stated that the “Rock” was the most prominent part of Fort Antonia [the Praetorium area], so this “oblong stone” was the central feature of the Church of the Holy Wisdom (that was destroyed by the Persians and Jewish soldiers in 614 A.D.). This is the same “Rock” that is now under the Dome of the Rock in the Haram esh-Sharif. The fact that later Christians thought the footprints of Jesus were embedded in this “Rock,” is a key for identification. There are historical references both Christian and Muslim that attest that the “Rock” over which the Dome of the Rock now stands was the same “Rock or Stone” that had the footprints of Jesus inlaid as foot-like depressions sunk into the “Rock.”

Indeed, even as late as the period of the Crusades we read that the court recorder of Saladin (the Muslim who reconquered Jerusalem from the Crusaders in 1187 A.D.) made mention that Jesus’ footprints had been embedded in the “Rock” underneath the Dome of the Rock (see article “Saladin” in Brill’s First Encyclopaedia of Islam). There are several other Muslim references to these footprints of Jesus in the “Rock” under the Dome of the Rock that I have present in a more extended context in my new book “The Temples that Jerusalem Forgot.” In

fact, in the book I will show in a future article that those footprints of Jesus were sawed away from the “Rock” and placed in a location within the Haram esh-Sharif about 200 yards north of the Dome of the Rock. This later fact is a most interesting and important aspect of the story.

In short, there can be no doubt of the identification. The “Rock” of the Dome of the Rock (which is clearly oblong in shape) and the “oblong stone” within the Church of the Holy Wisdom were one and the same “Rock/Stone.” Sophronius, the Archbishop of Jerusalem in the time of Omar when the Muslims first conquered Jerusalem, called the Church of the Holy Wisdom (when it was yet standing before its destruction in 614 A.D.) as “the House and the Stone” (Sophronius, *Antacroeontica* as translated by John Wilkinson in *Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades*, p.91). This fact shows that Sophronius saw great significance in the “Rock/ Stone.” That “Rock” that later became the spot for the Dome of the Rock to Sophronius was the very stone called “the Pavement” mentioned in John 19:13 (rendered in Greek as the *Lithostrotos*, and in Hebrew *Gabbatha*).

Why the Dome of the Rock Was Built by Abd al-Malik in 692 A.D.

During the first hundred years of Muslim rule in Jerusalem (since more than 90% of the population was Christian) was one of conciliation and ecumenism between Muslims and Christians and between Muslims and Jews. This does not mean that the Muslims wanted to embrace some of the teachings of Christianity. The Muslims abhorred what they believed to be outright idolatry among Christians with their statues, pictures and pagan practices within the Christian community, but they still thought in this early period that they could wean Christians away from their religious beliefs unto the new Islam that God had now revealed to the world by Muhammad. This was the central reason why Abd al-Malik first devised and designed the building called the Dome of the Rock to be built over the Christian spot where once the Church of the Holy Wisdom had stood. His attempt was ecumenical in its spiritual intent, but still to show the superiority of Islam over what Abd al-Malik believed to be a decadent type of Christianity.

The fact is, the Dome of the Rock was built exclusively to vie with (and to appeal to) Christians in Jerusalem to accept the new truth of Islam which was (in the Muslim view) a major advance in proper religious interpretation that the “Peoples of the Book” (the Christians and Jews) ought to have enough sense to accept. And though Jews were also accounted as being “People of the Book,” the construction of the Dome of the Rock was NOT intended in any manner to influence Jews. After all, Jews would NOT have reckoned as important a “Rock” that was exclusively a Christian religious site because it was identified with “the Pavement” recorded in the Gospel of John (John 19:13). In a word, Abd al-Malik and the early Muslims felt they could effectively (in an intellectual and philosophical way) convince Christians that Islam was correct by constructing the Dome of the Rock and to include within it a message from Islam that would glorify Muslim theology.

So, Abd al-Malik set out in 692 A.D. to woo the Christians to Islam. What he did was to rebuild in the exact spot and in the precise form “The Church of the Holy Wisdom” that had been destroyed by the Persians and Jews in 614 A.D. (and he desired it to have as much architectural grandeur as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre). He then built what looked like a grand Byzantine “Church” directly over the very “Rock” that Christians believed contained the footprints of Jesus. Abd al-Malik did not design the Dome of the Rock as a Muslim type of building. He wanted it to appear as a rebuilt Church of the Holy Wisdom (the reason for this I will explain in my new book on the Temples). The Muslim Caliph designed the building to be like a “Church,” but one that contained the new and advanced teaching of Islam. Within this new (or renewed) “Church,” Abd al-Malik placed two inscriptions in Arabic. One was to Muslims in general (the outer inscription), and the other was exclusively for Christians (the inner inscription next to the “Rock” itself). That inner inscription specifically mentions Jesus and the supposed errors of some Christian doctrines. Abd al-Malik was appealing exclusively to Christians by emphasizing this Christian holy spot through

Muslim eyes, NOT to Jews who did not yet accept Jesus as the Messiah as did Muslims and Christians. And in attempting to wean the Christians from their former beliefs unto the new Islam, Abd al-Malik used every architectural artifice and symbolic nuance he knew in a brilliant maneuver to woo the

Christians of Jerusalem to accept Islam in a non-offensive way. He did so with a deliberate and steadfast allegiance to Muhammad that made Islam the dominant religion for all mankind, including those who then accepted Christianity.

