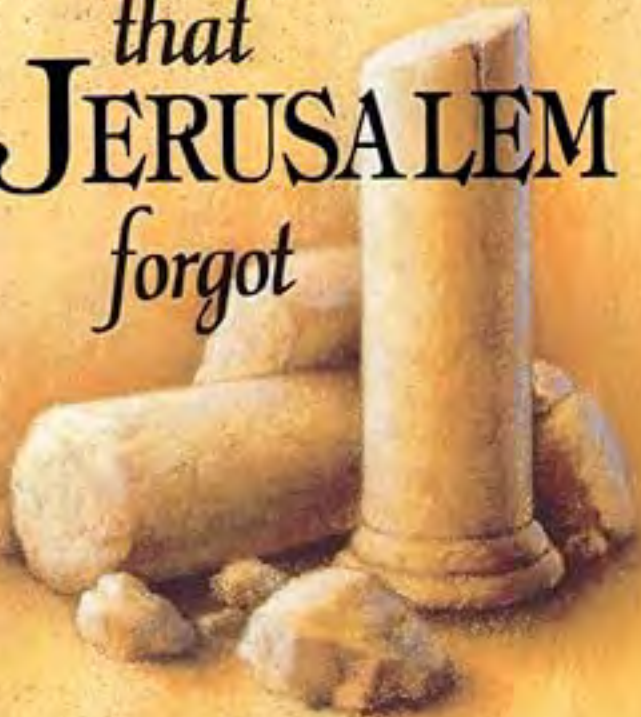


the
TEMPLES
that
JERUSALEM
forgot



by Ernest L. Martin

The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot

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ASK Publications

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my dear and lovely wife Ramona Jean who has gone through the same “blood, sweat and tears” as I have in sharing the time for research and the composition of this book. I thank her for her patience and kindness. Also, it is dedicated to the Associates of the “Associates for Scriptural Knowledge” who gave me the encouragement and support to continue in this task of historical research. I thank them all from the bottom of my heart.

From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth,
From the laziness that is content with half-truths,
From the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth,

O God of Truth, deliver us.

~ Ancient Prayer

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In this large world in which we live, no man is ever an island. Each of us is constantly coming in contact with others from whom we learn many valuable teachings that cause us to change our minds on some important occasions. In regard to the discovery of the site of the Temples in Jerusalem, I have had the pleasure and the good fortune of being brought into the company of many of the top historians and archaeologists of Jerusalem over the period of my professional career as a historian and theologian. My first visit to Jerusalem in 1961 set my mind on solving the problems that affected the true geographical comprehension of early Jerusalem throughout all its periods of history. I watched closely how Professor Benjamin Mazar and Meir Ben Dov (his assistant at the time) went about their professional duties and this was a great learning experience. Both of them were more than willing to answer questions for me in the many private times that I could learn from them. I later met Professor Mazar's son, Ory, who was the first to recommend to me that the Temples of Solomon and Zerubbabel were located on the Ophel mound just to the north of the original Mount Zion on the southeast ridge. He said his father was leaning in that direction at the time of his death. After a study of six months, in 1995 I wrote a preliminary report that suggested strongly that this theory was indeed correct for the two earlier Temples. I was then under the impression that Simon the Hasmonean (along with Herod a century later) moved the Temple from the Ophel mound to the Dome of the Rock area. Mr. Bill Lavers in England in reading closely the texts in Josephus

mentioned that Herod stated dogmatically that his Temple (though enlarged to be double in size of the former Temple) was still located in the same general area as that of the former Temples. This was also pointed out to me by Dr. James Tabor and David Sielaff (my historical and compositional editor). But then I noticed the eyewitness account of Eleazar who led the final contingent of Jewish resistance to the Romans at Masada. He stated that the Roman fortress which had long been in Jerusalem was the only structure left by 73 C.E. With this key in mind, I came to the conclusion in 1997 that all the Temples were indeed located on the Ophel mound over the area of the Gihon Spring. It then became clear that the dimensions of the Temple (with its unique shape and characteristics) was not the Haram esh-Sharif. We then began to draw (as would an architect) the Temple at its location over the Gihon Spring. I had the good fortune of having a professional artist, who was also interested in biblical matters, draw what Josephus stated in his writings. My thanks go to Lydia Cooper who provided the pictures showing how the Temple and Fort Antonia looked in relationship to one another. The illustrations she provided help make the matter much clearer to those who have only a limited amount of study into these historical and geographical matters.

This book is a result of my concluding research that shows that the Temples of God in Jerusalem were indeed located over the Gihon Spring and not over the Dome of the Rock. What has been amazing to me is the vast amount of Jewish, Muslim and Christian records that remain available from the first to the sixteenth centuries that clearly vindicate the conclusions that I have reached in this book of research. Any information that you readers may have or discover that either support or detract from the conclusions that I have made in this book, would be greatly appreciated by me.

Ernest L. Martin

“And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.”

Isaiah 29:18

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INTRODUCTION

IT IS WELL KNOWN that Herod (called “the Great”) vastly modified the geography of the Temple and the City of Jerusalem. Herod made the Mother City of the Jewish people into one of the most urbanized areas in the Roman Empire. So outstanding did Jerusalem become that it was favorably compared in architectural majesty, grandeur and prosperity with Rome and other great cities of the Empire. What Herod also did was to rebuild and to increase the size of the Temple. Next to the Sanctuary he reconditioned a fortress formerly called the Baris and renamed it Fort Antonia after Mark Anthony. To the west of the Temple, Herod constructed his palace and three major citadels in what was called the Upper City.

In spite of these accomplishments that scholars recognize today, people are still not aware what the Jerusalem of Herod and Jesus was really like. This book will show that Herod also created a Jerusalem with a topography quite different from that imagined by most modern historians and by our present religious authorities. Once this actual Jerusalem is recognized (and the proper location of the Temple determined), this new understanding will have a profound influence on how modern Jews and Muslims (as well as Christians) view the contemporary and future political status of Jerusalem. The antagonists fighting one another in the Holy City will come to realize that they are struggling over areas that have nothing to do with the former site of the Temple of Herod (nor the Temples of Solomon or Zerubbabel which were built in the same location). Strange as it may seem, the religious authorities of all the three Abrahamic creeds have forgotten where those Temples

were built. Only in the last two years have their sites been discovered for our modern world to recognize.

This loss of the Temple site by our contemporary religious leaders and scholars has happened even though the Holy Scriptures encouraged the faithful never to forget Jerusalem. What the Psalmist stated has long been echoed by Israelites in their prayers over the centuries.

“If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.
If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my
mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.”

• *Psalm 137:5-6*

This is a beautiful sentiment expressed by the Psalmist, but as far as the historical records are concerned for the past 800 years not only have Israelites forgotten the true geography of early Jerusalem, the whole world has also forgotten (and this includes the Muslim and Christian authorities). The actual site of the Temple languishes in Jerusalem forlorn, lonely, abandoned and thoroughly forgotten.

Yet the present religious authorities exalt to the highest esteem and respect an enclosure as the site of the Temple that was in Jesus' day the chief architectural symbol of Rome's claim to imperial world power. As a result, all religious leaders in Jerusalem and the world remain ignorant of the true location of the Temples of God. Even the worshippers at the “Wailing Wall” are directing their present devotions and veneration to a Roman edifice that their ancestors in Herod's time held in utter contempt.

This book, however, will identify in the clearest of ways where the Temples of Solomon, Zerubbabel and Herod were actually located. In fact, it is a simple process to discover the site of the former Temples. If a person can pinpoint the original “Mount Zion,” then he or she will also find the “Temple Mount” because the two terms are acknowledged as identical in several biblical contexts. Indeed, the first place the scholars and religious leaders misplaced (and finally forgot) was the location of the original “Mount Zion” that King David built and named. The real “Mount Zion” was situated at the lower end of the southeast ridge (and this

was rediscovered from the years 1875 to 1885 C.E.¹ by the vigorous and almost single handed efforts of Professor Birch in England. But the scholars forgot that in correctly re-locating "Mount Zion" on the southeast ridge of Jerusalem, they should have moved the site of the Temples to the same southeast ridge (but slightly north of "Mount Zion"). This necessary task was not only neglected by the scholars, they dug in their trenches and began to defend the Haram esh-Sharif with its Dome of the Rock as the proper place for the former Temples. They were absolutely wrong in this assessment.

But look at the simple facts. Since everyone now knows that the "Mount Zion" of King David's time was located in the *southern* part of Jerusalem on its *southeast* ridge, this means that the Temples would have to be located immediately north on what was called the "Ophel" in the Scriptures (but NOT a third of a mile north to the Dome of the Rock). This well known geographical fact signifies that the real site of the Temples was a few yards (meters) west of the Gihon Spring, about a third of a mile south of the Dome of the Rock now situated within the enclosure of the Haram esh-Sharif.

Thankfully, modern scholars and religious leaders over a hundred years ago properly returned "Mount Zion" to its original location on the *southeast* ridge, but they failed to return with it the "Temple Mount" as common biblical sense would have demanded. The historians and religious officials (with their opinions chiseled in stone so it seems) tenaciously maintain that the site of the former Temples is in the region of the Haram esh-Sharif. Their resistance to the true biblical site (mainly because of their religious convictions) has caused the whole world to reject the proper location of the Temples.

It is sad to witness, but the real "Temple Mount" is presently in a forsaken state and the site is deserted of all its holiness that once

¹ In this book I will use the scholarly C.E. (Common Era) and B.C.E. (Before Common Era) instead of the usual A.D. and B.C. for identifying particular years in history. Since I have shown in my book *The Star that Astonished the World* that Jesus was born in what we call 3 B.C.E. (a full two years *before* our present calendar states Jesus was born), it is better to use terms describing an "Era" rather than a wrong "birthdate."

graced the area. But people today are deceived when they look westward from the Mount of Olives and witness the majestic walls of the Haram esh-Sharif in all their glory and grandeur (and with their emotions running high that they are viewing the ancient remains of the outer Temple walls), they make the mistake that they are looking at the walls around the "Temple Mount." After all, people are confidently told by the scholars and religious authorities that they are observing the very walls that once surrounded the Temple. This appraisal, however, is manifestly wrong.

The conclusions reached in this book (which are easy to understand if one relies on biblical teaching and what the historical documents state) will have profound implications on our modern world in both a religious and political sense. For the first time in 800 years, people will understand and they can properly evaluate the real geographical and historical events connected with the Jerusalem of Herod and Jesus. The result is a very different "Jerusalem" than what people have imagined up to now. The fact is, the *REAL* Jerusalem of Herod and Jesus was far more impressive and elegant than that imagined by the false notions imposed on the world by the present religious authorities whether Christian, Muslim or Jewish.

This research provides the key to unlocking the real history and geography of the Jerusalem that existed 2000 years ago. But the outcome even goes farther than that. People also will achieve greater insight into the prophetic and doctrinal teachings of the Old and New Testaments. What has been obscure and confusing to scholars and religious leaders because of their false identifications will become radiantly clear. A proper (and a *new* kind of) Jerusalem will appear on the scene that is radically different than the "false Jerusalem" now imagined by modern authorities.

Three years ago, I readily admit, I taught and believed those same errors of the contemporary authorities. But an abundance of new research material shows that all of us must change our former convictions. All of us who have been (or are) admirers of the opinions of the religious establishments must now mend our thinking in favor of the truth, instead of the traditions and false teachings of former times. This is important because it is primarily

religious opinions (not biblical or historical evidence) that have determined much of the wrong geography involving the scriptural sites.

Though I would like to be kind to my religious peers who maintain these falsehoods, the biblical and historical facts that I document in this book show that the religious authorities of the three Abrahamic faiths have been (and are) totally *wrong* with their erroneous geographical teachings they have maintained over the centuries. They need to publicly renounce their spurious “holy places” and return to the true sites shown in the biblical and historical documents.

The fact is, the Temple as revealed in the historical records was *not* located near or within the Haram esh-Sharif. The actual Temple of Herod was located over the Gihon Spring and on the southeast ridge of Jerusalem. It was so destroyed that modern archaeologists will not be able to discover any remnants of it within the confines of its former site. They will not find even its foundation stones that were once strongly positioned in place. This is because Jerusalem and the interior and exterior walls of the Temple of Herod were totally demolished down to the bedrock in the Roman/Jewish War of 66 to 70 C.E. Only a few important Roman buildings continued to exist after that war. Among those Roman remains is the Haram esh-Sharif that was once an imperial administration center that the Romans sustained in use for another 200 years after the war.

As a matter of fact, when Jesus said the Temple and the City of Jerusalem would be obliterated, his prophecies were accurate to a tee. The historical records show that when the Romans got through with their fury in dismantling Jerusalem and the Temple, no stones were left in place that would make one believe there was once a city or a holy sanctuary in the area. So thorough was the ruin of the Temple (and also of “*Jewish* Jerusalem”) that scholars cannot find any stone of the Temple still in place in its original location on the Ophel mound, once a part of the southeast ridge of Jerusalem.

This forgetfulness of original Jerusalem is a profound anomaly because the actual “Mount Zion” and the “Temple Mount” have

been misplaced and forgotten even though those two areas have been the most holy of regions for the past 3000 years and that both sites were also located in one of the most urbanized areas of our world community. What is almost impossible to believe (but it is true), from the year 1150 C.E. unto the year 1875 C.E. (a period of 725 years!), the original site of "Mount Zion" and the real location of the former Temples were so hidden from view from all scholars and religious authorities that the areas were not even reckoned by people who lived in the region in later times to be a part of the City of Jerusalem. These important holy sites from earlier times were so forgotten by the people of Jerusalem that the City of Jerusalem built by Solomon and later by Zerubbabel were finally shunted into a remote and insignificant area of Jerusalem that the region remained even *outside* the walls of the City. That precinct of holiness became open countryside and not even designated as a part of the urban region of Jerusalem.

The documented historical and geographical proofs that I will provide in this book to prove these points will be a surprising shock to the religious authorities (whether they are Christian, Muslim or Jewish). But, for the first time in 800 years, this new research will restore to the world the whereabouts and the importance of "The Temples that Jerusalem Forgot."

Albert Einstein gave his opinion: "If at first the idea is not *absurd*, then there is no hope for it."

An illustration: On an airplane between London and Tel Aviv, I explained to a distinguished looking man who appeared to be an orthodox Rabbi the basic historical research of this book. My conclusion to him showed that the Bible and history revealed the "Wailing Wall" was *not* a wall of the Temple but is the western wall of Herod's Fort Antonia. He retorted vociferously and vigorously with a single English word: "PREPOSTEROUS"!

PART ONE



The Wrong Site of the Temples

Chapter 1

WHAT WAS THE HARAM ESH-SHARIF?

ONE THING IS CERTAIN, since the time of the Crusades no one has doubted the opinion of all scholars and religious leaders (including me up to the early months of 1997) that within the area of the Haram esh-Sharif, where we see the magnificent structure known as the Dome of the Rock, is the former region where the Temple of Herod was built. This appraisal has been universal.

For example, the prestigious *Anchor Bible Dictionary* gives an up-to-date assessment of this ironclad assumption that synthesizes present scholarly and religious opinion. It states:

“The location of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, and thus of the place where the three successive temples were built in biblical antiquity, has never been in doubt.”²

Prof. Avigad stated: “The [site of the] Temple Mount has never entered into controversy, as it [its location] is not in dispute.”³

² *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 6, p.354.

³ Avigad, “Discovering Jerusalem,” p.28.

The *New International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* states:

“It is clear that the site of today’s ‘Dome of the Rock’ on Jerusalem’s eastern hill marks the location of Solomon’s temple (as well as that of the later structures of Zerubbabel and Herod); but it is difficult to be more precise.”⁴

If these references are not enough, the *New Bible Dictionary* relates:

“That it [that is, Solomon’s Temple] stood within the area now called ‘Haram esh-Sharif’ at the east side of the ‘Old City’ of Jerusalem is undisputed. The precise location within the vast enclosure is less certain.”⁵

The time has come, however, for us to change our minds. The present religious, scholarly and archaeological opinion is thoroughly in error and needs immediate revision. The region of the Haram (so confidently accepted as the site of the Temple) represents another important complex of buildings constructed and enlarged by Herod the Great. Those enormous facilities of the Haram are well defined in the eyewitness accounts of Josephus and other historical narratives, but they are not the ruins of the Temple of Herod.

The Jewish people knew, up to the period that Islam emerged even to the time of the Crusades, that the *southeast* ridge was the location of *their* “Mount Zion” and the site of all the Temples built in Jerusalem. Indeed, modern scholars realize that this is true for the real location of “Mount Zion,” but these same scholars and religious leaders fail to place the “Temple Mount” at that “Mount Zion” on the *southeast* ridge where it obviously belongs. The Holy Scriptures clearly place the “Temple Mount” over and around the Gihon Spring on the *southeast* ridge (on top of the original “Mount Ophel”). But scholars and religious leaders continue insisting (and even dogmatically *demanding*) that the Temples of Solomon, Zerubbabel and Herod were centered within the parameters of the Haram esh-Sharif. However, it is time to get back to rational thinking. Pure and simple common sense will show clearly that all

⁴ *New International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. 4, p.760.

⁵ *New Bible Dictionary*, p.1168.

the Temples and the original Mount Zion were adjacent to one another on the *southeast* ridge of Jerusalem, and in many biblical cases the sites were considered identical.

Let me start by mentioning a scene that usually occupies the attention of each person who visits Jerusalem for the first time (or returns year after year) to see the archaeological remains of the Jerusalem of Herod and Jesus. That particular vista is observed from the Mount of Olives just in front of the Seven Arches Hotel. This is where people obtain the best overall view of the ancient and modern City of Jerusalem.

Before I present details concerning this inspiring and unforgettable prospect, let me relate a little about myself for some of you who only recently started to read my books in libraries, bookstores or through the Internet. This will allow you to understand my deep interest and my personal involvement with the City of Jerusalem over the past four decades. My professional career has centered on the Holy City.

My first visit to Jerusalem was in the year 1961. Since then I have returned to the city over thirty times from areas in Europe or America where I have lived. Though I am an American, I professionally taught at a Christian college near London, England (Ambassador College, later University) where I lived for fourteen years from 1958 to 1972. In Jerusalem, I worked personally on a daily basis with Professor Benjamin Mazar in the archaeological excavations at the western and southern walls of the Haram esh-Sharif. My working association with Professor Mazar on that site lasted for two months each summer during the years 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972 and 1973. Over that period of five summers, I was the academic supervisor for 450 college students from around the world digging at the archaeological excavation directed by Professor Mazar. *Time* magazine in its Education Section for September 3, 1973 featured my academic program for granting college credits for students working under my superintendence at Professor Mazar's archaeological excavation sponsored by the Israel Exploration Society and Hebrew University. Besides this particular professional association at the excavation, I have personally guided more than 800 people around all areas of Israel explaining its

biblical and secular history.

Though not an archaeologist by profession (my M.A. is in Theology and my Ph.D. is in Education), I have written several books and other major studies on the history and geography of Jerusalem especially in the periods of Jesus, the Roman Empire and Byzantium which have been acclaimed by top historians and archaeologists as first class discoveries in matters dealing with the history of Jerusalem.⁶ I mention these brief biographical points to show that I have had considerable opportunity to study and to know the early history of Jerusalem.

With this in mind, let's return to the top of the Mount of Olives to be reminded of the splendid panoramic perspective depicting the remnants of ancient Jerusalem as well as witnessing the vibrant and bustling modern City of Jerusalem. For the 800 persons I have guided in their visits to Jerusalem, I have always taken them to this spot on the Mount of Olives in order for them to visualize, as a beginning lesson, what early Jerusalem was really like.

Observing Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives

The view is spectacular. No scene from other areas of Jerusalem can replicate the grandeur of the ancient archaeological remains of

⁶ My book *The Star that Astonished the World* has been acclaimed by astronomers and historians as the best account of what happened at the nativity of Jesus in regard to historical, astronomical and geographical events. Professor Jack Finegan gave me a particular accolade in his new (second edition) *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* as one of the prime researchers in solving the matter of the timing of Herod's death. I showed in my book that Herod died after an eclipse of the moon of January 10, 1 B.C.E., and Professor Finegan states this discovery is a fundamental factor in straightening out the chronology of the nativity of Jesus as well as providing a proper chronology for the early years of the imperial period of Augustus Caesar. Over 600 Planetariums around the world now show this historical information which I have discovered.

I have also written a book titled *Secrets of Golgotha* showing clearly that Jesus was crucified on the Mount of Olives (and not at the traditional site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre or the Garden Tomb area subscribed by General Gordon). Professor Friend of Cambridge University said my conclusions were much better than those of Constantine and Helena who first selected the wrong spot in the western part of Jerusalem (*Journal of Ecclesiastical Hist.*, 40.3, July 89, p.449).

the city. What dominates the scene, as one looks westward, is a rectangular body of walls with gigantic stones perfectly aligned with one another in their lower courses. These four walls present to the observer a feeling of majesty and awe at what the ancients were capable of accomplishing by their architectural achievements. These walls surround the area presently known as the Haram esh-Sharif (the Noble Enclosure). The stones of the lower courses in those walls are in their pristine positions. They are still placed neatly on top of another without any major displacement from their original alignments. These lower stones are clearly Herodian in origin, and in some places in the eastern portion of the wall they are pre-Herodian. There are probably about 10,000 of these stones still in place as they were in the time of Herod and Jesus.⁷

The grand centerpiece within the whole enclosure is the Muslim shrine called the Dome of the Rock. It is centrally located in a north/south dimension within the rectangular area of the Haram. To the south of the Dome and abutting to the southern wall is another large building called the Al Aqsa Mosque with its smaller dome. And though from the Mount of Olives modern Jerusalem

⁷ No archaeological authority has been able to count all the stones of the four walls surrounding the Haram esh-Sharif because many of the stones are still hidden from view. But at the holy site at the Western Wall (often called the "Wailing Wall") there are seven courses presently visible within that 197 foot length of the wall in the north/south exposure. That section contains about 450 Herodian stones. There are, however, eight more courses of Herodian stones underneath the soil down to the ground level that existed in the time of Herod and Jesus. Below that former ground level, there are a further nine courses of foundation stones. If that whole section of the "Wailing Wall" could be exposed, one could no doubt count around 1250 Herodian stones (probably more) of various sizes. Most stones are about three to four feet high and three feet to twelve feet long, but there are varying lengths up to 40 feet, with the larger stones weighing about 70 tons. One stone has been found in the Western Wall that has the colossal weight of 400 tons (Meir Ben-Dov, Mordechai Naor, and Zeev Aner, *The Western Wall*, pp.61,215). To extend by extrapolation the number of stones making up the eastern, southern and western walls surrounding the Haram (there is little left of the northern wall), there has to be about 8 to 10,000 Herodian and pre-Herodian stones still in place as they were some 2000 years ago. Here I will state the number as 10,000 stones, but (as all should realize) this is simply an educated guess. The number, no matter what, is prodigious. All these stones in those four walls survived the Roman/Jewish War of 66-73 C.E.

can be seen in the background, the whole area is overshadowed and dominated by the Haram esh-Sharif with those walls that highlight the scene.

This is the view that modern viewers are accustomed to see. But let us now go back over 1900 years and imagine viewing Jerusalem from this same spot on the Mount of Olives. From this vantage point the Roman General Titus looked on the ruins of Jerusalem after the Roman/Jewish War in 70 C.E. The description of what Titus saw is very instructive. We should read his appraisal in the accounts by Josephus because they were both eyewitnesses.

Some scholars have been reluctant to pay attention to the narratives of Josephus because of a long-standing prejudice that accompanies his writings. This is because Josephus' descriptions of buildings and sites do not seem compatible with what we see today when we view the meager remains of the architectural sites he wrote about. This is unfortunate. This bias against Josephus is based on a desire for him to describe the Haram esh-Sharif as being the Temple site, when he was actually giving dimensions of a different building with very different measurements.

As Professor Mazar aptly showed in his many writings, his appreciation of the accounts of Josephus grew in admiration over the years. Many of Josephus' statements were clearly justified in several archaeological areas where he was an eyewitness when modern scholars thought he had to be wrong. The truth is, the erroneous modern appraisals of what we thought was the Temple site (and other buildings) give us problems, and NOT the accounts of Josephus who told the truth in great detail. It is not the fault of Josephus when he adequately and accurately describes the dimensions of the Temple, and we substitute another building instead of the one he intended.

Indeed, the first sources to consult for evidence are the eyewitness narratives of the destruction of the City of Jerusalem and the Temple of Herod in 70 C.E. That is why we should turn to Josephus, the historian/priest, who wrote two accounts in the Greek language within a period of twenty years concerning matters dealing with the Roman/Jewish War. He recorded with great detail

events involving the destruction of the Temple and the City. He also gave an appraisal by Titus the Roman General (and later Emperor) who saw the final ruin of Jerusalem. Besides this, Josephus recorded the eyewitness account of Eleazar, the leader of the last remnant of Jewish resistance at Masada, where 960 Jewish people died by their own hands in 73 C.E. There is also a Hebrew version of Josephus called *Josippon* that provides some interesting corroborative information.

These historical reports by eyewitnesses reveal the initial facts in discovering the actual site of the three Temples. They also inform us about the true identity and the early function of the walls that surround the Haram esh-Sharif presently enclosing the Dome of the Rock. These historical facts show that the Haram is NOT the former Temple site of Herod.

Let us notice what Titus observed when he viewed the city after the war. We should pay attention to what he stated he saw, and also what he left out.⁸ This omission will become of prime importance in our inquiry regarding the true location of the Temple. Titus commanded that only a part of a wall and three forts were to remain of what was once the glorious City of Jerusalem.

The Ruins of Jerusalem

Note what Josephus stated about the ruined condition of the City,

“Now as soon as the army had no more people to slay or to plunder, because there remained none to be the objects of their fury (for they would not have spared any, had there remained any other work to be done), Caesar gave orders that they should now demolish the entire city and Temple, but should leave as many of the towers standing as were of the greatest eminence; that is, Phasaelus, and Hippicus, and Mariamne; and so much of the wall as enclosed the city on the west side. This wall was spared, in order to afford a camp for such as were to lie in garrison [in the Upper City], as were the towers [the three forts in the Upper City] also spared, in order to demonstrate to posterity what kind of city it was, and how well fortified, which the Roman valor had subdued;

⁸ *War* VII.1,1.

but for all the rest of the wall [surrounding Jerusalem], it was so thoroughly laid even with the ground by those that dug it up to the foundation, that *there was left nothing to make those that came thither believe it [Jerusalem] had ever been inhabited.* This was the end which Jerusalem came to by the madness of those that were for innovations; a city otherwise of great magnificence, and of mighty fame among all mankind.”⁹

This eyewitness account about the total ruin of Jerusalem has given visitors a major problem in relation to what we witness today. The fact is, Titus gave orders that the remaining parts of the Temple were to be demolished. The only manmade structures to be left in Jerusalem were to be a portion of the western wall and the three fortresses located in the Upper City. This was Titus’ intention at first. But within a short time, even that portion of the western wall and the three fortresses in the west were so thoroughly destroyed that not a trace of them remained.¹⁰ At the conclusion of the war, the Tenth Legion left Jerusalem a mass of ruins. Stones from those ruins were in such abundance that they were even in use in the following century to build a new city called Aelia. But by late 70 C.E., there was nothing left standing of the Temple or the buildings of Jerusalem. Josephus stated:

“And truly, the very view itself was a melancholy thing; for those places which were adorned with trees and pleasant gardens, were now become desolate country every way, and its trees were all cut down. Nor could any foreigner that had formerly seen Judaea and the most beautiful suburbs of the city, and now saw it as a desert, but lament and mourn sadly at so great a change. For the war had laid all signs of beauty quite waste. Nor if anyone that had known the place before, had come on a sudden to it now, would he have known it again. But though he [a foreigner] were at the city itself, yet would he have inquired for it [its whereabouts].”¹¹

What the Modern Visitor Observes

These descriptions of ruin and desolation stated by Josephus are

⁹ War VII.1,1, Whiston translation. Italics and bracketed words are mine.

¹⁰ Scholars consider the “Tower of David” near the present Jaffa Gate a part of the foundation of either the Hippicus or the Phasaelus towers.

¹¹ War VI.1,1.

what he and Titus saw from the Mount of Olives. But this is NOT what we observe today. Those of us today who look westward witness one of the grandest and majestic structures still intact from the ancient world (an edifice that survived the Roman/Jewish War of 66 to 70 C.E.) with 10,000 stones comprising its walls. This huge architectural wonder dominated the landscape as an outstanding example of the architectural genius that once embraced the Jerusalem of Herod and Jesus. It represented an awesome manmade facility that occupied a great deal of the northeastern area of the Mother City of the Jews, admired by all who saw it.

It inspires us today and we gasp in amazement at its present splendor. When we view this panoramic vista from the Mount of Olives, the Haram esh-Sharif is the most conspicuous geographical aspect of the whole area, the grand centerpiece that graces modern metropolitan Jerusalem. The ancient structure is so large that it obscures much of the view of the present old city of Jerusalem.¹² Remarkably, its grandeur has even withstood two thousand years of weathering, earthquakes, wars and natural deterioration.

What is strange, and almost inexplicable at first, is the fact that Josephus mentioned the utter ruin of the Temple and all the City of Jerusalem, but he gave no reference that the Haram esh-Sharif was ordered to be retained or that Titus and his general staff commanded those walls should continue to remain intact. But they have survived unto our modern times. Through the centuries those 10,000 stones have remained in their original positions making up the four walls of the Haram as a prominent and dominant architectural facility in the City of Jerusalem.

As a matter of fact, in Titus' time there were probably another 5,000 stones left on the upper courses of the four walls. These

¹² The area inside the four walls of the Haram is so large that you could fit four Coliseums side by side (the one in Rome built by the same emperors who destroyed Jerusalem, Vespasian and Titus) and have a little room left over. That Coliseum in Rome is one *stade* long (600 feet) and 5/6th of a *stade* wide (500 feet). Or, for you Americans who watch football, the Haram could fit a Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California (900 by 700 feet in area) inside its walls and still have about 35% open space left. In short, the Haram is one of the largest and most majestic displays of architectural splendor from ancient times.

extra stones must have been dislodged and fallen to the ground since the first century. We have explicit statements of Josephus that the Temple and all Jewish Jerusalem were so destroyed that no one would imagine there was once a city in that area. (Josephus stated that all the walls were uprooted from their foundations, except at first, a portion of the western wall in the Upper City was retained). We are then left with the undeniable fact that Titus deliberately allowed the retention of the rectangular shaped Haram esh-Sharif and its walls practically in the state he found them when he and his legions first got to Jerusalem. Strangely, Titus must have ordered that those four walls of the Haram be retained for all future ages to see.¹³

Without doubt, the Haram esh-Sharif with its gigantic walls survived the war in 70 C.E. and those ramparts continue to exist to this day. But how could Josephus have failed to account for the retention of such a spacious and magnificent site that was clearly in existence in pre-war Jerusalem? The continued presence of those extensive remains of the Haram seem (at first glance) to nullify the appraisal of Josephus and Titus of complete ruin for Jerusalem. Remember, they said that nothing of Jerusalem was left.

“It [Jerusalem] was so thoroughly laid even with the ground by those that dug it up to the foundation, that there was left nothing to make those that came thither believe it [Jerusalem] had ever been inhabited.”¹⁴

¹³ As soon as the war was over, Titus first thought to retain part of the western wall of Jerusalem and the three western forts as the place for the Camp of the Tenth Legion (*War* VII.1,1). But Titus changed his mind (as I will soon show). He decided instead to leave the walls of the Haram esh-Sharif as the Roman memorial. Later, in the early second century, both the emperors Trajan and Hadrian also left the lower courses of the walls of the Haram in their pristine condition. In the fourth century we also find that Constantine and Helena (his mother) also left the walls of the Haram as they found them. So did Justinian in the sixth century, as well as the Persians in 614 C.E, as did Omar, the Second Caliph. He allowed them to remain in the seventh century. It appears Omar and his successors restored the Haram walls to protect the new Al Aqsa Mosque on the south of the platform.

¹⁴ *War* VII.1,1.

What is even more strange is the modern belief that the Haram esh-Sharif must be reckoned as the site of the Temple Mount. If present scholarly opinion is correct, it means that Titus and the Roman legions did not destroy the outer walls of the Temple in its middle and lower courses. This belief by modern scholars and religious authorities (whether Jewish, Muslim or Christian) that the 10,000 stones of the Haram are the remnants of the Temple walls make descriptions of utter demolition by Josephus and Titus to be outlandish exaggerations. And true enough, this is precisely how modern scholars, theologians, religious leaders and archaeologists view the matter, with one recent commentator boldly stating that Josephus used “wild exaggerations.”¹⁵ In almost every historical book on the subject we have the scholar (or scholars) voicing an apology for the erroneous statements that Josephus wrote. Even his friends admit he *greatly exaggerates* the dimensions he attributes to particular buildings.

Our modern scholars and religious authorities consistently state that we cannot accept as truth the plain words of Josephus in the important descriptions he provides regarding the shapes of buildings and their dimensions. We will discover it is the scholars and religious leaders who are wrong — not Josephus.

The early Jewish historian/priest, in places that scholars say he exaggerated, was stating the exact truth. The fact is, the Jerusalem of the Jews and the Temple of Herod were indeed totally destroyed and not a stone of them was left in place. This problem we face today is not Josephus. It is modern scholarly opinion that the

¹⁵ Though Professor Williamson, who translated Josephus, did not use the term “wild” (it was another highly respected scholar), Williamson would have thought the evaluation appropriate (as I did before 1997). He remarked that the thorough desolation that Josephus recorded and Titus supposedly saw in front of him was:

“An exaggeration. A great deal of the southern part of the Temple enclosure was spared. The whole of the south wall of its successor, the present wall round the Haram esh-Sharif, the southern section of the west wall (the ‘Wailing Wall,’ where the fall of Jerusalem is still lamented) and a short stretch of the east wall running up from the southeast corner are Herodian to a considerable height” (*The Jewish War*, p.454, n.2).

Haram esh-Sharif was the Temple Mount. But this evaluation is NOT true.

That facility known as the Haram was officially reckoned as being beyond and *outside* the limits of Jewish Jerusalem. It was NOT reckoned as being part of the municipality of Jerusalem.

Josephus Was Not Exaggerating

Modern scholars are wrong, not the eyewitness accounts of Josephus and Titus. Jewish Jerusalem and the Temple were certainly destroyed to the bedrock just as they relate. While the Haram retained its four walls, Josephus was keen on telling his readers that all the walls around Jerusalem were leveled to the ground. Note his observation:

“Now the Romans set fire to the extreme parts of the city [the suburbs] and burnt them down, and entirely demolished its [Jerusalem’s] walls.”¹⁶

Those walls surrounding the Haram were NOT city walls, they were walls that protected something else altogether. The Haram area was not even a part of Jewish Jerusalem.

To reinforce the matter, Josephus buttressed his account:

“When he [Titus] entirely demolished the rest of the city, and overthrew its walls, he left these towers [the three towers mentioned above] as a monument of his good fortune, which had proved [the destructive power of] his auxiliaries, and enabled him to take what could not otherwise have been taken by him.”¹⁷

These two accounts by Josephus, along with the other previous observations, confirm that there was a literal destruction of all the walls surrounding Jerusalem. We will see even the small section of the western wall of the Upper City was later demolished. Indeed, not a trace of it was mentioned by later eyewitnesses, nor has any part of it been found by modern archaeologists. Simply put, after 70 C.E. there is no word in any historical record about a continuance of those three fortresses that Titus at first thought he

¹⁶ *War* VI.9,4

¹⁷ *War* VI.9,1.

would retain as monuments to the power of Rome over the Jews.

But these descriptions of Josephus and Titus of total ruin of the Temple and Jewish Jerusalem seem at variance with what we witness today. Let's face it. From the Mount of Olives we behold the four walls of the Haram still erect in all their glory, and they are prominently displayed with a grandeur that dominates present-day Jerusalem. The lower courses of those walls clearly have 10,000 Herodian and pre-Herodian stones still on top of one another. As a matter of interest, those rectangular walls are even functioning ramparts of Jerusalem today. They have been in constant use throughout the intervening centuries to protect the buildings that were constructed in the interior of the Haram esh-Sharif.

Again, if those rectangular walls of the Haram are those which surrounded the Temple Mount (as we are informed by all authorities today), why did Josephus and Titus leave out any mention about this magnificent Haram structure? They spoke of the utter ruin and desolation of Jewish Jerusalem and Temple, not the *survival* of any buildings that Jewish authorities once controlled.

On the other hand, it is certain that Josephus and Titus were aware that the walls of the Haram survived the war. After all, the walls are there for all to observe. Then why did Josephus and Titus not refer to the walls of the Haram that remained standing in their time? This book will soon explain the reason why, and clearly.

A Quandary for Modern Christians

These facts present a major problem for Christians. If those rectangular walls of the Haram are the same walls in their lower courses that formerly embraced the Temple Mount (as we are dogmatically informed), why are these stones still firmly positioned on top of one another? The continued existence of those colossal stones shows that Titus did not destroy the walls of the Temple after all — if those were the same walls. Why is this a difficulty for Christian belief? The reason is plain.

Christians are aware of four prophecies given by Jesus in the New Testament that not one stone would be left upon another either of the Temple and its walls, or even of the City of Jerusalem

and its walls (Matthew 24:1–2; Mark 13:1–2; Luke 19:43–44; 21:5–6). But the walls encompassing the Haram still remain in their glory with the 10,000 Herodian and pre-Herodian stones in place in their lower courses. If those stones are those of the Temple, the prophecies of Jesus can be seriously doubted as having any historical value or prophetic merit in any analysis made by intelligent and unbiased observers.

Indeed, the majority of Christian visitors to Jerusalem who first view those huge stones surrounding the rectangular area of the Haram (and who know the prophecies of Jesus) are sometimes perplexed and often shocked at what they see. And they ought to be. The surprise at what they observe has been the case with numerous people I have guided around Jerusalem and Israel. They have asked for an explanation concerning this apparent failure of the prophecies of Jesus. Why do those gigantic walls still exist when Jesus prophesied that not one stone would remain upon another? If those walls of the Haram represent the stones around the Temple, then the prophecies of Christ are invalid.

The usual explanation to justify the credibility of the prophecies is to say Jesus could only have been speaking about the stones of the *inner* Temple and its buildings, NOT the *outer* Temple and its walls that surrounded it. This is the customary and conciliatory answer most scholars friendly to Christian principles provide as their explanation. It is the same type of reasoning I adopted to explain this anomaly to my students and associates.

The truth is, however, this explanation will not satisfy when one looks at what Jesus prophesied. Observe the prophecies carefully. They plainly state that one stone would not rest on another of the Temple buildings, and his prophecies included its *outer* walls. The Greek word Jesus used in his prophetic context to describe the Temple and its buildings was *heiron*. This means the entire Temple including its exterior buildings and walls. Notice what Vincent says about the meaning of *heiron*.

“The word temple (*heiron*, lit., sacred place) signifies the whole compass of the sacred enclosure, with its porticos, courts, and other subordinate buildings; and should be carefully distinguished from

the other word, *naos*, also rendered temple, which means the temple itself — the ‘Holy Place’ and the ‘Holy of Holies.’ When we read, for instance, of Christ teaching in the temple (*heiron*) we must refer it to one of the temple porches [outer colonnades]. So it is from the *heiron*, the court of the Gentiles, that Christ expels the moneychangers and cattle merchants.”¹⁸

The exterior buildings of the Temple including its walls were always reckoned within the meaning of *heiron* that Jesus used concerning the total destruction of the Temple. There were several outer divisions of the Temple distinguished from the Inner Temple, and these outer structures were accounted as cardinal features of the Sanctuary. Note the New Testament account stating that Satan took Jesus to the “pinnacle of the Temple” (Matthew 4:5). The pinnacle section was the southeastern corner of the outer wall that surrounded the whole of the Temple complex. The wording in the New Testament shows that this southeastern angle was very much a part of the Temple — it was a pinnacle [a wing] “of the Temple.” That area was a cardinal attachment to the sacred edifice itself and an integral section of the Temple Jesus referred to when he prophesied that not one stone would remain on another.

Another important geographical factor proves this point. When Jesus made his prophecy, Matthew said that Jesus and his disciples just departed from the outer precincts of the Temple. This means all of them were viewing the *exterior sections* of the Temple and its walls (the *heiron*) when he gave his prophecy (Matthew 24:1). The Gospel of Mark goes further and makes it clear the *outside* walls of the Temple were very much in Jesus’ mind when he said they would be uprooted from their foundations. “And as he [Jesus] went out of the Temple” [note that Jesus and the disciples were standing *outside* the Temple walls and looking back toward the Temple enclosure],

“one of his disciples saith unto him, ‘Master, see what buildings are here!’ And Jesus answering said unto him, ‘Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.’”

• *Mark 13:1–2*

¹⁸ Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. I., p.50.

Without doubt, when Jesus spoke in his prophecy about the destruction of the Temple, he included the stones of the *outer* walls enclosing the Temple as well as the buildings of the inner Temple.

All of Jerusalem Predicted to be Destroyed

Jesus went even farther than simply prophesying about the destruction of the Temple and its walls. He included within his predictions the stones that made up the whole City of Jerusalem (with every building and house that comprised the metropolis — including the walls that embraced its urban area). According to Jesus in Luke 19:43–44, every structure of Jewish Jerusalem would be leveled to the ground — to bedrock.

“For the days shall come upon thee [Jerusalem], that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another.”

So, in the prophecies of Jesus, not only the stones that made up the Temple and its *outer* walls were to be torn down, but he also included within that destruction the stones that comprised the totality of the City of Jerusalem. We are left with no ambiguity. The prophecies about the Temple and the City of Jerusalem either happened exactly as Jesus predicted, or those prophecies must be reckoned as false and unreliable. There can be no middle ground. If one is honest with the plain statements in the texts of the Gospels, Jesus taught that nothing would be left of the Temple, nothing left of the whole City of Jerusalem, and nothing left of the walls of the Temple and the City.

Anyone with any common sense, and not having preconceived notions, will admit that Jesus’ prophecies intended to show the complete and utter destruction of the City of Jerusalem and Temple. The emphasis of Jesus was that not one stone would be left on top of another.

Josephus and Titus Agree with Jesus

Was Jesus correct in his prophecies? Was Jerusalem with its

Temple and walls leveled to the ground? What is remarkable is the fact that the eyewitness accounts given by Josephus and Titus agree precisely with what Jesus prophesied. Note what these two men observed.

“It [Jerusalem with its walls] was so thoroughly laid even with the ground by those that dug it up to the foundation, that there was left nothing to make those that came thither believe it [Jerusalem] had ever been inhabited.”¹⁹

All the land surrounding the City of Jerusalem became a desolate and ruined wasteland. Note Josephus’ account.

“They had cut down all the trees, that were in the country that adjoined to the city, and that for ninety stadia round about [for nearly ten miles], as I have already related. And truly, the very view itself was a melancholy thing. Those places that were before adorned with trees and pleasant gardens were now become a desolate country in every way, and its trees were all cut down. Nor could any foreigner that had formerly seen Judaea and the most beautiful suburbs of the city, and now saw it as a desert, but lament and mourn sadly at so great a change. For the war had laid all signs of beauty quite waste. Nor, if any one that had known the place before, and had come on a sudden to it now, would he have known it again. But though he were at the city itself, yet would he have inquired for it notwithstanding.”²⁰

After 70 C.E., people would have seen utter desolation in all directions. Every stone of every building and wall in Jewish Jerusalem was dislodged from its original position and thrown to the ground. Josephus provides reasonable accounts of later events after the war to show how this complete destruction was accomplished. Much of the destruction of the City of Jerusalem came after the war had ceased.

But with the Temple it was different. In regard to the total destruction of the Temple and all its outer buildings, a Hebrew version of Josephus (known as *Josippon*²¹) states that when the Inner

¹⁹ War VII.1,1, Whiston translation.

²⁰ War VI.1,1, Whiston translation.

²¹ *Josippon* is an anonymous historical narrative written in Hebrew somewhere in southern Italy in the tenth century and accepted as valid by the Jewish

Temple was set to the flames by the Romans, the Jews knew their end was near. So, to prevent the Romans from desecrating the Temple by erecting another “abomination of desolation” like that of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Jews systematically tore down all of the Inner Temple and all its outer buildings and appurtenances in order to leave nothing of the former Temple for anyone to pollute. Notice what the historical account of *Josippon* states:

“So the flames destroyed the Holy of Holies. And when the [Jewish] leaders of the rebels and their followers who were still in the city [of Jerusalem] saw that the Holy of Holies had been burned, they burned the rest of the Temple together with every mansion in Jerusalem, so that the Romans should not rule over them. And **they also burned down the rest of the Temple buildings**, saying: ‘Now that the Holy of Holies has been burned, why go on living? Why leave house or building?’”²²

This teaching that the Jews themselves helped destroy the Temple so that it not be polluted is reflected in an early Jewish work called *Second Baruch*. All scholars realize this work was composed near the end of the first century, just after the destruction of

authorities during the Middle Ages. The work follows the literary arrangement of Josephus (with whom he was often identified) in 16 of his 20 books in *Antiquities* and also in an adaption of Josephus in his *Wars of the Jews*. The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* states that for his time

“the author was a gifted historian, aware of his responsibilities and endowed with excellent historical insight. Fables drawn from obscure sources are only rarely found in his book.... The author also had great literary gifts. His narrative is filled with national pride and is written in an excellent biblical Hebrew style. In the Middle Ages, the book was already called *Sefer Josippon*; this is the Jewish/Greek form for Josephus” (vol.10, p.297).

By the time of Rashi the book was recognized as being a Hebrew version of Josephus. Until the 18th century it was looked on in Jewish circles as the work of Josephus and was favorably quoted. It contains some information not found in the Greek version of Josephus. It can be reasonably stated that its narratives were reckoned by Jewish scholars of the Middle Ages as a valid source of historical information coming from the pen of Josephus himself. It certainly gives us Jewish understanding of past events associated with early Jerusalem and the period of the Second Temple not found in the Greek version of Josephus.

²² This quote of *Josippon* is given in *Mimekor Israel* (Classical Jewish Folktales), collected by Micha Joseph Bin Gorion (Indiana University Press, 1999), p.117.

the Temple and Jerusalem. The authors state that angels on the side of the Jews in the war with the Romans ordered the Temple put to the torch to keep it from falling intact into the hands of the Romans. Here is what the author states:

“I heard this angel saying to the angels who held the torches: ‘Now destroy the walls [of the Temple and Jerusalem] and **overthrow them to their foundations** so that the enemies [the Romans] do not boast and say, ‘We have overthrown the wall of Zion and we have burnt down the place of the mighty God.’”²³

These early sources support the fact that the Jews themselves, in desperation and seeing that no hope of victory, took part in destroying the Temple and the buildings of Jerusalem.

The references in the *Book of Josippon* and *Second Baruch* confirm the prophecy of Jesus, who viewed with his disciples the outer buildings and walls of the Temple and stated that all before them would be utterly destroyed, with every stone dislodged and not a trace of the Sanctuary as a building would be left. And recall, Jewish authorities during the Middle Ages accepted this narrative of *Josippon* as that of Josephus, an eyewitness.²⁴ And in the Greek version that has become the main standard text for Josephus, the priest/historian states that for six months after the war, the Tenth

²³ Second Baruch 6:3–7:1. Note also R. Hammer, *The Jerusalem Anthology*, p.89 for more information on this early historical source.

²⁴ Note the comment of the modern Jewish historian Rabbi Leibel Reznick.

“Josephus wrote two accounts of Jewish history in general and of the Second Temple era in particular. The first, written in Aramaic, is called *Yosiphon* [*Josippon*] or *Sefer Yossef ben Gurion HaCohain*. It was later translated into Hebrew. The second work was written in Greek and consisted of two books, *Jewish Antiquities* and *The Jewish War*. They were composed primarily for the European intelligentsia. Some scholars believe that the Greek version contains hyperbole, unreliable historical data, and a condescending Roman bias. However, the reliability of the *Sefer Yosiphon* can hardly be questioned. The giant among biblical commentators, Rashi, quotes from the *Sefer Yosiphon* no fewer than nineteen times. Other respected rabbinic authorities who used the *Yosiphon* text include Rabbaynu Saadyah Gaon, Rabbaynu Gershon, the Baal HaAruch, Rasbam, Baalei Tosfos, Raavad, Baal HaMeor, Ibn Ezra, Ramban, Abarbanel, Maharal M’Prague, Bach, and Tosfos Yom Tov” (*The Holy Temple Revisited*, [London, Aaronson, 1993], p.23).

Legion “dug up” the ruins of the houses, buildings and walls looking for plunder. They systematically excavated beneath the foundations of the ruined buildings and houses (and had many Jewish captives do the work for them).

They also had the whole area turned upside down looking for gold and other precious metals that became molten when the fires were raging. The Temple was one of their chief sources for riches. Josephus tells us the Temple was effectively the treasury for most of the Jewish people, whether they lived in Judaea or in the Diaspora, and that the Jewish authorities allowed people to have small chambers in various regions of the Temple enclosure (similar to what we today would call “safety deposit boxes”).²⁵ This is one of the principal reasons the soldiers after the war concentrated on tearing down every stone of the Temple in order to reach this abundance of hidden wealth.

We are told by Josephus that the whole City of Jerusalem was set to the torch. This burning of buildings caused precious metals to melt and flow into the lower crevices of stones. Even the lowest of the foundation stones contained melted gold from the great fires that devoured all the urban precincts. Also in Jerusalem, the inhabitants constructed a curious network of underground passages where a great deal of money and precious things had been hidden.²⁶ When the Romans discovered this labyrinth of passages, they systematically excavated every underground link in the city to extract the gold and other precious items. This plundering of every former building, wall and cavern in the municipality of Jerusalem resulted in the troops overturning (or having the remaining Jewish captives overturn for them) every stone within the city.

The Temple was especially vulnerable because the soldiers knew that was the central treasury of the nation. Such great quantities of gold were discovered in the ruins of Jerusalem in the sweep for riches that Josephus said the price of that metal in the eastern empire plummeted to half its former value.²⁷ This continual digging

²⁵ *War* VI.5,2.

²⁶ *War* VI.9,4.

²⁷ *War* VI.6,1.

up of the Jewish City of Jerusalem occurred over a period of months after the war. In the wake of extensive and systematic pillaging, the city was reduced to utter ruin and became a desert area. Indeed, after an absence of about four months, Titus returned to Jerusalem from Antioch and once again viewed the ruined city. Jerusalem was now turned upside down without a stone left in place (just as Jesus said). Josephus states what Titus saw.

“As he came to Jerusalem in his progress [in returning from Antioch to Egypt], and compared the melancholy condition he saw it then in, with the ancient glory of the city [compared] with the greatness of its present ruins (as well as its ancient splendor). He could not but pity the destruction of the city.... Yet there was no small quantity of the riches that had been in that city still found among the ruins, a great deal of which the Romans dug up; but the greatest part was discovered by those who were captives [Jewish captives were forced by the Roman troops to dig up the stones of their own city looking for gold], and so they [the Romans] carried it away; I mean the gold and the silver, and the rest of that most precious furniture which the Jews had, and which the owners had treasured up under ground against the uncertainties of war.”²⁸

Three Years After the War

We now come to the final appraisal of the complete desolation of Jerusalem. Note what Eleazar, Jewish commander at Masada, related three years after the war was finished at Jerusalem. Though Jewish Jerusalem and the Temple were then completely destroyed, Eleazar gave an eyewitness account of how the Camp of the Romans was preserved among the ruins. What Eleazar said to the 960 Jewish people (who were to commit suicide rather than fall into the hands of General Silva, on the verge of capturing the Fortress of Masada) is most important to our present inquiry. This final Jewish commander lamented over the sad state of affairs that everyone could witness at this twilight period of the conflict after the main war with the Romans was over.

Jerusalem to Eleazar had become a disastrous spectacle in thorough ruin. There was only one thing that remained of the former

²⁸ *War* VII.5,2.

Jerusalem that Eleazar could single out as still standing. Everything was gone except one facility. And what was that single structural vestige of the Jerusalem of Herod and Jesus? It was the Camp of the Romans that Titus permitted to remain as a monument of humiliation for the Jews and a triumph for the Romans over the Mother City of the Jews. Eleazar acknowledged that this military encampment had been in Jerusalem before the war, and Titus let it continue after the war. The retention of this single Camp of the Romans, according to Eleazar, was a symbol of the victory Rome achieved over the Jewish people. His words are recorded in *War* VII.8,7. Several words and phrases need emphasizing, so I feel justified in being conspicuous.

“And where is now that great city [Jerusalem], the metropolis of the Jewish nation, which was fortified by so many walls round about, which had so many fortresses and large towers to defend it, which could hardly contain the instruments prepared for the war, and which had so many ten thousands of men to fight for it? Where is this city that was believed to have God himself inhabiting therein? *It is now demolished to the very foundations, and hath nothing left but THAT MONUMENT of it preserved, I mean THE CAMP OF THOSE [the Romans] that hath destroyed it, WHICH [CAMP] STILL DWELLS UPON ITS RUINS;* some unfortunate old men also lie upon the ashes of the Temple [then in total ruins — burnt to ashes], and a few women are there preserved alive by the enemy, for our bitter shame and reproach.”

What Eleazar said must be reckoned as an eyewitness account of the state of Jerusalem in the year 73 C.E. This narrative is of utmost importance to our question at hand. Eleazar admitted that the whole of the City of Jerusalem and all its Jewish fortresses had been demolished “to the very foundations.” There was nothing left of the City or the Temple. This is precisely what Jesus prophesied would happen.

Eleazar reinforced his appraisal of utter ruin. He mentioned there had been the “wholesale destruction” of the city. He said that God “abandoned His most holy city to be burnt and razed to the ground.”²⁹ A short time later, Eleazar concluded his eyewitness

²⁹ *War* VII.8,6 Loeb.

account by stating: "I cannot but wish that we had all died before we had seen that holy city demolished by the hands of our enemies, or the foundations of our Holy Temple dug up, after so profane a manner."³⁰ Note that he said "*the foundation of our Holy Temple [was] dug up.*"

Yes, even the very foundation stones that comprised the Temple complex (including its walls) had been *dug up* and the foundations destroyed. Note that Eleazar said even the substructural stones of the Temple had been destroyed and not even the lower courses of the base stones that made up the Temple were left in place. According to Eleazar, the only thing left in the Jerusalem area of the former city was a single Roman Camp that remained still hovering triumphantly over the ruins of the City and the Temple. That Roman Camp was reckoned as having been in existence in the Jerusalem area *before the war*, and now he said it was the only facility left that was relatively unscathed. What was this facility still remaining in the area? He was talking about the Haram esh-Sharif ("Fort Antonia"), the Camp of the Romans.

This means that the main early Roman Camp called Fort Antonia survived the war. But as far as Jewish Jerusalem was concerned, that Jewish metropolis was so demolished that it "hath nothing left." The only structure continuing to exist in the region was that enduring "monument" (a single monumental facility) preserved by Titus. Eleazar said that monument was "the camp of those that destroyed it [Jerusalem], which still dwells [continues to dwell] upon its ruins."

The former Roman Camp did not have to be demolished. It had not been a reservoir of hidden gold before the war in which Jews could hide their precious things either within its walls or underground passageways. Jews did not hide their treasures inside any former Camp of the Romans. This particular region prior to the war had been Roman imperial property. This is a prime reason why it did not come under the ban of destruction to which Titus and others in the Roman military subjected the Temple and the rest of Jewish Jerusalem.

³⁰ War VII.8,7.

With its walls left intact the Haram made a perfect complex of buildings, protected by four substantial walls, to be the Camp of the Romans for the Tenth Legion. When Titus viewed the Haram esh-Sharif (Fort Antonia) and saw its walls relatively unscathed (especially its eastern, southern and western walls) and with its 37 cisterns and a special aqueduct supplying it with water, he decided to retain that strategic area (with its military advantages) as his Camp for the Tenth Legion. It had been the Roman Camp before the war, and Titus decided to keep it as the Roman Camp after the war.³¹ What the Romans did was to permit this former Camp to remain as the principal fort to quarter the Tenth Legion for the security of the Empire. This is why the Haram esh-Sharif was left by Titus to dwell upon the ruins of Jerusalem.

But what happened to the Temple and its walls? Just as Jesus prophesied, there was not one stone left on another of the Temple buildings or walls. And as Eleazar observed, even the very foundational stones of the Temple and its walls had been completely “dug up” and the site was left in thorough ruins. In a word, nothing was left of the Temple once located just to the south and above the

³¹ In many ways it was like Fort Sumter in the American Civil War. The original fort that guarded Charleston harbor was Fort Moultrie built in the Revolutionary War. That fort had a problem as more population came to the area. It was too close to the sea for adequate protection of the area, so a new Fort Sumter was built more inland on the opposite side of the harbor. At the beginning of the secession, Union forces moved from Fort Moultrie into the unfinished and ungarrisoned Fort Sumter because it proved to be more secure. The first shots of the Civil War took place against Union forces at Fort Sumter in April, 1861 and soon after Confederate soldiers took over Fort Sumter. It remained as a Confederate fort until February, 1865, when it returned to Union governance. It continued as a Union fort for several decades until it became a national monument in 1948.

Becoming a “monument” was typical of major forts which had significant battles or wars associated with them in the history of a nation or empire. So, just as Fort Sumter became a monumental fort after the Civil War, Titus decided the same monumental status for Fort Antonia. And just as Fort Sumter remained active for decades after its historical battle, so did Fort Antonia. When Fort Antonia returned to Roman hands at the end of the Roman/Jewish War, it continued as a fortress for the Tenth Legion until 289 C.E. That is why the walls surrounding Fort Antonia (that is, the Haram esh-Sharif) were allowed to stand after the war.

Gihon Spring. All that remained of Jerusalem was the Camp of the Romans (Fort Antonia), the Haram esh-Sharif.

The evidence for this truth is so abundant that it is amazing that this conclusion has not been seen before. There cannot be the slightest doubt, the walls of the Haram esh-Sharif are those that once surrounded Fort Antonia. This was the fort 600 feet *north* of the Temple and it completely dominated the Holy Sanctuary.

Chapter 2

THE ROMAN FORTRESS AT JERUSALEM

THE MAIN ROMAN CAMP was allowed by Titus to continue in existence when the war was over. This Roman Camp is today the Haram esh-Sharif. Why did the Romans want the Haram with its immense Herodian and pre-Herodian walls to remain as a fort? This stratagem of retention was because of the role the Haram played in the time of Herod and Jesus.

If we pay close attention to the historical accounts of Josephus, it is easy to identify the Haram as Fort Antonia. The main evidence comes from the speech of Eleazar who commanded the remnant Jewish forces at Masada some three years after the Temple and Jerusalem were demolished by the Romans. Eleazar's statement must be reckoned as an eyewitness account and is of utmost importance to our question at hand.

This is because Eleazar admitted that the City of Jerusalem and all its Jewish fortresses were indeed demolished "to the very foundations." Nothing was left of the City or the Temple. He reinforced his statement by mentioning the "wholesale destruction" of the

city. He said God “abandoned His most holy city to be burnt and razed to the ground by our enemies.”³² A short time later Eleazar concluded his account: “I cannot but wish that we had all died before we had seen that holy city demolished by the hands of our enemies, or the foundations of our Holy Temple dug up, after so profane a manner.”³³

Yes, even the very foundation stones supporting the upper parts of the Temple complex (including its walls) were uprooted and demolished. They had been “dug up.” Not even the lower courses of the base stones were left in place. According to Eleazar, the only thing remaining in the Jerusalem area was a single Roman Camp that continued to hover triumphantly over the ruins of the City and the desolation of the Temple. He said that while Jewish Jerusalem “hath nothing left,” the only thing remaining of former Jerusalem was the “monument” (a single monumental structure) preserved by Titus. And what was that “monument”? Eleazar said it was “the camp of those that destroyed it [Jerusalem], which still dwells upon its ruins.”³⁴

Such monuments were architectural structures designed to evoke memories from later peoples who view them. In the Roman world monuments were raised up to commemorate dead rulers.³⁵

³² *War* VII.8,6, Loeb translation.

³³ *War* VII.8,7.

³⁴ *War* VII.8,7.

³⁵ Examples of such monuments were those raised up by Simon the Hasmonean to commemorate his father, mother and brothers at Modin (*Antiquities* XIII.6,6); the monument of John Hyrcanus (*War* V.6,2; 9,2; 11,4); the monument of King Alexander the Hasmonean (*War* V.7,3); the city of Antipatris erected by Herod as a monument to his father (*Antiquities* XVI.21,9); and the Holy Temple Herod built as a monument to himself (*Antiquities* XV.8,5). In the general area of Jerusalem there were even several monuments left after the war. There were the monuments of Annas the High Priest and of Herod Agrippa the First located on the outskirts of Jerusalem near the temporary wall that Titus erected at the time of the siege (*War* V.12,2). There was also the monuments (plural) of Queen Helena of Abiadene situated north of Agrippa’s wall (*War* V.1,2). We must not forget what is called Absalom’s monument and the other two monuments associated with it in the Kedron Valley — these also remained after the war. But to Eleazar, the central monument that remained was “the camp of those that

to celebrate military victories, or to honor public buildings as grand government edifices. This is why Eleazar said that a major monument (a single manmade structure) was left of the buildings comprising former Jerusalem, “the camp of those that destroyed it [Jerusalem].” When one surveys what Josephus said (and recorded from the eyewitness account of Eleazar) there can be no doubt what “camp” is meant.

It is easy to discover where the Camp of the Romans was when one reads Josephus’ accounts of the war. The main military establishment in Jerusalem before the war was Fort Antonia, north of the Temple. Before the war the Romans considered Fort Antonia to be their property, and they had no reason to destroy buildings already belonging to them. After all, Titus was leaving the Tenth Legion to guard the area and such a large number of troops needed adequate and permanent facilities for housing. Fort Antonia was ideal to retain as the encampment of the Romans since it had been a former Roman fortress since the year 6 C.E. (I will soon explain why this year was important to Rome.)

And though we read in Josephus that in the last year of the war “Titus gave orders to his soldiers that were with him to dig up the foundations of the tower of Antonia,”³⁶ this early command was short-lived. Titus gave that order when the Jewish forces were still entrenched behind its walls and in complete control of Antonia. Titus knew that his legions had to storm the wall of that military fortress and dislodge the Jewish revolutionaries, or else he would never capture the Temple. The easiest way to reach the Temple was to use two causeways that led directly from the southern wall of Fort Antonia into the northern precincts of the Temple. “Through the tower of Antonia [the Romans could subdue] the Temple itself.”³⁷

We will see that the easy access from Fort Antonia into the Temple precincts was provided by two colonnade roadways that connected the Fortress with the four Temple colonnades that sur-

destroyed it [Jerusalem]” (*War* VII.8,7). This remaining fortress was a “living monument,” while the others were in commemoration of dead kings or a queen.

³⁶ *War* VI.2,1.

³⁷ *War* V.6,2.

rounded the square-form Temple complex. Titus at first thought to demolish Antonia, and indeed part of its northern wall was finally dismantled by the Romans in their quest to rout the Jews who remained in the fortress. But fortunate circumstances in favor of the Romans ended the war earlier than expected and caused Titus to change his mind about destroying Fort Antonia.

Fort Antonia Remained a Fortress in Jerusalem

The Romans at the beginning of the war had as one of their chief objectives the overthrow of Fort Antonia, which had been taken by the Jewish rebels. When the Jewish insurgents had control of Antonia, Titus thought it best to demolish the fortress. But, as it turns out, Titus only had to dismantle the foundations of part of the northern wall in order to gain entrance into the fortress. He did not raze to the ground or flatten the whole fortress. Indeed, it would have been a monumental task to tear down all the Haram walls.

Note how Whiston translated Josephus' description of the destruction of part of Antonia's wall. He added the word "some" to his translation, and for a reason. "The Roman army had, in seven day's time, overthrown [some] of the foundations of the tower [Antonia]."³⁸ Whiston added "some" because we find later the Tower of Antonia very much in existence. As it turned out, only the northern wall of the fortress was seriously damaged and after the war this section was quickly repaired. Indeed, as the war progressed and came to its final stages, Fort Antonia became a command post for Titus and his legions. "So Titus retired into the tower of Antonia, and resolved to storm the Temple the next day, early in the morning, with his whole army, and to encamp round about the holy house."³⁹

The Romans demolished only part of the northern wall of Fort Antonia. As Josephus showed, in the latter stages of the war the fortress became an important headquarters for Titus. This is because the southern wall of Fort Antonia (especially its highest tower at its southeast corner) provided Titus with a complete view of the entire Temple edifice directly south and west of the fortress

³⁸ *War* VI.2,7.

³⁹ *War* VI.4,5.

about 600 feet (as we will later see). Josephus described this vantagepoint for viewing the battles in and around the Temple as like a prime seat in a theatre. The southeastern tower of Fort Antonia was a central observation post where Titus could witness and direct all military activities inside and around the Temple precincts.⁴⁰

With this in mind it is easy to understand that capturing Fort Antonia became a fundamental task of Titus. It was necessary in order to conquer the Jewish revolutionaries in the Temple and then the rest of Jerusalem. So, Titus commanded his legions to first subdue Fort Antonia. As mentioned before, Titus demolished much of the northern wall of Antonia for his troops to enter the fortress controlled by its Jewish defenders. It is interesting that to this day the northern wall of even the Haram area is practically non-existent. This was the area the Romans breached to gain entrance into Fort Antonia.

The breach made by the Romans did in fact demolish Antonia's effectiveness as a secure fortress for the Jews late in the war. To this day the northern wall of the Haram has very few Herodian stones in its courses that identify the exact direction of the northern wall. The northern wall was the least effective of Fort Antonia. But after the war, the ineffectiveness of Antonia did not last long. Titus quickly repaired the rupture in the northern wall and made Antonia his command post for ending the war. Fort Antonia resumed its position as a powerful citadel to control all of Jerusalem.

Why Fort Antonia Was Strategically Important

At first Titus thought to leave for the Tenth Legion an area once part of Herod's former palace and also a portion of the western wall in the Upper City (and the three fortresses associated with it: Phasael, Hippicus and Mariamne). It is easy to see what Titus would have done had the plan been carried through. As historian G.J. Wightman rightly states in his excellent book *The Walls of Jerusalem*, it would have involved building a camp that

“had a typically square plan and enclosed an area of about 400 x 500 meters [1250 by 1600 feet]. Roman military camps were

⁴⁰ *War* VI.2.6.

normally divided into four quadrants by two main streets intersecting at right angles: the *Cardo Maximus* running N/S and the *Decumanus Maximus* running E/W.⁴¹

Building such a new encampment would involve a great deal of effort, time and expenditure of imperial funds. But the initial plan of Titus did not materialize. It is obvious what he decided to do within the four months after the war. Titus had a change of mind. It became evident to him that for the main headquarters of the Tenth Legion, it would be infinitely better strategically to recondition Fort Antonia and its colossal walls (with its 37 cisterns and aqueduct from Solomon's Pools providing abundant water in a protected environment). This plan made it unnecessary to build three more walls in the Upper City (a southern, eastern and northern rampart) to protect the camp area with the three fortresses in the west. Indeed, the Haram esh-Sharif had dimensions slightly larger than most permanent Roman forts, including the principal fort in Rome itself. And besides, Fort Antonia was built and designed as a fortress with all the needed defensive amenities. Nothing was better suited.

It must be understood that the first thing the Roman legions did as they journeyed from region to region was to set up temporary walls around their camps. But with permanent camps, the Romans went to great expenditure to establish appropriate defenses to protect their encampment for extended sieges. If Titus wished to have the camp of the Tenth Legion in the Upper City, the first thing he would have ordered would be the building of four rectangular walls of great dimensions to protect the camp from enemies. But Titus created no such walls or permanent camp in the Upper City near the three former towers. Why build three new walls and repair a fourth when he already had four prodigious walls of Fort Antonia (particularly the eastern, southern and western walls) still standing?

The Haram was much better suited to remain the Roman Camp and the Headquarters of the Tenth Legion. Let's face it, any military commander (past or present) looking over the ruins of Jerusalem would have immediately selected the site of the Haram as the

⁴¹ *The Walls of Jerusalem*, p.195.

logical place to house the Tenth Legion. Most of the western, southern and eastern walls of the Haram were still intact with over 10,000 stones in place in their lower courses. It was only logical that such a structure be chosen for the permanent Roman fortress (as for the previous hundred years and more). Only the northern wall of the Haram had been demolished and had its other three walls with their towers still available. Today one finds few Herodian stones making up the northern wall of the Haram, but the other three walls still expose their gigantic stones in their lower courses. When Herod built Fort Antonia, he constructed a fortress that was to last a long time, and it has!

But there was more than the existing walls that prompted Titus to select the Haram as the Roman Camp. The site of Antonia had those numerous cisterns within its perimeters and a working aqueduct that brought fresh spring water from south of Bethlehem directly into the camp area. The three forts in the Upper City (Phasael, Hippicus and Mariamne) did not have these military advantages. It is true Titus at first (after victory had just been granted to him and his Roman forces) thought to make those three forts and the partially standing wall on the western part of the city as the place for the Roman Camp. This did not materialize for several important reasons.

What About the Three Forts and Western Wall?

What happened to the former towers in the Upper City? Josephus said in summing up the topics he intended to cover in his book of the War (his Introduction) that between the time that the Romans crushed the last resistance of the war at Jerusalem in late summer of 70 C.E., and the time Titus returned to Jerusalem from visiting Antioch and other northern cities (about four months later), all “the local fortresses” had by then been demolished. We will see that the “local fortresses” were the three citadels in the Upper City. Note what Josephus said:

“The Romans crushed the last remnants of the wall and [then] demolished the local fortresses [not the international fortress, as we

will see]; [and then] how Titus paraded the whole country and restored order; and lastly his return to Italy and triumph.”⁴²

Though Titus immediately after the war thought to make the three forts in the Upper City the area of the Roman Camp, the truth is, that site never became the encampment of the Romans. The area proved to be inappropriate. As a result, those “local fortresses” were demolished as the above text states. There was no need to have two major Roman Camps in the environs of Jerusalem — one at the Haram and the other in the Upper City. We now know this for a fact. Up-to-date archaeological surveys show that there never was a Roman camp in the Upper City, not even an auxiliary camp. The archaeologist Hillel Geva and Hanan Eschel explain in a well-researched article in the November/December, 1997 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review*, that the Roman Tenth Legion never encamped in the area of the Upper City in the west where most scholars have imagined the camp to have been. He writes:

“It has often been suggested that the Tenth Legion’s camp in Jerusalem was confined to the southwestern part of what is now known as the Old City, that is, to the modern Armenian Quarter and to the area of David’s Citadel, just south of the Jaffa Gate. This is really quite a small area — about 1,300 feet by 800 feet. The assumption has been that a typical Roman military camp was founded here, protected by a wall enclosing the rectangular plan and divided by two main intersecting streets. This theory cannot be proved. The archaeological evidence simply does not support this hypothetical reconstruction of the Roman military camp.”⁴³

The Camp of the Tenth Legion was never located anywhere on the western hill in what was known as the Upper City, as the archaeological evidence now proves. Indeed, because no one has suggested any other area among the ruins of Jerusalem for the place of the Roman Camp, and because the whole western area is so lacking in material remains of a Roman Camp, modern archaeologists wonder if the Tenth Legion even had a camp in Jerusalem. Of course, there are meager remains to show the Tenth Legion was

⁴² *War*, Introduction I.11 ¶29, Loeb translation.

⁴³ Hillel Geva and Hanan Eschel, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Nov./Dec., 1997, p.38.

certainly in Jerusalem (and the historical sources from later times abundantly prove it), but Hillel Geva is so confident that the western area archaeologists thought the Camp to be is so sterile of material evidence that Geva himself suggests the main body of the Tenth Legion probably had its camp at Caesarea.⁴⁴ Simply put, there never was a Camp of the Romans in the Upper City.

To reinforce this fact, there is a further survey of the problem in the *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly* for January–June, 1998 by Doron Bar that fully agrees there is no evidence that a Camp of the Romans was ever located in or near the Upper City. And while Doron states that “we cannot doubt the existence of the camp [of the Tenth Legion] somewhere inside the [Jerusalem] city boundaries, the question of the actual location of the camp is still intriguing and unresolved.”⁴⁵

The problem of locating the Camp of the Tenth Legion exists because archaeologists are looking in the wrong place. Whereas all mainline archaeologists (until the writing of the two reports just cited) showed the tenuous state of the claim that the southwest hill was the area for the Roman Camp, they still maintained their dogmatic stance that it was located in the Upper City. This is in spite of the fact there is no archaeological evidence to give one the slightest confidence of the theory’s reliability. Doron Bar states: “Despite the virtual unanimity among scholars about the camp’s location, the archaeological finds inside the suggested boundaries of the camp and along its walls *do not verify these claims*.”⁴⁶

Indeed, Doron Bar goes on to say:

“Because of the absence of archaeological evidence, it seems to us that not only was the Tenth Legion’s camp not located on the southwestern hill of Jerusalem, as most scholars argue, but this hill was very sparsely populated during the late Roman period and perhaps was no part of Aelia Capitolina at all at that time [the city built by Hadrian in place of Jerusalem].”⁴⁷

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.40.

⁴⁵ *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly*, January–June, 1998, p.7.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.8.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, also on p.8.

The scholars need to look at the 36 acres located within the walls of the Haram esh-Sharif.⁴⁸ Of course, it is presently forbidden by religious authorities in Jerusalem to dig in the area of the Haram, but if that could be done, the archaeologists would find a great deal of evidence to show that is where the Tenth Legion had their Camp after the Roman/Jewish War was over. It certainly was not located in the western part of the city where most assume it was. Note more on this matter by Hillel Geva in his excellent research and by his wise appraisals.

“In the 1970s, I excavated in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City with the late Professor Nahman Avigad. In site after site, the same stratigraphical picture appeared. Over the destruction layer marking the Roman conquest of the Upper City in 70 C.E., we consistently identified a construction of the Byzantine period (fourth to seventh centuries C.E.) — with nothing in between.... Even more surprising, we did not uncover any other significant artifacts typical of Roman military camps (such as sculptures or Latin inscriptions) — only a few coins and a few baskets of shards. The conclusion cannot be avoided: The Roman stratum is absent in most of the excavated areas!”⁴⁹

The archaeological sterility of adequate military remains is so evident, no wonder scholars are surprised. Josephus stated this was where Titus first wished the Roman Camp to be placed. If the Camp of the Tenth Legion had been built in that place, there should be an abundance of artifacts. The truth is, there is nothing to give confidence that there ever was a Roman Camp in the area.

As a matter of fact, the western wall and the three fortresses that were once in the area were described by Josephus as being some of the most fortified sections of pre-war Jerusalem. Even Titus was amazed when he first viewed those almost impregnable fortifications. It was surprising to the Romans that the Jewish insurgents surrendered those three fortresses in the Upper City to Titus' legions without any encounters with the Romans. Their capitulation and abandonment of those three fortresses occurred because of

⁴⁸ Dr. David Jacobson in *Biblical Archaeology Review*, July/August 1999, p.44 says the area is about 36 acres.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.38.

some inexplicable reason that even Titus could not understand, except to say God ordained it on behalf of the Romans. Had those three fortresses not submitted with the Jews surrendering, Titus felt that not even the Romans would have been able to subdue those fortifications.⁵⁰

It was because of the impregnability of these three strong citadels in the Upper City, that Titus at first felt the fortresses could be used for the camp for the Tenth Legion. Had that been the case, most of those fortifications would surely have remained intact until the time of Eusebius in the fourth century (because the Tenth Legion remained in Jerusalem until 289 C.E.). But there is no hint of archaeological or historical evidence that Titus allowed those three fortresses to remain very long after 70 C.E. These were called by Josephus the “local fortresses.” He also said they were demolished soon after 70 C.E.⁵¹ Within three years, Josephus shows that the “local fortresses” were in total ruins and devastation.

Josephus stated that Eleazar in 73 C.E. said Jerusalem “which was fortified by so many walls round about, which had so many fortresses and large towers to defend it” [such as Phasael, Hippicus and Mariamne] was in his time totally in ruins and devastation. One of the reasons these three fortresses were known as “local” is that they were dedicated or named after “local” people⁵² in contra-

⁵⁰ *War* VI.9,1.

⁵¹ *War*, Introduction Book I.11 ¶29, Loeb translation.

⁵² These three magnificent fortresses in the Upper City were named in honor of “local” people rather than the customary “international” or “imperial” names that Herod used for most of his grand structures (*War* Introduction I.11 ¶29). These were specifically named, Josephus records, for Herod’s “brother, friend and wife” (*War* V.4,3 ¶162). All were “local” people, while Fort Antonia was named after Mark Anthony and the two major buildings of Herod’s own palace were named Caesareum and Agrippaeum in honor of “imperial” or “international” personalities (see *War* I.21,1). Recall that the two major cities built in his kingdom were named after Caesar (Caesarea and Sabaste). Or, as Josephus relates:

“In short, one can mention no suitable site within his kingdom, which he left without some mark of indebtedness to Caesar. And after filling his own realm with temples, he let the memorials of his devotedness overflow into the province and erected monuments to Caesar in numerous cities”

(*War* I.21,4). Herod “established athletic contests every fifth year in honor of

distinction to Herod's normal practice of calling his majestic buildings after imperial (or international) personalities. These three citadels were also termed "the royal towers, known as Hippicus, Phasael and Mariamne."⁵³

From Eleazar's viewpoint, by 73 C.E. even those "local" fortifications had been torn down. They were not retained by Titus as the Camp of the Romans for the Tenth Legion, though he first thought to keep them because of their former impregnability. But soon Titus leveled them to the ground. From later eyewitness accounts of Jerusalem (for the next three hundred years), there is not a single mention of the existence of the three citadels or the slightest remark about any western wall scholars have supposed survived the war. The three fortresses and the remnant of the western wall were also destroyed soon after 70 C.E. This fact is confirmed in the fourth century. Note what Gregory of Nyssa said:

"Where then are those palaces? where is the Temple? where are the walls? where are the defenses of the towers [such as the towers of Phasael, Hippicus or Mariamne]? where is the power of the Israelites? were not they scattered in different quarters over almost the whole world? and in their overthrow the palaces also were brought to ruin."⁵⁴

Caesar, and he constructed a theatre in Jerusalem.... All around the theatre were inscriptions concerning Caesar and trophies of the nations that he had conquered in war" (*Antiquities* XV.8,1). Herod's intent was to place "imperial" names wherever he could, but on some occasions he resorted to "local" names of persons he was fond of. Besides naming many places after himself, another notable "local" honor was the new city of Antipatris that Herod named after his father (*War* I.21,9). The fact of three fortresses at Herod's Palace named after "local" people was so exceptional that the designation "local" helps to identify them.

⁵³ *War* II.17,8. The designation "royal towers" meant that they were three fortresses that were "the king's citadels" (the "king" in this case being Herod the Great who had the three forts constructed to protect his royal Palace and the Upper City where the aristocratic residences for the most part were located). This is another reason why later people after the time of Herod the Great designated the three forts as "local fortresses" because they were built to particularly protect the "local" sovereign (King Herod) in distinction from Fort Antonia which became the "imperial" or "international" fortress that legally safeguarded the interests of Caesar and the Roman Empire.

⁵⁴ *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, s.2, vol. 5 (29), p.804.

That portion of the western wall and the three “local” towers were torn down by the Legion (with the aid of Jewish captives) in search of gold and other precious things soon after the war ended. This was also the situation regarding Herod’s Palace (along with the adjacent citadels) because Josephus said the Jews collected and deposited great quantities of money and precious things in these stronghold areas of the Upper City in the early years of the war. The Jews put the money in this area thinking that a deal might be worked out with the Romans.⁵⁵ Herod’s Palace and the three “local fortresses” were also uprooted to discover this gold and other money.

As a matter of interest, when the City of Aelia was built on the western side of Jerusalem from 130 C.E. onward (in the northern part of the Upper City), it is well known that no walls were associated with that city until late in the third century. We have the account of Epiphanius (writing in 392 C.E. and citing early second century documents) that when Emperor Hadrian first set eyes on the ruins of Jerusalem in 130 C.E. (65 years after its destruction), there was nothing left of Jewish Jerusalem to see, except a few houses and a Christian church. All Jewish walls and Jewish towers (citadels) were utterly gone. By 73 C.E., nothing was left of *Jewish* Jerusalem and this condition lasted until the time of Hadrian.

“It was the second year of his reign when he [Hadrian] went up to Jerusalem, the famous and much-praised city which had been destroyed by Titus the son of Vespasian. He found it utterly destroyed and God’s Holy Temple a ruin, there being nothing where the city had stood but a few dwellings and one small church.... [Then] Hadrian decided to restore the city, but not the Temple.”⁵⁶

Note particularly there was no evidence in Hadrian’s time that the three “local fortresses” and western wall in the former Upper City were then in existence. No Roman Camp is described as being in the region. Only “a few dwellings and one small church” were then occupying the region where Jewish Jerusalem once existed.

⁵⁵ *War* VI.7,1–2.

⁵⁶ Epiphanius, *On Weights and Measures*, Dindorf ed., vol IV, pp.17–18.

Let us continue with the professional observations of Hillel Geva and Hanan Eschel:

“So where are the remains of the Roman military camp? Perhaps elsewhere on the western hill? The evidence is similar wherever excavations have been conducted on the western hill, whether in the Armenian Quarter or farther south on Mt. Zion. What about the wall that is assumed to have enclosed the Roman military camp? Excavations have failed to uncover any sign of such a wall from the Roman period. On the contrary, excavations along the remains of the so-called First Wall ... show that it was not used by the Romans and that no new wall was built here by the Roman army.”⁵⁷

These remarks by Geva and Eschel reveal there is no evidence there ever was a wall around any region of the Upper City in the Roman period (let alone evidence that the three fortresses were allowed to continue in their pristine state).⁵⁸ But in the case of normal Roman Camps, Doron Bar makes the point that literary sources always have them surrounded by strong and adequate walls for the protection of the legionary troops. Bar spoke of “late Roman literary sources, which clearly testify that it was not customary for Roman legions to spend even one single night outside a fortified camp.”⁵⁹ But there is not the slightest evidence there was any wall or fortresses left in the western region by Titus. True, one can see evidence of the Roman Tenth Legion being in the Jerusa-

⁵⁷ Geva and Eschel, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Nov./Dec., 1997, p.38.

⁵⁸ The so-called “Tower of David” near the Jaffe Gate is considered a small part of the foundation of either the Phaesel or Hippicus towers because Josephus said the “Old Wall” of the city ran from the western portico of the Temple up the hill to the top of the ridge where it encountered the three citadels. But, as we will see, the Temple was located at least a third of a mile south of the Dome of the Rock region in the Haram esh-Sharif. This means the actual “Old Wall” was about a third of a mile south from where scholars place it today. Thus, the three citadels of which we are speaking had to be farther south on the upper ridge. The term “David’s Tower” (erroneously given in the sixth century to the remains near the Jaffe Gate) cannot refer to any of the citadels Josephus called Phasael, Hippicus or Mariamme. It is more probable that this Herodian base of the “Tower” represents that of the Psephinus Tower.

⁵⁹ Polybius, *Histories*, VI.26.10–32; Keppic 1984, 191–92; Isaac 1990, 427–28; cited in Hillel and Eschel., *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Nov./Dec., 1997, p.9.

lem area. (For example, kilns of the Tenth Legion have been recently found that were later built west of Aelia, but these kilns were not in the city itself).⁶⁰

There is no proof whatever that the Tenth Legion had its camp in the Upper City or anywhere in the west part of Jerusalem. As Bar again stipulates: "The view that the location of the Tenth Legion's camp was on the southwestern hill *cannot be verified*."⁶¹ What is certain is that all other evidences of Roman camps (literary and archaeological, including those of General Silva that surrounded Masada in the last year of the clean-up operation of the Roman/Jewish War in 73 C.E.) show that the Legions always had walls surrounding their encampment areas. And significantly: *The only WALLED part of Jerusalem that remained AFTER the War was the Haram esh-Sharif.*

Indeed, just looking at the remains of the walls of the Haram from the Mount of Olives would make any ordinary person see that such a compound surrounded by thick and impressive walls on all sides would have made a wonderful Roman Camp for the Tenth Legion. This is precisely what Titus and his general staff thought. That structure with its ramparts has lasted unto our day and this

⁶⁰ In 1998 about 8 kilns were found near the bus depot in the Jewish part of western Jerusalem. These were determined to have been built by the Tenth Legion. And true enough, the Legion certainly had need for kilns, and this helps show the Tenth Legion was definitely in Jerusalem. But kilns were almost always located away from residential and business areas. Indeed, kilns were prohibited in Jerusalem in Jewish times. Simple blacksmithing was allowed, but not the oppressive heat, noise and smells of kilns. Note *The Book of Legends*, Sect. 116.

"Ten things are said about Jerusalem: It is not impossible to buy back one's house there; no heifer is brought to have its neck broken [when someone slain is found lying in the open in the vicinity of Jerusalem and the identity of the slayer is unknown]; it may not be declared a condemned city; it is not subject to uncleanness from house plagues; attachments to windows or balconies may not protrude over its thoroughfares; dungheaps may not be located within it; *artisans' kilns may not be built there*; other than rose gardens that existed from the days of the early prophets, gardens and orchards may not be cultivated in it; chickens are not to be raised within it; and a corpse may not be kept overnight there. (*B.BK* 82b)."

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

proves how strong and lasting those four walls really were (and are). It is absurd to think of any other building that survived the War, other than the Haram, that could adequately protect the Tenth Legion. Indeed, the Haram had been built to be a military fort.

Titus saw that the Haram area was ideal to house his Tenth Legion. In fact, Antonia was the fortress that protected Roman interests in Jerusalem before the War. When the Haram *was* the Roman Camp. This is the case because even Eleazar, three years after the war, said that the Camp of the Romans still existed within the ruins of Jerusalem, even though the walls and forts that surrounded *Jewish* Jerusalem were all demolished. Eleazar spoke of Jerusalem's "many walls round about, which had so many fortresses and large towers to defend it" as then being in utter ruin and desolation. This includes the part of the western wall (and the three "local fortresses" of Phasael, Hippicus and Mariamne) that Titus first thought might provide a camp for the Tenth Legion. This means the three fortresses were the "local fortresses" demolished shortly after the war, according to Josephus.⁶² In the view of Eleazar, the Camp of the Romans then still in existence was not in the western part of the city. Only the Haram esh-Sharif remained with its walls, and it was the remaining Roman Camp to Eleazar.

We will see that Antonia was reckoned to be a separate Roman city (as were all permanent military camps of the Romans) and not looked on as part of the municipality of Jewish Jerusalem. All of Jewish Jerusalem, on the other hand, was demolished, but the Roman portion (Fort Antonia) was left standing to continue as the Camp of the Romans.

The Reasonable Action of Titus

The measures taken by Titus in leaving a secure fortress such as Fort Antonia for his Tenth Legion make perfectly good sense. There was not the slightest reason for Titus to demolish the splendid Camp of the Romans that guarded Jerusalem before the war. This Roman Camp became a monument of Rome's victory over

⁶² *War*, Introduction I.11 ¶29, Loeb translation.

the Jews,⁶³ as the remains of Fort Antonia continue to this day as a witness to the greatness of Rome. And, that central monument is now called the Haram esh-Sharif!

This is why people can still see those Herodian and pre-Herodian courses of stones in the walls around this enclosure. Titus left standing those structures in the Jerusalem area that belonged to Rome in the first place. They continued to protect the Tenth Legion until 289 C.E. However, as Josephus stated, every bit of Jewish Jerusalem including the Temple was leveled to the ground without one stone remaining on another.

When visitors today ascend the Mount of Olives and look westward toward ancient Jerusalem, they observe directly in front of them the remains of Fort Antonia, the Haram esh-Sharif with the Muslim Dome of the Rock. Those walls do NOT represent the walls of the Temple of Herod or the other Temples of Solomon or Zerubbabel or even the Herodian Jewish city of Jerusalem.

All the Temples were located over the Gihon Spring about a third of a mile south of the present Dome of the Rock. This means the prophecies of Jesus were true. Not a single stone can be found in place of the former Temple of Herod or of the stones that made up the walls that surrounded the Temple. The next chapter will detail these matters even more.

⁶³ *War* VI.9,1.

Chapter 3

THE LARGENESS OF FORT ANTONIA

WE SURVEYED in the last chapter what eyewitnesses and historians from the 1st to the 4th centuries had to say about the City of Jerusalem and the Temple of God. The Jerusalem of Herod and Jesus had been utterly demolished, including its ramparts. I will later show eyewitness accounts that the Temple and its walls were so devastated that the terms to describe them show it had become “like Sodom,” and eventually became a Roman farm with oxen plowing the empty space where the Temple once stood. As for the Haram esh-Sharif, it remained with all its walls intact, serving as headquarters for the Roman Tenth Legion. The outer walls looked much as they always appeared, even in the days of Herod and Jesus. It continued to house the Tenth Legion until 289 C.E. when the Legion transferred to Ailat on the Red Sea. A contingent of Moorish soldiers occupied the fort until the Diocletian rampage against Christians and the destruction of most churches in Palestine and the eastern Roman

Empire in 303 C.E.⁶⁴ After that, the fortress entered a new phase under the reign of the Byzantine emperors. Before we look at the later history of Fort Antonia, it will profit us to review what the fort was like in the time of Herod and Jesus. We will discover a very different type of fortress than that imagined by scholars today who erroneously identified the Haram with the Temple site.

The first point we must realize is that Fort Antonia was much larger in size than most people imagine today. Because scholars mistakenly identified the large area of the Haram as the site of the Temple, they have been forced to invent a new location for Fort Antonia and drastically to diminish its size. They moved Fort Antonia to be located just outside the northwest corner of the Haram. They also reduced its size considerably from the dimensions described by Josephus. They usually place it over or around a rock pavement they found in the area. In this pavement are the chiseled remains of outlines of games played by Roman soldiers. It was once thought the existence of these Roman games in the pavement was proof that this was once a Roman Camp, and the Camp was Fort Antonia. True, these archaeological remains indicate that Roman soldiers were once familiar with the site, but it has now been shown by further archaeological investigation that this particular camp flourished in the second century in the time of Hadrian, not the earlier period of Herod and Pilate.⁶⁵ This rocky area outside the northwest wall of the Haram was NOT the Fort Antonia in the time of Herod.

Let us look at the real Fort Antonia. The only ancient structure in Jerusalem today that can satisfy the early eyewitness accounts about Antonia is of course the Haram (with the Dome of the Rock now occupying its central area). The Haram had nothing to do with the site of the Temple. As I have been saying, the Temple was actually a third of a mile south of the Dome of the Rock, positioned over the Gihon Spring. I will show later that it was a biblical requirement that a natural spring had to be located within Temple precincts. There is no record ever showing there was a natural

⁶⁴ *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, article "Jerusalem, Roman Period."

⁶⁵ Mazar, *The Mountain of the Lord*, p.36.

spring in the region of the Haram. There were, however, many natural and manmade cisterns capable of supplying water to a legion of troops.

Let us now look at the eyewitness accounts of Josephus about the Fort Antonia that existed in his day. He tells us there was such spacious grounds inside Fort Antonia that it was like a city in size. It housed a legion of troops (that would number at least 5000 men and about 5000 support personnel who serviced the legion). This large division of troops could even perform military maneuvers within the enclosure and bivouac on those grounds in mock war training exercises. This means about ten thousand people were resident in or around any Roman fortress containing a legion of troops. Fort Antonia would have been no exception because of the military necessity of maintaining social and political discipline in the capital city of the Jews (who were often highly revolutionary and riotous in this period of time).

Scholars Are Forced to Make Fort Antonia Small

There is another designation of Fort Antonia used by Josephus that has given scholars the impression of “smallness” for the size of the fortress, even though he illustrated the encampment as a large military post capable of garrisoning a legion of troops. It is use of a word some scholars think denotes “smallness.” The word that makes them feel justified in considering Antonia to be limited in size. Why? Because Josephus called the fortress a “Tower.”

Using “Tower” to define the fortress can give a careless reader the impression that only a small and single “turret” is meant. The truth is, there was nothing small about Fort Antonia. Josephus stated the Tower of Antonia had walls 60 feet high (as high as a five-story building). These walls were buttressed with additional towers on its four corners another 75 feet high, except the tower on the southeast corner which was 105 feet high — from that tower one could look over all the courtyards of the Temple to the south.⁶⁶

These dimensions of Fort Antonia by Josephus do not suggest “smallness.” To Josephus, and others living in the first century, the

⁶⁶ *War* V.2,8.

word “Tower” often signified a large military fortress with expansive dimensions. Attention should be given to “Strato’s Tower,” a fortress located on the Mediterranean coast where Herod finally built Caesarea. The dual name did not simply designate a fortress with a single turret. Josephus said it was “a town on the coast called Strato’s Tower.”⁶⁷ Herod enlarged the town of “Strato’s Tower” by making a great harbor as large as that of Athens and furnishing it with numerous buildings in the Greek and Roman classical styles with a grand Temple to Caesar and to Rome. He renamed the town (now a city) by calling it Caesarea.⁶⁸ A similar example of a smaller fortress becoming a larger one would be the “Tower of London” in England. This structure eventually became a large fortress with many buildings with other “towers” associated with it. In such a manner a “Tower” can become “many towers.”

Similarly, the “Tower of Antonia” was at first moderate in size but grew large as additions were attached. By Herod’s time it contained a legion of troops and was like a Roman city. Being an imperial fort, and Roman property after 6 C.E., Antonia was unlinked from the administration of the municipality of Jerusalem. The “Tower” became an official Roman fortress.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ *War* I.21,5.

⁶⁸ *Antiquities* XV.8,5.

⁶⁹ Even at Fort Antonia in the Jerusalem area, there was an underground passage from the Temple to Fort Antonia called “Strato’s Tower” (*Antiquities* XIII.11,2; *War* I.3,5). Herod built this underground passage as a safety feature to allow him ready access to the Temple at any time (or from the Temple to Fort Antonia). Josephus said:

“There was also an occult passage built for the king; it led from Antonia to the inner temple, at its eastern gate; over which he also erected for himself a tower, that he might have the opportunity of a subterraneous ascent to the temple, in order to guard against any sedition which might be made by the people against their kings” (*Antiquities* XV.11,7).

The text shows that “Strato’s Tower” in Jerusalem was this underground sector of the “Tower of Antonia” (Fort Antonia). Note that Josephus also said Herod’s building of the “Tower of Antonia” was “the innate grandeur of his genius” (*War* V.5,8) and his building of the large city of Caesarea at “Strato’s Tower” was also “the innate grandeur of his genius” (*War* I.21,5). The identical wording by Josephus appears to link the two “Towers” (the “Tower of Antonia” and “Strato’s Tower”) in an architectural similarity. This may be a reason why an underground sector of the “Tower of Antonia”

So, simply because the word “Tower” was used by Josephus to describe Fort Antonia, a person should not get the impression that the Fort was a small citadel that could garrison about a cohort of troops (about a tenth of a legion in size and not a full legion of men). It is interesting that Titus left the full complement of the Tenth Legion to supervise even a ruined Jerusalem after the war when there were no more Jewish people attending any feasts in their metropolis.

If Titus thought it prudent to station a whole legion of soldiers when there was hardly anyone to govern or supervise, what would have been the case before the war when Jewish crowds coming to Jerusalem were thousands upon thousands in number with many expressing revolutionary trends? The Romans always needed more than a single “cohort” to govern their affairs in Jerusalem. It would be silly to imagine any other thing.

Indeed, when one considers the military requirements Rome encountered in Jerusalem, it can easily be seen they should have had (judging in hindsight after the war) at least two or three Legions to supervise the capital city of the Jewish nation. One legion, plus the troops of King Agrippa and the other auxiliaries, were not enough to quell the uprising that led to the destruction of the City and the Temple.

Translators Erroneously Diminish the Size of Antonia

Translators of Josephus felt compelled to accept the small size of Fort Antonia and describe Josephus’ full descriptions to the largeness of the fortress as being exaggerations. This is because they chose the wrong spot for the Temple. By making the Haram esh-Sharif the site of the Temple, scholars and translators have to locate their Fort Antonia at the northwest corner of the Haram. But such a small area could not hold a full legion of troops. In spite of this, most scholars have been assured (up to now) that this traditional area for Antonia at the northwest corner of the Haram is cor-

at Jerusalem became known as “Strato’s Tower.” Whatever the case, the use of the word “Tower” by Josephus, as it applies to these two fortresses, indicates that the forts were large and not a single turret.

rect. Because of this, they felt justified in interpreting Josephus to mean the number of troops at Fort Antonia was only a single “cohort,”⁷⁰ not a “legion” of troops (Greek: *tagma*).

The translators resorted to rendering the Greek word *tagma* and its derivatives, which normally mean “legion,” as signifying a small “cohort.” This is wrong. Throughout the works of Josephus, the various legions of Rome (including the Fifth, Tenth, Twelfth and Fifteenth — the very legions fighting under Titus during the Roman/Jewish War) were each designated as a *tagma* (a full legion of troops).

There is no reason for modern translators to render the word *tagma* as “cohort” to represent the supposed small number of troops comprising the garrison at the traditional Fort Antonia. In fact, it is absurd. How could a small “cohort” of 500 to 600 troops govern and discipline tens (or even hundreds) of thousands of Jewish pilgrims who came to the festivals at Jerusalem each year? Even a legion of 5000 to 6000 troops would be on the low side for supervising such crowds that were often quite unruly.

