

The Secret to the Dome of the Rock

 sightedmoon.com/the-quest-for-qabalah-a-trip-to-the-dark-side-and-witchcraft/

By Joseph F. Dumond

August 2, 2010

(Extracted from the Torah Portion in this News Letter 5846-025)

Shabbat Shalom Family,

Mat 27

Pilot 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 [italized 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.