One must carefully notice every architectural device used by Abd al-Malik to see what his intentions were and they must be minutely observed with utmost precision to the dotting of an “I” to the crossing of a “T.” Every detail of the architecture that the Caliph designed was meant to systematically lead Christians (NOT Jews, in this case) to the advanced teachings of Islam as he believed them to be. And what a master he was in his endeavor! Though he built the Dome of the Rock as a facsimile of the Church of the Holy Wisdom (there was NOT the slightest intention on the part of Abd al-Malik to give heed to ANY JEWISH PERSON OR EDIFICE WHATEVER in the architectural design of the Dome of the Rock), he changed the entrance to the octagonal building from its original design with its entrance on the west. Abd alMalik deliberately altered the entrance to Dome of the Rock to be from the south. This is most UN-Muslim! The ideal for those north of Mecca is (like the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem) to enter from the north and pray toward the qibla (the direction to Mecca) in the south. Not so the Dome of the Rock! Abd al-Malik designed it to be entered from the south with one’s back to Mecca (at the start of the liturgical theme)! Why do we know this? Because the two inscriptions in Arabic (containing vital information from cardinal verses in the Koran and also a religious commentary by Abd al-Malik himself as the successor of Muhammad) are a direct appeal to Muslims in general (the outer inscription) and then to Christians exclusively (the inner inscription that is written closer to the “Rock”). A significant feature of the inner inscription is the fact that it can only be read with one’s back to the “Rock.” This was intended to give a negative emotional reaction to the reader of the inscription that the architecture was designed to evoke. The inner inscription was not designed to be read by Jews who did not believe in Jesus in the first place (like the Muslims and Christians). The writings on the cornice were to give definite and decisive positive and negative psychological impressions through liturgical and ritualistic themes that Abd al-Malik designed into the architecture. Again (and it is important to note) the Caliph did NOT address any Jews nor did he show the slightest interest in Jewish matters or religious beliefs when he designed the Dome of the Rock. He built the Dome of the Rock to appeal strictly to Christians, NOT Jews! [To read what the two inscriptions state in English, read the excellent translations with outstanding pictures and explanatory text in Professor Oleg Grabar’s book titled *The Shape of the Holy*.]

A Historical Review of What Happened Surrounding the Site of the “Rock.” In 638 A.D., when Omar (the Second Caliph) went to Jerusalem, he asked Sophronius the archbishop to show him where King David had prayed before the building of the Temple. Omar said he wished to pray in the same spot. Sophronius showed him, first, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which Omar rejected. Then Sophronius took the Caliph to the traditional Zion on the southwest hill. Omar rejected that spot too. Then, when Omar stated that he wished to build a shrine at the place where David prayed, Sophronius then took him to the place over and near the Gihon Spring where the Jews had attempted to rebuild the Temple in the time of Constantine (as permitted in the Edict of Milan in 313 A.D. and with construction continuing to 325 A.D.) and also in the time of Julian the Apostate (362 A.D.). At that former Temple site

over the Gihon Spring, Omar was impressed. He dug through the filth and found a stone that he removed and took it through the South Gate of the Haram esh-Sharif. There he placed it near the qibla [the site toward which Muslim pray as they bow toward Mecca] on the elevated platform directly abutting the southern wall. He called the place the Al Aqsa (and a Mosque was soon built there). But one of Omar’s generals named Ka’ab (a recent convert from

Judaism who had extensive Christian indoctrination) found the place of the “Rock” where the former Church of the Holy Wisdom once stood. He told Omar that it would be better to place the qibla NORTH of this “Rock” and NOT down at the southern end of the Haram. Omar rejected this suggestion of Ka’ab and chided the general for making such a suggestion. That would have given much prestige to that “Rock” in the north, and Omar steadfastly refused. He turned his back on that “Rock” where the Christian church once stood, and went back south to the qibla of the Al Aqsa area. The truth is, Omar (in his role as the Second Caliph and the divine successor of Muhammad in Muslim theology) totally rejected that northern “Rock.” And later, Abd al-Malik wanted to show a further rejection by building the Dome over that northern “Rock” some fifty years afterwards.

Let me explain how this rejection is designed into the Dome. The original entrance designed by Abd al-Malik was from the southernmost octant of the octagonal design. Once a person entered the Dome, he was directed to read the start of the first inscription that was located at the top of the cornice on the far right side of the southern octant. Since Arabic (like Hebrew) is written from right to left, the first inscription contained no message for Christians and it was meant for Muslims in general. To read the whole inscription one must start with one’s back to Mecca (this is important to note), but then circle around the whole of the Dome clockwise (just the opposite from what Muslims do in circling the Ka’aba at Mecca) until one comes to the exact spot where one commenced his reading (when one returns to this southern point the person can conveniently turn his back to the “Rock” and pray directly toward Mecca in the south). The design of the outer message is to circle the “Rock” in the wrong direction (which gives a negative impression to any early Muslim, Jew or Christian). But the complete encirclement requires one to return to the south once again and the person is forced to face Mecca when one leaves the Dome with one’s back to the “Rock” as Omar insisted one must do (and Abd al-Malik designed this symbolic stance – with one’s back to the “Rock” – into the liturgy associated with the architecture of the Dome of the Rock).