When Jewish revolutionaries routed the Romans and took control of Antonia in 66 C.E., the Jewish authorities stationed 6000 men on the four colonnades surrounding the square of the Temple (apparently changing the guard three times a day).⁷¹ This was in order to discipline the festival crowds of the Jews. If the Jewish authorities had to deploy a whole legion of troops (with rotation of troops three times a day to maintain order), one can imagine that the Romans thought a similar procedure was prudent. It is absurd to think that a single cohort of 500 to 600 soldiers could govern multiple thousands of people in and around the Temple and the whole of Jerusalem.

These facts show that Fort Antonia needed more troops than a small “cohort.” When the apostle Paul was escorted to Caesarea

⁷⁰ See the translations of Williamson and the Loeb edition by Thackeray.

⁷¹ Ananus, the Jewish leader, “chose out of them by lot, six thousand armed men, and placed them as guards in the cloisters [the colonnades of the Temple]; so there was a succession of guards one after another, and everyone was forced to attend in his course” (*War* IV.3,12).

from Fort Antonia (called in the New Testament the “castle”), he was accompanied by 200 infantry, 70 cavalry and 200 spearmen, answering to about a “cohort” of troops.⁷² Note that the military commander of Antonia was able to spare that many troops for the protection of a single Roman citizen (the apostle Paul). But, if only a cohort of troops were normally garrisoned in the fortress (as some modern scholars are so bold as to imagine), the fortress would have been left with a mere 100 troops to supervise the whole of Jerusalem at the time of the festival of Pentecost then underway.⁷³ Ridiculous.

But what do we find the scholars doing today? The translations of Williamson and Thackeray suggest only a “cohort” of troops garrisoned Fort Antonia (even during the festival periods of the Jews). In no way can this small number of troops jibe with ordinary military necessities or with what Josephus stated was the case in the original Greek. An entire legion of troops would have been on the low side for governing the whole City of Jerusalem.⁷⁴

Further, note that Josephus stated it was customary for each Roman Camp to be spacious enough to contain even two legions if necessary. He said:

⁷² Acts 23:23.

⁷³ Acts 20:16.

⁷⁴ Just after the death of Herod there was an uprising that Quintilius Varus, governor of Syria, had to quell in Jerusalem and Judaea. After the war was over, he left a legion of troops to supervise the city (*Antiquities* XVII.11,1). About 40 years later, governor Petronius brought half of the four legions that guarded the province of Syria to Judaea (Philo, *Leg.* 207), but Josephus said in *War* II.10,1 that Petronius had three legions at his disposal in Judaea. This means he had a legion of troops already in Judaea. They must have been at Fort Antonia. It is interesting that even after the Roman/Jewish War, Titus thought it prudent to leave the Tenth Legion in Jerusalem though there was no longer large numbers of Jews living in the city nor thousands of worshippers coming to the festivals, because there was no longer a Jewish Temple or a city. If it were necessary to maintain a legion of troops even after Jerusalem ceased to be a city, what would have been essential *before the war* when Jerusalem was a highly active and vibrant capital city of the Jewish nation, harboring messianic expectations for a world domination by Jews? Having a legion of troops at Jerusalem to control the metropolis of the Jews *before the war* would have been a minimum army needed for Roman security.

“Titus ordered a camp to be fortified for two legions that were to be together; but ordered another camp to be fortified, at three furlongs farther distance behind them, for the fifth legion.”⁷⁵

It was normal procedure for Roman Camps (and permanent fortresses — as Fort Antonia certainly was) to garrison a full legion of troops.⁷⁶ It is time to abandon the absurd belief that the capital city of the Jewish nation (always in the first century bustling with revolutionary fever) could be effectively controlled by a single “cohort” of Roman troops numbering about 500 to 600 soldiers.

It bears repeating that when Titus left Jerusalem after the war, he thought it essential to leave the whole Tenth Legion. He did this when the Jews were no longer populous and were not going to Jerusalem for festivals each year. But without doubt, the situation would have been different before the war.

Fort Antonia Dominated the Temple

There is another reason to look at Fort Antonia as a very large fortress. The Loeb translation shows the fortress was so prominent that “Antonia dominated the Temple.”⁷⁷ Remember that Josephus tells us Fort Antonia was so large that it was not only responsible for protecting the Temple, but was large enough to guard both the City, the Temple, and the fortress at Herod’s former palace.⁷⁸ In fact, its physical dimensions were so huge that Fort Antonia obscured the view of the Temple from those approaching Jerusalem from the north.⁷⁹

Note the Whiston translation of Josephus’ description of the size of Antonia and how the fortress dominated the entire north side of the Temple Mount. Fort Antonia was much larger in size

⁷⁵ *War* V.2,3.

⁷⁶ Though Alexandria and all Egypt had a much larger population than Jerusalem, it was noted for its non-belligerent attitude to the Romans. King Agrippa said it still required two legions to supervise the region (*War* II.16,4). But with Jerusalem’s long history of resistance and antipathy towards Rome and its authority, at least a Roman legion was felt necessary.

⁷⁷ *War* V.5,8.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

than the Temple area itself, "That hill on which the tower of Antonia stood was the highest of these three, so did it adjoin to the new city [Bezetha], and was the only place that hindered the sight of the temple on the north."⁸⁰

When the accounts of Josephus are analyzed, it can be seen that Fort Antonia was so huge in size that it actually occupied the whole region north of the actual Temple Mount, not simply at the Temple's northwest angle of its outer walls. On two occasions Josephus said that Fort Antonia occupied the north side of the Temple. He said: "This was a fortress [Antonia] adjoining the north side of the temple, which, as I said, was formerly called Baris, but afterwards took this new name under [Mark] Antony's supremacy."⁸¹

The other reference in Josephus also stated that Fort Antonia was located on the whole of the north side of the Temple.

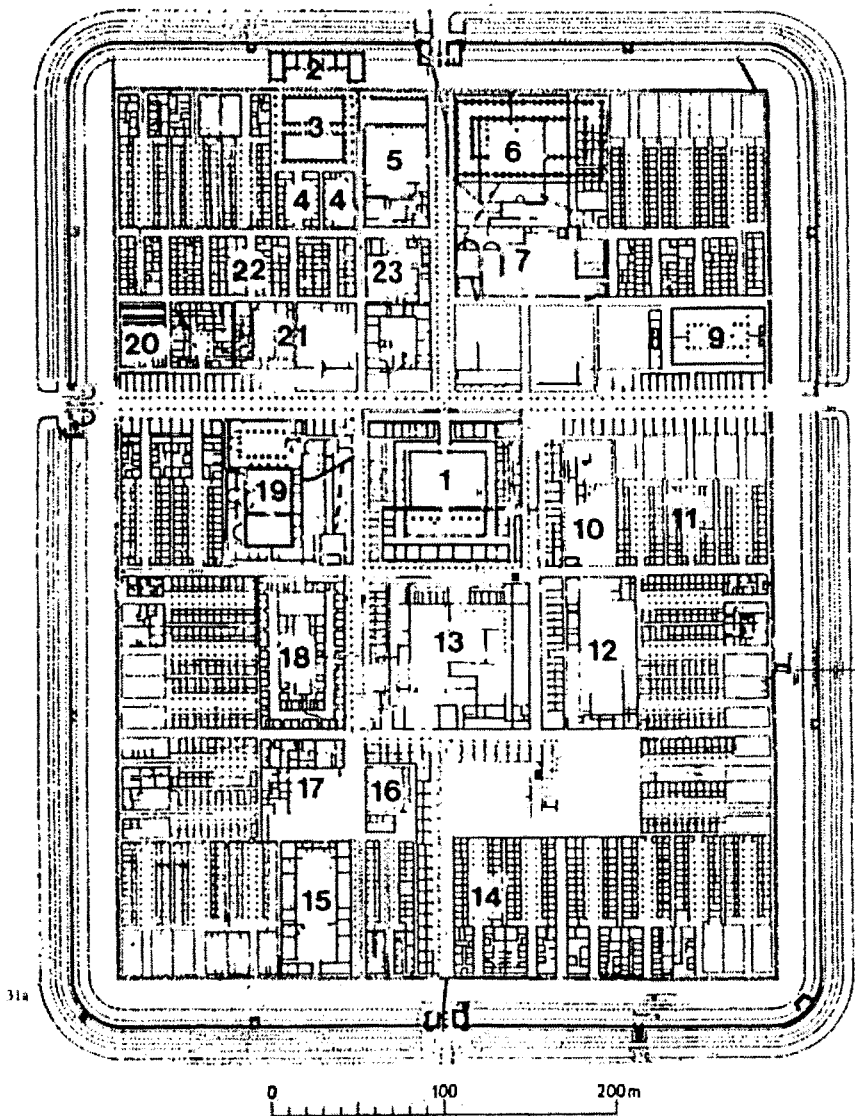
"Now on the north side [of the temple] was built a citadel [Fort Antonia], whose walls were square, and strong, and of extraordinary firmness. This citadel was built by the kings of the Hasmonean race, who were also high priests before Herod, and they called it the Tower, in which were repositied the vestments of the high priest, which the high priest only put on at the time when he was to offer sacrifice."⁸²

These are the plain statements by Josephus, an eyewitness, that Fort Antonia was so large it occupied the whole north side of the Temple. It is time modern scholars begin to pay attention to what Josephus describes rather than blithely criticizing the Jewish historian of being guilty of rampant exaggerations. The problem is not Josephus. The present difficulty comes about because modern scholars have selected the wrong place for the former Temples.

⁸⁰ *War* V.5,8. Modern translators, to keep Fort Antonia small, and to make it fit the traditional spot at the northwest angle of the Haram esh-Sharif, usually construe the text of Josephus to mean that it was the hill on which Bezetha was built (not Antonia) that hid the Temple from the north.

⁸¹ *War* V.5,4 Loeb translation (italics mine).

⁸² *Antiquities* XV.11,4.

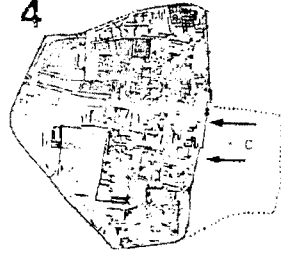


31. Camps. a) *Novaesium* (Neuss): legionary camp. 1 *Principia*.
 2 Workshop. 3 Granaries. 4 Quarters of *immunes*. 5 Shop. 6 Shop.
 7 Baths. 8 Quarters of *immunes*. 9 *Scholae* (?) of the 1st cohort. 10 Quarters of
immunes. 11 1st cohort's barracks. 12 Shop. 13 *Praetorium*. 14 Barracks
 of a century. 15 Shop. 16 Quarters of *immunes*. 17 Shop. 18 Hospital.
 19 Baths. 20 Barracks. 21 Officers' quarters. 22 Auxiliary unit's quarters.
 23 Auxiliary unit commander's headquarters.
 (Based on H. von Petrikovits, *Die Innenbauten römischer Legionslager*, 1975.)
The size of this permanent Roman Fort is just slightly smaller than
the Haram esh-Sharif. They certainly resemble one another.

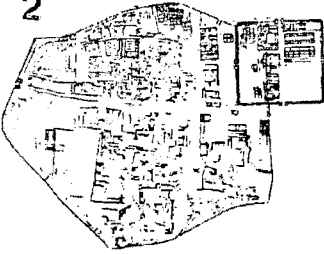
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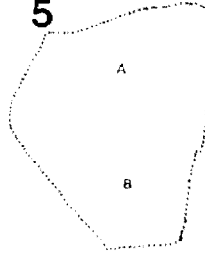
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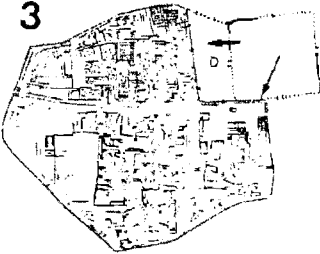
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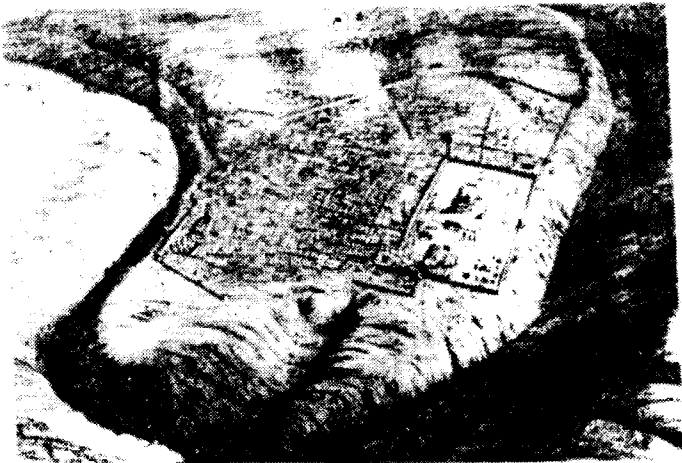
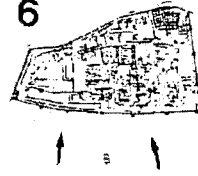
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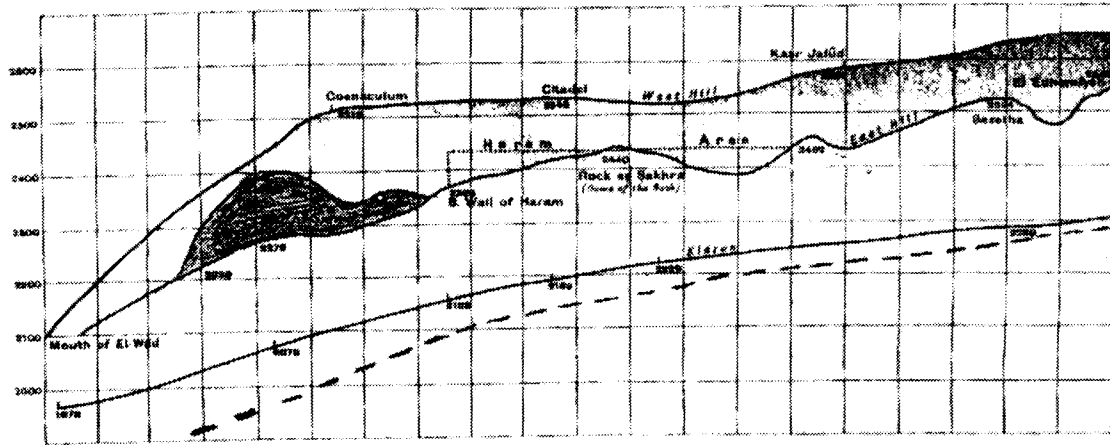
6





Josephus stated that the southeast ridge (which was the site of original Jerusalem where David build Mount Zion and Solomon constructed the Temple just the north on the Ophel mound) was crescent shaped. The bold outline shows that even on a modern map (1865) the crescent is easily seen. The square area in the center of the crescent is an outline of the Temple site of Herod and the dark circle is the area where there was a mountain called "Mount Zion" before it was cut down in the second century B.C.E.

**COMPARATIVE PROFILES OF THE EAST AND WEST HILLS
Mainly from the Rock Levels
WITH THE ROCK-BED OF THE KIDRON**



Vertical Scale 100 feet to the Square

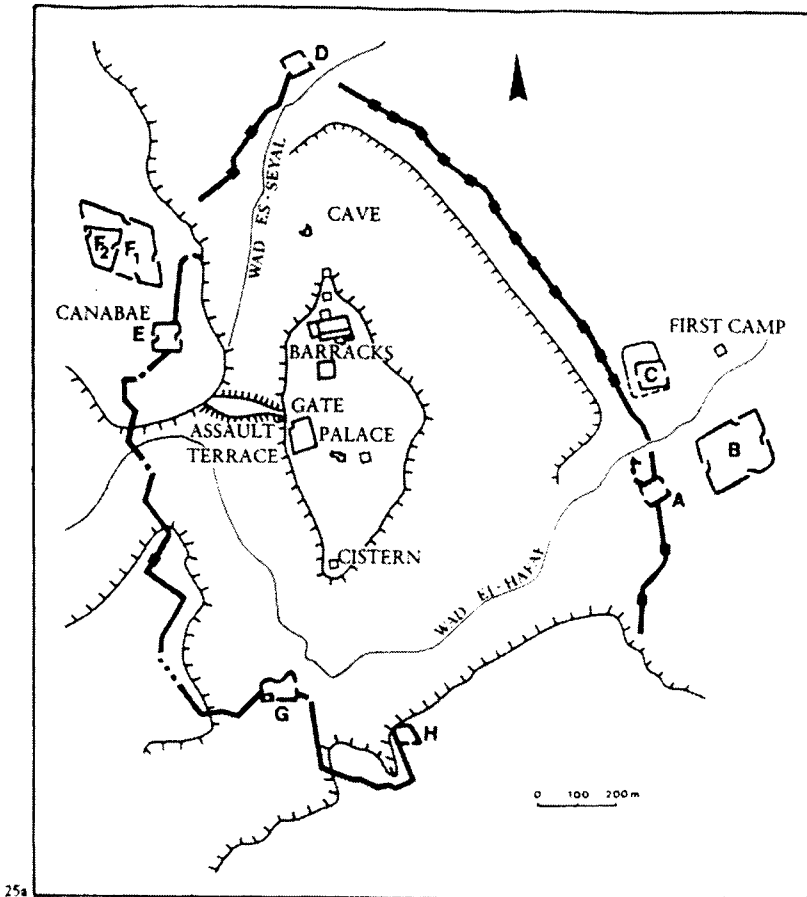
Horizontal Scale 100 yards to the Square

The Top Line is the West Hill

The Middle Line is the East Hill

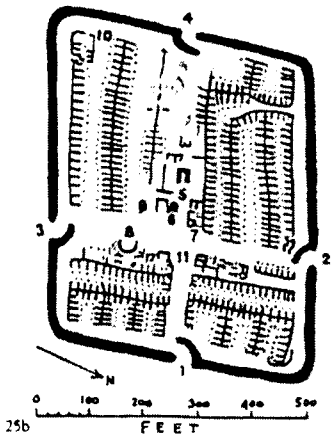
The Lowest is the line of the Kidron

These four lines are oriented from north (on the right side) to south (on the left side). They give an outline view of the depth of the Kedron Valley as it must have existed in David's time (the broken line), the second line is the present depth, the third line is the present outline of the top of the southeast ridge and the topmost line gives the present height of the southwest hill. The shaded area presents the two mountains (Mount Zion and the Ophel) that once were located on the southeast ridge before they were cut down to bedrock. The northern hill of the shaded area was the site of the Temples.



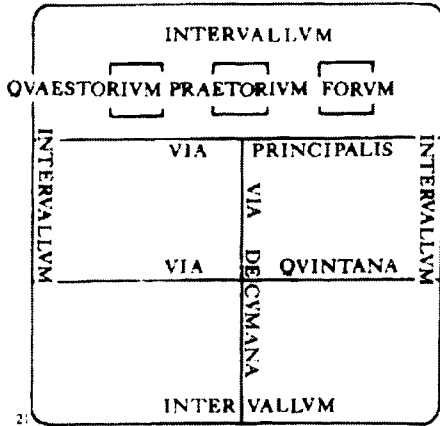
25a

Note that all the temporary Roman camps surrounding Masada (all built in 73 C.E. just after the destruction of Jerusalem) are in a type of “square” or “trapezium” shape. Remember that Eleazar said the only thing left in Jerusalem was “Fort Antonia.”



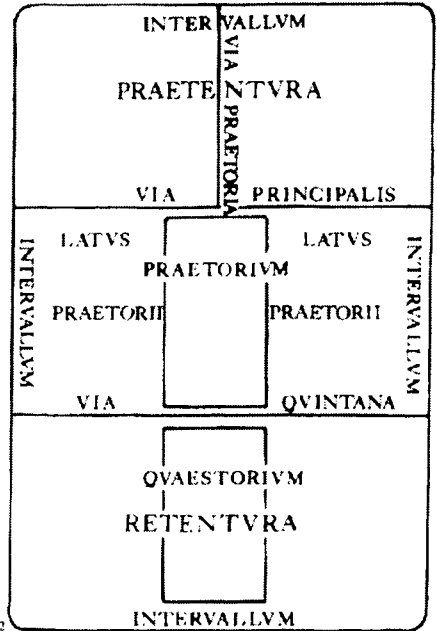
25b

25. The siege of Masada. a) General view. In order to isolate the Jews who had fled to the citadel of Masada in AD 72 Flavius Silva built eight small forts and a linear defence. In addition the Romans had to construct an assault platform to reach the citadel. b) Detail of camp B. 1 Praetorian gate. 2 Principal gate (right) 3 Principal gate (left) 4 *Porta decumana* 5 *Principia* (to be preferred to *praetorium*). 6 Podium. 7 *Auguratorium*. 8 *Schola* (?). 9 Standards. 10 Hospital (?). 11 Officers' quarters. (Based on C. Hawkes, *Antiquity III*, 1929.)



21. A temporary camp (Polybius). In the middle of the second century BC (i.e. Republic) the Greek writer Polybius enthused over a temporary camp (VI, 27-42) consisting of ramparts with an open space (*intervallum*) alongside forming an almost perfect square; in the centre along with the living quarters was a *forum*, the general's quarters (*praetorium*). Roads intersected at right angles.

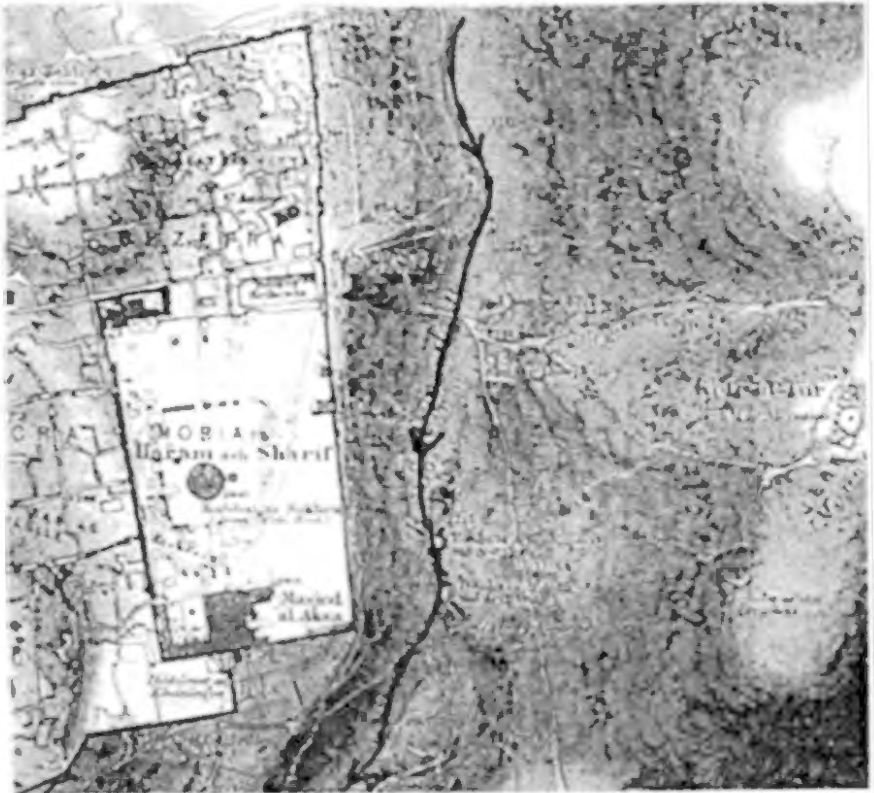
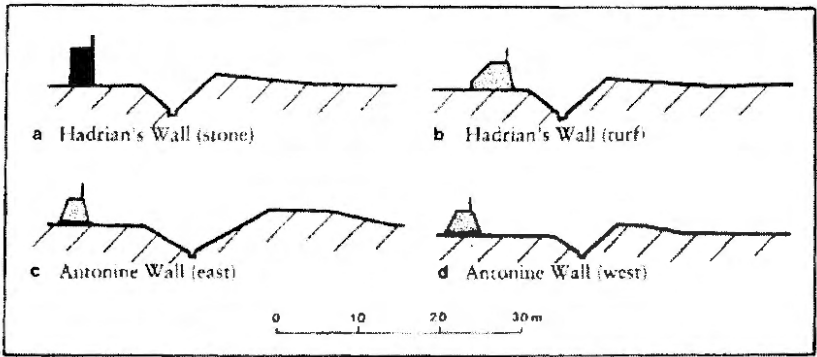
The plates showing Roman military diagrams are from the book *The Imperial Roman Army* by Hippocrene Books.



22. A temporary camp (Pseudo-Hyginus). An anonymous treatise, wrongly attributed to Hyginus, in describing a temporary Roman camp at the beginning of the second century AD shows how it had evolved in the intervening period. The ground plan is now rectangular and is divided into four sectors.

38. Rapidum (Sour Djouab): town and camp. These six drawings show the rise and fall of a little town that grew up from a camp in Mauretania I. Construction of a cohort camp 135 X 127m (440 X 415 ft) in 122. 2. In 167 a wall was built to protect the civilian settlement that had grown up around it. 3. At the height of the 'crisis of the Empire' in the middle of the third century the camp and sector D were abandoned. 4. Abandonment of sector C about 270. 5. Shortly after 270 the city was captured and destroyed, resulting in its total abandonment for several decades. 6. At the very end of the third century sector A was reoccupied. (J. -P. Laporte, *Bull. Soc. Antiq. France*, 1983, p. 264.)

Diagram 38 on the left page shows the development of a Roman town in North Africa built around a small permanent fortress. There are six stages showing the rise and decline of the fort and town. The bottom picture is a drawing of Jerusalem in 1844. Note that both towns grew up and around the two forts. The similarity is striking. The two plates above represent the normal style of fort in the 2nd century B.C.E. (21) and one 300 years later (22). The later one is very much like the Haram esh-Sharif which is Fort Antonia.



The four illustrations at the top show that the Romans tried to have the walls of their forts on top of surrounding embankments about 30 feet away from the precipices. Note that the Haram is also on top of the embankment and its walls do not reach down into the Kedron Valley (center of ravine is shown with bold line). The Temple, though, did have its eastern walls in the ravine bottom.



This map shows the route taken by the Bordeaux Pilgrim when he got to the Jerusalem area. He approached the city from the north and kept to the Kedron Valley until he reached the site of the Temple (the square bold area over the Gihon Spring). He then went southerly and then westward to the Upper City (Zion outside the walls). He then (for the first time) went through a wall – Zion's Gate) and went north to the circled area. To his right (east) he saw the walled Praetorium with its walls down in the Tyropoeon Valley (the three arrows point to the Haram esh-Sharif). To his left (west) he saw the Holy Sepulchre being built (single arrow pointing northwest). After visiting the Church he went east through the East Gate to the Mount of Olives and fully bypassing the Haram.

What Happened to Fort Antonia?

This large encampment of Fort Antonia, along with the auxiliary *Praetorium* at Herod's former palace in the Upper City, were reckoned by the Romans to be Roman imperial property after 6 C.E. These two military camps were not accounted as part of the municipal City of Jerusalem that King Agrippa and the Jewish authorities controlled. So, when the Romans began their mopping-up operations after the war, the legions completely tore down all of Jerusalem, including the Temple and its exterior walls. The only structures left were the exterior walls of Fort Antonia (which were repaired to bring them back into pristine shape) and the fortress in the Upper City near the three towers. The rest of the city was so destroyed that Titus and Josephus admitted that if any persons stumbled onto it after the war and saw what remained of the Mother City of the Jewish nation, none would have believed there had once been a city in the area. All they would have seen was a major Roman Camp with its auxiliary in the former Upper City. Such persons would have no doubt wondered why those two camps were built to guard such an empty and desolate area. Indeed, Titus finally saw no need to retain the western wall and the three towers in the Upper City. He allowed them to be torn down. He left only Fort Antonia to house the Tenth Legion.

This is the reason the Haram esh-Sharif with its four walls intact continued to exist in the area of Jerusalem for the succeeding centuries, and even to modern times. This outpost of the Roman army stood as a singular monument of the Jerusalem that existed in the time of Herod and Jesus. Until the building of Aelia after 135 C.E., this Roman fort was an oasis in the midst of utter ruins.

This desolation left in the area is precisely what Jesus prophesied would happen to the Temple and the City of Jerusalem. All remaining buildings were those that were Roman military camps. These were the triumphant monuments of Rome left amidst the total ruins of Jewish Jerusalem. And true to what Jesus prophesied, there was not a stone left on one another of the original Jerusalem or of Herod's Temple. All that can be seen today are the walls around the Haram esh-Sharif — the remains of Fort Antonia.

Chapter 4

FORT ANTONIA WAS A ROMAN CITY

IT IS TIME TO LOOK at eyewitness accounts of the shape and dimensions of Fort Antonia. The principal report comes from Josephus who was very familiar with the fortress. He gives excellent information that can be understood when we adopt some simple rules of interpretation that were recognized in the first century. Fort Antonia was called the *Praetorium*, a term that denotes the fortress was large and much like a Roman city — as most permanent Roman camps were. It could be said without controversy that Fort Antonia was a Roman city within the environs of the Jewish City of Jerusalem.

Notice some significant details. Outside Fort Antonia the region was a Jewish city where Jewish customs prevailed, while inside the fortress a very different social system operated. The two areas of Jerusalem were quite opposite from one another. For example, Pilate at the beginning of his government tried to introduce images of the emperor into the Jewish sections of Jerusalem. The Jews

resisted. Reluctantly, Pilate had those images removed to Caesarea. Later, to show deference to the Jews, who often presented themselves before him at the governor's palace, Pilate desisted from displaying some Roman shields even when they had no images on them.⁸³

While Pilate took care not to introduce Roman images into the areas of Jerusalem controlled by the Jewish authorities, these restrictions did not hold within the main camp at Fort Antonia. Roman troops did not have to obey Jewish religious scruples within their own domiciles. Roman soldiers at their camp in Jerusalem continued to serve their own Roman imperial deities and other divinities, and performed all their civil and military duties as normal Roman legionaries. These soldiers retained Roman customs without the slightest heed given to the Law of Moses. Antonia was a Roman fort/city, not reckoned as part of the Jewish municipality of Jerusalem. It was a Roman city alongside the City of Jerusalem, but not a part of the municipality.⁸⁴ This is further illustrated by the description of Fort Antonia by Josephus. Fort Antonia was much larger than the Temple environs. It was like a city (even bigger than some cities in size). It dominated the Temple both in size as well as military strength.

“Now as to the tower of Antonia, it was situated [its entrance was] at the corner of two cloisters [colonnades] of the court of the Temple; of that on the west, and that on the north. It was erected upon a rock of fifty cubits in height, and was on a great precipice. It was the work of King Herod, wherein he demonstrated his natural magnanimity [genius]. In the first place, the rock itself was covered over with smooth pieces of stone, from its foundation, both for ornament, and that any one who would either try to get up or to go down it might not be able to hold his feet upon it. Next to this, and before you come to the edifice of the tower itself, there was a wall three cubits high; but within that wall all the space of the tower of Antonia itself was built upon, to the height of forty cubits. The inward parts had the largeness and form of a palace, it being parted into all kinds of rooms and other conveniences, such as

⁸³ Philo, *Embassy to Gaius* XXXVIII.299–305.

⁸⁴ Josephus said that when the Romans built a fortification to house their Legions, they were actually constructing “a city” (*War* V.2.3 ¶73).

courts, and places for bathing, and broad spaces for camps [military training areas]; insomuch that, by having all conveniences that cities wanted, it might seem to be composed of several cities. By its magnificence it seemed a palace. And as the entire structure resembled that of a tower, it contained also four other distinct towers at its four corners; whereof the others were but fifty cubits high; whereas that which lay upon the southeast corner was seventy cubits high, that from thence the whole Temple might be viewed; but on the corner where it joined to the two cloisters [colonnades] of the Temple, it had passages down to them both [to both roadways], through which the guard (for there always lay in this tower a Roman legion) went several ways among the cloisters, with their arms [weapons], on the Jewish festivals, in order to watch the people, that they might not there attempt to make any innovations; for the Temple was a fortress that guarded the city, as was the tower of Antonia a guard to the Temple; and in that tower were the guards of those three [Fort Antonia guarded the City, the Temple and Fort Antonia itself]. There was also a peculiar fortress belonging to the upper city [called Herod's *Praetorium*], which was Herod's palace, but for the hill Bezetha, it was divided from the tower Antonia, as we have already told you, and as that hill on which the tower of Antonia stood was the highest of these three, so did it adjoin to the new city, and was the only place that hindered the sight of the Temple on the north" (words in brackets and those italicized are my emphases).⁸⁵

The first point that we need to review from Josephus' description is that Fort Antonia was walled on all four sides. It was a square-like fort that resembled a city in size, and functioned as a separate urban area, not as a part of the municipality of Jerusalem. Indeed, it resembled just not one city in size, but this particular fort was "composed of several cities." In ordinary Gentile areas containing permanent Roman fortresses, there were usually external towns surrounding the forts that provided logistical support facilities. In Jerusalem, it was different. This was the central holy city of the Jews with explicit laws of purification and religious requirements associated with it. The Jewish authorities did not permit normal Gentile support towns to be located around (or external to) Fort Antonia.

⁸⁵ *War* V.5,8.

That permanent camp in Jerusalem known as Fort Antonia had to provide its own support facilities inside its walls. And Fort Antonia came replete with all the features of a permanent Roman encampment. There were religious Temples for the troops, sporting areas (that doubled as training regions for the army), a hospital, areas for entertainment, a major caravansary quartering troops and government dignitaries for communication purposes with Rome and Antioch in Syria (like modern Hilton Hotels which serve the same purpose).

As a matter of convenience, it was normal to have an appropriate sized red-light district for soldiery and other clients. Normally such districts were attached externally to the fortress areas but Jewish prudence and ritualistic laws did not permit such things to be outwardly visible in the holy city of Jerusalem under ordinary circumstances. So, Fort Antonia had to provide a great deal of space for these ordinary Roman conveniences and religious Temples that were denied them in Jerusalem and vicinity.

Fort Antonia In Size Was Like a City (or Cities)

Fort Antonia was so large in size that Josephus reckoned it like several cities, located in a rectangular walled area. This is in accord with what Josephus informs us about other Roman military camps. Josephus said they too were indeed like cities:

“They divide the camp into streets, very conveniently, and place the tents of the commanders in the middle, in the nature of a Temple, insomuch that it appears to be a city built on a sudden, with its marketplace, and place for handicraft trades.”⁸⁶

Note the comments of Professor John E. Stambaugh on the city-like nature of Roman camps.

“An army legion pitching a permanent or semi-permanent camp needed an orderly layout of streets, barracks, chapels, parade grounds, officers quarters, and a sturdy defensive wall. A standardized plan permitted soldiers to feel securely oriented within camps built at very different locations. Indeed, Polybius wrote that

⁸⁶ *War* III.5.2.

the legionary camps he knew in the second century B.C.E. were similar to cities.”⁸⁷

Such Roman Camps (*Praetoriums*) were designed so that at their center was the conspicuous Temple — a religious edifice devoted to Rome and to Caesar — to which all streets led. Permanent camps were similar to towns for size and in function. Professor Le Bohec tells us:

“With almost 5000 men, a legionary camp was the equivalent of a town. Consequently everything that was essential for the daily life of such a community — hospital, stores, workshops, baths, as well as public lavatories — was to be found.”⁸⁸

And this is what Fort Antonia was, a military city located within the boundaries of Jerusalem, the Mother City of the Jews.

The native city (Jerusalem) was very different from the environment of the Roman fort. Since in most peoples’ eyes Herod was more Roman and Greek than he was “Jewish” (though he outwardly gave strict attention to Jewish scruples), he would have designed the military fort guarding his palace in the Upper City, the Temple in the Lower City, and the whole City of Jerusalem in the best Roman style available at the time. After all, Herod’s chief desire was to please Augustus Caesar in all his architectural and political endeavors. If one wants to know how Roman fortresses for their legions were then being built, all one has to do is to read the description given by Polybius. Little had changed when Herod rebuilt Fort Antonia.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ John E. Stambaugh, *The Ancient Roman City*, p.250.

⁸⁸ Le Bohec Yann, *The Imperial Roman Army*, p.160, emphasis mine.

⁸⁹ Professor Stambaugh states:

“Polybius (6.27–32) describes the normal practice in his day. The *Praetorium* (commander’s quarters) was laid out first, flanked by the *quaestorium* (quartermaster’s office) on one side and a market on the other, in back was a street 100 feet wide and, beyond it, space for auxiliary troops to camp. In front of the *quaestorium praetorium* line was the main street of the camp, the *via principalis*, 100 feet wide, in front of it tents of the legionary and allied troops were arranged along five streets 50 feet wide, was called the *via quintana* because it lay just beyond the fifth rank of tents counting from the *via principalis*, to which it was parallel; between the tents and the defen-

Simply put, in rebuilding and enlarging the Baris (first built by John Hyrcanus) into Fort Antonia, Herod would have followed the traditional guidelines of Augustus in his construction of any permanent fortress in the Jerusalem area. And how would Herod have built his fortress (or redesigned it to fit the purposes at the start of the imperial period)? Let us notice the comments of Professor Stambaugh.

“Surveyors’ manuals from the principate [the time of Augustus] and archaeological discoveries of a large number of military camps throughout the empire reveal a reciprocal relationship between the design of camps and the design of cities. The earliest plan of Ostia, dating from the fourth century B.C.E, is an example of a colony imitating the simple rectangular shape of a military camp.”⁹⁰

These fortresses scattered throughout the empire customarily followed the general design of the central fortress in Rome, the capital of the empire. In the northeastern part of Rome was located the Praetorian Camp. It was a perfect square of two *stadia* on each side (1200 feet by 1200 feet). It is interesting that the dimensions of the Haram esh-Sharif (though not a perfect square itself — it is a trapezium) are very similar in size, with the Haram being about 15 per cent larger than this main (and permanent) military camp at Rome. It makes perfectly good sense that Herod would want his central fort at his capital city to be about the same size as that which graced the capital of the empire.

Indeed, it was recognized that Herod in his construction projects was noted for exceeding the grandest expectations associated with other buildings and artifacts within the empire. As an example, Josephus said Herod’s palace in Jerusalem in certain features excelled the Temple in grandeur.⁹¹ Even his smaller palace at Masada was larger than any other palace found within the Roman Empire.⁹² Nothing was held back in expensively equipping Anto-

sive rampart at the perimeter of the camp lay an empty interval of 200 feet wide for drills” (Stambaugh, *The Ancient Roman City*, p.372, n.15).

⁹⁰ Stambaugh, *The Ancient Roman City*, p.250, emphasis mine.

⁹¹ “The king’s palace, baffling all description: indeed, in extravagance and equipment no building surpassed it” (*War* V.4,4 ¶¶177–83).

⁹² “The Herodian villa at Wadi Qelt, outside Jericho, matches Cogidubnus’

nia. It was built as a huge military fortress that could contain a legion of troops plus normal auxiliaries (about 10,000 people). It was a city within a city. And recall that Josephus said Antonia's largeness was more like "cities" in its extent. It dominated the Temple and was far larger in size than the Temple and its courts.⁹³ It is this clear visual analysis by Josephus that ought to govern our

palace at Fishbourne (Sussex) in scale and richness of decoration, but no palace in the Roman Empire can match Herod's palace at Masada." Alexander McKay, *Houses, Villas, and Palaces in the Roman World* (John Hopkins, 1998), p.219.

⁹³ Recall that one could place four Coliseums like that built in Rome by Vespasian and Titus snugly into the area of the Haram esh-Sharif. The Coliseum could seat 50,000 people (or four of them would seat 200,000). Also, one could place a Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California (with about 35% extra free space available) into the area of the Haram.

But the Temple area (including the Court of the Gentiles) was quite a bit smaller. Though Josephus recorded that 18,000 people worked on repairing the Temple (*Antiquities* XX.9,7), the highest number he records in the courts of the Temple were 10,000 (*War* VI.5,1, killed inside the Temple precincts at the close of the war). After that event, 6000 were forced into the Temple platform area and later killed (*War* VI.5,2). When the Idumeans entered Jerusalem at the start of the war, they slew 8000 in the outer court (*War* IV.5,1). Though in the time of Cumanus (a Roman soldier on top of the colonnades overlooking the Temple courts let down his breeches and displayed a demeaning posture to the worshippers below), an outraged crowd in the Temple got agitated, rushed out of the Temple to fight and 20,000 were crushed in the streets of Jerusalem (*Antiquities* XIX.5,1). But this large number of people (Josephus in *War* II.12,1 said was 30,000) also included the inhabitants of Jerusalem who got caught up in the rush within the narrow streets of the city.

While it was common for 6,000 soldiers to be on top of the squared colonnades at festivals (as shown in *War* IV.3,12), the normal number of worshippers at the time of the Passover (those few able to take Passover lambs into the Temple for sacrificing) was 3000 (though it was not necessary to kill Passover lambs in the Temple itself). This is the precise number (3000) killed at the Passover following Herod's death (*War* II.1,3; II.6,2). There is New Testament evidence that at the festival of Pentecost, Peter and the other apostles in speaking to Jews in the Temple found 3000 of them accepting their teachings (Acts 2:41).

Documentary evidence does not support the usual belief that 80,000 to 100,000 people could easily stand within the courts of the Temple. True, such a number could occupy the precincts of the Haram esh-Sharif, but NOT the courts of the Temple. It was a much smaller enclosure measuring only 600 by 600 feet on all its four sides. Scholars have selected the wrong building for the Temple. The maximum number of people the inner and outer courts of the Temple could hold was about 20,000, and that number would be shoulder to shoulder. Recall, besides the Temple structure, there were other buildings on the platform.

understanding of this grand specimen of a Roman Camp that existed right on the northeastern doorstep of Jerusalem. Though it was very near to Jerusalem, it still was not a part of Jewish Jerusalem. Let us see.

Fort Antonia Was Not A Part of Jerusalem

Let us be clear about this. Once a person stepped inside the walls of Fort Antonia, the person no longer found himself in the Jewish municipality of Jerusalem.⁹⁴ Upon entering Fort Antonia, a person was then in a Roman “city” situated within the region of Jewish metropolis. Antonia was surrounded by four walls, as were all permanent military camps of the Romans. And remember, the Haram esh-Sharif today has four rectangular walls around it like all Roman fortresses. Even the internal area of Fort Antonia (about 36 acres) was almost equal or even larger than most Roman forts in principal cities or frontier regions.⁹⁵ These fortresses were off

⁹⁴ There are modern examples that explain why Fort Antonia was not considered part of the city of Jerusalem. These examples are well remembered by me. I volunteered to enter the United States Air Force in 1950, the year the Korean War erupted, because meteorologists were needed at the time and I had college credits within that profession. I was sent to Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas for basic training. At that time San Antonio was called “a military city” because it was strategically located and had several Air Bases and other military establishments in and around its city limits. But any local authority over a person within the municipality of San Antonio ceased once a person stepped within the line designating the limit of the military establishments. A different set of rules and regulations governed everyone who came into the camp regions of those federally controlled military facilities. And though the bases were located at San Antonio in a geographic sense, none was ever part of the city in a governmental sense. Those bases were as separate from San Antonio as if they were located in Europe or in Japan. And so it was with Fort Antonia at Jerusalem. That fortress was a permanent Roman imperial military outpost governed directly from Rome through the provincial capital in Syria and its subsidiary authority at Caesarea. The Jewish authorities in Jerusalem had not the slightest control over Fort Antonia or the other auxiliary military post at Herod’s former palace.

⁹⁵ The classic modern work on Roman fortresses is that of Anne Johnson called *Roman Forts of the 1st and 2nd Centuries* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1983). It has numerous pictures and diagrams of Roman forts in the western part of the empire. Other than the normal rounded corners of their rectangular walls, they appear (in most cases) very much like the walls of the

limits to most civilians unless there was a military or political requirement for people to enter. This is why there were military guards at all entrances to Fort Antonia as there would be to any normal military encampment. No person could enter that military zone without permission from the Roman legionary authorities.

Just as American military bases in foreign countries today tend to resemble cities in America (with amenities and conveniences with which the troops would be familiar), so it was with Roman military establishments located in distant areas from Rome and Italy. Fort Antonia was such a Roman “city” at Jerusalem. As for the Jews at the time (and certainly for those living in Jerusalem), they would have had little reason to enter such Roman military establishments that resembled ordinary Roman towns.

As a matter of fact, we are told by Doron Bar in his excellent article in *The Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly* that it was common for Roman forts to be built alongside civilian cities (and sometimes within their city limits, as in the case of Rome itself). Doron Bar gives examples:

“The Third Legion, Cyrenaica, was based in the northern part of the city of Bostra, the capital of the province of Arabia. It was stationed in a well fortified camp which formed *an integral part of the city*. Here many relevant remains from the legion’s presence in the area were found. In the city of Palmyra, in the eastern part of modern Syria, the military quarter in the northwest of the city likewise formed *an integral part of the city*, and was divided from it only by a wall. Strikingly similar discoveries were made in the excavations at the city of Dura Europos on the banks of the Euphrates. All this seems to indicate quite clearly that these *Roman military camps were all interwoven in the urban fabric of the cities*, divided from them only by a wall.”⁹⁶

Doron Bar goes on to relate that the Camp of the Tenth Legion must have been located right alongside or within the city limits of Jewish Jerusalem. Although Doron Bar did not mention the Haram as a candidate for the Roman Camp (because all authorities con-

Haram esh-Sharif today. One is struck by the similarity. Indeed, most permanent forts were about the size of the Haram.

⁹⁶ *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly*, January–June 1998, p. 11.

sider the Haram to be the remains of the Temple), I am sure he would be impressed that the Haram fits the ideal dimensions and location in every way for a Roman Camp in Jerusalem, since the many examples he gives are guides to such military establishments.

Though Fort Antonia was in the heart of the Jewish metropolis, Jewish authorities tried to avoid any association with Gentiles. At that period, it was common custom for Jews to shun Gentiles and to stay away from their homes and their sections of cities.⁹⁷ Jews would avoid with utmost vigilance going into Fort Antonia unless necessary business required them to be there.

This was particularly the case during the festival seasons. We are told in the New Testament in the time of Jesus that Jews did not want to enter the *Praetorium* (Fort Antonia) during the period of Passover because to enter those precincts meant they would be considered ritualistically unclean and unable to partake of the Passover. We read in the Gospel of John: "Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas into the judgment hall [*Praetorium*]: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall [*Praetorium*] lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover."⁹⁸

This defilement by entering the area of Fort Antonia is also shown by the reference in Josephus that speaks about the High Priest's robes being held by the Romans in a building within the boundaries of Antonia. Josephus states:

"The Romans, when they entered on the government [in 6 C.E.], took possession of these vestments of the high priest, and had them repositied in a stonechamber, under the seal of the priests, and of the keepers of the Temple, the captain of the guard lighting a lamp there every day; and seven days before a festival they were delivered to them by the captain of the guard, when the high priest having purified them, and made use of them, laid them up again in

⁹⁷ An example of such attitudes of separation, recall that the apostle Peter retreated from eating and fellowshiping with Gentiles in Antioch when he heard that some Jewish leaders from James in Jerusalem were arriving to meet them. Galatians 2:12-14.

⁹⁸ John 18:28.

the same chamber where they had been laid up before, and this the very next day after the feast was over.”⁹⁹

This procedure shows that Jews considered anything being located within Fort Antonia as having been (to a certain extent) defiled and ritualistically polluted. People and garments needed seven days’ purification before a festival if the person or garment was to be used in the Temple services. This restriction pertained even to the pontifical vestments of the High Priest.

Why Fort Antonia Was Not A Purified Area

Fort Antonia was the main Roman Camp in the area, a Roman city alongside the municipality of Jerusalem, governed by Roman laws (both civil and religious) and not by the Laws of Moses that the Jews tried to observe. The two areas were utter contrasts to one another in all aspects of civilization, secular or religious. This made the region of Fort Antonia off limits to Jews on most occasions, and particularly at the times of Jewish festivals.

In the first century it is well known that most Jews were keen on keeping themselves separate from Gentiles in matters dealing with secular and religious customs. Alfred Edersheim in his *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* gives the best survey of Jewish attitude towards the Gentiles in this period. Note his appraisal of the antipathy held between Jews and the Gentiles in the first century. It will be profitable to quote him verbatim. It is painful to read, but what Edersheim said was true. Here is his quote.

“To begin with, every Gentile child, so soon as born, was to be regarded as unclean. Those who actually worshipped mountains, hills, bushes, etc. — in short, gross idolaters — should be cut down with the sword. But as it was impossible to exterminate heathenism, Rabbinic legislation kept certain definite objects in view, which may be thus summarized: To prevent Jews from being inadvertently led into idolatry; to avoid all participation in idolatry; not to do anything which might aid the heathen in their worship; and, beyond all this, not to give pleasure, nor even help, to heathens. The latter involved a most dangerous principle, capable of almost indefinite application by fanaticism. Even the Mishnah goes

⁹⁹ *Antiquities* XVIII.4,3 emphasis mine.

so far as to forbid aid to a mother in the hour of her need, or nourishment to her babe, in order not to bring up a child for idolatry! But this is not all. Heathens were, indeed, not to be precipitated into danger, but yet not to be delivered from it. Indeed, an isolated teacher ventures even upon this statement: 'The best among the Gentiles kill; the best among serpents, crush its head.' Still more terrible was the fanaticism which directed that heretics, traitors, and those who had left the Jewish faith should be thrown into actual danger, and, if they were in it, all means for their escape removed. No intercourse of any kind was to be had with such — not even to invoke their medical aid in case of danger to life, since it was deemed that he who had to do with heretics was in imminent peril of becoming one himself, and that, if a heretic returned to the true faith, he should die at once — partly, probably, to expiate his guilt, and partly from fear of relapse....

"In truth, the bitter hatred, which the Jew bore to the Gentile, can only be explained from the estimate entertained of his character. The most vile, and even unnatural, crimes were imputed to them. It was not safe to leave cattle in their charge, to allow their women to nurse infants, or their physicians to attend the sick, nor to walk in their company, without taking precautions against sudden and unprovoked attacks. They should, so far as possible, be altogether avoided, except in cases of necessity or for the sake of business. They and theirs were defiled; their houses unclean, as containing idols or things dedicated to them; their feasts, their joyous occasions, their very contact, was polluted by idolatry; and there was no security, if a heathen were left alone in a room, that he might not, in wantonness or by carelessness, defile the wine or meat on the table, or the oil and wheat in the store. Under such circumstances, therefore, everything must be regarded as having been rendered unclean. Three days before a heathen festival (according to some, also three days after) every business transaction with them was prohibited, for fear of giving either help or pleasure. Jews were to avoid passing through a city where there was an idolatrous feast — nay, they were not even to sit down in the shadow of a tree dedicated to idol worship. Its wood was polluted; if used in baking, the bread was unclean; if a shuttle had been made of it, not only was all cloth woven on it forbidden, but if such had been inadvertently mixed with other pieces of cloth, or a garment made from it placed with other garments, the whole became unclean. Jewish workmen were not to assist in building basilicas, nor stadia, nor places where the heathen pronounced judicial sentences. Of course, it was not lawful to let houses or fields, or to sell cattle to

them. Milk drawn by a heathen, if a Jew had not been present to watch it, bread and oil prepared by them, were unlawful. Their wine was wholly interdicted — the mere touch of a heathen polluted a whole cask; nay, even to put one's nose to heathen wine was strictly prohibited. Painful as these details are, they might be multiplied."¹⁰⁰

With these strict prohibitions in force, especially in the capital of the nation where the Holy Temple was situated, one can easily understand why most normal Jews would keep themselves from entering a Roman military encampment such as Fort Antonia. Only under duress and in the utmost necessity would any Jew enter such places that they deemed polluted and defiled by the very ground on which they were built.

Let's face it, Roman soldiers in their own fortresses were able to practice their personal religious observances which involved ceremonies Jewish authorities considered idolatrous and defiled. Even the foods Romans would eat were considered detestable and to be utterly avoided. Many hygienic customs which Romans considered proper and medically permissible were accounted unclean and polluting to Jews. A mere touch of the hand by a Gentile man or woman rendered the Jewish person as ritualistically corrupt and even physically tainted. This is why the Jewish authorities at Jerusalem tried with arduous vigor and utmost scrutiny to avoid contact with Gentiles.

Jewish religious and social customs were not the only problem in the relationship between those ruled and those doing the ruling. The Romans also desired separation from the peoples they governed, in order to retain a position of superiority. Permanent Roman military camps were separate cities from the areas they guarded and ruled. Usually there was a Roman town associated with permanent military camps called a *canabea*.¹⁰¹ This town was normally made up of Romans or close allies. It was a support municipality of civilians.¹⁰² They were there to look after the

¹⁰⁰ Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. I, pp. 90–92.

¹⁰¹ Bahat, *Illustrated Atlas of Jerusalem*, p. 60.

¹⁰² "The name *canabea* seems to be derived from a Gallic word meaning

logistical and societal needs of troops stationed in any Roman Fort. In Jerusalem before its 70 C.E. destruction, any normal *canabea* had to be located inside Fort Antonia because that was allowed (and even denominated) to be Roman imperial property and not subject to the strict religious laws of the Jewish community.

Fort Antonia was easily large enough to contain a modified *canabea* within its ramparts. Remember, Josephus tells us that Fort Antonia was so large that it garrisoned a full legion of troops, which with auxiliaries numbered about 10,000 people. The original fortress must have been designed by Herod to resemble a normal permanent camp of the Romans because, as stated before, it was the same size as most camps built by Romans in other strategic areas of the Empire, even at Rome itself. Recall that Herod was a friend of Caesar and the Roman people. He was prone to copy imperial Roman customs and governmental procedures with admiration and approval. Even today most military bases in the world (and no matter what race or nation) have their fortresses and military establishments quite similar to one another. This was also how it was in the time of Herod and his successors.

Fort Antonia Was the Imperial Praetorium

Fort Antonia was the Roman *Praetorium*, and was reckoned to be Roman government property before the war. This was the chief reason Titus allowed the area to remain after the war, and why we still observe the majestic walls surrounding the Haram. As late as the time of Constantine, those walls were identified as being those of the *Praetorium*. Indeed, in 333 C.E. an anonymous Christian pilgrim from Bordeaux described the only structure of significance located east of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (then being constructed). I will soon quote the Bordeaux Pilgrim at length and let him speak for himself on what he saw in Jerusalem. There can be no doubt. The Pilgrim described a building with its foundational walls situated in the bottom of the Tyropoeon Valley. And what

‘wineshop’” (Stambaugh, *Ancient Roman City*, p.251). By implication, *canabea* meant the place where soldiers could find relaxation and entertainment outside their ordinary quarters within the fortress.

did this Pilgrim call it? He said it was the *Praetorium* where Pilate was living at the time of Jesus' trial.¹⁰³ Those walls the Pilgrim saw were the western and southern walls of the Haram esh-Sharif, and to him they represented the remains of Fort Antonia (the *Praetorium*), NOT the remnants of the Temple.

¹⁰³ John Wilkinson on the Pilgrim in his book *Egeria's Travels*, pp.155–8.

Chapter 5

THE HAREM ESH-SHARIF WAS FORT ANTONIA

THERE WAS A NAME to designate a Roman Camp that was different from the common word “Fort” or “Citadel.” All Roman encampments (especially permanent ones) were also known as *Praetoriums* because this is where the General had his headquarters.¹⁰⁴ A close examination of the records shows

¹⁰⁴ *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* has the following description of a *Praetorium*.

“*Praetorium* denoted a general’s tent (Livy 7.12, 10.31; *Caes. BCiv.* 1.76) or his staff or council (Livy 26.13.6). Hence comes the *porta praetoria* of Roman *castrametation* (see CAMPS). By an extension of meaning *Praetorium* signified the residence of a provincial governor (e.g. ILS 2298), a pleasure villa (e.g. Suet. *Tib.* 39), an official roadside resthouse (CIL iii.6123), or an emperor’s residence (CIL iii.5050). It is also regularly used for the forces or services of the Praetorian Prefect (CIL v.2837, viii.9391, etc.). In permanent fortresses or forts it is distinguished from the *principia*, or headquarters building, and clearly refers to the commandant’s house, a separate structural entity (Livy 28.25; Tac. *Ann.* 1.44; RIB 1092, 1685–6, 1912)” (p.874).

there were two *Praetoria* in pre-war Jerusalem — the main Camp where the General in charge of the Legion had his command post (Fort Antonia), and an auxiliary *Praetorium* in the Upper City at Herod's palace where the Romans allowed the two Agrippas (I & II) to judge their people as client kings. In the time of Jesus, one could call each site a *Praetorium* or a Camp. The term fits the description of Antonia precisely.

Indeed, the designation *Praetorium* will prove helpful to us because the term is important in identifying the site of Fort Antonia after the war in 70 C.E. and up to the time of the Crusades. There are several later eyewitnesses who refer to the Haram esh-Sharif as the Roman *Praetorium* (Fort Antonia). It was especially significant because it was the place where Pilate judged Jesus on the day of crucifixion.

“Praetorium” and “Camp” Were Synonymous Terms

It is essential to recognize that both terms (*Praetorium* and *Camp*) were employed in the New Testament to mean the same thing. Note that Fort Antonia is equated with the phrase “the *Praetorium*.”¹⁰⁵ And in the original Greek of the New Testament, it was also called “the *Encampment*.”¹⁰⁶ In popular vernacular, one could refer to Fort Antonia as a “*Roman Praetorium*” or it could be called a “*Roman Camp*.” The words meant precisely the same thing. During the time of Jesus there were two *Praetoria* in Jerusalem; neither was considered part of the Jewish City by the Jewish or Roman authorities when under strict imperial control.

To recognize this point, it is necessary to realize that before 6 C.E., in the time of Herod the Great and his successor Archelaus, Judaea was a client kingdom with a native king on the throne who ruled the people directly. The Jewish king answered to Augustus personally for his conduct. Augustus was the final arbiter in all political affairs within the Jewish state. During this period there

¹⁰⁵ John 18:28,33; 19:9. (the KJV translates the word as “judgment hall,” however, in Mark 15:16 the KJV retains the original “*Praetorium*”).

¹⁰⁶ Acts 21:34; 22:24; 23:10,16,32. The KJV renders the Greek by the word “castle,” but its actual meaning is “encampment.”

was a two-tier system of government in Jerusalem. One was local and Jewish, the other was imperial (international) and Roman. These two systems of government especially applied to judicial and military matters.

In Jerusalem during the time of the client kingdom of Herod and his son Archelaus there were actually two judgment halls (*Praetoria*) — one for judicial matters dealing with local and strictly native (Jewish) affairs and the other concerned imperial matters that directly involved Rome. We can see an example in the coastal city of Caesarea, which was the normal Roman headquarters for the district of Judaea (later called Palestine). In Caesarea there was not only the ordinary Roman *Praetorium*, but there was also another called “Herod’s judgment hall.” This was the local or subsidiary *Praetorium* which dealt only with Jewish affairs (Acts 23:35).

The same situation was found in Jerusalem. The local *Praetorium* was incorporated into Herod’s palace in the Upper City. It was accompanied by an area of a small encampment designed to house some of Herod’s soldiers. After the time of Herod and Archelaus these areas were for Roman soldiers (except the brief spans when Agrippa I & II were client kings). Adjacent to this small camp in the Upper City were the three fortresses of Phasael, Hippicus and Mariamne (which Josephus called the “local fortresses.”¹⁰⁷) This *Praetorium* in the Upper City was the judgment hall intended strictly for Jewish affairs.

When in 6 C.E. Rome assumed full provincial control of the client kingdom of Judaea, the area of Judaea ceased to be a “Jewish state” and became part of the imperial system like any other provincial region of the empire. After this acquisition by Rome, the local *Praetorium* at Herod’s palace in the Upper City (with its three “local fortresses”) finally became the normal living quarters of Pilate when he took command in Jerusalem. But there was also the other imperial *Praetorium*. This was the principal Roman *Praetorium* for Roman or international affairs. This was at Fort Antonia north of the Temple Mount. It was in Fort Antonia where

¹⁰⁷ *War* Introduction Book I.11 ¶29, Loeb edition.

the major body of Roman troops was quartered; the encampment referred to in the Book of Acts, and called the *Praetorium* in the Gospel of John.¹⁰⁸

Fort Antonia was also the fortress that Herod enlarged from being a former citadel called the Baris that the Hasmonians used to protect the Temple and the city.¹⁰⁹ So, the actual Roman *Praetorium* for imperial affairs from 6 C.E. onwards was Fort Antonia, the permanent military camp in pre-war Jerusalem. This Roman *Praetorium* of Fort Antonia was the headquarters of the General in charge of the Roman forces at the permanent fortress in Jerusalem *before* the war began.

This was where Pilate stayed during the Passover seasons to be near the Temple to control the crowds. This was where he judged Jesus. Since Jesus was charged at Passover with sedition against Caesar and the Roman Empire, the jurisdiction presiding in such matters was at the imperial *Praetorium*. At all Jewish festivals and other important occasions, Pilate (as would any Roman procurator) took up residence in the main *Praetorium* at Fort Antonia where he conducted most governmental activities.¹¹⁰

Why was it necessary for Pilate to have been resident at the main Roman fortress in Jerusalem at the time of the Passover? Let us recall an important point. Jesus was judged by Pilate at the time of the Jewish Passover. This is when the top Roman authority in Jerusalem needed to be at Fort Antonia to be in close quarters with his troops to supervise the vast numbers of Jewish people who crowded into Jerusalem at such times. Clearly, Pilate had left his

¹⁰⁸ As in the footnotes above, compare Acts 21:34; 22:24; 23:10,16,32; John 18:28,33; 19:9 and Mark 15:16.

¹⁰⁹ This fort was first built or enlarged, as it is supposed, by John Hyrcanus in about the year 107 B.C.E. He called it the "Baris," the Tower or Citadel. It was afterwards rebuilt with great improvements by Herod, under the government of Antonius, and was named from him "the Tower of Antonia." About the time when Herod rebuilt the temple, he seems to have put his last hand to it. See *Antiquities* XVIII.5,4; and *War* I.3,3; and 5,4.

¹¹⁰ *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* states: "In permanent fortresses or forts it is distinguished from the *principia*, or headquarters building, and clearly refers to the commandant's house, a separate structural entity (Livy 28.25; Tac. *Ann.* 1.44; RIB 1092, 1685–6, 1912)" (p.874).

personal home at the former palace of Herod in the Upper City and had taken up residence at Fort Antonia, at the imperial *Praetorium* in Jerusalem. This was where the main body of the legion of Roman troops had their encampment.

All that Remains of Early Jerusalem Is the Haram

The historical evidence from eyewitnesses attests to the fact that nothing was left of the Temple or Jewish Jerusalem after 70 C.E. Only the walls of the Haram have survived in the area as an outstanding architectural example of the splendor and majesty that graced the region in the days of Herod and Jesus — enduring the ravages of wars and all attempts to destroy it (if any) down to the period of Eusebius and to our own time.

Since the Haram has continued in the Jerusalem area, were there any ancient authorities who mentioned the Haram esh-Sharif during the first six centuries of our era? Yes, it was mentioned, and in a most conspicuous manner. Let us see.

The Haram Reckoned to be the Roman Praetorium

From 70 C.E. to 370 C.E., there was only one ancient eyewitness who referred to the walls of the Haram esh-Sharif as then existing in Jerusalem. That reference was made in 333 C.E. when a Christian pilgrim came to Jerusalem to view the holy places. He came from Bordeaux in what later became France and is known in historical literature as the Bordeaux Pilgrim. He was the first to give a systematic view of the Jerusalem of his time, and it was a meager account. But what he related at the beginning of the Byzantine period is important to us in confirming the site of the Temple of Herod and Jesus.

The first place the Bordeaux Pilgrim visited was the site of the Temple. What is remarkable about his account is that the Pilgrim's reference to the Temple and its adjacent buildings says *nothing* about going through the gate in a wall of Jerusalem to reach the site of the Temple. The Pilgrim speaks of the Temple as being *outside* the City of Aelia (Byzantine Jerusalem) as it existed at the time. Indeed, he did not enter what he called "Jerusalem" until

after his description of the Temple and the area around it. Only then did the Bordeaux Pilgrim state in his document that he entered Jerusalem by walking westward with the Siloam pool situated on his left which finally led him upward to the Upper Hill that was then called Zion (spelled “Sion” in Christian literature).

To this point in his journey, in what he called *inside* Jerusalem, he still had *not* gone through a gate in any wall. But this was soon remedied. He then wrote that he journeyed northward and came to a gate in the southern wall of the city, which he entered (this was his first time the Pilgrim found himself within any ramparts in the City of Jerusalem, then called Aelia). Once through this southern gate, he walked directly north and noted two buildings that caught his attention. These two constructions were the only ones *inside* the walls of Aelia that he considered important, or thought fit to describe. One building was the new and unfinished Church of the Holy Sepulchre on his left side (in the west) and another building was located on his right side (in the east). This latter building with walls surrounding it was situated, according to the Pilgrim, directly opposite (east of) the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. One should emphasize that to the Bordeaux Pilgrim this *eastern* construction had walls (“walls” in the plural) with its foundations within the Tyropoeon Valley.

He identified that “walled facility” as the *Praetorium*. He further described it as the former residence of Pilate, who was at that site in the time of Jesus’ trial. So, the walled area east of the Holy Sepulchre was an edifice that had remained in existence from the time of Pilate and Jesus. In other words, this structure survived the Roman/Jewish War of 66–70 C.E.

Since we are assured from earlier eyewitness records that *nothing* of “Jewish Jerusalem” or the Holy Temple (either their inner or outer walls) survived the war, the only candidate that remains tally with the description of the Bordeaux Pilgrim is the former Fort Antonia — which in the time of Pilate and Jesus had the same technical name *Praetorium* connected to it.

This shows that the Bordeaux Pilgrim was looking at the broad view of the western side of the *Praetorium* with its walls (the

southern and western walls making the *southwestern* angle) that we called today the Haram esh-Sharif. It must be emphasized that the Pilgrim observed the *Praetorium's* walls (plural) with their foundations that reached downward to the lower areas of the Tyropoeon Valley. His description can only refer to the southwest corner of the Haram ramparts at the juncture of the southern and western walls near what we call "Robinson's Arch" being directly in front of him.

So, this earliest authority after the Roman/Jewish War, the Bordeaux Pilgrim, in referring to the Haram, correctly identified the site in the early 4th century as the place of the *Praetorium* where Pilate had his residence at the time of Jesus' trial. In the Roman world at the time, the word "*Praetorium*" was another synonym for the residence of the Roman General who had his abode in the center of a military camp of the legions. In simple terms, the Bordeaux Pilgrim in the early 4th century was well aware that the walls of the Haram esh-Sharif were those of the *Praetorium*, or in plain speaking, it was Fort Antonia, the former Camp of the Romans.

But there is more evidence of this fact from later Christian times. In the next chapter I will show further proof that the Haram esh-Sharif was recognized as the *Praetorium* where Pilate judged Jesus. It was NOT the former site of the Temple in the eyes of people in Jerusalem as late as the 6th century. Let us see.

Chapter 6

THE ROCK AND THE FORTRESS OF ANTONIA

THE AREA OF THE DOME OF THE ROCK was actually that of the *Praetorium*, formerly Fort Antonia. The most prominent geographical feature associated with Fort Antonia was the rock around which the Fort was built. That rock monopolized any other description connected with Fort Antonia. Josephus mentioned it as dominating all other geographical facets of the area. The “Rock” and “Fort Antonia” went together like “birds of a feather” in first century Jerusalem.

Josephus says Antonia was situated north of the Temple with an entrance to the Fortress at the northwest corner of the outer colonnades encompassing the Temple Square. There was an outstanding feature of Fort Antonia that characterized its location. He said the Fortress had a prominent rock formation associated with it.

The way some translations render Josephus it might be imagined the whole fortress was situated on the top of a single rock (not simply over and around a rock). The fact is, though, Josephus did

not mean the fortress was built strictly on top of a singular rock. The Greek preposition Josephus used in giving the location of Fort Antonia was *huper*. This means the fortress was built over and around a rock, not on top (Greek: *epi*) of the rock itself.

Another point must be borne in mind. Josephus said the rock associated with Antonia was 50 cubits high (75 feet high). He gave no other dimensions to show the full measurements of the rock in other directions except to say that all areas around the rock were precipitous.¹¹¹

Josephus meant something else. The text shows Fort Antonia was built over and around a rock (Greek: *huper*). This indication solves a problem about which scholars have been perplexed. Josephus was talking about a type of rocky ridge oriented north to south. From the base of this ridge of rock, Herod placed smooth flagstones in a slanted angle that surmounted the slope of the rocky surface to a height of 50 cubits (75 feet). Then a wall of 3 cubits was built as a balustrade to surround the fortress to protect an inward roadway that encompassed the fortress. On the inside of the roadway, four walls of 40 cubits height (60 feet) were built that circumnavigated the fortress. There was a level platform occupying the whole inner space within those four walls. The buildings and grounds of the fortress were constructed on that platform. At the four corners of the walls were towers of 50 cubits in height (75 feet) with the exception of the southeast tower which was 70 cubits high (105 feet). This southeast tower had the advantage of such singular height that one could view from its top (as did Titus, the Roman General) the whole of the Temple courts located to the south.

This description of Josephus concerning Fort Antonia must allow the height of the rock formation (the visible portion being the "Rock" itself) to protrude slightly above the platform as we see

¹¹¹ He did not state, as some have commented, that the rock was also 50 cubits wide in its horizontal directions. If so, this would answer to a small rock (relatively) with a square area of 75 by 75 feet. If Fort Antonia were built strictly on top of such a rock, the fortress would have been very small in size in a relative sense. Why, there are many private homes in posh areas of American cities today that are larger than this 5625 square feet in area.

the rock now located underneath the Dome of the Rock. This is because Josephus shows the whole of Fort Antonia was positioned over and around this rock protrusion positioned at the summit of the ridge. There was nothing small about these dimensions associated with Fort Antonia. Indeed, the rocky ridge was a prominent geographical feature or else Josephus would not have referred to it. It means that the rock ridge was quite long and covered a large area which could house over 10,000 military personnel.

Josephus' use of the "Rock" as a cardinal feature of the geography of Fort Antonia agrees with his other descriptions of important topographical sites in the region of Palestine and surrounding areas. Note that Josephus used the same word for *rock* (Greek: *petra*) to describe the fortress of Masada. That fortress, also built by Herod, was not a small facility. Masada was a large encampment that Josephus said was on a rock near the Dead Sea. Modern measurements show the top of that rock was 18 acres in size.¹¹²

There is even more. Josephus also used the same word rock (Greek: *petra*) to describe the large city of Petra that occupied an area that was over a mile across. This particular "rock" was a city of carved temples and other magnificent buildings located southeast of the Dead Sea. Even today, this extensive area is called Petra [the Rock].¹¹³ Using the word "*Petra*" to denote a large geographical area (such as a whole city) was common to Josephus as it was to other people in the first century.¹¹⁴

When one looks at the geographical evidence for this area of Jerusalem, Josephus could only be describing the rock now under the Dome of the Rock in the Haram. He was not talking about some unidentifiable "rock" in the northwest corner region of the

¹¹² *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15th Ed.), vol. 7, p.905.

¹¹³ *Antiquities* XII.6,11.

¹¹⁴ Just like Masada near the Dead Sea, and Petra in the Kingdom of Jordan, Antonia being built over and around "a Rock" was intended to show it as being large and highly fortified. A similar designation was afforded to Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay. This was a large prison area called locally "the Rock." Indeed, a recent Hollywood movie concerning Alcatraz was titled *The Rock*. As Masada, Petra and Alcatraz were designated "the Rock," the same nomenclature applied to Antonia which was also a large military camp that could garrison a full Roman legion and built over and around the rock (Greek: *huper*).

Haram that to this day no one has been able to find. In fact, this “*oblong rock*” was known later in Christian circles to the time of the Crusades as the *Praetorium*, the place of Jesus’ footprints where Pilate judged Jesus. I will show the evidence for this fact shortly.

The only outstanding geographical feature involving a “rock” on the eastern ridge in that area of Jerusalem is the “rock” under the Dome of the Rock. Anyone with common sense would admit this to be true. This is another clue is the description of Josephus that the Haram represents the remains of Fort Antonia and NOT the site of the Temple of Herod.¹¹⁵

From the time of Abn al-Malik in 692 C.E. who built the Dome of the Rock over that “*oblong rock*,” the central outstanding feature of the whole shrine has been the *rock* itself. Often in later literature, we find that the site was holy to the Muslims simply because the *rock* was there, that it was so important to God that the foundation of the world was dependent upon the existence of this *rock*, and that it was the navel of the earth in all geographical senses. The only thing we ever hear about after it was built was the sanctity and the importance of this *rock* (not only for Muslims and Jews, but for all people). The central component of the whole of the Haram esh-Sharif was (and is) the existence of that *rock*.

But in regard to the Temples built by Solomon, Zerubbabel and that of Herod, there is NOT one mention of an outcropping of natural rock (or a protruding stone at the top of a ridge) that figures into the geographical setting of the Temple. In fact, the absence of such an indication is conspicuous and tell-tale. In all biblical references, we find that the Temples had NO natural outcropping of rock associated with either the Holy of Holies or the Altar of Burnt Offering. All the stones important in the various Temples were either loose stones or those cut to fit certain parts of buildings or the walls of the compartments of the Temple.

¹¹⁵ The Israeli architect Tuvia Sagiv wisely suggests that the rock underneath the Dome of the Rock is associated with Fort Antonia. He is right.

No Rock Outcropping Associated with the Temples

There is NOT a single reference either in the Holy Scriptures or any secular source that a natural outcropping of rock located on the highest point of a ridge (or hill) was ever associated with the positioning of the Temples. This also applies to the sites of both the Holy of Holies and the Altar of Burnt Offering. This is a most important fact that we must now consider, and be cognizant of its importance.¹¹⁶

First of all, we are informed in the Holy Scriptures that the place selected for the Altar of Burnt Offering was a threshing floor.¹¹⁷ If there is one thing certain about this “threshing floor,” it is the fact that the area was a level region and not on the top of a

¹¹⁶ Such a “Rock” (that is, a gigantic outcropping of natural rock) was never depicted in the Bible or in secular history as associated with the architecture of the Temples. Where David prayed and raised up an altar that became the site of Solomon’s Temple was once a threshing-floor. The word in Hebrew denotes a type of a floor (that is, a level area where grain could be threshed). All threshing-floors are level areas, just like a floor, usually on a terrace between the strata of rocks on the upper slopes of hills. No farmer would think of make a threshing-floor on the peaked top of a natural outcropping of rock with rough indentations where grain would fall and have to be scooped out by hand. One can search the Bible throughout and never find that the Temples were built over a natural rock outcropping like the “Rock” under the Dome of the Rock.

The “foundation stone” called the *Even Shethiyah* that Jewish authorities said Solomon placed in the Holy of Holies as a base for the Ark of the Covenant was a man-made slab of stone that could fit within the twenty cubits’ dimensional square of the Holy of Holies. The top of that particular stone, made in the days of the Early Prophets, that is, Samuel, David and Solomon, was smooth and was elevated three fingers above the floor of the Holy of Holies. Note Sanhedrin 26b: “For we learnt: A stone lay there [beneath the Ark] ever since the time of the Early Prophets and it was called ‘shethiyah’.” This reference shows the stone was portable. See also the Mishna portion of Yoma 53b:

“After the Ark had been taken away, there was a stone from the days of the earlier prophets [Samuel and David], called the *Shethiyah*, three fingers above the ground, on which he would place [the pan of burning coals]. He would take the blood from him who was stirring it, and enter [again] into the place [the Holy of Holies].”

In no way, is the *Even Shetinyah* the natural “Rock” underneath the Dome of the Rock. The fact is, the *Even Shetinyah* (the “foundation stone” in Solomon’s Temple) was a manufactured slab of pavement.

¹¹⁷ Second Samuel 24:16.

protruding rock on the top of a ridge. Every threshing floor I have ever seen in the Middle East (also Africa, Europe and even America) is on a level area. After all, even the term means *floor* and not a jagged outcropping like the protruding rock with indentions under the Dome of the Rock. That rock, even in its pristine state, would have been most unsuitable for the site of a threshing *floor*. One must look for a *level* area, NOT a jagged or steep one.

True, there was a stone featured in the Temple of Solomon the Jews called the *Even Shetiyyah*,¹¹⁸ a term that normally denoted “the foundation rock.” But, as I have shown, and many Jewish scholars agree, *that* particular stone was moveable and it was NOT a natural outcropping like the “Rock” now under the Dome of the Rock. There was such a “Rock,” however, that was later called the “oblong rock” reckoned to be within the interior of the *Praetorium* in the days of Pilate and Jesus. Cyril, the archbishop of Jerusalem said about 350 C.E. that the *Praetorium* in his day had not been maintained for human occupation and the site was then in ruins.¹¹⁹ But shortly afterwards, Jerome said the site had been rebuilt.¹²⁰ A

¹¹⁸ *Even Shetiyyah*, a term that was understood in two ways in talmudic times: “the rock from which the world was woven.” and “the foundation rock.” Both meanings presuppose the belief that the world was created from the rock which, placed at the center of the world in the Holy of Holies of the Temple in Jerusalem, constitutes the focal point of the world. The Holy Ark was placed upon this rock, and during the Second Temple period the high priest rested the fire-pan on it when he entered the Holy of Holes on the day of Atonement.

The Mishnah (Yoma 5:2) states that the rock had been at the site of the Holy of Holies “since the time of the early prophets” (i.e. David and Solomon); that it was three finger breadths higher than the ground: and that it was called *shetiyyah*.... The Mishnah clearly dates the placing of the stone to the time of the Temple’s construction (Yoma 54b). The relationship of the *Even Shetiyyah* to the rock presently housed under the Dome of the Rock (the “Mosque [Shrine] of Omar”) built on the Temple Mount is in no way identical in the Bible or early Jewish records. Muslim tradition identifies the two, and this view is most widely held today. The major difficulty here is the size of the rock housed in the Dome if the Rock measures approximately 58 by 51 feet, an area much larger than the Holy of Holies in which the *Even Shetiyyah* was placed.

¹¹⁹ Cyril, *Cat. Lectures* 13:39.

¹²⁰ See Letter 108. In the time of Jerome, the area was again the residence of the imperial governor. This area was reserved for dignitaries and other political persons to lodge within the four walled area of former Fort Antonia. A small Church of St. Cyrus and St. John was then located over the “Rock” and it was

Christian church was soon built in the area, and in the middle of the fifth century an even bigger one (called the "Church of the Holy Wisdom") was built to house and to venerate the "Rock."

The Arrival of the "Footprints" of Jesus

The reference by Jerome is very important to the story of what was built over the "Rock" as time went on. In fact, when Helena was in Jerusalem we have historical references that she selected the site for a church to be called "Saint Cyrus and Saint John." This church pointed out the spot of the "Pavement" (that is, the "Rock") where Jesus was judged before Pilate. There was no documentation at this early period that the *footprints* of Jesus were then to be seen in that "Rock." But, as Jerome tells us, the area had again become the residence of the imperial governor. This became the aristocratic region reserved for dignitaries and other political persons while they staying in Jerusalem. Such noble people could reside in comfort and safety within the four walled area of former Fort Antonia. After all, for military purposes the Haram esh-Sharif, with its gigantic walls, was the perfect spot for any military camp in Jerusalem. It was designed for that very purpose.

So, by the time of Jerome (about 385 C.E.) the Haram esh-Sharif was again the site of the *Praetorium* and the place where the military governor lived. He even invited Paula the nun, his friend of noble birth, to reside within the *Praetorium*. Paula did not feel this palatial residence was fit for her purposes in being in the Holy City. She had come as a pilgrim, not as an official dignitary.

Within the *Praetorium* by the time of Jerome and Paula, there was the small Church of St. Cyrus and St. John located over the "Rock." It must have been reserved at the time as a chapel for dignitaries and was not of sufficient importance for great crowds of residents or pilgrims to visit it. But something happened that made the spot quite important to all Christians. Somewhere in the 5th

often a chapel reserved for dignitaries and not frequented by normal residents or pilgrims. But something happened with the Church. It was discovered that two indentations in the "Rock" were those of Jesus when he stood before Pilate. This is when a new "Church of the Holy Wisdom" was erected at the site and the area was opened to the general Christian public. I will show this in a moment.

century, a discovery was made. In looking closely at the “Rock,” it was recognized by Christian authorities that two indentations in the “Rock” looked like *footprints* and they were identified as the *footprints* of Jesus when he stood before Pilate. People became impressed with this feature and they wished to visit the “Rock” to obtain what early Christians called “measures” (facsimiles in wax or other substances) to take away as relics, mostly to aid in miraculously healing people. The Christian authorities then enlarged the area and built a new Byzantine style Church at the site. They called it the “Church of the Holy Wisdom.” It was erected in the middle of the 5th century, probably in the time of Empress Eudocia. The area was then opened to the general Christian public to view. Its centerpiece was an “oblong rock.”

This church is described very well (and accurately) in a sixth century work written by the Piacenza Pilgrim. He said (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 to 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.”¹²¹

Note “*the oblong stone*” which the people thought had the footprints of Jesus embedded in it. Just as Josephus stated, 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” (destroyed by the Persians and Jewish soldiers in 614 C.E). This “Rock” is now under the Dome

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p.60, or p.84.

of the Rock on the Haram esh-Sharif. And there are further references to it as late as the time of Saladin in the 12th century. I will have more on this later.

How was it determined the two indentations found in the "Rock" were the *footprints* of Jesus? The discovery was made in the same way the Piacenza Pilgrim said some markings and scratches found (at another site) on a column at Mount Sion where Jesus was supposed to have been tied and scourged were identified. The Pilgrim spoke of this and relates:

"When he [Jesus] clasped it, his chest clove to the stone [an indentation was made by his chest], and you can see the marks of both his hands and feet, his fingers and his palms. They are so clear that you can use them to take 'measures' [to make wax models of them] for any kind of disease, and people can wear them around their necks and be cured."¹²²

A short time before, an account of Jerusalem called *Breviarius* spoke of the same column he called "the column at which the Lord was struck, where this is a mark where he held onto it, like an impression on wax."¹²³

There are other such instances of similar discoveries. A Christian named Abdomnan mentioned a Gallic bishop by the name of Arculf who visited Jerusalem about 680 C.E. Arculf saw a great round church near the top of the Mount of Olives (octagonal in shape, like the soon to be built Dome of the Rock) where there was a stone in which "the Lord's feet" could be seen indented. And even though people took away soil where Jesus once stood, "to this day there are *footprints* on the earth."¹²⁴ Arculf also spoke about what he saw in the Church of Saint Mary in the Kedron Valley.

"Entering the lower round Church of Saint Mary one sees on the right, let into the wall, a rock. On it the Lord knelt to pray in the field of Gethsemane just before he was betrayed, on the night when

¹²² Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades*, p.84.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p.60. There is also the similar comment of Theosius who lived near the same time: "The column ... where my Lord Christ was scourged ... you can still see the way he clung to it ... as if the marks were in wax ... the impression [was] of his whole face, chin, nose, and eyes as if it had been wax" (*Ibid.*, p.66).

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.101.

he was ‘given up into the hands of wicked men’ and to Judas. The *marks of his knees* are visible, printed deeply in this rock, as if it had been soft wax.”¹²⁵

The Muslims had their own rocks and columns on which various body parts of their righteous were believed to be molded into the hard substance (when the substance became “wax-like”) and these indentions could still be seen and venerated. Indeed, at a place east of the Al Aqsa Mosque on the lower slopes of the Haram esh-Sharif, the Muslims found the place where Jesus was supposedly born.¹²⁶ The Muslims came to revere the spot and called it “The Cradle of Jesus.” They did this because the Muslims could point out scratches in the rocks from Mary’s fingers supposedly made when she struggled in birth pangs to bring forth Jesus.¹²⁷ All of these “cradles” [indentions] were believed by early

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.99.

¹²⁶ According to Muslim belief, the nativity of Jesus was near the Temple in Jerusalem, and not at Bethlehem as the New Testament teaches.

¹²⁷ The word “cradle” is explained by the Muslim historian Ibn Taymiyya (the great critic of relics and marvelous stories) who died in 1328 C.E. Speaking about an “indention” on the Dome of the Rock that some Muslims believed to be the footprint of Muhammad, Ibn Taymiyya said:

“What some of the ignorant ones have mentioned is that there is a footprint of the Prophet — God bless him and grant him salvation — or a trace of his turban or the like on it [the Rock]. All of this, however, is a lie. The greatest lie is from those who think that is the place of the footprint of the Lord [of Allah himself] and likewise that it is the place mentioned as the cradle [or, footprint] of Jesus [in the “Rock” under the Dome of the Rock] — Peace be upon him. It is nothing more than the baptismal font of the Christians.”

Translation in F.E. Peters, *Jerusalem: The Holy City in the Eyes of Chroniclers, Visitors, Pilgrims, and Prophets from the Days of Abraham to the Beginnings of Modern Times* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), p.377. A “cradle” in the context used by Ibn Taymiyya meant a depression in a rock (or a hole or a framework in which moldable things could be placed to be formed into a more solid shape). We even have a similar meaning in modern English. It means a “framework” usually made of timber or concrete in which a moldable substance can harden into the form of the framework into which it was poured. In early times, it was common for pilgrims to Jerusalem to place wax in such indentions [or “cradles,” that is, “frameworks”] in order to take away the shape of the “cradle” as a relic or as a souvenir. Any such “holy indentation” in a rock or on a column was ordinarily called a “cradle.” It did not mean in such contexts simply a cot for a young child. Even the supposed *footprint* of Jesus on the “oblong rock” was called in Arabic times a “cradle.”

Christians and Muslims to be miraculous signatures of the people associated with them. More examples in various areas of the world could be given.¹²⁸

The Conclusion that Haram esh-Sharif Was Fort Antonia

The present Herodian and pre-Herodian stones standing on one another in the rectangular area known as the Haram esh-Sharif are NOT the stones that made up the walls of either the Temple or the City of Jerusalem in the time of Jesus. They belong to the former Fort Antonia, reckoned by Josephus and Titus to be Roman imperial property (the *Praetorium*) and not part of the municipality of Jerusalem from 6 C.E. onward. It is also clear that the “Rock” around which Fort Antonia was built was the same “Rock” (called the “Oblong Stone” that was the main feature of the Church of the Holy Wisdom (destroyed by the Persians and Jews in 614 C.E.). That is the same “Rock” now under the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem.

¹²⁸ See *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, edited by Mercia Eliade, under the article “Relics.”

Chapter 7

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE “ROCK” UNDER THE DOME OF THE ROCK

WE NOW LOOK MORE SPECIFICALLY at that single “Rock” under the Dome of the Rock. What is the history surrounding it? Documentary evidence shows that when Omar (the Second Caliph) entered Jerusalem in 638 C.E. looking for the place where David prayed, he displayed no interest in that “Rock” in any religious sense whatever. Neither did Omar’s successor Mu’awiya.¹²⁹ In fact, after the Caliph decided where to

¹²⁹ Professor Oleg Grabar writes:

“In 661, the head of the Umayyad clan, Mu’awiya ibn abi Sufyan, governor of Syria and one of the truly brilliant Arab leaders of that century, was elected to the caliphate and received in Jerusalem the homage of Arab Muslim leaders. On that occasion, Mu’awiya is said to have visited the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Church of the Ascension on the Mount of

place his *qibla* for his new Mosque (he placed it at the southern end of the Haram esh-Sharif which later became the Al Aqsa Mosque). Omar consistently and deliberately turned his back to the northern "Rock outcropping" each time he prayed toward Mecca. Omar was not at all impressed with the supposed sanctity of that northern "Rock" and declined to venerate it.

Yet, something happened that brought Omar's attention to the "Rock" while he was in Jerusalem. Recall that Omar had a Jewish general in his army named Ka'ab. We are told in the early Byzantine historical work by Theophanes (ninth century) that Omar also had ten Jewish leaders from the Arabian peninsula in association with his army and all recently gave lip-service to Islam. Omar did not entirely trust them and wondered if their conversions were genuine.¹³¹ Still, one day Omar saw Ka'ab (who had never been to Jerusalem) taking off his shoes and walking upon the rock over which the Dome of the Rock was later built. Omar became suspicious. When Omar queried the actions of Ka'ab, the Jewish general made a non-religious excuse for walking on the rock with bare feet.

This answer did not satisfy Omar. The Caliph already persuaded Sophronius to point out the Christian view of holy sites in Jerusalem. So, Omar already knew that the "Rock" where Ka'ab walked barefoot had been a notable Christian site believed to contain the *footprints* of Jesus embedded in the "Oblong Rock" when he stood before Pilate. When Omar saw Ka'ab take off his shoes when he

Olives, and the tomb of the Virgin Mary in Gethsemane. No mention is made of a visit to the mosque on the Haram" (*The Shape of the Holy*, p.50).

This powerful Caliph that followed Omar, according to the records, also showed no interest in the "Rock" that later became the center of the Dome of the Rock. About twenty years later, the Gallic Bishop named Arculf visited Jerusalem and described the holy sites (including Muslim, the newly-built forerunner of the Al Aqsa Mosque) but he also said not one word about the "Rock" that was in the center part of the Haram. I will show that Abd al-Malik himself (though he built the Dome of the Rock over the "Rock") erected his magnificent shrine to wean people away from any religious significance or veneration toward the "Rock." Indeed, Abd al-Malik utilized every means possible to show disapproval of any adoration beginning to be shown by Muslims.

¹³⁰ See Appendix I, "Rocks" and *Holy Places in the Bible*.

¹³¹ *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, translated by Harry Turtledove (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), p.34.

tread on that “Christian Rock,” this made the Caliph suspect Ka’ab of being a clandestine Christian.¹³²

The “Rock” Was of Christian Significance

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” had great symbolic meaning. Recall that the first Christian pilgrim who left record of his journey to Jerusalem was the Bordeaux Pilgrim who in 333 C.E. 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 already described the Temple site, and other buildings around it, several paragraphs before.¹³³

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 where the “Wailing Wall” of the Jews is presently located. The Pilgrim said this “walled area” contained the residence of Pilate, the Roman *Praetorium*. In Roman usage, the *Praetorium* was the headquarters of a military unit and could refer to the whole camp or more particularly to the commander’s house.¹³⁴

Within the *Praetorium* area was the “Rock” of Judgment called in John’s Gospel (John 19:13) “the Pavement-Stone” (in Greek, *lithostrotos* meaning “paved with flagstones,” and in Hebrew *Gabbatha*). The “Rock” was connected with the *Praetorium* and was

¹³² Ka’ab had studied with a certain Abu Muslim from Galilee who was a Jew that apparently had become a Christian monk. See Moshe Gil, *A History of Palestine 634–1099*, note 70, p. 68.

¹³³ Again, see Wilkinson’s excellent translation of the Bordeaux Pilgrim in his *Egeria’s Travels*, p.158.

¹³⁴ *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* states: “In permanent fortresses or forts it is distinguished from the *principia*, or headquarters building, and clearly refers to the commandant’s house, a separate structural entity (Livy 28.25; Tac. *Ann.* 1.44; RIB 1092, 1685–6, 1912)” (p.874).

part of Fort Antonia, the permanent Roman Camp. The central feature of Antonia was a major rock and it was associated with *flagstones*. Josephus 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). Indeed, before the construction of Fort Antonia, Josephus said the "Rock" was 50 cubits high (75 feet), but Herod later built a platform around it with appropriate *flagstones* (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 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 indentations in that "Rock" came 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 *footprints* of Jesus, early Christians came to believe it. 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 Christians noticed in the New Testament that a "Judgment Seat" was placed by Pilate on the "Rock," called in Greek a *bematos*. The 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 sitting on a throne to sentence people in an official judicial event. 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 divine judgments (Psalms 99:5; 132:7; Lamentations 2:1). Each military governor of the Romans carried his official *bema* or *bematos* 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.¹³⁵ Christians simply confused the literal meaning of *bema* [*footprint*] and the indentations seen in the natu-

¹³⁵ See "Praetorium," *Hasting's Bible Dictionary*.

ral outcropping of rock became “Jesus’ *footprints*.” Though an error, this reckoning became an unforgettable identifying mark on the “Rock” where Pilate made his judgment against Jesus.

This “Rock” (called “the Pavement”) was well known in the time of Constantine. Helena, the mother of Constantine, ordered that a small Christian Church with the name “St. Cyrus and St. John” be built over *that* “Rock” and construction started some 30 years after Helena’s visit to Jerusalem.¹³⁶ This church was enlarged, probably in the fifth century, as a major church 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. His words are important enough in our present research to be repeated.

“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 to 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.”¹³⁷

Note “*the oblong stone*” which the people thought had the footprints of Jesus embedded in it. Just as Josephus stated, 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” (destroyed by the Persians and Jewish soldiers in 614 C.E). This “Rock” is now under the Dome of the Rock on the Haram esh-Sharif.

¹³⁶ See Life of Constantine in Wilkinson’s *Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades*, p. 204.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.60, or p.84.

The fact that later Christians thought the *footprints* of Jesus were embedded in this “Rock,” is a key identifier. There are other historical references, both Christian and Muslim, that attest to the “Rock” under the Dome of the Rock as the same “Rock or Stone” that had the footprints of Jesus inlaid as foot-like depressions into the “Rock.” This was confirmed by the Christian writers Peter the Deacon and Saewulf later in the Crusader period.¹³⁸ Indeed, a short time later even the court recorder of Saladin (the Muslim who reconquered Jerusalem from the Crusaders in 1187 C.E) said that Jesus’ footprint had been inlaid in the “Rock” under the Dome of the Rock.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ See Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels* (p.182) where this translation of Peter the Deacon is given,

“In the middle of the Temple [the Dome of the Rock] is a great mound surrounded by walls, in which is the Tabernacle [the early Arabic name for “tent” was *Kubbet* which came to mean “Dome”] ... on the left side of the Tabernacle the Lord Jesus placed his foot on the occasion when Symeon took him in his arms.”

This cannot mean the Symeon when Jesus was an infant because the footprint in the Rock was reckoned to be an adult footprint and this makes the reference as no doubt being a mistake for “Simon of Cyrene” who was in Jerusalem at the time Jesus stood before Pilate. The point that I wish to make is the fact that Christians during the Crusades were well aware that the footprint of Jesus was reckoned to have been on the “Rock” under the Dome of the Rock. In 1102 C.E., the Christian writer Saewulf stated: “There are still to be seen in the Rock the footsteps of our Lord.” See Zev Vilnay, *Legends of Jerusalem*, p.22, note.

¹³⁹ See “Saladin,” in *Brill's First Encyclopaedia of Islam*. His name was Imad Ad-Din. His mention in 1187 C.E. is the last time we hear of Jesus’ footprints in the “Rock.” When Islamic writer Ibn Taymiyya wrote about Jerusalem in 1328 C.E., he mentioned the footprint of Muhammad, but he said it was a lie that the footprint of God or of Jesus were then in the “Rock.” He said that what was formerly held to be the footprint of Jesus was a “cradle” (an indentation in the Rock) that was nothing more than a “baptismal font” that Christians once used See Peters, *Jerusalem*, p.377: Yes, Ibn Taymiyya was correct. But what he failed to realize is that the Church of the Holy Wisdom was built over that supposed footprint of Jesus for the express purpose of being a baptistery church in which that indentation (called a “cradle”) became the main baptismal font. And when Abd al-Malik built the Dome of the Rock he followed the exact outlines (even with the Byzantine Dome) of the early Church of the Holy Wisdom. Note the comments of Professor Oleg Grabar on the design of the Dome of the Rock.

“As to the basic shape, a circle surrounded by a double octagonal ambulatory, there is little doubt that the model for the Dome of the Rock was a

There can be no doubt of the identification. The “Rock” of the Dome of the Rock (which is clearly oblong) and the “oblong stone” within the “Church of the Holy Wisdom” were the same and identical “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” (still standing before its destruction in 614 C.E) “the House and the Stone.”¹⁴⁰ Indeed, Sophronius saw great significance in that “Rock/Stone.” To Sophronius it was the very stone called “the Pavement” mentioned in John 19:13, rendered in Greek as the *Lithostrotos*, and in Hebrew *Gabbatha*. The word “*Gabbatha*” had a different meaning from *Lithostrotos*. It was an architectural term widely developed in Byzantine official circles to mean a “Dome” or a “Judgment-Seat” of God.¹⁴¹ The “Dome” itself had the appearance of the heavenly

fairly common type in Late Antique and Early Christian or early Byzantine architecture. Originating in the mostly funerary architecture of the late Roman Empire (the tomb of Diocletian in Spalato, of Santa Costanza in Rome), it became a form for *baptisteries* [italics mine for emphasis] all over the Christian world and included the two monumental ones built in Ravenna for the Orthodox and for the Arians, with mosaic decoration, as we have mentioned, comparable in its effectiveness to that of the Dome of the Rock” (*The Shape of the Holy*, p.107).

In Byzantine churches it was common to place baptisteries under “Domes” (*Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol.I, pp.390–91). But Ibn Taymiyya did not think that the footprint of Jesus could in his time (1328 C.E.) be seen in the “Rock.” And he was correct. By his time, the footprint of Jesus had been cut away from the “Rock” and that “footprint” section of the “Rock” was placed in a new area of the Haram. I will show this in my comments on my Web Page on the Internet.

¹⁴⁰ See Sophronius, *Antacroeontica* as translated by Wilkinson in *Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades*, p.91.

¹⁴¹ Look at the Aramaic word “*Gabbatha*.” It has an interesting etymological history. Note the cogent remarks by Professor Moss in the prestigious *Hasting’s Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, vol.I, p.631.

“GABBATHA occurs only in John 19:13 as the Hebrew, or more correctly, Aramaic equivalent of *lithostrotos*. For the etymology of the word see E. Nestle in *Hastings’ DB* ii, 74f, with the literature there cited. The word is apparently connected with the root GBT, of which the fundamental idea is that of something curved or convex. Hence it cannot be taken as identical in meaning with *lithostrotos*, which implies a level tessellated surface. A surface of that kind on the summit of a hill, or with a rounded porch or an open cupola [a Dome] over it, beneath which might permanently stand, or be

sphere (wherein was God's throne). The "Dome" became a sanctified symbol of God's heavenly abode.

Byzantine Christians first developed use of the "Dome" as meaning the place for "God's Judgment," and the central area of their famous churches were graced with a "Dome" (Judgment-Seat, just like *Gabbatha* in Aramaic or *Kubbet* as the Arabic indicated). The "Dome" also depicted the whole of the sphere of the heavens where God had His domicile (or home). Thus, the "Rock" where Jesus was judged by Pilate (where the *bema* or *footprint* of authority used by Pilate was placed) finally became the "Church of the Holy Wisdom" (no doubt a domed octagonal building) originally a Christian holy place. The Aramaic word *Gabbatha* is equal in meaning with the Arabic *Kubbet* and *Kubba*. The words are all synonymous terms and all can signify "Dome" or "Judgment-Seat." And since the "Dome" is half a sphere that shows the whole of the sky or heavens of a twelve hour day, it also signifies God's heavenly throne. The "Dome" represented "*God looking down from heaven*" at that spot to render His judgment on any case being heard under the "Dome."

Since in the New Testament Jesus was judged by Pilate in the *Praetorium* (Fort Antonia), that judgment was also at the official place called *Gabbatha* (or, it was understood to mean: "the Place where God Judges"). To the Romans it signified the place where "Jupiter" renders decisions regarding matters of state and religion. It was reckoned in Rome itself to be Capitoline Hill. To the Jews

placed occasionally, the *bema* or 'judgment-seat,' would best meet the conditions of the case."

In short, the word "Gabbatha" meant a high and rounded (convex) type of structure (the equivalent of what we call a "Dome"). The word also described perfectly a "bald-headed man" or the "forehead" (Jastrow, *Aramaic Dictionary*, under the word "Gabbatha"). The Arabic (being close kin to the Hebrew and Aramaic) rendered Gabbatha as *Kubbet*, or shortened to *Kubba*, which is the common Arabic word for "Dome." In fact, the "Dome of the Rock" in classical and modern Arabic is *Kubbet al-Sakhra* (*Kubbet* is often shortened to *Kubba*). The words simply mean "Dome." Even the Greek word *kube* (Arabic *kubba*) that early Christians used to describe the central part of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre had reference to its "Dome" (for more information, see Grabar, *The Shape of the Holy*, pp.64-65).

and others, it simply meant where “YHVH judges,” or the place where God allowed Gentiles to judge people regarding civil and government affairs. This meaning of *Gabbatha*, in its judicial sense, is why the Byzantines adopted their place of judgment in churches as being under a “Dome,” which meant to be officially judged under a *Gabbatha*.¹⁴² The Aramaic word *Gabbatha* is equal in meaning with the Arabic *Kubbet* and *Kubba*. The words are all synonymous terms and signify “Dome” or “Judgment-Seat.” The Romans and Greeks who at first were not used to the application of a “Dome” adopted a different term but it came to mean the same official designation. They called it the “*Lithostrotos*” (or, simply,

¹⁴² The Hebrew/Aramaic word *Gabbatha* also has a specific meaning “head” in a judicial and political sense. In simple terms, it came to mean “headquarters” (with an identical meaning in Latin as *Praetorium* and finally *caput* or “head”). The “head” was reckoned to be like a “dome” (a convex structure) that represented the “head” of a government or the regional representative of that government. Like our word “dominion,” it came to mean the site of government headquarters. In Arabic, *Gabbatha* came to be pronounced with a slight difference and became *Kubbet* or *Kubba* (for short). Professor Grabar states that classical Arabic thought was of *Kubbet* meaning temporary tabernacles or tents (*Shape of the Holy*, p.64), but in time it came to signify the place where the chief of the clan held audience. And though the word came to mean “Dome,” in the last century it was common to see the “Rock” under the Dome of the Rock covered by a symbolic “tent” suspended from the ornate columns under the Dome itself.

It is easy to see that *Kubbet* is seen in the Latin *caput* (head) from which we obtain our modern word “capitol” meaning the head of government. The rounded capitol dome resembles a man’s bald head and the meaning of “head” is very much attached to the etymology of the Latin word *caput*. For example one need only look at the capitol (head) building of the United States with its “dome” on top to represent the head of government. Indeed, the original “capitol hill” in Rome (as well as that in Washington) has the precise meaning of *caput* (head) or in Arabic *kubbet* (Dome) as in the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, which in Jesus’ time was known as *Gabbatha*.

The word “Dome” was not only a later equivalent, but as *Gabbatha* in the New Testament was a place of judgment where Pilate judged Jesus, so the later “Dome” over such a site came to mean “Judgment-Place.” Our common phrase “Doom’s Day” for “Judgment Day” is actually the same as “Dome’s Day,” that is, a Judgment rendered at the “Dome.” It can easily be understood how *Gabbatha* became in Arabic *Kubbet* or *Kubba* (and in Byzantine Greek *kube*, as the “Dome” of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was first called), or the Latin *Caput*, like *Kubbet*, where we get “Capitol” or a Domed building. In Aramaic (John 19:13), it is “Judgment Place.”

“the Pavement”). This spot was so important that John singled it out in John 19:13.

The important point I wish to make as a means of identifying the site of the *Praetorium* with what was to become the Dome of the Rock, is that the Christians from the fifth century onward believed the *footprints* of Jesus were to be seen on the “Rock” when he stood before Pilate. This belief is a cardinal factor in making a proper identification of the site.

A Final Interesting Comparison

In concluding these chapters concerning the Haram esh-Sharif, let me give some interesting comparisons that I hope all of us who study history can appreciate.

1. Let us say that you or I could be transported back to Jerusalem before its destruction, say in the year 65 C.E. when the apostle Paul and the Jewish historian Josephus were still alive. When we arrive in Jerusalem we ask to see an area surrounded by four walls with four large towers at each corner, that has a prominent “Rock” near its center and the area around the “Rock” was large enough to comfortably house a legion of Roman troops, and the region resembled a town because of its size. We could say that a Jewish priest by the name of Josephus wrote us about it. Where in Jerusalem do you think people at that time would direct us? It would certainly be to the *Praetorium* otherwise called Fort Antonia because that is precisely how Josephus described the Fortress.

2. Now, almost 2000 years later (in our present day) let us go to Jerusalem and ask for an area that has four large walls around it, that has a prominent “Rock” in almost the center of the area, that the region within the walls was large enough to hold a division size army unit of the United States Infantry and that occupied an area the size of a small modern town. Where in Jerusalem would we find such a prominent “Rock” being featured as Josephus said was noted in his day? We would no doubt be shown the Haram esh-Sharif with its Dome of the Rock near its center.

3. Now, let us go back to 550 C.E. at the time of the Piacenza Pilgrim and ask to see an area then called the *Praetorium* (that is,

the former military encampment where the Roman army had its headquarters) and where there was a large "Oblong Rock" being featured at a major Church called the Church of the Holy Wisdom. This area was directly east of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and supposed to be famous because Christians were identifying it with the place where Pilate had his residence at the time of the trial of Jesus, and it is reported that Jesus' *footprints* could be seen on that "Rock." Where in Jerusalem in the sixth century would the populace show us such a prominent "Rock"? We would no doubt be shown the Haram esh-Sharif with its four walls standing there in all their magnificence.

4. Now, let us go back to 333 C.E. at the time of the Bordeaux Pilgrim and ask to see an area called the *Praetorium* (that is, the former military encampment where the Roman army had its headquarters) and with large walls located in the bottom of the Tyropoeon Ravine and positioned directly east of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (then being built). We could mention that the Bordeaux Pilgrim did not tell us of any other structure but this *Praetorium* that dominated the scene east of the Holy Sepulchre. Where in Jerusalem during the middle of the fourth century would the populace show us that satisfied this description? We would no doubt be shown the Haram esh-Sharif with its western and southern walls solidly founded within the Tyropoeon Ravine, standing in all their splendor because those walls survived the Roman/Jewish War that ended in 70 C.E.

5. Indeed, let us now go back to 70 C.E. just after the war was over and stand with the Roman general Titus as he was looking for a place to house the Tenth Legion he was leaving to guard the area. As Titus looked over the ruins of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, he could see the lower courses of the walls of the Haram esh-Sharif still standing in all their stateliness. The whole place looked almost exactly like the permanent Camp of the Romans in Rome itself (about the same size and shape). Within the Haram were 37 cisterns for an abundant water supply. Would this not be the best place to house the Tenth Legion? Would not Titus have thought that the site in front of him was so perfect that it would have looked like heaven itself sent down the most ideal spot for a

military encampment in the whole region of Jerusalem? And most importantly, the walls were still intact. Would common sense suggest to anyone in the shoes of Titus any other place for a military fort in Jerusalem? Without doubt, the Haram was the ideal place for the Roman Camp.

6. Now, let us go forward to 135 C.E. and the time of Hadrian just after the Second Roman/Jewish War. This time it would be Hadrian the Roman emperor and general who was looking for a place to continue housing the Tenth Legion in the Jerusalem area (now that he was planning a new city with his name describing it). Hadrian could look down from the Mount of Olives and see the lower courses of the walls of the Haram esh-Sharif still standing in all their eminence. The whole place looked almost like the permanent Camp of the Romans that he was used to in Rome itself (about the same size and shape). Still, within the Haram were 37 cisterns to provide an abundant water supply for the Tenth Legion and the walls surrounding the site were so perfect for a Camp that it would still have looked like heaven itself sent down the most ideal spot for a military establishment in the whole region of Jerusalem. Would common sense suggest to anyone in the shoes of Hadrian any other place for a Roman military Camp in Jerusalem? Without doubt, the Haram was the only place for a Roman Camp.

7. Let us finally look at the panoramic vista of the Haram esh-Sharif from another perspective. All permanent Roman forts had prisons associated with them for wayward military personnel and (in foreign lands) even for civilian criminals who could claim Roman citizenship. Permanent Roman forts had four solid walls around them to protect the troops inside the fortress from being besieged by external armies, but those walls also proved to be excellent ones to house imperial prisons (criminals would find it difficult to ascend and descend the walls among a whole contingent of Roman troops on constant vigilance). So, the apostle Paul as a Roman citizen was taken into the "encampment" (Fort Antonia) in order to be guarded both on the behalf of Roman security and to defend him from Jewish people who wanted to kill him (Acts 22:24). Paul stayed in such confinement until a cohort of Roman troops escorted him to Caesarea where he remained in Roman custody for two years. There was no place in Jerusalem more suited

for a permanent Roman Fort with its special prisons than the Haram esh-Sharif. Any military commander looking for a suitable fortress and an associated Roman prison in Jerusalem would be instantly gravitated to the Haram. Indeed, when the Crusaders finally commissioned the Knights Templars in Jerusalem, the Templars made their encampment and headquarters at the Haram. After the Crusades, however, because the site came to be reckoned at that time (wrongly) as being the former place of the Temples, its holiness made it to be inconsistent as a proper military fort. From the time of the Crusades, the main military camp and fort in Jerusalem became the Tower or Citadel of David located in the western part of the city near the Jaffa Gate. But before the Crusades, every military commander looked on the Haram esh-Sharif as the ideal place for a permanent fortress and prison. One would be daft to state otherwise because that is precisely the reason the fortress was built by King Herod in the first place.

Indeed, the very reason why Titus and later Hadrian kept the four walls of the Haram esh-Sharif standing in all their excellence was to provide housing and protection for the Tenth Legion. And why not? That precise spot was Fort Antonia before the Roman/Jewish War of 66 to 70 C.E., and it remained as Fort Antonia until 289 C.E. when the Tenth Legion left Jerusalem and went to Eilat on the Red Sea. And 50 years later in the time of the Bordeaux Pilgrim it was still the *Praetorium* (the Camp of the Romans) that had its walls in the Tyropoeon Ravine standing in all their loftiness.

Let's face it. These are common sense comparisons that most ordinary rational people would no doubt make. I have provided them along with other historical facts (that I will later present) that will make it outrageous and ridiculous to suggest anything else as possible. And as a matter of fact, no one did make such absurd statements to counter the comparisons, until the religious authorities in the seventh century began to turn the whole area (through folklore accounts provided by visions, dreams and revelations) into the very site of the former Temples of God. What nonsense! The Haram is the site of Fort Antonia, NOT the Temple!

PART TWO



The Original Site of the Temples at Jerusalem

Chapter 8

MANY MODERN SITES FOR THE TEMPLES IN JERUSALEM

NO SERIOUS SCHOLAR in modern times or any religious authority for the past eight hundred years has questioned that the area within the Haram esh-Sharif containing the Dome of the Rock was where the three original Temples were built. Over the past eight centuries the authorities have been assuming that the Temples built by Solomon, Zerubbabel and Herod were positioned somewhere within that Muslim enclosure. Historical records and eyewitness accounts, however, show the scholars and clerics are in error. Their false assumptions have corrupted and contaminated the true history of ancient Jerusalem. The conclusions they have reached are clearly counter to the plain statements of ancient historians who provided accurate information about these matters. But modern scholars (with the aid, support and dogmatic assertions of Jewish Rabbis, Muslim Imams and Chris-

tian ministers/priests) have selected the wrong spot for the former Temples. I wish I could be more kind with the authorities, but sadly, their false identifications are universally believed. In a word, no one disputes them.

The *New International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* states:

“It is clear that the site of today’s ‘Dome of the Rock’ on Jerusalem’s eastern hill marks the location of Solomon’s temple (as well as that of the later structures of Zerubbabel and Herod); but it is difficult to be more precise.”¹⁴³

While religious and scholarly opinions have universally concluded that the region of the Haram esh-Sharif is where the biblical Temples were built, in modern times there have been at least *SEVEN* different areas within the Haram enclosure that have rivaled each other as the site for the Holy of Holies.¹⁴⁴ Those *seven*

¹⁴³ *New International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. 4, p.760.

¹⁴⁴ Dogmatism of scholars and religious leaders (of all three major faiths in Jerusalem) centers on the area of the Haram esh-Sharif as the undisputed site of the former Temples. But the history of dogmatism in regard to holy areas of Jerusalem has not fared well. What was certain and undoubted concerning the location of Zion was completely overturned. The location of Zion was not about the identification of a stone, a room or a building (which many knew to be tenuous and difficult), but concerned an entire third of the former City of Jerusalem itself. In fact, Zion was a whole mountain called “Mount Zion.”

For 1500 years Christian authorities believed (or 1200 years for Muslims and 800 years for Jews) that the site of “Mount Zion” was the southwest hill of Jerusalem. As late as 1856 Professor Robinson (one of the early historians of Jerusalem) acclaimed that 20 years of intense research regarding the geography of Jerusalem demonstrated that the position of Zion being on the southwest hill was “unassailed” in the opinion of the top scholars and religious authorities in the world (George Adam Smith, *Jerusalem*, vol. I., p.165).

But little over a generation later, the “unassailable” opinion regarding that southwest hill was cast into the graveyard of erroneous theories. Zion was moved back to its true spot over 2000 feet east of the summit of the southwest hill. I will show that the original “Mount Zion” was moved from the southeast hill to the southwest hill in the time of Simon the Hasmonean about 170 years before the ministry of Jesus. It was relocated for a deliberate reason. But scholars have rightly moved back “Mount Zion” to its original location on the southeast hill.

Soon the present belief that the former Temple site is at the Haram esh-Sharif (and not at “Mount Zion”) will be buried in the graveyard of antiquated theories

different areas within the Haram are not the only contenders for the site of the Temples. There have been *four* other areas of Jerusalem *outside* the perimeters of the Haram esh-Sharif (accepted by people from the 4th century to the 11th century of our era) that were also thought to be the site of the Temple. In all, this makes *eleven different* areas in very dissimilar sections of the Haram and in various locations in Jerusalem that have been claimed to be the true site.

At one time or another, all of these disparate and separate regions for the Temple site have been acknowledged as certain and thoroughly sacrosanct to numerous authorities. The truth is, however, utter confusion has reigned over the past 800 years regarding the actual site for the Temples of Solomon, Zerubbabel and Herod, and it is time that all of us in our modern period realize this. Let us look first at the *seven* modern conjectures for the site, then we will consider the *four* that earlier authorities accepted.

Seven Modern Temple Site Theories Inside the Haram

The *two* most popular beliefs for the location of the Temples center around the Dome of the Rock. Among the Jews there has been a dispute as to whether the Holy of Holies was located directly over the highest point of the rock under the Dome or whether that protruding natural rock is where the Altar of Burnt Offering was located.

There is a *third* opinion. Professor Kaufman suggests a site for the Temple about a hundred yards north of the Dome, while the Israeli architect Tuvia Sagiv gives a *fourth* site. He believes the Temple was located south of the Dome, about half way to the Al Aqsa mosque and directly east of the Jewish "Wailing Wall."¹⁴⁵ A *fifth* site is that of Nathan Kaplan who places the Temple in the

about sacred sites in Jerusalem. The Temple site will soon be moved back to its true spot on the southeastern hill that was once called "Mount Zion." In the Bible, the terms "Mount Zion" and the "Temple Mount" were identical.

¹⁴⁵ What is excellent about the suggestion of Tuvia Sagiv is his correct identification that the "Rock" under the Dome of the Rock is the "Rock" mentioned by Josephus as a foundation for Fort Antonia. Yet Sagiv still places the former Temples about 300 feet south within the Haram (see his Web Page on the Internet for details: www.templemount.org).

eastern part of the Al Aqsa Mosque.¹⁴⁶

That does not end the guessing. In the early part of the last century a *sixth* site was suggested. Several scholars thought the extreme southwestern portion of the Haram was the actual place for the Temple.¹⁴⁷ There is also a *seventh* site. In the period of the Crusades it was believed that Solomon's Temple was located in the extreme south of the Haram esh-Sharif where the Al Aqsa Mosque now stands.¹⁴⁸ So, we have *SEVEN* different places within the Haram area alone that authorities over the past 800 years have accepted as possibly the true location.

All of this shows confusion among the scholars and religious leaders. The space of dispute within the Haram amounts to well over a quarter of a square mile in area. For such an important building as the Temple, held in the highest religious esteem by people of all ages, why is there such widespread diversity in selecting its former site? And the Temple was a large building. Josephus the Jewish historian/priest who was an eyewitness said its outer walls were a precise square of 600 feet on each side (an entire city block in most American cities). Surely one would think, such a large structure (or the remains of it) could be identified by modern scholars to a precise area within which we can place confidence. This is indeed the case if one pays close attention to Josephus. But all modern scholars and religious leaders are adept at ridiculing early eyewitness accounts of Josephus and others if they contradict present academic or religious opinion about sites and dimensions.

Yes, several eyewitness accounts do exist, but scholars and religious leaders have consistently repudiated them in favor of their own guesses. They maintain that suggesting any other area of Jerusalem is utterly preposterous and unworthy of serious consideration. But eyewitness reports differ about the size and location of

¹⁴⁶ See Internet: www.templemount.org/kaplan/index.html

¹⁴⁷ Professor George Adam Smith mentions "the theory of Fergusson, Thrupp, Lewin and others, advocated by W.R. Smith, article 'Temple,' *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, that Solomon's Temple, and, according to the last named, Herod's also, lay in the southwest angle of the Haram area, which projects on substructions over the Tyropoeon" (*Jerusalem*, vol.I., p.231, n.1).

¹⁴⁸ Benjamin Mazar, *Mountain of the Lord*, p.275.

the Temples from modern scholarly opinion. That presents no problem to our contemporary academics. They simply castigate the early historians (among them the accounts of Josephus) for giving “false accounts.”

Until recently the Jewish historian Josephus was often held in contempt by scholars for his so-called “wild exaggerations” and “erratic manipulation” of numbers, weights and distances in his description of the Temple and other buildings. His narratives giving dimensions of buildings and other parameters of sites seem incompatible with structures that scholars and religious leaders want to accept today. They do not realize that Josephus was actually discussing structures and building sites different than what the scholars imagine today. I will show that Josephus was giving reliable data, and when his accounts are analyzed, people will finally discover he was telling the truth all along.

Thankfully, the situation is not entirely hopeless. Some scholars have had second thoughts about Josephus and his geographical details. Among them, Professor Benjamin Mazar who expressed to me personally that his own archaeological investigations proved that Josephus more often than not was correct in his eyewitness accounts.¹⁴⁹ Professor Mazar felt Josephus should be respectfully reviewed once again and that scholars could benefit from his observations (if they would drop their modern prejudice that his accounts are imaginative and exaggerated).

In this book I accept the reliability of Josephus in his description of the Temple of Herod. It is amazing how clear Josephus makes the truth if we let him portray the buildings he saw without trying to force him to describe different buildings *of our own imaginations*. As an example, our modern academics assume Josephus is illustrating the Haram esh-Sharif when he records architec-

¹⁴⁹ Before his death three years ago Professor Mazar was the Dean of Israeli archaeologists and past Rector and President of Hebrew University, as well as a professional historian. I worked personally with Professor Mazar at his major excavation at the western and southern wall of the Haram esh-Sharif in Jerusalem from 1969 to 1974. Under Professor Mazar I directed the activities of 450 college students over that period of five years at that “dig.”

tural details of the Temple, its walls and buildings. Whereas the Haram was NOT even a part of the Temple, nor even a Jewish building in the time of Jesus. It is no wonder that Josephus' eye-witness accounts of the Temple do not fit what we see in the remains of the Haram.

It is time that we let the historical records speak for themselves without preconceived ideas. When we do, we realize that the early eyewitnesses were actually giving us accurate details about the buildings they saw and described. But why is the location of the Temple not easily found today? The problem in locating the exact site is because (as Josephus and other eyewitnesses have testified) that Sanctuary was totally destroyed beyond all physical recognition during and after the Roman/Jewish War of 66–70 C.E. Nothing was left of the interior or exterior parts of the Temple. No stone of its buildings or outer walls was allowed to remain in place. Not a trace of the structure survived. Nothing is left of the Temple for us to view today.

Four Different Temple Sites Outside the Haram

Several centuries after the destruction of the Sanctuary, when people began to look for the former site of the Temple, they had no physical remains of the Temple to aid them in their search. People in the fourth century of the Christian era began to pick various places in Jerusalem for its former site, and within 300 years *four* different spots had been selected. Remarkably, NOT ONE of those *four* places was located within the Haram esh-Sharif. It was not until 638 C.E. that an area within the Haram was finally looked on as a candidate for the location of the Temple. Of these *four* early sites, two of them are Christian, one Muslim and one Jewish).

Interestingly, the people who lived 300 years after the fall of Jerusalem did not arrive at the same conclusions that modern scholars have accepted. Modern historians normally promote the reliability of witnesses if they lived close to the events, and these *four* areas outside the Haram region had the advantage of being selected by authorities who lived much nearer in time to the events they describe. This principle of relying on earlier evidence should allow us to view these early conclusions as having more credibility. This

alone should cause these *four* different areas for the site of the Temple as being valid candidates for consideration.

Where were those *four* areas selected by early authorities? They were located as far as half a mile from each other. These *four* competing spots can be recognized and reviewed by summarizing a fourteenth century Muslim historical work entitled *Muthir al-Ghiram* (a book which synthesized all the early Muslim historical works concerning the first days of Islam).¹⁵⁰ Coupled with this is a tenth century Christian Arabic history that tells of the first days of Islam in Jerusalem. It is the history of *Said b. al-Bitrik*, also called Eutychius, Archbishop of Alexandria.

This evidence represents a preliminary geographical survey of the historical data regarding the real site of the former Temples from the documentary records that came down to us from the fourth to the fourteenth centuries of our era. This first chapter is intended to set the stage for the full historical evidence from the historical documents presented later.

Let us look at the Muslim account of the fourteenth century titled *Muthir al-Ghiram*. It summarizes early events at the beginnings of Islam by stating that Omar, the Second Caliph [the second successor to Muhammad], came to Jerusalem in 638 C.E. seeking to pray at the place where King David erected the altar that became the site of the Temple. This historical record states that Omar had been given a divine revelation from God (so this account relates) wherein the prophet Muhammad showed him the area from whence Muhammad ascended from the "Farthest Mosque" (which later Muslims believed was located in Jerusalem) and into heaven. The Christian authority in charge of Jerusalem at this period was Sophronius, the patriarch of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, who was summoned to a conference by Omar. Christian sources state that Omar appeared in a dirty camelhair garment. Sophronius offered Omar a regal garment to wear befitting the Commander of

¹⁵⁰ To read what is known as the classical Islamic account of the Muslims arrival in the City of Jerusalem, one can view the translation of *Muthir al-Ghiram* as recorded in Peters, *Jerusalem*, pp.187-9, and Eutychius in the same book, pp.189-90.

the Faithful, but Omar refused (though he did allow his camelhair garment to be washed for the interview).

The Muslim chief was religiously inquisitive. The first thing Omar did was ask Sophronius to reveal the exact place where David prayed (the former Temple site), because Omar and his Muslim colleagues were aware that different sites were being bantered about as possibilities. These Muslims had never been to Jerusalem before and they wanted to obtain expert advice on the whereabouts of the real site. True, Muhammad supposedly showed Omar in his visionary encounter certain geographical aspects associated with the place of David's prayer (which Muslims believed reliable), but no specific spot in Jerusalem was revealed. Thus, Omar felt it proper to inquire about the correct location. Sophronius responded quickly to the query of Omar, and told him without hesitation that the site of the Temple was where the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was located. At the time, Sophronius and Omar were standing just outside the eastern entrance to the Holy Sepulchre. Sophronius pointed to that Christian basilica and stated with dogmatism that *the Church* was the place where David prayed — in other words, *where* the Temple of Herod formerly stood.

This identification by Sophronius may have appeared to Omar a strange and even an absurd suggestion for the patriarch to make (and it was, because it was common knowledge that Jesus had been crucified and buried *outside* the gates of Jerusalem and even *outside* the camp of Israel). In spite of these clear facts, it was a cardinal Christian teaching in the seventh century that the place where Jesus drove out the moneychangers from the Temple was located in the court just east of the Tomb and before the Martyrium of that Church. Some Christians were insisting that *this* eastern section of the Holy Sepulchre Church was a literal part of Herod's Temple. Consequently it would have been near the spot where David once prayed.¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ Sophronius was not trying to fool Omar. Christians in the previous three hundred years had erroneously transferred (by confiscation) many of the geographical factors of the Jewish Temple directly into the region of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It is difficult for us moderns to believe that such geographi-

Several factors led to this erroneous conclusion. For example, when the Emperor Constantine became sole ruler of the Roman Empire at the defeat of Licinius in 324 C.E., he issued a decree to God's "eastern nations" [all eastern nations in the Empire *including the Jews*] which contained his prayer to God for "*the restoration of thy most holy dwelling-place*" [House of God or the Temple]."¹⁵² And, since the Edict of Milan in 313 C.E. made between Constantine and Licinius was an attempt to restore the former religious properties to their earlier owners, the Jews interpreted the Edict as allowing them to rebuild the Temple at the proper site. They were constructing their new Temple for 12 years when Constantine forbade them from continuing in 325 C.E.¹⁵³ This Temple, other buildings and seven synagogues were built by the Jews during those previous 12 years. (I will give the evidence later.) Constantine, however, had in mind to build his own *new* Temple (not the former "Jewish" Temple).

When the building of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre commenced, its design was deliberately constructed to resemble another Temple. It was even oriented about 10 degrees north of east to mimic a *new* Jewish Temple being built in the time of Constantine that followed the same orientation of the southern wall of the Haram esh-Sharif which was also 10 degrees north of east. Adopting the 10 degrees aspect made the Church unique of all Christian buildings, but it was like the design of the Temple the Jews had recently built from 313 C.E. to 324 C.E.

But it does not stop there. Virtually all early Jewish traditions

cal nonsense about the Temple's location and artifacts could have been perpetuated among so-called intelligent people from the fifth to the seventh centuries who clearly should have known better. However, this farcical practice of the early Christians is a fact fully documented and I do not apologize for using appropriate adjectives to condemn the practice. Christians at the time believed they were building a new type of Temple to God to take the place of the old Jewish Sanctuary. In full defiance of the historical facts, they transferred many former events, artifacts and rituals belonging to the Jewish Temple to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. They did it without blushing and with an extent of arrogance that belied the very fabric of historical truth.

¹⁵² Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, II.55.

¹⁵³ See John Chrysostom, *Against Judaism*, V.10; VI.2.

regarding matters associated with the Temple Mount (whether true, mythological, emotional or symbolic) were appropriated by the Christians in the time of Constantine and associated with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Those early Byzantine Christians even adopted some of the rituals of the former Temple into their liturgies. They also brought over most of the Jewish historical and religious traditions (even myths) concerning the *site* of the Temple and made them to be a part of the Church.

The Jewish Temple and its rites, so to speak, were transferred to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. So, the Church became the new center of the world; it became the place of Adam's creation; that Adam's tomb and skull were there; that the Church was where Melchisedec offered sacrifice; that Abraham's altar intended for Isaac was there; that Jacob had his dream at the Church; that Zacharias' blood shed between the altars in the Temple was reckoned to be within the Church's precincts; the horn that anointed David and Solomon and the place where Solomon sealed certain demons with Solomon's ring of authority were also transferred to the Church.¹⁵⁴

All of the above items were appropriated by Christians ("stolen" would be a better word) from the former Temple site and re-assigned directly into the "New Jerusalem" in the western part of Jerusalem. It became the new "Temple of God" erected by Constantine. So, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre became a replacement for the Temple, not only in a spiritual or symbolic sense, but by the sixth century, it *was* the Temple in the crudest and most literal way. In a word, the Christians had "robbed" the Jews of their Temple.

We thus discover that Sophronius simply told Omar what Christians at the time believed. Of course, Sophronius was wrong. This early Christian opinion must be reckoned as the official *first spot* for the site of the Temple (among the *four* competitive suggestions that I am giving in this chapter).

¹⁵⁴ For other examples and excellent comments on some of these matters, see John Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades*, in his *Gazetteer*, p.177 col.a and also see his *Egeria's Travels*, pp.298-310.

The Christian belief is completely preposterous and even idiotic (and as a Christian I am ashamed to admit that this belief was foolishly accepted by early Christians, many of whom I admire for other reasons). Yet I do not apologize for the provocative words I use to condemn the practice and the wrong identifications. Such teaching was utterly irrational, and let's be honest, it represented a deliberate forgery; but this official farce sustained by church authorities at the time was believed with a passion by many Christians.¹⁵⁵

So, we find Sophronius telling Omar that the Holy Sepulchre Church was the true site of the former Temple where David prayed. This basilica was outside the region of the Haram esh-Sharif where the Dome of the Rock is standing.

With the suggestion of Sophronius freshly in the Caliph's mind, it did not take Omar long to decide on the matter. Omar viewed the area and then refused to pray in the Church. He said that the site

¹⁵⁵ This wrong identification was not only in regard to the site of the Temple. It was standard procedure for Christian authorities from the time of Constantine to rely on visions, trances and dreams of people to select the places or artifacts associated with people who lived in the time of the Old and New Testaments. As Wilkinson states, "The usual authentication of a site was thus either a tradition or by direct revelation. Thus a monk is told by God where to dig, and finds the coffin of Job, or a shepherd sees a vision which shows him where Moses is buried" (*Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades*, p.38).

Wilkinson goes on to show that when Christians wanted to identify buildings, houses or rooms, they were able to find as many as they wished for pilgrimage purposes, but Wilkinson suspects that almost three quarters were arbitrarily selected (p.38). Their wild and often absurd guesses should be considered comedy (as any serious historian and theologian realizes), but to Christians living from the time of Constantine and through the Crusades, these wrong sites were often seriously accepted as proper and right. The early Christian historian Sozomen stated in discovering the supposed tomb of Jesus:

"Some say that the facts were first disclosed by a Hebrew who dwelt in the East, and who derived his information from some documents which had come to him by parental inheritance; but it seems more accordant with truth to suppose that God revealed the fact by means of signs and dreams; FOR I DO NOT THINK that human information is required when God thinks it best to make manifest the same" (Sozomen, *History* II.1).

Major mistakes were made by early Christians when they relied on such irresponsible means to locate the sites or artifacts connected with people in the Holy Scriptures.

did not fit the parameters of the visionary experience that God had earlier given him (with Muslim accounts stating that Muhammad also was present in the vision to Omar to vouch for the location). With this judgment in mind, Omar stepped aside a short distance, knelt down and prayed to God for the first time in Jerusalem.

Since Omar was viewed by early Islamic adherents as having prophetic and inspirational powers directly from God, that *first spot* where Omar initially prayed was selected (some decades later) as a holy site. A mosque was built over the area and they called it the Mosque of Omar (not to be confused with the present Dome of the Rock). Because all the actions of Omar were accounted “holy” by early Muslims, some Muslims later began to believe *this* might have been the true site of David’s prayers. After all, how could the Caliph (the Emir who was the successor of Muhammad) be wrong in the *first* place he chose to pray? The Mosque erected on that site was later destroyed in the time of the Crusades and no one accorded the area as holy after that period.

Omar was not satisfied. The various Muslim accounts then report that Omar asked Sophronius a second time to quit his craftiness (and his outright lying in trying to deceive the Commander of the Faithful). Sophronius was ordered to show Omar the real site of the former Temple. To comply, Sophronius made a suggestion that must at first have met with Omar’s approval. The Archbishop said: “Let’s go to Mount Zion.” This made sense to Omar because most people were aware that “Mount Zion” and “the Temple Mount” were almost synonymous in meaning within the Holy Scriptures. An abundance of verses in the Old Testament show the Temple was indeed located at a spot known as “Mount Zion” (or Sion, in Christian spelling). The terms were reckoned to be speaking of identical sites.

So, Sophronius took Omar about a third of a mile south of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to the area known at the time as “Mount Zion.” If this *southern* region represented the actual “Mount Zion” of the Bible, then it made biblical sense that it could well contain the former spot of the Temple.¹⁵⁶ This was the *second*

¹⁵⁶ Indeed, as late as the 1875 C.E. it was commonly accepted by all scholars

place contending as the Temple site. But Omar, after surveying the area, thought the locale did not fit the architectural or topographical ambience shown in his visionary experience with Muhammad. Omar rejected it too.

Omar once again asked Sophronius for the *third* time to quit his chicanery and identify the true spot of the former Temple. But, Omar added a new dimension to his request. He told Sophronius that he not only wanted to pray at the site where David prayed, but since Jerusalem was the first *qibla* in the initial years of Islam [the *qibla* was the site to which Muhammad and all Muslims should face when they prayed five times a day], Omar said he wanted to build a mosque or a shrine in the Holy City for Muslims to honor after Mecca and Medina.¹⁵⁷ In Sophronius' view this brought a new problem into the matter. Such a mosque or shrine could cause Jerusalem to become an important Muslim city as well as a city that Christians honored and revered. This could bring contention and competition between Muslims and Christians.

With this knowledge, Sophronius became thankful that Omar had not prayed in the Holy Sepulchre Church because (as Omar stated would happen) Muslims would have turned the Church into *their* Mosque and that would have been the end of Christendom's holiest spot on earth. But Omar told Sophronius he wanted to build a new place to revere David and Solomon, and to honor the first *qibla* of Islam. This information prompted Sophronius to suggest a different site. There was one other spot then recognized as being the site of the former Temples — the place the Jews accepted.

of all religious persuasions that the southwest hill was certainly (and without the slightest doubt) the true "Mount Zion" of the Bible. It was only with the vigorous research of Professor Birch in England (along with the discovery of Hezekiah's tunnel in 1880 C.E.) that within a score of years this "certain and sacrosanct" belief was proved wrong and scholars replaced "Mount Zion" rightfully to the southeast ridge.

¹⁵⁷ The first direction for prayer by Muhammad and his followers was toward Jerusalem. But about 18 or 19 months after his flight to Medina from Mecca (when the Muslim calendar began in 622 C.E.), he had a falling out with the Jews in Medina and he abruptly changed his direction of prayer [the *qibla*] to the Ka'aba stone in Mecca. In the time of Omar, all Muslims were praying five times a day toward Mecca.

Sophronius was well aware of the spot the Jews had claimed for their Temple site, but since the time of Hadrian the area had been turned into the city dump (and was reconfirmed as a dump in the time of Constantine). Only Jews had been interested in the location. The historical records showed that no major buildings of any kind had been built in the area either by the Romans before the time of Constantine, or later by the Byzantines. The area for all practical purposes was vacant and was a place where people of Jerusalem cast their refuse. It so happened that the Jews were the only ones interested in the site. Indeed, the Jews in the fourth century *twice* attempted to rebuilt a Temple in the area, once in the time of Constantine and the other under Julian the Apostate.¹⁵⁸

Christians had not been interested in constructing buildings in this region of Jerusalem. Christians would not build in the area in order to serve as a reminder of Jesus' prophecy that no stone would be left on another in that locale. And what may be surprising to modern scholars, this spot was NOT at or near the Dome of the Rock. It was NOT even located within the confines of the Haram esh-Sharif. This site was over and around the Gihon Spring in the Lower City of Jerusalem. Sophronius knew *this* was the spot the Jews held in honor and reverence.

Sophronius then made a deal with Omar, the Commander of the Faithful. He agreed to take Omar to the exact spot *that the Jews accepted as the true site of the Temple*, a place that Omar could build his new mosque or shrine. Sophronius asked only two requirements in his contract with Omar. One, that Omar would build *only ONE building* in Jerusalem, and that he would *forbid any Jews from living in Jerusalem*. Omar agreed with these terms and signed a document guaranteeing the two stipulations to Sophronius

¹⁵⁸ The first building of this new Temple took place from the issuance of the Edict of Milan in 313 C.E. until Constantine stopped construction in 325 C.E. The second attempt to rebuild was commenced in 361 C.E. when Julian the Apostate gave permission to the Jews to erect their Temple. Julian's death in 363 C.E. caused this second rebuilding to cease. These two attempts resulted in several ruins left in the area of the Temple Mount. Notable was a ruined part of a western wall from the Holy of Holies (and ruined relics of other buildings) that remained for several centuries. Of course, *nothing* was left of Herod's Temple.

and to the Christian community in Jerusalem.

When Omar signed the agreement, Sophronius then took Omar and his associates to *the place where the Jews believed the Temple site was*.¹⁵⁹ This was at the city dump located in the lower city of Jerusalem on the southeast hill just at the edge of the Kedron Valley. (Sometimes in this early period the southern end of the Kedron was identified with the Valley of Hinnom.) The spot was just above and near the Gihon Spring.

The “Stone and the “Rock”

There is an account that explains these events given by the first Christian Arab historian, *Said b. al-Bitrik*, whose Greek name was Eutychius. This Eutychius was a high Christian dignitary, the Archbishop of Alexandria. We need to read the statements of this early historian carefully because he presents several factors that forbid the Dome of the Rock as being the location shown to Omar (although later people erroneously thought Eutychius clumsily referred to the “Haram rock”). Yes, the account mentions a “rock” that was discovered at this final site that Sophronius pointed out to Omar as the place where David prayed. But *this* “rock” was a portable stone. It was NOT a permanent outcropping of rock like under the Dome of the Rock. A reading of the account confirms this.

The “rock” in Eutychius’ account was actually a “stone” that *could be carried by humans*. Omar even took that particular “rock” and *carried it* into the region of the Haram esh-Sharif. He then made this portable “rock” part of his *qibla* area in what was to become known as the Al Aqsa Mosque. Note the conversation between Sophronius and Omar. The account recorded by Eutychius is given as translated by F.E. Peters in his excellent book on Jerusalem.¹⁶⁰

“Then Omar said to him [Sophronius]: ‘You owe me a rightful debt. Give me a place in which I might build a sanctuary [*masjid*].’ The

¹⁵⁹ Later Jewish records state that an elderly Jewish man helped Omar discover a stone underneath the refuse that represented where the Holy of Holies once stood. See Peters, *Jerusalem*, p.191.

¹⁶⁰ Peters, *Jerusalem*, pp.189–190, citing from D. Baldi, *Enchiridion Locorum Sanctorum*, pp.447–8.

patriarch said to him: 'I will give to the Commander of the Faithful a place to build a sanctuary where the kings of Rum were unable to build. It is the rock where God spoke to Jacob¹⁶¹ and which Jacob called the Gate of Heaven and the Israelites the Holy of Holies. It is in the center of the world and was a Temple for the Israelites, who held it in great veneration and wherever they were they turned their faces toward it during prayer.¹⁶² But on this condition, that

¹⁶¹ Note that Sophronius said the "rock" was the one used by Jacob. The stone of Jacob was one he carried to a convenient spot and used for a pillow (Genesis 28:11). Jacob then had his dream (verse 12). The next morning "he took the stone that he had put for his pillow and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it" (Genesis 28:18). This stone of Jacob was suitable as a standing pillar, and was portable. In no way was this stone on which Jacob placed his head an "immovable rock" like the one under the Dome of the Rock. Jacob's "stone" could be carried.

¹⁶² Jewish belief was that Solomon took a stone for a "foundation stone" (called the 'shethiyah') to place as a footstep in the Holy of Holies of the Temple as a foundation for the Ark of the Covenant. It was only a few feet square. Since the Holy of Holies was 20 cubits (30 feet) in length and breadth, the stone had to be small enough to fit inside the inner sanctum. Tradition had it that Jacob's pillar stone was shaped in the time of David to be that "foundation stone." One can search the Bible throughout and never find that the Temples were built over a natural rock outcropping like the "Rock" under the Dome of the Rock.

The "foundation stone" called the *Even Shethiyah*, that the Jewish authorities said Solomon placed in the Holy of Holies, was a man-made slab of stone elevated three fingers above the flat floor of the Holy of Holies. Note Sanhedrin 26b: "For we learnt: A stone lay there [beneath the Ark] ever since the time of the Early Prophets [Samuel and David] and it was called 'shethiyah'." This reference shows the stone was portable. See also the Mishna portion of Yoma 53b:

"After the Ark had been taken away, there was a stone from the days of the earlier prophets [Samuel and David], called the *Shethiyah*, three fingers above the ground, on which he would place [the pan of burning coals]. He would take the blood from him who was stirring it, and enter [again] into the place [the Holy of Holies]."

In no way, can the *Even Shethiyah* of the early Jewish records be that natural "Rock" underneath the Dome of the Rock. In clear language, the *Even Shethiyah* "foundation stone" in Solomon's Temple was manufactured as a slab of portable pavement in David's time. It was carried back into a newly refurbished Sanctuary by the righteous King Hezekiah.

"But as for its interpretation as referring to Hezekiah and his party: where do we find the righteous designated as 'foundations'? — In the verse, For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's and He hath set [*wa-yasheth*] the world upon them." (Sanhedrin 26b).

you promise in a written document that no other sanctuary will be built inside of Jerusalem.

Therefore, Omar ibn al-Khattab wrote him the document on this matter and handed it over to him. [Sophronius then remarked that this area was in ruins when] [t]hey were Romans when they embraced the Christian religion, and [when] Helena, the mother of Constantine, built the churches of Jerusalem. The place of the rock and the area around it were deserted ruins and they [the Romans] poured dirt over the rock so that great was the filth above it. The Byzantines [*Rûm*], however, neglected it and did not hold it in veneration, nor did they build a church over it because Christ our Lord said in his Holy Gospel ‘Not a stone will be left upon a stone which will not be ruined and devastated.’ For this reason the Christians left it as a ruin and did not build a church over it.¹⁶³ So

Note that this portable slab was likened to a pillar-like foundation stone.

¹⁶³ This “stone” shown at first to Omar was not the “Rock” underneath the Dome of the Rock. This is because Omar obtained this “stone” mentioned by Eutychius from a site in Jerusalem where no Christian church had ever been built. Sophronius was insistent that no early Roman building nor any Byzantine structure or church had ever been constructed in the area where Omar found this sacred “stone.”

However, records indicate that Helena ordered a minor church to be built over that “Rock” where the Dome of the Rock now stands. Construction began 30 years after her death and it was called the “Saint Cyrus and Saint John Church.” This church was later enlarged (and called the “Church of the Holy Wisdom”). The “Holy Wisdom Church” was built to enshrine the footprints of Jesus believed to be embedded in that “oblong rock” and supposedly inlaid there when Jesus was condemned before Pilate. There can be no doubt that that “Rock” at first represented a Christian holy place, not a Jewish one (nor was it a Muslim one until after the Dome of the Rock was built). This “Church of the Holy Wisdom” with its “oblong rock” was well known to Sophronius and he even wrote a poem in praise of it. That “Holy Wisdom Church” was not in existence when Omar arrived in Jerusalem. The Persians and Jews destroyed it in 614 C.E. but still well remembered by Christians.

I will show that Jesus’ footprints were reckoned to be in that “Rock” underneath the Dome of the Rock, and those footprints were accepted as authentic by Christians and Muslims until the time of the Crusades. Saladin’s court recorder said the “Rock” underneath the Dome of the Rock contained Jesus’ footprints (*Brill’s First Encyclopaedia of Islam*, article “Saladin”). For that reason two churches had been built over that “Rock” prior to the time of Omar’s arrival in Jerusalem.

Because the Dome of the Rock was a Christian holy area, no Christian would have thrown garbage on that holy site. But Omar was sifting through refuse at the dump. He was shown the city dump then located over the Gihon Spring. No

Sophronius took Omar ibn al-Khattab by the hand and stood him over the filth. Omar, taking hold of his cloak filled it with dirt and threw it into the Valley of Gehenna. When the Muslims saw Omar ibn al-Khattab carrying dirt with his own hands, they all immediately began carrying dirt in their cloaks and shields and what have you until the whole place was cleansed and the rock was revealed. Then they all said: 'Let us build a sanctuary and let us place the stone at its heart.'¹⁶⁴ 'No,' Omar responded. 'We will build a sanctuary and place the stone at the end of the sanctuary.'¹⁶⁵ Therefore Omar built a sanctuary¹⁶⁶ and put the stone at the end of it."¹⁶⁷

Roman or Byzantine church was in ruins there. There were, however, Jewish Temple ruins and I will show this as we continue.

¹⁶⁴ Note carefully that even the Muslims accompanying Omar and Sophronius could see that the holy "stone" selected by Omar could be carried and placed in a new Sanctuary. It appears as though Omar saw a larger outcropping of bedrock which he and Sophronius considered to be the site of the Holy of Holies and that Omar may have "cut off" a piece of that stone in order to place it in a different area where he wanted to build his "temple." It would there become a new "Temple of Solomon." This piece of stone could not be reckoned to be the portable *Shethiyah* ["foundation stone"] of the original Temple because it was already a slab of pavement that could fit inside the Holy of Holies. But, Omar's stone could be considered a type of that earlier stone (or a replica of it).

¹⁶⁵ Note again that the "stone" Omar selected was capable of being carried by humans. He said that he wanted it placed "at the end of the sanctuary." The emphasis is on a "stone" that was portable.

¹⁶⁶ Christians understood Omar to mean a "temple." Theophanes, writing in 814 C.E., said that Omar began to build his sanctuary (which Theophanes called a "temple" some 5 years after his first arrival in Jerusalem). "In this year [643 C.E.] Omar began to build a temple in Jerusalem" (translation by Turtledove, under year 6135, p.42). This was a new Temple that later people began to call "Solomon's Temple." The "stone" sanctified it through the ritual called by the Muslims *baraka* (an Arabic word) denoting the transference of spiritual power or influence from a person or an object to another through touching or other contact. See Francesco Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, p.168.

¹⁶⁷ Words in brackets are added. Some are Peters', some are mine. Professor Peters and most academic scholars prefer the more accurate spelling "Umar," not "Omar."

Again, to emphasize the "stone's" portability, Omar "put the stone at the end of it [at the end of the sanctuary]." It was like a pillar (or a slab) that would have been suitable as a pillow for Jacob that David had Solomon place inside the Holy of Holies as a foundation stone for the Ark of the Covenant. It was a shaped-by-man portable stone.

This portable stone was set up at the southern end of the Haram at what was later to become the Al Aqsa Mosque. This "stone" was NOT the "Rock" under-

Sophronius pointed out that this area had been the city dump from Roman times. The people of Jerusalem were aware that Hadrian in 135 C.E. in his disgust with the Jews and *their* Temple turned the site into the city dump. The region was never extensively built upon by the Romans or Christians.¹⁶⁸ There is even teaching in the Muslim records that Helena ordered this former site of the Temple be turned into (actually, returned to) the dump of the city, and that it was well known among people in Jerusalem.¹⁶⁹ Helena ordered this because in the early second century Hadrian had commanded it to be in that condition when the Jews wanted to rebuild the Temple.

Sophronius was well aware that this area *was where the Jews* attempted to rebuild the Temples in Constantine's and Julian's time and there were still some parts of walls standing of those former attempts. It was customary even in Sophronius' time for

neath what later became the Dome of the Rock. That "Rock" was not portable, but was (and is) a natural outcropping of rock. However, as the centuries passed, it became common for later historians — Muslim, Christian and Jewish — to confuse the issue and make the "stone" of the original story become the "Rock" under the Dome. One must be careful with the later records in this regard.

¹⁶⁸ In a Christian account of the early 6th century called Breviarium (a short account) of Jerusalem we are told that south of the Church of the Holy Wisdom "you come to the Temple built by Solomon, but there is nothing left there apart from a single cave." See Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades*, p.61. Back in 333 C.E., the Bordeaux Pilgrim spoke of a "pierced stone" (which could mean a cave) at the Temple site. This cave became a prominent fixture to Jews who came to the Temple site after the time of Omar in 638 C.E. and to the time of the Crusades. We now have Jewish documents from the Geniza in Egypt that such a cave was used as a synagogue in southeast Jerusalem (as I will soon show) where Jews felt David had built his altar.

¹⁶⁹ Moshe Gil in his monumental work *A History of Palestine 634–1099* states: "According to Muslim tradition (and there is no reason to doubt it), the Byzantines turned the Temple Mount into Jerusalem's refuse dump from the time of Helena, the mother of Constantine" (p.65). It must also be recognized that later Muslims and Christians (as well as Jews) after the time of the Crusades who read the early records showing this fouling of the Temple Mount by Helena and other Byzantines, automatically assumed that the site she befouled was that of the Dome of the Rock. But Christians would in no way have desecrated such a Christian holy place where Jesus' footprints were thought to be and where two Christian churches had graced the spot before the Muslim period. Indeed, Jesus' footprints sanctified that spot.

Christian women to bring rubbish to the site and throw the refuse (especially their menstrual discards) onto this site over the Gihon Spring. And true enough, all that Omar saw in the area was a refuse dump and a few remnants of buildings and walls all in ruin. That is when Omar became saddened by what he saw and, at his own initiative, began to take some of the refuse in his cloak, carried it to the Valley of Hinnom and threw it into the area prophesied in Christian as well as Muslim theology as the place for the destruction of wicked things.

As early as the fourth century the Kedron Valley was called by Christians by the name Gehenna, primarily in the southern part adjacent to the dump of Jerusalem.¹⁷⁰ It is easy to imagine that there were then fires and smoke in the lower (southern) part of the Kedron where refuse was being thrown and burned. It was easy for Omar to walk east a few feet with refuse in his cloak in his attempt to clear the site of uncleanness. His associates witnessed the Commander of the Faithful, so they all pitched in and cleaned the spot as best they could. Later we find that Omar allowed Jews to return to Jerusalem and they were also ordered to keep this *south-eastern* spot clean.

The “Stone” Was Transferred to the Haram esh-Sharif

With the discovery of the “stone” from what Omar thought was the site of Solomon’s Temple, he looked around that part of Jeru-

¹⁷⁰ In the *Muthir al-Ghiram*, written in the 14th century (by that time much folklore had entered the story, and some sites and objects became mixed up), we read that one of Omar’s Jewish generals offered his advice on the place was where David made his prayers.

“Ka’ab answered [Omar]: ‘Measure from the well [water source] which is in the Valley of Gehenna [the Kedron Valley] so and so many ells [usually rendered “cubits”]; there dig and you will discover it,’ adding, ‘at this present day it is a dung-heap.’ So they dug there and the rock was laid bare” (translation in Peters, *Jerusalem*, p.189).

Notice that the stone Omar saw, and placed near the qibla in what was to become the Al Aqsa Mosque, was found by measuring from the water source in the Kedron Valley. It was in a straight line so many cubits from the Gihon Spring, the only water source in the Valley. This strongly indicates that the actual place of David’s prayer (that is, the Temple) was reckoned to be near the Gihon Spring. And so it was.

salem for the place to build his shrine or mosque as he had been told to do in his vision. Omar then looked north at the *southern* wall of the Haram esh-Sharif where he saw a gate allowing entrance into the enclosure. This *southern* gate was particularly important to Omar because of a prime teaching of Islam that was beginning to circulate at this period.

It concerned an account of Muhammad's vision (or dream) of a Night Journey on his fabled horse named *Buraq*. The account (known in Muslim circles as the *isra*) featured the Prophet being taken to what was called "the Farthest Mosque" (Al Aqsa) and from there into heaven where he saw many heavenly luminaries (and former righteous people who had lived on earth). A cardinal factor of the story was a *southern* gate through which Muhammad was supposed to have entered an enclosure from whence he went to heaven. Omar thought that this *southern* gate of the Haram might be the one associated with the Night Journey of the Prophet.

Omar and Sophronius took the "stone" from the Jewish Temple site *south* of the Haram and with the other Muslims went through the southern gate into the Haram. Omar looked at the geographical factors of the spot and he came to the dogmatic conclusion that *this* was the region shown in his vision associated with Muhammad's Night Journey. It was the spot he wanted to build his Mosque.

Omar then named the *southern* gate of the Haram the *Bab al-Nabi* (the Gate of the Prophet) in dedication to the holy event of the *isra* (the Night Journey).¹⁷¹ Once assured of the legitimacy of the site as Omar judged it, he then placed the "stone" from the *southern* Temple Mount (or perhaps a portion of it cut from the parent "stone") to this southern part of the Haram esh-Sharif. He put it at the "end" (the *southern* end) of the building and it became a part of the *qibla* that pointed toward Mecca. This was the place

¹⁷¹ Oleg Grabar in his monumental work *The Shape of the Holy*, concerning the history of the Haram and the Dome of the Rock, states:

"Anticipating the later names of gates to the Haram, many stories relate that the caliph Umar [Omar] entered the sacred precinct through the southern Bab al-Nabi 'Gate of the Prophet,' which would have been the gate through which the Prophet came on his mystical journey" (p.48).

that finally became the Al Aqsa Mosque [the “Farthest Mosque].

Up to this point, the *northern* “Rock” at the later Dome of Rock held no religious importance to Omar nor was it ever significant to him throughout any of his residences in Jerusalem. Indeed, Omar was decisively against any attention whatever being given by Muslims to the *northern* “Rock” now under the Dome of the Rock. I will say more about this *northern* “Rock” (it was a Christian holy place) and Omar’s persistent disdain for it.

Omar then concentrated his whole attention to the area of the Haram esh-Sharif adjacent to the *southern* wall, which is now the *southern* wall of the Al Aqsa Mosque. This *southern* region abutting to the *south* wall of the Haram was remarkable to Omar. It appeared like the area shown him in his original vision that prompted his trip to Jerusalem to search for the place David prayed. There was a feature of the *southern* wall that Omar must have liked (and he must have been amazed at it when it came time to set up his *qibla*). The fact is, the southern wall of the Haram is inclined about 10 degrees north of east in its east/west directional aspect. To Omar and his associates, this angle may well have appeared providential because a *qibla* placed perpendicular to the southern wall of the Haram would cause all people facing it or any part of the southern wall *to be looking directly toward Mecca*. The direction to Mecca happens to be about 10 degrees east of south from Jerusalem.

Note the natural advantages of this factor. Building a Mosque at this site would make the structure to be as high in elevation as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (which Omar wanted to mimic to compete properly with the Christians). But this location for the “stone” associated with the *qibla* also allowed faithful Muslims worshipping in the Al Aqsa Mosque to actually pray *through* the *real* Holy of Holies situated almost 1000 feet south — actually 10 degrees east of south and precisely in the direction of Mecca. So, the “stone” Omar retrieved from the area of Solomon’s Temple (as they believed) and the “Rock of Abraham” (the Ka’aba in Mecca) could be venerated in *straight-line* posture by Muslims praying in the Al Aqsa Mosque.

Omar brought the “stone” he found at the site of Solomon’s Temple to the new area where he was building his shrine (or Mosque) as a means of sanctifying Omar’s different holy spot in Jerusalem. Indeed, this maneuver by Omar was looked on by the people of the period as a relocation of Solomon’s Temple when the “sacred stone,” as well as other usable stones from the Temple ruins, were brought to the spot to build his Al Aqsa Mosque.¹⁷² That’s right, there were other rectangular stones from the previous Temple begun at the time of Julian the Apostate (362 C.E.) that were still at the site, and Omar took suitable ones to build the Al Aqsa Mosque. So, in one way of looking at it, the “Temple” was rebuilt to the north of its former spot over the Gihon Spring and placed at the *southern* end of the Haram esh-Sharif. From then on, it became common to refer to the Al Aqsa Mosque as “Solomon’s Temple” and it retained that designation through the Crusader period.

¹⁷² Many more than the single “stone” was transferred to the site on the southern side of the Haram. Jewish tradition has more information on what happened. In the words of a Jewish visitor to Jerusalem in 1334 C.E. (Isaac ben Joseph):

“The king [Omar, the Second Caliph], who had made a vow to build up again the ruins of the sacred edifice [the Temple], if God put the Holy City in his power, demanded of the Jews that they should make known the ruins to him. For the uncircumcised [Christians] in their hate against the people of God, had heaped rubbish and filth over the spot, so that no one knew exactly where the ruins stood. Now there was an old man then living who said: ‘If the king will take an oath to preserve the wall [probably the Western Wall of the Holy of Holies], I will discover unto him the place where the ruins of the Temple were.’ So the king straightway placed his hand on the thigh of the old man and swore an oath to do what he demanded. When he had shown him the ruins of the Temple under a mound of defilements, the king had the ruins cleared and cleansed, taking part in the cleansing himself, until they were all fair and clean. After that he had them all set up again with the exception of the wall, and made them a very beautiful Temple, which he consecrated to his God.”

E.N. Adler, *Jewish Travellers: A Treasury of Travelogues from Nine Centuries* (NY: Dover Pub.), pp.130–31. Italics are for emphasis, brackets are mine. In other words, Omar rebuilt the Temple from the ruins found at the Temple site.

It is interesting that Isaac ben Joseph (writing very late, in 1334 C.E.) goes on to quote the comments of Benjamin of Tudela who mistakenly places “the wall” under discussion as being in his time near the Dome of the Rock. By Benjamin’s time (as I will show) confusion in regard to previous holy areas was great.

Look at this transfer of stones from the earlier Temple site. From the point of view of the Muslims, they considered the “stone” (and the other stones from the ruins of the Temple of Julian’s time) as a rebuilding of the Temple. The main “stone” from the Holy of Holies, Omar transferred to the *southern* wall of the Haram esh-Sharif. This “stone,” over which the Holy of Holies once stood, signifying the Paradise of God, became the center piece near the *qibla* in Omar’s new Temple at Jerusalem.

They considered this “stone” to be reckoned as a part of the “foundation stone” for the Ark that Jewish tradition said Solomon placed in his Temple (or that it was at least a replica of that Solomonic “stone”).¹⁷³ This moving of the “stone” to the inside *southern* wall of the Haram (along with many other rectangular stones used for building purposes) answered to an official relocating of the holiness of Solomon’s Temple from its former spot over the Gihon Spring to this *new* site about 800 feet north.¹⁷⁴ That is why

¹⁷³ Izhak Hasson in his article “The Muslim View of Jerusalem: The Qur’an and Hadith,” in *The History of Jerusalem* gives reference to the Arab historian Muqaddasi who wrote in the fourteenth century about the early traditions recorded in the Muslim chronicles. He spoke of “the black slab of marble found in the Mosque of Jerusalem — at the entrance to Paradise” (p.375). This was a “stone” of the Muslims associated with the symbolic Garden of Eden (Paradise). Its purpose was similar to the “stone” in the “Holy of Holies” (also a symbol of Paradise) in the Temple at Jerusalem.

The Bordeaux Pilgrim in 333 C.E. saw a “marble slab” in front of the altar that was before the Holy of Holies (Paradise). The “slab of black marble stone” that was the Muslim entrance into Paradise” was surely a portable (and man-made) piece of flat stone that one could walk on. One similar to it (if not that stone) could have served as the foundation stone in a “Holy of Holies” in a Jewish Temple from the time of Constantine and/or Julian. The symbolism behind the two “stones” (both Muslim and Jewish) was identical. And, the “stone” Omar set up in the Haram and the “stone” found within the Mosque (if not identical) were certainly NOT the “rock” under the Dome of the Rock. Omar saw no Muslim value in the Dome of the Rock area in this early period in the history of Islam.

¹⁷⁴ Biblical people commonly understood that any holiness or divine importance associated with a sacred area or artifact could accompany the stone or artifact wherever it was taken. Thus, there was a “rock” carried with the Ark of the Covenant and the Cherubim by the Israelites during their exodus from Egypt. The apostle Paul said that “Rock” represented Christ (I Corinthians 10:4). That “Rock” was analogous in the Old Testament to the “sapphire stone” shaped like

it became common after the time of Omar by most people in Jerusalem to view the Al Aqsa Mosque as the place of "Solomon's Temple." Jerusalem now had a *new* "Solomon's Temple," but in a different place.

The *new* identification soon became "chiseled in stone." During the Crusades, the Christians finally had enough historical sense to abandon their belief that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre had been part of Herod's Temple. They then joined the Muslims and took it for granted that the building called the Al Aqsa Mosque was the place where Solomon's Temple once stood.¹⁷⁵ Transferring

a throne (that is, as a footstool or a slab that represented a throne) that Ezekiel saw in vision with the Cherubim (Exodus 1:26).

Wherever the Tabernacle was pitched with the Ark (with that stone), that spot on earth became "holy." When the Tabernacle moved onward with the Ark and stone, the former area no longer had any holiness attached to it. Indeed, when the Philistines stole the Ark, the holiness of the Ark went with it (Dagon was destroyed before it). When Uzzah tried to stabilize the Ark when it was about to fall, the holiness associated with it was manifested. No matter where it was (like in the house of Obed-edom), the place was blessed.

Jesus gave a similar transference of holiness. He said the gold of the Temple was sanctified because it was associated with and was a part of the Temple. The gift on the Altar in the Temple was made holy because of its attachment to the Altar that was holy (Matthew 23:16-22). Even the stone that the builders rejected (because it appeared to be marred), not only retained its holiness, but it became the Head of the Corner, the top stone of the Temple (Psalm 118:22-24). When Judas Maccabee saw the Temple ruined in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Jewish authorities took the stones of the Altar and hid them in order for a prophet to put them into a new Temple so that it could be sanctified (1 Maccabees 4:44-46). And when Herod rebuilt the Holy of Holies by moving its stones and placed it in the center (north to south) of his new Temple when he doubled the size of the Temple, the Holy of Holies was transferred northward about 225 feet from where it once was in Solomon's time.

So, when Omar took the stone from the Holy of Holies at the site of Solomon's Temple, and deposited it within his new Mosque some 800 feet north, Omar had many biblical and historical precedents (as seen by theologians at the time) that the holiness of the Temple accompanied the sacred stone. The Muslims believed this and called the practice *baraka* (that was a part of Islamic faith). See Francesco Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, p.168.

¹⁷⁵ Christians in the fourth century did a similar thing when they transferred almost all the symbols of the Jewish Temple to their new Church of the Holy Sepulchre and named it "the Temple." Later, Christians carried stones, etc. (relics) to all areas of the world with a view that the "holiness" attached to the original holy items accompanied the relics to their new homes. Islam also

that particular “stone” by Omar (with the other building stones) was enough to do the trick.

So, in Omar’s time, there now became two sites for the “Temples of Solomon.” One was the ruined Jewish site over the Gihon Spring and the second was the *new* Muslim site at what became known as the Al Aqsa Mosque. (And until the Crusades even a *third* Temple site was in Jerusalem if one accepted the Christian teaching that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was the Temple where Christ drove out the money changers). It was in this period *before* the Crusades that the Temple site began to be moved to different locations in Jerusalem. I will later show that even the Jewish authorities got caught up in this fashionable procedure during the Crusades. This resulted in biblical and Jewish traditions of the Temple (whether true or symbolic myths) getting transferred to either the *new* Christian “Temple” or Omar’s *new* Muslim “Temple” that had arrived in Jerusalem.

It was this practice of calling a *new* sanctuary by the same name as the *old* (even if it was a new building in a different place) that *begins the confusion* for us today over the proper spot of the true Temple, as well as which “stone” or “rock” is meant when we read early records. The mix up started with the false identification of the Christians from the time of Constantine to Sophronius, and perpetuated by the Muslims with the actions of Omar, and later finalized by the Jews themselves under circumstances that I will soon describe. These fallacious identifications have sadly governed even the supposed rational thinking of scholars and religious leaders ever since. They have been devastating to the truths of the biblical and historical records.

Confusion Now Begins Over the “Rock” and “Stone”

What about the “Rock” now under the Dome of the Rock? Also, what about the “Stone” that Omar took from the true Temple site

believed the same. It was believed that sanctification was transferred to the new site no matter where it was in the world. The question is not whether this was right or wrong. We need to realize that people accepted this belief as having intrinsic merit and that the belief was widely practiced.

over the Gihon Spring and placed in his new Al Aqsa Mosque (the *new* “Temple of Solomon”)? It may appear strange but Omar showed no interest in that “Rock” under the Dome of the Rock in any religious sense while he was in Jerusalem. In fact, after the Caliph decided where to place his *qibla* for his new Mosque (associated with the “Stone” on which David supposedly prayed), Omar always turned his back to that *northern* “Rock outcropping” each time he prayed toward Mecca. As time went on, Omar and the later Umayyad leaders in Jerusalem continued to show disdain for the “Rock” to the *north* of the Al Aqsa area. I will document that even in 692 C.E. when Abd al-Malik finally built the Dome over the “Rock,” he did so in order to diminish an budding devotion that Muslims were beginning to display to the supposed significance of the *northern* “Rock.”¹⁷⁶

Yet, something happened that brought Omar’s attention to the *northern* “Rock” while he was in Jerusalem. Omar had a Jewish general named Ka’ab, of whom I spoke briefly in a previous note. We are told in the early Byzantine historical work by Theophanes (ninth century) that Omar also had ten Jewish leaders from the Arabian peninsula in association with his army and all had recently given lip service to Islam. Omar did not entirely trust his Jewish allies and wondered if their conversions were genuine.¹⁷⁷ One day Omar saw Ka’ab taking off his shoes and walking upon the “Rock” over which the Dome of the Rock was later built. Omar became suspicious. When Omar queried the actions of Ka’ab, the Jewish

¹⁷⁶ The importance of the “Rock” under the Dome of the Rock changed dramatically and swiftly with the Abbasid Dynasty beginning in 750 C.E. Not only the footprints of Jesus (and even God’s) were believed to be on the “Rock,” but Muhammad’s footprint (and also his handprint) were discovered near 750 C.E. These new “facts” proved to many Muslims that Muhammad’s famous Night Journey to heaven took place at the “Rock,” and not at the Al Aqsa Mosque. From then on, a flood of folklore traditions descended upon the “Rock” that caused the Muslims to transfer almost all the events associated with the former Jewish Temple to the “Rock,” just as Christians earlier transferred Jewish rituals and traditions of the Temple to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. By Crusader times, the “Rock” had become the “Temple Site” itself. It has remained that way ever since. I will explain how later.

¹⁷⁷ *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, translated by Harry Turtledove (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), p.34.

general made a secular excuse for walking bare foot on the rock. This reasoning did not suit Omar well because it was well known at the time that the place of the “Rock” was the former site of a Christian church called the “Church of the Holy Wisdom.” Sophronius himself had earlier written a poem mentioning its significance to Christians and their prophetic expectations. The “Rock” was of Christian importance, NOT Jewish!

The “Rock” Was of Christian Significance

The answer that Ka’ab gave to Omar did not satisfy the Caliph. Omar already had several conversations with Sophronius about holy places in Jerusalem and the Caliph was well aware that the “Rock” was symbolically important to Christians, NOT to Jews. The “Rock” underneath what later became the Dome of the Rock was such a Christian site. It was a place that Christians believed the *footprints* of Jesus were embedded into that “Rock” when he stood before Pilate.¹⁷⁸ Omar was aware that the “Rock” where Ka’ab walked barefoot was a notable Christian site. When Omar saw Ka’ab take off his shoes and walk barefoot on the “Rock,” this made him suspect Ka’ab of being a clandestine Christian.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ The central symbolism associated with the spot for Christians was their belief that Jesus’ footprints were embossed into that “Rock” that later came to be underneath the Dome of the Rock. Christians and even Muslims accepted those footprints as authentic until the time of the Crusades. Saladin’s court recorder said the “Rock” underneath the Dome of the Rock contained Jesus’ footprints. See *Brill’s First Encyclopaedia of Islam*, article “Saladin.” This was the very “pavement” where Jesus stood when condemned by Pilate before his crucifixion (John 19:13). This made the site of the “Rock” at first an important Christian holy place, NOT a Jewish or a Muslim one.

The story of those footprints of Jesus was not well liked by the Muslims because the Quran states in Sura 4:154–7 that Jesus did not die as the New Testament relates, but that a counterfeit person took the place of Jesus on the tree of crucifixion. The tradition of Pilate’s presence gave credence to the story of the footprints and provided a vindication that the New Testament was right and that Jesus did die because the Romans would have demanded it (along with the Jews). In other words, the story behind the footprints on the “Rock” was a famous one that seemed to contradict the Quran. No Muslim cleric would have perpetuated that teaching.

¹⁷⁹ And though many early Muslim records state that Omar was sensitive about Ka’ab’s Jewishness, it must be remembered that there were “Jewish Christians”

Look at the facts. The “Rock” under the Dome of the Rock is the most conspicuous natural feature within the entire 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 left us a record of his journey to Jerusalem was the Bordeaux Pilgrim who in 333 C.E 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.¹⁸⁰ He first described the Temple site (and several other buildings around it) in his initial account of Jerusalem; it was the first thing he was interested in. After discussing the Temple site at length, he discussed the imposing structure to the east of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with its walls within the valley. He did not call it the Temple site. He said it was the *Praetorium*, the area where Pilate condemned Jesus. The account of the Bordeaux Pilgrim must have been known in the time of Sophronius and Omar.

The Pilgrim clearly records that after he left the Temple area and after he entered the walled city of Aelia (the Roman name for Jerusalem), he then describes the Haram esh-Sharif as being east of the new Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and that the Haram was indeed the *Praetorium*. The Pilgrim from his description was looking mainly toward the southwest angle of the Haram and to the north toward the spot where the “Wailing Wall” of the Jews is presently located. The Pilgrim said this “walled area” contained the residence of Pilate. 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.

Within this walled enclosure was the “Rock” called in John’s

that could have influenced Ka’ab. It was known that Ka’ab had studied with a certain Abu Muslim from Galilee who was a Jew that apparently became a Christian monk. See Moshe Gil, *A History of Palestine 634–1099*, note 70, p.68.

¹⁸⁰ I will later give the translation of the Pilgrim. See John Wilkinson’s excellent translation of the Bordeaux Pilgrim in his book *Egeria’s Travels*, p.158.

Gospel “the Pavement-Stone” which meant a type of *flagstone* (in Greek, *lithostrotos* and in Hebrew *Gabbatha*) where Jesus stood before Pilate (John 19:13).

The first description by Josephus (the Jewish historian of the first century and an eyewitness) of this particular “Rock” within the *Praetorium* area shows it had a “Pavement” or *flagstones* around it. That “Rock” was the central natural fixture associated with the *Praetorium* and part of Fort Antonia, the permanent Roman Camp located in Jerusalem in the time of Pilate and Jesus. Josephus said that the central feature of Fort Antonia was a major rock.

“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*.”¹⁸¹

Before construction of the fortress, the “Rock” was 50 cubits high (75 feet), but Herod later built a platform around it and it became the north/south center of the walled fortress). This made it not as high and it became accessible for judicial purposes. This provides a reasonable agreement in the descriptions of Josephus and the apostle John.

That “Rock” around which Fort Antonia was built and mentioned by Josephus was in his estimation 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” forming the literal outlines of Jesus’ feet. I have explained how Christians thought Jesus’ *footprints* got embedded in the “Rock.”

The simple truth is, Omar did not show in any way that he viewed any religious importance to the “Rock” now under the Dome of the Rock. But the story of Jesus’ *footprints* on the “Rock” reinforced the teaching of the New Testament that Jesus did in fact die and that Pilate made sure that he did. The Christian tradition

¹⁸¹ *Jewish War*, V.v,8 para.238.

concerning that “Rock” was not favorably acceptable by Omar because it seemed to contradict a central doctrine of the Quran.

The successor of Omar was Mu’awiya. He was also unconcerned or at least ambivalent to the “Rock.” Even later when their successor Abd al-Malik built the Dome of the Rock it was not to show Muslims the religious significance of the “Rock” or to reinforce their beliefs. The building was constructed to show Christians that they should abandon their belief in Christianity and direct their attention to the Ka’aba in Mecca and the new religion of Islam. Omar, Mu’awiya and Abd al-Malik repudiated the Christian reputation that was attached to the “Rock.”

After the time of the three Caliphs just mentioned, Muslims began to attach new teachings (primarily from folklore accounts) that the “Rock” was part of the Muslim holy area connected with the Night Journey of Muhammad to heaven. By then (the ninth century C.E.), that “Rock” even replaced the “stone” set up by Omar in the Al Aqsa Mosque as having extreme importance to Muslims. But all of these folklore teachings emerged and were placed within Muslim tradition *after* the reigns of Omar, Mu’awiya and Abd al-Malik. Even later Muslim writers, however, condemned these later folklore teachings as being the highest form of falsehood, and that they were nothing more than lies.¹⁸²

The Proper Site for the Temple of Herod

Let us recall that even before Omar transferred the sacred “stone” from the actual site of the Temple over the Gihon Spring to his *new* Temple at the *southern* end of the Haram esh-Sharif, there were already *four* other areas outside the precincts of the Haram being accepted in Omar’s time as the site of the former Temples of Solomon and Herod. These *four* sites were well known to those in Jerusalem long before Omar came on the scene in 638 C.E. Remember, Sophronius pointed out the east part of the Holy Sepulchre as his *first* place for the Temple. A *second* candidate became the Muslim site where Omar first prayed (where later a

¹⁸² See the vociferous critique by Ibn Taymiyya who wrote in 1328 C.E. (his English translation can be seen in Peters, *Jerusalem*, p.377).

mosque called the “Mosque of Omar” was built near the Holy Sepulchre). The *third* area was at the *traditional* Mount Zion located on the *southwest* hill that was a third of a mile south of the Holy Sepulchre. I will later show how this *southwest* hill became the *new* “Mount Zion.”¹⁸³ However, the *traditional* “Mount Zion” of all religionists from the time of the Crusades, was NOT the true site of the Temples. Finally, there was the *fourth* area that the early Jewish people accepted, and this was the proper site. It was situated on the *southeast* ridge over and around the Gihon Spring.

This *fourth* (Jewish) region of Jerusalem is the place where all historians and archaeologists today recognize as the *original* “Mount Zion.” Since it was common knowledge to biblical readers that the site of the former Temples and the location called “Mount Zion” were identical terms in the geography of biblical Jerusalem, it should not be odd that the Jewish authorities would long remember the site of the *original* “Mount Zion” on the *southeast* ridge.

The terms “Mount Zion” and the “Temple Mount” in many biblical contexts are synonymous, and they both refer to the spur of the *southeast* ridge where the original “Mount Zion” and its northerly extension called the “Ophel” were located (and with a “Millo district” in between as a “fill area”). For accuracy, all the Temples were actually located on the “Ophel” prominence situated over and around the Gihon Spring. I will later show that the Temple was built on the “Ophel” (the “humped mount”), the northern extension of “Mount Zion,” that was over the Gihon Spring. But for now, note that in Isaiah 32:14 (where “Ophel” is translated “forts” in the KJV), Isaiah said some of the main geographical features of the Ophel were its “*caves*” (KJV: “dens”) located underneath and within the mountain ridge.

Indeed, there are numerous “caves” and “tunnels” (most man-

¹⁸³ Recall that the traditional “Mount Zion” of the southwest hill was believed to be accurate and true with utter dogmatism by scholars from the Crusades until the middle of the last century. Since the phrases “Mount Zion” and “Temple Mount” were identical in some biblical contexts, the information about the true site of the Temple could have been known over a hundred years ago. The Jews until the time of the Crusades knew the southeast ridge was the original “Mount Zion” area and that is where they recognized their “Temple Mount” to be.

made, but some natural) that lead from the top of the Ophel to the Gihon Spring and its tributaries. The “caves” and “tunnels” are so obviously a part of the Ophel that it is no wonder that the prophet Isaiah singled out those prime characteristics that dominated the site. These “caves” (plural in Isaiah) are a cardinal part of the landscape and one can enter them today at the entrance to the archaeological gardens above the Gihon Spring. There were (and are) “caves” and “tunnels” underneath the Ophel that were intentionally carved out of the rock downward to reach the waters of the Gihon Spring (which Spring was a necessary part of the Temple and its rituals) was recognized as an essential feature of the Temple. The great Jewish commentator Maimonides (born 1134 C.E.) spoke of the subterranean parts of the Temple beneath the Holy of Holies,

“There was a stone in the Holy of Holies at its western wall upon which the Ark rested. In front of it stood the jar of manna and the staff of Aaron. When Solomon built the Temple, knowing that it was destined to be destroyed, he built *underneath, in deep and winding tunnels* [that is, *caves*], a place in which to hide the Ark.”¹⁸⁴

As far as the “Rock” underneath the present Dome of the Rock is concerned, there is indeed a single “cave” carved out of the southeastern part of that “Rock,” but historical sources show *that* “cave” was hewn out of the “Rock” *in Muslim times*, at least 600 years *after* the destruction of Herod’s Temple. That “cave” is thus a late creation. That single cave in the “Rock” does NOT have numerous “caves” and “tunnels” underneath it. But the “caves” and “tunnels” under the Ophel about 1000 feet south have been there from at least a thousand years before the birth of Jesus and were a notable feature of the Ophel ridge. Those underground passages are there for all to see today. They lead directly from where the Temples were, to the Gihon Spring where it was essential to get water for Temple rituals.¹⁸⁵ The Jews in Omar’s time wanted to

¹⁸⁴ See the English translation of Maimonides in Peters, *Jerusalem*, p.227, where he cites the statement found in 1957:17 of Maimonides.

¹⁸⁵ I will present two chapters of information primarily from the Holy Scriptures to show that all early Israelites knew that spring waters (that is, the Gihon Spring waters) were an essential part of the Temple and that spring water was

move to this *southeastern* site of Jerusalem where the Temples once were. They got their wish and lived in that *southeast* part of Jerusalem until the Crusades.

But what is it that presently governs our modern geographical understanding of the Jerusalem of Herod and Jesus according to the scholars and religious leaders? Sadly, it remains traditional religious teachings that rely mainly on the acceptance of dreams, visions and supernatural revelations by “holy men and women” as the best guides at identifying sacred sites in Jerusalem, and *not* documentary evidence from the Bible or historical records. Acceptance of those visionary “proofs” — whether Christian, Muslim or Jewish — is tenacious even in the thinking of scholars, though they are reluctant to admit it.

But the time has come to return to the documentary evidence of the biblical and historical records and to jettison the visionary “evidences” ordained by religious authorities who govern our churches, mosques and synagogues. In the next chapter we will look at the original Jewish appraisals of where *their* Temples were located in Jerusalem. We will see that Jewish authorities until the time of the Crusades recognized that the *real* Temples were located over and around the Gihon Spring.

Chapter 9

THE *REAL* JEWISH SITE OF THE TEMPLES

AT THE TIME OF OMAR AND SOPHRONIUS, the Jewish authorities that lived in the Holyland *had their own area* in mind as the actual site of the Temple. It was certainly not in the region of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, or the later Mosque of Omar, or at any spot on the traditional Mount Zion that was then situated on the *southwest* hill. The Jewish site for the Temples was over and near the Gihon Spring in the *southeastern* part of Jerusalem, the original site of “Mount Zion” with its northern extension called the “Ophel.” Since the terms “Mount Zion” and the “Temple Mount” were synonymous in several biblical contexts, the original Temples were located on the *southeast* ridge where “Mount Zion” and the “Ophel” extension were first situated, and not in the *northeast* area of Jerusalem where the Haram esh-Sharif was located. In this chapter I will give evidence that clearly supports this conclusion.

Omar Allowed Jews to Return to Jerusalem

Though Omar made a firm covenant with Sophronius that he would build only *one mosque* in Jerusalem and that no Jews were allowed to enter the City of Jerusalem, Omar relented on the latter agreement. We have documented evidence that just after Omar established his residence in Jerusalem in 638 C.E., Jewish authorities approached him from Tiberias. They petitioned him to allow them to return to Jerusalem and live in the city. Omar thought about the matter and he stated that 120 families could come to Jerusalem. Sophronius heard about this allowance and hurriedly reminded Omar of his sworn testimony that he would not allow *any* Jews to live in Jerusalem. Omar convinced Sophronius that it would be to everyone's advantage if some Jewish families could return to their metropolis. While Sophronius finally agreed that 40 families could come to the city, Omar in the end got Sophronius to accept a compromise figure of 70 families. This is when 70 Jewish families returned to Jerusalem from Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee.

Now note an important point. Those 70 families of Jews told Omar they wanted to reside *near their former Temple*. It is remarkable to note that these Jewish people selected the spot *south* of the Haram (near the Pool of Siloam) in order to be in the area of their former Temples. Omar knew where they meant because he had taken the stone from the area over the Gihon Spring (which Sophronius said was the site of the Jewish Temple) and placed it at the end part of the Al Aqsa Mosque as a part the *qibla* pointing to Mecca. (This would have meant praying *through* the site of the actual Temple of Solomon.)

Jews Wanted to Settle Near the Temple in Jerusalem

Let us look at this matter closely. It has great bearing on locating the true site of the Temples that once existed in Jerusalem. After Omar conquered Jerusalem in 638 C.E., the Jewish people in Palestine (from the region of Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee, the center of Jewish patriarchal authority for so many years) were then allowed by Omar to take up residence in Jerusalem. They told Omar they wanted to live in Jerusalem near their former Temple.

And they told Omar where they wanted to settle — on and around the *southeast ridge*.

The Jewish authorities did not believe that Omar had the power to build a new Temple of Solomon at the southern Haram by the simple transference of a stone from the area of the true Temple to the site that was to become a Muslim Mosque. They did not believe the visionary information that Omar accepted, that satisfied Muslims. It was that the Temple of Solomon was now located at what became known as the Al Aqsa Mosque when the stone from the Temple area was transported to where the Mosque was to be built. After all, Jews were not Muslims. They did not receive the visionary experiences of Omar as valid; indeed, they considered his visions as emanating from the Devil.

These Jewish authorities from Tiberias also had a different site in mind for the Temple than Ka'ab's "Rock" at what was to become the Dome of the Rock. That northern "Rock" was actually a site that Christians held in high esteem, NOT Jews. That northern "Rock" within the Haram esh-Sharif was NOT the site of the former Temples of the Jews, and the Jewish authorities were well aware of this fact. We now have precise information of what these mainline Jews from Tiberias requested of Omar when they settled in Jerusalem. Let us look at the historical evidence. It shows in no uncertain terms that the official Palestinian Jews at the time of Caliph Omar looked on the site of the Temple as being *near the Gihon Spring* in the southern part of Jerusalem.

The Geniza Documents from Egypt

The modern world has been blessed with a new discovery as important as the Dead Sea Scrolls. For the past hundred years the scholarly world has been able to read many thousands of letters and documents (and scraps of literary material) that were discovered in a synagogue in Cairo in what was called the Geniza (a room for old and unused literary documents). Over 200,000 pieces of literary material have been recovered from this one synagogue alone. Much of it is yet to be translated. In this horde of manuscripts written mainly in the 11th century (but giving historical information back to the period of Omar the Second Caliph) there is

considerable information to show *where* the official Jewish authorities thought their former Temples were located in Jerusalem. In no way did they consider the region of the Haram esh-Sharif as the former place of their Temples. Neither did they think the eastern part of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was the site. Nor did they think the region of "Mount Zion" on the southwest ridge was the true area of the Temples. Let us note the following information that comes from this horde of early Jewish writings from the Geniza in Egypt.

In a book called the *Sefer HaYishuv*, compiled from some of the documents of the Cairo Geniza, we read about Omar the Second Caliph settling those 70 families of Jews from Tiberias in his new city of Jerusalem just after 638 C.E. Note carefully *where* those 70 Jewish families from Tiberias wished to anchor themselves in the Holy City. One specific Geniza document shows *where* they wished to reside and a great deal of other later material from the same Geniza collection substantiates their quest to be near the Temple site, which they believed to be the *southeast ridge* of Jerusalem. Indeed, the Jews looked on the area *south* of the Haram and near the Gihon Spring as the place of their former Temples. Look at the account as quoted in the *Sefer HaYishuv*:

"When the Caliph Omar visited Jerusalem shortly after the conquest [of Islam over the Middle East], he asked the Jews: 'Where would you wish to live in the city? And they answered, *in the SOUTHERN part*; and that is the marketplace of the Jews [the central trading area for Jews in Jerusalem].' Their intention *was to be CLOSE TO THE TEMPLE AND ITS GATES*, as well as the waters of Siloam [in the *southeast* portion of the city] for ritual bathing. The Emir of the Believers granted this to them."¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ See *Getting Jerusalem Together*, Archeological Seminar Ltd., by Fran Alpert, p.32 for the quote from the *Sepher HaYishuv*, emphases and brackets mine. Another important reference to this document is found in Reuven Hammer's *The Jerusalem Anthology*, p.148. It says:

"Omar decreed that seventy households should come. They agreed to that. After that he asked: 'Where do you wish to live within the city?' They replied, 'In the southern section of the city, which is the market of the Jews.' **Their request was to enable them to be near the site of the Temple and its gates, as well as to the water of Shiloah, which could be used**

Note carefully that those Jewish families from Tiberias wanted to live in the *southern* part of Jerusalem near *the waters of Siloam* [the Gihon Spring and the Pool of Siloam] in the ancient area of early Jerusalem on the *southeast* ridge where David had built the original Zion with its northern extension, the “Ophel.”¹⁸⁷

This is a most important point to recognize. Only in the last hundred years have archaeologists and historians determined that the original Zion of King David was located near the *southern* end of the *southeast* ridge of Jerusalem. The 1880 C.E. discovery of the Hezekiah tunnel constructed in the eighth century B.C.E. (from the Gihon Spring to the Pool of Siloam under the *southeast* ridge) was instrumental in convincing scholars that a mistake had been made.

for immersion. The Emir of the Believers granted them this. So seventy households including women and children moved from Tiberias and established settlements in buildings whose foundations had stood many generations.”

Note that the remains had been in the region for many generations. These were remnants of the partially built Temples that I will show were started in the time of Constantine (313 to 325 C.E.), added to and refurbished in the time of Emperor Julian in 362/3 C.E. These ruined buildings were located on the former Temple Mount that existed in the time of Herod and Jesus, south of the Haram and near the Gihon Spring and Siloam pool. Among these ruins associated with the “Constantine/Julian Temple” was a part of the “Western Wall” of the Holy of Holies that had been partially constructed in the fourth century. The Jews in the time of the Talmuds (5th century) believed this “Western Wall” still had the Shekinah hovering around its eastside. They often quoted the Song of Songs to substantiate this identification. Still, this particular “Western Wall” was NOT of the Temple that existed in the time of Herod. It was part of the Julian Temple built in 363 C.E.

¹⁸⁷ The Jewish authorities were well aware that the Gihon Spring was the central source that supplied water to the Pools of Siloam. In Temple times there was an external stream (“the waters of Shiloah,” Isaiah 8:6) that left the spring to douse the Kedron Valley with water down to the Pool of Siloam, and there was also an underground stream (Hezekiah’s tunnel, II Chronicles 32:30). These waters were essential for certain Temple rituals, and Jews before the Crusades knew the difference between the Gihon Spring and the waters of Siloam (Sukkah 4:9–10; Parah 3:2; yHag. 1:1), though they often used just the word “Siloam” to describe the whole system. After 70 C.E., Christian sources did not use the name “Gihon,” they used “Siloam,” until modern times. But for Jews until the Crusades, the Temple site was known to have caves and tunnels that humans could use to reach the Gihon Spring. This was convenient for fetching water to use in Temple services. Those caves and tunnels are there for all to see today.

wrongly identifying the *southwest* hill as original “Zion.”

Yet early Jews (before the Crusades) had no problem locating biblical “Zion” on the *southeast* ridge, analogous with the general area of the Temple. The Geniza records show they knew it was the correct spot for “Mount Zion” and the “Ophel” associated with the original Temples.

So, those Jewish families from Tiberias established themselves in that *southeastern* region of Jerusalem (even south of the present Turkish wall farther south of the Haram esh-Sharif). They also settled farther south than the palatial Islamic buildings immediately south of the southern wall of the Haram that Professor Mazar uncovered in the area about thirty years ago. This means the Jews from Tiberias made their abode in Jerusalem at least 600 to 1000 feet *south* of the southern wall of the Haram esh-Sharif.¹⁸⁸ In fact,

¹⁸⁸ These seventy Jewish families settled at an area where they could see an outcropping of rock where there was a cave. This “cave” is mentioned by the early 6th century Christian pilgrim who wrote a short account (the Breviarius) of the sites of Jerusalem. The pilgrim said the only thing left of Solomon’s Temple was this single “cave.” See Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades*, p.61. We will see later excellent evidence that the Jews made a “cave” their synagogue that they connected with the site of the Temple. This “cave” was in a rock outcropping (but NOT at the “Rock” under the Dome of the Rock).

The second Muslim leader that followed Omar in Jerusalem was named Mu’awiya, Caliph from 661–681 C.E. We read an account about this Caliph in a prophecy written by an early Jewish sage, Simon ben Yohai (whose tomb is still shown near Merom in Galilee), who wrote,

“The second king who arises from Ishmael will be a lover of Israel; he restores their breaches and the breaches of the Temple. He hews [cuts down and levels] Mount Moriah and makes it all straight and builds a meeting hall on the Temple rock.”

See Peters, *Jerusalem*, pp.199–200 for the translation. This prophecy shows Israel was given a new foundation and even the Temple was provided with the same blessing in the view of Israelites. Mu’awiya, however, built nothing at the “Rock” where the Dome of the Rock was built some thirty years later. Indeed, his building the “meeting place” over the “Temple Rock” pleased the Jews. This particular rock of the Temple was the same “rock” that the Christian Arab historian Eutychius said Sophronius showed Omar. Omar then “cut away” a part of that “rock” from near the Gihon Spring and placed it in his new “temple” in the southern area of the Haram esh-Sharif. This rock was NOT the “Rock” underneath the Dome of the Rock.

The European pilgrim named Arculf about 680 C.E. described a wooden

they were not the only Jews who settled in this *southeast* region of Jerusalem. Later in the ninth century Karaite Jews moved into the Jerusalem area in numbers. They also established their living quarters near the Rabbinic Jews in the same *southeastern* section of the city in the vicinity of the Siloam pool and the village of Silwan east of the Kedron Valley. This also put them in close proximity to the Temple site.

Indeed, later evidence (much of it from the Geniza documents) shows that this *southeastern* region of Jerusalem, the former area of the City of David, became the “Jewish Quarter” during the early Islamic occupation of Jerusalem — for over 400 years, from the time of the Emir Omar, the Second Caliph in 638 C.E. to 1077 C.E. I will detail later why the Jews abandoned this region just before the period of the Crusades. For now, however, it should be mentioned that a major earthquake occurred in 1033 C.E. that devastated the wall protecting the southeastern region. After the Seljuk Turks conquered Jerusalem in 1071 (at the beginning of a new Millennium from the Temple’s destruction), we find this was a momentous time for Jews in Jerusalem who thought that the End of the World was upon them. With the arrival of the Seljuks, the Jews in Jerusalem came in contact with invaders who were a very different type of people than they were used to being around. So, in 1077 C.E. a major decision was made by Jewish authorities. They moved the Jewish Academy at Jerusalem from this *southeastern* area and establish it in Tyre, and soon afterward to Damascus.

A short time after this exodus of the Academy, the Jews abandoned Jerusalem and left it void of Jewish inhabitants for a span of about 50 years. For that half century no Jews lived in Jerusalem.

building erected as a Muslim mosque [the Al Aqsa Mosque] at the place Omar placed his qibla and where he established the “stone” from the original Temple site. But Arculf did NOT say one word about any “Rock” north of the Al Aqsa Mosque. Neither Omar or Mu’awiya, who followed Omar, showed any religious interest in the “Rock.” The Dome of the Rock was not built until the time of Abd al-Malik from 689 to 692 C.E. Mu’awiya, whom Jewish authorities called “a lover of Israel,” also helped Jews to settle in the area south of the Haram esh-Sharif. The Caliph visited Christian sites in Jerusalem, but showed no interest in the Haram area. He built a “meeting place,” with Jewish approval, at their former Temple site, but NOT at the “Rock” north of the Al Aqsa Mosque.

nor do we have records showing Jews even visiting the city. When Jews did return to Jerusalem, they took up with different geographical places for buildings and walls associated with the former Temples. I will show why they altered their Temple site in later chapters.

The truth is, the Jews long knew in the centuries prior to the Crusades that this *southeastern* region just west of the Gihon Spring was the site of the true “Mount Zion” and of the former “Temple Mount.” That is why in the time of Omar they asked to live in that *southern* region. It allowed them to be near the real Temple site (and not the areas accepted by Muslims and Christians).

There is much evidence that the Jews were well aware of the proper spot of the actual Temples. The central proof revolves around the Jews’ recognition that all their Temples had within their precincts a single natural spring. They also knew there was only *one such spring* in Jerusalem. It was the Gihon Spring. There are even two accounts from eyewitnesses who lived 400 years from one another that show the Temples were situated at and around the Gihon Spring. Many biblical references show the need for such a spring. These two Gentile eyewitnesses showing an “*inexhaustible spring*” located *within* the Temple perimeters were Aristeas and Tacitus.

Aristeas in about 285 B.C.E. personally saw the Temple and he stated that a *natural spring* was emanating from its interior.¹⁸⁹ This was long before any aqueducts brought spring water to Jerusalem from south of Bethlehem. Also, Tacitus the Roman historian 400 years later (quoting eyewitness sources) said there was an *inexhaustible spring* located *within* the Temple at Jerusalem.¹⁹⁰ Throughout history the only spring in Jerusalem was recognized as the Gihon Spring. Historical and even geological sources show there *never* was a spring within the region of the Haram esh-Sharif. The Haram had cisterns, but *no springs*. But *within* the Temples at Jerusalem there was a single, natural, fresh water spring — the

¹⁸⁹ See *Letter of Aristeas*

¹⁹⁰ *History*: V.11,12.

Gihon. This spring was a cardinal feature of the Temples and its presence was indispensable for the symbolism of the Sanctuary to be in force.

Let me be dogmatic. There can be no proper Temple without a natural spring emanating from its center. All biblical symbolism concerning God's abode on earth *demands* this water source as a cardinal part of the Temple itself. Indeed, this spring (the Gihon) is referred to many times in the Psalms and Prophets of the Holy Scriptures (as I will show later).

But something remarkable happened to that natural spring. It was a most important event that had a profound effect upon the Jewish population at Jerusalem and the need for their presence in the Holy City. In the year 1067 C.E., another major earthquake hit Jerusalem. It was so devastating that the records show 25,000 people died in Jerusalem alone, and only two houses remained standing in the Jewish quarter of the city on the southeast side.¹⁹¹ A few years before this time, the Gihon Spring was referred to as having good waters, but after 1067 C.E., the waters of the Gihon Spring turned bitter and unpalatable for normal drinking. All historical works (including Greek, Roman, Jewish and Muslim) show evidence that demonstrate the freshness of the Gihon Spring waters prior to this date. Indeed, those waters from time immemorial had been fresh waters that were the envy of all. So pure were they that they symbolically came to represent the "waters of salvation" that issued from the throne of God in the Temple (mentioned many times in the Scriptures).