The inner inscription is different. One must go further into the Dome to the other side of the same cornice and look upward at the same southern octant, but to its far-left side if one is facing the “Rock” (indeed, one must look at its far left side only when facing the “Rock” itself, but inside the inner area of the Dome one must look southerly and also upwards at the start of the inscription which will be seen on one’s upper right side – this requires a person to have his back to the “Rock” and looking toward Mecca). To read the inner inscription one must crane the neck upward to see the start of the inscription that is circling and facing the “Rock.” One then begins to read the inscription in Arabic devoted strictly to Christians (NOT to Jews) because the whole emphasis of the message is about the importance of Jesus in Muslim theology. One must read this inscription which completely encircles the Dome (like the outer one in the opposite direction), but one must do so in a counterclockwise manner as one does at Mecca (a positive sign) but this time with one’s back to the “Rock” (another positive sign from a Muslim point of view, and a negative one as Christians would view it).

Now note this important point. All the time a Christian is reading the teaching from Abd al-Malik in the inner inscription, he has to do so with his back deliberately turned away from the “Rock” and with his head craned upward in the most uncomfortable position that one can imagine. The whole anatomical awkwardness forced upon the human observer is a deliberate attempt to show disdain for the symbolic meaning that Christians had placed on the “Rock.” The original symbolism for Christians was different. The Christian entered the Domed Church from the west and looked eastward toward the Mount of Olives. Once the circuit of the “Rock” was made, the Christian could again look through the “Rock” eastward toward Olivet in symbolic anticipation for the Second Advent (Christ is to come back from the east – as the sun in its circuit of the earth).

However, Abd al-Malik designed the Dome of the Rock to be entered from the southern octant. But even if a Christian entered from the south (as designed by Abd al-Malik), though his circuit around the “Rock” would be all negative to Christianity because his or her back would always be away from the “Rock” (while reading the inner

inscription), the Christian upon completing the circuit could simply refuse to face Mecca when his circuit ended in the south. He could then turn directly northward and pray through the "Rock" (which symbolized the rule of Christ in his or her life) and direct his ultimate attention to the north quarter of the sky where all people knew God the Father had His residence. If Abd al-Malik saw a Christian do this after the circuit deposited the person in the south, then Abd al-Malik knew that the person would never be a Muslim and the Christian would be accepted as a "Person of the Book" (the Holy Scriptures) but inferior to Muslims. Thus, the person would then pay the poll tax to the Muslims and carry on with his own beliefs.

Still, when one completed the circuit by reading either the outer or the inner inscription in order to exit the Dome of the Rock as intended by Abd al-Malik, the person is forced to face directly toward Mecca. But there is one other thing. The person is also facing directly toward the Al Aqsa Mosque established by Omar the Second Caliph, and directly through the former site of the Holy of Holies of Solomon's Temple (because the Muslims knew then where Solomon's Temple was formerly located over the Gihon Spring). The prayer of the Muslim would transverse Solomon's Temple and focus onward to the Ka'aba in Mecca. Every device imaginable was used by Abd al-Malik in his building of the Dome of the Rock to direct people (both Muslims and Christians) AWAY FROM any significance of the "Rock" (just as Omar had demanded when he was first in Jerusalem). This is because it was well known in the seventh century that the "Rock" was actually a Christian holy spot.

What is most important for us of modern times to realize is the fact that the site of the "Rock" under the Dome of the Rock is purely and simply a Christian holy place (before the time of Omar and Abd al-Malik), and it did not become a Muslim holy site until many folklore traditions about the "Night Journey" of Muhammad began to be associated with the "Rock" from the eighth century on to the time of the Crusades. I explain in my book "The Temples that Jerusalem Forgot" how the many Muslim mythic accounts (which were outright fables and lies that even Muslim historians admit to be so) erroneously got attached to the "Rock" under the Dome of the Rock. As for the Jews, NO JEW showed any interest whatever in the "Rock" and the Dome of the Rock until the time of the First Crusade. This is a fact! For more information see further articles on this subject on our ASK Web Site.

So, the Dome of the Rock was built over a prime Christian holy place (where the Church of the Holy Wisdom was once situated). Abd al-Malik built the Dome of the Rock with the intended purpose of getting Christians to forget the "Rock" on which Jesus was judged at the time of Pilate. Abd al-Malik wanted Christians to abandon the Christian significance to the "Rock" by having them turn their "backs" on it and he wanted Christians to convert to Islam and then to focus on the Ka'aba stone where Muslims supposed Abraham erected at Mecca in Arabia for the true worship of God. My book "The Temples that Jerusalem Forgot" provides more details to this important historical fact.