All of a sudden those "holy waters" became brackish and unsuitable for normal drinking. The earthquake may have moved underground strata introducing impurities into the water, or seepage from the city sewage areas. The change from fresh, pure water to a brackish and tarnished state had a mystical and prophetic sig-

¹⁹¹ Joshua Prawer states: "The city [of Jerusalem] suffered badly during the eleventh century from a series of earthquakes — in 1016, in 1033, and again in 1067. In the last, it is reported, 25,000 people were killed and only *two houses* [emphasis mine] remained." *The History of the Jews in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Clarendon, Oxford), p.15.

nificance to the Jewish people of Jerusalem. The original “Mount Zion” had become polluted, and it reminded them of the same type of description in the prophecies of Jeremiah that also occurred at the time of Nebuchadnezzar.¹⁹²

This pollution of the Gihon Spring waters was of strategic moment to the Jewish community in Jerusalem. This failure of the natural spring to provide suitable water for drinking as well as for ritualistic purposes caused the Jews in Jerusalem to re-evaluate their need to live in the *southeast* region, where they had lived for 400 years.¹⁹³

¹⁹² The waters of the Gihon turned bitter at least once in the time of Jeremiah. The prophet told the Jews of his time that God sat on “a glorious high throne from the beginning in the place of our sanctuary [which had a fountain of living waters but] they have forsaken the fountain of living waters” (Jeremiah 17:12–13). Back in Jeremiah 2:12 the prophet had said:

“They have forsaken me the fountain of living waters [in order] to drink the waters of Sihor [the Nile] [and] to drink the waters of the river [the Euphrates] know therefore and see that it [your own fountain – the Gihon Spring at Jerusalem] is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God” (Jeremiah 2:18–19).

“For the Lord our God hath put us to silence, and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against the Lord” (Jeremiah 8:14).

“Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink’” (Jeremiah 9:15).

“Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts concerning the prophets: ‘Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall’” (Jeremiah 23:15).

This condition happened just before the destruction of the Temple in the time of Jeremiah. Later, the Gihon Spring that came from the throne of God within the Temple precincts again became fresh and clean.

But sometime after 1067 C.E. and before the Academy of the Jews at Jerusalem moved to Tyre about 1077 C.E., the waters again became bitter. Even today, only after heavy rains or snow do the waters temporarily come forth abundantly and the bitterness is lessened; but for the last 900 years the waters of the Gihon Spring have always shown a bitterness and even a septic condition.

¹⁹³ Any observant Jew would instantly recognize the symbolic significance of the fresh waters of the Gihon/Siloam system turning bitter. It would have inspired a certain devastating and humiliating interpretation. Indeed, as a notable punishment for secret sins (especially if a husband suspected his wife of committing secret adulterous acts), there was a Temple ritual to discover such hei-

Not long after the earthquake and the invasion of Palestine in 1071 C.E. by the Seljuk Turks (a very strange people to the Jews even in a physical sense), the Jewish Academy of Jerusalem (the Jewish religious headquarters in Palestine) thought the End of the World was upon them. They moved to Tyre in 1077 C.E. and then immediately to Damascus to anticipate the End-Time prophecies to be fulfilled. (Remember, the coming of the Seljuk Turks in 1071 C.E. was a scant more than a Millennium since the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in 70 C.E.) The eschatological beliefs of the Jewish people at the time were firmly fixed on the soon arrival of the Messiah to redeem them from their exile and their Diaspora. After a short stay in Tyre, the authorities of the Academy decided to move to Damascus. They placed the Academy at Damascus for a particular reason that was most important. I will place this information on my Internet Web Page. The move of the

nous sins. The priest was to take holy water (in Temple times from the Gihon/Siloam water source) and mix some dust of the Temple floor with it and have the accused woman drink the liquid. If it turned bitter in her stomach and caused her belly to swell, it was deemed as proved that the woman was adulterous (see Numbers 5:11-31).

The prophet Jeremiah (who by the way was a priest) used this very ritual to accuse ancient Judah of harlotry. Jeremiah taught that the Jews had drunk water that had turned bitter (Jeremiah 2:19) and this proved that they were "playing the harlot" (Jeremiah 2:20). As a result of this, Jeremiah said they would soon be drinking the stinking and polluted waters of the Nile and the Euphrates (verse 18). The early Talmudic Jews knew how to interpret this symbolism. Quoting the Midrash Lamentations R. proem 19, the *Jewish Book of Legends* records:

"Jeremiah said to Israel: Had you been worthy, you would be dwelling in Jerusalem and drinking the waters of Siloam, whose waters were pure and sweet. But now that you are unworthy, you are being exiled to Babylon, where you will be drinking the water of the Euphrates, whose waters are impure and ill smelling, as Scripture says, 'And now, what is the good of your going to Egypt to drink the waters of the Nile? And what is the good of your going to Assyria to drink the waters of the Euphrates?' (Jeremiah 2:18)" (p.380).

But then, even the pure and sweet water of the Gihon would turn bitter as gall. This happened in Jeremiah's time, and again in the 11th century the waters of the Gihon/Siloam source returned to bitterness. The biblical symbolism associated with this change in the characteristics of the water at the Gihon (within the very precincts of the Temple) had even a greater effect upon the Jewish people at the time. Now, even their "Temple waters" had turned bitter.

Jewish Academy to Damascus was because of a very significant prophetic belief of the Jewish people that centered the domicile of God within the city of Damascus just before the advent of the Messianic period on earth (as shown in Zechariah 9:1).

Be that as it may, the remnant of Jewish people left in Jerusalem uprooted themselves from their former quarters in the *southeast* sector (which had no wall around it since its destruction in 1033 C.E.) and moved to an area just *northeast* of the Haram esh-Sharif (a region never held in honor by Jewish people).¹⁹⁴ Then, in 1099 C.E. when the crusading Europeans took control of Jerusalem, the Jews were plagued even more. They lost all possessions in Jerusalem and were banned from entering Jerusalem for over 50 years.

Note what this means. While Jews were given permission to live in Jerusalem from the start of Islamic times until the Crusades (over 450 years), with the capture of Jerusalem by the crusading armies, the few remaining Jews were compelled by force of arms to leave the city — an evacuation and prohibition that lasted a little over 50 years. This enforced abandonment was the end of an era for Jewish people in their attitude toward Jerusalem, and even in their theological thinking about the city. Indeed, for a little over five decades after the coming of the crusaders, no Jews were allowed to reside in the City of Jerusalem or, as far as the records go, even to enter the city of their fathers. This “abandonment of Jerusalem” was a turning point in the history of Judaism. When the Jews finally returned after 50 years, they adopted a different approach to the significance of the City of Jerusalem. I will show what happened in later chapters.

Jews Permanently Forsook the Southeastern Quarter

Twenty years before the First Crusade the Jewish people moved *northeast* of the Haram esh-Sharif as their place of residence in the Holy City. This forsaking of their long-established presence in the *southeastern* quarter of the city (the original Zion) has surprised Jewish scholars. But it happened. We can understand why when we realize this was the time they also gave up the site of their for-

¹⁹⁴ Prawer, *The History of the Jews in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, p.49.

mer Temples over the Gihon Spring. After all, the waters of the spring had turned bitter and salty when the waters had normal flow (and not temporarily giving floodwaters from wet winters). The pitiful condition of the Gihon caused them to renounce the sanctity of the area. From then on they began to look for *other symbolic areas* to satisfy their religious needs. All these tragedies converged with the start of the devastating earthquakes in 1033 C.E. And, when the waters of the Gihon Spring became bitter and salty, it was a turning point for Jewish authorities. It caused them step-by-step to abandon that *southeastern* region as their official residence in Jerusalem and they terminated the Jewish Academy in the city.

Even more important, when they returned to Jerusalem, after an absence of over 50 years, the Jewish authorities began to acknowledge another area as *their* Temple site. I will explain on my Internet Web Page why the Jewish authorities from the time of the Crusades onward resigned themselves to accept the region of the Dome of the Rock as a Temple site that Muslims and most Christians were then acknowledging. But such acceptance was *not* the mainline Jewish opinion for the first thousand years of our era. After all, the original Mount Zion (where the Temples once stood) was located on the *southeast* hill.

Indeed, before the time of the Caliph Omar in 638 C.E., there is *NOT one clear reference* from the thousands of pages of historical and theological documents at the disposal of scholars today (from Christian, Jewish or secular sources) that dogmatically states or even suggests that the site of the Temple of Herod or other Jewish Temples were located within (or even near) the Haram esh-Sharif. When Omar himself went to Jerusalem for the express purpose of praying at the spot where David knelt, Omar showed clear evidence that he *did NOT know* where the Temple once stood. All the Caliph had as proof for the site were nebulous factors associated with a visionary episode he experienced. But the Caliph wanted practical and historical proof for the holy spot, and Sophronius gave it.

Sophronius took him to two different places on the western hill of Jerusalem before Omar was finally shown the area over and around the Gihon Spring. This was the original Mount Zion of the

Bible (and the true location of the Temples) as all modern historians and archaeologists will come to see. The Jews for centuries knew this fact and steadfastly looked at the *southeastern* hill as the place for their former Temples. This place completely satisfied Omar in his quest for the place of David's altar.

Only after Omar discovered the stone in the *southeast* hill, where the Holy of Holies had been, did he become interested in a particular gate of the city where the Prophet Muhammad was supposed to have entered during his Night Journey. Omar then looked north and saw the southern gate within the southern wall of the Haram esh-Sharif. After entering the enclosure Omar witnessed what he thought to be the geographical environment of the Haram that answered to his visionary experience and to his theological beliefs concerning the Night Journey. Indeed, this supernatural revelation provided all the evidence Omar required and it settled the matter for the Caliph once and for all. Omar's decision has satisfied most Muslims ever since.

The Jewish Quarter Had Been the Southeast Sector

It is most important to realize that when those 70 Jewish families came from Tiberias to settle in Jerusalem in the same year as Omar's visit (in 638 C.E.), they requested of Omar (and they got his permission) to dwell near *their* Temple in the *southeastern* part of the city. This is where Omar was shown the "stone" that he took into his new area for the Mosque. The region the Jewish authorities wanted for their residence was near the Gihon Spring and the Siloam pool to be near (as their records clearly state) the site of *their* former Temple, the *original* "Mount Zion." So, to the Jews who lived in Palestine and were well acquainted with the region, *their* site for the Temple in this early period was *south* of the Haram esh-Sharif and over and around the Gihon Spring and its north mountain extension called the "Ophel."

This powerful evidence emanates from those Jews who lived within 80 miles of Jerusalem. These were Jews at the center of Palestinian Judaism from the early second century to the time of Omar. These were Jews having constant contact with *their* Holy City even when not allowed to live in the area. These were Jews

who wanted to live in the *southern* area to be near the ruins of their Temple.

These were *not* Jews from Arabia like Ka'ab and his colleagues who accepted Islam as their faith but had never been to Jerusalem. These were *not* Jews from Spain where many generations of Jews only had hearsay of what Jerusalem was like. They were *not* even Jews from Babylon where the Gaonic head of Judaism was located some 500 miles from Jerusalem. No, the Jews who wanted to live *south* of the Haram (and *south* of the grand Umayyad buildings later constructed along the southern wall of the Haram) to be near their former Temples were those *in constant contact* with Jerusalem. For over 400 years the *southeastern* part of Jerusalem was the Jewish Quarter of the city. Their *ruined* Temple was there.

Look at reality. Those Jews from Tiberias had social, religious and even commercial connections with Jews in Egypt and this meant a regular, persistent association with Jerusalem. They were in constant contact with the Holy City because it was located on one of the central highways between Tiberias and Egypt. These 70 families of Jews said the Temple was *south* of the Haram in the area of the Gihon Spring. Other Jews shared their conviction. They were joined in the 9th century by many other Jews known as the Karaites who also settled in this *southeastern* area (some east of the Kedron and others on the west side). All of the Jews together wanted to be in this *southeastern* region from 638 to 1077 C.E. because they knew this was the area of their former Temples.

When Omar set up his *qibla* in his new Sanctuary of Solomon (so called because it was constructed from ruined stones found on the Temple Mount over the Gihon Spring), it allowed him and the Muslims of Jerusalem to bow at prayers five times a day not only toward Mecca but also directly through the former site of the Jewish Temples. The location over the Gihon Spring was where David placed his altar — and this was the very spot Omar wanted to honor when he came to Jerusalem.

The “Rock” underneath what was to become the Dome of the Rock, *that* was a Christian holy place and Omar did not feel he had the right (and certainly not the motive) to construct any kind of

structure in that spot. Remember that Omar made a sacred commitment to Sophronius to build only *one shrine* in Jerusalem and that single “temple” or “mosque” would not be constructed on the site of any Christian Church or on property owned by the Christians. Note the words of the contract:¹⁹⁵

It begins with the official statement: “In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the most Compassionate.” The text follows:

“This is the assurance of safety (*aman*) which the servant of Allah [the second Caliph] Omar, the Commander of the Faithful, has granted to the people of Aelia [Capitolina].

He has granted them safety for their lives and possessions; their churches and their crosses; the sick and the healthy of the city; and for the rest of its religious community. Their churches will not be inhabited nor destroyed [by Muslims]. Neither they, nor the land on which they stand, nor their crosses, nor their possessions will be confiscated. They will not be forcibly converted, nor any one of them harmed. No Jew will live with them in Aelia.

The people of Aelia must pay the poll tax like the people of the [other] cities, and they must expel the Byzantines and the robbers. As for those who will leave [the city], their lives and possessions shall be safeguarded until they reach their place of safety; and as for those who remain, they will be safe. They will have to pay the poll tax like the people of Aelia.”

[Similar guarantees are given to villagers of Palestine. I omit that part as having no bearing on the people of Jerusalem.]

“[Finally], the contents of this assurance are under the covenant of Allah, are the responsibility of His Prophet [Muhammad], of the Caliphs [Muhammad’s successors], and of the Faithful. If [the people of Aelia] pay the poll tax according to their obligations.”

“The persons who attest to it are: Khalid ibn al-Walid, ‘Amro ibn al-‘Asi, ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn ‘Awf, and Mu’awiya ibn Abi Sufyan. This assurance was written and prepared in the year 15 [of the Muslim calendar].”

¹⁹⁵ Dr. Abd al-Fattah El-Awaisi, Lecturer in Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Stirling in Britain has ably constructed and recorded the official text (accepted by Muslim theologians and politicians) of Omar’s Assurance of Safety to the People of Aelia [Jerusalem]). This covenant is provided on the Web Site <www.interx-me.com/jerusalem/society.htm>. I am thankful to him for the fair manner with which it and other historical materials are presented.

To honor his covenant (made in the name of Allah) with the Christians of Jerusalem, he felt obligated to build only *one* Mosque in Jerusalem, in an area no Christian claimed as holy, or there was a Church or former Church. Since it was clear that the “Rock” north of the Al Aqsa Mosque was Christian property and the former site of the Church of the Holy Wisdom, Omar felt obligated (and he honored his obligation) *not* to build any structure whatever on *that* Christian site. He kept his word. So did the following Caliph, Mu’awiya, and so did Abd al-Malik until he made a further deal to build the Dome of the Rock (in the form of a Christian Church) over the northern “Rock.” This was accomplished by further negotiations with the Christians. This codicil to the original agreement was similar to that which Omar made regarding the Jews who wanted to return to Jerusalem.¹⁹⁶

This divine covenant by Omar in the name of Allah caused him *not* to embrace the northern “Rock” within his building program in Jerusalem. But there was another factor regarding the gesture of Omar turning his back to the “Rock” now under the Dome of the Rock. That spot was still revered by Christians as the site where the *footprints* of Jesus were believed to exist from the time he was condemned by Pilate. We will see later that this belief was an essential reason for Muslims *not* to make that Christian holy spot part of their worship of Allah by placing the *qibla* over the “Rock.” Such action would mean that the “Rock” in Jerusalem could have a superiority over the *qibla* of the Al Aqsa Mosque in the *south* (the *new* “Temple of Solomon”) in the daily worship when Muslims faced the Ka’aba in Mecca.

Omar adamantly resisted the urging by some of his closest advisors to place the prime *qibla* to the north over the “Rock.” Had he done so, this gesture would have brought the role of “Jesus” to the forefront of Muslim thinking and worship. This was especially dangerous to do in Jerusalem where 90% of the people were still

¹⁹⁶ Recall that Omar made a deal with Sophronius that instead of prohibiting that Jews could live in Jerusalem, he finally agreed with Omar that 70 families could return from Tiberias to Jerusalem and settle in the southern area of the city (on and around the southeastern ridge) to live near the former site of their ruined Temple over and near the Gihon.

Christian. Though Omar honored and respected Jesus as the Prophet next to Muhammad in Islamic theology, placing the *qibla* in front of an undeniable Christian holy site in Jerusalem would give Jesus a far greater measure of religious esteem than Omar was willing to provide. Besides, Omar covenanted with Sophronius to avoid any Muslim tampering with Christian churches or their property. So, Omar always turned his back on that “Christian holy site” in order to forbid any superiority from developing to the rank of Jesus. His successor Mu’awiya did the same thing, and (as we will see) so did Abd al-Malik 50 years later even when he deemed it necessary (even essential) to build the Dome of the Rock over the “Rock.” See the ASK Web Page on the Internet for details.

While Omar consistently prayed with his back to that “Rock,” he had not the slightest compunction in praying toward Mecca *through* the former site of the actual Temple of Solomon and that of Herod (over and near the Gihon Spring) with its ruins directly *south* of the Al Aqsa Mosque. It was *that* area in the *south* that the 70 Jewish families of the Jews from Tiberias wanted to live. Their descendants continued to reside in that quarter until the Jerusalem Academy moved to Tyre (then to Damascus) in 1077 C.E. For over 400 years, Jews in Jerusalem were able to reside around the former Temple site, while Muslims worshipped at their *new* “Temple of Solomon,” the Al Aqsa Mosque, erected in the south of the Haram. The evidence to support these matters is abundant and certain.

Some remarkable things began to take place *after* the Dome of the Rock was built by Abd al-Malik. There were numerous miraculous discoveries made by Muslim theologians inspired by the traditional folklore beliefs concerning the “Rock” that began to emerge. What was at first a purely and thoroughly Christian holy place (where Christians believed Jesus’ *footprints* were inlaid), the story of the “Rock” soon began to take on *new* embellishments. The first *new* belief was the discovery of “God’s *footprint*” on the “Rock.” That started the ball rolling. As time went on, an incredible amount of *new* beliefs began to be accepted by Muslims.

The “Rock” was soon transformed into a *new* and important Muslim shrine of immense significance. After it was determined “God’s *footprint*” was found on the “Rock” (and the first one to

suggest this was apparently Abd al-Malik himself), that important "fact" was followed by an avalanche of other miracle stories about the "Rock" that staggers the imagination. Indeed, by the time of the Crusades (400 years later), the "Rock" had been metamorphosed into being the literal site of the Holy of Holies of the Jewish Temples.

Just as Christians after the time of Constantine started transferring events associated with the Temple (whether true or mere folklore) to the new Church of the Holy Sepulchre, now it was the Muslim's turn at doing the same thing. And they were very successful in the eyes of the general public. So complete was the transfer of past events and holy relics, that all of the traditions associated with the Temple of Solomon and the other Temples were transferred lock, stock and barrel to the "Rock." The Muslims were doing the same thing the Christians did to enhance the prestige of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre 300 years before.

So, what happened? The place of Abraham's trial in offering Isaac was transferred to the "Rock." Jacob wrestled with the angel on the "Rock." The events of Muhammad's Night Journey from earth to heaven were moved from the area of the Al Aqsa Mosque to the "Rock" under the Dome of the Rock. Muslims came to believe that the "Rock" was the gathering place of all the prophets and holy people of the past. They also found the *hand* print of the Archangel Gabriel on the "Rock," and Muhammad's *hand* print as well as Muhammad's *footprint*. They came to believe that the cave in the "Rock" in its southeast sector was caused by the "Rock" lifting itself up from the earth and being suspended a few feet above the ground hoping to accompany Muhammad during his Night Journey into heaven. However, Gabriel and/or Muhammad pushed the "Rock" back to earth. Yet, the "Rock" was stubborn and refused to return all the way back to earth. This reluctance created the *cave* at the southeast section there as proof that the "Rock" tried to go to heaven with Muhammad.

But it didn't stop there. Just as Christians came to believe that Adam's skull was found at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Muslims had their own similar account concerning Adam. They soon discovered Adam's *footprint* on the "Rock" alongside the

very *footprint* of God left at the time of His ascension to heaven after creating the earth.

What wonderful beliefs! Those accounts all started with the prime belief given by Abd al-Malik that “God’s *footprint*” was on the “Rock.” From then on, the miracles didn’t stop until the Muslims (like Christians before them with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre) had moved every major holy event or artifact associated with the sanctity of Jerusalem and its area directly to the “Rock.” So certain were many of these beliefs by the end of the Crusades, that not only Muslims believed the “Rock” was the site of the former Temples, but even the Christians (and even the Jews, as I will show) came to believe it. Even our modern scholars and religious authorities accept the nonsense.

It was also in the period of the Crusades that the Jews began to accept that *their* Mount Zion was really located on the *southwest* hill. They did this (as I will explain) because an event occurred in the middle of the twelfth century convincing them that David’s Tomb was situated on the *southwest* mountain and that the Christians and Muslims were right to believe the *southwest* mountain was the original “Mount Zion.” How wrong they were.

I will explain in detail how the confusion got started. For now (and to close this section of the research) let me briefly state that the geographical confusion over the *southwest* mountain in its relationship with true history began as early as the time of Simon the Hasmonean (142–134 B.C.E.). This was because of major changes in the topography of Jerusalem accomplished in that early period. What Simon and the Jewish authorities did was systematically level to the very bedrock the original Mount Zion. They also cut down the Ophel Mound to the bedrock (to the very entrance to the caves and tunnels that led to the Gihon Spring).

It will surprise many, but documentary evidence shows that in the time of Simon the Hasmonean and his son John Hyrcanus, the Jewish people actually built a brand *new* Temple. It was built in place of the one that existed from the time of Zerubbabel until Judas Maccabees, a Temple different from the one defiled and destroyed in the time of Judas Maccabees. They also tore down

and removed the buildings on the former Mount Zion and on the Ophel Mound along with the transference of David's tomb (that is, all hewn stones and furniture) and rebuilt them all on the *southwest* hill. Simon renamed the area the *new* "Mount Zion."¹⁹⁷

Nothing of the former grandeur can be seen in that earlier center of Jerusalem on the southeast ridge. That is why the present southeast ridge is bereft of any mountains whatever, and why it became known as the "Lower City" even by Herod's time. And after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., there were no longer the dual mountains to be seen that were once a prominent feature of the southeast ridge. Indeed, when a person looks at the region today, it is almost impossible to believe (if we did not have the biblical records that demand we accept it) that there were once dual mountains gracing the southeast ridge.

¹⁹⁷ We have a good modern example of what Simon did. The stones of the original London Bridge were transported lock, stock and barrel to Arizona and rebuilt across the Colorado River for commercial and amusement purposes over thirty years ago. This "London Bridge" in Arizona is almost identical (but slightly smaller for engineering purposes) to the original bridge in London but it is now located some 6000 miles from where it once was. So, a person can now see "London Bridge" (with the very stones that once crossed the River Thames) at Lake Havasu in Arizona. In like manner, Simon the Hasmonean tore down the original Mount Zion and moved its buildings with their very government names (along with the Tomb of David) to the southwest mountain. A new Temple was then built in the place of the former. Herod later enlarged that Temple to twice its original size. The Romans destroyed that Temple in 70 C.E.

Chapter 10

ALL *JEWISH* BUILDINGS IN JERUSALEM DESTROYED IN 70 C.E.

LET US NOW RETURN to the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. There is a considerable amount of historical information that we need to recognize to understand how the region of the Temples finally became forgotten by not only the Roman secular world, but even the Christians, Muslims and Jews also forgot. We need to return once more to realize that the Haram esh-Sharif is NOT the site of the Temple.

The historical records clearly show the Haram esh-Sharif was the former site of Fort Antonia. It survived the Roman/Jewish War of 66–73 C.E. because that complex of buildings was *Roman* property, and Titus, the Roman general, saved the Fortress after the war to house the Tenth Legion quartered in the area of Jerusalem to guard and maintain the peace. On the other hand, all the buildings that made up *Jewish* Jerusalem were destroyed to the ground and

dismantled during and after the war. When those structures are catalogued, it becomes a sad list showing utter destruction.

It registers the great casualties of war besides the killing and maiming multitudes of human beings. The inventory of those magnificent buildings in Jerusalem, of which nothing remains today, is an awesome witness to the annihilation of the region by the Romans. An itemized account of destruction (besides the destruction of the Temple) included the complete ruin of the Palace of Herod that Josephus said was so elegant and grand that it was “baffling all description: indeed, in extravagance and equipment no building surpassed it.”¹⁹⁸

What happened to that complex of buildings? The grounds of the palace had immense walls surrounding it 45 feet high. The interior areas with their living quarters were beautiful beyond compare. But, if you ask archaeologists today if they can find a trace of Herod’s Palace and its walls, they admit it has completely disappeared from the face of the earth. Not a stone has been left on another. True, scholars think they may have located a part of the podium on which the Palace was built, but there is nothing left “to recreate its original design.... None of this superstructure has survived. We know that they [the walls and buildings] sprawled over more than 4.5 acres stretching across the present Armenian compound.”¹⁹⁹ In spite of its large size and grandeur, there is absolutely nothing left of Herod’s Palace to give archaeologists today a hint even of its former outline.

There are other important buildings that were destroyed that elude the attention of the archaeologists. In Jerusalem in the time of Jesus was the large Hippodrome (the circus area for horse races). This sporting facility was at least as large in area as Herod’s Palace and located somewhere in the southern part of Jerusalem.²⁰⁰ One would think it would be an easy task to find remains of this Hippodrome. But here too, there is not one stone from those buildings to be found. Not a trace of its foundational parameters are

¹⁹⁸ *War* V.4,4 ¶177 Loeb edition

¹⁹⁹ Comments of Cornfeld, *The Jewish War*, p.344, n.182 [a].

²⁰⁰ *Antiquities* XVII.10,2; *War* II.3,1.

visible today. The Hippodrome was leveled to the extent scholars are not even sure where it was located.

Another major building was the Xystus, constructed next to the Temple, with a roadway from the Temple to its enclosure. It was originally built to be a type of gymnasium, but it became a place for general public meetings where great crowds could assemble. Alfred Edersheim called this building “the immense Xystus ... surrounded by a covered colonnade.”²⁰¹ It was in the Xystus where the Sanhedrin (the Supreme Court of the Jews) assembled just before the Roman/Jewish War. But what happened to the stones that made up that “immense Xystus” which occupied an expanse surely equal to the present Knesset (the modern Parliament building of Israel located in west Jerusalem)? Like the stones that made up the Temple and its walls, the Xystus was so destroyed in the war that no archaeologist can identify a single stone comprising that majestic and significant building.

The same thing applies to the magnificent palace of Herod Agrippa the Second who occupied and refurbished the former palace of the Hasmonean kings situated just west and higher up the slope from the Xystus. That Hasmonean palace was almost as grand in its beauty as that of Herod the Great. But again, no archaeologist today can point to a single stone in Jerusalem that can confidently be identified as belonging to that impressive and grand palace.

There are other examples. At the beginning of the war, insurgents set fire to the House of Ananias (the High Priest).²⁰² This important building was the virtual headquarters of all religious matters in the country outside those administered by the Temple

²⁰¹ Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple, Its Ministry and Services*, p.29. Formerly, the Sanhedrin was housed in the Temple itself. While located within the Temple, half the chamber of the Sanhedrin (called the Chamber of Hewn Stones) was in the priest's portion of the sacred enclosure, and half was in the Court of Israel. But in 30 C.E., the Sanhedrin moved from their quarters in the Temple near the Altar of Burnt Offering to a building in the eastern court of the Temple called the “Trading Place.” Then for some reason, the “Trading Place” proved to be unsatisfactory. The Sanhedrin then moved, immediately before the Roman/Jewish War, to the Xystus located just west of the Temple.

²⁰² *War II*.17.6.

and the Sanhedrin. It must have been a large and sumptuous building for the High Priests. But look in Jerusalem today, archaeologists cannot discover a single stone on top of another that made up that edifice.

There is more. One of the first public government buildings the revolutionaries burnt to the ground was the Archive Building where government records of taxation, contracts involving money and other registers of financial accountability were housed.²⁰³ No remains of this building are found today. There were other government buildings in the same "City Hall" area that were demolished as well. In ruining them, Josephus said they "thus burnt down the nerves of the city."²⁰⁴

All the above-mentioned buildings were located in either the aristocratic southern part of the western hill that came to be called "Zion," or in the region of the Tyropoeon Valley between the original City of David and the "Upper City" situated on the western hill. For an up-to-date archaeological appraisal of what happened to all those buildings in the areas above, one can read the article by Hillel Geva in the November/December, 1997 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review*. He is one of the chief archaeologists to excavate in this area of early Jerusalem. He said: "In short, both the literary and the archaeological evidence indicate that the city was totally destroyed in 70 C.E. Not a single building remained standing."²⁰⁵

What should be remembered in our present inquiry is the fact that all these buildings were immense in size and comparable to many grand edifices we witness in our own cities. And indeed, if cities today are destroyed by bombs, fire or other weapons of war, it is most always possible for investigators to discover some kind of foundational outlines of the former buildings. But with the Jerusalem of Herod and Jesus, the matter is far different, and this is precisely how Jesus prophesied that it would be. No foundation stones of any kind can be found.

²⁰³ *War* II.17,6.

²⁰⁴ *War* II.17,6.

²⁰⁵ Page 37, emphasis mine.

Regardless of these facts, however, the lower courses of the four walls surrounding the Haram esh-Sharif have continued to exist for the most part in perfect shape and position for centuries after the war was over. They are still intact and in splendid condition after 2000 years. Those lower courses of that rectangular enclosure were not dislodged in the slightest. Their continuance is in contrast to all other buildings and walls in Jerusalem. The walls of the Haram were left intact by Titus to be the ramparts that quartered the Tenth Legion. Those walls did so effectively until 289 C.E. when the Legion left for Ailat.

Clearly, Roman troops did not tear down or root up the monumental stones from the foundations of the walls surrounding the Haram esh-Sharif. They left them alone. After all, there were no precious items or Jewish gold deposited in Fort Antonia and no need to demolish structures belonging to Romans in order to discover hidden Jewish treasure. The structures associated with the Haram esh-Sharif did not represent buildings formerly under the command of Jewish authorities in Jerusalem. Those buildings were Roman from 6 C.E. onward. This is why the Haram esh-Sharif continues to exist in magnificent glory to this day.

Chapter 11

EVERY STONE UPROOTED FROM THE TEMPLE

MANY CITIES of the Mediterranean world that existed in the first century have remnant examples of their former greatness that we today can observe and admire (like Rome and Athens). However, the only monument of first century Jerusalem that remains in its full outline form is the Haram esh-Sharif. Even the western wall and three fortresses in the Upper City that Titus wanted to leave standing so posterity could later see what a great and powerful city Jerusalem had been, were leveled to the ground within four months of the war's end.

The only remnants to be seen of any buildings in the Jerusalem area that pre-date the 70 C.E. period are those walls surrounding the Haram. Those stones are still solidly in place. I will show from a great deal of documentary evidence, however, that those walls of the Haram esh-Sharif do not belong to the Temple that existed in the time of Herod and Jesus. They were the remains of Fort Antonia.

Though we have historical records that Jerusalem was once a bustling and vibrant city with wondrous buildings to behold, and a Temple that words could hardly describe for its grandeur and beauty, none of those structures or their ruins are to be seen. So uprooted and laid even to the ground were those buildings that a person soon after 70 C.E. arriving on the scene would hardly have believed there once had been a city in the area. The stones that comprised the buildings, and the Temple, and the walls that surrounded them are nowhere to be found today. This is precisely what Jesus said would be the case in his prophecies about the Temple and Jerusalem.

The predictions of Jesus have been fulfilled precisely. The fact is, none of the stones of the City of Jerusalem and the Temple from their glory before 70 C.E. is any longer on site for archaeologists to discover. All have been taken away and used in other buildings or construction programs. This has resulted in the total obliteration of the former City of Jerusalem.

Central to the whole issue are the prophecies of Jesus particularly in the Gospel of Luke. He prophesied that not one stone would be left on one another, either of the City of Jerusalem and its walls, or also of the Temple and its walls.²⁰⁶

Why are these two prophecies of Luke cardinal to our inquiry? Because many scholars feel Luke recorded these two predictions of Jesus somewhere between 63 and 70 C.E., while others feel the composition was shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem.²⁰⁷ Be that as it may, whether before or after the destruction of the Tem-

²⁰⁶ Jesus said:

“For the days shall come upon thee, that thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side. And shall lay thee [Jerusalem] even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation” (Luke 19:43–44).

“As some spake of the Temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he [Jesus] said; ‘As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down’” (Luke 21:5–6).

²⁰⁷ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15th ed.), article “Luke, Gospel of.”

ple and the whole City, many people would have been alive to witness to the truth of the prophecies. I believe the prophecies were accurate and uttered before the events. Even in the Slavonic version of Josephus we have Josephus supposedly stating that Jesus was crucified “because he prophesied the **destruction of the city** and the **devastation of the temple.**”²⁰⁸

Even the prophecy in the Book of Revelation about Two Witnesses building another Temple (*naos*) is pertinent. This book was in circulation among Christians by the last decade of the first century. The prophecy speaks of the Temple as no longer in existence, and that a new Temple would be built by authority of Two Witnesses. These two priests were to take measuring rods to mark out dimensions of a new Holy Place and Holy of Holies because the former divisions of the Temple had been destroyed (Revelation 11:1–12). They were also ordered to leave something out. They were told not to build the former barriers that surrounded the Temple courts so that Gentiles could continue to trample those holy areas along with the precincts that once comprised Jerusalem. The author said those barriers had been “cast out” (verse 2) as though their stones had been thrown down and tossed away. The Two Witnesses were not to rebuild them. This Book of Revelation speaks about rebuilding an Inner Temple, but not the outer courts.

Even if Luke wrote after the year of 70 C.E. (as some critical scholars feel), this still provides powerful eyewitness accounts written by the evangelist. Let’s face it. No one in his right mind would record the prophecies of Jesus about the total and absolute obliteration of the City of Jerusalem and Temple if thousands of stones making up the walls of the City and the Temple areas were still in place contrary to what Jesus stated.

Note this point carefully. If the Haram esh-Sharif were indeed the remnants of the walls around the Temple (and the 10,000 stones that make up those walls today were there in the time of Jesus and also after 70 C.E.), then Luke would have been considered an outright falsifier of the facts to state that every one of those stones was to be uprooted and leveled to the ground. Even critical

²⁰⁸ *The Jewish War*, Loeb edition, vol.III, p.657.

scholars must admit that Luke would not likely record prophecies of Jesus after 70 C.E. were they not true for everyone to witness in the time of writing or at the time he published his Gospel. The fact is, the walls around the Haram esh-Sharif were not the walls of the Temple, nor did people after 6 C.E. consider those ramparts to be a part of "Jewish Jerusalem."

These prophecies of Jesus given in Luke's account also apply to the similar predictions of Jesus recorded in Matthew and Mark. Because these two Gospel accounts along with Luke were literary productions written within a decade or two of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 C.E., we must consider their statements to be eyewitness accounts. But if these descriptions in the Gospels were untrue (with walls and buildings still in evidence) how can we of modern times account for the widespread growth of Christianity after 70 C.E., a result of the supposed accuracy in the Gospel accounts?²⁰⁹

These early first century Gospel accounts must be reckoned as documents recording truthful events. Central to the whole issue is that the very foundation of Christian teaching centers on the presentation of "truth" as a primary principle. And indeed, thousands upon thousands of people in the very region of Jerusalem and Palestine came to accept the basic truths of the teachings and prophecies of Jesus by the end of the first century. Were the stones of the Temple walls still in place (as we presently observe with the walls of the Haram), people could have dismissed the predictions of Jesus as worthless.

We will see additional reasons why the Haram was NOT the site of the Temple, but was actually the locale of Fort Antonia. There was no doubt to the early Christians concerning this matter. Those early Palestinian Christians could witness that the prophecies of Jesus were clearly accurate. The evidences for this are so profound and extensive, that one wonders why modern people

²⁰⁹ Eusebius, the fourth century Christian historian, records there was a community of Jewish Christians in Jerusalem until the time Aelia was constructed in the second century, and that Gentile bishops continued to flourish in the Jerusalem area continuously until Eusebius' own time.

might doubt the reliability of those predictions made by Jesus. Christian records from eyewitnesses consistently inform us that the prophecies of Jesus had been fulfilled precisely.

Eyewitnesses Confirm the Gospel Prophecies

People of later times could observe the truth that what Luke and the other Gospel writers wrote was in fact true. Even early Jewish records retain eyewitness accounts of the ruination and destruction of the Temple in all its official precincts. (In the quotes that follow, emphases and words in brackets are mine.)

“Once as Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai was coming forth from Jerusalem [at the very end of the war], Rabbi Joshua followed after him and **beheld the Temple in ruins**. ‘Woe unto us!’ Rabbi Joshua cried, ‘that this, the place where the iniquities of Israel were atoned for, is laid waste’.”²¹⁰

There is little ambiguity in this Jewish description of the desolation of the Temple with all its sacred facilities at the very end of the war.

There were other corroborative accounts. There was the testimony of Barnabas who wrote as an eyewitness on the condition of Jerusalem and the Temple within 15 years of their destruction. Speaking about the Temple, Barnabas stated:

“Through their war [the Jewish war with the Romans] it [the Temple] **has been destroyed by the enemy** [the Romans].... And again it was made manifest how the Temple and the people of Israel should be given up to their enemies. For the scripture saith, ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days that the Lord shall deliver up the sheep of his pasture, and their fold and their tower [the Temple] **shall he give up to destruction**’; and *it happened according to that which the Lord had spoken*.”²¹¹

²¹⁰ Aboth de Rabbi Nathan, ed. Salomon Schechter, Vienna 1887, version A (=ARNA ch.4:5, p.21. [Judah Goldin: *The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan*, in Yale Judaica Series, vol. X (New Haven 1955), p.34]).

²¹¹ Barnabas 16:4–5. Note that this account in Barnabas describes the Temple (both its Inner and Outer buildings and its walls) as being a “tower.” This is a true description. We will later see that Josephus shows that the Temple and its outer walls as being a perfect square in shape and that it was towering upwards

This is a very important reference by Barnabas. It tells us the Temple was destroyed precisely as Jesus predicted, and the prime feature of that prediction was that not one stone would be left on top of another of either the Temple or its outer walls.

There is also the book Ezra IV, written in Hebrew not more than thirty years after the destruction of the Temple. The author claimed to witness the complete ruin of the holy sanctuary. He wrote about a widow that just lost her son (a son of her old age) who died on his wedding night under the wedding canopy itself. To the author, this was like Israel who just suffered at seeing the Temple's ruin:

“Thou foolish woman, why dost thou weep? Seest thou not the mourning of Zion, our Mother? **For thou seest how our sanctuary is laid waste. Our altar thrown down, our Temple destroyed.**”²¹²

While Barnabas and the book Ezra IV attest to the destruction of the Temple (and Jewish records describe the Temple as a heap of stones in the sixty years that followed the war), there still remained within that melancholy scene of desolation the four walls of the Haram esh-Sharif with its 10,000 stones splendidly in place in the lower courses. The walls around the Haram were NOT laid even with the ground when Titus demolished Jewish Jerusalem. This is because, as we have seen, the Haram was NOT a part of the Temple or even part of the municipality of Jerusalem.

There were Jewish accounts in the Talmudic period about events in Jerusalem and the Roman province of Palestine. Some are collected by Nathan Ausubel in *A Treasury of Jewish Folklore*. Note how the Jewish people viewed the situation in the six decades following the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem.

“Desolate lay Zion, in ruins moldered Jerusalem; **the Temple was but a heap of stones. Where once stood the Sanctuary now grew weeds and jackals howled in the Temple court,** where once David the Psalmist and his vast choir of Levites plucked the

from the very bottom of the Kedron Valley to equal the height of a modern 45 story building. The Temple was indeed a “tower” just as Barnabas, an eyewitness, stated that it was.

²¹² R.H. Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigraphica*, vol. II, pp.604-5.

harp strings and raised their voices in songs of praise to the Eternal. Sixty years had passed since Titus the Roman sacked the Temple and led the Jewish captives in triumph to Rome. There were now few [Jewish people] alive who could remember the beauty of the Temple.”²¹³

Other Eyewitness Accounts

In the middle of the second century, we have further accounts about the utter desolation of the Temple. Look at the statement of Justin Martyr (a Samaritan Christian from Palestine) speaking to Trypho the Jew in a cordial type of debate or discussion. They were reviewing the state of affairs then extant concerning the City of Jerusalem and the Temple. Justin reminded Trypho of a prophecy in the Scriptures that Trypho agreed had been fulfilled. Justin said:

“The city of Thy holiness **has become desolate**. Zion **has become as a wilderness**, Jerusalem a curse; the house [the Temple], our holiness, and the glory which our fathers blessed, **has been burned with fire**; and all the glorious nations [the nations once adhering to Judaism, e.g. Edomites, Iturians, etc.] have fallen along with it [with the Temple]. And in addition to these [misfortunes], O Lord, Thou hast refrained Thyself, and art silent, and hast humbled us very much.”²¹⁴

There was nothing left of original Jerusalem or the Temple when Justin Martyr and Trypho were debating. This was the case although much construction was going on in the area with the building of Aelia. Hadrian the emperor had decreed that a new Gentile city named Aelia should be built in the northwest section of old Jerusalem. The original Jerusalem, however, south of the former Upper City and all of the area of the Lower City, remained in complete ruins. Justin and Trypho were not speaking about the Haram in Jerusalem nor about the buildings of the new City of Aelia. They were concerned with Jewish Jerusalem as it existed before 70 C.E., which was then in thorough ruins and desolation.

²¹³ Nathan Ausubel, *A Treasury of Jewish Folklore* (Crown Publishers: NY, 1978), pp.233–4.

²¹⁴ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, Chapter 25.

So destroyed was the site of the former Temple and the Mount of the Temple,²¹⁵ that Jerome in the late fourth century said that Hadrian had turned the site into the city dump for his new city called Aelia. Note what Jerome recorded in his Commentary on Isaiah 64:11 where he first quoted the verse, then gave his comments.

“Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, **is burned up with fire**; and all our pleasant things **are laid waste**’: and the Temple which earned reverence throughout the world **has become the refuse dump** of the new city whose founder [Hadrian] called it Aelia [that is, Hadrian called his new city Aelia Capitolina].”²¹⁶

Hadrian converted the site of the former Temple into the dump for the City of Aelia to humiliate the Jews with whom he just completed a war. This area for the city dump remained in the region of the former Temple for several decades because as time went on parts of the former Temple area were used for other things. Whatever the case, there was nothing left of the former Temple itself, and its primary area became the city dump of Aelia.

Examine this action by Hadrian if the Haram was the location of the Temples. For Hadrian to make the Haram the city dump would have been the height of stupidity. While Aelia had no walls, unlike most classical cities, the Haram had four strong walls to protect, what? Ash, refuse and dung heaps of the city? This makes no sense.

Further, the main water supply for Aelia was in the center of the Haram. Having the walls of the Haram protect the water reservoirs makes sense, but to put the city dump on top of the main water supply for the city is ludicrous to consider.

The four walled region of the Haram, however, was perfect for the Camp of the Tenth Legion. This is what Herod designed the area to be, and Hadrian would have done the same thing. Indeed,

²¹⁵ Early Jewish records in the Mishnah stated was a 750 feet square area, which would equal about 13 and a quarter acres. Middoth II.1.

²¹⁶ Quoted with notes and commentary by Prof. Moshe Gil in *A History of Palestine 634–1099*, p.67, n.70.

the Haram esh-Sharif was not a part of Jewish Jerusalem in the time of Herod and Jesus.

Desolation of Jewish Jerusalem Was Thorough

We have more information about the condition of the former Jewish Jerusalem. About 180 C.E. the Greek geographer named Pausanius made a remark about Jerusalem (with which he was apparently well acquainted, he even knew where the monuments of Helen of Abiadene were located in the area). Pausanius spoke about: "The City of Jerusalem, a city that the Roman king **destroyed to its foundations.**"²¹⁷

There is even more detailed evidence. About 40 years later we have information about Jerusalem from an author who claimed to have expert knowledge of Jewish affairs in Jerusalem within the first century. He called himself "Clement." The author claimed to be the Clement mentioned in the New Testament who the apostle Paul referred to in Philippians 4:3. Though the narrative has information that makes around 220 C.E. a more plausible time of writing (as most modern scholars believe), the author of the Clementine Homilies had interesting knowledge about Jewish affairs in Palestine in this period. His account deserves our attention. In his time there were no stones still in place in the walls of the ruined Temple (though we know the Haram had its lower stones in place even as "Clement" wrote). The author stated:

"Accordingly, therefore, [Jesus] prophesying concerning the Temple, said: 'See ye these buildings? Verily I say to you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another which shall not be taken away; and this generation shall not pass until the destruction begin. For they shall come, and shall sit here, and shall besiege it, and shall slay your children here.' And in like manner He spoke in plain words the things that were straightway to happen, **which we can now see with our eyes**, in order that the accomplishment might be among those to whom the word was spoken. For the Prophet of truth utters the word of proof in order to the faith of His hearers."²¹⁸

²¹⁷ Pausanius, *Guide to Greece*, Book VIII.16.

²¹⁸ *Clementine Homilies*, Homily III, chapter XV.

The narrative by this author (who lived a little over a hundred years after the destruction of Jerusalem) is from a person well acquainted with Jewish and Palestinian affairs. He said in clear terms there was in his time not one stone left on top of another of the Temple. Note that he explicitly stated “we can now see with the eyes” these very predictions of Jesus fully accomplished. This “Clement” was certainly not referring to the 10,000 stones then comprising the walls of the Haram esh-Sharif which were then (as today) very much in place in their lower courses.

“Clement” knew what he was talking about. He was quoted favorably by Origen, who lived shortly after this “Clement.”²¹⁹ This is significant because Origen had been to Aelia (the new name for Jerusalem) and was in charge of the Caesarean library on the coast of Palestine. Had this “Clement” been describing conditions of the former Temple that were not true, Origen would have corrected him or not cited him as a reliable witness.

The truth is, at the beginning of the third century no stones remained in place of the Temple or its walls from the former Jerusalem. There was another person who lived near “Clement’s” time who said the same thing. That person was Hippolytus who wrote about 225 C.E.

“Come, then, O blessed Isaiah; arise, tell us clearly what thou didst prophesy with respect to the mighty Babylon. For thou didst speak also of Jerusalem, and thy word is accomplished. For thou didst speak boldly and openly: Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire; your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate as overthrown by many strangers. The daughter of Sion shall be left as a cottage [a ramshackle building] in a vineyard and as a lodge [a temporary structure] in a garden of cucumbers [a patch of land suitable for farming], as a besieged city. What then? *Are not these things come to pass? Are not the things announced by thee fulfilled?* Is not their country, Judea, desolate? Is not the holy place [the Temple itself] **burned with fire? Are not their walls cast down?** Are not their cities destroyed? Their land, do not strangers devour it? Do not the Romans rule the country?”²²⁰

²¹⁹ *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, article “Origen.”

²²⁰ Hippolytus, *Works*, Part II.30 Ante-Nicene Fathers, brackets and emphasis

Note carefully what Hippolytus stated. As far as former Jerusalem and the Temple were concerned, NONE OF THEIR WALLS were standing in 225 C.E. Even Aelia had no walls around it at the time. Of course, the Haram esh-Sharif had its 10,000 stones making up its solid walls, but those walls and buildings were not even considered by Hippolytus. He knew the Haram was the Roman fort that guarded the ruins of former Jerusalem and the new City of Aelia. It was here where the Tenth Legion had its headquarters and camp, as Hippolytus said: “Do not the Romans rule the country?”

Eusebius of Caesarea Was a Valuable Witness

As for eyewitness accounts, we now come to one of the most important observers. That is Eusebius, who was curator of the library at Caesarea. He also got much of his historical information from the library at Aelia — the former Jerusalem. Eusebius is known in the scholarly Christian world as the “Father of Christian History.” He was meticulous in research and in his writings, and in our present inquiry concerning the state of Jerusalem and the Temple, he is a valuable witness with first rate credentials. The reason for this is that Eusebius gives eyewitness testimony as to what was occurring in Aelia (that is, Jerusalem) when he wrote one of his major historical works titled *Demonstratio Evangelica (Proof of the Gospel)*. Eusebius composed this extensive and highly significant work of history and theology over the span of a few years up to about 302 C.E.²²¹

Eusebius is a proper witness to the state of Jerusalem and the

are mine.

²²¹ Throughout the ten books of his *Proof of the Gospel*, Eusebius speaks of a profound peace happening among the Christian community within the Roman Empire, and that there were then many sumptuous church buildings located in various areas of the world (Bk.I, Ch.9, sect.32; Bk.VIII, Ch.3, sect.407; Bk IX, Ch.17, sect.457–8). But in 303 C.E., Diocletian commenced his catastrophic wars of destruction upon Christians and their church buildings. This document called the *Proof of the Gospel* had to have been written before that disaster. Eusebius wrote this work during the last part of the last decade of the third century. The work has many details about Jerusalem and Christian affairs not found in his celebrated *Ecclesiastical History* that he wrote later during the first 25 years of the fourth century.

Temple area in his own lifetime, but he also refers to events before he was born. There were many records both at Aelia and at Caesarea, and Eusebius states that he consulted them all. His witness is most trustworthy. One reason is that he was born within 70 miles of Jerusalem and went to the area several times to study its geographical and biblical affairs. He spent much time at the library in Aelia.²²² It could be said with confidence that the Library at Aelia and the Library at Caesarea on the coast were sister libraries. The libraries housed the main historical documents and biblical manuscripts associated with the development of the Christian community in Jerusalem and Palestine.

Eusebius was also a top scholar who found himself in the very center of the earliest literature of Christianity. This is one main reason why the great textual scholar Origen earlier went to Aelia and to Caesarea in the first part of the third century, to do documentary research into literary texts of the biblical revelation. Eusebius followed in the footsteps of Origen with the wonderful opportunities he had to study the history of Christianity in the very heart its origins. I will show in a later chapter that the Library of Aelia was located in a city of Christians on the summit of the Mount of Olives. It was not actually in the Roman city of Aelia.

Jerusalem as Shown by Eusebius' Accounts

Let us look at the narratives of Eusebius concerning the state of the former Jerusalem and the Temple as he saw them in his day. He also recorded historical accounts in his references that show the circumstances in the hundred to two hundred years before his time. In the *Proof of the Gospel*, at various intervals he often referred to

²²² Eusebius said:

“Prominent at that period [early third century] were a number of learned churchmen, who penned to each other letters still surviving, and of easy access, as they have been preserved to our own time in the Library established at Aelia [Jerusalem] by the man who then presided over the church there, Alexander — the Library from which I myself have been able to bring together the materials for the work now at hand” (*Ecclesiastical History*, VI.20,1).

Eusebius would have been very knowledgeable of all affairs in Jerusalem and for the historical periods before him. His witness is invaluable.

the ruined state of Jerusalem and the Temple. What I will do in this book is present these eyewitness reports of Eusebius. It will be a revealing and rewarding exercise in historical study.

Eusebius' fullest description of the former Jerusalem and Temple is found in Book VIII, Chapter 3, sections 405 and 406. (Christians spelled "Zion" as "Sion.") Note what Eusebius records:

"The hill called Zion and Jerusalem, the buildings there, that is to say, the Temple, the Holy of Holies, the Altar, and whatever else was there dedicated to the glory of God, **have been utterly removed or shaken [down]**, *in fulfillment of the Word.*"²²³

Utter desolation has possessed the land [of Sion]. Their once famous Mount Sion instead of being as it once was, the center of study and education based on the divine prophecies, which the children of the Hebrews of old, their godly prophets, priests and national teachers loved to interpret, is a Roman farm like the rest of the country. Yea, with my own eyes I have seen the bulls plowing there [the whole area was plowed], and the sacred site sown with seed. And Jerusalem itself is become but a storehouse of its fruit of old days now destroyed, or better, as the Hebrew [of the Old Testament] has it, a stonequarry. So Aquila [an early second century translator of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek] says: 'Therefore for your sake the land of Sion shall be ploughed, and Jerusalem shall be a quarry of stone,' for being inhabited of men of foreign race it is even now like a quarry. All the inhabitants of the city choose stores from its ruins as they will [without restraint] for private as well as public buildings. And it is sad for the eyes to see stones from the Temple itself, and from its ancient sanctuary and holy place, used for the building of idol temples, and of theatres for the populace. These things are open for the eyes to see."²²⁴

The area of the Temple Mount according to the Jewish Mishnah was about 13 and a quarter acres, while Josephus said the Temple walls surrounding the Temple buildings enclosed just over 8 acres. [In contrast, the area of the Haram esh-Sharif is about 36 acres — a very different spot.] Jerome reported that Hadrian formerly turned much of the region of the actual Temple Mount into the city dump for Aelia, but by the time of Eusebius portions of it were being

²²³ Sect. 405.

²²⁴ Sect. 406.

farmed by Gentiles. Eusebius' eyewitness account shows the site of the Temple and the City of David was then a Roman farm plowed by cattle. This was a fact for all to observe. The mention of this shows the widespread understanding both among Jews and Gentiles of the prophecy uttered by Micah the Prophet. The prophet predicted:

“Therefore shall Sion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps [ruined rubble], and the mountain of the house [the Temple] as the high places of the forest [the Temple would become treeless or barren land].”²²⁵

What Eusebius did was quote the Greek Version (with a reference to Aquila) that gave a slightly different rendering from the original Hebrew. For example, the Hebrew word translated “heaps” (ruined rubble), Aquila translated as a quarry of stone. So denuded was the area of Sion and Jerusalem to become, according to Micah, that the region would resemble a site suitable for plowing with cattle.²²⁶

²²⁵ Micah 3:12.

²²⁶ The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. was so severe and thorough that the prophetic description by Micah 3:12 (that Sion and Jerusalem would be suitable only for plowing as a field), became a proverb among Jews and Gentiles from the second century onward to describe the condition of the ruined city. Indeed, there are Roman coins minted in the time of Hadrian that attest to the fact that even in the early second century, Jerusalem was so devastated that the city could be plowed with a team of cattle. One Roman coin issued by Hadrian (about 130 C.E.) shows his image on one side with the inscription “Imperator Caesar Trianus Hadrianus.” On the other side the emperor is shown plowing on the site of the city with a pair of cattle, and the inscription in Latin is “the colony of Aelia Capitolina has been founded.” In the background is one of the standards of the Tenth Legion carried in the procession. See Dan Bahat, *The Illustrated Atlas of Jerusalem*, p.61. Another Roman coin shows Hadrian with his image on one side and on the reverse Hadrian is seen plowing a furrow on the ruined city of Jerusalem (*ibid.*). It is known that the designation of a “furrow” (Latin: *pomerium*) on a monument or coin was often a symbol of the founding of a new city (Bahat, *ibid.*, p.60). It is not clear if this was meant in these coins concerning Jerusalem. It could mean that Hadrian was aware of the prophecy of Micah about Jerusalem being plowed where there was once a city, that he issued the coins to humiliate the Jews, that their capital city had been utterly destroyed and now only fit for the plow. Or, it could be the coins were merely designating the beginning of the new city of Aelia in place of Jerusalem. Dates are not given on the coins, so it is impossible to ascertain what the proper interpretation might be.

Indeed, for just over 200 years after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, Eusebius noticed in his day that stones were still being taken from the old site of Jerusalem to use in buildings in the City of Aelia. These remnant stones of the Temple and city were being taken and used in construction (or re-used from buildings in Aelia formerly built from Temple stones).

But what was the site of the Temple like in the time of Eusebius? The Temple Mount had become a Roman farm, planted with seed. This shows the region at that time was so barren of its former buildings (and bereft of the larger stones that made up the Temple and its walls) that cattle could easily plow the area for the planting of crops. The Temple region was nothing more than a patch of earth that could be plowed, planted and harvested.

This agrees precisely with a well-known Jewish and Arabic traditional story of two Gentile brothers who farmed the Temple Mount when it was an agricultural site. Though the narrative is folklore and fictional, it provides insight concerning the opinions of Jews and Arabs some 300 years ago who recognized that the Temple site was once farmed. (And, indeed, this is precisely what happened to the area for a period of 178 years between the time of Hadrian and the early years of Eusebius.) During this time eyewitness records keep referring to the prophecies that only a farm cottage, a temporary hut, or perhaps a tent, would occupy the region while its basic characteristic would be that of a farm. In about the year 225 C.E., Hippolytus said the prophecy of Isaiah 1:8 was very much fulfilled in regard to the Jerusalem and Temple site in his day. He said: "The daughter of Sion shall be left as a cottage [a ramshackle building] in a vineyard, and as a lodge [a temporary structure] in a garden of cucumbers [a patch of land suitable for farming]."²²⁷ The story of the Two Brothers fits into this period of time in a remarkable way. Three centuries ago the account was

Whatever the case, the coins are still excellent evidence that in the time of Hadrian, the original Jerusalem was in such a ruined state that cattle could plow the land where once there was the Jewish Temple and a thriving metropolitan area. Even though the Haram esh-Sharif remained with its walls, the areas of the Temple and the main city of Jerusalem were then being plowed.

²²⁷ Hippolytus, *Works*, II.30 Ante-Nicene Fathers (bracketed parts are mine).

known both in Muslim (Arabic) and in Jewish circles and this shows its wide acceptance. The story is as follows:

“The place where our glorious Temple was built had long been a field [a farm] owned by two brothers. One of them had a wife and children while the other had no wife or children. Yet they dwelt in a single house, wholehearted, at ease and rejoicing in the portion of land they had inherited from their father; and they plowed the field by the sweat of their brows. During one wheat harvest they bound up shocks in the field and beat out the ears and made two equal piles of the grain they had reaped, one pile for each of them; and they left them there in the field. That night the brother who had neither wife nor children lay on his bed and thought to himself: ‘I am all by myself and depending on nobody who is dependent on me for his daily bread. But my brother has a wife and children, so why should my portion be like his?’ So he rose in the middle of the night and stole like a thief and took sheaves from his own pile and placed them on his brother’s pile.

And his brother said to his wife: ‘It is not fair to divide the wheat in the field into two portions, half to me and half to my brother. My lot and fate is so much better than his, since God has given me a wife and children while he goes alone and has no pleasure or song or delights in anything but the grain he gathers in the field. Come with me, wife, and we will secretly add to his portion from our own.’ And they did so.

Next morning both men were astonished to see that their piles were equal as they had been at first. But they said nothing that day. Instead they went and did the same thing on the second night and the third and the fourth, and every morning they found that the heaps were equal. Then each of them made up his mind to investigate. When each went to do his deed at night, one brother met the other carrying the sheaves. Then they understood what they had been doing, and they embraced and kissed one another. And they gave thanks to God who had given each of them a brother who engaged in good deeds and went his just and upright way. That was the place that the Lord desired, the spot where the Two Brothers had thought and done the good deed. This is why it was blessed by the men of the earth, and the children of Israel chose it for building a House for the Lord.”²²⁸

²²⁸ The story is given in *Mimekor Yisrael*, Classical Jewish Folktales, collected by Micha Joseph Bin Gorion (Indiana University Press, 1990), pp.272–3.

The story is so quaint and touching the emotions that it could not have had its origin in pre-Solomonic times (that is, describing the first condition of Mount Moriah), else we would have several references to it in the abundant literature preserved by the Jews or Christians to the time of Constantine. But since the story was found both in Arabic and Jewish circles some 300 years ago, it would fit into the 170 year period from Hadrian to Diocletian. There are several eyewitness accounts that the area of the Holy Temple became a Roman farm in this period before Constantine.

And what a farm the Temple Mount had become! If the farm was located within the four walls of the Haram esh-Sharif, the owners could say they had the most protected and secure farm in the entire Roman Empire because the walls of the Haram surrounded it. If this were the case, surely there would be some reference to this unusual circumstance — a farm surrounded by four gigantic walls to protect it from invaders.

On the other hand, if the Haram was the encampment of the Tenth Legion, the circumstances become understandable. While the site of the former Temples did become a farm area (with many stones in its confines), that Roman farm was NOT in the region of the Haram esh-Sharif. The region of the Haram was unsuitable for a simple Roman farm, but it had many advantages for protecting important buildings or (as we know) armed forces of the Empire.

Jerusalem Became a Quarry of Stones

For the Temple Mount to become a farm, the thousands of ruined stones had to be carted away. This was done from the time of the building of the City of Aelia (130 C.E.) to the early years of Constantine (313 C.E.). This was the period when the region of Jerusalem became a quarry for stones. Most of the quarrying was done in the earliest period, just after the initial destruction of the City and Temple. Indeed, it was the great number of stones that led Emperor Hadrian in 130 C.E. to command they be used to build his brand new City of Aelia. When Aelia was being constructed in earnest, they had a treasure-trove of hewn-cut rectangular stones piled in heaps ready for re-use in the new buildings. This can be demonstrated because Eusebius cited the translation of Aquila to

support the fact that the Hebrew word translated “heaps” (which we read in the King James Version of Micah 3:12) was rendered by Aquila as a “quarry of stone.” This is a most important historical reference.

Why is Aquila’s translation significant? Because he was an eyewitness, and composed his version in the area of Palestine in the early part of the second century C.E. This makes Aquila a valuable witness to the condition of Jerusalem in this early period, and his translation is really a commentary on what Jerusalem was like in his time. He knew Jerusalem had become a “heap of stones,” used as a “quarry” to garner stones for building the City of Aelia and other surrounding cities. Even Eusebius, 150 years later, was observing some quarrying still being done. By the time of Eusebius, however, most of the quarrying had concluded because Sion (the Temple site itself) was then free of stones. It had been turned into a Roman farm and cattle were plowing its former courts. The Temple site was then fields of open land. But already in Hadrian’s time the area of the Temple and the main City of Jerusalem was even then being plowed.

Is it not interesting that during this entire period of building the City of Aelia and other regions nearby with stones from the Jerusalem “quarry,” no one touched the wonderful and gigantic stones still to be seen in the lower courses surrounding the Haram esh-Sharif? Why were those gigantic stones of the Haram off-limits to the people building Aelia? Why did they not use them? Surely some of those stones in the lower courses of the Haram would have been of great value in constructing other buildings in the new City of Aelia, especially for government edifices. But what do we find? The stones of the Haram were left untouched in their lower courses. Why would the people have avoided dismantling those colossal stones of the Haram? The answer is simple. It is because these stones were part of Fort Antonia, the Roman fort that housed the Tenth Legion unto 289 C.E.

References to Total Destruction in Eusebius

As far as Jewish Jerusalem and the Temple were concerned, there was not one stone left on another after Titus and the Tenth

Legion, using captive Jews, dismantled every vestige of the former Jerusalem and the Temple with all buildings and outer walls. Let us now read eyewitness accounts that will assure any reasonable person that not only were Jewish Jerusalem and the Temple utterly destroyed, but even the foundation stones of those buildings and walls were completely uprooted.

It will be instructive for us to record the numerous references Eusebius provided to show the thorough desolation and ruin of the City of Jerusalem and the Temple in his *Proof of the Gospel*. I will give a rundown of these essential references from the commencement of his book to its conclusion. There was no doubt in Eusebius' mind (who was, again, an eyewitness) that there was nothing left of any part of Jewish Jerusalem, the former Temple (or its outer walls). So devastated were those areas that Eusebius said when Christian pilgrims came to the area they avoided going into the former City of Jerusalem. There was nothing important for them to view there. They went instead to the Mount of Olives.

In the time of Eusebius (before Constantine), Christians went only to the top of the Mount of Olives to rendezvous around a cave in order to learn about the ruin of old Jerusalem they could see to the west. They found no reason whatever to enter that desolate region located west and south of the Kedron Valley or to enter the City of Aelia located farther west and north.²²⁹ Christians also did

²²⁹ Eusebius said:

“Believers in Christ all 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 rest there [on Olivet] that they may learn about the city being taken and devastated as the prophets foretold, and that they may worship at the Mount of Olives opposite to the city, whither the glory of the Lord migrated when it left the former city. ... to the cave that is shown there.” (*Proof of the Gospel*, Bk.VI, Ch.18, section 288).

Christians were coming from all over the Roman and Parthian worlds to assemble at a cave on the Mount of Olives. These early Christians showed no interest in any other site in the area of the City of Aelia or in the region of the Haram esh-Sharif. Only the Mount of Olives was of concern to them. Indeed, Christians lived only on the Mount of Olives until the time of Constantine. My book *Secrets of Golgotha* explains why early Christians showed interest only in Olivet.

not visit the Haram esh-Sharif. Though Eusebius and the Christian pilgrims were well aware of the Haram, they showed not the slightest interest in it. They knew the Haram had nothing to do with the Temple or its walls. This was because Eusebius consistently said the Temple and its walls were utterly destroyed.

Let us notice the many references Eusebius gave throughout his book *Proof of the Gospel*. He spoke only about the old areas of Jerusalem where the real Mount Zion was located and where the former Temple had its existence. He did not elaborate about the Aelia because in the time of Eusebius it was a bustling Roman city full of secular and heathen activities that did not interest Christian pilgrims. His references are to the condition of the original Zion and the actual Temple of Herod. The first statement from his *Prologue* is most instructive (all emphases in the following quotes will be mine). As far as Eusebius was concerned, the Temple site was then in extreme desolation.

“[I will explain] how their royal metropolis would be burned with fire, **their venerable and holy altar undergo the flames and extreme desolation**, their city be inhabited no longer by its old possessors but by races of other stock.”²³⁰

“And to this day it is forbidden for the children of the Hebrews outside the boundaries of their ruined mother city to sacrifice according to the law, to build a Temple or an altar, to anoint kings or priests, to celebrate the Mosaic gatherings and feasts, to be cleansed from pollution, to be loosed from offences, to bear gifts to God, or to propitiate Him according to the legal requirements.”²³¹

“The Romans besieged Jerusalem, and destroyed it and the Temple there.”²³²

“Jerusalem was besieged, the holy place [the Temple] and the altar by it and the worship conducted according to Mosaic ordinances **were destroyed**.”²³³

“[They] were exiled from their mother city, which **was destroyed**,

²³⁰ *Proof of the Gospel*, Bk.I, Ch.1, sect.6.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, Bk.I, Ch.6, sect.17.

²³² *Ibid.*, sect.18.

²³³ *Ibid.*, sect.18d.

where alone it was allowed to celebrate the Mosaic worship.”²³⁴

“The divine oracles foretold that the Advent of Christ and the call of the Gentiles would be accompanied by the total collapse and ruin of the whole Jewish race, and prophesied good fortune only for a scanty few easy to number, while their City with the Temple would be captured, and all its holy things taken away — *prophecies which have all been exactly fulfilled.*”²³⁵

“Sion ... has been left as a tent in a vineyard [as a portable structure in a country vineyard], as a hut in a garden of cucumbers [a ramshackle hut in a farming area], or as **anything that is more desolate than these**. And strangers devour the land before their eyes, now exacting tax and tribute, and now appropriating for themselves the land that belonged of old to the Jews. Yea, **and the beautiful Temple of their mother city was laid low** [it no longer stands] **being cast down** by alien peoples, and their cities were burned with fire, and Jerusalem became truly a besieged city.”²³⁶

“And then because **total destruction overtook them** ... when they were besieged by the Romans.”²³⁷

“Their ancient holy place, at any rate, and their Temple are to this day as much destroyed as Sodom.”²³⁸

The last comment deserves special attention. To Eusebius, the Temple was so destroyed that no remnant of it was standing in his day. This was a melancholy judgment by Eusebius. To be like “Sodom,” meant to be “thoroughly demolished.” Trying to discover the ruins of the Temple would be like searching for Sodom that disappeared from the surface of the earth. Using the word “Sodom” denotes a superlative destruction of the Temple in the eyes of Eusebius.

On the other hand, if one looked at the walls surrounding the present Haram esh-Sharif (plainly evident in the days of Eusebius), no one would imagine the stones in its lower courses were destroyed like Sodom. That is because the Haram esh-Sharif with its

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, Bk.I, Ch.7, sect.28.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, Bk.II, Ch.1, sect.44.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, Bk.II., Ch.3, sect.64.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, Bk.III, Ch.2, sect.99.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, Bk. V, Ch.23, sect.250.

outer walls was not a part of the former Temple, and Eusebius knew it. There is more.

“If you behold Jerusalem of old, the famous city of the Jewish race, her glory and her fruitfulness, despoiled now of her holy citizens and pious men. For after the coming of Christ she became as the prophet truly says without fruit or water **and quite deserted.**”²³⁹

“**Mount Sion was burned and left utterly desolate**, and the Mount of the House of God [the Temple] became as a grove of the wood [with natural trees springing up and nothing manmade left]. *If our own observation has any value*, we [Eusebius said] have seen in our own time Sion once so famous ploughed with yokes of oxen by the Romans and **utterly devastated**, and Jerusalem as the oracle says, deserted like a lodge [like a deserted temporary house].”²⁴⁰

“[This desertion occurred] through the siege that attacked Jerusalem after our Savior’s advent, **for the Temple was burned with fire not long after, and was reduced to extreme desolation** and the city was encircled by the chariots and camps of the enemy. ... *we see with our own eyes the fulfillment of the holy oracles.*”

Let me pause to comment. With his own eyes Eusebius said he witnessed this desolate condition of the Temple site, which was a Roman farm without any municipal buildings on the site. It was not only in ruin, but he assessed it as being extremely desolate. He did not say the Temple was subjected to “partial desolation” (as one expected were he speaking of the Haram esh-Sharif with its changes over the centuries), but Eusebius said the real Temple (with its buildings and walls) was subjected to “extreme desolation.” Or, as Eusebius asserted earlier, it was like Sodom, utterly destroyed.

This is precisely what Jesus said would happen to that sacred Sanctuary. Again, Eusebius was not referring to the four walls surrounding the Haram esh-Sharif with the 10,000 stones in place as in Jesus’ time, and still evident in Eusebius’ day. Indeed, they are still in their lower courses in pristine grandeur today. In no way could it be said the walls of the Haram underwent extreme desolation and resemble Sodom, like Eusebius as an eyewitness said the

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, Bk.VI, Ch.7, sect.265.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Bk.VI, Ch.13, sect 273.

Temple and walls underwent.

“[Eusebius said that had the nation repented] the stately beauty of their very Temple would not have become sand and thorns.”²⁴¹

“Sands and thorns!” This description does not bring to mind a pleasant scene. These eyewitness appraisals do not in any manner describe those enormous walls (or the interior) of the Haram. In Eusebius’ next reference the very opposite was the case in regard to the Temple.

“The evidence of what we can even now see. ... the siege of Jerusalem, and the total destruction of their ancient Temple, and the settling of foreign races on their land.”²⁴²

Referring to a particular prophecy, Eusebius said:

“The Roman rulers are meant, who governed the nation [of Judaea] from that time, and **who destroyed the city of Jerusalem itself, and its ancient venerable Temple.** For they [Jerusalem and the Temple] were cut off by them as by a flood, and were at once involved in destruction until the war was concluded, *so that the prophecy was fulfilled and they [Jerusalem and the Temple] suffered utter desolation.*”²⁴³

“The hill called Sion and Jerusalem, the buildings there, the Temple, the Holy of Holies, the Altar, and whatever else there was dedicated to the glory of God, **[has] been utterly removed or shaken [down], in fulfillment of the Word.**”²⁴⁴

Before the time of Eusebius, all of Jewish Jerusalem was destroyed, including the former three fortresses known as Phasael, Hippicus and Mariamne in that part of Sion called the “Upper City.” They, and all other buildings in Jewish Jerusalem had been “utterly removed or shaken down.” The historian is not finished with his description of the ruin of the Temple and Jerusalem.

“**[The Temple]** after its burning by the Babylonians, it was not burned again till in the time of Titus and Vespasian, the Roman emperors, **it was utterly destroyed by fire.**”²⁴⁵

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Bk.VII, Ch.1, sect.327.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, Bk.VII., Ch.1, sect.327d.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, Bk.VIII, Ch.2, sect.399.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Bk.VIII, Ch.3, sect.405.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Bk.VIII, Ch.4, sect.411.

Again note the Temple was NOT simply “ruined,” it was “utterly destroyed.”

“The lamentation and wailing was predicted for the Jews, and **the burning of the Temple and its utter desolation, can also be seen even now [by eyewitnesses] to have occurred according to the prediction [of Jesus].**”²⁴⁶

Remember, the prophecy of Jesus stated that not one stone would be left on top another of the Inner or Outer Temple or of its walls that surrounded it. And Eusebius said his prophecy was an accurate description of the present state of affairs. Or, as Eusebius stated to the end of *The Proof of the Gospel*:

“From that day to this, God turned their feasts into mourning, despoiled them of their famous mother city, **and destroyed the Holy Temple therein** when Titus and Vespasian were emperors of Rome.”²⁴⁷

This ends Eusebius’ comments about the total destruction of the City of Jerusalem and the Temple in *The Proof of the Gospel*, but this does not end Eusebius’ historical evaluation of the Temple’s ruin. He made some equally cogent remarks about thirty-five years later at the dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. In the presence of many assembled bishops who were then in Jerusalem for the celebration, he said:

“The entire Jewish people were scattered by an unseen power [the angelic power in charge of the Romans], their royal seat was utterly removed, **and their very Temple with its holy things, were leveled with the ground....** Respecting the Temple of those wicked men, our Savior said: ‘Your house is left unto you desolate:’ and, ‘*There shall not be left one stone upon another in this place, that shall not be thrown down*’.”²⁴⁸

This reference is further evidence that Christians in the fourth century were NOT pointing to the Haram esh-Sharif with its stones in place and saying that Christ’s prophecy (“there shall not be left one stone upon another in this place”) was obviously fulfilled. The

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Bk.VIII, Ch.4, sect.412.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Bk.X, Ch.6, sect.486–7.

²⁴⁸ *The Oration of Eusebius*, Ch.XVII, sect.8.

state of the Haram would have proved just the opposite. Yet, Eusebius states with dogmatism that the prophecy was completely fulfilled. This is because he and the assembled bishops at Jerusalem knew the Haram esh-Sharif was not the remains of the walls of the former Temple.

Also, in a sermon that he gave at the same dedication in Jerusalem, Eusebius stated to the assembled bishops.

“[The Romans] burned the truly divine sanctuary of God with fire, and profaned to the ground the Tabernacle of His name. Then they buried the miserable one [the Temple] with heaps of earth, that destroyed every hope of deliverance.”²⁴⁹

The whole area of the Temple had become nothing but “heaps of earth.” Not a stone of the Temple’s interior or exterior walls was to be seen above ground. Eusebius (an eyewitness to the state of the Temple site from the last part of the third to the first part of the fourth century) said to the assembled bishops at the Jerusalem conference that all remnants of the former Temple were “buried underground.” He said this to bishops then in Jerusalem who were witnessing for themselves that Eusebius’ comments were accurate. Eusebius also stated in his *“Life of Constantine the Great”* that the former City of Jerusalem that had existed in the time of Jesus “had experienced the last extremity of desolation.”²⁵⁰

While rebuilding activities started again in the time of Constantine, all that could be seen at the Temple site and the area of the Temple Mount were “heaps of earth.”

These statements by Eusebius are eyewitness accounts written or stated before assembled bishops of the Church then meeting

²⁴⁹ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Bk. X.4,58. New research shows this sermon of Eusebius was delivered at the dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem in the year 336 C.E. It was formerly thought the sermon was given in Tyre in 316 C.E. Whatever the case, the statement by Eusebius in front of many dignitaries who were very familiar with Jerusalem in their time is most important. It shows that all were aware nothing was left standing of the Temple or its “Tabernacle” walls (that is, its outward walls) that surrounded the courts of the Temple. All of the buildings of the Temple and its walls had been thrown to the ground and the area buried under “heaps of earth.”

²⁵⁰ See *“Life of Constantine,”* section “Jerusalem Assembly.”

together in Jerusalem. This makes him and his evaluation to be important witnesses because he was also born in Palestine and he had lived in the area of Jerusalem (not more than 70 miles away). As a professional historian, Eusebius was very familiar with former events associated with Jerusalem and the Jewish people because of his ardent interest and studies into those subjects. Remember, Eusebius was not only an historian but a librarian and extremely concerned with the history of Jerusalem, the Temple and the predictions of Jesus. His numerous statements about the complete ruin of the Temple and its walls (that he claimed to see with his own eyes and in the presence of many bishops assembled in Jerusalem) affirm there was nothing left in his day of Jewish Jerusalem or the Temple of Herod. They were "destroyed" and "in ruins." The Temple was like "Sodom," and "heaps of earth."

The accounts of Eusebius and others cited earlier make certain that the Haram esh-Sharif could not in any way qualify as the Temple remains that Eusebius and his contemporaries knew. The entire Temple and its outer walls by Eusebius' time was ruined like Sodom. To make the area productive for grain and vegetables, it had to be cultivated with cattle pulling plows. Parts of it were also sandy and had thorns. It is best described at the beginning of the fourth century as a Roman farm where the area was sown with seed for the growing of cucumbers and grain. And recall there are Roman coins as early as the second century showing the area of Jerusalem being plowed as Eusebius said.²⁵¹

As a matter of fact, sixty years after the death of Eusebius, we have the words of Gregory of Nyssa on the utter ruin of Jerusalem and the Temple:

"Where then are those palaces? where is the Temple? where are the walls? where are the defenses of the towers? where is the power of the Israelites? were not they scattered in different quarters over almost the whole world? and in their overthrow the palaces also were brought to ruin."²⁵²

But wait a minute! Without doubt, Titus allowed the more than

²⁵¹ Bahat, *Illustrated Atlas of Jerusalem*, pp.60–61.

²⁵² Gregory of Nyssa, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, s.2, vol. 5 (29), p.804.

10,000 stones of the four walls of the Haram to remain in their original glory in their lower courses. This means emperor Trajan also left them there. This also means Hadrian also left them there. Even Constantine left them there. And in the time of Gregory of Nyssa 10,000 stones of the walls of the Haram esh-Sharif were there in all their glory (even to our modern times).

When Gregory said: “where is the Temple? where are the walls? where are the defenses of the towers?” he was NOT talking about the majestic structure called the Haram esh-Sharif with colossal walls standing in their lower courses! Yes, the walls of the Haram were there in Gregory’s time for all to see. But, Gregory did not think for a moment the walls of the Haram had anything to do with the Temple and its walls, or with the walls of Jewish Jerusalem, or with the Jewish fortresses of Phasael, Hippicus and Mariamne, completely destroyed by Titus in 70–73 C.E. All of this clearly shows that Gregory knew the Haram was not a part of Jewish Jerusalem.

According to Gregory, everything of former Jerusalem disappeared from the surface of the earth. All its towers were destroyed. This included the “local towers” (the fortresses) of Phasael, Hippicus and Mariamne. Even they were nowhere to be found. Not a vestige of the original palaces or walls could be seen.

There is a further testimony of Gregory. He said:

“Up to the time of the manifestation of Christ the royal palaces in Jerusalem were in all their splendor: there was their far-famed Temple, ... [but now] no traces even of their Temple can be recognized, and their splendid city has been left in ruins, so that there remains to the Jews nothing of the ancient institutions; while by the command of those who rule over them the very ground of Jerusalem which they so venerated is forbidden to them.”²⁵³

This is an interesting statement by Gregory of Nyssa, given near the end of the fourth century, that “no traces of their Temple can be recognized.” Of course, he meant the Temple of Herod that Jesus said would be destroyed.²⁵⁴ Indeed, from the other quotes I have

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.940.

²⁵⁴ There is a negative account that has great bearing on the issue of the walls

given above of eyewitnesses from the time of Barnabas (c. 85 C.E.) to this observation of Gregory, one must admit they were accurate in their appraisals and observations. On the other hand, while these eyewitnesses attested to the utter ruin of the Temple and its walls, the lower courses of walls around the Haram were nevertheless standing in awesome grandeur (throughout that whole period of time and basically as we observe them today). But in the fourth century, as far as Herod's Temple was concerned: **"no traces of their Temple can be recognized."** It is no wonder that archaeologists today cannot find even the foundational outline of the former Temple and its walls. Those stones were hauled away for use in other buildings, and **not a trace of the Holy Temple of Herod could be recognized in the late fourth century.**

There is more even in the fifth century. In 416 C.E., Theodoret went to Jerusalem. He looked at the southeast area where the former Jerusalem was situated near the Gihon Spring (where all the Temples were located). *"With my own eyes,"* he writes,

"I have seen that desolation. The prediction [of Jesus] rang in my ears when I saw the fulfillment before my eyes and I lauded and worshipped the truth."²⁵⁵

These accounts show (and there are numerous others I have not given) that the prophecy of Jesus is reliable and accurate. If Jesus was correct in his prophecies, then the Harem esh-Sharif with its

of the Harem esh-Sharif supposedly being the remains of the Temple of Herod. If indeed, the 10,000 stones of the Haram were those left from the Temple of Herod, why is it that Julian the Apostate in the middle of the fourth century (an advocate for the return of the Roman Empire to Hellenism, and a prominent opponent of Jesus and His doctrines) said not one word about the so-called FAILURE of the prophecies of Jesus so evident to the emperor had the walls of the Haram been the walls of the Temple. Julian gave permission for Jewish authorities to rebuild the Temple (which they attempted in 362 C.E.) and he felt no compunction whatever to call attention to the remaining 10,000 stones of the Haram as a witness against Jesus because he and the Jewish elders were well aware the Haram was NOT the ruins of the Temple of Herod. As I will show, Christians in the middle of the fourth century knew the Haram was the *Praetorium* where Jesus was taken before Pilate. They knew the Haram to be the ruin of Fort Antonia.

²⁵⁵ Theodoret, *Graec. Affect. Car. 1090*, see further *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, s.2, Prolegomena vol. 3 (27), p.3.

four walls and 10,000 stones still intact (occupying a huge area that the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California or four Coliseums in Rome could comfortably fit within²⁵⁶) cannot be the walls and stones of the Temple that the eyewitnesses describe as thoroughly ruined and devastated beyond recognition.

In citing the above accounts about the condition of the Temple and complete ruin of the former city of Jewish Jerusalem, all of us are well aware that the Haram esh-Sharif continues to exist in all its glory. This retention of the Haram (since most consider it to be the Temple site) has caused problems for people who respect the prophecies of Jesus.

Haram esh-Sharif Conspicuous for Its Walls

The permanence of the walls around the Haram provoked two major explanations that modern scholars and theologians use to validate the reliability of the predictions of Jesus. The first explanation is the usual one given by conservative scholars. They state that the prophecies of Jesus did not refer to the outer walls of the Temple (like those surrounding the Haram), but only to the inner walls and other buildings that made up the interior Temple. They state this answer despite the fact that Jesus and his apostles were viewing the outer walls of the Temple directly in front of them when Jesus made his predictions.²⁵⁷ Some have other explanations. If people are not fond of the conservative account, there is also a solution provided by “liberal” theologians.

Liberal theologians normally do not take Jesus’ prophecies in a literal sense even though they accept the validity of his predictions in a general way. Usual liberal exegesis centers around the rationale that Josephus and Jesus consistently used “exaggerations” in their teachings. Though Jesus may actually have said every stone comprising the interior and exterior Temple structures would be destroyed (and all Jewish Jerusalem leveled to the ground), these

²⁵⁶ Dr. David Jacobson in *Biblical Archaeology Review*, July/August 1990, p.44 states that “the precinct to the goddess Athena on the Acropolis of Athens — including the famous Parthenon — occupies barely a fifth of the area [of the Haram in Jerusalem].”

²⁵⁷ Mark 13:1–2.

were statements that liberal Christian scholars believed to be hyperboles or “Semitic exaggerations” without empirical justification for being historically true. Some scholars who use a combination of the “conservative” definition and the “liberal,” in an attempt to satisfy both modern camps.

Up to 1997 (before I understood the Haram esh-Sharif was Fort Antonia), I accepted the common explanation given by conservative Christian scholars for the retention of the 10,000 stones in the walls around the Haram (which are thought to be the external walls of the Temple). If that evaluation was true, then the only solution to justify the prophecies was that Jesus was speaking solely about the interior Temple and interior stones that made up the walls within the boundaries of the Haram, but not the walls that encompassed the Haram. This method allowed theologians to exclude the exterior walls from the predictions of Jesus.

The truth is, however, these inventions of eliminating the outer walls of the Temple to justify Jesus’ predictions (or that he was using Semitic exaggeration) will not hold when all biblical evidence is surveyed. It is a conspicuous and striking circumstance that these so-called modern solutions provided by experts are never found in interpretations of early scholars, theologians and travelers who visited Jerusalem from 85 C.E. (the time of Barnabas) to the start of the sixth century. Within the 500 years after the ruin of Herod’s Temple, there is not the slightest hint from any scholar, historian or eyewitness, that they used either modern explanation to justify Jesus’ prophecy for the continued existence of the 10,000 stones making up the four walls of the Haram. There is no reference to any of our modern interpretations. The fact is, all the ancients knew that all the walls of the former Temple of Herod were thoroughly destroyed, just as Jesus predicted.

Yet, all people today who respect the prophecies of Jesus about the overthrow of the Temple and complete destruction of the City of Jerusalem, are forced to give the modern conservative or the liberal interpretation (and some give both) about those predictions. Israeli guides use either view or both. Christian guides do the same thing. Archaeologists, historians or even theologians feel it necessary to engage in the same maneuver. Even preachers, pastors of

churches, evangelists, priests, cardinals and Popes feel obliged to repeat the same modern interpretations. Rabbis or Muslim Imams, who might respect the prophecies of Jesus, nevertheless say the same thing. All rely on these modern explanations to demonstrate why the 10,000 stones are still in the four walls of the Haram esh-Sharif. All are wrong — because they accept those four walls as once surrounding the Temple of God in Jerusalem.

Yes, all modern commentators of all religious persuasions adopt these explanations to justify the retention of those colossal stones around the Haram. But recall that none of the eyewitness accounts of early scholars and theologians (from 85 C.E. to the early sixth century), ever used these normal explanations that conservative and liberal scholars presently advocate. That's right. There is not the slightest hint that early scholars felt the need to explain the 10,000 set stones around the Haram to make Jesus' prophecies reliable.

Why did they not explain the fact of the continued walls around the Haram esh-Sharif? The truth is, they did not feel it necessary because all of them knew the Haram esh-Sharif WAS NOT the building associated with the Temple of God at Jerusalem. They knew it was the Roman Fort Antonia, the home of the Tenth Legion. As for the original Temple site, it was over and near the Gihon Spring and remained *desolate* of normal buildings until the time of the Edict of Milan in 313 C.E. In the next chapters I will explain these matters in detail.

Chapter 12

RUINS OF THE TEMPLE IN SOUTHEASTERN JERUSALEM

FROM THE FOURTH CENTURY to today, as I have shown in the past chapters, there were *eleven* different spots in Jerusalem that authorities selected as the location of the Temple (especially the Altar and the Holy of Holies). That's right! As many as *eleven locations* have been sanctified or accepted over the centuries. But only *ONE* is correct! That proper site was shown by Palestinian Jews in the time of Omar (in 638 C.E.) as being in the *southern* area of Jerusalem near the Gihon Spring. It was at the time the city dump. There were, however, some few ruins at the area during the period from 325 to 638 C.E. when Omar, the Second Caliph, took over Jerusalem. What were those ruins in the *southeastern* region and who were the parties responsible for building them?

Understand that from the destruction of Herod's Temple in 70 C.E. until the Edict of Milan in 313 C.E. (an edict of emancipation by Constantine and Licinius, the two emperors of Rome), we have

some thirty eyewitness reports (as given previously) that not a single stone of the inner Temple buildings or the external walls surrounding the Temple courts was left standing. The eyewitness evidence is universal that the "Temple Mount" was left derelict of any permanent buildings from the time of Hadrian (135 C.E.) to the Edict of Milan (313 C.E.). True, there are indications of huts or tents being on the site, and in 303 C.E. we have Eusebius giving eyewitness evidence that the Temple Mount was then a Roman farm being plowed by oxen, but clearly it was destitute of any activities to rebuild any part of the Temple or associated buildings.

All of this changed, and changed drastically, with the eyewitness account of the Bordeaux Pilgrim given in 333 C.E. He spoke of what looked to him like a Temple and altar, a House of Hezekiah, a pinnacle of the Temple and other adjacent structures that only indicated recent building activity that Jewish authorities had undertaken. Indeed, there was a great deal of building activity on the Temple Mount from 313 C.E. until the Nicean Council held by Constantine in 325 C.E. How did those *new* buildings come into existence within those 12 years? But before we can understand how a *new* Temple and other buildings came to be started on the Temple Mount in the early fourth century, we must realize that *before* the Edict of Milan in 313 C.E., the Temple Mount was vacant of any former buildings from the time of Herod.

The Temple Mount Had Been Absent of Buildings

The Temple site from the time of Hadrian (135 C.E.) to Constantine (313 C.E.) was destitute of any normal buildings or structures. But in 333 C.E. the Bordeaux Pilgrim saw what he called a "Temple" and several other buildings located directly over and around the true Temple Mount. Some fresh construction had been done by the Jews. Remember what Eusebius said as an eyewitness about the complete destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem. This Christian historian was born in Palestine and wrote in the late third and the beginning of the fourth century. He was the foremost historian of the Christian community and curator of the Library of Caesarea, adjacent to Jerusalem. Eusebius' fullest description of the former Jerusalem and Temple is found in Book

VIII, Chapter 3, sections 405 and 406 which he wrote in 303 C.E. Note these quotes from Eusebius out of the many he records.

“The hill called Sion and Jerusalem, the buildings there, that is to say, the Temple, the Holy of Holies, the Altar, and whatever else was there dedicated to the glory of God, **have been utterly removed or shaken [down]**, in fulfillment of the Word.”²⁵⁸

“Their ancient holy place, at any rate, and their Temple are to this day as much destroyed as Sodom.”²⁵⁹

The Temple buildings were all leveled without a stone remaining on top another, and the area was like “Sodom” in its utter destruction. Nothing was left standing. Indeed, there was no remnant of a “Western Wall” of the Holy of Holies left intact for Jewish authorities to anoint and to pray around. After the Jewish war with Hadrian in 132 to 135 C.E., the emperor in revenge against the Jews turned the area of the Temple into the city dump of his new City of Aelia. Recall what Jerome (who lived in Bethlehem in the late fourth and early fifth centuries) recorded in his *Commentary* on Isaiah 64:11. Jerome first quoted the verse, then commented.

“Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, **is burned up with fire**; and all our pleasant things **are laid waste**”: and the Temple which earned reverence throughout the world **has become the refuse dump** of the new city whose founder [Hadrian] called it Aelia [that is, Hadrian called his new city Aelia Capitolina].”²⁶⁰

Hadrian converted the former Temple site into the city dump to humiliate the Jews. It remained in that condition until some Romans about a hundred and fifty years later saw the potential of the site for farming. They cleared the remaining ruined stones from the region and turned the area into a Roman farm. There was nothing left of the Temple when Eusebius described the site. To Eusebius, the former Sanctuary had become “like Sodom.” But this bucolic condition was soon to end. The political position of Jews

²⁵⁸ Sect. 405.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Bk. V, Ch.23, sect.250.

²⁶⁰ Quoted with notes and commentary by Prof. Moshe Gil in *A History of Palestine 634–1099*, p.67, n.70.

improved and the Jews were given permission (or so *they* thought was permission) to rebuild the Temple and the corollary buildings that supported the divine house. A major concession was given to the Jews in the year 313 C.E.

In 313 C.E. a major historical event took place that was interpreted by Jewish authorities as consent from the emperors of Rome to rebuild their Temple and adjacent buildings in the spot over and around the Gihon Spring. This historical event was prompted by the Edict of Milan by Constantine and Licinius in 313 C.E. Let us notice what happened.

The Importance of the Edict of Milan

Later Jewish historians looked on the Edict of Milan of 313 C.E. as having disastrous consequences for Jewish people in the succeeding centuries, and this is a correct evaluation. The first twelve years after Constantine and Licinius signed the Edict, the Jewish people in Palestine were under the sole authority of Licinius in a *de facto* sense. During this time great strides were made by Jewish authorities for Jewish people to return to Jerusalem and to build several buildings. From the Edict of Milan to 325 C.E., the Jews built many buildings on or near the Temple Mount. Many Jews flocked to Jerusalem, and began to construct many buildings. As Professor Mazar stated: there was “*an orgy* of building unmatched in the history of the country.” The new Jewish settlers in Jerusalem were most interested in showing a major Jewish influence in the holy city. They concentrated their building enterprises at or near the former site of the Temple,²⁶¹ and in the Upper City

²⁶¹ In Jerusalem after the Edict in 313 C.E., Jews who returned to Jerusalem prospered until the Council of Nicea in 325 C.E. That is when Constantine had his falling out with Jewish authorities. We are told in a tenth century work by Euty chius (Ibn Batriq), patriarch of Alexandria, that Constantine again forbade the Jews from living in Jerusalem or even to stay within the city as Emperor Hadrian had done (Euty chius, *Annales* I, 446 PG 3, c.1012). But we have clear evidence that Helena, the mother of Constantine, brought Jews to Jerusalem to council her on the whereabouts of Christ’s tomb and all parties cooperated with one another in that quest (Paulinus of Nola, Letter 31.5). There was not much outward persecution of the Jewish population by Constantine. Indeed, as Norman F. Cantor records: “It is possible that Helena, the mother of Constantine I

on the southwest hill. They were especially active in that part of Jerusalem located over and near the Gihon Spring. This is the region where the Temples were located.

The fact is, Jews took advantage of the wording of the Edict of Milan, at first interpreted by all as ecumenical and in favor of all religious sects, that Jews as well as other religions were to be reckoned on an equal level with Christians. Though the Edict itself was primarily intended for Christians, its ecumenical ambiguity gave others in the Empire the appearance of equal *de jure* rights of inclusion. It was interpreted as being particularly beneficial to the Jews in Jerusalem where Licinius had prime control. The eastern emperor was not as favorably inclined to Christian belief as Constantine. In the later part of his reign, Licinius progressively disfavored Christians while giving more patronage and benefits to pagans and Jews.

Jewish people reaped many favors during that brief period of twelve years in which Licinius was in command in Jerusalem and the East. Let us first take a look at the Edit of Milan. I will give an edited portion that shows the favorable conditions that Jews would — and did — interpret as giving them authority to purchase lands, construct buildings and reside once again in Jerusalem after being banned from living there for almost 200 years.

Look closely at the wording of the Edict of Milan. Though at points ambiguous as far as Jews are concerned, it is easy to see the enthusiasm, at first, Jewish people had at its promulgation. I emphasize parts in the Edict of Milan that Jews would have noted as applying to them in a special sense:

... was herself Jewish. She came from among the teeming urban masses in Asia Minor, where she had been a serving maid at a tavern" (*The Sacred Chain*, p.155). Cyril, the Archbishop of Jerusalem shows, that from around 340 to 360 C.E. Jewish people regularly encountered Christians within the City of Jerusalem. Cyril gave twenty-three lectures inside the newly built Church of the Holy Sepulchre instructing top Christians in Jerusalem how to discuss the principles of Christianity with "Jews, Samaritans and Gentiles" (Cyril, *Procatechesis*, 10). Throughout the lectures Cyril takes it for granted there were Jews in Jerusalem who could be engaged in dialogue by Christians, see Lecture XIII,37; XV,15).

“Already a long time ago, being anxious that freedom of worship ought not to be denied, but that *EVERYONE* should be given liberty in his mind and inclination to concern himself with divine matters, each according to his own preference, we bade the Christians to observe the faith of their own sect and worship. But since many and various conditions seemed to be clearly added in that rescript, in which liberty was conceded to the same persons, it may have happened that some were shortly afterwards inhibited from such observance.

When both I, Constantine Augustus, and I, Licinius Augustus, met under happy circumstances at Milan, and discussed all matters that concerned the public good and welfare, we believed that this thing, among others, which we saw would be beneficial to many people, should be regulated first of all so that reverence for the divinity was reserved, namely, to give both the Christians *AND ALL MEN* free choice to follow the religion which each one would, so that *WHATEVER DIVINITY THERE EXISTS* in the heavenly seat, might be appeased and propitious to us and to all those who are placed under our authority. Therefore, we believed that this policy was to be adopted on a salutary and most just basis, so that we decided that no one should be denied the opportunity of devoting himself either to the cult of the Christians *OR TO WHATEVER RELIGION HE HIMSELF FELT MOST SUITABLE FOR HIMSELF*, so that the highest Divinity, whose religion we obey with free minds, can exhibit to us in all things His customary favor and benevolence.... Your Excellency understands that, for the sake of peace in our time, free and open liberty of religion or cult has been similarly granted *TO OTHERS ALSO*, in order that every individual may have *UNRESTRAINED OPPORTUNITY TO PURSUE WHAT WORSHIP HE CHOOSES*. We have done this that it may not appear that we have in any way diminished any cult *OR ANY RELIGION*....

But that an outline of this decree of our kindness may come to the knowledge of all, it will be your duty to publish everywhere these ordinances, set out in an edict of yours, and to bring them to the knowledge *OF ALL*, in order that the decreeing of this our *kindness MAY NOT POSSIBLY ESCAPE THE NOTICE OF ANYONE*.²⁶²

It will also be profitable to record a portion of the Decree by Maximinus Daia in his response to the Edict of Milan in 313 C.E.:

²⁶² Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, X, v, 2–14.

“The Emperor Caesar Gaius Valerius Maximinus Germanicus, Sarmaticus, Pius Felix Invictus Augustus.... Last year we addressed letters to the governors of all the provinces and laid down the law that if *ANYONE* wished to follow such custom or the same observance of worship, he should persist unimpeded in his purpose, and *THAT HE SHOULD NOT BE HINDERED OR PREVENTED* by anyone and that they should have ample opportunity to do, without any fear and suspicion, as they please. But even now it could not escape our notice that some of the judges wrongly interpreted our orders, and were instrumental in that our people had doubts concerning our commands, and caused them to go rather hesitantly to those religious observances which were pleasing to them. In order, therefore, that for the future all suspicion and uncertainty arising from their fear should be removed, we have decreed that this ordinance be published, so that it may be manifest to all that those who wish to follow this sect and worship are permitted, by virtue of this our bounty, as each of them wishes or finds it to his liking, to join the worship which they choose to make their religious observance. Permission has also been given *THAT THEY BUILD THE LORD'S HOUSES.*”²⁶³

Note in this latter decree that permission was given to build “The Lord’s Houses.” In Christian circles, this was an indication that new churches could once again be constructed. It was common in some Christian societies to call churches “Lord’s Houses.” But to Jews such permission meant only one thing. To the Jewish way of looking at things, there could only ONE “Lord’s House” — and that “House of the Lord” was the Temple. Jewish authorities could well have thought that this allowance in interpreting the Edict of Milan leaned heavily in the direction that they (in the ecumenical spirit of the times) might make a successful bid to rebuild the Holy Temple of God. Indeed, this is precisely what they did while Licinius ruled in the east. So, from 313 to 324 C.E. Jewish authorities were busy building a new Temple (with corollary structures) and also built seven synagogues to accommodate the influx of Jews returning to Jerusalem.

Of course, Licinius was succeeded by Constantine in 324 C.E. How were the Jews to interpret the wishes of Constantine now that

²⁶³ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, IX, x, 7–11.

he was sole emperor? At first, everything appeared to remain just fine. This is because at the exultation Constantine displayed at the defeat of Licinius in the east, the emperor composed a prayer to God that became a type of decree. In it Constantine stated without equivocation that he was giving permission to build “the House of God” (the Temple) in Jerusalem. Let us note that prayer (and decree) Eusebius recorded in his *Life of Constantine*.

Constantine Allowed the Rebuilding of the Temple

When Emperor Constantine became sole ruler of the Roman Empire by defeating Licinius in 324 C.E., he issued a decree to God’s “eastern nations” [all eastern nations in the Empire *including the Jews*] which contained his prayer to God for “**the restoration of thy most holy dwelling place**” [the House of God or the Temple] which “profane and impious men have defiled by the contamination of violence.”²⁶⁴ And, so no one could misinterpret, Constantine in the next section of his prayer contrasted the irrelevance of non-Christian temples to the spiritual Temple of the heart (using the apostle Paul’s analogy of the Christian *ekklesia* as the “Temple of God”). He wished to restore, Constantine said, that spiritual Temple through Christianity that is “according to nature” or “as our own natural possession.” This was the glorious edifice of God’s truth because each Christian was reckoned by God as being a Temple of God. In spite of this, and in contrast, he said:

“With regard to those [eastern nations *including the Jews*] who will hold themselves aloof from us, **let them have, if they please, their temples of lies**: we have the glorious edifice of thy truth which thou [God] has given us as our own natural possession.”²⁶⁵

The Jewish authorities took this prayer/decreed literally. To them it signified a definite permission (albeit given by Constantine with reluctance and disdain) to “have, if they please, their Temple.” The Jewish nation rejoiced exceedingly because they — as well as the civil and military authorities of the imperial government in the east — interpreted this as permission for not only pagan temples to be

²⁶⁴ Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, II.55.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, II.56.

built or re-built, but that the Jews, as an “eastern people,” could rebuild their Temple at Jerusalem.

The Jews Were Not Able to Finish their Temple

Within a year, however, the efforts by Jewish authorities for the previous twelve years to build the Temple and the concomitant structures necessary for the Temple to function properly, came to an end. Constantine called for all Christian bishops to assemble in Nicea across the Bosphorus from the new city of Constantinople that he intended to build. At that conference, the Christian authorities had serious talks with Constantine about the Jews and the new Temple they were constructing. They expressed deep concern and displeasure about Constantine’s allowance to Jews to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. The majority of the bishops must have been violently opposed, because they were able to convince Constantine to rescind permission for the Jews to continue the Temple reconstruction.

With advice from his Christian bishops, Constantine developed a hostile attitude towards anything Jewish, and this included his decree of a year earlier that the Temple of God could be rebuilt in Jerusalem. Thus, at the Council of Nicaea he reversed his showing any ecumenical spirit to the Jews. From 325 C.E. onwards, Constantine said: “Let us have nothing to do with the detestable Jewish crowd.”²⁶⁴

And what happened? When the Jews in Jerusalem got the first decree of Constantine in 324 C.E. that the Temple of God could be rebuilt, they tried immediately to put the finishing touches on its reconstruction. They had already completed several buildings in the area of the Temple Mount (as I will soon show). But by late 325 C.E., Constantine’s mind had changed radically.

He ordered a termination to all building activities on the Temple. But, instead of simply commanding Jewish authorities to cease construction, he went beyond such civil actions and resorted to a brutal inhumane act. To humiliate the Jews (and this is the only main reason that he invoked the command), and end their undertaking, he was told by his ecclesiastical advisors that Old Testa-

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*,

ment laws forbade anyone disfigured in the flesh in any manner from entering the Holy Temple or have anything to do with it. So Constantine ordered all Jews working on the Temple (most were priests) to have their ears cut off. And this is what was performed on the Jewish men. This heinous disfigurement of the Jewish builders effectively put a stop to that attempt to rebuild the Temple in 325 C.E. The account is recorded in the writings of John Chrysostom.²⁶⁷ The narrative makes sense in every way and there is no reason for denying its veracity.

We will soon observe this left some completed houses, a palace, and an almost finished Temple on the Temple Mount. These were NOT remnants from the Temple of Herod, completely destroyed some 255 years before. There was not a scrap of Herod's Temple left intact after 70 C.E. But now on the Temple Mount were several completed buildings and an almost finished Temple in full view of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. What happened to these buildings has not been clearly recorded in history. We do know that Helena, the mother of Constantine (according to Muslim historical records who claimed to receive them from earlier Christian and Jewish sources), ordered the area returned to be the city dump as Jerome reported had occurred in the time of Hadrian almost 200 years before.²⁶⁸

The return of the Temple Mount to a city dump would have caused any Jewish buildings recently constructed not to be maintained and some may well have been torn down by order of Roman authorities. However, seven years after Constantine ordered the Jews to stop construction, we have the eyewitness report of a Christian pilgrim (the Bordeaux Pilgrim). He viewed the area in 333 C.E. and reported a Sanctuary standing on the Temple Mount where Solomon built his Temple, along with other buildings the Jewish authorities recently constructed (as we now know), over the

²⁶⁷ John Chrysostom, *Against Judaizing*, Disc.V. 10; VI.2.

²⁶⁸ Moshe Gil in his extensive work of research *A History of Palestine 634-1099*, p.65, approvingly (by his parentheses) states: "According to Muslim tradition (and there is no reason to doubt it), the Byzantines turned the Temple Mount into Jerusalem's refuse dump from the time of Helena, the mother of Constantine."

twelve years from the Edict of Milan in 313 C.E. to Constantine's order to cease work in 325 C.E. The Bordeaux Pilgrim provides us with an interesting and informative view of the Temple Mount in 333 C.E.²⁶⁹ Many of the buildings were still standing, but the consequent neglect of maintaining the structures quickly saw them fall to ruin and dilapidation.

Cyril, the Archbishop of Jerusalem, wrote about 20 years after Constantine stopped the Jews from completing the Temple. In his sermons, Cyril referred to this new Temple under construction by

²⁶⁹ The following excerpts are from the excellent translation by John Wilkinson in *Egeria's Travels*, pp. 155–7. The exact quote of the Bordeaux Pilgrim shows a number of buildings still standing on the Temple Mount, including the almost finished Temple. He stated:

“In Jerusalem beside the Temple are two large pools, one to the right and the other to the left, [the two pools were] built by Solomon.... There is also a vault there where Solomon used to torture demons, and the corner of a very lofty tower, which was where the Lord climbed and said to the Tempter, ‘Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.’ ... Below the pinnacle of this tower are very many chambers where Solomon had his palace.... And in the Sanctuary itself, where the Temple stood which Solomon built, there is marble in front of the altar which has on it the blood of Zachariah – you would think it had only been shed today.... Two statues of Hadrian are there, and, not far from them a pierced stone [a cave in a stone outcropping] which the Jews come and anoint each year. They mourn and rend their garments, and then depart. There too is the house of Hezekiah, king of Judah [a new house just built by the Jews for the Messiah whom they soon expected, as I will later explain].”

Note that the Bordeaux Pilgrim said the Sanctuary he saw was constructed where Solomon erected his Temple. And though he thought (or was told) that the tower near the Sanctuary was the pinnacle where Jesus was taken by Satan, it must be remembered that eyewitness accounts before the Pilgrim report no such tower (or any buildings whatever) on the Temple Mount. Pilgrim accounts are usually non-critical and assume that what they were told by guides was true. Sometimes they were not informed properly. For example, the Bordeaux Pilgrim was told that a single palm tree in the Kedron Valley was the very one from which the people obtained branches to adore Jesus during his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. (Although Josephus states that all trees within a radius of ten miles of Jerusalem were destroyed in 70 C.E., and it is well known that Palestinian palm trees only live to about 100 years old, and never more than 150 years.) Still, the Pilgrim accurately reported what he was told and those accounts might be true or stray wide from reality. For certain, however, all the buildings the Pilgrim saw on the Temple Mount near the Gihon Spring were recently built.

the Jews in a way that showed the structure *had only recently fallen into disrepair*. He mentioned the state of this new Temple while speaking at the Holy Sepulchre Church. He said: “The Temple of the Jews opposite to us *is fallen*.”²⁷⁰ Cyril is not speaking of a Temple that had *fallen* almost 300 years before, because his wording shows he meant the Temple *is fallen*, as though in the process of *falling* at the time Cyril spoke.

In another sermon a short time later, Cyril was teaching that an Antichrist will come to the Jews in Jerusalem and he will build from scratch the Temple of Solomon. The Antichrist would do this, according to Cyril,

“at the time when there shall not be left one stone upon another in the Temple of the Jews, according to the doom pronounced by our Savior; for when, either *decay of time* [in the future], or *demolition ensuing on pretense of new buildings* [he spoke of the *demolition* of the existing buildings], or from any other causes, *shall have overthrown all the stones* [stones still standing from the attempt to rebuild the Temple in Constantine’s time]. I mean not merely of the outer circuit, but of the inner shrine also, where the Cherubim were.”²⁷¹

Note the italicized words in Cyril’s quote. He was stating simply that the stones of the Temple that people could then witness standing on top of one another, would by *decay of time* or by their *demolition* be toppled once again so Jesus’ prophecy could remain valid.

What remarkable statements for Cyril to make. The Archbishop was stating that in his time (some 20 years after Constantine), it was possible to witness stones of the new Temple, begun with the Edict of Milan in 313 C.E., *still in place* at the Temple site. Cyril thought the Antichrist would cause a *demolition* of the stones of the Temple then in evidence. Though the Temple of which Cyril was speaking was in a ruined state, these remnants were *NOT* the remains of the Temple of Herod.²⁷² These were stones from the

²⁷⁰ *Catechetical Lectures*, X.11.

²⁷¹ Cyril, *ibid.*, XV.15.

²⁷² I have given numerous references from eyewitnesses up to 303 C.E., that the former Temple of Herod totally and completely vanished from the earth.

attempt to rebuild the Temple in the time of Constantine. This is important to note because this historical event has not been recognized by scholars of modern times to my knowledge. Most historians naturally assumed Cyril was speaking about the ruins of the Temple of Herod. In no way was this the case.

The structural remains on the Temple Mount that Cyril referred to were those recently constructed in the period of 12 years from the Edict of Milan in 313 to 325 C.E. when Constantine thwarted the Jewish attempt to rebuild the Temple. But it was not only these Temple ruins that Cyril was concerned about. This is because the Jews constructed a number of other new buildings in the area of the Temple from the Edict of Milan to Constantine, 325 C.E., and then to the time of Cyril, in 344 C.E. and beyond. Indeed, the Bordeaux Pilgrim stated that in 333 C.E. he saw on the Upper Hill in Jerusalem: "Seven synagogues were there, but only one is left — the rest have been 'ploughed and sown.'"²⁷³ This reference shows there were extensive remains of recently constructed Jewish buildings in Jerusalem.

The period of twelve years' tranquility for the Jewish people (313 to 325 C.E.) gave ample opportunity for them to initiate building programs in consequence of their return to Jerusalem. They concentrated on many building sites around the area of the Gihon Spring where the Temple of Herod formerly had been built. They also built their seven synagogues in the Upper City.

Another Attempt to Rebuild the Temple

The Emperor Constantine and his mother Helena in 325 C.E. put a stop to the first attempt of the Jews to rebuild the Temple on the Temple Mount. But 37 years later, in 362 to 363 C.E., Emperor Julian, nephew of Constantine who became known as "the Apostate," gave the Jews clear permission to rebuild the Temple. Jewish authorities responded with vigor and commenced the endeavor. In their favor, they still had some ruins of the former buildings in place on the Temple Mount. In many cases they could reuse some

²⁷³ Translation of the Bordeaux Pilgrim by Wilkinson in *Egeria's Travels*, p.158.

stones and other artifacts already in the area to fashion a new Temple with its subsidiary buildings.

While Constantine's sons and immediate successors were Christian in belief (and Julian himself was reared in a Christian atmosphere), when Julian the Apostate assumed the emperorship, he immediately began to promote the early religions of Rome. He wanted to re-establish what Christian rulers were trying to suppress and abolish. This was manifested by his antipathy toward the Christian clergy and their teachings. Because the Jews were not Christians, this prompted Julian to look on the Jewish people with favor. One reason was because the Jews, though they did not participate in the pagan religions that dominated Rome, were nonetheless respected by early Hellenistic believers as a legitimate religion, and were accorded tolerance.

Julian wanted to restore this earlier favorable relationship that Rome had with the Jews within the previous 150 years. Indeed, he went even farther. In 361 C.E. he devised a plan to aid the Jews in finishing the Temple begun in the reign of Constantine. Some remnants of that building enterprise were still in place on the Temple Mount (though in a disheveled state). When Julian gave the order that the Temple could once again be constructed, the Jews responded with alacrity. Thinking the time of the Messiah might be near, they immediately began the work of preparation for restoring the Temple that lay in ruins.

The Jews surveyed the area of the former Temple Mount built in the time of Constantine. They found they were able to use some remains of those edifices erected in the twelve years from the Edict of Milan (313 C.E.) to the Nicean Council (325 C.E.). Socrates, the Christian historian in the early fifth century who had access to official Roman records, mentioned the Jewish rebuilding of the Temple in the time of Julian and how Julian provided imperial funds to help accomplish the task.²⁷⁴ Rufinus, also in the early fifth century, recorded that the Jews began their building activities thinking that Messiah was arriving or already had arrived.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴ Socrates, *History* III.20.

²⁷⁵ Avi-Yonah, *ibid.*, p.194.

Socrates mentioned that the Jewish workers quickly obtained lime and cement and that they began to destroy the old foundations. The records show that that foundation stones from the rebuilding in the time of Constantine were in place. Some of the ruins are even detailed. Philostorgius related that around the Temple Mount in the time of Julian there were ruined colonnades, and that in one of the remaining porticos the Jews at the time of the rebuilding established a provisional synagogue for workers who labored in Jerusalem.²⁷⁶

The Christian historian Sozomen went farther in his description of the Temple Mount in Julian's time. He said the Jews found the

“ruins of the former building [the Temple built in the time of Constantine], they dug up the ground and cleared away its foundation [of the recent Temple]; it is said that the following day when they were about to lay the first foundation [of their new Temple], a great earthquake occurred, and by the violent agitation of the earth, stones were thrown up from the depths, by which those of the Jews who were engaged in the work were wounded, as likewise those who were merely looking on. *The houses and public porticos near the site of the Temple* [the Jews found buildings and colonnades already located on the Temple Mount — also built in the time of Constantine], in which they [the Jews] had diverted themselves, were suddenly thrown down.”²⁷⁷

Theodoret stated that the Jewish builders of the new Temple slept “at night in an adjacent building.”²⁷⁸

We have further records from Jewish writings of the numerous letters and other documents found in the Cairo Geniza. They also show there remained portions of the former Temple constructed in the time of Constantine/Julian. The Jewish scholar Reuven Hammer in his *The Jerusalem Anthology*, quotes the central and prime document that tells of seventy Jewish families from Tiberias wanting to settle in the *southern* area of Jerusalem in the first year of Omar (638 C.E.). The document states:

²⁷⁶ Philostorgius, VII.9a.

²⁷⁷ Sozomen, *History* V.22.

²⁷⁸ Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History* III.15.

“Omar decreed that seventy households should come [to Jerusalem from Tiberias]. They agreed to that. After that he asked: ‘Where do you wish to live within the city?’ They replied, ‘In the *southern* section of the city, which is the market of the Jews.’ **Their request was to enable them to be near the site of the Temple and its gates, as well as to the water of Shiloah**, which could be used for immersion. This was granted them by the Emir of the Believers. So seventy households including women and children moved from Tiberias *and established settlements in buildings whose foundations had stood many generations.*”²⁷⁹

Note that the historical document shows that as late as the Islamic conquest there were still observable remains of buildings that were in the region for many generations. These were remnants of the partially built Temples begun in the time of Constantine (313 to 325 C.E.), added to and refurbished in the time of Emperor Julian in 362 and 363 C.E. These ruined buildings were located on the former Temple Mount from the time of Herod and Jesus. Note that this area was *south* of the Haram, near the Gihon Spring and the Siloam pool. We will see that among those ruins, the Jews gathered every year around a portion of the “Western Wall” of the Holy of Holies of the Temple that remained after the time of Julian’s death.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁹ Hammer, *Jerusalem Anthology*, p.148.

²⁸⁰ In no way could these building activities by Jewish authorities be on or around the “Rock” of the Dome of the Rock. During this time Helena, Constantine’s mother, designated that place in the Praetorium as the site to build the new “St. Cyrus and St. John Church” over the “Pavement” (the “Rock” on which Jesus stood before Pilate). See “Life of Constantine” in Wilkinson’s *Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades*, p.204. Construction started some 30 years after Helena’s visit to Jerusalem. This church was enlarged probably in the fifth century as a major church called “The Church of the Holy Wisdom.” Jewish attempts to build two Temples (in the time of Constantine and Julian) were NOT within the area of the Praetorium where the Dome of the Rock was later built. The Jews were interested in the southeastern ridge as the site of the original “Mount Zion” and the “Ophel” (where the Temples once stood) and not in northeast Jerusalem of the Baris that Herod made into Fort Antonia. Jerome tells us that the Praetorium had by 385 C.E. become the headquarters once again for the Roman (Byzantine) executive in charge of Jerusalem (Letter 108).

The Remains of the Temple in the Time of Julian

The historical accounts show there were several edifices constructed on the Temple Mount from the Edict of Milan in 313 C.E. up to Julian the Apostate. Only a minority of these structures survived the time of Julian, and a portion of the “Western Wall” of the Holy of Holies remained. But with the death of Julian, the Jews fell out of favor with Roman authorities once again and most of the new buildings on the Temple Mount were destroyed or collapsed over time. The restriction of Hadrian that Jews could no longer visit Jerusalem was also reinstated (it had also been revived by Constantine for a short period). This meant Jews were not allowed to have free access to their Temple site or the City of Jerusalem as they had for most of the previous forty years.²⁸¹ This was not strictly enforced because we are told by Jerome that after Julian, Jews were permitted to visit the Temple site once a year on the Ninth of Ab in order to mourn the destruction of the Temple.²⁸² Jerome in his *Commentary on Zephaniah* described how the Jews bribed Roman soldiers to give them permission to mourn at the site of the Temple.²⁸³ Jerome said many people came lamenting over the fall of the Temple (even feeble women and elderly men). They made their hair disheveled and tore their garments while blowing

²⁸¹ Some twenty years after Julian’s death, we have the Christian theologian, Gregory of Nyssa stating:

“Up to the time of the manifestation of Christ the royal palaces in Jerusalem were in all their splendor: there was their far-famed Temple, ... [but now] **no traces even of their Temple can be recognized**, and their splendid city **has been left in ruins**, so that there remains to the Jews nothing of the ancient [Herodian] institutions; while by the command of those who rule over them the very ground of Jerusalem which they so venerated is forbidden to them” (*The Great Catechism*, ch.XVIII).

There is more in the fifth century. In 416 C.E., Theodoret went to Jerusalem. He looked at the southeast area where the former Jerusalem was situated near the Gihon Spring (where all the Temples were located). ‘With my own eyes,’ he writes, ‘**I have seen that desolation**. The prediction [of Christ] rang in my ears when I saw the fulfillment before my eyes and I lauded and worshipped the truth’” (*Graec. Affect. Cur.* 1090).

²⁸² Jerome, *Commentary on Zephaniah* 1:15 and Avi-Yonah, *ibid.*, p.223 for details).

²⁸³ Jerome, *Commentary on Zephaniah* 1:15.

the *shofar*. The Roman soldiers allowed this because it was profitable to them to let the Jewish mourners enter the area of the Temple Mount and to stay even longer at the site if more money were paid to the soldiers.

Though the Jews were allowed to visit the site of the former Temples over the Gihon Spring, Christian authorities added insult by placing a statue of Hadrian and one of Jupiter at the site. Jerome stated:

“The statue of Hadrian and the idol of Jupiter *have been placed* where once there was the Temple and worship of God.”²⁸⁴

As stated before, the “idol of Jupiter” could well have been Hadrian himself dressed in the outward form of Jupiter. It was common practice in the time of the Empire for emperors to adorn themselves like the gods of Rome.²⁸⁵ And note this, it is remarkable that Jerome said that “the statue of Hadrian and the idol of Jupiter *have been placed* ...” This, when taken literally, seems to show that the two statues of Hadrian and Jupiter [Hadrian dressed as Jupiter] *had only recently* been placed (in the time of Jerome) in the region of the former Temple of God. But there is more.

For some reason, the statue assigned to Jupiter was then removed from the area of the Temple and only the statue of Hadrian remained in what Jerome thought was the Holy of Holies. Jerome said that in this later period there was:

²⁸⁴ Jerome, *Commentary on Isaiah*, in CCL, 73, ed. M. Adrian, p.33.

²⁸⁵ Josephus said the statue of Augustus at Caesarea was fashioned like an image to Jupiter (War I.21,7). Indeed, there were numerous references to men who had statues in the guise of Hercules. A comment by Gibbon ought to suffice to show how common this was.

“Commodus eagerly embraced the glorious resemblance, and styled himself (as we still read on his medals) the Roman Hercules. The club and the lion’s hide were placed by the side of the throne, amongst the ensigns of sovereignty; and statues were erected, in which Commodus was represented in the character, and with the attributes, of the god, whose valor and dexterity he endeavored to emulate in the daily course of his ferocious amusements” (*Decline and Fall*, vol.I, p.107).

“an equestrian statue of Hadrian, which stands in the place of the Holy of Holies [the inner sanctum of the Temple of God] *to this very day.*”²⁸⁶

Consider how this affected Jewish people who visited the site on the Day of Atonement. When they assembled near the Holy of Holies,” the Jews looked at the statue of Hadrian every time they convened their yearly worship at *that* “Western Wall” once part of the Holy of Holies.

²⁸⁶ Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew*, Sources chretiennes 259, ed. E. Bonnard, p282.

Chapter 13

THE FIRST “WESTERN (WAILING) WALL”

FROM HADRIAN (135 C.E.) to the Edict of Milan (313 C.E.), the true site of the Temple over and around the Gihon Spring (in the *south* and the *southeast* of Jerusalem) was the dump of the city. Eyewitnesses during that period stated that only an occasional temporary tent or hut could be found within its confines. There were no walls around the area. Near the end of this period (in 303 C.E.), Eusebius records that part of the Temple Mount by then had become a Roman farm and was being plowed. After the Edict of Milan, however, the Jews came back to Jerusalem and began building structures (including a *new* Temple of God) on the *southeast* ridge of the Holy City. They started with the Temple building itself with its altar and courts, then began to erect a “House for Hezekiah.” They also constructed a pinnacle part of the Temple for observations to other areas of Palestine. Within those twelve years (313 to 325 C.E.), we read that seven syna-

gogues were erected by the returned Jewish authorities in the southwest part of the city.²⁸⁷

All these building activities were halted by Constantine and his mother Helena around 326 C.E. Constantine cut off the ears of the Jewish builders and this effectively stopped that particular rebuilding of the Temple. The account was recorded in the writings of John Chrysostom.²⁸⁸ The narrative makes sense in every way and there is no reason for denying its veracity. A number of ruined Jewish buildings remained on the spot.

Seven years later in 333 C.E., we have the Bordeaux Pilgrim telling us about the parts of *that* Temple and Altar constructed in the time of Constantine. They were still in existence in Jerusalem. In 362 C.E., there was another attempt to finish the Temple, but that came to a halt with the death of Emperor Julian in 363 C.E.

So, within a period of 50 years to the middle of the fourth century there were two attempts to rebuild the Temple, at the time of Constantine and at the time of Julian. After that final occasion, remnant portions of the Temple were still seen over and around the Gihon Spring, notably a portion of the Western Wall of the Holy of Holies from the Constantine/Julian attempts. This residual part of the Western Wall did NOT belong to that of Herod's earlier Temple. That Temple of Herod and Jesus was leveled to the ground, with not a stone of the Temple or its walls left intact after 70 C.E. This was the condition Jesus prophesied would occur, and his prediction proved accurate to the smallest detail.

The Location of the Actual "Gates of the Temple."

One major problem for historians has been to identify the "Gates of the Temple" mentioned in the Geniza documents. What we will discover is that those Gates were intended by the writers to identify "gates" located in the *southeastern* part of Jerusalem, in and around the Gihon Spring. This is true; but today scholars who read the Geniza remains automatically and without compunction, endeavor to place them in the Haram esh-Sharif. All scholars and

²⁸⁷ See the Bordeaux Pilgrim's account.

²⁸⁸ John Chrysostom, *Against Judaizing*, Disc.V. 10; VI.2.

religious authorities today (whether Christian, Muslim or Jewish) place the site of the Temple in the Haram. So, they say, the “gates” of the former Temple must be in that *northern* rectangular area. But the Haram “gates” were NEVER the “Gates of the Temple.” The Haram had its own “gates” with their own names. No wonder scholars are confused over the location of the “Gates of the Temple” because the Jews from Tiberias said those “Gates” were in the *southern* part of Jerusalem near the Gihon and Siloam water sources, NOT north in the Haram region.

Indeed, when I, and the students I supervised, worked with Professor Mazar in the dig near the south Haram wall, the group (along with other staff) found two large Umayyad buildings *south* of the Haram’s southern wall. Professor Mazar compared them to palaces because they were so large and sumptuous in decoration. These buildings were located next to the southwestern corner of the Haram. Further south a short distance, one met the present southern wall of Jerusalem built in the first Ottoman dynasty. But the early Jewish authorities who spoke with Omar and came from Tiberias in 638 C.E., wanted to reside in an area yet *south* of this modern wall. The seventy Jewish families from Tiberias wanted to live *near their Temple in the southern part of the city adjacent to the Siloam water system*, even farther *south* than those two palatial Umayyad buildings and the modern wall (at the present “Dung Gate”).

This means that if scholars wish to find any of the “Gates of the Temple” mentioned in the Geniza documents, they should look even farther *south* than the present Dung Gate of the wall built by Suleiman the Magnificent in 1537–1539 C.E. They need to look near the Gihon Spring.

There will be confusion in comparing the written opinions of modern scholars (and even scholars since the Crusades). Many names of the “Gates of the Temple” have been transferred since the Crusades (against all reason) from their proper *southerly* positions to the wrong *northerly* Haram region. This was done by various people over the centuries who were unaware of the true Temple site. This factor must always be kept in mind in any

research, whether in historical documents or archaeological evidences. With the actual Temple site being in the *south* and the fact that there were often two or more “gates” with the same name (because of transference) one should expect confusion over the issue — and there was.

The result was in the proper name of a Temple “gate” in the *south* (identified by the Jews from Tiberias and their descendants), being confused with a another “gate” given the same name in the *north* and subsequently identified with “gates” around the Haram. Thus, “two gates” (and even more) of the same name has been the consequence.

The Gates of Huldah

As an example, Talmudic Jewish references speak of the “Gates of Huldah” being the *southern* “gates” of the Temple, but because modern scholars believe the *south* wall of the Haram is the *southern* wall of the Temple, they have transferred the “Gates of Huldah” to that *south* wall of the Haram. They now identify some closed gates that are easily seen as those very “Gates of Huldah.” The truth is, the real “Gates of Huldah” were located about 1200 feet *south* and led to the tomb of Huldah reckoned to be on top of the *southern* part of the Mount of Olives.²⁸⁹ According to Jewish sources, it was only the *southern* part of the mountain that was known as the “Mount of the Anointment” [that is, the “Mount of the Messiah”]. This was the only distinctively “Jewish” area on the Mount of Olives. Note what we read in Zev Vilnay’s *Legends of Jerusalem*.

“The *southern* part of the Mount of Olives was named the Mount of the Anointment, in Hebrew *Har ha-Mish-ha*, for here was prepared the finest olive oil which was used to anoint kings and high priests of Israel. The Mount of Anointment commands a beautiful view of Jerusalem of the biblical period: the City of David and the Ophel. The Mount of Anointment was at a certain period the center of the cult of idol worship; idolators gathered there to perform their

²⁸⁹ Peters, Jerusalem, quoting Rabbi Moses Basola (1480–1560 C.E.), p.485. The same was stated by Isaac Chelo (1334 C.E.), *Jewish Travellers in the Middle Ages*, p.132.

abominable practices. Therefore the beautiful name *Mish-ha* (Anointment) was changed into *Mash-Hit* (Corruption)."²⁹⁰

The *southern* "Gates of Huldah" directed people over the Kedron Valley and up the western slope of the *southern* part of the Mount of Olives to the Tomb of Huldah (located in a cave).

Other Temple gates suffered the same wrong fate. Another important "Gate" mentioned by Jewish authorities from the Byzantine period to the Crusades (and prominently so in the Geniza documents) was the "Gate of the Priests." It is mentioned in association with the Western Wall of the Holy of Holies and sometimes in a context that references the "Gates of Huldah" we just spoke about. That "Gate of the Priests" was also located in the *southern* part of Jerusalem at least 900 feet south of the southern wall of the Haram esh-Sharif. Additional sources from the Geniza collection speak about Rabbanite Jews who dwelt by the Priests' Gate.²⁹¹ This particular Gate was NEVER part of the former Temples from Solomon to Herod, but was a remnant of the Constantine/Julian Holy of Holies.

With the Crusades, Temple "Names" Moved to Haram

In the time of the Crusades all people in Jerusalem began to assume (almost to a man) that the Temple Mount was to be found within the Haram esh-Sharif. All historical references to the names of the "Gates of the Temple" were moved to the Haram to name the various gates of its surrounding walls. The result has been modern confusion in interpreting records concerning the Haram in the *northeastern* part of Jerusalem along with Jewish records that relate to the *southeastern* part of Jerusalem, a different sector altogether. So, one must be careful in interpreting even the Jewish records regarding "Temple Gates" during the 460 years from 638 C.E. to the coming of the Crusaders in 1099 C.E. The main "Temple Gates" were not identified by the earlier Jews or Muslims with the gates in the Haram walls.

²⁹⁰ Vilnay, p.295.

²⁹¹ Dan Bahat, "The Physical Infrastructure" in *The History of Jerusalem*, p.53.

After the Crusades, the matter changed drastically. It became popular to place all the “Gates of the Temple” within the Haram walls, as all modern scholars do. This brings in utter confusion. Modern interpretation of the Geniza documents is often tarnished by contemporary scholars because of this erroneous trend to “switch sites.” The truth is, most references to “Gates of the Temple” in the Geniza documents refer to the ruined “Temple Mount” in the *southeastern* part of Jerusalem, NOT to the *northeastern* part where the Haram is. Keep this in mind as we continue.

The New “Gate of the Priests” Was in the Southeast.

Positioned in a part of *that* wall of the former Holy of Holies was a *new* gate of the Temple called “the Gate of the Priests.” This Gate was situated near the entrance to a *cave* that became the synagogue of the Jews in their quarter of the city. The Jewish Quarter was clearly in the *southeast* sector of Jerusalem, where the Temple Mount was formerly situated. This ruined area had remnants of some Temple gates built in the time of Constantine/Julian surrounding it. All were basically in ruins but Jewish authorities could still recognize the general regions where there were gates, such as the Huldah Gates and the significant *eastern* portal called “the Mercy Gate.” These geographical sites in the *southern* part of Jerusalem were prominently mentioned in Jewish literature, composed in Jerusalem within the four centuries before the Crusades.

These ruined parts of the Temple of Constantine/Julian were positioned around one another (a short distance from each other) in the *southeastern* portion of Jerusalem where the Jews had their living quarters in Jerusalem.

The Real Western Wall

The remnant of the Western Wall once part of the Holy of Holies in the Constantine/Julian attempts to rebuild the Temple was well known by Jewish authorities from the fifth century to the coming of the Crusades. In a fifth century work called *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana* (a compendium that summarizes and synthesizes Jewish teaching from the Holy Scriptures as well as the Talmud for teaching in synagogues), we are told that the Western Wall of the

Holy of Holies was where the “second Moses [the Messiah]” was to be located. They said that the Messiah and the Shekinah (the divine presence of God) were to be found “behind our wall.”²⁹² They arrived at this conclusion by a mystical interpretation of the biblical book *Song of Songs* 2:9.²⁹³ And though the *Song of Songs* was used in an allegorical sense by Jewish authorities, they recognized it as a way of interpreting how a remnant of the Western Wall of the Holy of Holies came to be visited by the Jewish people who lived near Jerusalem. There was a literal Western Wall that existed at the former site of the Temples. This remnant wall (now

²⁹² Pesikta, Piska 5:8.

²⁹³ Though the *Song of Songs* was interpreted allegorically, a person should pay close attention to the context about the person standing “behind our wall” (the Shekinah) in *Song of Songs* 2:9. The person was likened to a young hart (deer) who had just finished leaping on the mountains and skipping on the hills (in other words, the person was outside in the open air). He then looks inwardly through the windows and lattices and asks for the woman to come outside because the outside weather is beautiful and it was not raining. Though allegorical, the context is important to the practical side of the story. The context shows the Shekinah to be outside the Kotel (the name of the wall) and that He is looking inward to where the woman (allegorically, Israel) was living. Since this “wall” was reckoned to be the ruined “Western Wall” of the Holy of Holies, the Shekinah of the allegory was then in exile and outside (on the west side) of that Western Wall while Israel (the woman of the parable) was on the inside of the ruined building.

This fact is fatal to the present allegorical theory concerning the contemporary “Wailing Wall” in Jerusalem because the roles in evidence today are reversed. Presently in Jerusalem it is the people who are outside (that is, on the west) while people believe that the Shekinah is inside (that is, on the east side of the wall). These reverse roles in the present arrangement do NOT fit the context of the allegory that the early Jewish Sages made. And further, the present “Wailing Wall” has no windows or lattices for the people to look inside like the allegory demands (while the actual “Western Wall” of the allegory identified by the Sages was ruined enough that it was possible to view the people assembled on the east side of that wall of the Holy of Holies). There is another difference. Israel in Temple times always approached God from the east, NOT from the west as they are doing now.

But fatal to the present theory is the fact that the present “Wailing Wall” is an external wall of the Haram and has NOTHING to do with any “Western Wall” of the Holy of Holies. Indeed, even more devastating to the theory is the fact that the Haram walls are those of Fort Antonia (NOT the external walls of the Temple). There can be no doubt whatever that the four walls of the Haram have nothing to do with the Temple of Herod. These points must be realized.

in ruins but still distinguishable in places) was part of the Holy of Holies left standing from the two attempts to build the Temple in the times of Constantine/Julian.

Judah Nadich in his work titled *Jewish Legends of the Second Commonwealth*, has interesting comments about these Jewish references to *this* “Western Wall” of the Holy of Holies. All of these references are to the *first* Western Wall that was a remnant of the Constantine/Julian Temples. When this is finally understood by modern historians and theologians, the documentary evidence will make the correct identification clear as crystal. I will also show that the present “Western Wall” at the *outer* wall of the Haram esh-Sharif had nothing to do with the Holy of Holies.

“Before the Temple was destroyed the Divine Presence dwelt within it [that is, within the Holy of Holies], for it says, *The Lord is in His holy place* (Psalm 11:4). But when the Temple was destroyed the Divine Presence removed itself to heaven, as it is said, *The Lord has established His throne in heaven* (Psalm 103:19). This was said by Rabbi Samuel ben Nahman.

But Rabbi Eleazar said, ‘The Divine Presence did not depart from the Temple, for it is said, *My eyes and My heart shall always be there* (II Chronicles 7:16).’ So it also says, *I cry aloud to the Lord, and He answers me from His holy mountain* (Psalm 3:5). For although it was laid waste [the Temple of Constantine and Julian was ruined], it still retained its holiness. See what Cyrus said, *The God that is in Jerusalem* (Ezra 1:3), implying that though Jerusalem is laid waste, God had not departed from there. Rabbi Aha, said, ‘The Divine Presence will never depart from the Western Wall, as it is said, *There he stands behind our wall* (Song of Songs 2:9).’ [The reference to this] *wall* alludes to the Western Wall of the Temple [of the Holy of Holies] which will never be destroyed. Why? Because the Divine Presence is in the West. And because God has sworn to Himself that it will never be destroyed; nor will the **Gate of the Priests** nor the Gate of Huldah ever be destroyed until God shall renew them” (pp.367–8).²⁹⁴

²⁹⁴ Judah Nadich cites several early references that mention these points that he relates in the above paragraph. There is Pesikta Rabbati 35:1; 15:10; 47:3 (also from the fifth or sixth century); Exodus Rabbah 2:2; Tanhuma Hakadam Exodus; Numbers Rabbah 11:2. One should pay close attention to the reference to the “Gate of the Priests,” because this Gate is mentioned later in some docu-

Note an important point mentioned in the above quote. Jewish authorities of the fifth century spoke of “the Gate of the Priests” as though the Jewish community was well aware of its existence.

The Gate of the Priests

Yes, the Jewish communities in Palestine (and later in Jerusalem) certainly knew where “the Gate of the Priests” was located. It was in the *southern* part of the city near and around the Gihon Spring. Be that as it may, just where was *this* “Gate of the Priests”? There is no reference in any historical source to the “Gate of the Priests” associated with the former Temples from Herod on back to Solomon. This designation is a novel one. It represents a *new* Gate that only came into existence with the Temples being built in the time of Constantine and Julian.²⁹⁵ Though some scholars might

ments that come from the Geniza collection of Hebrew letters from Cairo that greatly illumine what was happening in Jerusalem from the time of Omar the Caliph to the Crusades. Pay close attention to this “Gate of the Priests.”

²⁹⁵ This “Gate of the Priests” (or, “Priest”) was a new gate. We hear of it only in Jewish records well into the Byzantine period. It is mentioned many times as a cardinal geographical area in Geniza documents that speak of Jewish matters in Jerusalem from 638 to 1099 C.E. Moshe Gil states in regard to locating the “Jewish Quarter” in the southeastern part of Jerusalem during that period:

“There is mention of its [the Jewish Quarter] being ‘adjacent to the Gate of the Priests.’ These references appear in such phrases as ‘the Rabbanite sect dwelling alongside the Gate of the Priests,’ ‘we pray regularly for you on the Mount of Olives ... and beside the Gate of the Priests and beside the gates of the Lord’s Temple,’ and ‘we have blessed you on the Mount of Olives and beside the Gate of the Priests.’ In the Mishnah [continues Gil], we can find no reference to the Gate of the Priests, neither in the tractate Middot (Measurements) which provides a description of the Temple and the Temple Mount, nor in any other tractate. Nor is any reference given in either the Babylonian or Jerusalem Talmud. However, a Palestinian midrashic commentary dating probably from the Byzantine period speaks of the Gate of the Priests. In the Song of Songs Rabba, commenting on 2:9 (‘There he stands behind our wall’), we read: ‘This is a reference to the Western Wall of the Temple’” (Gil, “The Jewish Community” in *The History of Jerusalem*, p.172).

The brevity of the accounts concerning this “Gate of the Priests” gives rise to different interpretations about its location, but this much is reasonable: This “Priest’s Gate” had to lead to an area for priests (or, since the singular is used, “for a priest,” and probably, “the High Priest”). Though this Temple was in ruins, parts of it were yet standing, so the site of the “Holy Place and the Holy of

think the sentiment of the Jewish authorities in regard to *this* Western Wall referred to a remainder from Herod's Temple in 70 C.E. (or most unlikely, to the ruins of the Temple destroyed in the 6th century B.C.E by the Babylonians), but mention of "the Gate of the Priests" in the quote above shows that this was a *newly* named Gate in Jerusalem.

The designation "Gate of the Priests" goes back only to the building of the Constantine/Julian Temple in the fourth century. More important to our present inquiry is that this "Gate of the Priests" is mentioned several times in Geniza letters as being located by the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem in the *southeastern* part of the city. This "Gate of the Priests" was part of the "Western Wall" remnant of the Holy of Holies from the Constantine/Julian Temple. It was NEVER part of the external Western Wall of the Haram (where all scholars attempt to place it today).

There is a contradiction in geographical facts when "the Gate of the Priests" is placed by the modern scholars (Jewish, Muslim or Christian) within the Western Wall of the Haram. Putting this "Gate of the Priests" into that western wall of the Haram disturbs *all* of the data found in the Geniza documents, much of it describing eyewitness accounts that say it was located within the *southern* district where the Jews had their living quarters. But, dear reader, if you check every book written on the subject up to and including all of 1999 (except my own works on the Internet which show the

Holies" would have been known (after all, what remained of the "Western Wall" was the western wall of the Holy of Holies). So, this "Gate of the Priests" would have been located on the east side of the site of "the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies."

We are also told that the Jewish Quarter located in the south and southeastern sector of Jerusalem was "adjacent to the Gate of the Priests." The Rabbinic sect of the Jews lived close to and "alongside the Gate of the Priests," while Karaite Jews lived farther east and south. Since Jews always worshipped God by facing Him, they stood "before Him" on the east side of the Holy of Holies (or, just to the east of this "Gate of the Priests"). Also, the ruins of the Western Wall were located west of this "Gate of the Priests." So, though the Jewish people believed the Shekinah was "behind our wall," the people worshipped God from the east side of that Western Wall, NOT from its west side. This made it possible for the people to be located "before our wall," while the Shekinah of the allegory found in Song of Songs was "behind our wall." These points are important.

truth of the matter), you will find that all scholars (Jewish, Muslim and Christians) desperately try to place the “Gate of the Priests” somewhere within the Western Wall of the Haram esh-Sharif, usually north of the modern “Wailing Wall” of the Jews. They use every false and erroneous device they can muster, to squeeze that “Gate of the Priests” into that wall north of the present day “Wailing Wall.” They are as wrong as can they can be.

The truth is, that “Gate of the Priests” (or the remnants of it) could be seen from the Mount of Olives.²⁹⁶ I will show that the Jews observed Jerusalem from the *southern* spur of Olivet now called the Mount of Offense where they had a synagogue.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁶ The Jewish scholar Hirschman (p.221 of his work) was correct when he wrote: “whoso stands on the Mount of Olives sees the Hulda Gate [the southern most Gate of the Temple] as well as the Priests’ Gate.” And Moshe Gil answers by stating the truth that “the Priests’ Gate was situated in the Jewish quarter, which was in the south.” Gil, *A History of Palestine 634–1099*, p.641, note 113. It is clear from the Geniza documents that “the Gate of the Priests” was situated just above a cave that Rabbinic Jews used as a synagogue, positioned next to their “Western Wall” of the Holy of Holies in the southern part of Jerusalem over and around the Gihon. In no way do geographical indications in the Geniza documents suggest the area where Jews had their cave/synagogue was within the Haram. The “Gate of the Priests” (along with the nearby cave, also a Jewish synagogue) was within or contiguous with the Western Wall of the former Holy of Holies of the Constantine/Julian Temple and where the Shekinah was believed to hover, even though the Temple itself was then in ruins.

My daughter Kathryn and I in March, 1999 walked into that very cave (which led to a series of tunnels or other caves). These latter tunnels led downward to the Gihon Spring at the base of the southeastern hill that was once the Ophel, situated north of David’s Mount Zion. You can see these things yourself.

²⁹⁷ Note carefully Second Kings 23:13. This description is not speaking about the two summit areas of Olivet located in the north called the central summit and the Scopus summit. This Scripture refers to the southern flank of Olivet located directly east of the original Jerusalem and the site of the former Temples: “The high places that were before Jerusalem [that is, east of Jerusalem], which were on the RIGHT HAND [southern part of Olivet] on the hill of Corruption.” The “Hill of Corruption” is the same as the “Mount of Offense.” This eastern site from Jerusalem of the Mount of Offense is also described in First Kings 11:7. It was a “hill” on the southern flank of the Mount of Olives. This means that in the time of prophets, it was the “Mount of Offense” that was directly east of early Jerusalem. This is also where Jewish authorities from the time of Omar the Second Caliph until 1077 C.E. had their synagogue and their Sanhedrin. They even purchased this southern portion of Olivet. I will show more on this fact in a later

Moshe Gil states the Jewish documents from the Geniza collection show that the “Gate of the Priests” was part of or associated with the Western Wall of the Holy of Holies connected with a *cave* that Rabbinic Jews had turned into a synagogue. This is true, but the “Western Wall” was NOT the western wall of the Haram. Both the *wall* and *cave* were located in the *southern* part of Jerusalem over and near the Gihon Spring. There is quite a bit of historical data about this *cave* that became a synagogue. In the Geniza documents, according to Gil,

“it was common practice to make special donations to the *me'ara* (the *cave*), the synagogue in Jerusalem, which was evidently situated beneath the ‘Priests’ Gate’ (that is, “The Gate of the Priests”), in the Western Wall as we shall soon see.”²⁹⁸

This *cave* alongside the Western Wall of the former Holy of Holies was in the same location as the Jewish Market Place. It was in the living area of the Jewish population in the *southern* part of Jerusalem near the Gihon Spring. This *cave* was also known in the local vernacular as the *masjid Da'ud* — the place of David’s prayer at the altar he raised up on Mount Moriah, in other words, the site of the Temple Mount.²⁹⁹ To Jewish authorities this particular “Gate of the Priests” near that *cave* was associated with David’s place of prayer on Mount Moriah, which later became the site of the Temple.³⁰⁰ This place was over the water source of the Gihon Spring.

This “Western Wall” that the Jews visited and lamented (within the 600 years before the Crusades) was reckoned to be the same one mentioned in the *Song of Songs* 2:9. All these early references applied to the *internal* wall of the Holy of Holies, NOT to the present “Wailing Wall” that comprises the *external* Western Wall of

chapter. The central summit of Olivet, however, was always dominated through the period by Christians, though one Muslim writer did say Omar built a Muslim site that was allowed to exist. The “Jewish Olivet,” though, was exclusively on top its “southern spur.” This spur was not part of the two summit areas east and northeast of the Dome of the Rock.

²⁹⁸ Gil, *A History of Palestine 634–1099*, p.607.

²⁹⁹ See Gil, *A History of Palestine 634–1099*, p.649 along with comments also on page 67.

³⁰⁰ See the article “The Jewish Community” by Gil in *The History of Jerusalem*, pp.172–3.

the Haram where modern Jews assemble to mourn the Temples. In Midrash *Lamentations* I.5,31 the Rabbis mention a traditional prophecy that the Western Wall “should never be destroyed because the *Shechinah* abode in the west [that is, the *west* part of the Holy of Holies].” What side of the wall were they referring to? Could the *Shechinah* dwell in other areas, while at times He would appear at the Western Wall? These are important questions.

Let us look at what some top Israeli scholars say about these matters of which we now speak. In their excellent book titled *The Western Wall (Hakotel)* by Meir Ben-Dov, Mordechai Naor and Zeev Aner, these Jewish scholars state dogmatically that these early fifth century references to the Western Wall referred to the wall of the Holy of Holies (and NOT to the “Western Wall” of the Haram where modern Jews are praying). They mention that while the “Western Wall” around the Haram remains (as do its other three walls built in Herod’s time), “the western wall about which it was prophesied that it would never be destroyed, is the western wall of the actual Sanctuary [the Holy of Holies].”³⁰¹

In fact, regarding all the references to the “Western Wall” in the documents of the fifth century, our modern Jewish authors state with dogmatism: “We must again stress that the subject of these traditions is the western wall of the Temple building itself.”³⁰² The scholars emphasize that the Western Wall of the Haram (the present “Wailing Wall”) is NOT to what the early records of the Jews referred. Indeed, we have to wait until the 16th century before the “Western Wall” of the Haram is given any recognition of a sanctified nature by Jews. But back in the fifth century, up to the period of the Crusades, when the “Western Wall” is mentioned, it refers to the wall (then ruined) of the Holy of Holies built in the times of Constantine and Julian. It was located on the southeast ridge.

There is more. Rabbis clearly recognized that the mystical teaching of the *Song of Songs* gave a context for interpretation the *very reverse* of what Jews after the 16th century began to believe about their *new* “Wailing Wall” at the Haram. Early Rabbis up to

³⁰¹ *The Western Wall*, p.27.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, p.28.

the period of the Crusades knew the parable that spoke of the *Shekinah* being *outside* and looking *inward*, NOT as the Jews have it today, with the *Shekinah* *inside* looking *outward* (that is, the *Shekinah* looking from *within* the Haram enclosure toward the people praying *outside* at the western side of the wall). The earlier Rabbis understood this significant difference. Speaking of the *Shekinah*, we read in the *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana*:

“Or a young hart (Song of Songs 2:9) — He is like the young of the gazelle, said Rabbi Jose bar R. Hanina.

Behold, He standeth behind our wall (Song of Songs 2:9) — outside the walls of houses of prayer and houses of study.

He looketh in through the windows (Song of Songs 2:9) — that is, through the openings that are formed by the arms of the priests (when they raise their hands in blessing).

He showeth Himself through the lattice (Song of Songs 2:9) — that is, through the openings between the fingers of the priests (when their fingers are spread out in the bestowal of blessing).”³⁰³

This particular “Western Wall” being discussed was compared allegorically with the wall mentioned in the *Song of Songs*. It was in a ruined state. It had breaks in it. This could not be the “Western Wall” of the Haram because its Herodian stones have no windows (breaks or openings) in them whatever, nor have there been lattices in the “Western Wall” of the Haram (to shade open areas in the wall). But the *ruined* “Western Wall” of the Holy of Holies (from the Temple of Constantine and Julian) could well have had such apertures and breaks associated with it. Whatever the case, all early traditions about the *Shekinah* (the Divine Presence) remaining near the “Western Wall” of the Temple refer to the “Western Wall” of the Holy of Holies, and NOT to the external wall (the present “Wailing Wall”) that is a part of the Haram esh-Sharif.³⁰⁴

What we find in these records are references to parts of the

³⁰³ Piska 5:8.

³⁰⁴ It was only in the time of the Ottoman Empire (some 400 years after the Crusades) that we witness any historical information about Jews assembling at the Western Wall of the Haram. I will explain why the Jews switched to this outer “Western Wall” on my Web Page on the Internet.

Temple still in existence and built in the time of Constantine and Julian. The Jewish people in Jerusalem resided in this *southeastern* quarter until the water of that spring became bitter near the time of the great earthquake in 1067 C.E., and the move of the Academy of Jerusalem to Tyre and then to Damascus in 1077 C.E. From 1077 to 1099 C.E. the Jews in Jerusalem moved to the *northern* part of the city, even *north* of the Haram esh-Sharif. They then left behind (until now) that *southern* region where the Temple was located.

But what about the present “Wailing Wall” of the Haram esh-Sharif, wrongly identified with the former (and original) “Western Wall”? The fact is, the present “Wailing Wall” of the Jews was NOT even recognized by any Jews as having any religious value or significance until a Rabbi by the name of Isaac Luria designated it (wrongly) as the former “Western Wall” in the sixteenth century. He ignorantly misjudged the true geography of Jerusalem. He was a mystic religionist, NOT a proper historian or geographer. There was not a single Jewish person in the world who paid any attention whatever to the “Wailing Wall” now revered by Jewish people in Jerusalem until the sixteenth century of our era. Early Jews before the time of the Ottoman Empire would have thought it highly odd and even wrong for Jews to show reverence to the Western Wall (the modern “Wailing Wall”) and there is no evidence whatever that any Jew saw any religious significance to that “Wailing Wall” until the sixteenth century – a mere 400 years ago. I will show more on this plain and simple fact at the ASK Web Page on the Internet in the months to follow. Keep your eyes on monthly updates to all “Temple Research” at the ASK Web Page on the Internet. It is: www.askelm.com.

Chapter 14

THE ACTUAL TEMPLE SITE FROM 638 TO 1099 C.E.

THIS AREA of the *real* Temple Mount was located in *southeastern* Jerusalem where the Jews lived for 460 years (from 638 C.E. to 1099 C.E.). The Abbasid period of Muslim rule began in 750 C.E. With the Abbasids the fortunes of the Jewish population in Jerusalem began to deteriorate. And about 800 C.E. we have documents that give authentic Jewish eyewitness appraisals of what was happening in Jerusalem.³⁰⁵ For the period of the Abbasids and later Fatimid rulers, Jews were NOT allowed to enter any Muslim holy place. This meant that the Haram esh-Sharif with its Dome of the Rock was completely off limits to Jews. They could, however, continue to live at and around their own Temple Mount located near the Gihon Spring. Indeed, in the time of the Fatimids (953–975 C.E.), we read that the area of the Temple Mount of the Jews was then in a ruined state and not being

³⁰⁵ Peters, *Jerusalem*, p.224.

respected like as under the Umayyad Dynasty when Muslims were friendly to the Jews. We have a contemporary report from Rabbi Ahima'as, an Italian Jew, visiting Jerusalem for pilgrimage. Note the following translation that mentions this pilgrim.

“At that time there was a Jew named Rabbi Ahima'as who went up to Jerusalem, the glorious city, three times with his vowed offerings. Each time he went, he took with him 100 pieces of gold, as he had vowed to the Rock of his salvation, to aid those who were engaged in Torah study and for those who mourned *the ruined House of His Glory...*”³⁰⁶

Note that the Rabbi spoke of the Temple as “ruined.” The fact that the Temple of the Jews was then in a *ruined* state dovetails with another reference from the same document concerning an appeal to Jews in the world to help Jews in Jerusalem. This was the famous Rabbi Paltiel, head of the Jewish people in Egypt under the rule of the Fatimids. What is amazing in our present context is that Rabbi Paltiel made an astonishing appeal to Jews regarding what was left of the *Sanctuary* then in existence in Jerusalem. He spoke of the ruined *Sanctuary* as very much in evidence [and that Jews were able to worship within its precincts]. He said that money should be sent to Jerusalem in order to supply

“oil for *the inner altar of the Sanctuary at the Western Wall*; and for the synagogues and communities, far and near: and for those who were mourning *the loss of the Temple* [however, the partial Western Wall of the Holy of Holies was left standing], those who grieved and mourned for Zion; and for the teachers and their students in the Yeshiva [in Jerusalem] and for the scholars of Babylon in the Yeshiva of the Geonim [in Babylon].”³⁰⁷

This reference is most revealing. Though it was evident the Temple was then in *ruins*, and Rabbi Paltiel readily admitted that the Jews had *lost the Temple*, and there were a group of people mourning the “loss of the Temple,” he nonetheless asked that money be given supply “*oil for the inner altar of the Sanctuary at the Western Wall.*” This clearly means an Inner Altar was then in

³⁰⁶ Ahima'as 1924: 65, translated by R. Harari, in Peters, *Jerusalem*, p.224.

³⁰⁷ Ahima'as 1924: 95–97, italics mine, translated by R. Harari, in Peters, *Jerusalem*, p.225.

operation at what was still called a “Sanctuary” [another Jewish name for the Temple]. He even located the Sanctuary as being in that ruined area. The precise location the Rabbi sanctified was *the Inner Altar located at the Western Wall on the southeast ridge*.

Modern Jewish scholars reviewing these texts state that Jews in Jerusalem considered this “Sanctuary” as a reference to a Synagogue located in a *cave* with an entrance very near that “Western Wall” of the ruined Holy of Holies.³⁰⁸ To go into that underground synagogue on the Temple Mount worshippers were referred to as “going down there” or “going down to the *kanisa* [synagogue].”³⁰⁹ Indeed, about 540 C.E. it was noticed by Christians who saw this area of Solomon’s former Temple that a single *cave* was to be found at the original Temple.³¹⁰ This *cave* HAD NOTHING to do

³⁰⁸ Two modern works best describe the discoveries from the Geniza documents relating to Jerusalem in the crucial periods in which we are interested. They focus attention to the “Inner Altar of the Sanctuary at the Western Wall” and the synagogue located in a *cave* on the Temple Mount. These works are: Gil’s *A History of Palestine (638–1099)*, pp.536, 607, 639, especially 647–53; and Joshua Praver and Haggai Ben-Shammai’s compilation of articles, *The History of Jerusalem*, pp. 54–55, 80, 81n, 174–75. These two works are monumental in scope. Once it is realized by scholars that the “Temple Mount” to Jewish authorities from 638 to 1099 C.E. referred to the *southeastern* region of Jerusalem in and around the Gihon Spring, the accounts in these two works take on a true and clear meaning. The Jewish scholars themselves were unaware of the full import of their work due to their belief that the Dome of the Rock was the location of the former Jewish Temples. But a whole new way of looking at Jerusalem during that 400 years comes to light when the falsity of the Haram location is finally realized. These two volumes are indispensable for research. All persons interested in Jewish history during this period definitely must have these two volumes in their library. They show, when understood correctly, that the *southeastern* area of Jerusalem was where Jewish authorities in the pre-Crusade period located their own “Temple Mount.” The Haram and the Dome of the Rock were NEVER reckoned to be the Temple site by Jews in this period. During this period, the Haram was even OFF-LIMITS to Jews. But the Jewish authorities and laity were able to settle near and worship at the true site of their former Temples located in the *southeastern* section of Jerusalem near the Gihon.

³⁰⁹ Gil, *A History of Palestine (638–1099)*, p.647.

³¹⁰ In a Christian account of the early 6th century called *Breviarius* (a short account) of Jerusalem we are told that south of the Church of the Holy Wisdom “you come to the Temple built by Solomon, but there is nothing left there apart from a single cave [emphasis mine]” (Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades*, p.61). Back in 333 C.E., the Bordeaux Pilgrim spoke of a “pierced

with the *cave* built in the “Rock” under the Dome of the Rock. That particular *cave* in the “Rock” was chiseled out in Muslim times, and in no way could it be the cave described in the Geniza records. This is because of the clear evidence that no Jews were allowed into the Haram area from the time of the Muslim Abassids (750 C.E.) to the Crusades.

Exactly where was the cave of the Gineza records that was adjacent to the “Western Wall” in the *southern* part of Jerusalem? Let us look further.

We are told by Maimonides (about 1180 C.E.) that at the spot where there was “the Western Wall of the Holy of Holies,” there were also underneath the standing wall some “deep and winding tunnels.”³¹¹ This was on the *southeast* ridge. After entering an initial *cave*, the Jews encountered branches to that *cave*. They led downward. This means that below the “Western Wall” on the *southeast* ridge there were deep and winding “caves.” At this spot beneath the Western Wall (where the caves were) there was a Sanctuary with all the appearances of a Synagogue with an Inner Altar associated with it.

At this very spot was the gate of the Temple called “the Priest’s Gate.” No “Priest’s Gate” was ever mentioned in literature connected with the Temples that existed in Jerusalem from the time of Solomon to Herod. But in the final days of the Talmudic period

stone” (which could mean a *cave*) at the Temple site. This *cave* became a prominent fixture to Jews who came to the Temple site after the time of Omar in 638 C.E., up to the time of the Crusades. We now have the Jewish documents from the Geniza in Egypt, referred to in the text, that such a *cave* was used as a synagogue in southeast Jerusalem where Jews felt David had built his altar. This *cave* was near the Western Wall. It was located in the Jewish quarter of the city after the time of Omar, the Second Caliph. The *cave* was then a synagogue.

³¹¹ Recall that the terms “Mount Zion” and the “Temple Mount” are synonymous. They refer to the same place — to the spur of the southeast ridge where the original “Mount Zion” and its northerly extension called the “Ophel” were located. Later, I will show that all the Temples were located on the “Ophel” (the “humped mount”) prominence over and around the Gihon Spring. But for now, note that in Isaiah 32:14 (where “Ophel” is translated “forts” in the KJV), Isaiah said some of the main geographical features of the Ophel were its “caves” (KJV: “dens”) located underneath and within the mountain ridge.

(5th century C.E.), we read of a “Priest’s Gate” associated with the “Western Wall” of the Holy of Holies. This Holy of Holies must be the remnant of the Inner Sanctuary from Temples built in the time of Constantine and Julian. Note the comments of Moshe Gil.

“The Midrash mentions the Priest’s Gate together with the Western Wall and the Hulda Gates; the latter were certainly situated *in the south* [emphasis mine], according to the *Mishna* (Middot I:3). On the Priest’s Gate, it is said in *Shir ha-shirim rabba* (to the Song of Solomon, ii:9, ‘behold, he standeth behind our wall:’) [that is] ‘behind the Western Wall of the Temple, why? For the Lord has sworn that it will never be destroyed.’ In *Numbers Rabba* (xi:3): it is “the western wall of the Temple’ that has never been destroyed; and also *Lamentations Rabba*. The version in the Song of Solomon Rabba should therefore be viewed as an interpretation, as if it intended to say: the western wall has never been destroyed, the proof being that the Priest’s Gate and the Hulda Gate were not destroyed.”³¹²

As Moshe Gil states, these geographical features surrounding the Western Wall of the Holy of Holies “*were certainly situated in the south.*” They were nowhere near the Haram or the Dome of the Rock (which, as is well known, had been off limits to Jews for almost 200 years). These *ruins* of the Sanctuary area on the true Temple Mount were located far to the *south* of the southern wall of the Haram. They were on the *southeast* ridge. And while the “Rock” of the Dome of the Rock had a single *cave* associated with it, in no way could that small *cave* be called, as Maimonides did, “deep and winding tunnels” (that is, several *caves*). There were no “deep and winding tunnels” under the Dome of the Rock.

[This exact geographical feature is prominently displayed today in the archaeological garden constructed by the Israeli Antiquities Department located over the Gihon Spring. In March, 1999, I toured the whole area and the full tunnel system with my daughter Kathryn. It is easy to find the site. There are, indeed, several caves and tunnels (one or two could easily house a number of people for synagogue services). Beyond the first caves there are some complete and incomplete tunnels (and a shaft in the rock) that reach

³¹² Gil, *A History of Palestine 634–1099* p.642.

down toward the Gihon. The geography of the region fits perfectly the description of *that* “Western Wall” mentioned by Maimonides, and also the descriptions found in the Geniza documents. And NOTE CAREFULLY: this area is about a third of a mile south of the Dome of the Rock.]

Beside these “deep and winding tunnels” at *this* particular “Western Wall,” there was a gate of the Temple (over the Gihon Spring) called the “Priest’s Gate.” This gate was, to the writers of the Geniza documents, a part of the *wall* (the “Western Wall”) of the Holy of Holies. In one Geniza letter are references to the synagogue located inside the *cave* next to the collapsed wall. Note what Moshe Gil records about this matter.

“In the same [Geniza] letter, Joseph ha-Kohen mentions alongside the synagogue the *cave*. Despite the letter’s poor condition, it is easy to discern that ‘the *cave*’ is used as a synonym for the synagogue. Indeed, ‘the *cave*’ is frequently mentioned in the sources as the place where the Jews of Jerusalem congregate, and it is clear that they are referring to the synagogue. Solomon ben Judah writes to Ephraim b. Shemaria that on the morrow after receiving his letter, they hastened to declare his rival excommunicated in Jerusalem: ‘On Monday, we and a large public gathering *in the cave* and we took out the scrolls of the Torah and banned all those ‘that decree unrighteous decrees’ (Isaiah x:1). After mentioning the collapse of a wall [the Western Wall] which caused damage to the synagogue, he writes, following the work of reconstruction, ‘the *cave* was restored.’ As to the collapse, it occurred on the first day of Passover, when the synagogue was full of people, but no one was injured. It seems that he is referring to the collapse of part of the Temple Mount wall, that is, the Western Wall.... This collapse is explicitly mentioned in Ibn al-Jawzi, who links it with the earthquake which occurred on 5 December, 1033 C.E.”³¹³

All these geographical details from Jewish records (some from the Geniza collection were contemporary with the events) showed that the Jewish Sanctuary on the Temple Mount (then in *ruins*) was NOT at or within the Haram, because Jews had long been prohibited from entering that area. The original Temple was over the Gihon Spring.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, p.648.

In fact, if people had used only the Bible to go by, there never would be doubt where the original “Mount Zion” and its adjacent mount Ophel were located as the location of the Temples. This brings us to consider the opinions of certain Jews known as Karaites who claimed to abide by the teachings of the Holy Scriptures alone. (And they had nothing to do with Rabbinic Rabbis who believed in accepting traditional beliefs *added* to Judaism since the canonization of the Jewish Bible in the time of Ezra.) These Karaite Jews came on the scene in the ninth century of our era. Many of them gravitated to Jerusalem during this period. These Jewish sectarians did not get along well with the Rabbinic Jews who had been in the *southern* Jewish quarter of Jerusalem since the time of Omar. But even though there was hostility between the two groups, the Karaites had enough sense to settle in the same general area (yet somewhat to the east) as the Rabbinic Jews. After all, both groups wanted to be near the area of the Temple Mount.

The Karaite Sectarian Jews Come to Jerusalem

It was in the late Abbasid period that an important development took place among the Jews of Jerusalem. This was the arrival of Jews who divorced themselves from the teachings of the Rabbinic authorities in the Talmuds. They supposedly founded their beliefs only on the teachings of the *Tanak* (the Old Testament). Because of their insistence that *only* the teachings in the Holy Scriptures were important, the Karaites become further witnesses that the *southeastern* region of Jerusalem was where the former Temples were located. When they came to Jerusalem they took up residence in the *southeastern* part of the city, and most of them (because Rabbinic Jews already lived over and around the Temple Mount near the Gihon) moved to a village named Silwan, just east of the Kedron Valley from the former City of David.

Several documents from the Geniza collection show the Karaites’ interest was only in the *southeastern* part of Jerusalem. This is significant because they were concerned only in what they believed was *biblical* Jerusalem, and not to traditional sites that the Christians and Muslims considered holy. The Karaites made *no attempt* at settling in the northern part of the city near the Haram

and the Dome of the Rock. They also made *no attempt* to live in the western part of Jerusalem on the *southwestern* hill that was of Christian interest or in the *northwestern* part near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (also of Christian interest). Their areas for living during the 200 years they spent in Jerusalem was in the *southern* region near the Rabbinic Jews, but more particularly they settled in the village of Silwan on the *southern* slope of the Mount of Olives. This area of Karaite settlement is shown in Dan Bahat's *Illustrated Atlas of Jerusalem*.³¹⁴

The reason the Rabbinic Jews and the Karaite Jews (normally adverse to one another in theological and societal matters) congregated around the *southeastern* sector of Jerusalem was both were aware the ruined Temple Mount was in that region. To them, the Temple Mount had nothing to do with the Haram or the Dome of the Rock. A letter written at the end of the tenth century from Jerusalem by a Rabbinic Jewish authority asked for donations of money to help Jewish people in Jerusalem has survived. The Jews lived in the midst of Muslims, Christians and other non-religious groups that made the environment where the Jews settled, and even the Temple Mount, an unsavory place to live. When one reads the account carefully, it is easy to see that *this* Jewish elder was NOT speaking about the Haram and the Dome of the Rock when he refers to the Temple and its grounds. Note what he stated.

“Greetings to you from the faithful Lord, the eternal city [Jerusalem], and from the head of Sion’s yeshivas, from the city in which the seventy-one members of the Sanhedrin sat with their students before them ... the city which is now widowed, orphaned, deserted, and impoverished with its few scholars.... Many competitors and rebels have arisen [the Karaites], yet it yearns for the day the All-Merciful Lord will redeem it.

We the Rabbanite community, a pitiful assembly *living in the vicinity of the Temple site*, regret to inform you that we are constantly harassed by those foreigners *who overrun the Temple grounds*. We pray: ‘How long, O Lord, shall the adversary reproach? Shall the adversary blaspheme Your name forever?’ (Psalm 74:10). Our sole comfort shall be when we are once again

³¹⁴ See pages 81 and also 87.

permitted to walk freely about its gates, to prostrate ourselves in prayer for Jerusalem's total liberation *with its Temple restored*.... Yes, there is a synagogue on the Mount of Olives to which our Jewish confreres gather during the month of Tishri. There they weep upon its stone, roll in its dust, encircle its walls, and pray.

It was God's will that we found favor with the Ishmaelite rulers. At the time of their invasion and conquest of Palestine from the Edomites [the Romans/Byzantines], the Arabs came to Jerusalem and some Jews *showed them the location of the Temple* [italics mine]. This group of Jews has lived among them ever since. The Jews agree [that is, these Jews *still agree*] to keep the site clear of refuse, in return for which they [the Jews] were granted the privilege of praying at its gates. They [the Jews] then purchased the Mount of Olives [the whole Mount of Olives where the Jews had their synagogue was *purchased* by the Rabbinic Jewish community], where the Shekinah is said to have rested, as we read in Ezekiel 11:23: 'The glory of God went up from the midst of the city and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.' ... Here [on the Mount of Olives] we worship on holy days facing the Lord's Temple, especially on Hoshana Rabba [the Day of Trumpets]. We entreat the Lord's blessing for all of Israel wherever they might reside. All who remember Jerusalem will merit a share in its joy.

Everyone can partake of it by supporting Jerusalem's residents. Life here is extremely hard, food is scarce, and opportunities for work very limited. Yet our wicked neighbors exact exorbitant taxes and other 'fees.' Were we not to pay them, we would be denied the right to *pray on Mount of Olivet*.... These intolerable levies and the necessary frequent bribes compel us to borrow money at high rates of interest in order to avoid imprisonment or expulsion. Help us, save us, redeem us. It is for your benefit too, for we pray for your welfare."³¹⁵

One of the first places the Jewish authorities wanted to secure to themselves (if possible) was the Mount of Olives as a part of their inheritance in Jerusalem. So, over the years, the Jews finally were able to purchase the whole of the *southern* spur of the Mount of Olives. This part of Olivet was important for Temple services.

³¹⁵ A. Holtz, *The Holy City: Jews on Jerusalem* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1971), pp.122-3.

Geniza Records Show Temples Located in South

The historical importance of the Geniza documents is immense in understanding that the original Temple site was in *southern* Jerusalem on the *southeastern* ridge near and around the Gihon Spring. I have already mentioned these early letters and documents, and their worth should not be underestimated. These literary remains have been uncovered in Egypt from the Cairo Geniza. They are a horde of over 200,000 pieces of manuscripts dating from the tenth to the twelfth centuries, and refer to events back to the time of the Caliph Omar who conquered Jerusalem for Islam. They were discovered just over a hundred years ago. Many are still to be translated and presented to the general public. But a great quantity has already been rendered into English and modern Hebrew. They are opening up a new historical understanding of Medieval Judaism.

The Geniza documents testify to architectural remains of the Temple in the *southeastern* area of Jerusalem near the Gihon Spring. This was the central reason why Jewish people from Tiberias who returned to Jerusalem with the allowance of Omar the Second Caliph in 638 C.E. stated confidently that they wished to reside in the *southern* part of the city.³¹⁶ We will now look at these historical discoveries that confirm the original Temples were located over and around the Gihon in *southeastern* Jerusalem.

What must first be recognized is that Omar the Second Caliph was shown the place of the Temple near the Gihon by Sophronius,

³¹⁶ See Fran Alpert, *Getting Jerusalem Together*, Archeological Seminar Ltd., p.32 for quote from the Sepher HaYishuv, emphases mine. Another important reference to this document is found in Reuven Hammer's *The Jerusalem Anthology*, p.148. As cited earlier:

"Omar decreed that seventy households should come [from Tiberias]. ... he asked: 'Where do you wish to live within the city?' They replied, 'In the southern section of the city, which is the market of the Jews.' **Their request was to enable them to be near the site of the Temple and its gates, as well as to the water of Shiloah**, which could be used for immersion. This was granted them ... So seventy households ... moved from Tiberias and established settlements in buildings whose foundations had stood many generations."

the Christian Archbishop of Jerusalem.³¹⁷ Omar dug in the refuse and found a “stone” from which he obtained the specimen that he took to the southern part of the Haram esh-Sharif. That stone became associated with the new *qibla* in Jerusalem that Omar erected in what was called Omar’s *new* “Temple.” Jewish records tell us Omar also took ruined stones from the Temple site (no doubt rectangular ones that could still be used) to help construct his *new* Temple at the southern end of the Haram.³¹⁸ He took so many stones, it was common to call Omar’s new Al Aqsa Mosque at the *southern* part of the Haram as the *new* Temple of Solomon.³¹⁹ And soon, we find the local people of Jerusalem called the *new* Mosque “Solomon’s Temple,” and the custom lasted. The Christian Crusaders even called the Al Aqsa Mosque by that august name.

³¹⁷ Some sources say some Jews accompanied them, one being an older Jew who knew the exact place for the Temple site.

³¹⁸ Much more than the single “stone” was transferred to the site on the southern side of the Haram. Jewish tradition has more information on what happened. In the words of a Jewish visitor in 1334 C.E., Isaac ben Joseph:

“The king [Omar, the Second Caliph], who had made a vow to build up again the ruins of the sacred edifice [the Temple], if God put the Holy City in his power, demanded of the Jews that they should make known the ruins to him. For the uncircumcised [Christians] in their hate against the people of God, had heaped rubbish and filth over the spot, so that no one knew exactly where the ruins stood. Now there was an old man then living who said: ‘If the king will take an oath to preserve the wall [probably the Western Wall of the Holy of Holies], I will discover unto him the place where the ruins of the Temple were.’ So the king straightway placed his hand on the thigh of the old man and swore an oath to do what he demanded. When he had shown him the ruins of the Temple under a mound of defilements, the king had the ruins cleared and cleansed, taking part in the cleansing himself, until they were all fair and clean. After that he had them all set up again [My italics for emphasis. In other words, Omar rebuilt with stones from the Temple site ruin], with the exception of the wall, and made them a very beautiful Temple, which he consecrated to his God” (Elkin N. Adler, *Jewish Travelers: A Treasury of Travelogues from Nine Centuries*, 2nd ed. [New York: Hermon Books, 1966], pp.130–31).

³¹⁹ Like the London Bridge comparison mentioned earlier, when the stones of the Bridge crossing the River Thames were transported and rebuilt over the Colorado River in Arizona. The bridge was still called “London Bridge.” Since Omar used stones from the ruined Temple to build his Al Aqsa Mosque, it is easy to see how contemporaries called his Mosque the new “Temple of Solomon.” That is precisely what they did!

With this *new* “Temple of Solomon” (as Muslims considered it) located on the platform of the Haram at its extreme *southern* aspect, other architectural features associated with the former Temple also were transferred to the northern area. This especially applied to the names of gates that once surrounded the actual Temple site over and near the Gihon Spring and its Siloam extension. When Omar the Second Caliph asked the Jews of Tiberias where they wanted to reside, they wanted the *southern* area, directly *south* of the southern wall of the Haram. Note how Moshe Gil records this.

“A section of the Jewish chronicle mentioned above [from the Geniza documents], which was copied (or written) sometime during the eleventh century, notes that, when they [the Tiberias Jewish authorities] spoke with Umar [or, Omar] about the possibility of a renewed Jewish community in Jerusalem, the Jews asked for permission to settle in the *southern* part [my emphasis] of the city, near the gates of the ‘Holy Site’ (that is, the Temple) and near the pool of Siloam.³²⁰ On receiving Umar’s consent, the Jews proceeded to build there, using construction materials that were readily available and that had previously been used in the old, now ruined structures. According to this source, the area in which the Jews took up residence is the site of the Jewish marketplace ‘to this very day’.”³²¹

These Jewish authorities told Omar (and he accepted it) that *their* “Holy Site” (the Temple) was positioned in this *southern* area, south of the Haram esh-Sharif, and even further south, beyond the later palatial Muslim buildings built south of the Haram

³²⁰ The Holy Scriptures make clear there had to be a spring of fresh water within the precincts of the Temple. Entire Psalms and many statements in the writings of the prophets require a fresh water spring within the House of God. Without fresh spring water, there could be no formal and proper House for God to have His abode among men on earth. I will devote two chapters in the next section to prove beyond doubt that a fresh water spring was a cardinal feature of the House of God. Spring water was essential, and the Gihon Spring was adequate to provide that fresh spring water in early times. This is why the Jews demanded of Omar that they be given the ruins of their Temple in the south of the Haram to live in, and why they needed access to the Siloam water system.

³²¹ “The Jewish Community” in *The History of Jerusalem*, p.171. Words in parentheses are Gil’s.

that Professor Mazar discovered.³²² Besides that, this *southern* region was most important because the Jewish authorities even stated to Omar that they wished to reside near the Pool of Siloam (in the extreme *south* of the city). They had not the slightest qualm in telling Omar that vicinity was *where* the former Temples of Solomon and Herod had been located. Omar agreed.

Jewish Quarter Was in Southeast Jerusalem 440 Years

That *southeastern* region of Jerusalem in 638 C.E. had ruined buildings within its precincts, and the stones from these earlier structures were used in the first decades of their return to build homes, and other buildings. Interestingly the Jewish documents also describe the remnants of a Western Wall that became very important to them. This concerned residual stones from the Western Wall of the Holy of Holies built in the fourth century in the Constantine/Julian endeavors to reconstruct the Temple. It had nothing to do with the western external wall surrounding Herod's Temple.³²³

This remnant Western Wall the Jews came to revere and represent as "holy" was located near the center of the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem, in the *southeastern* part of the city, over and around the Gihon Spring. Besides this wall, the Geniza documents give other geographical sites that became very important to the Jews in that period of about 440 years (from 638 C.E. to 1077 C.E.). One of the topographical features needed by the Jews was to be near the

³²² Indeed, some of the college students I supervised at the excavation over the five years from 1969 to 1974 were the very ones who uncovered these Umayyad buildings in this southern region.

³²³ It is of utmost importance to distinguish the "western wall" of the Holy of Holies, which was part of the Holy Temple itself, from the outer "western wall" (the western external wall of the squared ramparts Josephus described as circumnavigating the whole Temple complex). By the way, this reference to the "western wall" in these fifth century Jewish documents has nothing to do with the Western (Wailing) Wall of the Haram esh-Sharif (which wall is not even a part of an exact square like the Temple walls, but the walls of the Haram are a trapezium-type of rectangular walled area with unequal side lengths). True, there are some modern Jewish people who wish to identify the two "western walls" as being identical (they are members of the laity who have not seen the historical facts). This is not possible as Jewish scholars admit.

Siloam Spring (the water source being the Gihon) so they could have proper ritual bathing. The 70 families from Tiberias in the time of Omar wanted to take up residence “in the *southern* part of the city ... which is the Jewish Market.” Indeed, the main and essential reason for wanting to live in this *southern* region was to be near the Temple Mount, its gates and the Gihon Spring. The Jewish authorities told Omar they wanted to live:

“In the *southern* section of the city, which is the market of the Jews.’ **Their request was to enable them to be near the site of the Temple and its GATES, as well as to the water of Shiloah.**”

[I deliberately emphasize that the Jews said the “Gates of the Temple” were in the *southern* part of Jerusalem near the Siloam waters.]³²⁴

³²⁴ Reuven Hammer’s *The Jerusalem Anthology*, p.148 and Gil’s, *A History of Palestine 634–1099*, p.636.

PART THREE



The Biblical History of the Temples unto Herod the Great

Chapter 15

THE GARDEN OF EDEN, THE TOWER OF BABEL AND THE TEMPLE OF GOD

WE NOW COME to a necessary part of this biblical and historical research that will show why Solomon and then later Herod built the Temple of God in the manner they did. They were actually preserving a form of “Temple” that God had designed for mankind to be aware of from the very beginning of human existence. The later Jewish authorities came to realize that in the time of Adam and Eve, God presented to mankind his first design of a “Temple.” This was a geographical location that was intended to represent on earth a replica of God’s divine residence in heaven. That first “Temple” was the Garden of Eden and a larger region called the Land of Eden. Let us see how the Jewish authorities recognized the fact that the Temples of Solomon and Herod were built in a fashion to resemble the Garden in Eden and the Land of Eden. This matter will help us appreciate

what the Temple structure itself was designed to present in a symbolic fashion to all mankind.

The Symbolism of the Temple

The three divisions of the Tabernacle (and later the Temple of Solomon as well as the Temple of Herod) were recognized by the early Jewish authorities as equated in a symbolic sense with the three divisions of the Land of Eden mentioned in the early chapters of Genesis. Geography is the key that helps to understand these points. The first geographical fact is the biblical account that the Garden associated with Adam and Eve was located within an extensive area called the Land of Eden. We must be careful to recognize that the Garden of Eden and the Land of Eden are not the same in meaning. The Garden was actually situated within the boundaries of Eden and it made up only a part of Eden.

Look first at the Garden. Close examination shows that the Garden had two sections to it. The first and principal portion was its inner area where God periodically met with Adam and Eve. This interior region in the Jewish symbolism associated with the Tabernacle and Temples answered to the inner Holy of Holies where God was supposed to have his residence. The second section of the Garden was the remainder of the outer Garden area and it had boundaries that separated the Garden from the rest of the Land of Eden. This second section of the Garden answered to an area located just east of the Holy of Holies and called the Holy Place of the Tabernacle and Temples. This is where the priests performed all their ceremonial duties. Outside the Garden one would come to the territory that was called the Land of Eden itself. This Land of Eden surrounded the Garden, and in the Book of Genesis, this was called "the Land of Eden" proper.

The biblical account tells us that Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden but they were able to make their home in the rest of the Land of Eden. It was in this area of Eden just outside the eastern gate of the Garden where Cain and Abel built an altar to petition God whom they considered to be still in the Garden. This altar was built at the east entrance to the Garden and there they

offered their sacrifices. This altar of Cain and Abel came to be analogous to the Altar of Burnt Offering located just east of the Holy Place in the Tabernacle and the later Temples.

Now look at the Land of Eden itself. The early Jewish authorities understood that the whole area of Eden was symbolic of the Court of the Israelites in the Tabernacle and Temples and it also included the extended area around the sanctuaries that came to be called the "Camp of Israel." So, the two parts of the Garden with the Land of Eden (when combined together) were identified as representing the three compartments in the Tabernacle and later Temples: 1) the Holy of Holies and 2) the Holy Place represented the two parts of the Garden, and 3) the Court of Israel and the rest of the "Camp of Israel" represented the totality of the Land of Eden. Let us now look at this extensive area called the Land of Eden.

The Land of Eden Had Borders Around It

Recall that Cain was expelled from the Land of Eden (which the Court and Camp of Israel came to represent). This forced Cain outside the borders of Eden into the Land of Nod that meant the "Land of Wandering." This land was located *east* of Eden. In the time of the later Temples, this region answered to the lands of the Gentiles outside the sanctified region at Jerusalem (that is, outside the "Camp" area of Israel). It was in this outer area *east* of Eden that God said Cain would be provided with an animal sacrifice that would "lie at the door."³²⁵ The Hebrew of this verse actually suggests that this sacrificial animal would be "couching at the door" and that it would be under a heavy weight. Since Cain by murdering Abel had sinned against his brother, and consequently Cain had sinned against God by his murderous act, the animal sacrifice that God would provide for Cain was understood to be a type of sin offering bearing a heavy weight of sin. God told Cain that this sin offering was to be presented alive "at the door." This "door" was an entrance into a region that the Book of Genesis does not specify. But there is no problem in recognizing the area where this "door" was located. This entrance was actually the "door" that led

³²⁵ Genesis 4:7.

from the Land of Nod back into the Land of Eden. Remember, Cain had been expelled *eastward* from Eden and he could not re-enter the Land of Eden.

This “door” before which Cain’s sacrifice was to be placed was positioned at the *eastern* boundary line between the Land of Eden and the Land of Nod. Since it was understood by Cain that God dwelt in the Garden which was within the interior of Eden, this sacrifice for Cain was to be located on an altar facing God at his dwelling place within the Garden which was in Eden. Cain with his sacrifice was to petition God who dwelt in the Land of Eden, west from the Land of Nod. In a word, the sacrifice of Cain was to be placed on an altar just in front of the *east* entrance to the Land of Eden. This altar of Cain was analogous to that of Moses (and later Solomon and Herod) which he positioned just “outside the camp” of Israel. The prophet Ezekiel said it was in the *east* and also “without the sanctuary.”³²⁶ Jewish sources tell us that this particular altar was located some 2000 cubits *east* of the central part of the Temple.³²⁷ In the time of Jesus, this altar was placed slightly downslope from the southern area of the Mount of Olives (as one looked toward the southern spur called the Mount of Offense). This altar was in full view of the main Temple located in the west and slightly to the south. This was the altar for burning the sacrifice of the Red Heifer. Its technical name was the “Miphkad Altar.”³²⁸ I show in my book *Secrets of Golgotha*, that near this Miphkad Altar on the Mount of Olives is near where the New Testament and history show Jesus was crucified.

The Temple and Geography

First of all, the Temple at Jerusalem was patterned after the Tabernacle that Moses constructed in the wilderness, which in turn was designed after the geographical features of the Garden in Eden and the Land of Eden itself (along with the altar of Cain located east of Eden). Recall that when Solomon built the Temple in Jeru-

³²⁶ Ezekiel 43:21.

³²⁷ See the first two chapters of my book *Secrets of Golgotha*.

³²⁸ Ezekiel 43:21.

salem, he carved flowers and palm trees in the outer and inner walls of the Holy Place in order that the Holy Place resemble a garden. He also carved cherubim onto the walls because cherubim were at first associated with the Garden in Eden.³²⁹ So, the Temples were built to represent a symbolic type of the Garden of Eden where our first parents were placed after their creation.

That does not end the symbolic agreements. The Temple and its environs were further patterned after God's heavenly palace and its celestial surroundings that existed in the north part of the heavens.³³⁰ These are important factors to recognize. As for the Tabernacle, it was simply a portable Temple. It represented to the wandering Israelites on earth, the abode of God as it was in the heavens. Indeed, there was even an astronomical arrangement recognized surrounding the Temple that showed the three regions in the Bible that were acknowledged as being "heavens." The Bible shows these "three heavens." Numerous texts show that the "first heaven" is the atmosphere where the birds fly and where all weather phenomena take place. The "second heaven," however, was beyond the earth's atmosphere and embraced all the visible planets and stars, including the sun and the moon. The "third heaven," that the apostle Paul referred to in II Corinthians 12:1-4 that he called Paradise, was that of God's official residence in his heavenly region which was separate from the other two heavens.

These "three heavens" were symbolically pictured in the Temple at Jerusalem. In fact, the three main sections of the Temple were designed to show these three heavens. When an Israelite entered the main Temple from the east, he or she would first be within the Court of the Israelites. This first section of the Temple (which continued westward up to the eastern portion of the priests' court in which was the Altar of Burnt Offering) was not covered with a roof. The first section was open to the sky and to all weather phenomena. Birds could also fly within it. This area of the Temple answered in a typical manner with the "first heaven," which was

³²⁹ I Kings 6:31-35.

³³⁰ Hebrews 8:5; 9:23. That God supposedly resided in the north part of the heavens, note Psalm 75:6.

like our atmosphere surrounding the earth.

The “second heaven” in the Temple in a symbolic sense began at the eastern curtain in front of the Holy Place. Josephus tells we this curtain, had the principal stars of the heavens displayed on it in tapestry form.³³¹ It represented the entrance into the starry heavens beyond our atmosphere. Josephus tells us that west of this curtain, one could witness the center of the zodiacal circle with the seven planets displayed on the south side in the form of the Menorah (the seven lamps) with the twelve signs of the Zodiac denoting the twelve months displayed on the north side by the twelve loaves of the Table of Shewbread. This second court of the priests represented all the starry heavens above the earth’s atmosphere. But beyond this “second heaven,” there was yet a “third heaven.” This “third heaven” was the Heaven of Heavens, or in Temple terminology, the Holy of Holies, which equaled God’s celestial abode where his palace and divine precincts were located which the apostle Paul called Paradise.

The Temple and Jerusalem Were Astronomical

With all of the astronomical features of the Temple, it is not difficult to understand why the shape of the “Camp of Israel” for calendar and prophetic purposes was reckoned to be circular, as astronomical designs are typically shown to be. In a word, the city of Jerusalem and the Camp area that surrounded it were symbolically accounted as being the physical and earthly counterpart (or pattern) of God’s heavenly headquarters from which he governed the entirety of the universe.³³² Though the physical sanctuaries

³³¹ *War*, V.5,5 ¶213.

³³² Hebrews 8:5; 9:23. This astronomical “camp” which was circular in shape should not be confused with the “camp” denoting the Sabbath limits of the city of Jerusalem. The shape of the Sabbath “camp” was square to accord (in the time of Herod) with the square shape of the Temple itself (600 feet on each side) and the limits of the Temple Mount (750 feet on each side). The corners of the square also afforded the Israelites a little more maneuverability on the Sabbath days by extending the length of the Sabbath Day’s journey (see Acts 1:12). In matters dealing with the calendar and prophetic teaching, the “camp” areas were reckoned in a circular manner, but in regard to social, governmental and religious matters, the “camps” were “square” in shape.

were located on earth, there was always a heavenly theme associated with the symbolism of the Tabernacle and the later Temples. This is because the actual abode of God was in heaven. The Garden of Eden on earth also represented that heavenly home of God.

Thus, the Tabernacle in the time of Moses was designed to symbolically indicate a “portable” Garden of Eden (where God has his abode on earth) or a “permanent” Garden of Eden when Solomon finally built the Temple in Jerusalem (which also was typical of God’s residence on earth). It was essential in Temple symbolism (as I will soon demonstrate) that a natural spring had to be located within the Temple grounds. Solomon, and all subsequent rulers in Israel, realized that *spring waters* had to be within the Temple precincts. That is why the Temples (all of them) had to be located over the Gihon Spring in Jerusalem. The reason the name “Gihon” was given to this natural spring is because one of the rivers that fed water to the original Garden of Eden was also called the Gihon.³³³ It has been recognized that the use of Gihon in Jerusalem was to make a symbolic connection to the Gihon River in Eden.³³⁴

This theme of the Garden of Eden was very much in Solomon’s mind when he constructed the Temple at Jerusalem. Note that Solomon made the most holy area of the Temple to be a square of 20 cubits (30 feet by 30 feet). This was to indicate that the Garden in Eden (where God resided on earth in the time of our first parents) was also square in its dimensions. This fit the square dimensions of the ideal Temple described in Ezekiel 45. Even the design of the Temple found among the Dead Sea people (called “the Temple Scroll”) was a perfect square in shape. Indeed, Herod’s Temple was also a precise a square with a distance of *one stade* (600 feet) along all four sides of its walls. This square-shape also answers to the holy city of Jerusalem that is destined to descend from heaven as described in the Book of Revelation.

“And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand

³³³ See Genesis 2:13.

³³⁴ *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol.II., pp.282–3.

furlongs [*stadēs*]. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.”³³⁵

The Prophesied Holy City of Jerusalem

When one looks at the dimensions of the Holy City of Jerusalem that the Book of Revelation states will come down from heaven at the End of the Age, it must be noted that it is described as not only a square-form city, but it is also a cube-form with the same dimensions as its breadth and length. What we find is the fact that this symbolic city is shown descending out of heaven onto the earth and that on top of this cubical form is located the New Jerusalem itself with a wall on the top that surrounds the four-sided city. That wall on top of the cube will be 144 cubits high (216 feet). This wall is certainly for decoration and is not intended for any defensive reasons.

What we view from this allegorical display is a cubed-form city with a wall on its top that surrounds the square platform on which the New Jerusalem will be placed. When viewed from a distance, this New Jerusalem looks like a large tower that ascends upwards into the heavens with a city built on its topmost platform (and a wall surrounding the four precipices on its four sides).

It is interesting that this is how Herod’s Temple eventually appeared, if one could imagine the symbolic significance. Herod’s Temple was a type of foursquare tower that rose majestically over the floors of the Kedron Valley. Josephus said its eastern wall rose 300 cubits (450 feet), but that it had foundational stones that went below the surface another 100 cubits (150 feet).³³⁶ So, if measured from the lowest foundation stones of the southeastern corner of the Temple, there were exactly 400 cubits (600 feet) from the bottom to the top of the platform on which the Temple buildings were placed. We should recall that the Temple platform had dimensions

³³⁵ Revelation 21:16.

³³⁶ Josephus may possibly have another explanation in mind. The 100 cubits (150 feet) might be reckoned as being on top of the Temple wall at its southeast corner. This would mean that the “pinnacle” (if it were actually a tower) could be 100 cubits higher than the wall surrounding the Temple. Further study will have to be made to know what Josephus actually means by this 100 cubits.

of 400 cubits (600 feet) on each side, making the Temple platform a perfect square. But if one went even farther and imagined the depth of the wall to its foundation stones to also be 400 cubits (600 feet), it could symbolically draw a conclusion that Herod's Temple was cube-form (like the New Jerusalem of the Book of Revelation). Looking solely at the southeast corner of the Temple one could imagine that there was precisely 400 cubits (600 feet) for its height, as well as 400 cubits (600 feet) for its breadth and length. Herod no doubt intended this symbolic significance when he and the priests had his Temple built and dedicated in this shape.

The Tower of Babel and the Temple at Jerusalem

It will be recalled that after the Flood of Noah the people went to the plain of Shinar (a part of the region where the former Garden and the Land of Eden were situated) and they began to build a tower with the depiction of "heaven" on its top.³³⁷ The text does not mean that they intended to build the tower until it reached the "heaven" of God. This Tower (or Temple) was simply to depict "heaven" (the residence of God, like God's abode in the Garden of Eden or in his actual divine celestial quarters). In a word, the people took it upon themselves, without God's approval, as the text strongly suggests, to build a Temple (in the form of a Tower) that would have a replica of God's residence on its top. The problem in building such a structure in honor of God was the fact that it was a premature endeavor and (as we later learn) it was built in the wrong place. The actual place where God wanted to build a Tower (a Temple) for a permanent display of his divine residence in heaven was to be Jerusalem.

The area of Jerusalem came to have significance beginning with the time of Abraham. Tradition had it that the city called "Salem" in the period of Abraham where Melchizedek was the priest of God was actually Jerusalem. When Abraham was told to sacrifice his son Isaac, he journeyed north from Hebron to the mountain area of "Moriah" (which indicated a place where God viewed things in a special way). This was also in the area that became

³³⁷ Genesis 11:1-4.

Jerusalem in the time of David. Besides that, the region of Jerusalem was also called in the time of Jacob by the name “Migdol Edar” (which in Hebrew means “Tower of the Flock”).³³⁸

Interestingly, when the prophet Micah prophesied (at the time Isaiah was also teaching in Judah), the name “Migdol Edar” referred to the Stronghold of David which was also called by the name Zion.³³⁹ So, this religious and governmental center where Solomon finally built the Temple was called a “Tower” — the Tower of the Flock (Migdol Edar). This was intended to mean that God’s people (reckoned to be the “flock”) had their “Tower” to which they could turn to in worship. Solomon ordered that all Israelites direct their prayers and requests to God toward the Temple in Jerusalem.³⁴⁰ It was long recognized by the Jewish authorities that the Temple in Jerusalem was to be the geographical area to which all Israelites would direct their prayers to God. Those who stood and prayed in Jerusalem were required to turn their faces toward the Temple Mount, because Solomon said “toward the house that I have built for thy name.”

One dictum that was always recognized in Israel was the fact that all those who prayed on the Temple Mount should turn their faces toward the Holy of Holies. In simple terms, it was determined by the early Jewish authorities that those who were north of the Temple should pray toward the south (that is, toward the Temple), those who were south of Temple should pray toward the north, those who were east of the Temple should pray toward the west, and those who were west of the Temple should pray toward the east.³⁴¹ This means that the Temple was to take the place of the Tower of Babel in being the center of all religious activities on earth. The Temple at Jerusalem was designed by Solomon to be the center focal point for all Israelites no matter where they were

³³⁸ Genesis 35:21.

³³⁹ Micah 4:8.

³⁴⁰ II Chronicles 6:20–42.

³⁴¹ To read elaborate references to these matters, one should refer to the excellent book *The Sages* by Ephraim E. Urbach, p.58 (Harvard University Press, Fourth Printing, 1995). This book is a suburb reference source on all matters of Judaism within the period of the Talmuds.

located in the world. It was a proper “Tower” whereas the “Tower of Babel” was not. This means that a new type of “Eden” was established in the area of Jerusalem. And, it had God’s blessing. At a later time, Mohammed also adopted this well-known religious motif in focusing his followers to pray toward a special site that God had dedicated to be the center of all religious affairs on earth. At first, Mohammed directed those in Islam to pray toward Jerusalem, but this was soon substituted for Mecca in order not to confuse the teachings of Islam with Judaism.

The Temple at Jerusalem Was Reckoned to be a Tower

The Temple at Jerusalem was called a Tower like that of the Tower of Babel. It was a Tower with “heaven” (God’s official residence) built on its top platform. But the Tower of Babel was a premature structure in the eyes of God and we later find out that it was located in the wrong place. It was not in the “center of the world,” as Jerusalem was later reckoned to be. True enough, the people just after the Flood of Noah intended the Tower of Babel to provide the same center focal point for their religious and social existence as Solomon did with the Temple that he constructed. But God had another region of the earth in mind to be the “navel of the earth.” As Josephus stated: “The city Jerusalem is situated in the very middle [of the country]; on which account some have, with sagacity enough, called that city *the Navel of the Country*.”³⁴² This new region of centrality from a religious point of view was not to be in the region of Babylon, it was to be located at Jerusalem. And, the new emphasis was not simply to be central area called “the Navel of the Country,” but Jerusalem was finally expanded in the eyes of Jews and Christians to be the “Navel of the World.”³⁴³

Similarities Between the Tower of Babel and Temple

The Tower of Babel was originally designed by its builders to be the central religious shrine for all people on earth. It was reck-

³⁴² *War* III.3,5.

³⁴³ To cite the references to this fact would occupy at least two pages of notes. Simply put, no one disputes the fact that this was the opinion of early Jewish and Christian authorities.

oned to be an edifice that would keep people in touch with one another and observing the same type of religious beliefs. The Holy Scriptures, however, show that God had another area in mind that would become the "navel of the earth." That site was Jerusalem. So, the Tower of Babel was finally destroyed and the people's languages were changed so that they "babbled" to one another and could not be understood. People throughout history and in various parts of the world to which they were scattered have had feelings that the site of Babylon was religiously and socially important as a focal point of reference. Even in the Book of Revelation, we find that the term "Babylon" was still being used to denote the center of rebellion and the area counter to God in social and religious matters. The true site that God wanted to select for the role of presenting righteousness and the real Kingdom of God to the world was Jerusalem. That is why the Scriptures tell us that God selected Jerusalem to fulfill his purpose. So, Jerusalem became the "navel of the earth," not Babylon.

In actual fact, Solomon, as well as Zerubbabel and also Herod understood these matters. They knew that the Tower (or Temple) of Babel was not designed by God to be the center of world affairs. These men of the Bible came to realize that the Temple at Jerusalem was where the centrality of religious attention was to be located. That is why Solomon, Zerubbabel and even Herod felt they had God's blessing for the construction of the "Tower of the Flock" (the Temple), while those after the Flood of Noah did not have permission to build such a Temple (or Tower). And, from a New Testament point of view, whereas God did destroy the Tower of Babel and confused the languages of the people, God reversed the matter and on the Day of Pentecost God brought Jews together from all parts of the immediate world to the Temple at Jerusalem. While in the Temple on that Pentecost day, they heard the teaching of the Gospel in their own language.³⁴⁴ This was viewed by the early Christians as a reversal (or a rectification) of what happened at the Tower of Babel. It was a vindication that the real Temple

³⁴⁴ Acts 2.

was located at Jerusalem and not in any other area of the world.³⁴⁵

Still, however, the original area of the Garden of Eden (God's first residence on earth) was remembered by Solomon and even by Herod. Though the Tower (the Temple) of Babel was disallowed, and though it was located in the area of the Land of Eden, Solomon still built the Temple to resemble a Tower that had "heaven" on its top. It was also built over the Gihon Spring, which was named after one of the rivers that watered the Garden in Eden. And even more important than that, if one will look at the orientation of the Haram esh-Sharif (which was located directly north of the Temple of Herod exactly *one stade* — 600 feet north), the Temple was oriented in relation to the cardinal directions of the compass about ten degrees north of east. (The Church of the Holy Sepulchre of later times was also oriented the same ten degrees north of east for the specific reason of resembling the Temple at Jerusalem.)

The Orientation of the Temple of Herod

That orientation of the Temple about ten degrees north of east leads directly to the place where the Tower was raised up after the Flood of Noah (in the area of Babylon) that answered to the region in which the original Garden of Eden was located. This orientation was no accident. It was designed to link the Temples at Jerusalem with the original Garden of Eden in the east and even the place where the Tower of Babel was at first erected. This was to show a connection between those geographical areas of God's first influence on earth with the final area of Jerusalem where God actually wanted his final headquarters on earth to be positioned.

This is one of the reasons that Herod's Temple actually resembled a Tower that rose up appearing cubical in form (at least at its southeastern angle). This was to show how God's divine residence was positioned in the heavens. The Temple of Herod (with a Sanc-

³⁴⁵ The Samaritan women at the well asked Jesus where the proper place of worship was to be. Was it at the Temple on Mount Gerizim that the Samaritans accepted, or was it Jerusalem that the Jews had acknowledged since the time of Solomon? Jesus answered by saying that salvation was of the Jews and he indicated that Jerusalem had the priority until the Kingdom of God would arrive on earth (John 4:6–23).

tuary on top of a Tower) was like a cube in appearance as seen from its southeastern angle. It was a type of microcosm of the description of the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven as shown in the Book of Revelation.³⁴⁶ Indeed, we read in Josephus that Fort Antonia hid the Temple from anyone approaching Jerusalem directly from the north, but if the approach were slightly to the east at a place called “Scopus” (that is, “Viewpoint”) on the northern spur of the Mount of Olives, Josephus said that the Sanctuary could first be seen as “*the grand pile of the Temple gleaming afar*” penetrating upward above the southwestern horizon.³⁴⁷ The Sanctuary did indeed appear as a “*grand pile*” of large stones — a Tower with the Temple buildings themselves perched on the top platform.

As a further historical indication that the Herod’s Temple looked like a Tower, we have the writer Barnabas (he was one who saw with his own eyes Herod’s Temple). He called it: “**THEIR TOWER** [the Temple] shall he give up to destruction; and it happened according to that which the Lord had spoken.”

That wonderful Temple, whose walls were shaped like a colossal pile of stone (a Tower), was so destroyed by the Romans that not one stone was left on another. This is exactly what Jesus prophesied would occur, and it has happened precisely as he stated.

In the next section of this research, we will look at the biblical and historical documentation that clearly shows that the original Temple of Solomon, as well as those of Zerubbabel and Herod, was built over the Gihon Spring on the southeastern ridge in Jerusalem. It is an interesting story indeed.

³⁴⁶ Revelation 21:9–27.

³⁴⁷ War V.2,3 ¶67.

Chapter 16

WHERE DID SOLOMON BUILD THE TEMPLE?

JOSEPHUS INFORMS US that Jerusalem was built on two mountains.³⁴⁸ One mountain embraced the western area, which he called the Upper City. The other mountain was a ridge east of the Tyropoeon Valley which Josephus designated the Lower City. The whole of the eastern ridge was called the “Lower City” to distinguish it from the “Upper City” which was reckoned as the elevated area west of the Tyropoeon Valley (which was the center ravine between the Lower and the Upper Cities).

Josephus, however, in his description of Jerusalem, makes a rather remarkable statement that seems to be in error (or, it appears that way to modern archaeologists and historians). He states that the western mountain comprising the southern part of the Upper City was formerly the site where David built the City of David (called the *Akra* or Citadel). This statement of Josephus is not true,

³⁴⁸ *War* V.4,1.

and it contradicts what Josephus said in *Antiquities* VII.3,1 where he correctly placed the original City of David on the southeast ridge. The former statement (since all manuscripts of Josephus fell into Christian hands) is an editor's insertion presenting Christian opinion in the fourth century that the southwest hill was "Mount Zion" to justify the belief that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was the site of Herod's Temple. This alien insertion should never have been placed in the text since Josephus would *never* have made such an erroneous statement.

What Josephus did in his description of Jerusalem was to focus his attention to the eastern mountain called the Lower City. This Lower City consisted of two elevated areas which he called "hills." They were known as the "Second Hill" and the "Third Hill." The "Second Hill" was the southeast section of Jerusalem called the *Akra*. This "Second Hill" was shaped like a crescent moon. "The second hill, which bore the name of *Akra* and supported the Lower City, was shaped like the crescent moon. Opposite this was a third hill, by nature lower than *Akra*."³⁴⁹

This "Third Hill" was opposite the *Akra*. To be opposite yet also on the same eastern ridge meant it was *north* of the *Akra*. This "Third Hill" was a part of the Lower City, in contrast to the area west of the Tyropoeon Valley that was designated the "Upper City." But it was north of the "Second Hill" area that appeared crescent-like. What was the "Third Hill"? To Josephus it was the hill on which the Dome of the Rock now rests. It was situated north of the crescent-shaped Lower City. Properly locating this "Third Hill" is a most important geographical feature in understanding the topography of early Jerusalem. We will soon pay strict attention to it. What we will discover is the fact that this "Third Hill" on which the Dome of the Rock was constructed was NOT a part of the Temple Mount. The Temple itself was located in the center of the "Second Hill" in the south and much nearer to the place called the *Akra*. The Temple was situated in the area that was shaped like a crescent moon.

³⁴⁹ *War* V.4,1.

A Major Misunderstanding of Josephus

A problem arises with this description by Josephus of early Jerusalem. Most interpreters have completely misunderstood what the historian intended by his topographical indications. Note that Josephus said the *Akra* ridge (the “Second Hill”) was shaped “like the crescent moon” and that the “Third Hill” was opposite this crescent-shaped area. The “Third Hill” was not a part of the *Akra* area. This shape of the “Second Hill” as the moon in its third quarter is a very significant geographical indication, but almost all interpreters have not understood it. Most have taken Josephus’ description to mean a *vertical* configuration of the ridge, that it was “hump-like” or “moon-like” in a vertical sense. This is the exact opposite of what Josephus intended his readers to understand.

In this case scholars should be excused for taking the meaning of Josephus in the wrong way. Truthfully, it was a reasonable supposition that Josephus meant the southeast ridge was “dome-like” in shape, like a swelling of the earth in the form of a “rounded mountain” that was oriented north to south and situated on the southeast ridge. This is because Josephus showed that there were two former elevated areas comprising the *Akra* of the Lower City. The northern ridge of the *Akra* was even called in Hebrew the *Ophel* (which means “hump-like” or “swelling”). And, the southern summit, in the time of David, was higher than the *Ophel*.

This coincidence of meaning concerning the word *Ophel* (“swelling”) and the description of the Lower City as “crescent shape,” appears at first sight to be a logical vindication for rendering the word “crescent shape” as “hump-like.” But this is NOT what Josephus meant. Modern interpreters make a major mistake when they view the southern ridge as “crescent-like” in this *vertical* sense. As a result of this misunderstanding, Cornfeld translated the Greek word meaning “crescent moon” as “hump-like” — giving it a *vertical* dimension. Thackeray, in the Loeb edition, went even farther afield by rendering the word as “hog’s back” (a most tendentious translation that no Jewish geographer would ever use). Following the same *vertical* interpretation, Professor La Sor thought Josephus meant “arched,” while Williamson stated the southeast mountain ridge was “dome-shaped.”

The Vertical Interpretation is Wrong

All these modern translations focus on a *vertical* aspect. But this is not what Josephus wanted his readers to understand by his use of the word “crescent-shaped.” Josephus was actually speaking in the *horizontal* sense. As a matter of fact, if one stood on the southern extension of the Mount of Olives (called the Mount of Offense) and looked westward over the city of Jerusalem in the time of Josephus (and especially in the earlier period before Simon the Hasmonean), one would have observed the walls surrounding this southeastern ridge prominently displayed with a crescent-shaped configuration (like the moon in its third quarter). One would have observed the northern and southern “horns” of this crescent. The “horns” were evident by the shape of the walls coming to a sharp convergence in the extreme north, with a similar sharp convergence in the extreme south of this curved ridge. These two “horns” of the crescent-shape would have extended eastward toward the Kedron Valley, while the outward circular bulge of the ridge, which connected the two northern and southern “horns,” would have bulged westward toward the Tyropoeon Valley.

The western side of this southeast ridge abutting to the Tyropoeon Valley had a wall separating the eastern part of Jerusalem on the southeast ridge from the area west of the Tyropoeon Valley that later became the Upper City.³⁵⁰ The accompanying diagram page indicates the “crescent-shape” of early Jerusalem that would have been observed. All the city of Jerusalem, including the Temple, was then located within that “crescent-shaped” area. Interestingly, this shape of the original city of Jerusalem is also described in a similar way in “The Letter of Aristeas.” Aristeas wrote more than three hundred years before Josephus. This early author said that the Jerusalem of his time was shaped like a theatre (in this case, he meant, a Greek theatre — a semi-circle).

³⁵⁰ See Luria, B.Z. “The Hasmonean Wall of Jerusalem.” *Beth Mikra* (1983), #93, 180–84. Also see Josephus, *Antiquities* XIII.5,11 for a description of such a wall.



The above plate is found in Professor George Adam Smith's monumental work of two volumes titled: *Jerusalem* published in 1912. In this diagram, Prof. Smith uses a modern (1865) map of the Jerusalem area. In his text he attributes the crescent shaped southeastern ridge (which he outlines in bold lines) to show the original "Mount Zion" with its Ophel extension slightly to the north of the center of the crescent. He ascknowledged that there was NO MORE area to Jerusalem at that time than what was in the crescent shape. This geograaphical feature existed until Simon the Hasmonean.

Notice what Aristeas stated about the overall shape of Jerusalem at this earlier period. He agreed with Josephus that the southeast ridge was shaped like the moon in its third quarter, but with a *horizontal* dimension. It appeared like a semi-circle.

“The size of the city [of Jerusalem] is of moderate dimensions. It is about forty furlongs in circumference, as far as one could conjecture. *It has its towers arranged in the shape of a theatre.*”³⁵¹

This geographical layout of early Jerusalem (and confined to the southeast ridge) shows that the city was shaped like a Greek *theatre*. Even the Jewish authorities in the Talmud recognized that the form of a theatre was that like the moon in its crescent phase.³⁵² The design of an early theatre was that of a half-circle, and Aristeas was stating that Jerusalem with its walls had that half-circle shape. But he went on with more detailed information which reinforces the “crescent-shape” of early Jerusalem. He said: “Indeed, the place *bends back*, since the city is built on a mountain [on a single mountain].”³⁵³

When one looked at early Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, it gave the distinct appearance of “a bent-back mountain” — a *single* mountain curved backward. There was no “Upper City” on the western hill at the time Aristeas saw Jerusalem. We will show in this book that the “Upper City” was planned by Simon the Hasmonean in the last part of the second century B.C.E. and was continually built until the time of the apostles. In the time of Aristeas, only the southeastern ridge was considered to be the City of Jerusalem. It was then “crescent-shaped.” Professor Charles said that the Greek word denoting this early geographical appearance of Jerusalem is *anaklosin* that literally means, “a bending back.” Liddell and Scott also show that the word means “to curve backwards” or to reveal features like a rounded stern of a ship. Another description is like that of a long board plank suspended over a bench

³⁵¹ R.H. Charles, *Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. II, p.105, lines 105–6, italics are my emphasis and words in brackets are mine.

³⁵² See Talmud *Sanhedrin* 37a where the theatre-like seating of the Sanhedrin in the Temple at Jerusalem was shaped “like the moon.”

³⁵³ R.H. Charles, *Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. II, p.105, see note on line 106.

fulcrum with weights at each end that causes the plank to “bend” — like a seesaw or a teeter-totter that bends at both ends. Professor Charles further defined the word *anaklosin* as being like the “crescent horns” of the Mount of Olives (starting with Mount Scopus in the north and including the Mount of Offense in the south) “which bend round slightly [in a westward direction] towards the city.”³⁵⁴ This is true. The Mount of Olives as seen from the air (or on a map) also appears “crescent-shape” though its “horns” point westward towards the modern city of Jerusalem. The original Jerusalem also had its “crescent-shape,” however, its “horns” pointed in an opposite direction toward the east (toward the Kedron Valley).

Now note this important point. This “crescent-shape” of the southeastern ridge as described by Josephus and Aristeas means that both its western and eastern walls encompassing the southeast ridge would have been circular shaped (between the two projecting “horns” which were in the north and south). In truth, both the inner and the outer walls of the crescent-shaped ramparts of Jerusalem in this early period would have appeared “circular.” The walls at intervals had square-like protrudent turrets and some slight oblique angles within them, but Aristeas said the overall shape of the ramparts then circling the City of Jerusalem was like a “circle of walls.”³⁵⁵ Remember, there was yet no “Upper City” on the western hill in this early period.

These descriptions of Aristeas are accurate and easy to understand. There were actually two walls enclosing the southeast ridge, each of them was in the form of a half-circle — the shorter inner circled wall was on the eastern or Kedron Valley side, and the longer outer circled wall was on the western or the Tyropoeon Valley side. This gave the definite appearance of a *horizontal* “crescent” when observed from an elevated area, and, it made Jerusalem look like the half-circled shape of a “Greek theatre.”

This “crescent-shaped” configuration is a most important geographical feature of early Jerusalem because the historical and biblical records show that the City of David and the early Temples

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.105.

³⁵⁵ Charles, *Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. II., p.104.

were built within and upon that single mountain which was shaped like a Greek “theatre.” That “crescent-shaped” appearance represents the original topography that describes the city of Jerusalem from the time of David down to the time of Simon the Hasmonean. And though archaeology has shown that there was some building activity on the southwest hill (later called the “Upper City”) in the two hundred years before Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city in the sixth century before the common era, but it did not become a permanent feature of the area of Jerusalem until the time of Simon the Hasmonean. I will show Simon’s role later in this book.

The Original Jerusalem Located on ONE Mountain

There is more to it than the fact that Jerusalem was “crescent-shaped.” Aristeas also revealed that the entire city of Jerusalem in his time was located on *ONE mountain ridge*. Notice what he said:

“When we arrived in the land of the Jews we saw the city [Jerusalem] situated in the middle of the whole of Judaea *on the top of a mountain* [a single mountain] of considerable altitude. On the summit the Temple had been built in all its splendor. It [the Temple] was surrounded by three walls [a wall on the south, one on the west, and one on the north — the eastern rampart of the Temple was the east wall of the City].... The Temple faces the east and its back is toward the west.”³⁵⁶

The Temple that Aristeas observed was located on that single mountain, as well as the whole of the city of Jerusalem. This mountain actually had two summits like the three summits on the Mount of Olives. The northern summit was where the Temple was located. It was called the *Ophel* area. The southern (and slightly higher) summit was the site of the Citadel (which was actually the *Akra* or the City of David). This *Akra* (City of David) on the southern edge of the city was still located *alongside* the Temple because Aristeas said his group of companions ascended “the neighboring Citadel and looked around us” to look down into the Temple to view all that went on within its outer courts. This shows

³⁵⁶ Charles, *ibid.*, p.105, lines 83–4, italics are my emphasis and the words in brackets are mine.

that the Citadel and the Temple were built on the elevated region of this single mountain.

The text of Aristeas states that from the lofty position on the wall of the Citadel, people could “gain complete information” of what was going on inside the outer courts of the Temple (line 100). This observation from an eyewitness that the Citadel was *alongside* the Temple and close to it, is of prime importance. It shows the closeness of the Citadel (the *Akra*) to the Temple. Furthermore, Aristeas said the Citadel was built as the special fortress for “guarding the Temple precincts” (line 101). Or, in plain words: “The Citadel was the special protection of the Temple and its founder had fortified it so strongly that it might efficiently protect it [the Temple]” (line 104, words in brackets mine).

From these eyewitness accounts of Aristeas, it can easily be determined that the Temple was located to the north but still *alongside* the City of David. The Temple was not situated at that time near the area of the Dome of the Rock that modern historians and theologians (whether Jewish, Christian or Muslim) insist is the proper site. These authorities are wrong. Indeed, since professional archaeologists have also guessed that the Dome of the Rock is the region for the early Temples, they have also misjudged the majority of the eyewitness accounts concerning the City of David and the Temple being on the southeast ridge. A complete re-evaluation of the archaeological evidence needs to be made. That is why I am doing in this historical research. When one investigates what the documentary evidence actually shows, a whole different picture emerges on the scene. It provides us with a history that presents a very different Jerusalem than most people have imagined.

Chapter 17

THE CENTRALITY OF THE EARLY TEMPLES

THE EARLIER TEMPLE that Aristeeas observed was located north and *alongside* the Citadel (the *Akra*) and positioned within the crescent-shaped city of Jerusalem. This placed the Temple about a third of a mile south of the region of the Dome of the Rock in the Haram. This southern region is the precise spot that another historian by the name of Hecateus Sof Abdera said the Temple was located. Hecateus witnessed this fact during his visit to Jerusalem long before Simon the Hasmonean (I will later show why Simon's period is important) — somewhere near the time of Alexander the Great. Hecateus wrote extensively about the Jews in Judaea according to Josephus and also about the city of Jerusalem. Josephus quoted him on several occasions and gave him high marks for the accuracy of his accounts. Let us note carefully what Hecateus reports as an eyewitness. He said the Temple was located *near the CENTER of Jerusalem* as it existed in his time.

“The Jews have only one fortified city; they call it Jerusalem. *Nearly in the center of the city* stands a stone wall [of the Temple], enclosing an area about 500 feet long and 150 feet broad, approached by a pair of gates. Within this enclosure is a square altar, built of heaped up stones, unhewn and unwrought; each side is 30 feet long and the height is 15 feet. Beside it stands a great edifice, containing an altar and a lampstand, made of gold, and weighing two talents; upon these is a light which is never extinguished by night or day.”³⁵⁷

In no way is Hecateus describing the Temple as being in the region of the Dome of the Rock. That area in Hecateus’ time was located outside the walls of Jerusalem in *the extreme north* of the metropolitan area and *FAR AWAY* from its *center*. However, the actual Temple was positioned near the *very center* of Jerusalem, as one would naturally expect it to be.

The Old Testament Confirms Hecateus’ Location

If we had nothing more to go on but the narrative by Hecateus, it provides us with grounds to question the opinion of modern scholars that position the original Temple of Solomon and that of Zerubbabel on the “Third Hill” of the city, in the extreme north around the Dome of the Rock. The Temple was actually situated on the “Second Hill” of Jerusalem in the *center* of that southeast ridge. Indeed, there are far more significant evidences to support Hecateus’ statements. These are the accounts of eyewitnesses who were writers of the Bible. There is an abundance of information within the Holy Scriptures to show this. The Scriptures reveal that Hecateus was giving an accurate description of Jerusalem and the Temple before the time of Simon the Hasmonean. What Hecateus said about the geography of Jerusalem would have been a very similar description through past times back to the period of Solomon. Let us now look at the scriptural evidence.

One of the Psalmists had some words to say about the location of the Temple in Jerusalem. He placed the Temple directly in the *center* of the city of Jerusalem. Note Psalm 116:18 & 19.

³⁵⁷ *Contra Apion*, I.22.

“I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the Lord’s house [within His Temple], *in the midst of thee*, O Jerusalem” (italics mine).

This biblical writer states that the courts of the Lord’s house were in the middle of Jerusalem. This reference is a clear geographical indication. His description is not metaphorical nor is it a figure of speech. The Scripture is telling us that before the time of Simon the Hasmonean, the original Temple of God was located in the very *center* of Jerusalem, not in the extreme *north* on the peripheral edge of the city where the Dome of the Rock area is located.

Some may say, however, that this statement of centrality mentioned in the Bible must be a general description and cannot be accepted as a precise geographical indication. This belief will not hold water. This exact Hebrew expression was used by the prophet Ezekiel when he located his future prophetic Temple precisely in the middle (he meant in the absolute *center*) of the restored land of Israel. Ezekiel wrote that: “the Sanctuary of the Lord shall be *in the midst* thereof.”³⁵⁸ The prophet repeated this specific geographical identification. He said: “The city shall be *in the midst* thereof.”³⁵⁹ Similarly, Ezekiel said: “The Sanctuary of the House shall be *in the midst* thereof.”³⁶⁰ What does the phrase “*in the midst*” actually mean? Scholars realize what it signifies. The Catholic translation called “The New American Version” renders the above three verses as: “the Sanctuary of the Lord shall be *in its center*”; “the City shall be *at their center*”; and “the sacred tract and the Sanctuary shall be *in the middle*.” Other modern translators and commentators follow the same rendering of the Hebrew, which clearly has this meaning of centrality.

What often confuses readers of the Holy Scriptures is their interpretation of the archaic phrase “*in the midst*” (which in normal English presents a nebulous geographical focus) rather than the specific usage “*in the center*” (which provides a more precise and concrete meaning). The simple fact is, Ezekiel intended the “con-

³⁵⁸ Ezekiel 48:10.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, verse 15.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, verse 21.

crete meaning,” rather than the nebulous. He dogmatically indicated that the Temple of the Lord was to be in the *center* of the land, and he meant the real “center” (his description in chapter 48 places the Sanctuary in that *center* of a north/south axis). Look at what the prophet said in Ezekiel 37:26 & 28 using the same Hebrew expression as given above (and by changing the word “midst” to “center”). God said: “I will set my Sanctuary *in the center* of them forevermore” and again “my Sanctuary shall be *in the center* of them forevermore.”

There is much more biblical evidence to show the *central* position of the Temple in the early City of Jerusalem. Ezekiel described the Shekinah (the Glory of God) as leaving the Temple in his day. It abandoned the Temple and positioned itself over the Mount of Olives. We should recall that the Shekinah (the Glory) was always associated with the Holy of Holies inside the Temple at Jerusalem. In regard to this Glory, Ezekiel said (again using the word “center” instead of “midst”): “And the glory of the Lord went up from *the center of the city* [of Jerusalem], and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city [the Mount of Olives].”³⁶¹ In the Bible, the Mount of Olives was reckoned to be an elongated mountain which included its northern spur called Scopus and the “Offense” spur located on the south. The Mount of Olives also had two central summits. The whole of Olivet is about a mile long north to south. So, the Shekinah left the Temple in the *center* of Jerusalem and went to a part of this elongated shaped Mount of Olives — just where the Shekinah went on the Mount of Olives is not stated, but the exact geographical spot will become pertinent later on in this book.

All of the above gives us some very useful geographical information. The City of Jerusalem itself, in the time of Ezekiel, was then located on the southeast ridge and the Temple (God’s dwelling) was situated in the *center* of the city. This fact is also given in the prophecies of Zechariah some seventy years later.³⁶²

³⁶¹ Ezekiel 11:23.

³⁶² Zechariah 8:3,8.

“Thus saith the Lord; I am returned unto Zion, and *will dwell in the center of Jerusalem* and Jerusalem shall be called the city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts [Zion] the holy mountain [God’s Temple].... And I will bring them, and *they shall dwell in the center of Jerusalem* [with Him]: and they [Israel] shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness” (italics mine).

This teaching of Zechariah is not allegorical nor were his geographical indications mere figures of speech meaning that God would nebulously dwell “among them” or “around them.” Indeed, when Zechariah made these statements, the Temple was located in the *very center* of the city of Jerusalem just as the eyewitness account of Hecateus said it was. This location is re-enforced further by Zechariah in another section of his writings. He gave a prophecy that God would continue to dwell “*in the center*” of Zion. Note Zechariah 2:10–13.

“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and *I will dwell in the center of thee*.... And thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me [Zechariah] unto thee. And the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again. Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation [His Temple]” (italics mine).

Zechariah continues his theme by stating that God’s glory would be in the *center* of Jerusalem: “I will be the glory *in the center* of her.”³⁶³ This position of centrality among the Israelites at their capital city of Jerusalem would have been the same location for the Sanctuary that Moses ordained for the Tabernacle in the wilderness. The Tabernacle was indeed pitched directly in the *center* of the encampment of the tribes of Israel. In order to duplicate this design, Solomon’s Temple was also placed in the *center* of Jerusalem, in the *center* of the crescent shaped ridge. Even the place of the Temple in the “Temple Scroll” of the Dead Sea sectarians was also described as being in the *center* of Jerusalem. All these historical references show that it was common understanding among biblical writers that the position of the Temple in relation to the City of Jerusalem was that of centrality.

³⁶³ Zechariah 2:4–5.

So, when one substitutes the modern English word “center” for the archaic English word “midst,” as I have done in the biblical verses above, we are provided with a clear description of geographical significance. This makes the meaning of the biblical texts to accord with the historical facts. They all place the Tabernacle and the early Temples in the *center* of the various encampments in the wilderness and at the capital city of Jerusalem. They also agree identically with the statement of Hecateus who revealed (as an eyewitness) that the Temple was indeed located in the *center* of Jerusalem in his day. This does not end the matter. There is much more evidence that conclusively proves these facts.

What is interesting is the fact that modern archaeologists who have excavated in the region of the southeast ridge, totally ignore these eyewitness accounts about the geography that comprised the “Lower City” of Jerusalem in the period before the time of Simon the Hasmonean. The truth is, however, there was once a major mountain with two summits (the *Akra* and the *Ophel*) on the southeast ridge and that mountain no longer exists in that area. What modern archaeologists need to do is to re-evaluate these eyewitness accounts. Once these historical events are understood and appreciated, then proper conclusions can be reached on what the archaeological remains present to us for examination.

Chapter 18

THE TEMPLE ON THE SOUTHEAST RIDGE

THERE IS EVEN MORE to show that both the City of David and the site of Solomon's Temple were located *within the crescent area* of the southeast ridge near the *center* of early Jerusalem. This fact is related in the Book of Enoch written near the time of Simon the Hasmonean. This book is not a part of the Holy Scriptures but it is referred to favorably by the Book of Jude in the New Testament.³⁶⁴

We are told that the author of Enoch went to Jerusalem and recorded what he saw. His description is remarkable because he agreed with what Aristeas and Hecateus stated. Just as Ezekiel the prophet in a vision looked southward to see Jerusalem positioned on a hill (Ezekiel 40:2), Enoch also stood in a northern area and looked southward. He saw the whole of the City of Jerusalem. Note what he stated in chapter twenty-six.

³⁶⁴ Jude 14.

“(1) I went thence to the middle of the earth [a symbol for Jerusalem], and I saw a blessed place in which there were trees with branches abiding and blooming of a dismembered tree. (2) And there *I saw a holy mountain*, and *underneath* the mountain to the east [on its eastern side] was a stream and it flowed toward the south.”³⁶⁵

This is an important description. The author of the Book of Enoch observed a holy mountain with a stream running *underneath* the mountain. Professor Charles correctly identified this stream as being that which began at the Gihon Spring located about halfway up the eastern side of the crescent-shaped ridge.

The author of Enoch saw the stream coming from the Gihon Spring and descending southward. It went *underneath* the holy mountain (Zion). In actual fact, Enoch saw two watercourses that led southward from the Gihon Spring. One was constructed to flow *outside* the walls along the eastern slope of the mountain (at times it was an open trench and at other times underground). This was probably the stream that Isaiah wrote about when he said: “This people refuseth the waters of Shiloah, that go softly.”³⁶⁶ The other stream was different. It flowed *underneath* the holy mountain — *inside* the mountain. This watercourse also began at the Gihon Spring but descended in a circuitous tunnel to the Pool of Siloam. This was the well-known tunnel carved out of the solid rock by the engineers of King Hezekiah in the eighth century B.C.E.³⁶⁷

This geographical description by the author of the Book of Enoch provides us with a general topographical appearance of Jerusalem as it existed near the time of Simon the Hasmonean. This, however, was not all. He gave more information about the “holy mountain” and the “outside” stream that flowed along the Kedron Valley.

“(3) And I saw toward the east [of the holy mountain] another mountain higher than the first [as Prof. Charles said, he saw the Mount of Offense eastward from Zion across the Kedron Valley —

³⁶⁵ Charles, R.H., *Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. II, p.205, italics are my emphasis and the words in brackets are mine.

³⁶⁶ Isaiah 8:6.

³⁶⁷ II Chronicles 32:30.

a mountain which was a southern extension of the Mount of Olives and located directly to the east of Mount Zion]; and in the midst of them [between Mount Zion and the Mount of Offense] a valley deep and narrow [the Kedron Valley], and through it a stream [the “outside” stream] ran alongside this higher mountain. (4) And to the west thereof [of the Mount of Offense and Olivet] was another mountain, lower than it [lower than the Mount of Offense and Olivet] and of no great height [this mountain was where the Dome of the Rock now stands], and a valley at its foot between them, deep and dry [this was the deep and dry extension of the Kedron Valley north of the Gihon Spring], and all the valleys [were] deep and dry at the farthest parts of the three mountains [that is, the Tyropoeon Valley was deep and dry west of the city, and the Valley of Hinnom was deep and dry even farther away to the south, and the valley between the Dome of the Rock and the Mount of Olives was deep and dry farther to the north]. (5) And all the valleys were deep and narrow, of flint rock, and no tree was planted in them. (6) And [so majestic was the sight that] I marveled at the rocky ground and I marveled at the valley [the deepness of the Kedron Valley]; indeed, I marveled exceedingly.”³⁶⁸

Note carefully that the third mountain observed by the author of Enoch was located west of the Mount of Offense which was the southern extension of the Mount of Olives. This third mountain was the elevated area where the Dome of the Rock now stands. This mountain was NOT a part of the Holy Mountain that Enoch saw from the Mount of Offense. Note specifically that the Holy Mountain had the Gihon Spring (the only perennial water source in Jerusalem) as a part of its geographical holiness.

There is another significant point that must be realized concerning this description of Jerusalem in the Book of Enoch. The author said that there was a continually running stream that ran *underneath* the “holy mountain” (west of the Mount of Offense). Besides this, he said there was another “outside” stream along the Kedron Valley between that “holy mountain” (Zion) and the Mount of Offense. These two streams were supplied by water from the Gihon Spring. This was a karst type of spring located on the

³⁶⁸ Following the text of the Ethiopic “Book of Enoch” as rendered by Matthew Black, *Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha*, pp.3940, words in brackets are mine.

East Side of the holy mountain. He also saw his third mountain west of the Mount of Offense and Olivet. Note that *there were no running streams* associated with that third mountain. The areas north of the Gihon were all dry. Indeed, all the other valleys surrounding the crescented-shaped Jerusalem were “deep and dry” — a typical description of *wadis* in the Middle East that are not fed by perennial springs but only contain water when it rains or by runoffs from melting snow. Since there was only *one spring* in the Jerusalem area (the Gihon Spring), this means that the watered parts of Jerusalem observed by the author of the Book of Enoch and associated with the “holy mountain” were confined to the areas from the Gihon Spring and southward.

This fact is a very significant geographical feature that helps to explain many topographical aspects of early Jerusalem. For example, the various biblical references to the *Water Gate* located in the eastern wall of early Jerusalem can only signify the gate that led directly to the Gihon Spring.³⁶⁹ This is because there was *no water* north of the Gihon to which a road through a gate could lead. Indeed, the Bible shows precisely that the *Water Gate* was directly east of the *Ophel* summit on the southeast ridge.³⁷⁰ This indicates that the *Ophel* summit (on which the Temple stood) was adjacent to the *Water Gate* and directly above the Gihon Spring.

The Kedron Valley to the north of the Gihon Spring, however, which included the area on the East Side of the Dome of the Rock, was “deep and dry” (it was without a constant water source) as were the other valleys such as the Tyropoeon and the Hinnom. This shows that the *Water Gate* can never be located north of the Gihon Spring. What this reveals is the fact that, just before the time of Simon the Hasmonean (as described in the Book of Enoch), it was the Mount of Offense that was directly east of the crescent-shaped city of Jerusalem with its Gihon Spring. At that time, the summit areas of the Mount of Olives (that had no spring waters within that northern area) was not east of the Holy Mountain. The Temple Mount had the Mount of Offense (the southern spur)

³⁶⁹ Mentioned in Nehemiah 3:26; 8:1,3,16; 12:37.

³⁷⁰ See Nehemiah 3:26.

directly east of it, NOT the higher regions of the Mount of Olives in the north.

Look at what this means. When the Scriptures state that the Mount of Olives was *east* of Jerusalem,³⁷¹ the scriptural definition refers to that area on the southern spur of Olivet called the Mount of Offense. This definition in the Bible is not speaking about the two summit areas of Olivet in the north. Note Second Kings 23:13 that refers to the southern flank of Olivet located *east* of Jerusalem: “The high places that were *before* Jerusalem [that is, *east* of Jerusalem], which were *on the RIGHT HAND* [southern part of Olivet] on the hill of Corruption.”

The “Hill of Corruption” is the same as the “Mount of Offense.” This means that in the time of prophets, it was the “Mount of Offense” that was directly *east* of early Jerusalem. This is the witness of the biblical writers and secular observers before the time of Simon the Hasmonean state the same thing. This *eastern* site from Jerusalem of the Mount of Offense is described in First Kings 11:7. It was a “hill” that was the *southern* flank of the Mount of Olives. This hill was the southern spur of Olivet and this mount was not a part of the two summit areas that were directly *east* of the Dome of the Rock located a third of a mile north.

All of these geographical facts are highly significant in discovering the location of the original Temples of Solomon and Zerubabel. The truth is, the whole of the city of Jerusalem as seen by the author of Enoch (including the Temple which was in the city’s *center*) was restricted to the crescent-shaped ridge located to the *west* of the Mount of Offense spur on the southern side of the Mount of Olives. At this early time, the area of the Dome of the Rock was much to the north and outside the walls of Jerusalem. It was not even a part of the city.

These eyewitness accounts are most important to consider in trying to piece together an understanding of the real history of Jerusalem prior to the time of Simon the Hasmonean. The fact is, however, modern archaeologists are totally avoiding these histori-

³⁷¹ As shown in Ezekiel 11:23 and Zechariah 14:4.

cal evidences in their evaluations of what the Jerusalem of antiquity was like. This lack of knowledge is widespread. It is no wonder that archaeologists have been making erroneous interpretations regarding the excavated remains from the region of the City of David and the *Ophel* summit area located just to the north of Zion. By not recognizing these historical facts, many misjudgments are being made by archaeologists and scholars regarding the real topographical alignments associated with the southeast ridge. This book, however, can mend the errors.

Chapter 19

THE PRIME POSITION OF THE TEMPLE

THE TOPOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTIONS given above by the early authorities mentioned in the previous three chapters agree remarkably with other (and more extensive) geographical details provided in the eyewitness account of Aristeas (the Gentile from Egypt who visited Jerusalem well over a hundred years before the time of Simon the Hasmonean). We can now continue with a more detailed description of the Temple and Jerusalem as provided by Aristeas. It is very instructive.

We of modern times possess the actual written words of Aristeas. Prof. Gifford of England translated an English version of this early writer, which gives Eusebius' rendition. Let us recall that Aristeas was speaking about the Jerusalem of his day (early third century before Jesus). In his description of Jerusalem and the Temple, he tells us that in the interior of the Temple there was an important geographical feature that will serve as a topographical benchmark for determining where the Temple was located. He said

there was within the Temple a *natural spring* gushing up that gave an abundance of water to the Sanctuary. He could not be clearer.

“There is an inexhaustible reservoir of water, as would be expected from *an abundant spring gushing up naturally from within [the Temple]*; there being moreover wonderful and indescribable cisterns underground, of five furlongs [3000 feet away], according to their showing, all around the foundation of the Temple, and countless pipes from them, so that the streams on every side met together [at the Temple site]. And all these have been fastened with lead at the bottom and the side-walls, and over these has been spread a great quantity of plaster, all having been carefully wrought.”³⁷²

This is a remarkable statement by Aristeas that shows what the pre-Simonian Jerusalem was like. Aristeas states that *a single spring* gushed forth an abundance of water “*from within the Temple area.*” This same distinctive feature was mentioned by the Roman historian Tacitus in his description of the Temple as it existed just before its destruction in 70 C.E. Note what Tacitus stated.

“The temple resembled a citadel, and had its own walls, which were more laboriously constructed than the others. Even the colonnades with which it was surrounded formed an admirable outwork. *It contained an inexhaustible spring*; there were subterranean excavations in the hill, and tanks and cisterns for holding rainwater. The founders of the state had foreseen that frequent wars would result from the singularity of its customs, and so had made every provision against the most protracted siege.”³⁷³

That spring was a significant feature of the Temple. This spring in the Temple precincts is a most important geographical feature in helping to identify the area in the Jerusalem region where the Temple was situated. This is because there was only one spring in the Jerusalem area (and none other for five miles in any direction — as we will see in the next chapter). That spring was clearly and plainly the Gihon Spring located on the east side of the Holy Mountain as shown by Enoch in his description of Jerusalem.

³⁷² Eusebius' recording of Aristeas, *ibid.*, ch.38.

³⁷³ Tacitus, *History*, Bk. 5, para.12.

There were no springs of any kind in the region of the Haram esh-Sharif where the Dome of the Rock is located at the present. As stated before, the Gihon Spring was situated about a third of a mile south of the Dome of the Rock and it was in this southern region that the secular observers mentioned above place the Temple in Jerusalem.

It must be pointed out, however, that the Gihon Spring and the few cisterns on the Temple Mount mentioned by Tacitus were not the only water sources in Jerusalem to supply water to the Sanctuary. There were also other cisterns, which provided water to the Temple. Tacitus said some cisterns were located on the Temple Mount (which is understandable), but Aristeas said the principal ones were found 3000 feet away and upslope from the Temple. Conduits came from those cisterns to converge in the Temple. Obviously, these cisterns had to be upslope from the Temple in order for water to flow in pipes in a downslope manner.

Aristeas was even taken to view these cisterns in an area *outside* the city walls where pipes from the cisterns came together to form a major conduit for waters entering the Temple precincts. At a spot about 2500 feet away from the Temple and OUTSIDE the walls of the city of Jerusalem, the Jewish authorities took Aristeas to view (and hear) the water from these cisterns running in pipes towards the Temple. Aristeas said:

“They led me four furlongs outside the city [note, he was OUTSIDE the city of Jerusalem] and bade me peer down toward a certain spot and listen to the noise that was made by the meeting of the waters, so that the great size of the reservoirs [cisterns] became manifest to me, as has already been pointed out.”³⁷⁴

This area near the Dome of the Rock has a concentration of 36 or 37 cisterns.³⁷⁵ This unusual concentration of natural and artificial cisterns is surely the area to which Aristeas was taken. One of those cisterns was even constructed to catch water in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah.³⁷⁶ And recall, those cisterns in the area of the

³⁷⁴ Charles' translation, p.103, line 91.

³⁷⁵ Smith, George Adam, *Jerusalem*, Vol.I., p.19.

³⁷⁶ *Erubin*, 104a, 104b.

Dome of the Rock were then, according to Aristeas, outside the walls of Jerusalem. There was another area that water came from (about 500 feet farther on) which Aristeas said was five furlongs away (3000 feet). This could answer very well to what the New Testament calls the "Pool of Bethesda" (or, the *Birket Israil*). A channel could have also left that northern area to the Temple.

Though these outside cisterns supplied water to the Temple, there was within the precincts of the Sanctuary "an abundant spring gushing up naturally." That natural spring had to be the Gihon. This is a major geographical fact that must be emphasized. The Temple in Aristeas' time was positioned *directly above (and associated with) the Gihon Spring*.

Now note what has happened with our modern scholars regarding Aristeas' account (and also that of Tacitus who also mentions the spring in the interior of the Temple). Since they universally believe that the site of Aristeas' Temple must have been at the Dome of the Rock (which has no springs whatever in its area), they are forced to accuse Aristeas of shoddy and erroneous reporting. They cannot believe that the historian is reporting the truth. Indeed, they go so far as to call him a liar, though they are accustomed to do so with academic language that tends to soften the charge of outright falsehood (which they believe Aristeas and Tacitus are engaged in). After all, geographical and geological experts who have extensively surveyed the area around the Dome of the Rock (which they mistakenly think is the Temple Mount) over the past hundred and fifty years admit there has never been a natural spring within the region. This is enough to convince them that Aristeas and Tacitus are wrong in their reporting.

Modern scholars are so certain that Aristeas and Tacitus were in error in their assessment about the natural spring being inside the Temple enclosure that the most recent translation of Aristeas has the translator changing the text to say "just *as if* there were a plentiful spring rising naturally from within [the Temple]." ³⁷⁷ This highly interpretative translation of the text (by adding words that

³⁷⁷ Shutt's translation in Charlesworth's *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. II, p.18.

Aristeas did not write) is in contrast to the accurate translations of R.H. Charles, Thackery and Gifford. At least the earlier scholars properly translated Aristeas as saying, like Prof. Charles: “*there is an inexhaustible supply of water, because an abundant natural spring gushes up within the Temple.*”

Though Professor Charles was faithful by correctly translating Aristeas, even he had to candidly admit that he thought Aristeas and Tacitus were wrong because there is not any geological evidence that there ever was a natural spring in the vicinity of the Dome of the Rock. It is because of this lack of proof for such a spring that prompts modern scholars to charge Aristeas and Tacitus with falsehood.

The simple fact is, however, Aristeas and Tacitus were telling the truth. The Temple of Solomon, that of Zerubbabel and the one of Herod were all situated directly over the site of the Gihon Spring which was located on the north side of the original Zion. The Temple was actually located on the *Ophel* hump at the base of which was the Gihon Spring. This is so abundantly clear that the normal historian has to wonder why archaeologists and religious leaders find it difficult to locate the original Temple site in the proper area. It is plain that in no way were Aristeas and Tacitus speaking about a natural spring gushing up naturally in some “Temple” that was supposed in the region near the Dome of the Rock.

The next chapter will show conclusively that there was only one spring in the Jerusalem area, and that spring was the Gihon. Without the slightest doubt, Aristeas saw that Gihon Spring (and Tacitus referred to it in his account of the war in 70 C.E.) and that it supplied water to the Temple from within its precincts. This means that we have eyewitness and other historical accounts that the original Temple was built just above (and within the area of) the Gihon Spring.

Chapter 20

THE ORIGINAL TEMPLE OVER THE GIHON SPRING

THERE ARE EARLY HISTORIANS who give abundant information of the actual location of the Temples in Jerusalem. It is time we look at the testimonies of these early eyewitnesses and their united witness that the Temples were positioned over the Gihon Spring. Let us first look at the account of Aristeas, a Jew from Egypt who visited Jerusalem about fifty years after the time of Alexander the Great. Aristeas gave a detailed description of the Temple and Jerusalem, and modern scholars and theologians should be aware of what he stated as an observer. His account is very instructive.

We of modern times possess the actual written words of Aristeas. Prof. Gifford of England translated an English version of this early writer, which gives a rendition preserved by Eusebius. Recall that Aristeas was speaking about the Jerusalem of his day (early third century *before* Jesus). In his description of Jerusalem and Temple, he tells us that in the interior of the Temple was an important geographical feature that serves as a topographical benchmark

to determine where the Temple was located. He said there was within the Temple a *natural spring* gushing up that gave an abundance of water to the Sanctuary. He could not be clearer.

“There is an inexhaustible reservoir of water, as would be expected from *an abundant spring gushing up naturally from within [the Temple]*; there being moreover wonderful and indescribable cisterns underground, of five furlongs [3000 feet away], according to their showing, all around the foundation of the Temple, and countless pipes from them, so that the streams on every side met together [at the Temple site]. And all these have been fastened with lead at the bottom and the side-walls, and over these has been spread a great quantity of plaster, all having been carefully wrought.”³⁷⁸

The Only Spring in Jerusalem Was the Gihon

Within the biblical period, historical records show the original Temple was located over the Gihon Spring, and modern geological surveys reveal that the only spring within five miles of Jerusalem was the Gihon. It was because of this strategic location of this spring that the earliest settlement at Jerusalem was in that area.

The first name for Jerusalem was *Migdol Edar* (Tower or Citadel of the Flock). It was associated in history with Jacob and is mentioned in Genesis 35:21 and in Micah 4:8. This site later became equivalent to the original Mount Zion. The reason such a Citadel existed in the time of Jacob was because of the high elevation of the area, plus the existence of the perennial *spring* at its base. These factors provided the security that people needed to build and to defend an important city, which the Canaanites finally called Jebus.

Without doubt, the Gihon Spring was the essential feature (besides the fact that the area was elevated for protection from invaders) which prompted early people to pick this area for settlement. But note. There was no spring of any kind in the region where the later Dome of the Rock was situated. This is one major reason why no early settlements were made in that area north of the original Zion.

³⁷⁸ Eusebius' recording of Aristeas, *Preparation of the Gospel*, ch.38.

The only spring in Jerusalem was the Gihon, yet ancient historians said the area around the spring was desert-like. We have abundant historical evidence to show this was true. At the end of the first century B.C.E., Strabo the Greek geographer described the city of Jerusalem as “rocky, and although well supplied with water, it is surrounded by a barren and waterless territory.”³⁷⁹ Dion Cassius in the second century said the same thing.³⁸⁰ There was even more geographical precision given about Jerusalem in the period just before that of Simon the Hasmonean. Eusebius in his *Preparation of the Gospel* quoted from Alexander Polyhistor (who wrote in the early first century B.C.E.) who cited earlier writers concerning Jerusalem. Note what Eusebius quoted from Polyhistor.

“Timochares, in his *Life of Antiochus*, says that Jerusalem has a circuit of forty furlongs [including lands surrounding the city for 2000 cubits], and is difficult to take being shut in on all sides by abrupt ravines: and *the whole city is flooded with streams of water*, so that even the gardens are irrigated by waters which flow *from the city*. But the country from the city as far as forty furlongs [five miles] *is without water*: but beyond the forty furlongs [five miles] it is well watered.”³⁸¹

This description by Timochares concerned Jerusalem before Simon the Hasmonean. Only within the City of Jerusalem itself was there abundant water. This had to come from the Gihon Spring. The next reference by Polyhistor quoted by Eusebius, shows that the only water at Jerusalem (again, before the time of Simon the Hasmonean) came from *a single spring* in the city.

“The author of the *Metrical Survey of Syria* says in his first book that Jerusalem lies upon a lofty and rugged site: and that some parts of the wall are built of polished stone, but the greater part of small stones [rubble]; and that the city has a circuit of twenty-seven furlongs [using the 1000 cubit scale], and that there is also within the place *a spring* which spouts up abundance of water.”³⁸²

This single “spring” (Jerusalem’s only water source) referred to

³⁷⁹ Strabo, Book XVI, 2:36.

³⁸⁰ Dion Cassius, 66:4.

³⁸¹ Eusebius, quoting Polyhistor in *Preparation of the Gospel*, Bk.IX, ch.35.

³⁸² Eusebius, *Preparation of the Gospel*, Bk.IX, ch.36.

by the author of the *Metrical Survey* was, again, the Gihon. Indeed, there is more information given by Polyhistor about early Jerusalem before the time of Simon the Hasmonean. He quoted a person named Philo (a man of the second century B.C.E. or even earlier). Polyhistor stated:

“Philo too says, in his *Account of Jerusalem*, that there is a *fountain* [a single *spring*], and that it is dried up in winter, but becomes full in summer.”³⁸³

Philo went on to say that this fountain produced a “joyous stream, flooded by rain and snow, [which] rolls swiftly on *beneath* the neighboring towers, and spreading over the dry and dusty ground ... the blessings of that wonder-working *fount* [the single *spring* in Jerusalem].”³⁸⁴ Eusebius continued by stating that this Philo called that single *spring* “the High Priest’s *fountain* and the canal that carries off the water, he [Philo] proceeds as follows: “A headlong stream [from the fountain] by channels *underground*, the pipes pour forth.”³⁸⁵

This description by the early writer named Philo describes perfectly the Jerusalem before the time of Simon the Hasmonean. Not only was there *a single spring* (called the Spring of the High Priest, which connected the *spring* with the Temple), but it produced waters that ran “beneath [or, underneath] the towers” of the city walls. The waters from that spring were carried off in “underground channels” (an apt description of Hezekiah’s tunnel and the Siloam conduit that carried water from the Gihon Spring to the southern area of the city).

These geographical observations given by this writer named Philo show there was *only one water source* in Jerusalem, the Gihon Spring. There was, however, a place called the En-Rogel located about a third of a mile southeast of the City of David. This was NOT a spring. George Adam Smith in his celebrated survey of the city of Jerusalem, referred to the professional appraisal of Sir Charles Wilson. Sir Charles examined the En-Rogel site very

³⁸³ Eusebius, *ibid.*, ch.37.

³⁸⁴ Eusebius, *ibid.*

³⁸⁵ Eusebius, *ibid.*, emphasis mine.

closely. He determined it was actually a 135 foot *well*. It is NOT (nor had it ever been) a spring like the Gihon.³⁸⁶ Prof. Avigad confirms this:

“The Gihon Spring is Jerusalem’s only supply of fresh water in early antiquity. South of this hill is another minor water source, the Rogel Spring, which is actually *only a well*.”³⁸⁷

The single spring in the Jerusalem area was the Gihon, and Philo associated that spring with the High Priest who, of course, governed all Temple activities.

This dovetails with the description given by Aristeas about 50 years after Alexander the Great, and Tacitus 300 years later. Both Aristeas and Tacitus dogmatically state this *natural spring* was found within the precincts of the Temple at Jerusalem. These geographical facts from eyewitness accounts totally disqualify the area around the Dome of the Rock as having any relevance in locating the site of the Temples of Solomon, Zerubbabel and Herod.

Without any doubt, the historical sources are consistent in placing the original Temples over the Gihon Spring located in the *center* part of the “crescent-shaped” city of Jerusalem. All these reports place Jerusalem solely on the southeast ridge which, in the time of Josephus, had become known as the “Lower City.”

God’s Spring Waters

The Holy Scriptures consistently proclaim that the Temple at Jerusalem represented a physical replica on earth of God’s official residence in heaven. The various rooms, furniture and household items in God’s heavenly palace were exactly reflected in God’s residence on earth in the Tabernacle and the later Temples in an anthropomorphic way. Regarding these amenities, we read in the Scriptures that God has in His heavenly residence what we would call “spring waters.” These waters are supposed to supply God and His household with the essential “waters” that we on earth associate with the creation and perpetuation of life, and what is required to maintain ordinary cleanliness as well as ritualistic purity.

³⁸⁶ George Adam Smith, *Jerusalem*, Vol.I, p.99.

³⁸⁷ Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem*, p.26.

The authors of the Scriptures give many descriptive accounts that relate these symbolic agreements between God's earthly "House" (the Tabernacles and Temples) and His heavenly Sanctuary.

This is one main reason why it was deemed essential by the biblical writers that there be a *spring* within the interior of the Temples. A New Testament reference indicates this essential feature in association with God's divine domicile.

"And I John saw the holy city new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.... I will give to him that is *athirst* of the *fountain [spring]* of the *water of life* freely.... And he showed me *a pure river of water of life*, clear as crystal, *proceeding out of the throne of God* and the [throne of the] Lamb.... And let him that is *athirst* come. And whosoever will, let him take *the water of life* freely."³⁸⁸

The symbolism on earth of the heavenly House of God would not be complete without *spring waters* being within the earthly Temple. It was believed by the early kings and prophets of Israel that if God's House had no *spring within it*, it would not be supplied with an appropriate water supply to perform the rituals of purification, and provide other life-giving therapeutic features that issue from the throne of God. This is why biblical writers leave us with no ambiguity concerning this matter. The scriptural description of God's House in heaven (and its counterpart on earth) consistently shows that the Sanctuary has (or must have) *spring waters* emerging from within its interior.

"His [God's] foundation is in the holy mountains. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.... The singers as the players on instruments shall be there [in the Temple]: ALL MY SPRINGS ARE IN THEE [Zion]."³⁸⁹

This description by the Psalmist of the Temple shows there were *SPRINGS* within Zion. In God's symbolic Temple on earth, there was also a "spring." It was the Gihon — the only spring within a 5 miles' radius of Jerusalem.

³⁸⁸ Revelation 21:2,6; 22:1,17.

³⁸⁹ Psalm 87:1-3 and 7.

The fact that the Psalmist states that there were “*SPRINGS*” (plural) in Zion and though the Gihon is only “one spring” is no problem. The Gihon is clearly called “*SPRINGS*” (plural) in II Chronicles 32:3–4. The fact that this “one spring” is pluralized (if it is not an idiomatic usage) can be accounted for because of the peculiar manner in which the Gihon produces its waters. Though the Gihon is a perennial spring, it is a karst-type of spring that thrusts out its water as much as five times a day in the Springtime when water is plentiful (with time intervals in between when no water comes forth at all). Thus the Gihon is a siphon type of *spring* that gushes forth intermittently. In the dry season the flow may occur a few minutes once a day. This oscillating effect of the Gihon could be a reason the ancients called this single water source with the plural word “springs.” Whatever the case, both Aristeas and Tacitus state the Temple at Jerusalem had an inexhaustible spring in its interior. This has to be the Gihon Spring.

David Placed the Ark of the Covenant at the Gihon

Let us look at one of the most important theological events that occurred during the time of King David. To show the symbolic importance of the Gihon Spring in association with the throne of God, look at the incident when King David transported the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. Before the king brought the Ark to the City of David, he built a Sacred Tent to house the Ark, not to be confused with the main Tabernacle. The actual Tabernacle at that time was pitched at the great waters at Gibeon, about 6 miles north and west of Jerusalem.³⁹⁰ But to house the Ark, David pitched a special Tent before which he and Israel could worship God and offer animal sacrifices.

“And David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched a tent for it.”³⁹¹

“So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it: and they offered burnt sacrifices and

³⁹⁰ I Chronicles 16:39.

³⁹¹ I Chronicles 15:1.

peace offerings before God [who was considered to be anthropomorphically “in” that special tent].”³⁹²

Where did David place this Tent which contained the Ark of the Covenant? This was shown when Solomon was made king. David actually pitched the Tent for the Ark (called a “Tabernacle” in the King James Version) on a terrace region directly above and within the immediate of view of the Gihon Spring. Note that when Solomon was crowned “King,” Zadok the priest led Solomon to the Gihon Spring and then “Zadok the priest took a horn of oil *out of the tabernacle* [wherein was the Ark], and anointed Solomon.”³⁹³ Later Jews came to recognize from this example of Zadok that kings were not only anointed with olive oil but that the coronation itself had to be conducted at a place where there was a *spring*. “Our Rabbis taught: Kings are anointed only by the site of a spring.”³⁹⁴ So, the first “Temple” at Jerusalem erected by King David (before Solomon finally built the permanent Temple) was placed on the terrace directly at and just above the Gihon Spring. This made the site equivalent in a symbolic way with God’s House in heaven because it was believed that God had what we call *spring water* associated with His heavenly abode.

This means that for the last twenty-seven years of David’s reign and the first eleven years of Solomon reign (that is, for 38 years before Solomon built the Temple), all Israel resorted to this holy spot at the Gihon Spring to worship God and to offer sacrifices. And what was this place called? Look at Second Samuel 12:20. “Then David arose from the earth. and washed, and anointed himself, and came *into the House of the Lord*, and worshipped.” David was in Jerusalem when this event occurred. It was at the Tent of the Ark of the Covenant. Wherever the Ark was located was called the “House of the Lord” — another name for the Sanctuary.³⁹⁵ David also called the place of the Ark “his [God’s] habitation” — it represented the “House of God” — the Temple.³⁹⁶

³⁹² I Chronicles 16:1.

³⁹³ I Kings 1:38–39.

³⁹⁴ Kerithoth 5b.

³⁹⁵ Exodus 34:26; Deuteronomy 23:18; Joshua 6:24; 9:23; Judges 18:31.

³⁹⁶ II Samuel 15:25.

For 38 years before the permanent Temple was dedicated by Solomon, the official “House of the Lord” (the holy Sanctuary in Jerusalem) was located in the city district of Gihon where there was the only spring of Jerusalem . See First Kings 1:32–40. This means that the Gihon Spring was a Temple site. As we will soon see, Solomon (after building the Temple) simply moved the Ark up to the top of the *Ophel* hill to his new Temple located a little higher above the Gihon Spring.

The House of God (His Throne) Required Water

It is of utmost importance that scholars and biblical students understand that the Temple was a physical symbol on earth of God’s House (or Palace) in heaven. It was an exclusive anthropomorphic representation. God’s heavenly House was reckoned as having *spring waters* associated with it. King David knew this. Since he realized he was making a replica of God’s “House” on earth, he deemed it necessary to have a water source *inside the House* in order to duplicate those heavenly facilities on earth. The Gihon Spring provided the earthly counterpart. Look at Psalm 29:2–3, 9–10 (verses written when the Ark was at the Gihon Spring).

“Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. The voice of the Lord is upon [*over*] the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the Lord is upon [*over*] many waters.... In his Temple doth everyone speak of his glory. The Lord sitteth upon [*over*] the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever.”

Note the symbolism. God resides anthropomorphically in His Temple *OVER* [on top of] the waters. These are waters that various scriptural verses show springing from underneath His throne. Indeed, His throne is positioned (as the Ark of the Covenant depicted at the Gihon Spring) *OVER* the flood of waters. God even issues His decrees and commandments with His voice of authority from a position in His Temple that is *OVER* the waters.

David in the above Psalm not only described the actual abode of God (His throne room) in heaven, but David recognized that the

pattern and replica of God's House on earth also had to depict *waters* directly under the feet of God. David believed God appears as a glorified human being. That is why he placed the Ark of the Covenant (once it was brought to Zion) directly at and *OVER* the Gihon Spring (where sacrifices were offered even in David's time).

There is even more. David is consistent in associating *waters* with God's House and God's Throne. Look at Psalm 93, verses 1 & 5 with 2-4.

"The Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty.... Holiness becomes *thine house* [thy Temple], O Lord forever. Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting. *The floods* have lifted up [thy throne], O Lord, *the floods* have lifted up their voice [of authority]; *the floods* lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than *the noise of many waters*, yea, than *the mighty waves of the sea*."

In order to have "majesty and holiness" in "thine house," David associated God's throne with an abundance of waters. Here again we find *waters* and noise of waters as essential features in the House of God. They are located *underneath* His heavenly throne because God is "lifted up" over them. Understanding this fact that waters were reckoned to be located under the feet of God as He sat on His throne in the Holy of Holies, it was acknowledged by Jewish authorities that even the waters that came from the Gihon Spring had their origin at the site of the Holy of Holies. Let us note the common belief among the Jews regarding the headwaters of the Gihon Spring. In the *Book of Legends* we read:

"R. Phinehas said in the name of R. Huna of Sephoris: The Spring that issued from the Holy of Holies resembled at its source the (tiny) antennae of locusts; when it reached the entrance to the Temple Hall [further east], it became wider, as wide as a thread of warp; when it reached the entrance to the Porch [even further east], it grew as wide as a thread of weft; when it reached the entrance to the Temple Court [even further east], it became as wide as the mouth of a small narrow-necked jug. From there onward [in an underground channel], it grew wider and wider as it rose, until it reached the entrance to the House of David [at the bottom of Mount Zion]. After it reached the entrance to the House of David,

it became a swiftly flowing brook in which those (who were ritually unclean) immersed themselves in order to become clean."³⁹⁷

The above description was believed to be a compatible explanation from the Holy Scriptures regarding waters coming from the top of the mountains where the Temple stood (like the waters that will come forth from Ezekiel's Temple).³⁹⁸

The precise symbolism (which the Temple endeavored to show) demanded that a *water source* be located below or near the feet or the throne of God and that God be enthroned *OVER* those waters. David also described the singers and musicians of the Temple as performing before "*the fountain of Israel*" associated with God's throne within the Temple precincts. Notice Psalm 68:24–26, 29, which described ceremonial services in the Temple.

"They have seen thy goings, O God; even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary [in Zion]. The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them were the damsels playing on timbrels. Bless ye God in the congregations [who assemble at Zion], even the Lord, *from the fountain of Israel* [located in the Temple] ... Because of thy Temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee" (italics mine).

This theme of a *fountain* or a *water spring* in Zion, representing the holy sanctuary and mountain of God, is a recurring one in the Psalms of David. Note Psalm 36:7–9.

³⁹⁷ Bialik and Ravnitzky, *The Book of Legends* (NY: Schocken Books, 1992), p.161, sect.10, words in parentheses are in the text, the words inside the brackets are my additions given for clarification.

³⁹⁸ There were also beliefs among the Jews that the waters of the Gihon actually came from the Garden of Eden because the river Gihon was an Edenic stream and that is how the Gihon Spring got the name "Gihon." Another belief was that different name for the Spring was the Shiloah in Isaiah 8:6. They thought it came from the geographical spot "Shiloh" where the Tabernacle was first permanently pitched. See the "Work on Geography," in John Wilkinson's *Jerusalem Pilgrimage 1099–1185* (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1988), p.200. The Christian traveler Theodoric in 1169 C.E. reported the same belief of the Shiloh origin of the waters among Jews in his time, though he did not believe the waters came from that far off (*Ibid.*, p.295). Another belief of the Jews was that the waters of the Gihon originated at an elevated area 'Ayn 'Eytiam south of Bethlehem. But the main belief was the one mentioned in the text.

“How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house [the Temple at Zion]; and thou, shalt *make them drink of the river* of thy pleasures. For with thee *is the fountain of life* [from the Temple]; in thy light shall we see light” (italics mine).

Thus we are informed in the above Psalm that the Temple at Zion was associated with “*the fountain of life*” producing a stream of spiritual abundance issuing from the throne of God. The simple fact is, there can be no proper Temple on earth, which is a pattern or replica of God’s Temple in heaven, without there being within its precincts a “*fountain of life*” which represents the actual “*fountain of life*” found in God’s heavenly Sanctuary.

This is why Solomon felt it incumbent to follow David and position the original Temple directly over the Gihon Spring which was near the northern foot of the original Mount Zion (the *Akra*) and just below the *Ophel* summit. The truth is, the *Ophel* was where Ornan had his “threshing floor.” In order to reach the waters of the Gihon from the summit of the *Ophel* (before building the Temple), Solomon had engineers design and then chisel out of the rock a shaft which led down to the Gihon Spring. This may or may not be what is now called “Warren’s Shaft” after the man who discovered it in the middle of the 19th century. Earlier archaeologists normally dated the carving of this vertical shaft to the 10th century B.C.E. — the exact time of Solomon. It was constructed to reach the Gihon from the *Ophel* summit (where the Temple was built). Some archaeologists think the “Shaft” is natural and not manmade.

There were facilities to bring the spring waters by mechanical means into the laver that Solomon built within the Temple courts. This brazen laver was a large reservoir containing 3000 “bats” when brim full (probably about 18,000 gallons of water — no one knows the exact measure of the “bat”), or 2000 “bats” at its lowest level. It obtained its water supply from the only perennial source of water in Jerusalem — the Gihon Spring — far below the laver. It was common at that period to use a wheel, or conveyor belt apparatus with water containers attached to the belt at specific intervals,

to lift the water into a receptacle (in this case, the laver). Animal power was no doubt used to elevate the spring water into the laver. Oxen were probably harnessed and located just outside the Temple but were capable of pulling long ropes attached to the apparatus to elevate the water. Remember too the laver was positioned on the backs of twelve model oxen.

The laver itself had such large dimensions in order to provide a continuous and abundant supply of water to the Temple. This was because the Gihon Spring spouted forth water only at intervals throughout a twenty-four hour period. It was dormant at other times. The Temple ceremonies, however, demanded a constant supply of running *spring water* for the Temple ceremonies to proceed properly. One such ceremony was the anointing of kings that had to be performed at a place where *spring waters* were flowing. "Our Rabbis taught: Kings are anointed only by the side of a spring."³⁹⁹ This tradition began because Solomon was anointed as king at the Gihon Spring.⁴⁰⁰ Later when Joash was made king *in the Temple itself*, the ceremony was performed beside the Altar of Burnt Offering, where the laver of Solomon was positioned providing *spring water* from the Gihon.⁴⁰¹ This shows that the laver in the Temple was acknowledged as part of the Gihon system and was reckoned as an official place where kings could be anointed and crowned.

Temples Had Springs Emerging from their Interiors

Spring waters were always associated with the earthly Temples. Indeed, when the prophet Ezekiel described the ideal Temple (or House of God), he showed that a central characteristic of God's Temple was that *spring waters* could be seen emerging from the threshold of the interior of the Temple. Ezekiel saw the waters springing from the same general area where Solomon placed his large "laver," built as a reservoir to contain the *spring waters* pulled up from the Gihon. Notice how Ezekiel 47:1 illustrates this.

³⁹⁹ Kerithoth 5b.

⁴⁰⁰ I Kings 1:32–34.

⁴⁰¹ II Chronicles 23:10–11.

“Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house [the Temple]; and, behold, *waters* issued out from under the threshold of the house [the Temple] eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the *waters* came down from under *the right side* of the house at *the south side* of the altar [the precise position where Solomon placed his ‘laver’].”

There is more biblical evidence for the use of *spring waters* in connection with the Holy Places and where God will one day have His throne of sovereignty. Look at Zechariah 14:8–9. We read about a future time when God will establish His throne on earth. Note what will once again emerge from Jerusalem.

“And it shall be in that day, that *living waters* [*spring waters*] shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth ...”

The *waters* described are clearly *spring waters* coming directly from the City of the Great King [the new Zion].

There are other prophecies that speak of *living waters* emerging from the holy places of God when God establishes His throne on earth. Look at Joel 3:16–18.

“The Lord also shall roar out of Zion and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall you know that *I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain*: then shall Jerusalem be holy. ... all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a *fountain* [a spring of water] shall come forth of the House of the Lord.”

This prophetic description in the Book of Joel is very important to our present research. As one can easily observe, there is prophesied to be (once again) *a single fountain of water* giving forth pure *spring water* which will well upwards from *within* the House of the Lord (God’s Temple). This same requirement was viewed by David and Solomon as a necessary feature of the Temple at Jerusalem to precisely duplicate the pattern or replica of God’s Temple in heaven. This is why King Solomon took the Ark of the Covenant located in its special Tent at the Gihon, and placed it within

the Holy of Holies that he built on the top of the *Ophel* directly above the Gihon.⁴⁰²

There is even more information in the Holy Scriptures to show that *spring waters* are again destined to come forth from the sacred land of Israel. This will occur when the idols are destroyed from Israel and all wars will cease within the land. Look at Isaiah 30:19–26, especially verses 19 and 25 where it says waters will come forth from the tops of mountains when idolatry is destroyed from the territory of Israel. Isaiah gives us information about these *spring waters*:

“For the people shall dwell in [Mount] Zion at Jerusalem. ... there shall be upon every high mountain [of Israel], and upon every high hill, *rivers and streams of waters* in the day of the great destruction [of idols from Israel], when the towers [built for war] fall.”

This same theme is also shown in the New Testament. Speaking about New Jerusalem and the time when God will reign over the earth, we have symbolism of fresh *spring waters* emerging from the throne of God — directly from underneath the feet of God as He sits anthropomorphically on His throne. Note what the apostle John wrote in Revelation 21:2,6; 22:1,17:

“And I John saw the holy city new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.... I will give unto him that is athirst of the *fountain [spring]* of the *water of life* freely.... And he showed me *a pure river of water of life*, clear as crystal, *proceeding out of the throne of God* and the [throne of the] Lamb.... And let him that is *athirst* come. And whosoever will, let him take *the water of life* freely.”

A similar description is given in the Book of Enoch (referred to

⁴⁰² Let's be honest with truth. The terms “Mount Zion” and “Temple Mount” are synonymous. They refer to the same place — to the spur of the southeast ridge where the original “Mount Zion” and its northerly extension called the “Ophel” were located. For accuracy's sake, all the Temples were located on the “Ophel” prominence situated over and around the Gihon Spring. Note also Isaiah 32:14 (where “Ophel” is translated “forts” in the KJV), Isaiah said some of the main geographical features of the Ophel were its “caves” (KJV: “dens”) located underneath and within the mountain ridge. These caves and tunnels were carved out of the subterranean rock to reach the waters of the Gihon.

by Jude in the New Testament). That *spring of water* issuing from the throne of God is reckoned to be symbolic of righteousness and wisdom that God will impart to his chosen ones. In an apocalyptic vision the author said in First Enoch 47:3 and 48:1:

“In those days I saw the Head of Days sit down on the throne of his glory, and the books of the living were opened before him, and all his host [of angels] which dwells in the heavens above, and his council were standing before him.... And in that place I saw *an inexhaustible spring* of righteousness, and many *springs* of wisdom surrounded it, and all the *thirsty drank* from them and were filled with wisdom, and their dwelling was with the righteous and the holy and the chosen.”

Notice again it is *spring water* associated with the throne of God, symbolic of righteousness and goodness, and representing the *water of life*. To show this on earth in the replica of God’s heavenly Temple, it was necessary to have a literal *spring* within the Temple at Jerusalem that duplicated this heavenly scene. That *fountain* was clearly the Gihon, as Aristeas and Tacitus state was located in the Temple precincts. It was the only *spring* in Jerusalem and David referred to it. Recall Psalm 36:7–9 as above.

“How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of *thy house* [the riches of thy Temple]; and thou shalt make them *drink* of the *river* of thy pleasures [from the Temple]. For with thee is the *fountain* of life [the *fountain* within God’s House].”

It was reckoned in the symbolism of the Temple (and the City of God) that from the holy area a *water source* produced *streams* of water. Psalm 46 also shows a *river* comes from the City of God that produced *streams*. The *river* emerges from “the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.” This place for the springing forth of the *river* was where “God is in the midst of her [Zion].” Note the verses in Psalm 46 that also show this theme.

“There is a *river*, the *streams* whereof shall make glad the city of God, in the holy place [a *river* within the Temple] of the taberna-

cles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her [the City of God, Zion].”⁴⁰³

Similar evidence is given in Psalm 65 where David said there was “the *river* of God” full of water. Where did this abundant water have its origin? It provides riches and welfare for all who would drink. David called it “the *river* of God.” It was “God’s own *river*” coming from the courts of the Temple. See Psalm 65:4,9.

“Blessed in the man thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee [in thy House], that he may dwell in thy courts [of the Temple]: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.... Thou visitest the earth, and *waterest* it: thou greatly enrichest it with *the river of God* [God’s own river], which is full of *water*.”

This was no ordinary *river* David was talking about. It was “*THE River of God*.” He illustrated the use of the river in contexts in which he was speaking about the courts of the Temple at Zion. This was a special “*River of God*” that came forth from God himself who, of course, resided symbolically in the Temple at Jerusalem. This *river* had to be a part of Temple apparatus in Zion.

David also made it as clear that there was a *fountain* (a *spring*) within the precincts of the Holy Temple in heaven, and there was also a *fountain* (a *spring*) positioned in the replica of God’s House in Jerusalem. David related these things in his Psalms when the “House of the Lord” was reckoned to be the Tent of the Ark located at the Gihon Spring. That special Sanctuary for the Ark remained at the Gihon for 38 years.

“They have seen thy goings, O God; even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary [in the Tent at Gihon]. The singers [of the Sanctuary] went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them [in the Temple] were the damsels playing with timbrels. Bless ye God in the congregations [assembled in the Temple at the Gihon Spring], even the Lord, from the *fountain* [the *spring*] of Israel.”⁴⁰⁴

Look at the Psalm carefully. Where is God described as having

⁴⁰³ Psalm 46:4–5.

⁴⁰⁴ Psalm 68:24–26.

his abode? He was living as a King “in the sanctuary” (in the Tent at Gihon). From where did the Lord bless Israel and their congregations? The blessings came directly “from the *fountain* of Israel.” This *fountain* was, of course, reflective of that *fountain* within the precincts of the Temple or God’s divine palace in heaven. The earthly symbol for this *fountain* was the Gihon Spring.

Water Springs and the Temples

We find Zion is always shown as having a water source within it. This is indicated in the eschatological description of God’s new Zion spoken of by the prophet Isaiah as an elaboration of his prophecies concerning the Suffering Servant of God (which Christian teaching from the very beginning associated with Jesus as the Christ). Isaiah provides a prophecy about the Suffering Servant beginning in Isaiah 52:13 and without a break in context on through Isaiah 53 to 56:9.

After referring in the first fifteen verses about the role of the Suffering Servant in granting Israel a freedom from sins through his actions, the prophecy in Isaiah continues with a description of the wonderful period when the Suffering Servant is finally glorified and *everyone can drink from the WATERS of Zion*. Let us look at selected verses of this long prophecy that pertain to the new Zion once the Suffering Servant has established sovereignty over the earth. It is much like what the Book of Revelation says will occur when Christ returns to earth and establishes his rule.

“Sing, O barren [because of the Suffering Servant’s actions], thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate [women without children] than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. Enlarge the place of thy tent [make Zion larger to hold more people], and let them stretch forth the curtains [make the Temple curtains larger] of thine habitations [make larger your Temple courts]: spare not, lengthen thy cords [enlarge your Tent so more people can enter], and strengthen thy stakes [secure this enlarged habitation of God]....

Ho, *everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters* [of Zion], he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price....

[Do not let] the son of the stranger [the Gentile], that hath joined himself to the Lord, saying [in dejection], ‘The Lord hath utterly separated me from his people’: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree....

Even unto them [even rejected Gentiles and eunuchs] will I give in mine house [within my new Zion] and within my walls a place [a high position] and a name better than of [my legitimate] sons and of daughters: I will give them [even Gentiles and eunuchs] an everlasting name [of fame and legitimacy], that shall not be cut off.... even them [Gentiles and eunuchs] will I bring to my holy mountain [my new Zion], and make them joyful *in my house of prayer* [inside the House of God].... My house [the Temple or Palace] shall be called *a house of prayer for all people* [not just Israelites, but even Gentiles and eunuchs drink its waters]. The Lord God which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, *Yet will I gather others* [besides Israel] *to him* [to the Suffering Servant], beside those [of Israel] that are gathered to him [all races will be gathered to his new House of God].”⁴⁰⁵

This new Zion established by the Suffering Servant would have an enlarged House of God to gather all peoples into it (including even Gentiles and eunuchs formerly the desolate and rejected). All will be allowed to drink *of the waters* associated with this new House of God. As prelude to this future acceptance of eunuchs and Gentiles, the New Testament shows the first non-Jewish convert to Christianity was an Ethiopian eunuch.⁴⁰⁶ This incident was symbolic of what will occur when *all races* and *all social distinctions* will be allowed to enter God’s Temple and *drink* the waters of salvation to be found in God’s Sanctuary.

That is why all Temples of God on earth must have natural *spring waters* within their enclosures. The symbolism of all Temples is to show the future role of the actual abode of God that He will have on earth. This is why it is necessary for *spring waters* to emerge from *within* any Temple to secure a proper symbolism of the *fountain of salvation* from God in heaven. Only the area of the Gihon Spring could supply the needed symbolic spring waters.

Even in the description of the future Temple in the “Temple

⁴⁰⁵ Isaiah 54:1–2; 55:1; 56:3,5–8, italics mine.

⁴⁰⁶ Acts 8:26–39.

Scroll” of the Dead Sea sectarians, there was water in its interior. Its laver was supplied with a constant quantity of water.

“You shall make a channel all round the laver *within the building*. The channel runs [from the building] of the laver *to a shaft*, goes down and disappears in the middle of the earth so that the water flows and runs through it and is lost in the middle of the earth.”⁴⁰⁷

Interestingly, in Solomon’s Temple there were shafts in the rock used to elevate spring water from the Gihon to the Laver of the Temple. The shafts also allowed the used water of the Temple to return to the Gihon water system. One of these was no doubt the “shaft” the “Temple Scroll” was referring to.

This shows that the original Sanctuaries at Jerusalem were built either at or over the Gihon Spring located in the *center* of the “crescent-shaped” city situated on the southeast ridge. There can be no doubt, the early Temples were not located near the northern area of the Dome of the Rock, then outside the walls of Jerusalem. That lop-sided area is totally disqualified from being considered as the Temple Mount. It is time people return to the biblical and eyewitness descriptions, and look for the Temples of Solomon, Zerubbabel and Herod where they were actually built over the Gihon Spring.

⁴⁰⁷ The “Temple Scroll,” Col. xxxii, 12–13, Martinez’ trans., italics are mine.

Chapter 21

NECESSARY SPRING WATERS WITHIN THE TEMPLES

THERE CAN NEVER BE a representation of the House of God on earth without *spring waters* being within the enclosure. They provide the symbol of *everlasting life* and spiritual regeneration connected with the salvation of God and the righteousness associated with his heavenly household. Jeremiah the prophet noted this fact. Look at two verses in tandem to one another that show this teaching of the prophet Jeremiah. The verses are found in Jeremiah 17:12–13.

“A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary [the Temple]. O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the *fountain* [water spring] of *living waters*.”

Notice that Jeremiah associates the “glorious and high throne” of God with “the fountain of living waters.” The term “living waters” within God’s Sanctuary was interpreted by early Jewish

commentators to mean "*spring waters*" which are the only fit symbol of the purity found at God's fountain within His heavenly dwelling. Josephus tells us that when Moses raised up the Tabernacle in the wilderness, *spring waters* were necessary to purify the Temple and the priests.

"Now when Moses had bestowed such honorary presents on the workmen [who built the Tabernacle], as it was fit they should receive, who had wrought so well, he offered sacrifices in the open court of the Tabernacle, as God commanded him; a bull, a ram, and a kid of the goats, for a sin-offering. Now I shall speak of what we do in our sacred offices in my discourse about sacrifices; and therein shall inform men in what case Moses bid us offer a whole burnt offering, and in what cases the law permits us to partake of them as of food. And when Moses had sprinkled Aaron's vestments, himself, and his sons, with the blood of the beasts that were slain, and *had purified them with spring waters* and ointment, they became God's priests. After this manner did he consecrate them and their garments for seven days together."⁴⁰⁸

Use of *spring waters* was far more sanctified than rainwater or waters from cisterns. The cistern water collected from rain water has to flow over areas of earth that may be contaminated. Such was not considered fit to describe *the living waters of God* that came from the purity of God's fountain of life. That is why Jeremiah contrasted cistern waters as inferior to *living waters* that emerge from underground springs. In Jeremiah 2:13 he said:

"For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me *the fountain of living waters*, and hewed them out cisterns [for the catchment of rain water], broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

While waters from cisterns could be used for drinking and other domestic functions (and for minor purification rites associated with normal ritual bathing), the most holy of purification ceremonies, such as those involving the Red Heifer, etc., required a higher level of purity. In those cases *spring water* had to be used.⁴⁰⁹ This was pure *spring water* and to a lesser degree from rivers fed by natural *spring waters* at their source.

⁴⁰⁸ *Antiquities* III.8.6.

⁴⁰⁹ In Hebrew it is rendered living water or the water of life (Numbers 19:17).

This is why the laver in Solomon's Temple contained only *spring water*. We are confidently told in the Talmud by Jewish authorities that only water from the laver could be described as "holy." Note what the Talmud relates (the capital letters represent the words of the Mishnah). "AND THE PRIEST SHALL TAKE HOLY WATER. There are no holy waters save those that are hallowed by being put in a vessel, and these are *the waters of the laver*."⁴¹⁰ "AND THE PRIEST SHALL TAKE HOLY WATER, such that is, as was made holy *in the laver*."⁴¹¹

Look at the Temple ritual to determine if a woman committed adultery. The Scriptures teach that the priest shall take *water* and prepare it for the judgment to be rendered by the priest. We read an explanation of this ceremony in Philo Judaeus who lived in the time of Jesus. Philo was thoroughly knowledgeable of the symbolic usages in the Temple of this holy rite and he gave a description that deserves full quotation. Notice Philo.

"Then the Law proceeds to say, the priest, having taken an earthen vessel, shall pour forth *pure water*, having drawn it from a *fountain*, and shall also bring a lump of clay *from the ground of the Temple*, which also I think has in it a symbolical reference to the search after truth; for the earthenware vessel is appropriate to the commission of adultery because it is easily broken, and death is the punishment appointed for adulterers; but *the earth and the water* are appropriate to the purging of the accusation, since the origin, and increase, and perfection of all things, take place by them: on which account it was very proper for the law-giver to set them both off by epithets, saying, that the *water* which the priest was to take *must be PURE and LIVING WATER* [spring water], since a blameless woman is pure as to her life, and deserves to live; and the earth too is to be taken, not from any chance spot, *but from the SOIL of the GROUND of the TEMPLE*, which must, of necessity, be most excellent, just as a modest woman is."⁴¹²

Notice that the earth in the ritual had to come from the interior of the Temple. But the *water* had to have an equal holiness; it had

⁴¹⁰ Midrash Rabbah, Numbers 9:14 Soncino ed., italics mine, capital letters are original text.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, Numbers 9:32, italics mine, capital letters are of original text.

⁴¹² Philo, Yonge's translation, vol. III, p.318.

to be pure *spring water*. And since all references I have given so far (from scriptural and secular records) reveal the Temple had a *natural spring* within its courts (the Gihon Spring waters), it follows that the *spring waters* used in this holy ceremony were those from the Gihon Spring. Indeed, even later in Herod's Temple with the ceremony of the "Water Drawing" (the joyous festivity in the Temple at the Feast of Tabernacles), the waters were obtained from the Siloam water system,⁴¹³ and these waters came from the Gihon. This ritual was looked on as drawing "water out of the wells of salvation."⁴¹⁴

The illustration of the "water out of the wells of salvation" comes from the narrative of the child Immanuel in chapters 7 to 12 in the Book of Isaiah. That long prophecy of six chapters centers geographically "at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field."⁴¹⁵ From there, Isaiah declares events of the prophecy concerning Immanuel. Further on, he tells how Israel "refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly."⁴¹⁶ Then Isaiah concludes the prophecy by showing how Immanuel "is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."⁴¹⁷ The "water" in the Immanuel prophecy is parallel with that of "Shiloah that go softly" which provided the geographical theme of the Immanuel prophecy of Isaiah.

These waters which represented "salvation" came from the Gihon Spring within the Temple. Such waters could aptly represent the waters of God from the throne area in the Temple. Indeed, we are told in the Mishnah that the symbolic waters of the "Water Drawing" were collected in a pitcher from Shiloah. They were typical of future waters that would issue forth from the threshold of the Temple mentioned in Ezekiel's prophecy of Ezekiel 47:1.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹³ Sukkah 21a, 48a,b.

⁴¹⁴ Isaiah 12:3.

⁴¹⁵ Isaiah 7:3.

⁴¹⁶ Isaiah 8:6.

⁴¹⁷ Isaiah 12:23.

⁴¹⁸ Middoth 2:6. This symbolic ritual is also described in detail in Sukkah 4:9. In Sukkah 4:10 the Mishnah states that if the time for the rite occurs on the Sabbath, then priests could collect the needed water from the laver. Why from the

Not All Rituals Required Spring Waters

Though any clear and clean water could be used for most ritual bathing, certain water sources were considered more pure than others. For example, rivers that had sources at underground springs (such as the Jordan River) were considered appropriate waters for purification rites not associated with major Temple ceremonies. Thus, John the Baptist and Jesus himself could baptize (baptism was a purification ritual) in the Jordan River. Such ceremonies were legal and proper for general and non-Temple purifications.

The rivers associated with the Garden of Eden were also appropriate for ritual purifications because the waters had mountain springs as their source. Even waters from rain and snow that filled the rivers were given greater holiness if the original sources of the rivers were *natural springs*. As a matter of fact, the Garden of Eden itself was looked upon by early biblical authorities as a type of Sanctuary of God from the rivers, notably the Gihon, that ran through it (a forerunner of the Tabernacle and the Temples).

Garden of Eden Like the Tabernacle and Temples

We have been observing in this book that the Scriptures demand a water source within the precincts of the Temple. This requirement is even reflected within the symbolism associated with the Garden of Eden. The Garden of Eden has much symbolic teaching to it. In two other books of mine,⁴¹⁹ I provide abundant proof that biblical people and early Jewish authorities recognized the Garden in Eden, the Land of Eden, and the Land of Nod where Cain was banished, as represented symbolic features of the later Tabernacle in the wilderness as well as the Temples in Jerusalem.

The inner part of the Garden was understood as analogous to the Holy of Holies, the outer Garden answered to the Holy Place where the seven-branched Menorah was placed, while the altar where Cain and Abel presented their offerings was likened to the

laver? It was simply because even waters brought in great abundance into the laver, were waters from the Siloam water system with its origin at the Gihon.

⁴¹⁹ *Secrets of Golgotha*, pages 1–8 and 384–390 and *101 Bible Secrets That Christians Do Not Know*, pages 127–133.

Altar of Burnt Offering. Indeed, the rest of the Land of Eden as described in the Book of Genesis represented the outer courts of the Temple (including the Camp area surrounding the Sanctuaries). Even the Altar of Cain positioned before the “door” in the Land of Nod (outside the Land of Eden) symbolized the Altar of the Red Heifer located in the time of Jesus “outside the camp” on the Mount of Olives.

While all this is true, one thing must be borne in mind regarding this symbolism of the Garden of Eden with the Tabernacle and later Temples. That is, the four rivers, which had their sources in the mountains came together in the center part of the Garden of Eden to form one stream. This single stream then left the Garden and flowed into the Persian Gulf. That singular stream that emerged from the confluence of the four streams continued to be called the “Gihon.” Since *this* stream issued from the Garden of Eden, which then represented the Temple of God on earth in the pre-diluvian period, it became common to designate the spring waters coming from the interior of the Temple at Jerusalem (a type of the Garden of Eden) with the same identification. It was well known in Jewish traditional teachings that the Gihon Spring at Jerusalem was named after the Gihon River, the essential stream that finally left the Garden of Eden and debouched into the Persian Gulf.⁴²⁰

⁴²⁰ It was often taken for granted that in future Temples built in Jerusalem, waters coming from them would still be issuing from the Gihon Spring. In the account by Eliyahu ha-Cohen, *Midrash Talpioth*, 1903, p.203 and Emek ha-Melech, p.14 as recorded in Zev Vilnay’s *Legends of Jerusalem*, p.279 it states: “At that time a great stream shall flow forth from the Holy Temple, and its name is Gihon.” The early Arabs used to say: “He who comes to visit Jerusalem, shall bathe in the fount of Siloam, which springs from the Garden of Eden” (Vilnay, *Ibid.*). Another theory among the Jews was that the waters of the Gihon came from the Shiloh area in the north where the Tabernacle was first pitched. Thus the name Shiloah associated with the Gihon Spring in Isaiah 8:6 (they thought) referred to this traditional belief (see “Work on Geography,” in Wilkinson’s *Jerusalem Pilgrimage 1099–1185*, p.200.

The Christian traveler Theodoric in 1169 C.E. reported the same belief among Jews of the Shiloh origin of the waters at his time, though he himself did not believe it (*Ibid.*, p.295). Another belief of the Jews is that the waters of the Gihon originated at ‘Ayn ‘Eytiam south of Bethlehem (because the area was

This fact (with proof) is thoroughly explained in my books mentioned above. Thus, even with later Sanctuaries representing the Garden of Eden, we still observe a *water source* issuing from the Garden. That river later gave its name to the Gihon Spring that supplied *spring water* to the Tent area where David placed the Ark of the Covenant and over which Solomon built the original Temple. These similarities of names and other details were not coincidental. They were deliberately planned by biblical authorities to provide a consistent symbol for the *fountain of life* issuing from God's heavenly Temple which the Garden of Eden, the Tabernacle and the later Temples symbolically represented.

Not only did Aristeas and Tacitus state that the Gihon Spring was within the precincts of the Temple, but Jewish writers also echoed the theme. We find in Zev Vilnay's *Legends of Jerusalem*:

“To the Jews of Jerusalem, the Fountain of Gihon is known as the Bath of Ishmael the High Priest. They relate that on the Day of Atonement, before entering the Holy of Holies, the high priest used to dip his body and purify himself in its waters.”⁴²¹

Vilnay adds the comment: “The ritual bath of the high priest *was in the Temple courtyard*; see legend VIII:2.”⁴²² Thus, the Gihon Spring was within the Temple.

There is more. Vilnay also records:

“It is said of the Fountain of Gihon: ‘It was the ritual bath of Rabbi Ishmael the high priest,’ who was among the ‘ten martyrs of Israel.’ And a big fountain fills it with water every day before the break of dawn; and the waters were sweet and pure from the moment they gushed forth from the spring till sunrise. But after the sun shined and flashed its rays over the surface, they became so salty that no man could drink from them.”⁴²³

higher in elevation than Jerusalem). What is significant, however, is that both names “Gihon” and “Shiloah” (a variant of “Shiloh”) were used to denote waters that came forth from earlier Houses of God (that is, Eden and Shiloh) in order to show a spiritual identity and a consistent nomenclature. And so, the waters of the Gihon in Jerusalem were known to issue forth from the Temple precincts just as Aristeas and Tacitus stated that they did.

⁴²¹ Vilnay, *Legends of Jerusalem*, p.277.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, see note on page 277.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*

Again, this ritual bath of the high priest was understood to be located in the Temple courtyard. “*In the Temple courtyard* there was a bathhouse for the high priest. He used to immerse himself in water on the eve of the Day of Atonement.”⁴²⁴ The Gihon was from an early period known as the “Spring of the High Priest.” This is noted in Eusebius when he recorded an early eyewitness to the Temple named Philo. *This Philo* called that single *spring* in Jerusalem “the High Priest’s *fountain* and the canal that carries off the water, he [Philo] proceeds as follows: ‘A headlong stream [from the fountain] by channels *underground*, the pipes pour forth.’”⁴²⁵ This Philo was certainly speaking of the Gihon Spring.

Gentiles Used Spring Waters and Its Eden Theme

Early histories of the Gentile nations surrounding Israel also had memories and mythic stories about the Garden of Eden theme. It was no wonder they customarily built their most famous shrines or Temples where *natural springs* issued from sacred spots. In truth, sometimes the existence of a *spring* itself gave Gentile holy places their sanctification. One could cite the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. This shrine was reckoned by Greeks as the very center of the universe (the navel of the earth) just as Jerusalem was the navel of the earth to biblical peoples. A prime feature at the Temple at Delphi was a *spring* that issued from the earth and from which the oracles associated with Delphi were derived.

Another important Gentile Temple and Citadel region (very much like Jerusalem) was the Acropolis in Athens. The region was ideally situated as a fortress combined with a Temple, and there was also a *natural spring* within the Temple precincts that afforded the rites of purification and other ceremonies to priests and people who attended the religious ceremonies.

The celebrated Temple of Zeus Ammon, one of the chief desert Temples in Egypt at the time of Alexander the Great, was built over a *natural spring* (there were many springs in this desert region). This natural spring provided an abundance of water in the

⁴²⁴ Vilnay, *Legends of Jerusalem*, p.88.

⁴²⁵ Eusebius, *Preparation of the Gospel*, Bk.IX, ch.36.

middle of the desert some 300 miles west by south of Memphis. This water turned the region into a beautiful oasis. It was the *natural springs* that gave sacredness to the area.

At the source of the Jordan River at the base of Mount Hermon was a *natural spring* (indeed, several springs) and the site was looked on by people of the Hellenistic age as a center of activity for all the gods in the Greek pantheon. The Greeks gave the name *Panias* to the region in honor of the god Pan and also all the gods. (It is now called *Banias*.) This area was in fact a most holy area to many nations of the Gentiles. The Book of Enoch states that this area was where the “Sons of God” came down from heaven to enter into an earthly environment before the Flood of Noah.⁴²⁶

The holiness of Mount Hermon is mentioned in the Bible. The Psalmist was convinced Mount Hermon, located above the *natural springs*, was itself a type of holy place. Its dew was equivalent with the dew of Mount Zion. The Psalmist said God’s blessings could come forth from either mountain.⁴²⁷ It was no accident that Jesus was transfigured before his disciples, as the New Testament records the Father himself appeared to witness the divine mission of Jesus at the summit of Mount Hermon. This divine epiphany was reckoned as providing authority for Jesus’ final teachings to the Jewish nation before his death on the tree of crucifixion.⁴²⁸

Keep in mind the sacredness associated with many of these natural springs among various peoples throughout all regions of the earth. It was common custom for many Temples of the Gentile nations to have *springs* in their interior or vicinity. Numerous examples could be given of the shrines of people from Egypt, India, China, Japan, all over Europe and into both of the American continents. People all over the world inherited the belief that sacred springs are like the water found in the Garden of Eden (the primeval Park of God). This is one of the reasons that the Temple of God at Jerusalem was recognized by many Gentiles peoples as representing the true Palace of God in heaven.

⁴²⁶ First Enoch 6:1–6.

⁴²⁷ Psalm 133:3.

⁴²⁸ Matthew 17:1–9.

Tabernacle Had Water Springing from Within

Another matter involving water in the various Sanctuaries of God has puzzled biblical scholars over the centuries. That was the teaching of the apostle Paul that a “spiritual Rock” accompanied the Israelites at the Exodus that provided them with *water to drink* in the arid regions of the wilderness.⁴²⁹ Paul said that Rock was actually Christ. How did Christ as a Rock (or a Stone) accompany Israel to give them *water to drink* in the wilderness?

This is easy to explain, but few have understood what the apostle Paul actually meant. To realize what happened, note what Paul said in I Corinthians 10:1. He associated “the cloud” as a major part of his context. This cloud was the Shekinah (the Glory of God) that accompanied the Israelites in the wilderness. It hovered constantly over the holiest part of the Tabernacle.⁴³⁰ When God wanted the Israelites to journey to another area in the wilderness, the cloud (or pillar of fire by night) would lift and move in the direction God wanted them to journey. When the cloud (the Shekinah) stopped moving, that is when they again pitched the Tabernacle. The cloud (the Shekinah) accompanied Israel wherever they went or camped in the wilderness and water became associated with it.

While this is well understood, how did water come from a rock as the apostle Paul taught? Note that the prophet Ezekiel in vision also observed the Shekinah that went with Israel in the wilderness. He saw a great cloud and a fire that was transported by cherubim in a conveyance that had wheels within wheels.⁴³¹ But within the main part of the cloud and the fire, Ezekiel saw a throne. This “throne of God” was located inside the cloud and the cherubim carried it. This throne was made from a solid piece of sapphire stone. On it sat the Glory of the Lord who appeared like a human suspended above the cherubim who carried the sapphire stone.⁴³²

⁴²⁹ I Corinthians 10:1–4.

⁴³⁰ Exodus 13:21–22.

⁴³¹ Ezekiel 1:4. Verse 4 describes the cloud and the fire, verses 5 to 25 describe the conveyance.

⁴³² Ezekiel 1:26–28.

Thus, Ezekiel described the Shekinah (the Glory of God) as associated with that precious stone and that the Shekinah was in this cloud (or fire). The cherubim conveyed the entire apparatus.⁴³³ Recall that the Shekinah of Ezekiel was the same spiritual epiphany that accompanied Israel in the wilderness for forty years. The apostle Paul called special reference to the “Rock” (that is, that “Sapphire Stone”) in this cloud that went with Israel. He said that Rock (or Stone) represented Christ because Christ was sitting on that divine throne made out of the Sapphire Stone.⁴³⁴

Now, what about the *water* that Israel was able to *drink* in the wilderness? Paul tells us the *water* came forth from that Rock (that Stone which was a solid piece of sapphire stone in the shape of a throne on which the Glory of God sat). It was this *water* emerging from that stone which Israel was given to drink in the wilderness.⁴³⁵ This was the *water* that came forth from the “Rock” or “Stone” above the cherubim in the Holy of Holies. The stream from this Stone went out of the Tabernacle eastward to give the Israelites water to drink. Paul simply identified the one sitting on that Stone in the cloud as Christ some fourteen centuries before his birth in Bethlehem.

What Paul meant was that *water* came forth from the Stone (throne) for almost the whole forty years of the Exodus to give Israel *water* to drink and to use. But when Israel got to Kadesh at the border of the Land of Canaan, *water* stopped coming from that Stone. This is when God told Moses to speak unto another rock to produce a new water source for the Israelites while in Kadesh.⁴³⁶ Once they left Kadesh the Israelites found water in streams and in wells, and no longer needed a miraculous water source.⁴³⁷

The point should be made that *water* (miraculous *water*) was associated with God’s symbolic throne in the Tabernacle while the Israelites were in the wilderness. This shows how *spring waters*

⁴³³ Ezekiel 10:1.

⁴³⁴ Ezekiel 1:26; I Corinthians 10:1.

⁴³⁵ I Corinthians 10:4.

⁴³⁶ Numbers 20:1–13.

⁴³⁷ Numbers 21:12–18.

were connected with God's Temples. The waters must spring up *within* the Temples to symbolize the "fountain of life" that is associated with God's dwelling in heaven.

Remember, in Ezekiel's ideal Temple which God revealed to him in vision, Ezekiel saw *water* (spring waters) ushering forth from the Holy Place that went out the right side of the Altar of Burnt Offering and into the Dead Sea to make those acrid waters clean and fresh.⁴³⁸ On the sides of this river that came forth from that Holy Place were trees that gave life-giving attributes to all who eat from them.⁴³⁹ This is similar to what the Book of Revelation said about waters that will issue from the throne of God and the Lamb in the New Jerusalem. "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding *out of the throne* of God and of the Lamb."⁴⁴⁰

So, emerging from the Tabernacle of the Exodus there was *water* coming from *within* the Sanctuary when Israel was in the wilderness. Later, whenever the Israelites pitched the Tabernacle, it was common to position it at a water source. In Gilgal, the first site of the Tabernacle in the Holy Land, there were the springs from Jericho that supplied an abundance of water. When the Tabernacle was at Shiloh (from the times of Joshua to Samuel), there was a natural spring that supplied water to the Temple, the city and the surrounding area.

The only departure from the rule that *spring waters* be associated with God's House was when Israel went into a time of rebellion to God once the Ark of the Covenant was taken from Shiloh by the Philistines. For a period of 20 years the Ark was situated at the House of Abinadab, and for about another 100 years it was located at an adjacent site. During that 120 years, Israel was accustomed to raise up altars (illegally) in "high places" throughout the country.⁴⁴¹ Such high places were condemned by the prophets.⁴⁴²

⁴³⁸ Ezekiel 47:1-12.

⁴³⁹ Ezekiel 47:12.

⁴⁴⁰ Revelation 22:1.

⁴⁴¹ I Kings 3:1-2.

⁴⁴² I Kings 3:3 *passim*.

There were, of course, no natural springs in those “high places.” When the Tabernacle was pitched at Nob in the summit area of the Mount of Olives,⁴⁴³ it was not a proper site for a functioning “House of God” to meet the qualifications for holiness that Moses and the prophets demanded. David recognized the inferior status of such a Tabernacle at Nob because it did not contain the Ark of the Covenant, nor did it have spring waters. David thought nothing about eating the shewbread from such a place.⁴⁴⁴ Had such a site been fully sanctified, however, that act would have consigned David to the death penalty.⁴⁴⁵ Soon after this action by David at Nob, we find the Tabernacle was taken down and pitched at a more suitable location at the great high place of Gibeon, because proper *spring waters* were at that site.⁴⁴⁶ It is essential to keep in mind the need for *spring waters* to be part of a fully developed House of God.

A significant point to realize is, however, when David selected Jerusalem as the place for the Ark of the Covenant (which site he called the “House of the Lord” — the place of “his [God’s] habitation”), he placed the Ark directly over the Gihon Spring. And, from what I have shown so far, the Gihon was also *within* the area of the Temples of Solomon, Zerubbabel and Herod and was called the “*fountain of Israel*.” Recall that Aristeeas (just prior to Simon the Hasmonean) said there was an abundant natural spring gushing up *within* the Temple, and Tacitus confirmed this fact. This was the Gihon Spring. This means that throughout the history of the Tabernacle or Temples (whether in Old or New Testaments), the theme is consistent and constant. A *water spring* had to be intimately associated with all legal Sanctuaries.

It is now time to look closely at the geography of early Jerusalem to determine the exact site of the early Temples in the city. We need to focus attention on the period before Simon the Hasmonean. When we do, we will witness a Jerusalem very different from that

⁴⁴³ See Isaiah 10:32 for the position of Nob on the Mount of Olives.

⁴⁴⁴ I Samuel 21:6.

⁴⁴⁵ See Leviticus 24:5–23.

⁴⁴⁶ I Kings 3:4; I Chronicles 16:39; Jeremiah 41:12.

of Herod and Jesus' day. We will discover that Jerusalem was located almost entirely on the southeast ridge, now called the "Lower City." This is where the Citadel (or the *Akra*) and the original Temples were located. We will see that the early Temples were situated directly above the Gihon Spring and NOT a third of a mile north at the Dome of the Rock.

Chapter 22

WHERE WAS THE AKRA?

WHEN ONE LOOKS at the southeast ridge a third of a mile south of the present Dome of the Rock, there is no longer a major mountain called Zion with a subsidiary “hump” on the north called the *Ophel*. The reason this former elevated area is no longer in existence is because Josephus tells us that in the time of Simon the Hasmonean the region of Zion in the extreme south of the ridge was systematically cut down to the bedrock. It took the inhabitants of Jerusalem three years working night and day to accomplish the task of destruction. So complete was this engineering activity of the Jews that it became common from the time of Simon the Hasmonean onward to refer to this once elevated region of the southeast ridge (where there were once “two mountains”) as “the Lower City” (in contrast to earlier descriptions that the region was like the “utmost heights”).

We will now discover that this southern region called the original Zion was designated the *Akra* in the period of the Hasmoneans (otherwise known as the Maccabees). We are told in the historical records that this *Akra* was destroyed. It was cut down to bedrock. This is one of the main reasons that scholars have had trouble in

discovering its whereabouts, especially since they think the Temple (which was always described as being alongside the *Akra*) is reckoned by them to have been situated where the Dome of the Rock now exists. The scholars, however, have been looking in the wrong place for the *Akra*. In this chapter, we will see the plain geographical evidence that will locate the *Akra*. This discovery will make the matter of the original Temple sites to be clear. Indeed, it is really quite easy to locate the original *Akra* once we recognize where the Temples of Solomon and Zerubbabel were located. The word *Akra* means “high area” — the *top* of a mountain.

Syrians Entrench Their Troops in the Akra

Look at some of the history concerning the *Akra*. We find in the Book of First Maccabees that Antiochus Epiphanes in the second century B.C.E. built up the *Akra* (or Citadel) in the city of Jerusalem and placed part of his Gentile army inside. These Syrian soldiers remained in the *Akra* until Simon the Hasmonean conquered them about twenty-five years later. This *Akra* that the Syrians captured is consistently described in the historical records as being next to and alongside the Temple.⁴⁴⁷ We are further told in I Maccabees that at this earlier time the “Temple mount [was located] *alongside* [Greek: *para*] the *Akra*.”⁴⁴⁸ The text could not be clearer. The *Akra* in which the Syrians were encamped was positioned precisely alongside the Temple itself and everything in the Temple enclosure could be seen from the wall of that *Akra*.

The *Akra* and the Temple were so close to one another that the Syrians housed in the *Akra* often “became an ambush against the Temple.”⁴⁴⁹ Also: “The men in the *Akra* were hemming in Israel around the Temple, continually trying to harm them.”⁴⁵⁰ There is more proof of this. “In his time [Simon] and under his guidance they [the Jews] succeeded in driving the Gentiles out of their country, especially those [Syrians] in the City of David in Jerusalem,

⁴⁴⁷ I Maccabees 1:33–34; etc.

⁴⁴⁸ I Maccabees 13:52.

⁴⁴⁹ I Maccabees 1:36.

⁴⁵⁰ I Maccabees 6:18.

who had built for themselves an *Akra* from which they used to sally forth to defile the environs of the Temple and inflict grave injury on its purity.”⁴⁵¹

In the *Letter of Aristeas* it also shows that the *Akra* (the Citadel) was a close neighbor to the Temple and that the *Akra* was originally built alongside the Temple and designed as a fortress to protect the Temple. Aristeas said: “The Citadel [the *Akra*] was the special protection of the Temple and its founder had fortified it so strongly that it might effectively protect it [the Temple].”⁴⁵² And remember, so close was the *Akra* to the Temple that Aristeas said that from the wall of the *Akra* he and his companions could observe the priests performing their ceremonial activities within the Temple precincts. This indicates how close the two summits (the *Akra* and the Temple Mount called the *Ophel*) were to one another in the pre-Simonian period.

Let us now look at the dangerous situation in which the Jews were placed for some twenty-five years after Antiochus Epiphanes garrisoned his soldiers in the *Akra*. Those Syrian armed forces were encamped in the heart of the capital city of the Jews. This proved to be an embarrassment to the Jewish authorities, but more than that, this foreign garrison was precarious to their security. Since the *Akra* was positioned alongside the Temple, this made the Temple vulnerable to attacks by these Syrian forces. All these geographical factors are important in locating the precise position of the Temple in the time of Simon the Hasmonean. If one can discover the location of the *Akra*, the Temple has to be positioned right alongside that *Akra*. The key to the whole matter of where the early Temple was located is to find the location of the *Akra*.

The Akra is Easily Identified

The Septuagint Version (in the unversified section between our First Kings 2:35 and 36 and translated long before the time of Josephus and the enlargement of the Temple by Herod) states that the *Akra* was located on the north part of Zion or David’s City that

⁴⁵¹ 1 Maccabees 14:36, words in brackets mine.

⁴⁵² Line 104, words in brackets mine.

was situated on the south part of the southeast ridge. Simply put, the *Akra* and David's City (Zion) located south of the Temple were identical.

As clear as these facts can be, these historical references have not satisfied the beliefs of the Rabbis or even modern scholars. The Rabbis and modern scholars are dogmatic in their constant and unwavering faith that the Temple was position near the Dome of the Rock within the area of the Haram. Because the *Akra* is always shown in the historical records as *alongside* the Temple, scholars and religious leaders have consistently (and erroneously) felt compelled to place the Temple of Solomon, that of Zerubbabel and Herod near or at the Dome of the Rock. No other consideration for the location of the Temple has been remotely suggested. Utter dogmatism reigns supreme and without the slightest flinching of belief. It is automatically and systematically believed that somewhere within the enclosure of the Haram was where the Temples were located. This verdict is final and without controversy as far as the scholars and Rabbis are concerned. This current scholarly and religious opinion is universal. It is a belief "engraved in stone."

Now to the point. Just where was the *Akra* located? The scholars (who accept the Dome of the Rock as the early Temple area) have invented as many theories as to the *Akra's* whereabouts as there are writers who tackle the geographical problem. Since the *Akra* was situated alongside the Temple, modern scholars have been forced to place that fortress in various areas around the Dome of the Rock because that is the only area for the Temple they will consider. This makes them resort to inventing an "Akra" out of their own imagination in order to place it in the vicinity of the Haram. It is this manufactured *Akra* of the scholars that Simon the Hasmonean is supposed to have had the citizens of Jerusalem level to the ground, taking three years to accomplish the task.

The fact is, as I am showing in this book, the Jewish Rabbis and the secular scholars (along with the Muslim Imams) have picked the wrong Temple site. What they have done is something like looking for the Golden Gate Bridge in Seattle, Washington which is in the north part of the United States, rather than where it actually is located in the south, in the San Francisco Bay area. Though

almost 800 miles separate Seattle from San Francisco (and only a third of a mile from the Dome of the Rock to the original Temple site), the analogy is still the same. Modern scholars are looking in “Seattle” for their “Golden Gate Bridge” instead of “San Francisco.” This is why they will never find their “Akra” around the Dome of the Rock.

As a result of this erroneous dogmatism of the scholars and Rabbis, some have placed their *Akra* (that Antiochus Epiphanes captured and refortified) on the northwest side of their Temple site at a place called the Baris which Herod later renamed the Antonia. Others have placed it west of the Tyropoeon Valley near where the Hasmoneans built their palace. Others have positioned it on the southern side of the Dome of the Rock and near the southern wall not far from the Al Aqsa Mosque. Others have reckoned it to be a score of yards farther south of the southern wall. Selecting these various spots shows the confusion and disarray that is rampant among the scholarly authorities. The mystery in locating the *Akra* has become a common factor in misunderstanding the geography of early Jerusalem. The difficulty is because the modern scholars and Rabbis *have picked the WRONG Temple Mount!*

The secular scholars and the religious authorities need to get their geography straight. If they would pay attention to the records in First Maccabees about the actual site of the *Akra* as described by eyewitnesses, there would never have been any doubt about the proper location of the original Temples of Solomon and Zerubbabel, and the area where Herod enlarged it. The accounts clearly identify where the *Akra* was located. One should read (and BELIEVE) them. Look at First Maccabees 1:31–33.

“He [Antiochus Epiphanes] plundered the city [of Jerusalem] and set fire to it, demolished its houses and its surrounding walls, took captive the women and children, and seized the cattle. Then *they built up the City of David* with its high, massive wall and strong towers, and *it became their Citadel [their Akra].*”

Note that the troops of Antiochus Epiphanes conquered the *Akra* and then they positioned themselves within the interior of the fortress. The text also states that the *Akra* was identical with the City of David. Indeed, this *Akra* was the City of David itself as the

Septuagint Version shows. And where was the City of David according to all historical evidence — and a site that is not disputed even by modern scholars? It was *not* in the *north* near the Dome of the Rock in the area of the Haram. It was situated on the southeast hill about a third of a mile south of the Dome of the Rock. This is precisely where the actual *Akra* was located. There is so much historical evidence to support this fact that it is truly amazing that the identification has remained so difficult for some to accept. Note what the great geographer of Jerusalem, George Adam Smith, had to say about the identification of the *Akra* *WITH* the City of David on the southeast ridge.

“By the author of First Maccabees *the Akra is identified with ‘the City of David,’* that is the earlier Jebusite stronghold of Sion. *If we accept this identification the question is at once solved,* for, as we have seen, the stronghold of Sion lay on the East Hill, south of and below the Temple, or immediately above Gihon.”⁴⁵³

Professor Smith was absolutely correct. Without the slightest doubt, we find First Maccabees stating that the *Akra* that was torn down by Simon the Hasmonean (which took the citizens of Jerusalem three years of night and day work to demolish) was the City of David located near the Gihon Spring. The early Temples were located a short distance north of the City of David, on a secondary northern summit called the *Ophel* directly over the Gihon Spring. Between the City of David and the *Ophel* was the region called the “Millo” (the “Fill In”) which the Septuagint Version says was the site of the *Akra* (again, this shows nearness to the Temple on its south side abutting to the City of David). This location of the *Akra* in the Septuagint (written before the time of Simon the Hasmonean) tallies with the statement of Josephus that the southeast ridge itself was called the *Akra Hill*.

Speaking of the southeast ridge, Josephus said: “The second hill [east of the Tyropoeon Valley], which bore the name *Akra* and supported the Lower City [the southeast ridge], was shaped like the crescent moon.”⁴⁵⁴ Furthermore, in *Antiquities* Josephus referred to

⁴⁵³ “Jerusalem,” vol. I., p.445, italics mine.

⁴⁵⁴ *War* V.4,1.

“the *Akra* in the Lower City [the southeast ridge].”⁴⁵⁵ This plainly shows that Josephus placed the *Akra* (which means “High Place or Tower”) into an area of Jerusalem that was in his time so cut down to the ground that he had to re-designate the region as “the Lower City.” This is the reason archaeologists will never find the original Mount Zion of David. How can modern scholars locate an ancient mountain that was cut down and no longer exists? The original Mount Zion disappeared. It was chopped down to the bedrock.

Josephus Mentions These Points

Let us look at Josephus once again. Josephus said that there were in his time three hills that made up Jerusalem (plus a fourth hill in the north part of the city that he called Bezetha or New City). The first hill was the Upper City located in the west. He then described the other two hills as they once existed. Josephus said the second hill of Jerusalem was what he called the *Akra* (or Citadel and it then represented the Lower City). His third hill he said was “opposite” the *Akra* and lower in elevation.⁴⁵⁶ No doubt this was the mountain north of the Temple where the Dome of the Rock now exists.

Josephus said that in his day (though there was no longer a second mountain in this region because it was “cut down” and had now become “the Lower City”), the region just to the north of the former Mount Zion was still however called *Ophalas*⁴⁵⁷ which is a variant of “Ophel.” It was on the *Ophel*, as we will see, that the Temples were built. At the base of the *Ophel* was the Gihon Spring that was located within the interiors of all the Temples.

Josephus also showed that this third hill (which was the area of the Dome of the Rock) had been opposite the *Akra* (and formerly lower in elevation than the *Akra*). Then Josephus takes us to the time of the Hasmoneans, where he stated that the summit of the *Akra* was then cut off. Note what Josephus said:

⁴⁵⁵ *Antiquities* XII.5,4.

⁴⁵⁶ *War* V.4,1.

⁴⁵⁷ *War* II.17,9.

“The Hasmoneans in the period of their reign, both filled up the flat-like ravine [the ravine between the *Akra* and the third hill], with the object of uniting the city [the City of David, the *Akra*] with the Temple [located on the *OpheI*], and also [they] reduced the elevation of *Akra* by leveling its summit [only its summit was at first cut down], in order that it might not block the view of the Temple [which was before the time of Simon the Hasmonean situated just to the north].”⁴⁵⁸

What Simon the Hasmonean did was to destroy completely the original Mount Zion (the City of David). He made a high mountain (*Akra*) district into the lowest part of Jerusalem and then called it the “Lower City.” Josephus tells what Simon did.

“He [Simon] thought it would be an excellent thing and to his advantage to level also the hill on which the citadel [of David] stood, in order that the Temple might be higher than this. Accordingly, he called the people to an assembly and sought to persuade them to have this done, reminding them how they had suffered at the hands of the [Syrian] garrison and the Jewish renegades, and also warning them of what they would suffer if a foreign ruler should again occupy their realm, and a garrison should be placed therein. With these words he persuaded the people since he was recommending what was to their advantage. And so they all set to and began to level the hill, and without stopping work night or day, after three whole years brought it [the City of David, the original Mount Zion] down to the ground and the surface of the plain. And thereafter the Temple stood high above everything else, once the citadel and the hill on which it stood had been demolished. Such was the nature of things accomplished in the time of Simon [the Hasmonean].”⁴⁵⁹

Previously, before the summit of the *Akra* was lowered, travelers coming to Jerusalem from the east (that is, from the Jericho region) would normally have approached the city by the Kedron Valley route. They would proceed west and then when approaching the southern part of the Jerusalem area at the foot of Mount Zion (the Citadel of David), they would turn northerly to follow the lower riverbed road of the Kedron Valley to the Temple and the east gate. While travelling northward up the Kedron Valley, the

⁴⁵⁸ *War* V.4,1, words in brackets mine.

⁴⁵⁹ Josephus, *Antiquities* XIII.6,7 ¶¶ 215–18, Loeb translation.

Akra (then located on the southern summit of the crescent-shaped city) would have blocked the view of the Temple Mount that was just to the north of the *Akra* on the *Ophel*. But in the time of Simon the Hasmonean (142 to 134 B.C.E.), he cut down the *Akra*. This made the Temple on the *Ophel* summit to be a higher area in Jerusalem.

As for Mount Zion, it was finally cut down to bedrock. Where there was once at the southern part of the eastern ridge a high mountain (*Akra*) called “Zion,” the area had been lowered to such an extent that it was (after the time of Simon the Hasmonean) the lowest part of Jerusalem and then called “the Lower City.” It was anachronous, however, that the former name *Akra* (high point) now described the *lowest* part of the city. In a word, the original “Mount Zion” was completely destroyed and leveled to the low bedrock. I will show in a later chapter that this “cutting down” was prophesied in Isaiah 29:9ff to one day happen. The prophecy was fulfilled in the time of Simon the Hasmonean.

On the third hill to the north of the Temple was located the Baris (which was enlarged by Simon and his son John Hyrcanus and built even stronger by King Herod and renamed Fort Antonia in honor of Marc Anthony). It is now time for us to examine in detail how this destruction of the elevated areas on the southeast ridge was accomplished, and how the new fortress of the Baris (that is, Fort Antonia) became the fortress and citadel for both the Temple and the City of Jerusalem. The next chapter will explain.

Chapter 23

THE CITY OF DAVID AND THE OPHEL

BEFORE THE TIME of Simon the Hasmonean the City of David was positioned at the southern end of this crescent-shaped ridge and it was relatively *high* in elevation. As I have consistently shown in this book, the records show that the City of David was then called the *Akra* (the Citadel) and its summit was at first higher than the Temple mount which was then located on the *Ophel* knoll about five hundred feet north. The *Ophel* was naturally a lower summit of that same mountain (a single mountain ridge) that comprised the southeast ridge. Recall that Aristeeas said the original *Akra* was located close enough to the Temple Mount that it was possible to overlook activities that were going on in the Temple courts in the lower summit area to the north.

According to Josephus, the *Akra* before the time of Simon the Hasmonean was an elevated area higher than the Temple itself. His exact words are:

“He [Antiochus Epiphanes] burned the finest parts of the city, and pulling down the walls, built [that is, *built up*] the *Akra* in the lower city; *for it was high enough to overlook the Temple*, and it was for this reason that he fortified it with high walls and towers, and stationed a Macedonian garrison therein.”⁴⁶⁰

Josephus was certainly not talking about those in the City of David (the *Akra*) being able to look down into the Temple courts located a third of a mile north at the Dome of the Rock. This would have been a physical impossibility. We are told in I Maccabees that at this earlier time the “Temple mount [was located] *alongside* [Greek: *para*] the *Akra*.”⁴⁶¹ This makes it plain for all to see. The two areas were very close to one another. There are many other historical references to reinforce this conclusion.

The Compactness of the Original City of Jerusalem

There was an area between the *Akra* and the *Ophel*. It was called the “Millo” (or, “Fill In”). When Solomon enlarged the city of Jerusalem, he filled in the area between the Zion and *Ophel* summits that existed on the southeast ridge. He called the intermediate space the “Millo” (or, “Fill In”), which was a northern extension of a former “Millo” built on the north side of Zion in the Jebusite period — before the time of David.⁴⁶²

The Septuagint Version of the Bible said the original “Millo” was on the north side of the *Akra* (the Citadel sector of Zion). And so it was. But Solomon enlarged Jerusalem. He extended the original “Millo” (or, “Fill In”) northward to link the City of David with the *Ophel* summit. This made a type of artificial bridge of earth, stones and rubble that was placed on top of the old areas of Jebus located on the eastern slope of the ridge abutting to the Kedron Valley. Solomon constructed flanking walls on the eastside and on the westside of the southeastern part of the ridge known as the *Ophel*. Josephus tells us that this “Fill In” reached a height of 400

⁴⁶⁰ *Antiquities* XII.5,4 italics are my emphasis and the words in brackets are mine.

⁴⁶¹ I Maccabees 13:52.

⁴⁶² II Samuel 5:9.

cubits above the floor of the Kedron Valley (about 600 feet — this answers to a 40/45 story skyscraper in height).⁴⁶³ It was designed as a huge building that had the Temple and adjacent buildings on its level platform on the top. At least, this is how Josephus described the structure as it existed in his time.

Indeed, by the later time of Josephus, he said that Herod greatly enlarged the Temple platform and made it into a square area with dimensions of 600 feet (a *stade*) on each side. But in the period of Nehemiah, this high wall ascended from the very bottom of the Kedron Valley. It supported the Temple platform and was 150 feet broad on its east side. The southeast corner of this eastern wall was twice called in the Book of Nehemiah “the turning of the wall.”⁴⁶⁴ The northeast corner of this eastern wall (150 feet to the north) was also twice called in the Book of Nehemiah “the turning of the wall, even unto the corner.”⁴⁶⁵ This broad wall of the Temple platform was also 150 feet broad on its west side. At this early period, however, the Temple platform itself was a rectangle. The wall is described as being 500 feet in length on its south and north sides.⁴⁶⁶ This is what the eyewitness account of Hecateus of Abdera states when he saw the Temple platform near the time of Alexander the Great. Even though the platform support was smaller in the time of Nehemiah and Alexander the Great than in the period of Herod and Jesus, it was still an imposing edifice.

The Over-All View of the Early Temple and Jerusalem

In this region of the “Fill In” between the City of David and the Temple on the *Ophel* summit, Solomon erected several majestic buildings — some were private and others were government edifices. One of those was Solomon’s own palace. Scholars have long recognized that there are many biblical references to show the nearness of Solomon’s palace to the Temple Mount. And there can be no doubt that Solomon built his palace *adjacent* to the Temple

⁴⁶³ *Antiquities* VIII.3.9.

⁴⁶⁴ Nehemiah 3:19–20.

⁴⁶⁵ Nehemiah 3:24–25.

⁴⁶⁶ Josephus, *Contra Apion* I.22.

(just south of the Temple) in the “Millo” area between the *Akra* and the Temple.⁴⁶⁷

Indeed, Solomon’s palace abutted directly to the south side of the Temple.⁴⁶⁸ In the eastern part of this palace was an area where political prisoners could be confined. This accounts for the east gate leading into this area as the “Prison Gate.” This is where Jeremiah the prophet was imprisoned. “And Jeremiah was shut up in the Court of the Prison, which was in the king of Judah’s house.”⁴⁶⁹ This Prison Gate in the east wall led directly into the courts of the royal residence (called the “king’s high house” in Nehemiah 3:25).

Just to the north of the Prison Gate was the Water Gate (Nehemiah 3:26) which was opposite the Gihon Spring (hence the reason for its name). The Water Gate had the *Ophel* summit (the Temple Mount) directly to its west.⁴⁷⁰ Just north of the Water Gate was “the Wall of Ophel.”⁴⁷¹ This “Wall of Ophel” was the rampart that defended the eastern aspect of the *Ophel* summit. So, the Prison Gate was just east of Solomon’s former palace, while the Water Gate (above the Gihon Spring) was just east of the *Ophel* (or the Temple itself). The southern Prison Gate and the northern Water Gate were dual or adjacent gates. The description in the Book of Nehemiah is clear on this matter. There were also “caves” and “tunnels” in the subterranean area of the *Ophel*. These were constructed to lead to the spring water at the Gihon Spring.⁴⁷²

⁴⁶⁷ See *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, New Edition, article “Jerusalem.”

⁴⁶⁸ I Kings 10:5; II Chronicles 9:4; I Chronicles 26:16.

⁴⁶⁹ Jeremiah 32:2.

⁴⁷⁰ Nehemiah 3:26.

⁴⁷¹ Nehemiah 3:27.

⁴⁷² The terms “Mount Zion” and the “Temple Mount” are synonymous. They refer to the same place – to the spur of the *southeast* ridge where the original “Mount Zion” and its northerly extension called the “Ophel” were located. For accuracy’s sake, all the Temples were located on the “Ophel” prominence situated over and around the Gihon Spring. The Temple was built on the “Ophel” (the “humped mount”) that was over the Gihon Spring. Note that in Isaiah 32:14 (where “Ophel” is translated “forts” in the KJV), Isaiah said some of the main geographical features of the Ophel were its “caves” (KJV: “dens”) that were located underneath and within the mountain ridge. In later times, Maimonides

All of these topographical indications show the relative nearness of the City of David to Solomon's palace that was alongside the southern wall of the Temple. The geographical layout gave the appearance that Jerusalem had been "compacted" — a matter of being "brought together" into a being a unified city on a single mountain ridge. In a Psalm of the Bible, we read: "Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact [joined or coupled] together."⁴⁷³ The last word of the Psalm (rendered "together") has more meaning to it in Hebrew than the King James translation provides. It actually states: "that is joined *to itself*."

This "joining" of the two summits on the southeast ridge (Zion with the *Ophel*) by the "Millo" allowed the two summits to become united and more or less leveled out with one another. This made Jerusalem to be a single city surrounded by its own walls. It was not connected by bridges or moats by any manmade or natural abutments to any other urban area. Jerusalem was then located solely on the southeast crescent-shaped ridge.

True enough, in the two hundred years before the Babylonian Captivity, there is archaeological evidence that there were some buildings constructed on the western slope that later became known as the "Upper City." These buildings, however, were thoroughly destroyed in the period of Nebuchadnezzar. Nothing was rebuilt in this western sector until the time of Simon the Hasmonean. Without doubt, the region on the *southeast* ridge was the original Jerusalem. This fact is reinforced by geographical references given in the Book of Nehemiah, some 300 years before Simon the Hasmonean. The Holy Scriptures provide a detailed description in the Book of Nehemiah. It shows the Temple was built above the Gihon Spring.

(born in 1134 C.E.) mentioned that there were indeed these "caves" and "tunnels" underneath the Temple. The great Jewish master said:

"There was a stone in the Holy of Holies at its western wall upon which the Ark rested. In front of it stood the jar of manna and the staff of Aaron. When Solomon built the Temple, knowing that it was destined to be destroyed, he built *underneath, in deep and winding tunnels* [that is, *caves*], a place in which to hide the Ark." Peters, *Jerusalem*, p.227.

⁴⁷³ Psalm 122:3.

Dedication of the Wall by Nehemiah

The wall of Jerusalem was re-dedicated in the time of Nehemiah. At the dedication, the Jewish officials appeared at the west gate of Jerusalem. They separated themselves into two groups. One contingent walked on top of the northern wall (this was half the group going north), while the other walked along the top of the wall toward the south. Both groups traversed Jerusalem in a semi-circle fashion until they converged in front of the Temple on the eastside of Jerusalem. The walls of Jerusalem in Nehemiah's time were crescent-shaped as defined by Aristeas and confirmed by Josephus.

During the time of Nehemiah, the extent of Jerusalem was confined to the southeast ridge. The situation of the City of David on the southern flank with Solomon's palace and the Temple being a short distance to the north on the lower summit of the *Ophel*. This fact makes good sense when one surveys the account about the rebuilding of the walls around Jerusalem⁴⁷⁴ and the journey of Nehemiah when he circumnavigated the city.⁴⁷⁵ Particularly notice that at the time of Nehemiah the sepulchres of David (and many other early kings of Judah) were located at the base of the stairs that went down into the Kedron Valley from the City of David.⁴⁷⁶ They were positioned alongside a pool that was fed by the waters of a conduit from the Gihon Spring.

These sepulchres were also located near the "House of the Mighty" This building was David's former palace that Solomon had rededicated in the "Millo" area as a museum to house artifacts and trophies associated with the wars and victories of David when he was king of Israel. These sepulchres in Nehemiah's time were positioned not far south of the Gihon Spring over which the Temple then stood. In the earlier period from David to Nehemiah it was common to place the tombs of distinguished persons (especially kings) *outside* the Temple, but not far away. They were certainly not buried far to the north near the Dome of the Rock. In fact, the

⁴⁷⁴ Nehemiah 3.

⁴⁷⁵ Nehemiah 2.

⁴⁷⁶ Nehemiah 3:15-16.

earliest tombs associated with the City of David that archaeologists have found are located directly east of the Kedron Valley on the slope of the Mount of Offense. These tombs at the time of their construction were located opposite the Temple area. This is just another indication that all of Jerusalem was then located on the southeastern ridge. It had not expanded to the western hill. We will soon see that it was Simon the Hasmonean who had these tombs of King David and other kings moved up to the western hill that was called the Upper City in the time of Herod and Jesus. There is historical evidence to support this move from the southeastern hill to the southwestern hill. I will give this proof in the next chapter.

Nehemiah's Walls Were Crescent Shaped

Let us look further at the dedication of the wall in the time of Nehemiah. Note that one group went south from the Valley Gate located near the mid-position of the Western Wall (on the side of the Tyropoeon Valley). This first group continued going south a thousand cubits to the Valley of Hinnom — to the southern “horn” of the crescent shaped walls. They then turned north and walked by the City of David finally stopping a little farther on at the Water Gate opposite the Gihon Spring.⁴⁷⁷ This spot was directly in front of the *Ophel*⁴⁷⁸ and, consequently, it was in front of the House of the Lord (the Temple).⁴⁷⁹ Indeed, the broad area mentioned by Nehemiah in 8:1 which was in front of the Water Gate where Ezra read the Law to the gathered assembly is believed by many scholars to be an outer court of the Temple. This is certainly true.

The second group at the dedication of the wall left the same Valley Gate on the west side of the city but they went northward toward the Gate of Ephraim and then almost directly east where the wall crossed the crest of the ridge — to the northern “horn” of the crescent shaped walls at the Kedron Valley. They then continued southward to stop at the Prison Gate.⁴⁸⁰ They encompassed the

⁴⁷⁷ Nehemiah 12:27–37.

⁴⁷⁸ Nehemiah 3:26.

⁴⁷⁹ Nehemiah 12:40.

⁴⁸⁰ Nehemiah 12:38–39.

Mishneh region or “Second District” of Jerusalem (the area north of the *Ophel* or Temple).⁴⁸¹

Recall, the Prison Gate was just east of Solomon’s former palace (the “king’s high house”), while the Water Gate (which led to the Gihon Spring) was just east of the courts of the Temple (or, the *Ophel*).⁴⁸² The southern group led by Ezra (the priestly leader) walked in a semi-circle from the west side of Jerusalem to a point in the eastern wall that was slightly north of the 180 degree mark of the semi-circle. They stopped at the Water Gate in front of the courts of the Temple and just north of the Prison Gate.

The northern group led by Nehemiah (who was the secular ruler) also walked in a semi-circle fashion from the west side of Jerusalem to a point in the eastern wall that was slightly south of the 180 degree mark of the semi-circle. They stopped at the Prison Gate just to the south of the Water Gate. These two gates (the Prison and Water Gates) were next to each other as double gates separated no doubt by a single column of support. This pair of side-by-side gates was directly in front of the east entrance to the Temple. Indeed, we have an eyewitness account of these very gates. Hecateus in the time of Alexander the Great viewed the site and said the Temple was “approached by a pair of gates.”⁴⁸³

This means that the two groups (the priestly group led by Ezra and the secular group led by Nehemiah — both representing the “church and state” governments of the Jewish society) assembled at these two eastern gates alongside one another. This placed both groups directly in front of the Temple that was on the *Ophel* summit.⁴⁸⁴ With Ezra and his group standing in front of the Water Gate, and Nehemiah and his group standing in front of the Prison Gate, the two groups could then walk westward side-by-side in a processional fashion directly into the Temple courts. This positioning allowed Ezra’s group (the priestly representatives) to be on the right hand side which was a position of superiority in religious

⁴⁸¹ See II Kings 22:14; Nehemiah 11:9; Zephaniah 1:10.

⁴⁸² Nehemiah 3:26.

⁴⁸³ *Contra Apion* I.22.

⁴⁸⁴ Nehemiah 3:26.

matters. This right side indicated priestly rank.

These geographical indications locate the whole of the Temple complex on the *Ophel* summit above the Gihon Spring in front of a pair of gates (the Water and Prison Gates). This region for the Temple was near the *center* of the crescent-shaped area of the southeast ridge and precisely in conformity with the observation of Hecateus of Abdera.⁴⁸⁵ This means that all of Jerusalem in this pre-Simonian period was confined to the southeast ridge. The region of the Dome of the Rock was not even within the walls of Jerusalem at the time. Neither were there any walls surrounding the western hill that later (after the time of Simon) became known as the “Upper City.”

So, before the time of Simon the Hasmonean (142–134 B.C.E) the Temple was reckoned to be 150 feet wide (north to south) and 500 feet long (east to west). There was no longer the higher mountain just to the north of the Temple that was formerly called “Mount Zion.” To guard the Temple, Simon started to build a *new* citadel around the “Rock” that is now under the Dome of the Rock. He called this *new* fortress the Baris. This was the fortress that Herod later enlarged and changed its name to Antonia after Mark Anthony. These were major changes in the geography of Jerusalem. Let us see what happened.

⁴⁸⁵ *Contra Apion* 1.22.

Chapter 24

CRITICAL PROBLEMS FACING SIMON THE HASMONEAN

LET US NOTICE some important historical observations from the Bible and secular history that explain what Simon the Hasmonean had to do in order to re-establish what he considered to be a proper divine worship for the Jewish people in Jerusalem.

The Book of First Maccabees tells us that at the beginning of Simon's reign (after he dislodged the Macedonians from the *Akra* on the southern tip of the crescent ridge), he first began to reinforce the *Akra* and the original Temple Mount.⁴⁸⁶ This initial action of Simon returned the geographical situation to the *status quo* that had existed before the time when Antiochus Epiphanes desolated the Temple in 167 B.C.E. But to Simon, this former

⁴⁸⁶ I Maccabees 14:37.

status quo presented a problem of the first magnitude concerning the security of the Jewish people at their capital of Jerusalem. This former geographical situation left the *Akra* in a location of invulnerability and potentially it was still a fortress that could be used to threaten Israel at a future time if the Gentiles would recapture it. It was because of this future possibility, among other things that I will soon relate, that Simon devised a momentous plan.

Simon decided to change his mind about the *Akra*. After securing all of Jerusalem, he stopped the rebuilding of the *Akra* (which the Jews were again fortifying). Josephus states that Simon consulted with the authorities in Jerusalem and they all confirmed it was better for the protection of the nation and the Temple that the *Akra* should have its summit reduced in size.⁴⁸⁷ They then assigned men to begin the destruction of that southern summit. As Josephus stated: "So they all set to and began to level the hill."⁴⁸⁸ After accomplishing this leveling, the result made the adjacent hill called the *Ophel* (on which the Temple stood) higher than the former *Akra*.⁴⁸⁹ But Simon went even further than this. He thought it was prudent if he thoroughly leveled the *Akra* to the ground, to the very bedrock. And this he did. Josephus said they continued their work and finally "razed the *Akra* to the ground."⁴⁹⁰ Josephus said: "So they all set to and began to level the hill [the *Akra*], and without stopping work night or day, after three whole years brought it down to the ground and the surface of the plain."⁴⁹¹

They cut to the bedrock the *Akra*. This meant that the *Ophel* knoll just to the north (on which the Temple stood) was then higher in elevation than the *Akra* as Josephus stated.⁴⁹² But this did not end the matter. With the *Akra* cut down, the Temple was now left without a fortress to protect it.

This new condition would have allowed the Temple to be completely vulnerable to enemy attack. There was, however, another

⁴⁸⁷ *War* V.4,1.

⁴⁸⁸ *Antiquities* XIII.6,7.

⁴⁸⁹ *War* V.4,1.

⁴⁹⁰ *War* I.2,2.

⁴⁹¹ *Antiquities* XIII.6,7 words in brackets mine.

⁴⁹² *War* V.4,1 see the Whiston and Cornfeld translations.

problem that Simon encountered. Besides the threat of Gentile enemies there was a domestic reason why the early Jewish authorities realized they needed a fortress next to the Temple. This was essential in order to protect ordinary law-abiding worshippers in Israelite society from unruly Israelites who may have had intentions to revolt and to go to war. A fortress next to the Temple was needed to supervise the crowds if they would become actively disturbed. Recall that vast crowds were accustomed to congregate in the Temple at the three festival seasons of the Jews. At times those crowds could become unruly or agitated and armed forces were necessary to quell the worshippers as the need arose.⁴⁹³

Simon was presented with a major problem. The original *Akra* (the City of David or Zion) had been leveled to the ground. There was no longer a fortress adjacent to the Temple for protection purposes and to supervise the worshippers. This new geographical situation was not conducive to maintaining a peaceful social existence in Jerusalem, even among Jews. This weak environment of insecurity could not be allowed to continue. Simon then made a significant decision.

Simon and the Jewish authorities noticed a prophecy in Isaiah 29 that the whole of the City of David (then called *Ariel*) was prophesied by God to be leveled to the ground. Indeed, such destruction of the original Zion is effectively what Simon and the people of Jerusalem had done. It took them three years of night and day work to chisel and to shovel the whole mountain of Zion down to the very ground. The prophecy may have given the authorities the vindication they needed to demolish the mountain of Zion (since it gave them God's approval in the enterprise).

The actual Mount Zion was effectively removed (demolished) from the surface of the earth. We will soon see that before Simon had Mount Zion destroyed, he moved as many (probably most) of the buildings (including David's tomb) up to the southeast ridge in what became known as the Upper City. In effect, Simon simply moved "Mount Zion" and most of its buildings directly west across

⁴⁹³ Josephus gave an astute observation that was always true. He said: "It is on these festive occasions that sedition is most apt to break out" (*War* 1.4,3).

the Tyropoeon Valley and up to the top of the western hill.

This accomplishment of cutting down to the ground the former Mount Zion with its citadel, though wonderful in its engineering feat, still left the Temple without a fortress to protect it or to supervise the crowds at the times when Israelites would come in droves to the capital city. Something more had to be done to re-introduce a new Citadel that Israelites could supposedly control.

In simple terms, Simon and the Jewish authorities had completely destroyed the original city of Jerusalem (with its Citadel and Mount Zion) and they left the southeast ridge without its former *Akra*. What an anachronism! What had once been a high area called "Mount Zion" and reckoned as being the "utmost heights," was so leveled to the ground that it now became known as "the Lower City." This was a major geographical alteration for the area.

The Building of a New Zion on the Western Ridge

Nostalgia as well as good common sense made Simon and the authorities at Jerusalem select a new area to be called "Mount Zion." They did this by tearing down many of the original buildings on the former Mount Zion and rebuilt them in a new area. They picked the region just to the west of the former (and original) Zion. As stated before, they transferred almost everything up to that new area. This included even the Tomb of David.⁴⁹⁴ They built a new cenotaph for David and from the time of Simon onward, it was this newly rebuilt area that became known as "Mount Zion" and the new official place for the "Tomb of David"⁴⁹⁵ They

⁴⁹⁴ Clearly, the original Tomb of David was located in the vicinity of the City of David on the southeast hill called the original Zion. But when Simon thoroughly demolished Mount Zion, a place had to be found for the Tomb of David that had become revered by the Jewish populace. A new tomb (or cenotaph) was constructed on the western hill and renamed the Tomb of David. When this new tomb was built, there may have been upwards of three thousand talents transferred to it because Josephus said John Hyrcanus, the son of Simon the Hasmonean, took that amount from David's Tomb to pay mercenary troops and he was "the first Jew to start this practice" (*War* 1.2.5).

⁴⁹⁵ When we are told by Josephus that in the time of John Hyrcanus (*Antiquities* XIII.8,4; *War* 1.2,5) and also in the time of King Herod (*Antiquities* XVI.7,1) that the Tomb of David was pillaged, it must be understood that the

did not stop with the moving of David's Tomb.

They continued their duplication of the new Zion on the western hill. They also built the Palace of the Hasmoneans on the slopes of that Upper City in the same south/north position that David's and Solomon's palaces had been positioned on the eastern ridge. Also, since the former home of the High Priest (such as Eliashib in the time of Nehemiah) had his home near David's former palace on the original Mount Zion on the southeast ridge, they now moved the new High Priestly residence up to the same south/north dimension in the Upper City. What they did, in essence, was to recreate a new *Mount Zion* in the region of the Upper City. Just like our ancestors in the New World wanted to perpetuate memories of their home city of York, they built a new city on lower Manhattan island and called it "New York." What Simon did was to make a "New Zion" when they completely destroyed the original Zion on the southeast ridge down to the very bedrock.⁴⁹⁶ Indeed, the first

region of the Tomb in those periods was in the Upper City. It had already been moved from its former area at the *base* of Mount Zion on the southeast ridge to the top of the southwest hill — the new burial site for David. We have the account mentioned in the travels of Benjamin of Tudela in the twelfth century that 15 years before the traveler got to Jerusalem the Rabbi Abraham of Jerusalem told him the story of two workmen who were helping to rebuild a wall of a church that had collapsed in the Upper City. About noontime, they found a cavern that they thought to enter. They said they peered in and saw a large chamber resting on pillars of marble overlaid with silver and gold. There was a table of gold with a scepter and crown. They also saw coffins [plural] in the chamber. At this moment they tried to enter the chamber, but they encountered a fierce wind that caused them to appear as dead men until evening. They aroused and heard a man's voice say: "Arise and go forth from this place." They immediately left and went to the Christian Patriarch and informed him of the incident. Benjamin then said the Patriarch summoned Rabbi Abraham who informed them that they had discovered the Tomb of David and other kings of Israel. Because the workmen who discovered the site were terrified, the Patriarch and the Rabbi decided to close up the area and to hide it. Rabbi Abraham told Benjamin of Tudela these things. Whatever one wants to make of the story (and Josephus tells us of similar miraculous events in Herod's time that frightened him when he opened the Tomb), it was thought by both Christians and Jews in the time of Benjamin of Tudela that David's Tomb was indeed located on the new Mount Zion in the Upper City. See Joseph Simon, *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela* (Malibu, CA: Pangloss Press), pp.84–86.

⁴⁹⁶ A further example is that of Constantine when he decided to make Byz-

Mount Zion ceased to be a mountain.

In a word, the Jewish authorities simply moved the whole of what was formerly "Mount Zion" westward across the Tyropoeon Valley and up to the Upper City. This was done in an official manner. That is why in the time of Jesus and Josephus, Mount Zion was no longer reckoned on the southeast hill (which had been totally obliterated). Mount Zion was then acknowledged by all in Jerusalem to be on the southwest hill. Since the word "Zion" came to mean something like our "Capital" (head of the government in Roman times), we find many areas and/or buildings that were located far from Rome (where the original Capital was located) were still called "capitals" in other areas of the world. Indeed, each of our fifty states in the United States of America has its "Capital," but these capitals are in different areas than the original Capital in Washington, D.C. (and far from the original "Capital" at Rome).

And so it was with the name "Zion." The new area for the government buildings in Jerusalem became the region of the southwestern hill (the Upper City). From the time Simon and the Jerusalem authorities moved the "Capital" to that area, this new site became known as "Zion" and the original site was forgotten. It made good sense to the ancients to re-name the southwestern area "Zion," and the procedure is not even foreign to us in modern times.

More than Zion was Moved

When the original Mount Zion was completely destroyed, this also removed the former *Akra* that was the main fortress that protected the Temple and helped to supervise the crowds that would come to Jerusalem for the festival periods. But the Temple still needed a fortress to protect it. That is when they noticed the area to the north of the Temple called the *Baris*. It was there that the Has-

antium on the Bosphorus to be the "New Rome." Constantine even chose the "seven hills" of Byzantium to duplicate the "seven hills" of Rome on the Tiber. Simon also felt that it was incumbent for the preservation of traditional and religious values that the geographical features of the original Zion (that he had effectively destroyed) should be perpetuated on the western slope of his "New Jerusalem."

monean began to build their fortress for the Temple. This was where the Dome of the Rock now stands.

It was Simon and his immediate successors who started to build the walls around the area and these were the first walls that made up what we call the Haram esh-Sharif today. When Herod came on the scene, he even enlarged the *Baris* and changed its name to honor Mark Anthony. So, Fort Antonia came into existence *north* of the Temple whereas the original fortress (the *Akra*) was in the *south* and on the original Mount Zion before the mountain was destroyed by Simon and the people at Jerusalem. This new northern fortress was located at a perfect spot for protecting the Temple just to its south.

Biblical Reasons for Building a “New Zion”

There were teachings in the Holy Scriptures that gave Simon and the Jewish authorities the permission they required to accomplish the task of rebuilding the Temple and constructing a “New Zion” in an area that was different from previous ages. Simon looked for biblical authority to accomplish the new building schemes he and the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem were planning.

Simon, being the High Priest and the king of the nation, knew that the former Tabernacle could legitimately move from place to place with God’s approval. This fact alone made it appear proper for Simon to enlarge the Temple and expand it into any area in Zion within the mountain district called *Moriah*. The Holy Scriptures made it clear that all mountains in the Jerusalem area were “the mountains of Zion.”⁴⁹⁷

Simon knew that Zion consisted of “mountains” (plural), not one single mountain. This fact also applied to the term “Moriah.” It is clear in the Holy Scriptures that every mountain in the Jerusalem area was also called “Moriah.” In Genesis 22:2 it shows that the whole district that later became known as Jerusalem was called “the Land of Moriah.” Abraham was told to take Isaac to “one of the mountains” in the area of “Moriah.” This indicates that the

⁴⁹⁷ Psalm 133:3.

term "Moriah" was the name of a mountain range in the area of Jerusalem. All the summits of those hills were designated as being a "Moriah." The term was not restricted to what later people called the Dome of the Rock.

Thus, the word "Moriah" refers to a *district* that encompassed Jerusalem, and the word "Zion" embraced all the mountains in the Jerusalem district. Simon and the Jewish authorities understood these geographical points. Indeed, "Zion" (often spelled "Sion" in Christian circles) not only signified all the mountains of Jerusalem, there are many biblical references that the whole of the city of Jerusalem became recognized as being "Zion." Besides that, the corporate nation of Israel (or Judah) was also called "Zion."⁴⁹⁸ Indeed, the name "Zion" was not even confined to the area of Jerusalem. Micah prophesied that "Zion" would leave Jerusalem and dwell in a field outside its walls. "You [Zion] shall go forth out of the city, and you shall dwell in the field."⁴⁹⁹ Even this did not limit its meaning because "Zion" would be transported farther afield. Micah said: "Thou [Zion] shalt go even to Babylon."⁵⁰⁰ The designation of "Zion" would stay in Babylon long enough to bear children.⁵⁰¹ The prophet Zechariah also confirmed this teaching of Micah by stating that "Zion" would finally be delivered from its residence in Babylon. "Deliver yourself, O Zion, that dwells with the daughter of Babylon."⁵⁰²

What the Holy Scriptures show is the fact that the name "Zion" as a topographical or spiritual designation was capable of moving around in a geographical manner into quite a number of areas. It was not even restricted to this earth. The word reached even into heaven. We find that "Zion" came to signify the heavenly Jerusalem where God had his dwelling. "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels."⁵⁰³

⁴⁹⁸ Micah 4:10.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰² Zechariah 2:7.

⁵⁰³ Hebrews 12:22.

In a word, “Zion” was able to denote *any place* that could designate an area (or a people) in which God dwelt. “Zion” really came to mean “the Dwelling Place of God.” From the scriptural point of view, it made no difference where on earth or in heaven God dwelt, that dwelling place was reckoned as being “Zion.” Simon the Hasmonean and the Jewish authorities were well aware of this biblical fact. They felt they had the biblical authority to name a new area of Jerusalem “Zion.” They knew that any place they selected in the Jerusalem area to build new government buildings and to build a new Citadel for the protection of the Temple could be justified by the teachings of the Holy Scriptures.

The Prophetic Authority to Destroy Old Zion

The prophecies of Isaiah spoke of the City of David (its mountain and citadel called the *Akra*) being cut down and lowered to below bedrock. The utter destruction found in the prophetic statements in Isaiah about the City of David show that the very mountains themselves would be leveled to the ground and they would no longer exist. Indeed, the destruction would be so thorough that no plunder would ever be taken from the area of David’s former city. These prophecies of Isaiah (chapters 25 to 35) could not refer to the destructions of Jerusalem by either Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus Epiphanes (or even later by the Romans in 70 C.E.) because abundant plunder was taken on those occasions by the invaders. The original City of David, however, was to be destroyed “forever.” Simon the Hasmonean and the Jewish authorities were certainly aware of these prophecies in Isaiah about the destruction of the original Zion.

The prophecies of Isaiah in chapters 25 to 35 must have been the very predictions that prompted Simon the Hasmonean and the Jewish authorities to cut down the *Akra* (the City of David). They may have considered, at first, that they were within that period known as “the time of end.” Indeed, since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (to which I will soon refer), many of which were written at the time of Simon the Hasmonean, they speak about that period as being the End-Time. Simon and the Jewish authorities may at first have shared this belief. They could easily have imag-

ined that the prophecies of Isaiah about God having His hand in destroying Zion (even to below bedrock) could legitimately find fulfillment in their time. Whatever the case, they could read that God himself was not keen on the continuance of the original Mount Zion, and the Isaiahan prophecies proved this to Simon.

God Prophesied Cutting Down Original Mount Zion

The prophecy in Isaiah 29 that God gave against *Ariel* (another name for Jerusalem) is a prediction that many people have not understood. Indeed, in Isaiah 29 the text shows that “the vision of all” given in the first eight verses of the chapter would be closed and sealed so that even the educated and the uneducated in Israel would not be able to comprehend the prophecy’s full meaning. This is in spite of the fact that the vision of God’s destruction upon the City of David was written plainly in a book for all to read.⁵⁰⁴ The prophecy stated that only at a later time would God open the eyes and ears of Israel to realize what God meant about the destruction of the original Mount Zion.

According to the prophet Isaiah, God would take away the covering of blindness about these matters that God has placed over the eyes of all individuals on earth. At the End-Time people would begin to comprehend these prophetic and historical matters (which the New Testament said would come with the advent and the teachings of Jesus).⁵⁰⁵

It is a remarkable fact, when one reads the prophetic information recorded within those eleven chapters of Isaiah, it could easily have fit the historical period of Simon the Hasmonean in a manner verging on precision. So close to the historical accounts is this Isaiahan prophecy of eleven chapters with the events recorded in Maccabees, Josephus and the Dead Sea Scrolls regarding the period of Simon the Hasmonean, that one would be tempted to say those eleven chapters of Isaiah were even composed within the period of Simon. This, however, was not the case. Among the Dead Sea Scrolls was discovered a complete manuscript of Isaiah

⁵⁰⁴ Verses 8–17.

⁵⁰⁵ Isaiah 25:6–8.

that can be dated long before the time of Simon and it shows that these prophecies of Isaiah were predictions on the destruction of the original Zion were written prior to the period of Simon the Hasmonean. On the other hand, the fulfillment of many of those Isaiahan prophecies in the time of Simon makes perfectly good sense. The agreement of these eleven chapters of prophecy in Isaiah with the history in Simon's time is remarkably close.

What the Prophecies of Isaiah State

Look first at Isaiah 29. It begins by predicting: "Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! Add ye year to year, let the feasts run their round" (verse 1, literal meaning). God stated that He would personally distress *Ariel* (a symbolic name of Jerusalem). This destruction was to happen when Israel was at peace and celebrating their feasts. God was going to place Jerusalem upon their own Altar of Burnt Offering (Jerusalem on the "Altar" would become itself an "Ariel") and the "sacrifice" of the original Zion would be consumed to ashes just like the fires on the Altar consumed the animal sacrifices.⁵⁰⁶

Look at the following verse. It shows God marshaling siege works to completely destroy (to bedrock) the City of David (*Ariel*).

"And thou shalt be *brought down*, and shalt speak out *of the ground*, and thy speech shall be *low out of the dust*, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit *out of the ground* [like a ghost out of the grave], and thy speech shall whisper *out of the dust*" (verse 4).

God then said,

"the multitude of *thy* [Zion's] strangers [the Gentiles occupying the Citadel of the City of David and dominating the Temple] shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones [then in Jerusalem] shall be as chaff that passeth away: yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly. Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire."⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁶ Verse 2.

⁵⁰⁷ Verses 5 and 6.

This shows that a judgment from God would destroy the very foundations of the original City of David (*Ariel*) in order to prevent Gentiles from occupying Zion (the Citadel). This destruction was to occur at a peaceful time in Israel when the nation was celebrating their holy festivals without hindrance.

No other time in history fits the fulfillment of Isaiah 29 other than that of Simon, and it does so with remarkable similarities (at least Simon and the Jewish authorities must have thought so). The outcome was the total demolition of what was once Mount Zion. It was leveled to the ground — to the bedrock. Zion went underground. What was once a high and eminent mountain was utterly destroyed and the place became known as the “Lower City” of Jerusalem. We will soon see that Simon (and later kings) built a new Zion on the western mountain that became known as the “Upper City.”

Isaiah Said God Would Destroy Zion

Recall that Jerusalem is located in one of the most severe earthquake zones on earth. History attests to such devastating seismic disturbances striking the area from time to time. In the prophecies of Isaiah the initial phase of his predicted destruction of the City of David is attributed to such an earthquake and the flame of a devouring fire.⁵⁰⁸ Interestingly, I will soon show that there was a Psalm written by the “Teacher of Righteousness” of the Dead Sea Community that used the same type of judgmental language as that of Isaiah to describe (as an eyewitness) what was happening in Palestine at the very time of Simon. The Psalm describes in vivid detail an earthquake and a consequent fire that destroyed whole sections of the land in and around Jerusalem. The Psalm and Isaiah 29:6 dovetail in their themes in a precise way. I will record this Psalm of destruction later in this book when I discuss the Dead Sea Scrolls and their relevance for this historical period.

What do these predictions in the Book of Isaiah denote? The prophecies state that the City of David (*Ariel*) would be lowered in height and submerged to the level of the bedrock. Mount Zion

⁵⁰⁸ Isaiah 29:6.

would descend into an underground state. So destroyed would the area become that if Gentile nations in the future would assemble their armies to attack the City of David, the occasion would be like a hungry and thirsty man dreaming he was going to eat abundantly from the riches of Zion, but when he arrives at the geographical area of Jerusalem he wakes up and his armies find *nothing left* that could be plundered.⁵⁰⁹ In short, at the former site of the original City of David, God was going to cause a complete “emptiness” to exist.⁵¹⁰ The whole area was to be destroyed to below ground.

Simon the Hasmonean and the Jewish authorities could easily read these prophecies in Isaiah 29. Indeed, the prophecies seemed to fit perfectly with their time because the Syrian Gentiles had been housed in the Citadel (the very City of David) for some twenty years and they were constantly threatening the worshippers who tried to enter the Temple located alongside that City of David. But in Isaiah 29:5 God said he would make the strangers then located in the City of David to become like small dust and chaff, and that God would destroy them from Zion. This prophecy fits perfectly with the historical events. Recall that Simon had successfully captured the City of David (acting as God’s High Priest and as King of God’s children of Judah). Simon had thoroughly expelled the Syrian Gentiles from the Citadel (Zion). This action dovetailed precisely with the prophecy of Isaiah 29:5.

Other Isaiahan Prophecies About Mount Zion

The context of the eleven chapters of Isaiah (25 to 35) reveals the utter destruction of Zion and finally even the Temple Mount itself. Look at the beginning of the long prophecy in Isaiah chapter 25. Notice verse two. The Jewish Targum shows this prophecy to be a reference to Jerusalem. Isaiah said: “For thou hast made of a city an heap; of a defenced city a ruin: a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built [or, it will never be ‘rebuilt’].”

This prophecy of Isaiah fits the time of Simon the Hasmonean perfectly. The Syrian Gentiles were then (and had been for twenty

⁵⁰⁹ Isaiah 29:8.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*

years) occupying the City of David (the Citadel), but Isaiah stated that the palace of the foreigners shall be destroyed and “*never be rebuilt.*” Notice the full prophecy of Isaiah 25:5. “Thou shalt bring down the noise of the strangers [the foreigners] ... the branch of the terrible ones *shall be brought low.*” Going on in verse 12 Isaiah predicts: “And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls *shall he bring down, lay low, and bring to the ground, even to the dust.*” This again is a prophecy of utter destruction of the fortress and the high fort of *thy walls* [of Judah’s walls, not Moab’s]. This is a prophecy about a cutting down to bedrock of a fortress — and the context of Isaiah 25 to 35 shows it refers to Jerusalem. Simon would have understood this prophecy as justification for cutting down Jerusalem’s Citadel in which the Syrian Gentiles had taken refuge [some of whose armed men could well have been from the territory of Moab to fit the context of the prophecy].

There is more. In the next chapter of Isaiah (chapter 26), Judah is finally provided with “a strong city” in which salvation will discover a foothold within its walls and bulwarks (verse 1). This new “strong city” will emerge once the original City of David (*Ariel*) had been cut down to the ground. This was after Jerusalem and its heights were lowered to the ground. Notice verse 5 (very similar in wording with Isaiah 25:12): “For he [God] *bringeth low* them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he *layeth it low*; he *layeth it low, even to the ground*; he [God] *bringeth it even to the dust.*” That does not end the words of judgment. In chapter 27 Isaiah states:

“He [God] maketh all the stones of the altar [the Altar of Burnt Offering in the former Temple] as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder [the Altar will be destroyed], the groves and images [once found in the Temple] shall not stand up. Yet the defended city [the City of David] shall be desolate, and the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness.”⁵¹¹

There is yet more. Even the Ophel hill (the hill on which the Temple stood that was located just to the north of the original Mount Zion) would become totally forsaken and made a place only for caves and dens. In the King James Version the word “Ophel” is

⁵¹¹ Isaiah 27:9–10.

rendered as “forts” in Isaiah 32:14. It reads: “The forts [Ophel Hill] and towers shall be for dens [caverns], a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks” (Isaiah 32:14). Yes, even the Ophel (the Temple Mount) would eventually become “a pasture of flocks” and a place of *caves*. This final chapter in the destruction of Ariel (Mount Zion) took place in 70 C.E. when the Romans destroyed the Temple to its very foundations. All that was left was a “pasture for flocks” and *caves* underneath the ground.

Later, when the prophecy states that Israel will be redeemed and brought back to their homelands, Isaiah predicted that Ariel (Mount Zion) would continue to remain “low.” “And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.... And the city [Jerusalem] shall be *low* in a *low place*.”⁵¹² This judgment against Jerusalem and the *Ophel* (as hewn-out caves) would last “forever.”

The prophecies of Isaiah stated that the original City of David would be ruined beyond repair. I will soon give evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls which gives eyewitness accounts that not only human destruction but “earthquakes and fire” did indeed rampage the area of Jerusalem in the time of Simon the Hasmonean. This physical destruction could have been another reason why Simon and the Jewish authorities deemed it necessary to apply human power to finally tear down to the bedrock the southeast ridge (the original Zion) and rebuild and enlarge the Sanctuary.

The historical accounts recorded in Josephus certainly support the fact that Simon the Hasmonean and the Jewish authorities did indeed demolish the entire hill that was formerly called Mount Zion. Before that hill was thoroughly destroyed, they moved what buildings and monuments that they could up to the western hill of Jerusalem in what later became known as the Upper City. They transferred as many of the former government buildings that they could and constructed even more new ones to beautify and to make practical the New Zion on the southwestern hill. They even built a new cenotaph for David that even the New Testament refers to as

⁵¹² Isaiah 32:18–19.

being in its new location in the Upper City.⁵¹³ This all makes sense when we realize all of the wonderful and grand building enterprises that Simon the Hasmonean accomplished under his rule.

In summary, what Simon the Hasmonean (and all the citizens of Jerusalem) performed was to cut down to the bedrock of the southeast ridge all the former building structures that had been erected upon that southeast ridge. For over a thousand years before David there was a city already built in the area (to take advantage of the Gihon Spring that was in the Kedron Valley) called *Migdal Edar* (Genesis 35:21; Micah 4:8) which no doubt produced many levels of occupation in the elevated *tel* that was established near the Gihon Spring. It was common in this era for cities to be built on top of older unoccupied or ruined cities, and in the same area (like being near a spring). The various cities would be increasingly elevated above the surrounding level ground. Note that the *tels* of Jericho, Megiddo and Hazor each had over twenty layers of occupation spanning many centuries of time, and *Migdal Edar* (a similar town) must have had layers of towns built on top of one another over several centuries. After *Migdal Edar* there was also the Canaanite city of *Jebus* built in the exact spot. That city could also have had several layers of occupation that raised the elevation of the *tel* even higher. When David conquered the city of *Jebus*, there could have been an accumulation of many earlier towns. What Simon the Hasmonean did was to destroy (cut down to the bedrock) the remains of those earlier towns of *Migdal Edar*, *Jebus* and the first *City of David* (up to Simon's own time). That whole elevated area would have been man-made (an artificial *tel*). Simon did not cut down a natural mountain. He only destroyed the layered remains of the former towns that existed in that singular area. The same was the case with the Ophel Mountain when the Romans later destroyed the Temple of Herod. And today, when we witness the area of the southeast ridge, we see it as it was first seen in its earliest historical period. Simon the Hasmonean and the people of Jerusalem leveled the former layers of various occupations of the earlier towns down to the natural bedrock. They actually took away "the Millo" (the great "fill-in" that helped to form the *tel*).

In the next chapter, I will show that Simon even built a brand new Temple in the same spot as *Migdal Edar*, *Jebus* and *Zion*.

⁵¹³ Acts 2:29.

Chapter 25

A NEW TEMPLE HAD TO BE BUILT



MOVING “MOUNT ZION” to the southwestern hill and building up the *Baris* north of the Temple (which finally became Fort Antonia) is not all that Simon and his contemporaries performed. When they looked at the state of the Temple (its walls and buildings) that had been utterly profaned by Antiochus Epiphanes with some rebellious Jewish renegades who controlled the Temple Mount between the time of Antiochus and Simon the Hasmonean, they were appalled at the destruction and desecration that had been accomplished to the Temple over that twenty-five year period.

The Temple was standing in its place as a hulk of profaned architecture that bore no signs of holiness or sanctification. Something also had to be done to the Temple itself. Simon, who was the High Priest of the nation, along with the other Jewish authorities in Jerusalem decided to completely renovate the Temple and to make a new type of Jerusalem for the people of Judah. Indeed, when Simon got through rebuilding the Temple and Jerusalem, he had

created a type of “New Jerusalem” that looked nothing like it appeared from the time of Solomon down to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes.

Simon and the Jewish authorities, for all practical purposes, built a new Temple and a new city of Jerusalem. The construction of a new Temple was done in two stages. It started with the actions of Judas Maccabeus about twenty years before Simon began to reign. Notice what the Jews did in 164 B.C.E. after the desolation of the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes. Judas Maccabeus (the older brother of Simon the Hasmonean) had the Temple purified and rededicated as best he could. In doing so, he caused the Altar of Burnt Offerings to be torn down and the old stones stored away in the region of the Temple Mount. He then had a new Altar built in its place.

“He chose blameless priests, devoted to the law; these purified the Sanctuary and carried away the stones of the Abomination [an idol shrine] to an unclean place [such as the Valley of Hinnom]. They deliberated what ought to be done with the altar of burnt offerings that had been desecrated. The happy thought came to them *to tear it down*, lest it should be a lasting shame to them that the Gentiles had defiled it; *so they tore down the altar. They stored the stones* [of that altar] *in a suitable place on the Temple hill*, until a prophet should come and decide what to do with them. Then they took uncut stones, according to the law, and built a new altar like the former one. They also repaired the Sanctuary and the interior of the Temple and purified the courts.”⁵¹⁴

The rebuilding of the Altar of Burnt Offerings and refurbishing the earlier Temple was done about twenty years before the reign of Simon the Hasmonean. This “purification” by Judas Maccabeus was the *first occasion* when the festival called Hanukkah was ordained for the Jewish people. It is normally believed that this is the only occasion when this festival was ordained for the Jews to observe, but this is not what history tells us. There were to be *two additional times* when the *new* Festival of Hanukkah was to be sanctified. These two other occasions will be explained shortly.

⁵¹⁴ I Maccabees 4:42–50, italics and words in brackets are mine.

Why Simon Decided to Build a New Temple

It was at first thought proper by Judas Maccabeus that a simple purification of the Temple structure was all that was necessary to resume a sanctified ceremonial service at the holy place. But the “purification” of Judas was only a partial affair. The High Priesthood soon fell to Alcimus who was the priest in charge of the Temple for the next five years. Alcimus was a thorough going Hellenist and as a last act of rebellion against the principles of true religion as viewed by righteous Jews started to tear down the inner wall of the Temple to allow Gentiles unrestricted access into the sacred enclosure.⁵¹⁵ The author of Maccabees states that these actions brought about his untimely death that many Jews thought was God’s judgment upon the rebellious priest.⁵¹⁶

These abominations of the High Priest Alcimus were a further pollution to the Temple. This made the former attempt at purifying the Sanctuary by Judas to be looked on by the Jews as incomplete. Indeed, for twenty years after the debaucheries by Antiochus, the Temple could not be adequately purified because of the Gentile troops in the Syrian garrison (in the *Akra* — the City of David). With the *Akra* located alongside the Temple, the Syrians continually harassed the Jewish worshippers who attempted to enter the Sanctuary.⁵¹⁷ This situation after Alcimus continued for 15 years while the Syrians were in the *Akra*.

The fact is, the Temple had been so utterly desecrated for three years by Antiochus Epiphanes and his supporters (both Gentiles and Jews) that only minor repairs could be done by Judas and others while the Syrians occupied the *Akra* garrison. This was also the case after the defilements caused by Alcimus. Simon, however, defeated the Syrians in the *Akra*. This allowed Simon and the Jewish authorities to focus their attention on the Temple once again. What they witnessed before them was a sad spectacle to behold. The only appraisal that could adequately describe what they observed was that of the prophet Daniel. It was to them an “abomi-

⁵¹⁵ I Maccabees 9:54–56.

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*, verses 56–57.

⁵¹⁷ I Maccabees 1:36.

nation of desolation.”⁵¹⁸ To the Jewish authorities this signified (through the prophecies of Daniel) that God had accounted the building and its site as utterly *desolate* and thoroughly stripped of all holiness.

Recall that Antiochus gave orders to set up the idol of Zeus Olympus in the Holy of Holies. He also dedicated the whole of the Temple structure to the worship of Zeus. He even commanded many swine to be offered on the altar with their grease splattered on the stones in all areas of the Temple (including the holiest parts).⁵¹⁹ Even that did not end the pollution. Second Maccabees laments:

“The Gentiles filled the Temple with debauchery and revelry; they amused themselves with prostitutes and had intercourse with women even in the sacred court. They also brought into the Temple things that were forbidden, so that the Altar was covered with abominable offerings prohibited by the laws.”⁵²⁰

One can only imagine the filthy graffiti and other defilements that marred the majority of the stones of the Temple. In the prophecies of Daniel the word “desolation” was used to appraise the condition of the once beautiful Temple. To Simon and the Jewish authorities, this was the only adequate word to describe the wrecked Temple standing in front of them. The scars of pollution embracing the Temple were so deep that the Jewish authorities considered its condition as being “abominable” and “desolate.”

When they looked closely at the biblical revelation about the situation they were witnessing, they were able to determine that no amount of repair or washing down could erase the evidence of the corruption. They read about the judgment of God found in the Holy Scriptures in Ezekiel 7:22. The teaching in that verse showed that God had formerly decreed that once the Temple in the time of Nebuchadnezzar had been stripped of its furniture and taken to Babylon, God then reckoned *the whole of the Temple* (not simply a part of it) as thoroughly polluted and without the slightest holiness.

⁵¹⁸ Daniel 11:31; 12:11.

⁵¹⁹ *Antiquities* XIII.8.2.

⁵²⁰ II Maccabees 6:4,5.

Simon and the Jewish authorities were also able to read in the Law of Moses what should be done with polluted houses that could not be purified because of the utter contamination and desolation that accompanied them. In Deuteronomy 7:26 Moses stated that if any abominable thing (like an idol) was brought into a house, even the whole house itself should be destroyed along with the abominable thing because that single abomination contaminated and desolated the whole house.

There was also the example of Achan and his family. When Achan was found with a single accursed thing in his baggage, not only was Achan and his family destroyed but also all his baggage had to be consumed together because that one item contaminated the whole.⁵²¹ As a matter of fact, if an Israelite's house had been so contaminated with the evidence of leprosy throughout the house, its house and its belongings had to be destroyed together.⁵²² The specific instructions were:

“The priest ... shall break down the house, the stones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the mortar of the house; and he [the priest] shall carry them forth out of the city into an unclean place.”⁵²³

In this case, God ordered the house and its stones to be deposited in an “unclean place.”

Since the Temple was considered the “House of God” on earth, Simon and the Jewish authorities reasoned that the same command for destruction for a polluted house also applied to the Temple. It was likewise “a house.” When Simon (in his position as High Priest) looked upon the whole structure of what once had been the Holy Temple of God, he and the Jewish authorities decided it was impossible to cleanse the House of the Lord in a proper way from its *desolate* state.

They decided to follow the laws of Moses, which applied, to all houses in Israel (and God's House was no exception). The Mosaic commands said to tear down the contaminated house and place its polluted stones in an unclean area. With the commands of Moses

⁵²¹ Joshua 7:11–26.

⁵²² Leviticus 14:33–45.

⁵²³ Leviticus 14:44–45.

staring them in the face, Simon and the Jewish authorities determined to tear down the contaminated “House of God” and *to replace the whole Temple* with a new sanctified one. When one looks at the historical evidence closely, this is the only conclusion that can be rationally believed. Simon built a brand new Temple.

The Extraordinary Authority that Was Given to Simon

Simon was given full legal authority by the people and Sanhedrin of Israel to perform all these momentous and unprecedented accomplishments, which the generality of the nation came to see were necessary. In looking at the history of all the Jewish leaders who lived from the period of Solomon to the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in 70 C.E, no one but Simon could have performed such official changes in altering these civil and sacred sites.

The truth is, Simon was given extraordinary authority of the highest order to accomplish what he did, and his word became law to the whole of the Jewish nation no matter where they lived. If some Jews objected to what Simon ordered, they were forced to flee Judaea (or to hide in remote and desolate areas, and there was a minority who did flee) because Simon demanded complete and absolute obedience to his commands. Jews had to submit to Simon or be excommunicated from the society. Remember that Simon was not only the High Priest of the Jewish nation, he was also their king. Besides that, he was given complete dictatorial powers by all the authorities of the Jews to perform his tasks. Even the surrounding Gentile rulers (including as far afield as the government of Rome) recognized the supreme power bestowed on Simon to accomplish his duties.⁵²⁴ One should read all of I Maccabees 14:41–49. I will quote it in full.

“The Jewish people and their priest have, therefore, made the following decisions. Simon shall be their permanent leader and high priest until a true prophet arises [such as Deuteronomy 18:15–19 states]. He shall act as governor general over them *and SHALL HAVE CHARGE OVER THE TEMPLE* to make regulations con-

⁵²⁴ I Maccabees 14:38–40.

cerning its functions [he had full control over all activities of or about the Temple — even changing its site if he wished], and concerning the country, its weapons and strongholds, in a word, he SHALL HAVE CHARGE OVER THE TEMPLE [this authority was repeated twice in the text of Maccabees to emphasize his supreme power over the Temple]. *He shall be obeyed by all.* All contracts made in the country shall be dated by his name [this shows a new era had begun for the Jewish nation]. He shall have the right to wear royal purple and gold ornaments. *It shall not be lawful for any of the people or priests to nullify any of these decisions, or to contradict the orders given by him, or to convene an assembly in the country without his consent, to be clothed in royal purple or wear an official gold brooch* [in a word, Simon assumed dictatorial authority in everything]. Whoever acts otherwise or violates any of these prescriptions shall be liable to punishment. *All the people approved of granting Simon the right to act in accord with these decisions, and Simon accepted and agreed to act as high priest, governor general, and ethnarch of the Jewish people and priests and to exercise supreme authority over all.*⁵²⁵

What outstanding and extraordinary authority Simon was given! No other Jewish king in history ever had such supreme power placed in his hands. His powers were so extensive that people looked on his commands or precepts as if they were the very precepts of God. To accomplish what Simon had to do, it was essential that he have that all-encompassing authority.

⁵²⁵ I Maccabees 14:41–47, italics are my emphases, words in brackets are mine.

Chapter 26

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS
AND THE NEW
JERUSALEM OF SIMON

WHILE ALL OF THE ACTIVITY of Simon building a New Jerusalem and enlarging the Temple was wonderful if God had decreed it and the majority of Jewish people at first thought it was God-ordained (including the author of the Book of Enoch, as we will see), we now possess historical evidence that a minority of people (and they were a vigorous and headstrong body of Jews) soon began to object most strenuously to these actions of Simon the Hasmonean. Whereas almost all Jews thought Simon began his reign as a “Good Priest,” a minority of priests and laity later began to express horror and disdain of Simon when he demolished the Temple and the original city of Jerusalem and began to build his new Temple and new city. His new Temple and City met with utmost resistance by a group of

Jewish people. These are the mysterious people who wrote many of the Dead Sea Scrolls of which we are now familiar.

At this time, this vocal minority of priests and laity began to call Simon “the Wicked Priest.” These Jews had their own plan of a Temple to be built in the Jerusalem area. It was discovered among the Dead Sea sectarians and scholars now call it “the Temple Scroll.” This minority of Jews felt that the Jerusalem that they were then observing in their midst and the Temple of Simon the Hasmonean should actually be abhorred and avoided by righteous Jews who wanted to retain a proper Sanctuary as ordained by their forefathers as shown in their “Temple Scroll.” What we find in these newly discovered scrolls is anger against Simon the Hasmonean and his successors.

The Dead Sea Scrolls Speak of These Actions of Simon

Who were these people who steadfastly objected to the actions of Simon regarding *his* Temple and *his* Jerusalem? Thankfully, we now are blessed with historical records only made available in the last fifty years (known as the Dead Sea Scrolls) that tell of the hostility that one group of priests and laity had to this tearing down of the national landmark (the ruined Temple), destroying the old city of Jerusalem, rebuilding the walls and the city of Jerusalem in a newer area to the north and west of the former city and Temple.

The principal people who wrote or adhered to the teachings found in the documents known as the Dead Sea Scrolls became very anti-Jerusalem, and they got that way because they passionately abominated the actions of “the Wicked Priest” who brought corruptions to pass (as they viewed them) in the area of the holy city of Jerusalem. It was not Jerusalem itself or the Temple of God itself that they hated, but it was the *new* Jerusalem and the *new* enlarged Temple of Simon that they abhorred.

So, the whole group (though it was a minority in Israel) turned their backs on the Jerusalem and the enlarged Temple that was built by the orders of Simon the Hasmonean. They did not feel that Simon was following the right pattern (or design) for the Temple of God that was to exist as the end of the age. Simon did not build his city or Temple in the “proper” and “ordained” manner and *his*

Temple was not according to their plans as maintained in what has become known as their "Temple Scroll."

While they may have agreed with Simon and the mainline Jewish authorities that the polluted Temple that Antiochus Epiphanes had desecrated needed to be replaced, it was not felt by them that Zion had to be torn down and a *new* Jerusalem selected in its place. The changes of Simon appeared to go too far. At least, when one reads the strictures mentioned in several of the scrolls, this is the impression that one gets. The Qumran people did not like the *new* Jerusalem being built on the western hill and the new Fortress called the Baris that later became Fort Antonia.

The Dead Sea Scrolls Show this Utter Antipathy

Let us now notice this historical evidence that comes from the Dead Sea Scrolls (many of which were composed at this very time of Simon the Hasmonean and written in response to these momentous and awesome achievements accomplished by Simon and the Jewish people who helped him). These people who objected to Simon left the society they once held in esteem and retreated to the desolate regions of Judaea or to towns scattered over the land. They made their headquarters at a place called Qumran that was located on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea. Just who were these Jewish people who came to hate "the Wicked Priest" of Jerusalem?

Many scholars, who have been associated with studies of the Dead Sea Scrolls from the very beginning of their discovery, believe that the person consistently mentioned in various manuscripts of the Scrolls as "the Wicked Priest" was Simon the Hasmonean. Professor Frank Moore Cross of Harvard University has held this belief for almost fifty years, and his belief is followed by the mainstream of scholarship, such as Professor Geza Vermes of Oxford University. Hershel Shanks of the Biblical Archaeology Society and publisher of *Biblical Archaeology Review* summed up the various theories concerning the identity of this "Wicked Priest" in his book *Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls* (1992).

Out of the many theories, the main consensus of opinion accepts that "the Wicked Priest" was Simon the Hasmonean. The historical

period fits well with the chronological teaching of the “Teacher of Righteousness,” and there are many other factors that sustain this approach.

[In order for this present treatise not to be too long, I refer the reader to the various works of the above scholars and the overview by Hershel Shanks for their historical reasons in selecting Simon. The scholars who follow Professor Cross provide very powerful evidence that Simon the Hasmonean was indeed “the Wicked Priest” of the Dead Sea Scrolls.]

Brief Analysis of the Dead Sea Scrolls

The manuscripts of the Dead Sea sectarians are many and varied. There are a few complete manuscripts, some large fragments and various sized fragments down to minute portions so small that scholars can hardly read them. The latest attempt (in late 1996) to give to the general public all the remaining contents of the scrolls that remained untranslated over the years is that of Wise, Abegg & Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*. All types of subjects are covered in the scrolls. In overview, there are copies of Old Testament books and commentaries. There are extra-biblical books. There are private Psalms, doctrinal works, calendar matters, etc. The main works that help to identify these sectarians is a *Manual of Discipline* and a work called the *Damascus Rule*. The latter along with some commentaries on biblical books show reasons why there was an antagonism between the opinions of the Dead Sea sectarians and the “Wicked Priest” along with the mainline Jewish people at Jerusalem.

When the subjects of the various books of the sectarians are viewed collectively, scholars can reasonably place (by observing their subject matters) the chronological periods (in the majority of cases) within which the various compositions were written or referred to. The *Damascus Rule* gives three periods of time that actively interested the writers of the Dead Sea sectarians. After mentioning a period of 390 years from the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar to the defilement of the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes, the writer (called “the Teacher of Righteousness”) spoke of three periods. The first was of 20 years when the docu-

ments showed Israel generally in harmony among themselves (their Psalms, etc., showing mainly that the enemies of Israel were the Gentiles). In this early period, even the one who became “the Wicked Priest” was loved and esteemed. But then, a major change takes place in their attitudes. This early period of harmony was followed by two periods of 40 years. The beginning part of the first 40 years (when Simon the Hasmonean really began to flourish) shows the commencement of a great clamor between rival priestly groups, a deep anger over the tearing down of “the everlasting heights,” the “removal of the Landmark,” an erroneous building of the city of Jerusalem with brand new walls and the defilement of the Temple. The emergence of these new and abrupt destructions and desecrations were promoted by Israelites, not by the Gentiles.

Because of these radical changes in the enlarged Temple and rebuilding Jerusalem in other areas, the “Teacher of Righteousness” and his group of priests and laity removed themselves from mainline Jewish society and they began to condemn the Israel that then was. As time went on, however, their writings start to moderate the harshness and a sense of “acceptance” and “resignation” sets in. There is even the suggestion that the sectarians should not fight the “rebels” in Jerusalem but to reluctantly accede to the mainline wishes because Jewish Messiahs (both priestly and kingly) would soon arrive to straighten out the calamitous mess the country had gotten into. This attitude of resignation on the part of the sectarians (because they considered that the present “wickedness” had been preordained by God) could be placed chronologically in the final 40 years of the sectarian’s prophetic scheme (though the sectarians themselves thought this final period would be the time of war when Israel would emerge as victor over all the nations of the earth).

This chronological information in the work called the *Damascus Rule* (focusing on the latter part of the second century before the Common Era) helps to place the main body of manuscripts written by the people of the Dead Sea Scrolls into the period of Simon the Hasmonean. Let us now look at some of the historical events that these scrolls reveal.

Chapter 27

RESISTANCE TO SIMON'S RULE

WHAT WERE SOME of the essential grievances against “the Wicked Priest” that the people of the Dead Sea Scrolls displayed? Cross and Vermes believe them to be the Essenes mentioned by Josephus, Philo and other classical writers and this evaluation makes perfectly good sense to me. To find out what their censuring was about concerning “the Wicked Priest,” look at the very beginning of a major document of the Dead Sea Sect that is called “The Damascus Rule.” This is a treatise that basically describes their reason for leaving mainline Judaism at the time of Simon the Hasmonean. Their leader and spokesman whom they called “The Teacher of Righteousness” wrote it. This person was a priest who became disenchanted with the prevailing opinion of the king and priesthood who ruled in the Jerusalem of his time.

This leader stated some castigating judgments on the Jewish society of his day. He was not at all pleased with what was developing in Jerusalem by the central authorities who were then

ruling. In these references, I will give the beliefs of the “Teacher of Righteousness” and add my own remarks of explanation in brackets. The page references are to the second edition of Geza Vermes’ translation.

“This was the time of which it is written, *Like a stubborn heifer thus was Israel stubborn* (Hosea 4:16), when the Scoffer [the Man of Lies] arose who shed over Israel the waters of lies [the Scoffer deceived ALL Israel]. He caused them to wander in the pathless wilderness, laying low the everlasting heights [what was intended to remain high and lofty for long ages *he had cut down and laid low*], abolishing the ways of righteousness and removing the boundary [other translators render the word ‘boundary’ as ‘landmark’ — that is, the Scoffer had removed a single ‘landmark’] with which the forefathers had marked out their inheritance, that he might call down on them [Israel] the curses of His Covenant and deliver them up to the avenging sword of the Covenant. For they sought smooth things and preferred illusions (Isaiah 30:10) [Israel preferred the teachings of false prophets and false seers] and they watched for breaks (Isaiah 30:13) [that is, the breaking down of a high wall] and chose the fair neck [of a stubborn heifer as in Hosea 4:16].”⁵²⁶

This demolishing of the “everlasting heights” (I take to be Mount Zion — they took three years to do it) and moving the “Landmark” (repositioning Zion up to the “Upper City”) was just too much for the person called the “Teacher of Righteousness” (who was himself a priest). He was scolding the main bulk of the people of Israel living in his time for doing these things that were being engendered by the “Wicked Priest.” The “Wicked Priest” did the dastardly thing of “laying low the everlasting heights.” In a new translation, Cook renders this interesting clause as “he brought down the lofty heights of old.”⁵²⁷

Indeed, that is the very thing that Simon did. This eyewitness description of tearing down lofty heights was not a figure of speech. Those heights in Jerusalem had been literally cut down to

⁵²⁶ Translation of Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, p.83, the scripture references in the parentheses are those of Professor Vermes, the words in brackets are mine.

⁵²⁷ Cook’s translation, “The Dead Sea Scrolls,” p.52.

the ground. This reference shows that it was this Scoffer (the “Man of Lies”) who had caused the nation of Israel to lay low or to cut down the elevated areas which were supposed to have been in “everlasting” existence.

This reference is a central proof that such topographical changes were being made in Jerusalem at the very time that the other historical records show that Simon was cutting down Zion (the *Akra* — the “everlasting heights”). The agreement is so precise that the records must be speaking about the same thing. Simon did in fact cut down the “everlasting heights.”

The Biblical Description of the Loftiness of the Original Zion

It has puzzled scholars for the past two centuries when they read descriptions of Zion by writers of the Old Testament who were eyewitnesses, and compare the present geographical situation of the southern part of the southeast ridge with those biblical accounts. There is *no comparison* at all, because the southern part of the southeast ridge is now so low in elevation that Josephus had to rename the area “the Lower City.” But how do the biblical writers describe that very region which existed in their times? Look at Psalm 48:1–4 as understood by the NIV.

“Great is the Lord, and most worthy of praise, in the city of our God, *his holy mountain*. It is beautiful *IN ITS LOFTINESS*, the joy of the whole earth. Like the *UTMOST HEIGHTS* of Zaphon is Mount Zion, the city of the Great King. God is in her citadels; he has shown himself to be her fortress.”

The original “Mount Zion” was *a very high mountain* relative to the other mountains that made up Zion. The biblical emphasis is its *loftiness*. It was the fact of its elevated eminence that characterized it as impregnable to conquest by various writers of the Holy Scriptures. And now, we now have historical evidence from eyewitnesses that these “lofty mountains” which once existed in the southeast ridge were cut down to the bedrock in the time of Simon the Hasmonean. The original “Mount Zion” had been chopped down to the ground by Simon and the Jewish authorities at Jerusalem and they were building a New Jerusalem at a different site and

enlarging Temple itself. These are the very actions that the Dead Sea sectarians were scolding the priests and people of Jerusalem about. What added fuel to the fire of the “Teacher’s” rebuke was the motivation for those “evil deeds.” It was not the Gentiles who had done the destruction (as one might suppose was understandable), but, forsooth, it had been promoted and accomplished by the top authorities in Israel, including the High Priest himself. This was just too much! It was Israel itself who caused the “everlasting heights” to be laid low. Those “everlasting heights” had been cut to the ground. When one applies the literal meaning to the texts, it fits the time of Simon precisely.

The “Wicked Priest” Removed the National Landmark

But that was not all. This Scoffer [the Man of Lies], according to the “Teacher of Righteousness,” also was guilty of “removing the landmark” (a single landmark, a *gebhul* in Hebrew) which had served ancient Israel as a standard for measuring their inheritance in the land of Canaan. This “Landmark” was the central *gebhul* from which and by which “the forefathers had marked out their inheritance.” This “Landmark” could be nothing else than a reference to Mount Zion (as I will soon show). When the “Teacher” was rehearsing historical events that had influenced Israel, he mentioned the period of the Judges at the start of section VIII of the *Damascus Rule*. This season before the time of Saul he called “the period of destruction of the land.” This is when the Philistines took the Ark of the Covenant to their own territory. This shrine of the Ark was the central part of the Sanctuary that made the Tabernacle holy. The “Teacher” spoke of this earlier example: “In the period of destruction of the land [by the Philistines] arose *the removers of the landmark* [the *gebhul* was removed] and [this] led Israel astray.”⁵²⁸ In this case, it was the Philistines who removed the *gebhul*.

This early Landmark (*gebhul*) that the “Teacher of Righteousness” was talking about was located at the central shrine called the Tabernacle situated on Mount Shiloh. And indeed, it was at the

⁵²⁸ Burrows translation, words in brackets mine.

religious and secular headquarters of the nation (at Zion) where all the standards of weights, linear measurements and monetary values were determined for the nation. It was also where the months and years were evaluated to take place for the religious and secular calendar of all the Jews. In a word, in their inheritance of the land in the eyes of the Israelites, the standard centerpiece of all inheritance was Mount Zion (the *gebhul*, which was viewed by Israel to be the place of residence of God on earth). It was this central “Landmark” area (not plural as Gaster translated the word) that was reckoned as the navel of Israel and for the whole earth.

Look more at this. The word “Landmark” in Hebrew is *Gebhul*. In Psalm 78:54 we read of “the *Gebhul* of his [God’s] Sanctuary” at Mount Zion. The Septuagint Version (abbreviated LXX) written near the time the Dead Sea Scrolls is important to the issue of what the word *Gebhul* meant to the Dead Sea sectarians because that translation of the Bible was composed near the time the sectarians wrote. The LXX said *Gebhul* meant “Mountain” and the Psalmist equated that *Gebhul* with *Har* (Mountain) in the second part of verse 54. The use of the word “Mountain” for *Gebhul* in the LXX is proof that the word was taking on *that* type of meaning by the time the Dead Sea sectarians were beginning to write. The LXX gives a plain and simple contemporary meaning to the word and this is a most important indication regarding its real significance in the Scrolls.

Indeed, the word *Gebhul* had a long geographical history of meaning a “Mountain” or a “mountain district” (note the mountainous area called *Gebal* in Ezekiel 27:9 which refers to the district of the Mountains of Lebanon, and Psalm 83:7 which is probably a place in the Mountains of Edom). The Arabs later adopted the term as their main word for “Mountain” and it was common to call Mount Sinai by the term *Jebel Musa* and even “Gibraltar” at the southern tip of Spain was a corruption of *Jebel Tarik* (the “Mountain of Tarik”) who was leader of the Berbers.

That *Gebhul* was equal with *Har* by the LXX translators shows this was a common meaning of the word by the time of the Dead Sea sectarians. This contemporary usage is important. And in Psalm 78:54 we are told that it was a mountain purchased by the

right hand of God for Israel. By extension, it also meant “*Territory*” or “*Area*.” And what was this “*Gebhul* [Mountain] of his Sanctuary” used for? The next verse in Psalm 78:55 tells us. “He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line [by *allotment* from the *Gebhul*], and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.” This is what the “Teacher of Righteousness” stated was the meaning of *Gebhul* in the *Damascus Rule*.⁵²⁹ The *Gebhul* was used to mark out the inheritance of the early Israelites. Clearly, this *Gebhul* was the mountain region of the Temple. Later, in Psalm 78:68–69, the text shows that “His Sanctuary” (that is, the “*Gebhul*”) was “Mount Zion,” and it housed the territory of the Temple (wherever the Temple was located). What was now happening in the time of the “Teacher of Righteousness”? Not only had the “everlasting heights” (the original Zion) been cut down to the bedrock by the priests at Jerusalem, but even the *Gebhul* (the *Mountain of Zion*) was removed to the “Upper City.” This is what Simon the Hasmonean did. He “removed the *Gebhul*” by destroying Mount Zion and by moving the name Zion to the *southwest* hill. He also built a new Temple..

Even if the “Teacher of Righteousness” agreed that the former Temple had been so defiled by Antiochus and Alcimus that a new Temple had to be built, the “Teacher of Righteousness” did not like the situation that Simon was building a new and enlarged Temple and it was not being constructed in the form sanctified by the “Temple Scroll” that the Dead Sea sectarians held dear. Indeed, He may have objected to *any* building of a new Temple at the time. This seems to be the case when one reads all of the material in the Dead Sea Scrolls concerning this matter. It looks like the “Teacher of Righteousness” wanted no new Temple built at all until one of the Messiahs (of David or Aaron) would be on earth to accomplish the task. Until that time, the people of the Dead Sea Scrolls would have been content to call their own community “the proper Temple of God” without resorting to a physical Temple at Jerusalem.

⁵²⁹ Col.I, line 16.

Dead Sea Sectarians Show Destruction in their Psalms

In the commentary of Qumran on the Book of Isaiah where the prophet said “I will remove its hedge [wall] so it can be devoured; I will break its fence [rampart] so it can be trampled,” the text of the Dead Sea interpreters states that the ones doing this destruction were: “the Men of Mockery who are in Jerusalem.”⁵³⁰ They were demolishing the walls of Jerusalem and creating other walls and bulwarks. In a work of the Dead Sea sectarians called “A Lament for Zion,” which Cook places in the Hasmonean period for composition, we read about the ruin of Zion. Cook translates the text:

“Ash heaps are now the home of the house of [Israel].... [How] lonely [she sits], the city [once full of people].... the princess of all the nations is as desolate as an abandoned woman.... All her fine buildings and [walls] are like a barren woman.... like those bereft of their only children, Jerusalem keeps on weeping.”⁵³¹

True enough, Simon had thoroughly brought down to the ground the “heights of old Zion” and he “moved the *Gebhul* (Mount Zion)” to the Upper City of his new and enlarged Jerusalem.

At this very period of time this “Teacher of Righteousness” wrote several Psalms that describe his anguish and sorrow at what he saw around him that was happening to his country. One should read all of his Psalm numbered VI.⁵³² This was one of the hymns sung by the Dead Sea community. Near the beginning of his Psalm, he made the statement that he had stood up among the wicked and proclaimed the truth, but he had been demoted and despised. This confrontation no doubt took place among those of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. He tried unsuccessfully to plead for his opinions among his fellow priests and Israelite brothers. For the most part his appeal fell on deaf ears. To the “Teacher of Righteousness,” the destruction of old Jerusalem taking place in his midst was a disaster of the first magnitude. To him, God’s society was being destroyed. The parks and forests of the land were being

⁵³⁰ Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, p.211.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.* p.238.

⁵³² Column III line 19–36, *not* the biblical Psalm, but the one composed by the “Teacher of Righteousness.”

ruined. The walls of clay and even the platform for the dry land had been eaten away. The foundations of the very mountains had been destroyed. Even the base strata of the flint rocks had been torn away. He was talking about a great destruction in the land of Israel of which he was an eyewitness. I will use the translation of Professor Burrows who renders the Psalm in meter. The words in brackets are mine.

“For I took my stand [before others] in the border of wickedness, and with the hapless in their lot; but the poor man’s soul was in dread, with great confusion [in the society].... the cords of death surrounded me inescapably; the torrents of Belial [Satan] flowed over all the high banks [high banks built to protect the land] like a fire eating into all their springs destroying every green or dry tree in their channels, it [the torrents] rushes about with flashes of flame, until all who drink of them are no more; into the walls of clay it eats [the walls were being eroded and destroyed], and into the platform of the dry land [the level areas were being eroded]. The foundations of the mountains are given to the flames [mountain foundations were being destroyed]; the roots of flint become torrents of pitch [the underground rock strata were ruined]. It [the flame] devours the great abyss; the torrents of Belial bust into Abaddon; the sentient beings of the abyss roar with the eruptions of mire. The earth cries out at the ruin [at the ruinous destruction of the land] which has been wrought in the world [aided by Israelite opponents of the ‘Teacher’]; all its sentient beings shout; all who are upon it go mad and [the fires] melt in utter ruin. God thunders with the noise of his might, and his holy dwelling [in heaven] re-echoes with his glorious truth; the host of heaven [the angels] utter their voice; the eternal foundations melt and shake; and the war of the mighty ones of heaven rushes about in the world and turns not back until the full end decreed forever; and there is nothing like it.”

Even allowing for poetic exaggeration, this destruction described by the “Teacher of Righteousness” (that he claimed to have seen with his own eyes) was very much like what Isaiah 29:4–6 said would occur when the City of David would be destroyed by God himself. “Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire.”⁵³³ This is precisely what the

⁵³³ Isaiah 29:6.

“Teacher of Righteousness” said happened. True enough, but Simon went even farther. What Simon the Hasmonean did in Jerusalem in the wake of those seismic disturbances mentioned by the “Teacher” could be described as a thorough destruction of the former City of Jerusalem. And while it was clear that God had a hand in performing the seismic disturbances, it was Simon who accomplished the final destructions that led to the rebuilding of a new Jerusalem (or Zion) in the Upper City.

Once the old Jerusalem was destroyed, Simon and the Jewish authorities simply made another City of Jerusalem in place of the other (Simon even enlarged the city) and he made an enlarged Temple in the same area as the former Temples (with the approval of the generality of the people of Judaea). But the “Teacher of Righteousness” and the Essenes, however, did not approve this rebuilding of Jerusalem and enlarging the Temple. While they no doubt admitted that the former City of David and the earlier Temple had been polluted beyond repair (and the “Teacher” could see the hand of God in the initial earthquake and fire), but he and those of Qumran wanted the *new* City of Jerusalem and the *new enlarged* Temple to be built by the Messiah who would rebuild the City and Temple in conformity with the “Temple Scroll.” Simon was NOT doing this. He avoided following the geographical parameters of the “Temple Scroll.”

In fact, the Qumran people were praying for the restoration of what they considered to be the “true Zion.” They wanted things built according to their own “Temple Scroll” that gave elaborate details on how the proper Sanctuary should be built and administered. Those details were different from those established by Simon.⁵³⁴ So, it was not Jerusalem *per se*, or the Temple *per se* that they objected to (because their writings show they were people who held the teachings of Moses with an extreme regard), but it was the *new* Jerusalem and the *new* enlarged Temple being built in Jerusalem that they now were witnessing that they objected to. These were the unauthorized construction projects (according to them) of the “Wicked Priest.” We find that the “Teacher of Right-

⁵³⁴ See *The Temple Scroll*.

eousness” objected most strenuously to the building projects of Simon and the mainline people of Jerusalem.

Fury Concerning the Buildings of the “Wicked Priest”

There are writings among the manuscripts found in the Dead Sea area which show that they held in abhorrence the building projects of the “Wicked Priest.” Let us now look at some of their strictures that they accumulated with vehemence against the “Wicked Priest” (Simon the Hasmonean) and his allies who ruled Jerusalem.

To learn about the construction projects of the “Wicked Priest,” one has to look at some of the various names that the “Wicked Priest” was called among the Essene groups. The Qumran sects called him by several names. The one that he was generally denominated in their document called the *Damascus Rule* was “the Scoffer” (or, “Man of Lies”). This personality, however, may or may not be equal with the “Wicked Priest.” Another personality or authority was “the Spouter of Lies.” Some scholars feel the “Scoffer” (or, the “Man of Lies”) is not a reference to “the Wicked Priest” himself, but to a collaborator called the “Spouter of Lies” who is mentioned in other Dead Sea Scrolls. Whatever the case, both “the Spouter of Lies” and the “Wicked Priest” (Simon the Hasmonean) were certainly in collaboration with one another. The truth is, there is no distinct context in the various documents to distinguish the two. This is no doubt the reason why there is some confusion in identifying the personalities in a dogmatic sense. Indeed, Professor Cross acknowledges that the “Spouter of Lies” may be different from the “Wicked Priest.”

But what or who was the “Spouter of Lies”? Professor Cross translates the term as “False Oracle.”⁵³⁵ Cross states: “The main point is that the False Oracle leads the assembly to build a false congregation, a faithless Israel over against the Essene elect.”⁵³⁶ Designating this “Spouter of Lies” as a “False Oracle” is a most

⁵³⁵ *The Ancient Library of Qumran & Modern Biblical Studies*, Revised Edition (Baker Book House), p.154.

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.155.

propitious and revealing interpretation. This shows it could refer to someone who was inspired beyond the realm of human originality.

Could this have been a divine voice from the Temple approving of all the actions of Simon the Hasmonean? The word “Oracle” can refer to the Holy of Holies in the Temple at Jerusalem,⁵³⁷ or to anyone who claims to speak directly from God. It also refers to voices that came from various inner sanctums of the Gentiles, or (in the case of Israel) from the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem. Such a preternatural voice from the Temple could have given credence to all of Simon’s actions.

It could well be that the “Teacher of Righteousness” is referring in his mention of “the False Oracle” to what Jewish theologians would call a “Bath Kol” (a voice of God) which on occasion did come from the inner sanctum of the Temple at Jerusalem. Josephus mentions such an Oracle when the twenty-four priests went into the Temple on the Day of Pentecost in 66 C.E. and heard voices (like an Oracle) saying: “We are departing hence.”⁵³⁸ There are numerous other examples in Jewish literature of similar Oracles either coming from the Temple or sometimes “out of the sky” to give divine or supernatural teachings. Jews of later times did not consider that these “Oracles” were always telling the truth or that they came from God.⁵³⁹ Even the New Testament mentions to beware what people calling themselves “prophets” might teach because there were many false prophets who had gone out into the world.⁵⁴⁰

The “Teacher of Righteousness” in the *Damascus Rule* did not think the Oracle was telling the truth because he designated it as a “False Oracle.” Professor Charlesworth, in his excellent translation, shows the force behind the “False Oracle.” There was: “One who weighs the wind and the Spouter of Lies.”⁵⁴¹ A “weigher of the wind” was one who “utilized the Spirit” (or used a “spiritual

⁵³⁷ II Samuel 16:23; I Kings 8:6.

⁵³⁸ *War* VI.5,3.

⁵³⁹ For example, see *Berekoth* 52a.

⁵⁴⁰ I John 4:1.

⁵⁴¹ Charlesworth, vol. I, p.29.

force”) to prompt the “Spouter of Lies” (or, the “False Oracle”) to give his teachings. This literary connection seems to support the belief that the “False Oracle was submitting to a “spiritual voice” from the heavens as a means of promoting his teachings and his building programs within Jerusalem and throughout the region of Judaea. It appears that Simon appealed to some kind of divine instruction. The Dead Sea sectarians were against it. They pejoratively gave him the title of “Precept, the Precept.”⁵⁴² They thought he considered himself to be like God Himself who was able to spout forth divine commands and precepts on his own authority. If this is Simon the Hasmoenean who is being referred to, it makes sense because he was given supreme power by the main Jewish authorities to accomplish his awesome tasks that he felt compelled to administer.⁵⁴³

The Oracle Told Simon to Build the City and Wall

The reason for the castigation by the “Teacher of Righteousness” was because this “False Oracle” was commanding Israel to build a city, and that a certain wall should be constructed. The “Teacher of Righteousness” considered the building of this city (along with the wall) to be against the principles of God that he and his fellow priests and laymen had been following. These maneuvers, however, formulated by this “False Oracle,” were being heeded by the “Wicked Priest” (Simon the Hasmoenean). Let us notice some of these commands to build a city, a town and a wall that the “False Oracle” was demanding. The “Teacher of Righteousness” referred to this in his commentary on the Book of Habakkuk.

In this commentary, the “Teacher of Righteousness” first gave a biblical verse that he wished to comment about and then he provided his rendition of what the verse meant, always applying its fulfillment to the very days in which he was writing. It is an interesting fact that the Qumran sectarians are almost always shown as believing that they were living in the final days before the King-

⁵⁴² *Damascus Rule*, Col.4, line 19.

⁵⁴³ I Maccabees 14:41–47.

dom of God would appear.

Note the verse in Habakkuk. It has to do with the building of a city with blood and founding a town through lies. In this case, as we will soon see, the city in question turns out to be Jerusalem.

“Woe to him who builds a city with blood and founds a town upon falsehood! Behold, is it not from the Lord of Hosts that the peoples shall labor for fire and the nations shall strive for naught? (Habakkuk 2:12,13). Interpreted [by the ‘Teacher of Righteousness’], this concerns the Spouter of Lies [Cross translates this phrase as the ‘False Oracle’] who led many astray that he might build a city of vanity with blood and raise a congregation on deceit.”

Note that this “Spouter of Lies” (or, the “False Oracle”) is accused of building a city upon falsehood. And what happened in the time of Simon the Hasmonean? He tore down old Jerusalem and rebuilt the city of Jerusalem in the north and west of where the former city had been. He also built up the lesser towns of Gazara and Beth-Zur.⁵⁴⁴ This building of cities and towns by Simon was an abomination to the “Teacher of Righteousness.” This anger of his was especially expressed toward Simon’s *new* city of Jerusalem and his *new* enlarged Temple which was not being constructed in the manner suggested in the “Temple Scroll.”

When one analyzes the simple statements in many of the Dead Sea Scrolls, it can easily be seen that the strictures uttered by the “Teacher of Righteousness” and his allies are centered on what they considered to be the illegality of tearing down “the everlasting heights,” the removal of the national “Landmark” (Zion) and re-establishing Zion in the Upper City. They considered the construction of unlawful walls, buildings and a new Jerusalem in the wrong places to be anathema. They were totally antagonistic to the defilement of old Jerusalem by the “Wicked Priest” and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. These historical events mentioned in the Dead Sea Scrolls precisely fit the period of Simon the Hasmonean.

⁵⁴⁴ I Maccabees 14:7.

Chapter 28

SIMON'S BUILDING PROJECTS

THE VERMES' TRANSLATION of *The Damascus Rule* gives some interesting narration. We read that the "Teacher of Righteousness" said that his period was a "time when Israel sinned and defiled the Temple." Who was the person responsible for doing these "abominable things"? Was he a Gentile doing these things in the Land of Israel as one might expect? No, it was Israel itself and its "Wicked Priest" (Simon the Hasmonean) who were responsible for doing harm to the Temple. There were *three things* that the "Teacher of Righteousness" held against the "Wicked Priest" and those who followed him in Jerusalem. He said they were committing fornication, they had greed for riches, and "the third is profanation of the Temple."⁵⁴⁵

What was happening with the Temple was of paramount importance to the "Teacher of Righteousness." He also was angry about certain buildings that the people of Israel were then constructing

⁵⁴⁵ Vermes' translation, p.86.

that he considered unauthorized and not in conformity to the teachings of God. He no doubt thought those structures should be built by the Messiah (NOT Simon). Simon's architectural endeavors to the "Teacher" were being achieved before the proper time.

The "Wicked Priest" was causing Israel to be "builders of the wall and those who daub it with plaster (Ezekiel 13:10)."⁵⁴⁶ They were erroneously building a new wall. As a result, they were epithetically called "the Builders of the Wall or the Rickety Wall."

The term "Rickety" was a pun used by the "Teacher of Righteousness" (though that is the meaning of the Hebrew) because the actual wall being built by Israel was no doubt strongly constructed. This wall was probably that which Simon was erecting to protect the new city and the new Temple and it was different from the walls that once surrounded Jerusalem. I personally feel that this was the eastern rampart of the Haram esh-Sharif above the Kedron Valley that was built in a north/south direction (up to what is called the "Seam" near the southeast corner of the present Temple wall). The architecture of the stones in that eastern wall is certainly Hellenistic in design (and many archaeologists accept this Hellenistic origin of the east wall of the area known as the Haram). The stones do not belong to the period of Solomon though later peoples erroneously called that eastern wall of the Haram "Solomonic."

The "Teacher of Righteousness" was infuriated over the building of this major wall in Jerusalem. He said that God "hated the builders of the wall and His anger was kindled against them and against all those who followed them."⁵⁴⁷ The "Teacher of Righteousness" held this construction program of the "Wicked Priest" in utter contempt. In no way did he believe that this type of building up Jerusalem was a proper thing to do. Notice his full invectives that he issued in his Commentary on Habakkuk 2:12-13. It describes the activities of Simon the Hasmonean in perfect detail. I will give Yadin's translation.

"Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood and establisheth a city by iniquity! Behold, is it not of the Lord of Hosts that the peoples

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.89.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.90.

shall labour for fire and nations weary themselves for vanity? Its hidden interpretation refers to the Preacher of Falsehood [Cross renders this phrase as ‘False Oracle’], who misled many into building a city of vanity through bloodshed and into forming a congregation [of Israelites] through lies for the sake of his glory, to compel many to toil in labour of vanity [in building the city] and to make them pregnant with works of lies [building projects that were based on false ideas], and thus their labour will be to no avail, and they will enter the judgments of fire, because they have cursed and insulted the elect ones of God.”⁵⁴⁸

This shows the indignation and anger that the “Teacher of Righteousness” was expressing when he witnessed the leveling of parts of Jerusalem and the Temple areas. Besides this, the rebels (as he viewed them) also rebuilt the city and enlarged the Temple with different dimensions from those in the Holy Scriptures or in the “Temple Scroll” that the Dead Sea sectarians held in esteem.

Destruction of the Temple/Jerusalem Was Abhorred

The main concern of the “Teacher of Righteousness” was Israel’s destruction of the earlier city of Jerusalem and rebuilding Zion in a different place by Simon the Hasmonean. Continuing his commentary on Habakkuk 2:17, the “Teacher of Righteousness” called attention to the biblical text which read:

“For the violence done to Lebanon [a symbolic name for the Temple] shall overwhelm you, and the destruction of the beasts shall terrify you, because of the blood of men and the violence done to the land, the city, and all its inhabitants.”

We will read in a moment the interpretation of the “Teacher of Righteousness” about this violence and destruction that he considered was done to Lebanon [the Temple], the city and the land, but to understand the above verse, it will be helpful to review some of the general symbolic usages that mainline theologians among the Jews were then adopting to explain the prophetic texts of the Scriptures. Jewish theologians usually accepted that the term “Lebanon” was a symbol *for the Temple* because the timber that was used in

⁵⁴⁸ Yigael Yadin, *The Message of the Scrolls*, p.97, the words in brackets are mine.

its building came from Lebanon. The “beasts” were normally taken to be Gentiles or evil Israelites.

The normal symbolic understanding by mainline Jews of the meaning of the above prophecy, would have interpreted that Habakkuk (the original prophet) was angry because Lebanon [that is, the Temple] had been subjected to violence and destruction. Also that men of blood had done violence and ruin to the land of Israel, to the City of Jerusalem with its buildings and parks that made up the city, and that the inhabitants of the city and land had suffered as a consequence.

Let us now look at the interpretation of Habakkuk 2:17 as understood by the “Teacher of Righteousness.” He attributed the passage of scripture to his own time — specifically to the time of Simon the Hasmonean. His interpretation was similar to what we would expect normal Jewish theologians to give, but with the “Teacher of Righteousness,” he turned the meaning into the castigation of his own enemies living in his time. Here is what he said:

“Interpreted, this saying concerns the Wicked Priest [Simon the Hasmonean], inasmuch as he shall be paid the reward which he himself tendered to the Poor. For Lebanon is the Council of the Community [a phrase the Dead Sea Sect used on occasion for the Temple]; and the beasts are the Simple of Judah who keep the Law. As he himself [the Wicked Priest] plotted the destruction of the Poor, so will God condemn him [the Wicked Priest] to destruction. And as for that which He said, Because of the blood of the city and the violence done to the land: interpreted, *the city is Jerusalem* where the Wicked Priest committed abominable deeds and defiled the Temple of God. The violence done to the land: these are the cities of Judah where he robbed the Poor of their possessions.”⁵⁴⁹

The “Teacher of Righteousness” was stating in plain and simple words that the Wicked Priest had destroyed what he considered to be the true and proper site of Zion (David’s City) at Jerusalem. Even the other cities of Judaea suffered as a consequence. What Simon the Hasmonean was doing was transforming the whole of

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.289, the words in brackets are mine.

Judaic society in Jerusalem and Judaea by having them accept a new Temple. The “Teacher of Righteousness” was upset with it.

More Qumran Documents Showing Simon’s Rebuilding

This does not end the references about the “Wicked Priest” (Simon the Hasmonean) in the Qumran documents. In what is called “A Messianic Anthology” or “Testimonia,”⁵⁵⁰ there is a further scriptural reference in which a commentary by either the “Teacher of Righteousness” or a lieutenant provides lessons for the community of people whom they served. I will quote the whole section from Vermes’ translation. The words in single brackets are those of Vermes, but those in double brackets are mine.

“When Joshua had finished offering praise and thanksgiving, he said: ‘cursed be the man who rebuilds this city! May he lay its foundation on his first-born, and set its gate upon his youngest son’ (Joshua 6:26). Behold, an accursed man, a man of Satan [[Simon the Hasmonean]], has risen to become a fowler’s net to his people [[he was an Israelite who had gone astray]], and a cause of destruction to all his neighbors. And arose [[the text here is obscure]], both being instruments of violence. They have rebuilt [[Vermes has: Jerusalem ‘rebuilt and have set up’]] a wall and towers to make of it a stronghold of ungodliness ... [[ellipsis]] in Israel, and a horror in Ephraim and in Judah ... blasphemy among the children [of Israel. They have shed blood] like water upon the ramparts of the daughter of Zion and within the precincts of Jerusalem.”⁵⁵¹

This was the “Teacher of Righteousness” making a clear curse against the “Wicked Priest” (Simon the Hasmonean) for his *rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem!* This Simon (with the help of another person because the last part of the curse speaks of “two people”) was rebuilding a wall with towers that could act as a stronghold. The “two people” referred to could be Simon and his son John Hyrcanus. It was John Hyrcanus who gave the final order (in 124 B.C.E.) for celebrating the full dedication of the renewed Temple at Jerusalem. The “Teacher,” however, thought this was an act of blasphemy being done “upon the ramparts of Zion and

⁵⁵⁰ 4Q175.

⁵⁵¹ Vermes, p. 296, the words in single brackets are those of Vermes.

within the precincts of Jerusalem.” This curse suggests strongly that Simon had destroyed the old Jerusalem and its walls and he was now constructing another city of his own choosing in a different area west and north of the original Jerusalem.

The “Teacher of Righteousness” and his followers would have nothing to do with these actions which they considered to be blasphemous. However, the vast majority in Israel agreed with the “Wicked Priest” and his actions. This is why the “Teacher of Righteousness” and his community had to flee the general society and take up residence in remote areas. They then began to call themselves the “Council of the Community” (a term the Dead Sea people applied either to the physical Temple, or to themselves as a community of people who represented the true “spiritual Temple of God”). They, in effect, abandoned their normal recognition of sanctity for the *new* Temple of Simon and also for the *new* City of Jerusalem that Simon was building. They retreated from normal Jewish society (at the first) to await the Messiah who would build a proper Temple and City of Jerusalem.

These admonitions by the people of Qumran fit the period of Simon the Hasmonean perfectly, once the proper history of Simon is restored (as I have attempted to do in this book). What we find is a dual evidence of proof. While the restored history that I have presented makes the recorded accounts in the Dead Sea Scrolls more understandable, those accounts in the scrolls also support in a remarkable way what I have been showing in the restored history. The accounts complement one another.

The fact is, we now have a much better picture of what was happening in Jerusalem in the last part of the second and in the beginning part of the first century before the Common Era. We should all be thankful for the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Scrolls help us in a profound manner to straighten out the historical occurrences (that most scholars and religious authorities know nothing about) at this crucial time in the history of the world.

Chapter 29

THE TEMPLE IN THE BOOK OF ENOCH

THE HISTORICAL SOURCE called the Book of Enoch has some important information that has not been appreciated for its historical value, but it is time to give it the attention that it richly deserves. Indeed, the Book of Jude in the New Testament makes a reference to this very book as though it contained significant information that future historians and theologians ought to pay attention even though the book was not canonical. What we discover is the fact that the tearing down of the original Temple in the time of Simon the Hasmonean is not only referred to in detail, but the book also confirms that another Temple was built to replace the one that was demolished. It even shows that this replacement was an action that had the approbation of God. Let us see what this document tells us.

The author of the Book of Enoch in its Fourth Division spoke first of the Tabernacle that was raised up in the time of Moses and how it became a portable Temple. It was called “a House for the

Lord of the Sheep.”⁵⁵² The author then showed how the Tabernacle became “the House among them [the Israelites] in the pleasant land [the Land of Canaan].”⁵⁵³ Then he said that Solomon finally built the Temple in Jerusalem.

The author of Enoch described it in the following fashion:

“And that House became great and broad, and it was built for those Sheep [Israel]; and a Tower [Citadel] lofty and great was built on [by] the House of the Lord of the Sheep, and that House [of the Sheep] was low, but the Tower [the Citadel] was elevated and lofty, and the Lord of the Sheep stood on that Tower and they offered a full table before him.”⁵⁵⁴

Later, said the author, God “forsook the House of the Lord and His Tower.”⁵⁵⁵ So, the House of the Lord is clearly the Temple.

This means that in the time of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar the Gentiles

“burnt that Tower and demolished that House. And I [the author of Enoch stated] became exceedingly sorrowful over that Tower because of the House of the Sheep was demolished, and afterwards I was unable to see if those Sheep entered that House [the Temple].”⁵⁵⁶

Then, said the author, in the days of Zerubbabel and Joshua (and also in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah) the

“Sheep turned back [to Canaan] and came and entered [Jerusalem] and began to build up all that had fallen down of that House [the Temple], but the wild boars [the Gentiles] tried to hinder them, they were not able. And they [the Sheep] began again to build [the House, the Temple] as before, and they reared up that Tower [the Citadel], and it was named the High Tower.”⁵⁵⁷

The author of Enoch then continues his history after the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. Professor Charles shows Enoch as indicating that there were thirty-five shepherds that ruled Jerusalem after the

⁵⁵² Enoch 89:36.

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.*, verse 40.

⁵⁵⁴ Enoch 89:50.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, verses 54,56.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, verses 66–67.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, verses 72–73.

time of Alexander the Great.⁵⁵⁸ Twenty-three of those shepherds were those who ruled during the Egyptian/Greek period (330–200 B.C.E.) and followed by twelve shepherds of the Syrian/Greek period (200 to about 140 B.C.E.). Professor Charles shows that the author of Enoch finally arrives at a historical incident that can only refer to Judas Maccabeus. He spoke about the breaking of the horn of a ram. This was Judas Maccabeus.⁵⁵⁹ This is in the period when the author mentioned “seven white ones.”⁵⁶⁰ Indeed, the angels of these “seven white ones” were mentioned as the precursors of those who would defend Israel at the very beginning of this section of Enoch’s prophecy.⁵⁶¹ And who are these “seven white ones” who would be so glorious that they will even be able to judge evil angels because of their righteous deeds?

Look at these “seven white ones.” The number “seven” is intimately associated with the family of the Maccabees. One of the cardinal tributes that Simon the Hasmonean did in honor of his whole family (who were the responsible ones for delivering Israel from desolation to triumph over the Gentiles) was to raise up “seven pyramidal shaped sepulchres” in their ancestral city of Modein.⁵⁶² This reference may be what the author had in mind.

There is, however, another explanation. It is found in *The Assumption of Moses*. It says:

“Then in that day there will be a man of the tribe of Levi, whose name will be Taxo, and he will have seven sons. And he will ask them, saying, See, my sons, a second cruel and unclean retribution has come upon the people [the cruel tactics of Antiochus Epiphanes] and a punishment without mercy and far worse than the first [by Nebuchadnezzar].”⁵⁶³

In interpreting who these “seven” are, Professor Charles said they could be the children of “the widow of Second Maccabees 7 (following on the martyrdom of Eleazar in 6:18–31) and Fourth

⁵⁵⁸ Enoch 90:1, see his comments on this verse.

⁵⁵⁹ Enoch 90:13.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 90:21.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 87:3.

⁵⁶² I Maccabees 13:25–30; Josephus, *Antiquities* XIII para. 211.

⁵⁶³ *The Assumption of Moses* 9:1–2.

Maccabees [who] has seven sons.”⁵⁶⁴ Whatever the case in identifying the “seven white ones” in the Book of Enoch, the account takes us to the period of the Hasmoneans. Then Enoch mentions something glorious.

At this very time of the “seven white ones,” the author of Enoch saw that

“a great sword was given to the Sheep [Israel], and the Sheep proceeded against all the beasts of the field [the surrounding Gentile nations], and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air fled before their face [the face of Israel].”⁵⁶⁵

This describes the time of Simon the Hasmonean when he assumed full dictatorial power over the Israelites as I have previously shown. The Jews were then in control of Judaea without the interference of the Gentiles.

Then notice what happened to the House [the Temple] at this very period when the author of Enoch terminated his historical account about Israel. The author then spoke favorably about a major architectural undertaking brought on by God himself in a context of judgment on the wicked people of the world (and even some in Israel were included in this judgment). After mentioning the evil deeds of some angelic powers in heaven and God’s judgment upon them and also on some evil men, the author of Enoch then described a final action that he placed in the time of Simon the Hasmonean. The text of Enoch 90:28–30 bears quoting in full. I will cite the translation of H.F.D. Sparks (with the renderings of Charles and Charlesworth interspersed at important junctures that reflect the full meanings of the words). Notice what the Book of Enoch states was happening at the time of Simon the Hasmonean.

“I stood up to see till the old House [the old Temple] was removed [the text reads ‘submerged,’ see R.H. Charles]; and all the columns were brought out [Charles: ‘carried off’], and all the pillars and ornaments of the House [the old Temple] were at the same time wrapped up [Charles: literally, ‘submerged’] along with it [the House was also ‘submerged’], and it [the old Temple] was taken

⁵⁶⁴ *Pseudepigrapha*, vol.II., p.421.

⁵⁶⁵ Enoch, 90:19.

out [Charles: 'carried off; Charlesworth: 'abandoned'] and put in a place [literally, in 'one place'] in the south [literally, at the 'right hand'] of the land. And I looked till the Lord of the Sheep brought [Charlesworth: 'brought about'] *a new house greater and loftier than that first and raised it up* [a new Temple was built] *in the same place as the first* which had been removed [Charles: 'folded up' — like taking a blanket off a bed and 'folding it up']: all its columns were new, and its ornaments were new and larger than those of the first [Temple], the old one which he had taken away; and the Lord of the Sheep [Israel] was in the midst of it [this new Temple]. And I saw all the Sheep which had been left, and all the birds of heaven, falling down and doing homage to those Sheep and making petition to them in everything."⁵⁶⁶

This is a clear description of the tearing down of one Temple in Jerusalem, and the building of another in its place. This was accomplished when Israel [the Sheep] would be top in authority. This new Temple was built "in the same place as the former one." Note carefully. According to the author of Enoch, God was the one who directed that the Temple be torn down. The text in Enoch actually shows that it was God who had Israel demolish *and to ABANDON* the former Temple. That Temple had been so defiled that God did not want it to remain. So, according to Enoch, God ordered the Temple to be torn down and replaced.

True, some scholars have seen in Enoch's description of this tearing down of the old Temple and the building of a new Temple as being a mystical and eschatological account, and not a literal one. They imagine that the author of Enoch was simply describing a future prophetic advent of a New Jerusalem coming to earth that was expected to emerge in the age of the Messiah. True enough, this prophesied action of God was no doubt intended by the author of Enoch, but note that the author was recording contemporary events (both heavenly and earthly) that were *occurring in his day*. He thought that he was witnessing *in his time*, a war in heaven in which the angels of the evil powers had been defeated along with the earthly powers. He thought he was living in the last days.

⁵⁶⁶ See Matthew Black, "The Book of Enoch" in *Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha*, p.82, italics are my emphases and the words in brackets are mine.

Even the main group, who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls, as we will see, also believed they were living in the final generation, just before the emergence of the Kingdom of God (and His Messiah). To the author of Enoch, this new Temple even appeared to be a type of that end-time Temple prophesied in the Holy Scriptures. To him, this new Temple was a victory for God and for Israel. It was a consequence of God's triumph. What is important to recognize is the fact that the author of the Book of Enoch gave a literal account in symbolic language of the history of Israel to his own time. Then he described contemporary events. A Temple was built and this new Temple was the fulfillment of prophecy.

The people who did the "carrying off" of the stones of the old Temple took the ashlars (even the foundational stones on which the Temple stood) and placed them in one particular area. Where was this single region? The Book of Enoch said it was in the "right hand side of the land"? As viewed from God's vantagepoint as He figuratively sat in the Temple, His "right hand side" was to the *south* of where the Temple stood. Interestingly, directly to the south of Jerusalem was the Valley of Hinnom. And in Enoch 90:26,27 (the verses immediately before Enoch's description of the tearing down of the Temple) he said God was judging certain "blinded sheep" in "the middle of the earth" (a phrase meaning "Jerusalem") and at an abyss located on "the right hand side of the house" (that is, on "the right hand side of the Temple"). That abyss in the Jerusalem area was clearly the Valley of Hinnom. Professor Charles shows that the author of Enoch was referring to the Valley of Hinnom as this place of judgment. This is contextual evidence that the remains of the polluted Temple were deposited in the Valley of Hinnom.

Remember an important point. Recall that when Simon and the Jewish authorities read the Law of Moses that any contaminated house of the Israelites was to be torn down, a further command was given about the disposition of the polluted stones of the house.

"And he [the priest] shall break down the house, the stones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the mortar of the house; and he [the priest — and remember, Simon was the High Priest of the nation]

shall carry them forth out of the city into an unclean place.”⁵⁶⁷

Everything connected with a contaminated house (even God’s House) had to be carried off to an unclean place. And what was the Valley of Hinnom? It was long known as an unclean place where defiled idols and polluted houses had their remains buried and destroyed.

It was simple for Simon and the Jewish authorities to read what happened to such contaminated houses in Jerusalem in the time of Jeremiah. They read how the Royal Houses of the kings of Judah (and the other houses of Jerusalem) were defiled in the time of Jeremiah. And what did the prophet Jeremiah inform the people to do with those defiled houses?⁵⁶⁸ Jeremiah ordered that those contaminated houses would be broken down into pieces “and they shall bury them [the pieces of the houses] in Tophet.”⁵⁶⁹ And where was Tophet? It was the Valley of Hinnom on the southern side of Jerusalem.⁵⁷⁰ Tophet was also “an unclean place” and a fit place to fulfill Leviticus 14:45 which instructed that the defiled stones, timbers and mortar of any polluted house should be buried in such a place.

So where did Simon place the stones of the former Temple that was now polluted beyond the place of purification? The Book of Enoch says the stones were placed at *one place* on the “right side of the land.” This is a perfect description of the Valley of Hinnom.

Simon and the Jewish authorities also noticed that the abominable possessions of Achan were thoroughly destroyed and even the geographical area where the abomination had occurred was declared anathema (it was called “the Valley of Achor”). They concluded that even the area where the polluted Temple once stood was also no longer a holy and sanctified region. Even the ground that supported the Temple had been defiled. It was like the ground of the City of Tyre that was so judged that God caused the very

⁵⁶⁷ Leviticus 14:45.

⁵⁶⁸ Jeremiah 19:1–15.

⁵⁶⁹ Jeremiah 19:11.

⁵⁷⁰ Jeremiah 19:1–2.

soil of the city to be scraped off and thrown into the sea,⁵⁷¹ which Alexander the Great did in fact accomplish during his siege of the city. Even later, in the time of Constantine, the emperor ordered that the soil that supported the Temple of Venus (where he imagined wrongly that Jesus was crucified) was to be carried off. Constantine considered the biblical rule that designated even the soil supporting such a polluted place as equally defiled.⁵⁷²

Simon and the Jewish authorities understood these requirements. After the stones of the Temple and the immediate topsoil that supported the Temple were disposed of according to the biblical instructions, the Jewish authorities then began to level the elevated area of the southeast ridge on which the City of David once stood. They no doubt carted off the remainder of the topsoil (and the rubble that made up the "Millo" area) and used it to fill up some of the steep valleys around Jerusalem or they made terraces for the new "Upper City" that they began to build. Once bedrock was reached, they then began to quarry the rock for suitable stones that could be used to construct walls and buildings for the New Jerusalem that they were building.

Simon even found a biblical reason for building Jerusalem on the southwest hill that they began to call the new "Upper City." Jeremiah prophesied⁵⁷³ that a new measuring line would reach from a "Gate of the Corner" (identified in verse 40 with the "Corner of the Horse Gate") and that it would go around to the "Tower of Hananeel" (located at the northwest section of the crescent-shaped original city of Jerusalem) and extend westward from that "Tower of Hananeel." This measuring line was prophesied to proceed westward up the Hill Gareb (a former unclean area and a place for lepers located on the backside of the original Temple). The line would reach to a high overlook of the upper Hinnom Valley called Goath and then go southward along the Hinnom Valley to its confluence with the Kedron Valley.

This western region surrounded by this new measuring line was

⁵⁷¹ Ezekiel 26:4.

⁵⁷² Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, III.27.

⁵⁷³ Jeremiah 31:38-40.

situated on the backside of the Temple (remember, the Temple was on the *Ophel* knoll and faced eastward). This backside area was not at first a holy region. Indeed, being on the backside of God's presence was best described by Jesus when he told Peter to "get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me."⁵⁷⁴ The backside of the original Temple on the *Ophel* was considered a place for Satan and unclean people. Recall that at the base of this Mount Gareb near the Tyropoeon Valley, Nehemiah found the "Dragon" or "Serpent's Well."⁵⁷⁵

This backside region from the original Temple was looked on at first as being the domain for Satan and unclean persons (so the name "Gareb," that is, "scabby or leprous"). Mount Gareb reached westward to the upper (northern) parts of the Hinnom Valley (the valley normally associated with evil). This new measuring line prophesied by Jeremiah, however, which would render a new holiness to the region was measured to reach southward from Goath at the upper region of the Hinnom Valley unto the Kedron Valley and then it would proceed back north to the same Corner at the Horse Gate from which it began.⁵⁷⁶

It no doubt was because of this prophecy of Jeremiah that Simon and the Jewish authorities considered it proper to include the western hill in their "new" Jerusalem that they were planning to build. This whole region of the southwest hill (Mount Gareb) was no longer just to west (or the backside of the Temple) and this would prevent the region from being considered an area in which Satan would be disposed as it was in the former and original Temples. Whatever the case, we have the historical record in the Book of Enoch (albeit given in symbolic language) that in the time of Simon the Hasmonean the old Temple was torn down and a *new* Temple was built in a larger and higher aspect in the same area as before.

⁵⁷⁴ Matthew 16:23.

⁵⁷⁵ Nehemiah 2:13.

⁵⁷⁶ Jeremiah 31:38-40.

Chapter 30

REBUILDING THE TEMPLE

SINCE THE TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM was reckoned as being made *desolate* by Antiochus Epiphanes, Simon and the Jewish authorities decided to tear it down (in accordance with the Mosaic instructions regarding contaminated houses) and rebuild the Temple anew. Note that at this same period of time is when Onias made his appeal to King Ptolemy of Egypt to have his new Temple built at Heliopolis. Onias felt that the Temple in Jerusalem was so ruined that he interpreted the prophecy of Isaiah (Isaiah 19:19) as a positive sign that a new Temple would be legitimate on the border of Egypt. Ptolemy gave permission for this new Temple of Onias. That, however, did not end the matter.

In this same period, a major controversy developed about the proper location for any true Temple of God. Where should any Temple be REBUILT? Since there were many Jews and Samaritans in Alexandria who were concerned about the state of the proper "House of God," a conference was convened with serious consequences for the adjudicators about the proper spot to REBUILD the Temple. The conference took place in Egypt before

King Ptolemy of Egypt (who was considered a neutral but interested arbiter regarding such important questions). The outcome of the conference resulted in Jerusalem being chosen as the proper place because of its long history as the site accepted by all peoples of the Middle East. Note, however, that the contention was over *where* a NEW Temple “was to be built” (at least, that is how the words in the context of Josephus state the matter).

The Jews and Samaritans (as Josephus states)

“disputed about their temples before Ptolemy himself, the Jews saying that, according to the Law of Moses, the temple *was to be built at Jerusalem*; and the Samaritans saying that it *was to be built at Gerizim*.”⁵⁷⁷

The conference was conducted for the purpose of discovering *where* a Temple “*was to be built*.” Indeed, Onias was already building his new Temple at Heliopolis. But *where* was the normal Temple to be built? True, the remains of the Temple at Jerusalem were still standing (in a *desolate* state) and the Samaritan Temple still existed, but the question argued before King Ptolemy was where the Temple “*was to be built*.” What concerned the conference was the proper location for building the Temple.

After much discussion, the official assembly before King Ptolemy selected Jerusalem as the proper site. Indeed, this is what Simon and the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem also decided was proper. They also believed the Temple “*was to be built*” in Jerusalem. Simon then tore down the *desolate* remains of the Temple and built a new Temple in the same spot over the Gihon Spring. Simon and the Jewish authorities then built their new Temple in the same area, but now made more level and enlarged.

Simon the Hasmonean and the Temple

The one verse in First Maccabees that characterizes the rule of Simon is that of 14:15. It states: “He [Simon] glorified the Temple and enriched its equipment.” Some later Jewish authorities understood this to mean that all the implements of the Temple had been

⁵⁷⁷ *Antiquities* XIII.3,4 para.74–79, Whiston.

so thoroughly polluted by Antiochus Epiphanes that everything about the Temple services had to be replaced, not just the Altar itself.⁵⁷⁸ Indeed, some Rabbis thought that what the Hasmoneans were doing was raising up a brand new Sanctuary like the Tabernacle had been built anew in the time of Moses.⁵⁷⁹ This new dedication by the Hasmoneans was an added reason for celebrating a greater Hanukkah. And note this. With the renewal actions of Simon, there was indeed a *second call* to celebrate Hanukkah. This was in the first year of Simon the Hasmonean.⁵⁸⁰ This was the very time that Simon decided to tear down the old "Mount Zion" and the "Ophel" (which had been thoroughly polluted by Antiochus Epiphanes and Alcimus) and to rebuild and dedicate a new sanctified Temple in the same spot on the Ophel, but with the area more leveled and enlarged.

Recall that it took three years to demolish the summits on the southeast ridge. It possibly took an equal time (or longer) to build the new Temple. This must be the case because in the year 124 B.C.E. (some nineteen years after Simon's first year of reign, during the reign of Simon's son, John Hyrcanus) the third and final call to celebrate the greater Hanukkah took place.⁵⁸¹ This means that *two further commands to celebrate Hanukkah* were given besides the original command by Judas Maccabeus.⁵⁸²

So, there were actually *three* occasions for ordering the sanctification of Hanukkah: *one* at the time of Judas Maccabeus (164 B.C.E.) when a partial purification was accomplished. But with the High Priest Alcimus and his outright pagan beliefs still in control and continuing to pollute the Temple and its furniture, Simon decided it was time to tear down the desecrated Temple and dedicate a new one. The *second* call for dedication was in 142 B.C.E. Then, finally, the Temple was completely finished and sealed by the arrival of a person with the prophetic spirit. That person came on the scene with the son of Simon, John Hyrcanus. He was the

⁵⁷⁸ See Zevin, *The Festivals in Halachah*, vol.II, pp.64–65.

⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid.* pp.68–69.

⁵⁸⁰ See II Maccabees 1:9.

⁵⁸¹ II Maccabees 1:10.

⁵⁸² This is discussed in the New Schurer, vol.I., p.211.

king who succeeded Simon, but he also had other powerful offices that Josephus thought essential to mention.

“He was the only man [in the history of Israel] to unite in his person three of the highest privileges: the supreme command of the nation, the high priesthood, and *the gift of prophecy*, for so closely was he in touch with the Deity.”⁵⁸³

It was in 124 B.C.E. (in the time of John Hyrcanus) when the final dedication of the completely renewed Temple was ordered.

This “renewal” of the Temple was remembered even in New Testament times. In the Gospel of John, the Festival of Hanukkah was called “The Feast of Dedication,” or in plain English, “The Feast of Renewal.”⁵⁸⁴ This final call to celebrate the Festival of Hanukkah was in honor of the “renewed Temple,” NOT simply the renewal of the sacrificial services in the earlier time of Judas. It is important to realize that it was not until 124 B.C.E. that the final command to celebrate Hanukkah was given to the Jews. Hanukkah really celebrates the construction of the brand new Temple by Simon the Hasmonean and dedicated by his son John Hyrcanus. This new historical information makes Hanukkah to be far more significant than many Jews have thought.

Simon Changed the Geography of the Jerusalem Area

What Simon did was a momentous historical and theological event for the people of Israel. He not only tore down the old city of Jerusalem (as it had existed back to the time of Solomon), but he built a “New Jerusalem” in the “Upper City” and he redesignated that area as the “New Zion.” The inhabitants of Jerusalem even had to give the southeast region a new designation because the area of Mount Zion was thoroughly cut down. They then began to call the area “the Lower City.” And so it became.

The upshot of the whole thing was a glorious new beginning for Israel with the construction works of Simon the Hasmonean. The author of the Book of Enoch said the building of this new enlarged Temple in the same spot as the former Temples was the initiation

⁵⁸³ *War* 1.68–69.

⁵⁸⁴ John 10:22.

of a New Era for Israel. This fits the time of Simon the Hasmonean perfectly. Recall how the First Book of Maccabees stated that the years of the Jewish calendar were to be reckoned anew as beginning with the reign of Simon and that all contracts made between Jewish people were to be dated in accordance with this New Era (this new society) devised by Simon.

In a word, the author of the Book of Enoch was giving a description of the three years' demolition of the previous Temple and Citadel (the former *Akra*). He placed the whole affair occurring before his eyes into an eschatological framework to secure its acceptance with the people.

The author of the Book of Enoch thought this was the commencement of that New Era which his teachings in his Fourth Division disclosed. As a vindication of this belief, the dedication of this *new* Temple in 124 B.C.E. is what the Festival of Hanukkah actually celebrates in its complete format (when all the final embellishments were made to the *new* Temple structure). This information given in this book helps to provide a new dimension to the understanding of what the Festival of Hanukkah was all about.

The Later Desecration by Pompey in 63 B.C.E.

There is an important reference in Josephus concerning the incursion of the Roman general Pompey into the inner Temple that bears emphasizing. This reference proves that a new Temple was built by Simon the Hasmonean and finished by his son Hyrcanus. Note that Josephus spoke of Pompey's unauthorized entrance into the holiest parts of the Temple in 63 B.C.E. by saying that this profanation had *never been done before*. Notice how Josephus stated the unusualness of Pompey's entrance into the Sanctuary. He said: "[The Temple] in former ages had been *inaccessible, and seen by none*."⁵⁸⁵

Note the blatant error of Josephus (at least, it looks like an error on the surface). Any Jewish school child would have known that Gentiles had entered the Holy of Holies in the time of Nebuchadnezzar and also in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and to have

⁵⁸⁵ *Antiquities* XIV.4,4.

viewed things that were forbidden to their eyes. Josephus also knew this. But Josephus appears to be making statements diametrically opposite to these well-known facts.

The truth is, however, Josephus gave a true account. He was referring to Simon's *new* Temple, NOT to the old ones of Solomon and Zerubbabel. The Temple that was built by Simon had truly been *inaccessible* to all unauthorized people before the time of Pompey and it had been *seen by none* before Pompey entered the Temple in 63 B.C.E. Josephus was telling the truth about Pompey in regard to Simon's Temple. Pompey was indeed the first person to enter *that new* Temple built by Simon. Pompey knew that his act was counter to the regulations of the Temple. So, Pompey ordered the cleansing of the Temple the next day after its desecration.⁵⁸⁶

The example of tearing down the Temple of God as shown by Simon and the Jewish authorities in their time was an incentive to Herod to make a brand new Holy Place and Holy of Holies and to enlarge the outer Temple regions even more than Simon and his contemporaries had done. There is historical proof from Josephus to support this valid conclusion. Just before Herod's death, he brought to trial in Jericho the perpetrators of tearing down a golden eagle over the eastern portal of the Temple that Herod had constructed and enlarged. In recounting his many benefits that Herod surmised he had lavished upon the Jewish nation, he singled out as supreme above all the fact that he had built and enlarged (and greatly adorned with costly gifts) the Temple "while the Hasmoneans, during the 125 years of their government, had not been able to perform any so great a work for the honor of God as that was."⁵⁸⁷

Note that Herod did not recount any refinements or additions done to the Temple *before* the time of the Hasmoneans. Why stop with the Hasmoneans? Herod had done much more than any of the people after the Babylonian Captivity had accomplished on building or decorating their Temple. Why did Herod not include that post-Babylonian Temple or the one built by Solomon? The reason is plain. The Temple that Herod had added to and decorated with

⁵⁸⁶ *Antiquities* XIV.4,4 para. 69–75.

⁵⁸⁷ *Antiquities* XVII.6,3 paras. 162–3.

expensive gifts reached back only to the Hasmoneans. That is why Herod inquired back to that 125 years before his own government. All these matters prove that Josephus was accurate in his historical description of the event. Indeed, I have been showing in this book that it is often the scholars who assume certain chronological or geographical ideas to be correct who want to consign Josephus to the realm of “never-never” land. It is usually the scholars who are wrong in many of these matters, and not Josephus.

The Enlargement by King Herod

The pollution by Pompey was not as severe and abominable as that of Antiochus Epiphanes and Alcimus. Yet, what Pompey did was a defilement. Indeed, in about 55 B.C.E., Licinius Crassus came to Jerusalem and took the gold and moneys from the treasury of the Temple, and this was also a defilement. But again, these pollutions were not in any way comparable to the violence done to the Temple in Antiochus’ day. Still, these two defilements gave Herod an ace in the hand for convincing the priests and other authorities in Jerusalem that a new Holy Place and a new Holy of Holies should be built in Jerusalem and that the Temple area itself should be enlarged. The authorities were convinced. Herod started his new Temple about 100 years after the Temple of Simon was finished by his son Hyrcanus in 124 B.C.E. (when the final Hanukkah was ordered).⁵⁸⁸

⁵⁸⁸ Recall that Josephus said that Herod doubled the size of the Temple (*War* I.21,1). This was doubling the size of Simon’s Temple. As I have shown, it did not mean the Temple that existed before Simon that reached back to the time of Nehemiah. The earlier Temple before Simon was, according to the eyewitness account of Hecateus of Abdera, on a platform that was 150 feet broad for its eastern wall and 500 feet in length for its southern and northern walls. Simon, however, built the Temple in the same place but made it larger. But if Herod “doubled” the size of Simon’s Temple, then Simon must have “doubled” the size of the pre-Simonian Temple (north to south) because Herod’s Temple was on a square platform that was a *stade* long (600 feet). We are told that Herod demolished most of the north wall of the Temple (no doubt, this was Simon’s Temple). Josephus said: “Later [in the time of Herod], the people made a breach in the north wall [of the Temple] and this took in an area as large as *that which the whole Temple subsequently occupied*” (*War* V.5,1). As the Temple platform became larger, it was necessary to reposition the Holy of Holies and the Altar of

Herod felt he had complete justification in enlarging the Temple area (even much more than Simon the Hasmonean). In the prophecies of Isaiah it stated that there would be a time when God's Temple in Jerusalem would be greatly enlarged and that even the eunuchs and Gentiles would find a justified position within the courts of that new Temple. Note the Scripture on this matter.

“Sing, O barren [because of the actions of the Suffering Servant], thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that dist not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate [women without children] than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. Enlarge the place of thy tent [make Zion larger to hold more people], and let them stretch forth the curtains [make the Temple curtains larger] of thine habitations [make larger your Temple courts]; spare not, lengthen thy cords [enlarge your Tent so more people can enter], and strengthen thy stakes [secure this enlarged habitation of God].”⁵⁸⁹

Herod convinced the Jewish authorities in his time that it was proper to enlarge the size of the Temple and to include sections in it that would pertain to Gentiles and others who were not ritualistically pure in all circumstances. Herod got his way and produced, according to Josephus, one of the most majestic buildings that mankind had ever seen.

Burnt Offering to make these areas to be centralized within the new dimensions of the Temple. In a word, the Holy of Holies was extended northward in the time of Simon and that of Herod. It was not situated over any stationary “Rock” like that under the Dome of the Rock. Indeed, the Holy of Holies was located in the southern part of the Temple platform in Solomon's time. In the Temple of Nehemiah and Hecateus it was moved 75 feet north of the southern wall. In Simon's Temple, the Holy of Holies was moved 150 feet north of the southern wall. And in Herod's Temple it was moved 300 feet north of the southern wall (indeed it was in the center of the square platform which was 600 feet by 600 feet). This means that while Herod constructed his final chamber for the Holy of Holies, the former chamber remained in operation alongside until the new one was finished in eighteen months. When the new one was finally finished, it was then dedicated as a *new* Holy of Holies in the year 19 C.E. This *new* Holy of Holies is what the Jewish authorities in the time of Jesus said had been built 46 years ago (John 2:20). This means that the site of the Holy of Holies (as well as the Altar of Burnt Offering) has moved short distances from former sites as the Temple itself was extended in size. The final enlargement was in the time of Herod.

⁵⁸⁹ Isaiah 54:1-2.

The structure he built to contain the Temple complex on its top platform was awesome indeed. We have the eyewitness report of Josephus concerning its dimensions and position. The Temple was actually built on the top of a 40/45 story *tower* that ascended above the floor of the Kedron Valley. It had the Gihon Spring within its confines and it reached up to a height that most people at the time (and even for us today) would have considered of utmost splendor and majesty. It is time that the modern world realizes just how magnificent the Temple of Herod was. Indeed, when its dimensions are given, any reasonable person would have to agree with Josephus (the eyewitness) that it is almost unbelievable that such a spectacular building could exist on earth in that time period. The fact is, however, the Temple on the top of that 40/45 story *tower* is fully proved by the eyewitness accounts who saw it in its glory.

The Shape and Dimensions of Herod's Temple

Josephus plainly stated as an eyewitness that the southern wall of Fort Antonia was located about a *stade* (600 feet) *north* of the northwestern corner of the outer Temple walls (with an open space between the two structures that was bridged by two colonnade roadways about 600 feet long). I will give the details of these dimensions in later chapters of this book. The walls surrounding the Temple and supporting the platform on which the Temple itself stood were also a *stade* in length (600 feet) on each side, making a perfect square. On the east side, the foundation of the wall went down 100 cubits (150 feet) *below* the surface of the Kedron Valley, and there was a further 300 cubits (450 feet) up to the platform on which was placed the colonnades that were 20 cubits (38 feet) high built around the Temple. The Temple complex looked like a palatial *penthouse* on top of a square-shaped skyscraper that was 40/45 stories high.

In effect, the Temple and its four walls were *a single high TOWER* standing alone like any 40/45 story building now in New York or Chicago. It was 600 feet square and it occupied a whole square block. Practically the whole of the southern wall had a double storied colonnade from west to east (with the pinnacle at the southeast angle). This portico had a special name. It was called the

“Royal Portico.” This means it was related to royalty or in honor of royalty in some manner. We know in the New Testament that in the time of Herod and Jesus there was such a portico associated with a royal person. That individual was Solomon who began the building of the Temple in the first place. Since we are told by Josephus that the southern part of the east wall (and the east part of the southern wall) where the pinnacle was located was a section of the wall attributed to Solomon, it stands to reason that “Solomon’s Portico” (mentioned in Acts 3:11) must have been the two storied colonnade associated with those parts of the wall belonging to the first builder of the Temple — to Solomon himself. This means that the “Royal Portico” and “Solomon’s Portico” were one and the same. That part of the Temple was along the southern wall.⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁹⁰ There is another way to show this and one that gives more precision. It will be recalled that Josephus said Herod “doubled” the size of the Temple platform from that Temple which preceded him (*War* 1.21,1). Since Herod’s Temple platform was a square of 600 feet on each side, it stands to reason that the previous Temple built anew by Simon the Hasmonean was about 300 feet on each side. Recall, however, that Hecateus (who saw the Temple about 190 years before Simon) said the Temple was then only 150 feet wide and 500 feet long. “The Jews have only one fortified city; they call it Jerusalem. Nearly in the center of the city stands a stone wall [of the Temple], enclosing an area about 500 feet long and 150 feet broad, approached by a pair of gates” (Josephus, *Contra Apion* 1.22). This eastern wall of 150 feet was a part of Nehemiah’s Temple who rebuilt that of Solomon. Josephus said that only *this part* of the wall (restricted to 150 feet in the east and a longer stretch on the southern wall toward the west) was a part of Solomon’s former construction. So, in Herod’s Temple, the northern half of the wall of the Temple platform was built by Herod. The southern half was divided in two parts of 150 feet each — the northern 150 feet were those of the brand new Temple built by Simon the Hasmonean, and the southern 150 feet (that which was observed by Hecateus) was Nehemiah’s reconstruction of Solomon’s Temple walls. This means that “Solomon’s Portico” had to be restricted to this southern region of the Temple. And since Josephus said the extreme southern flank of the Temple platform was graced with the large covered area called the “Royal Portico,” this most likely is to be identified with what the New Testament called “Solomon’s Portico” (or “Porch”) where the apostles were accustomed to assemble to speak with the crowds in the Temple enclosure. Remember too, each time the Temple platform was extended northward, the Holy of Holies had to be moved *northward* each time to continue being in the center of the Temple in its north/south axis. The Holy of Holies was NOT positioned over a natural and stationary “Rock” like that now under the Dome of the Rock. That “Rock” was always a part of the Baris (and finally) Fort

On top of this 40/45 story skyscraper called the Temple, one found all the other buildings that made up the Temple itself. Imagine too that at the top, and at the northwest corner of this 40/45 story building, there were two colonnade roadways that led northward to a much larger building straddling about three square blocks in area. This northern building would answer to the Haram or Fort Antonia.

If you can visualize this scene (as we have illustrated in the pictures accompanying this book), then you have an idea of what Josephus (an eyewitness) saw before the Temple was ruined. Another eyewitness was Barnabas. He said 15 years after the war that the Temple was indeed *a SINGLE TOWER*: He called it “*THEIR TOWER* [the Temple] shall he give up to destruction; and it happened according to that which the Lord had spoken.”⁵⁹¹

On the other hand, the Haram was not a *single tower*, while the Temple was shaped like a 40/45 story *TOWER* [like a modern skyscraper in New York or Chicago] with the Sanctuary located on its top platform. Barnabas said it was a *tower*, and his description is backed up with the depictions of the Temple and its walls as shown by Josephus and others. It is time that the world realizes just what the actual Temple was like.

When we look further at the real dimensions of the Temple of Herod, it will be seen that the Temple had nothing to do with the Haram esh-Sharif, with the exception that it had two colonnade roadways (they were both 600 feet long) that led from the northwest Temple wall to the southwestern corner of the Haram. The Haram itself was Fort Antonia. There can be no doubt that this is true.

The Temple of Herod and Jesus was built on a platform on top of a 40/45 story *tower* that was 600 feet south of Fort Antonia. It is important in New Testament studies that the parameters of this *real* Temple that Herod built be understood and appreciated (and not the one that modern scholars and religious leaders falsely place at the Haram esh-Sharif). This will help us to comprehend the fun-

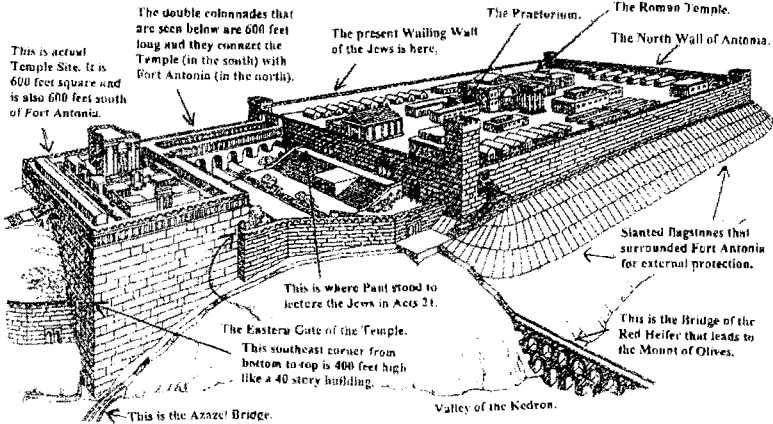
Antonia, NOT a sanctified “Rock” of the Temple.

⁵⁹¹ *Barnabas* 16:6.

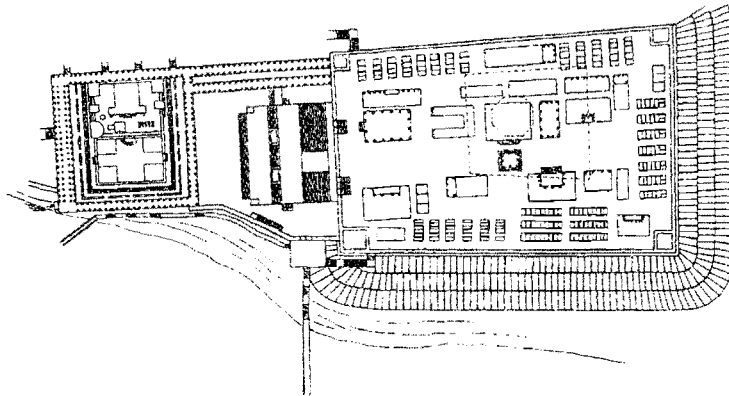
damental teachings of early Christianity. The next section of this book will explain.

**A Prospect of the Temple and Fort Antonia from the Mount of Offense
(looking northwestward)**

[If one will read the eyewitness accounts of Josephus, without preconceived ideas, the Temples and Fort Antonia will appear approximately as they are drawn below.]



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PART FOUR



The Position and Description of Herod's Temple

Chapter 31

DESCRIPTIONS OF FORT ANTONIA AND THE TEMPLE OF HEROD

JOSEPHUS SAID there were actually three fortresses that guarded Jerusalem before the war with the Romans — if one included the Temple itself as a fortress, which indeed it was. The Temple was the only Jewish fortress while the other two were Roman. The Temple as a fortress protected the Lower City (the southeastern portion of Jerusalem). As for the two Roman fortresses, the smallest was located in the Upper City situated at Herod's former palace (that included the three towers of Hippicus, Phasaelus and Mariamne). The function of those three fortresses was to protect Herod's Palace in the Upper City. Though they later became Roman fortresses in 6 C.E., they were finally called "local fortresses" during the client reigns of Agrippa I and II (37–44 C.E. and 50–66 C.E.). This is because Herod had given them "local"

names to distinguish them from the main (international) encampment known as Fort Antonia. This central citadel, however, was always Fort Antonia. It was located to the north of the Temple. Of these three fortress areas, Josephus informs us that the largest and most formidable was Fort Antonia.

“The Temple was a fortress that guarded the city, as was the tower of Antonia a guard to the Temple; and in that tower [Antonia] were the guards of those three [Antonia was the main fort that guarded the City, the Temple and even Fort Antonia itself]. There was also a peculiar fortress belonging to the upper city which was Herod’s palace.”⁵⁹²

Fort Antonia was large and it was critically situated near the Temple. It became the central military headquarters that had the responsibility of protecting the whole of the City of Jerusalem as well as the Temple. Even the western towers (the “local fortresses”) at or near Herod’s palace in the Upper City that were linked together as a single fortress were reckoned to be defended by Fort Antonia.

Josephus said: “He [Herod] had now the [Upper] City fortified by the palace in which he lived, and by the Temple which had a strong fortress by it, called Antonia, and was rebuilt by himself.”⁵⁹³ Josephus indicates that Antonia was preeminently “a strong fortification” located on the north side of the Temple. Josephus said that Antonia was so vast it actually dominated the Temple on its northern flank in all aspects.⁵⁹⁴

Note that Fort Antonia was regarded as a “fortress” before the Roman/Jewish War. In Jerusalem, in the time of Jesus, the Temple itself was the only Jewish fortification. The Romans laid no claim to the Temple as a part of their military encampments for the control and protection of Jerusalem, though they often stationed troops on the outer roadways above the four colonnades surrounding the Temple square, especially at festival times.

⁵⁹² *War* V.5,8.

⁵⁹³ *Antiquities* XV.8,5).

⁵⁹⁴ The Loeb translation states that “Antonia dominated the temple” (*War* V.5,8.).

The fact that Fort Antonia in Jerusalem was a Roman camp can be seen in other ways. For example, when King Agrippa was addressing the Jews in Jerusalem not to go to war with the Romans, he told them their belligerent actions in the initial phases of the conflict already had constituted a war scenario as far as Rome was concerned. This was because in early June of 66 C.E., the Jews tore down some strategic sections of two broad roadways that linked the gates in the southern wall of Fort Antonia with a corner gate of the Temple near its northwestern angle.⁵⁹⁵

These two roadways connecting Fort Antonia with the Temple were actually bridges with level upper decks that were elevated above the ground and resting on columns. The topmost deck was supported by columns that were just like the columns that surrounded the perfectly squared region of the actual Temple walls.

The Temple Was a Perfect Square

It must be remembered that Josephus was an eyewitness of the Temple, Fort Antonia and all of Jerusalem. He dogmatically stated that the Temple was located on an elevated platform with four walls surrounding it that formed a perfect square. Each of the four Temple walls was exactly a *stade* (c. 600 feet) in length.⁵⁹⁶ Besides this (as I will show) the Mishnah a hundred years later said the Temple Mount was a perfect square of 500 cubits (c. 750 feet) on each of its four sides. The figures are *not* contradictory. They are supplemental to each other. While the actual walls of the Temple were a perfect square of 600 feet on each side, there was another area surrounding the walls of the Temple (called the *Temple Mount* — which had NO walls around it) that was also a perfect square of 750 feet on each side. The two areas with their different measurements were quite distinct from each other. These measurements provide us with two different dimensions depicting parameters that were not the same. The greater dimension describes a square area (750 feet on each side) that surrounded the square area of the walls of the Temple that Herod built around the Temple (600 feet on

⁵⁹⁵ *War* II.15,6.

⁵⁹⁶ *War* V.5,2 with VI.5,4 and *Antiquities* XV.9.3.

each side).⁵⁹⁷ The marginal area between the outer limits of the Temple Mount and the Temple walls were reckoned less holy to the Jewish authorities (I will show this in a later chapter).

Josephus also tells us that the two elevated roadways from the northwestern angle of the Temple leading into Fort Antonia were also 600 feet (a *stade*) in length. This means that the precise distance between the southern wall of Fort Antonia and the northern wall of the Temple was one *stade*.⁵⁹⁸ This obviously signifies that the space between Fort Antonia and the Temple was 600 feet.⁵⁹⁹

The Two Colonnade Roadways

The two colonnades leading from the Temple to Fort Antonia had the identical dimensions as those that surrounded the four-square outer court of the Temple (45 feet wide) because Josephus

⁵⁹⁷ The square of the Temple Mount (750 feet on each side) was NOT equidistant from the square of the Temple walls (600 feet on each side). We are told quite plainly that this is a fact, and I will show the evidence for it as we continue.

⁵⁹⁸ As clear as Josephus could make it he stated that the distance between the southern wall of Fort Antonia and the northern wall of the Temple was one *stade*. See *War* VI.2.6. Strangely, some translators (namely, Whiston and Williamson) render this precise distance by the generic word "space" without giving the exact distance of a *stade* as mentioned by Josephus. Even Thackeray in the Loeb edition does the same thing in his main English text, but in a footnote he admits that the Greek manuscripts clearly have "furlong" (that is, in Greek, "*stade*"). Cornfeld in his translation shows that the "space" was actually a "*stade*" in length, though he puts the English word "furlong" in brackets. The reason for this indecision on the part of the translators to render this space to be exactly a *stade* in length (600 feet) is because most scholars imagined that Fort Antonia was a small fortress on the northwestern corner of the Temple Mount (which they wrongly identify with the Haram esh-Sharif) and that there can be little or no space at all between the southern wall of Antonia and the northern wall of the Temple. The truth is, however, as I have been showing in this book, the southern wall of the Haram esh-Sharif is actually the southern wall of Fort Antonia, and Josephus rightly states that a person had to walk a *stade* south of that southern wall (600 feet) to encounter the northern wall of the Temple.

⁵⁹⁹ The *stade* was the length of a stadium where sprint races (and other athletic events) took place. The normal stadium length was about 600 feet, though some stadiums could differ (more or less) in length. In this book, I take 600 feet to be the ideal length of the *stade*, and this could not be far off. See *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, p.1010 for details.

called those two colonnades as being appendages of the Temple.⁶⁰⁰ In fact, the two colonnades from the Temple to Antonia were simple extensions of those four colonnades surrounding the square-form Temple complex. They were much the same in appearance and in size as the Temple colonnades. Josephus informs us that the colonnades of the Temple were 45 feet wide (30 cubits) and about 38 feet high (25 cubits).⁶⁰¹ There was a roadway at the bottom part of the colonnades and another on the roof of the colonnades (the top deck was reserved for the military).

These two roadways (both the lower roadway which was the sheltered portion among the columns and the upper roadway on top of the columns) were two avenues leading into the Temple from Fort Antonia. The Roman soldiers who guarded the Temple used the upper roadways on top of the two colonnades. This feature made them to appear as two side-by-side “bridges” 600 feet long.⁶⁰² They led directly from Fort Antonia to the northwest cor-

⁶⁰⁰ The roofs of the colonnades, both of the square Temple enclosure and the two colonnade roadways that extended from the Temple to Fort Antonia, were intended to be areas where Roman troops could guard the entrances and exits to the Temple as well as to the Temple square itself. Josephus refers to this precise usage of the roofs of the colonnades. He said: “The usual crowd had assembled at Jerusalem for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the Roman cohort [i.e., 2000 troops] had taken up its position on the roof of the portico [colonnade] of the Temple; for a body of men in arms invariably mounts guard at the feasts, to prevent disorders arising from such a concourse of people” (*War* II.12,1 italics mine, Loeb translation). Josephus said it was customary to have 2000 troops on these four colonnade areas surrounding the Temple square in 3 shifts (making 6000 men each day) to control the crowds (*War* IV.3,12).

⁶⁰¹ In this book, the cubit is accepted as being 18 U.S. and British inches.

⁶⁰² Professor George Adam Smith shows how scholars have realized that these two “bridges” existed over some kind of “valley” between the Temple and Fort Antonia, but most who recognize them in the writings of Josephus fail to understand why they were necessary. Professor Smith said: “Sanday and Waterhouse (*Sacred Sites of the Gospels*, 108, with Plan 116; see also frontispiece) suppose a ‘valley’ crossed by ‘a double bridge’ between the Temple and Antonia, for which there is ‘some reason’ (108)” (*Jerusalem*, vol.II., p.499, n.1). Professor Paine in his work *Solomon’s Temple* (Boston, 1861) correctly illustrates those colonnade “bridges” in a diagram in his book (see this diagram also in M’Clintock & Strong, *Cyclopaedia*, vol. X., p.258). These “bridges” led from the Temple to Antonia. Indeed, Josephus stated dogmatically that there was exactly a distance of one *stade* (600 feet) in this narrow and confined space on

ner of the outer Temple colonnades. One roadway allowed ingress to the Temple and the other roadway provided an egress from the Temple. These were the “military entrances and exits” to and from Herod’s Temple. For this reason the general public normally did not use the northern entrance to the Temple. Though these were two roadways that led to the top of the Temple colonnades, there was only one gate in the northern wall. It was called the Tadi Gate.⁶⁰³ This northern gate was not used by the general public.

Josephus later described these two colonnades (military roadways) as being an integral part of Temple.⁶⁰⁴ They were likened to two “limbs attached to a body.”⁶⁰⁵ Josephus used this illustration to describe how the Jews destroyed parts of these two colonnades to keep them from being connected to the Temple. He said that cutting down these two colonnades was like the amputation of two arms from a diseased body. Those “arms” from the Temple extended northward to Fort Antonia and were considered to be a part of the Temple itself.⁶⁰⁶

top of the two bridges between Fort Antonia and the Temple (*War* VI.2,6 ¶144).

⁶⁰³ This was the only gate into the outer Temple courts from the north (*Mid-doth* 1:3). The name Tadi signifies “private” or “obscurity” (that is, it was normally off-limits to the general public because it was used almost exclusively by the military forces in Fort Antonia in order to enter onto the Temple colonnades from the two colonnade “bridges” that reached from Antonia in the north).

⁶⁰⁴ We will discover in a later chapter that the top of the northern wall of the outer Temple (at the juncture with these two colonnades from Fort Antonia) was at least 180 feet in height above the rocky ground below. If there were no colonnade bridges spanning this area between the north Temple wall and the south wall of Fort Antonia, then the troops from Fort Antonia would have had to descend to the ground level and then, when they reached the north wall of the Temple, climb steps upward for at least 150 feet in order to reach the platform on which the Temple was built. Such a situation would provide little or no military advantage to any troops coming from Antonia. But, if two bridges went directly from the southwest corner of Antonia practically on a level to the northwest corner to the outer Temple colonnades (and none but military forces could use such bridges), this would have been highly advantageous. This, indeed, is precisely what Herod provided for the troops in Fort Antonia who supervised the crowds in the courts of the Temple. These bridges gave easy access from one fortress (Fort Antonia) to the southern fortress (the Temple).

⁶⁰⁵ *War* VI.2,9.

⁶⁰⁶ In architectural terms, “arms” represent “an extension of a building or of a group of buildings” (Merriam-Webster *Third New International Dictionary*).

These colonnades were the two military roadways used by the Roman troops (built with a north/south orientation) that the Jews severed from the Temple early in the war. They cut them down again near the end of the war to impede the final Roman entry into the Temple. As a matter of fact, when the Romans eventually demolished the north wall of Antonia and captured the whole fortress, they immediately rushed through the entire length of the fortress area to its southwest corner. This allowed them to reach the two southern exits from Antonia that led directly to the Temple. They found themselves at the beginning of the two elevated roadways spanning the open space between Antonia and the Temple. In the latter phase of the war, the Romans chased the retreating Jewish forces onto these narrow elevated roadways as the Jewish troops ran southward toward the Temple. A battle then took place on top of the two narrow bridges.

Vantage-Point of Titus on Antonia's South Wall

At this battle, Titus ascended the southern wall of Antonia to watch the conflict that was taking place on the narrow roadways spanning the 600 feet open space between Fort Antonia and the Temple. Recall that Josephus said that the whole of Temple precincts could be observed by anyone who was standing on top of the southeast tower of Fort Antonia.⁶⁰⁷ What Titus did was to position

The term is similar to "the wing of a building." It was common in the imperial period of Rome for architects to ascribe terms denoting the human body to parts of buildings. Vitruvius, who wrote in the first century before Christ in his work on *Architecture*, states: "As in the human body, from cubit, foot, palm, inch and other small parts comes the symmetric quality of eurhythmy [harmony and esthetics of design in the human body], so it is in the completed building" (Book I.c.ii,4 Loeb ed.). That is, many early architectural terms for buildings were associated with the nomenclature of appendages attached to the human body. As a modern example, the "Brentwood Arms Hotel" would have originally signified an appendage to the main building. Later, if the "Arms" section became more prominent, people forgot the main building and concentrated only on the "Arms" itself. Josephus in his reference above was speaking of two colonnades attached to the Temple, part of the Temple complex. They connected Fort Antonia to the northwestern angle of the Temple and both were 600 feet in length. They were the Temple's northern "arms."

⁶⁰⁷ *War* VI.2,6.

himself on the southern wall of Antonia and he could easily see what was happening below him and on the roadways leading to the Temple some 600 feet in the south. Professor George Adam Smith called attention to the fact that the conflict took place between the Romans and the Jewish forces at this particular spot clearly shows there was open space between Fort Antonia and the Temple and not (as it is most often shown on maps of Antonia) that the area south of Antonia abutted directly to the Temple. This is why Josephus described the battle area as 600 feet long,⁶⁰⁸ and he also said the spot was “narrow” and confined. The troops had no where to maneuver (except in a north or a south direction) on the two bridges that were 600 feet long that connected Fort Antonia and the Temple.

In spite of the fact that Josephus said the space between Fort Antonia and the Temple was 600 feet, scholars for the past 200 years have had difficulty in believing him (though he was an eyewitness who lived in Jerusalem and was a Priest at the Temple). Professor Smith, however, was willing to waver a little in the right direction of interpretation. He said:

“Though some of the language used by Josephus may be interpreted as though the Antonia immediately adjoined, or even abutted upon, the Temple cloisters [colonnades], this is not the only possible meaning; and in his description of the struggles between the Romans and the Jews, after Titus had taken the Castle [Antonia], Josephus implies that some little space intervened between the latter and the peribolos [colonnades] of the sanctuary.”⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁸ *War* VI.2,6.

⁶⁰⁹ *Jerusalem*, vol.II, p.496. Professor Smith is referring to the narrative of Josephus in *War* VI.1,7–8 and VI.2,6. The whole battle scene shows there was the space of 600 feet between Fort Antonia and the Temple. It was a “narrow space” in an east/west direction within which the Romans and Jews were fighting with one another. The only way the troops could maneuver was either north (back into Antonia) or south (back into the Temple). Since Titus could witness everything going on from the top of the southern wall of Antonia, the battles must have taken place on the narrow roadways situated on top of the two colonnades. Those roadways on top of the colonnades were used for military purposes. Below these “bridges” the general public could walk and they could even enter Fort Antonia through lower gateways with stairs approaching the various other gates. The general public, however, could not enter the Temple area from

Professor Smith should have noticed that in Josephus' Greek text, the historian accurately said the space was 600 feet.⁶¹⁰ Almost everyone has overlooked this important geographical point. But the fact that a full *stade* of open space existed between the south wall of Fort Antonia and the north wall of the Temple is a cardinal factor given by Josephus that should never have been jettisoned from our appraisal in understanding that geographical setting.

The narratives in Josephus clearly show that Fort Antonia could not have abutted directly to the Temple as we observe in almost all maps by modern scholars. Soon I will show another way of determining that the colonnade roadways were each 600 feet long — they were each a *stade*. Those two colonnades having the narrow roadways on top (45 feet across) bridged this open space between the Temple and Fort Antonia.⁶¹¹

the north. There was only one Temple gate in the north, the Tadi Gate on top of the Temple platform, used only by the military. The only avenues from Fort Antonia directly to the courts of the Temple were the two colonnade roadways reserved for military purposes. The battles mentioned by Prof. Smith were fought on top of those narrow and confined roadways that were 600 feet long and orientated north/south.

⁶¹⁰ *War* VI.2,6.

⁶¹¹ This space of 600 feet between Fort Antonia and the Temple is clearly allowed in the narrative concerning the apprehension of the apostle Paul in the Book of Acts. The angry mob of the Jews took hold of Paul in the Temple, then dragged Paul "outside the Temple [*heiron*]" and immediately closed all public gates into the Temple (Acts 21:30). They then sent messengers to the judicial authorities "seeking" permission to kill Paul (which would have been by stoning) (verse 31). Such stoning had to be outside Jerusalem at what was called The Place of Stoning (Sanhedrin 6:1 and also see sections 2, 3 and 4). This is where Stephen had been stoned to death earlier (Acts 7:58–60). Later Christian authorities recognized this place of stoning as being at the top of the Mount of Olives (Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, p.185, n.1). Paul was being taken toward this spot when the commandant of Fort Antonia (with other officers and troops) left the fort and "ran down" (verse 32) to the crowd waiting with Paul for permission to stone him. When they saw the Romans, the crowd became agitated and unruly and asked for judgment against Paul. So violent was the crowd that the commandant ordered Paul to be taken "into the encampment" (Fort Antonia). In doing so, they had to ascend what was called "the stairs" (verses 34–35). At the top of the stairs, and just before entering Fort Antonia, Paul asked to speak to the people. After his speech the people became violent and began throwing dirt into the air (making clouds of dust fouling the air) (Acts 22:22). This shows the crowd was at the bottom of the stairs and at ground level in order

The initial battle scene for the Temple as described by Josephus shows that the Romans and Jews had only two directions to maneuver within this narrow 600 feet long area between the Temple and Fort Antonia. Those directions were north (back into Antonia) or south (into the Temple). Since Titus and the generals could witness from the southern wall of Antonia the whole battle scene, the pushing back and forth in this narrow and constricted area of the 45 feet roadways means the fighting was on top of the colonnades themselves (not in the sheltered underneath part). As the battle raged, the Jewish troops in this case got the upper hand and drove the Romans back into Fort Antonia. Then the Jews cut down the portion of the two colonnades nearest the Temple. This impeded the later movements of the Romans to capture the Temple. To finally conquer the Temple itself the Romans had to use battling rams and ramps in order to break down and to scale the Temple walls.

Remember, at the very beginning of the war, the Jewish revolutionaries cut down parts of those same two colonnades reaching from Fort Antonia to the Temple. But at that early period they listened to the pleadings of King Agrippa and repaired these "Arms of the Temple." So, this space of 600 feet between Fort Antonia and the Temple was again bridged in this earlier time when the

to secure dirt (to throw into the air) which they got no doubt from the garden sites encompassing the area. Paul was then taken into Fort Antonia for his protection. All of this shows that the crowd was waiting for permission to take Paul through the east gate of Jerusalem (located in the east wall built between the southeastern angle of Fort Antonia and the Temple). In this 600 foot space between Fort Antonia and the Temple was a garden area where loose dirt could be obtained for protest. Besides this, there was the main staircase that led upwards to the southern gates that the public would use to enter Fort Antonia. These very stairs were first unearthed in modern times by the college students that I supervised (under Prof. Mazar) at the excavations outside the southern wall of the Harem esh-Sharif. Those stairs where Paul stood can now be seen and walked on by the public today. This geographical information reveals that a good deal of space existed between the north wall of the Temple and the south wall of Fort Antonia (Josephus said the distance was 600 feet) in which the general public could walk and assemble. The Roman troops, however, who wished to enter the Temple could use the two elevated roadways that bridged this area of space from Antonia to the Temple.

Jews resumed paying taxes to Caesar.

Fort Antonia Belonged to Rome

It is easy to understand why not paying their taxes would bring the wrath of Rome down on them, but Rome was equally incensed over their action of cutting down the two colonnades linking the Temple to Fort Antonia. Why was this an act of war in Rome's eyes? Because Agrippa told them Fort Antonia belonged to Rome, and not simply to Florus (the Roman procurator with whom the Jews had particular grievances). Agrippa brought to their attention that Fort Antonia was official Roman imperial property and that the Jewish rebels had destroyed Fort Antonia's effectiveness by cutting off the fort's access to the Temple.⁶¹²

There is another reference in Josephus to show that Fort Antonia was reckoned to be Roman property even before the war. In the time of King Herod, when he enlarged what was formerly called the Baris and renamed it Fort Antonia, he decided to keep the pontifical robes of the High Priest in the fortress. When the Romans took control of Antonia in 6 C.E., they built a special building for those robes and retained them in the fortress for several years afterward. Josephus tells us dogmatically that while those priestly robes were in Fort Antonia, they were "under the power [authority] of the Romans."⁶¹³

⁶¹² The Jewish authorities told Agrippa that

"they would not fight against the Romans, but against Florus, on account of what they had suffered by his means. To which Agrippa replied, that what they had already done was like such as make war against the Romans: 'for [said Agrippa] you have not paid the tribute which is due to Caesar; and you have cut off the cloisters [the two colonnades] (of the Temple) from joining to the tower Antonia. You will therefore prevent any occasion of revolt if you will but join these [colonnades] together again, and if you will but pay your tribute; for the citadel [Fort Antonia] does not now belong to Florus, nor are you to pay the tribute money to Florus'" (*War* II.16.5 italics & brackets mine).

What King Agrippa was telling the Jewish authorities was that Antonia did not belong to Florus himself. It belonged to Caesar, the Senate and to the People of Rome. In a word, Fort Antonia was Roman imperial government property. Attacking Antonia was making war against Rome, not Florus.

⁶¹³ *Antiquities* XX.1,1.

This clearly shows that Fort Antonia was reckoned as Roman military property before the start of the war. Though the two colonnade roadways belonged to the Temple, the Romans still saw them as the main access from Antonia to the Temple. So, when Agrippa confronted the Jews for their rebellious activities at the early period of the war, the Jews listened to him and rapidly rebuilt the sections of the two colonnades that had been destroyed.⁶¹⁴ This incident reveals the Jewish authorities recognized Fort Antonia was Roman property and it was not reckoned part of the municipality of Jerusalem. This understanding is important in this research because the prophecies of Jesus about the complete destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple referred to Jewish property, not to that which belonged to Rome.⁶¹⁵

Herod's Palace Was Roman Military Property

Herod's former palace in the Upper City was also considered Roman imperial property before the war, temporarily assigned to Agrippa I and Agrippa II as the "local *Praetorium*" for governing the Jewish people by the client kings. This can be seen in the narratives of Josephus. He recorded that when the Jewish revolutionaries cut down the colonnades that connected Fort Antonia to the Temple, they routed the Romans from all areas of Jerusalem. Josephus tells us that the remaining Romans fled to the camp at Herod's palace in the Upper City where there were Roman soldiers.⁶¹⁶ Then about three months later (when the war intensified) the Romans even had to abandon their camp at Herod's palace and retreat into the three towers of Phasael. Hippicus and Mariamne that were alongside.⁶¹⁷ These references in Josephus prove conclusively that Herod's palace in the Upper City next to the three towers also had Roman soldiers stationed within it.

⁶¹⁴ *War* II.17,1.

⁶¹⁵ Recall the attitude of Jesus in regard to Roman property. He said: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21). Jesus had no quarrel with Rome at the time and his prophecies did not concern things belonging to Rome.

⁶¹⁶ *War* II.15,5.

⁶¹⁷ *War* II.17,8.

This information is significant in explaining why Titus after the war did not destroy Fort Antonia (nor did he destroy at first the three towers in the Upper City that had been loaned to the client kings Agrippa I & II). These areas were already acknowledged as Roman government property in which Rome had invested a considerable amount of money to maintain after the year 6 C.E. This is one of the essential reasons why the troops did not tear down Fort Antonia.

As for the three towers in the Upper City, Titus had a change of mind regarding them. He surmised that it was not necessary to leave two immensely fortified areas in Jerusalem (one at Fort Antonia and the other at the three towers in the Upper City). Really, there was nothing of consequence left in Jerusalem to justify the retention of the “local fortresses” as well as Fort Antonia. So, Titus finally let his troops tear down the western wall and the three fortresses in the Upper City, leaving only Fort Antonia as the Camp of the Romans to quarter the Tenth Legion. There is a great deal of evidence to support these matters. Let us see.

Chapter 32

THE COLONNADES FROM THE TEMPLE TO FORT ANTONIA

WE ARE TOLD by Josephus, when you read his accounts carefully, that the whole northern wall of the Temple was parallel to and flanking the full length of the southern wall of Fort Antonia. He said there was an open space of 600 feet (a *stade*) between the two walls.⁶¹⁸ Note that when Titus, the Roman General, was overseeing his soldiers fighting in areas associated with the Temple and its courtyards, he was able to view these events from the southern wall of Fort Antonia.⁶¹⁹ The view was like a stage (a theatre) in front of him.⁶²⁰ Titus could observe everything happening within the Courts of the Temple. In fact, once Fort Antonia was taken by the Romans and part of its

⁶¹⁸ *War* VI.2,6.

⁶¹⁹ *War* VI.1,8.

⁶²⁰ *War* VI.2,6.

north wall was demolished under orders from Titus,⁶²¹ this rendered Fort Antonia a useless fortress to Jewish defenders when they still had possession of its quarters. But once the Romans took control of Fort Antonia from the Jewish revolutionaries, Titus then made it the Roman headquarters for subduing the Temple and the rest of the City of Jerusalem. "Through the tower of Antonia [the Romans could subdue] the temple itself."⁶²²

Recall that Herod built the Tower of Antonia as a fortress to protect the Temple and the City of Jerusalem. In order to render direct protection to the Temple from Fort Antonia, Herod built a causeway of two colonnades (situated alongside one another — one on the west and another adjacent to it on the east with a narrow open space in between). They spanned a distance of one *stade* (600 feet) from the southwest angle of wall of Fort Antonia directly southward to encounter the northwest angle of the northern and western colonnades of the outer walls of the Temple. Remember that Josephus himself stated that the distance between the southern wall of Fort Antonia and the northern wall of the Temple was exactly one *stade* (600 feet).⁶²³

⁶²¹ "And now Titus gave orders to his soldiers that were with him to dig up the foundations of the tower of Antonia, and make a ready passage for his army to come [into the fortress]" (*War* VI.2,1). And a short time later (as Whiston correctly interprets Josephus) we read: "In the meantime, the rest of the Roman army had, in seven days' time, overthrown [some] foundations of the tower of Antonia, and had made a ready and broad way to the temple. Then did the legions come near the first court" (*War* VI.2,7). Note that Whiston correctly inserted the bracketed word "some" to show that only a part of the northern wall of Fort Antonia was demolished. This is because we later find Titus taking refuge in Fort Antonia itself and viewing the battles in the Temple from its southern wall. Josephus stated:

"So Titus retired into the tower of Antonia, and resolved to storm the temple the next day, early in the morning, with his whole army, and to encamp round about the holy house.... And now a certain person came running to Titus, and told him of this fire, as he was resting himself in his tent [in Fort Antonia] after the last battle; whereupon he rose up in great haste, and, as he was, ran to the holy house, in order to have a stop put to the fire; after him followed all his commanders, and after them followed the several legions" (*War* VI.4,5–6).

⁶²² *War* VI.6,2.

⁶²³ *War* VI.2,6.

Each colonnade had a roof that served as the upper roadway. This roof formed the broad roadway that was used by the troops. Josephus said these two colonnade roadways were each one *stade* in length (and, by combining both, they represented in length two *stades*). The roofs of the colonnades of the Temple were no doubt level with the roofs of the colonnades that reached northward to Fort Antonia. This meant that the troops were spared the inconvenience (and even the outright danger) of having either to ascend or to descend roadways that spanned the distance of 600 feet between Fort Antonia and the Temple. This is why the platform of Fort Antonia was level with the roofs of the colonnades in the south that surrounded the foursquare Temple.

These two colonnades were prominent in the geography of early Jerusalem. After all, they were two appendages of the Temple that were each a *stade* in length (600 feet). Indeed, Josephus likened these two colonnades to two limbs attached to a body. Josephus illustrated their positions in relation to the Temple by stating that the Temple represented the “body” and the side-by-side colonnades represented the two “limbs,”⁶²⁴ like two straight outstretched “arms” attached to a human body. They were reckoned part of the Temple itself.⁶²⁵ Josephus said in the same reference that the “limbs” were “adjoining” one another at intervals. That is, they were alongside each other with bridges to each other at intervals in their courses from the Temple to Fort Antonia (or, vice versa). The top part of these two colonnades (that is, their flat roofs) were reserved as roadways for the Roman troops so they could have easy access to the Temple and to the colonnades around the Sanctuary.

So, the two colonnades from Fort Antonia attached themselves to the colonnades that surrounding the Temple Square. The Temple colonnades formed a perfect square — one *stade* on each side (or, four *stades* altogether). “The whole enclosure [of the Temple], having a circumference of four *stades*, each side taking up the

⁶²⁴ *War* VI.2,9.

⁶²⁵ It is interesting that Josephus considered the two bridges to be a part of the Temple.

length of a *stade*.⁶²⁶ But in another place, Josephus wanted to include the two colonnade roadways that reached from the Temple to the entrance of Fort Antonia. Speaking of the colonnades of the Temple, Josephus said: “The colonnades were thirty cubits broad [45 feet], and the complete circuit of them, embracing [the colonnades to] the Tower of Antonia, measured *six stades*.⁶²⁷ The two colonnades were the northern “arms” of the Temple. Embracing them added *two stades* to the circumference of the Temple colonnades. These two appendages to the Temple were like the arms of a human body that would reach northward to grasp (embrace) with the arms the entrance to Fort Antonia.

When one counted together the four *stades* for the colonnades that surrounded the square of the Temple with the two colonnades (of two *stades* — one *stade* each) that were like two appendages extending northward to the entrance to Fort Antonia, the combined length of those colonnades equaled six *stades*. This is what Josephus said. Those northern colonnades were like bridges for the Roman troops. They were double causeways from the Temple to Fort Antonia.

Strangely, you will not find these two colonnades from the Temple to Fort Antonia illustrated in maps of Jerusalem at the time of Jesus nor in any drawings of Fort Antonia. Scholars avoid mentioning them. Why? It is because scholars are puzzled by Josephus’ references to them. In fact, modern scholars simply do not know where to place them (nor do some consider they even existed). The two colonnades, however, are amply described by Josephus in various and separate contexts as a cardinal feature of the Temple complex.

⁶²⁶ *Antiquities* XV.9,3 Loeb translation, italics mine.

⁶²⁷ *War* V.5,2. Note that Josephus in reaching the dimensions of six *stades* includes the two colonnades of one *stade* in length (two *stades* in all) that extended up to Fort Antonia. He attached these two *stades* to the four *stades* of colonnades surrounding the square-form Temple. Most scholars have not noticed that these two colonnades are appendages that extended northward from the Temple to Fort Antonia. He said the two colonnades resembled two side by side arms (or limbs) of a body that were attached to the colonnades surrounding the Temple (*War* VI.2,9).

These side-by-side bridge type colonnades must have been built to avoid confusion in transporting troops and armaments from Antonia to the Temple. One colonnade was used for ingress into the Temple while the other was for egress in leaving the Temple, much like our freeways. These colonnades (with their flat roofs) were used as roadways exclusively by the Roman troops to control activities in the Temple. The ordinary public used the sheltered roadway at the base of the columns if they wished to enter the Temple from that quarter. The lower part of the two colonnades had a walkway at ground level that protected the people from the elements, etc.⁶²⁸

Two Colonnade Bridges from the Temple to Antonia

The two side-by-side colonnades were similar to a modern freeway with two roadways each 45 feet wide to agree with the width of the colonnades encompassing the Temple Square. The flat roofs on the top were the roadways.

These two colonnades mentioned by Josephus were one *stade* long and provided a bridge type of causeway — one for north-bound traffic from the Temple to Fort Antonia and the other for

⁶²⁸ We can understand what these two colonnades looked like by referring to a colonnade Josephus said Herod built for the people of Antioch in Syria. Note what Josephus said about the generosity of Herod to foreign areas. "For the people of Antioch, the inhabitants of the principal city of Syria, where a broad street cuts through the place lengthwise, he built colonnades along both its sides, and laid the open road with polished stone, which was of very great advantage to the inhabitants" (*Antiquities* XV.5,3). Describing this in another place, he said:

"For that large open place belonging to Antioch in Syria, did he not pave it with polished marble, though it were twenty furlongs long [over two miles long]? This is when it was shunned by all men before, because it was full of dirt and filthiness, he [then] adorned the same place with a cloister [a colonnade] of the same length" (*War* 1.21,11).

If Herod provided such a beautiful and costly amenity to those in the foreign city of Antioch, what would he have done in his own capital city? These colonnades in Jerusalem were actually roadways that could be used both in the lower portions in the sheltered area, or on top as a roadway with balustrades providing private and secure movements for troops. It is this latter reason that Herod built the two colonnades from Fort Antonia to the Temple. Not only were they practical, they were beautiful and impressive.

southbound traffic from Fort Antonia to the Temple.⁶²⁹ The entrance to Fort Antonia from the Temple was from the northwest corner of the outer walls that formed a square around the Temple. “Now as to the Tower of Antonia, it was situated at the corner of two cloisters [colonnades] of the court of the Temple, of that on the west, and that on the north.”⁶³⁰

Josephus was speaking about the entrance to Fort Antonia being at the northwestern corner of the Temple colonnades, not that Fort Antonia was situated as a small fortress precisely at that northwest corner. One has to look for the walls of Antonia beginning at the northern terminus of those colonnades. Thus, the entrance to Fort Antonia was situated where their ramps impinged upon Antonia. It was common at the time to say an “entrance” represented its site.⁶³¹

⁶²⁹ When people entered the Temple, it was custom to turn to the right (and stay to the right) as one went about the Courts of the Temple (Mishnah, *Middoth* 2:2). This rule applied to all individuals no matter who they were (priests or laity). People entered the Temple on the right hand side of the gate and went around the Temple in a counterclockwise direction. This rule applied even if one’s immediate destination in the Temple was to the left of the entrance gate. People also exited from the Temple on the opposite side of the gate that they entered. This rule no doubt applied to the ingress of troops from Antonia to the Temple colonnades or to the egress of troops from the Temple to Antonia. It stands to reason that the eastern colonnade to Fort Antonia was for northbound traffic and the western colonnade that led to the Temple was for southbound traffic. Besides these ritualistic rules, the separation of traffic on the two colonnades made good military sense. It prevented “traffic jams.”

⁶³⁰ *War* V.5,8.

⁶³¹ It is easy to discover the intention of Josephus. Suppose you were standing close enough to have your hand on the northern wall of early Jerusalem. If there was no gate into Jerusalem where you were, you were still not reckoned (in the early way of looking at things) at being at Jerusalem. If the Damascus Gate (let us say) was still a third of a mile east from where you were standing, then you were yet a third of a mile away from Jerusalem. Thus, the distance between cities was measured from gate to gate of the cities, not from wall to wall. A further illustration involves a modern point. Route 66 is a highway from Chicago to the Pacific Ocean at Santa Monica, California. If you were on Route 66 ten blocks inland from its termination in the west and you asked a person where the Pacific Ocean was, you could rightly be told that it was ten blocks west at the end of Route 66. This, of course, would be correct. But if you were in San Francisco (400 miles north of Santa Monica), and someone asked you where the Pacific Ocean was located, it would make no sense if you said it was at the end of Route

Fort Antonia was located on the north side of the Temple. The two roadways encountered Fort Antonia at its southwestern angle. The whole of the Temple's northern wall was parallel to the southern wall of Fort Antonia with the length of the two colonnades occupying the space between the two structures. This span represented a *stade* in distance (600 feet). Josephus said it was the destruction of these two side-by-side colonnades by the Jewish revolutionaries that led to the ruin of the Temple. Note how Josephus stated it. "So they got immediately upon those cloisters [colonnades] that joined to Antonia, and cut them down."⁶³²

This destruction of the colonnades from the Temple to Antonia was looked on as a major disaster by anyone wishing a peaceful settlement with the Romans. All knew the Romans would severely punish such an action. It was early in the war the revolutionaries cut down the colonnades, but they later rebuilt them when those who promoted peace urged them to do so. The moderates among the Jews at that early time told the more adventurous:

"You have cut off the cloisters [colonnades of the Temple] from joining to the Tower of Antonia. You will therefore prevent any occasion of revolt if you will but join these together again."⁶³³

In this earlier period of the war, the militants acceded to the warnings of King Agrippa and the moderates. They repaired the colonnades (the two roadways). But this was not the conclusion to the matter.

66 in Santa Monica. Though this would indeed be correct, no one in San Francisco would use that vantagepoint. Indeed, if you were in Tokyo, Japan or Sydney, Australia and asked where one could find the Pacific Ocean and one said it was located at the end of Route 66 in Santa Monica, California, your remark would be considered absurd. Though true, only if you are in or near Santa Monica, California does the use of such an illustration to locate the Pacific Ocean make sense. And so it is with locating Fort Antonia in the area of Jerusalem. Josephus said it was at the juncture of two colonnades that reached northward from the northwest corner of the Temple Mount. Yes, but (like the Pacific Ocean) Fort Antonia was a large place. What Josephus meant was that a person will find the entrance (the gate) into Antonia at the northwest angle. It is just that simple.

⁶³² *War* II.15,6.

⁶³³ *War* II.16,5.

Later, as the war neared its end, the Jewish forces again set fire to the two colonnades and this time the damage was not repairable.⁶³⁴ When this occurred, Josephus then stated a prophecy that he thought forecast the destruction of the Temple and its walls. He said God intended the complete end of the Holy Sanctuary.

“For the Jews, by demolishing the [colonnades to the] tower of Antonia, had made their temple four-square, while at the same time they had it written in their sacred oracles, ‘That then should their city be taken, as well as their holy house, when once their temple should become four-square.’”

This prophecy of the Scriptures can be known.⁶³⁵

Those side-by-side colonnades were reckoned to be like a pan-handle appendage to the Temple (two “limbs attached to a body”). They were the “Arms of the Temple.” In essence they were Temple property but the Roman military used the roadways. With the destruction of those two colonnade roadways, the Temple was

⁶³⁴ *War* VI.2,9.

⁶³⁵ *War* VI.5,4. We may be able to discover the prophecy that Josephus meant. Dr. James Tabor of the University of North Carolina informed me Josephus must have been referring to what is known as the Seventy Weeks’ Prophecy. In that prophecy are, as Josephus himself related, vague indications dealing with the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem. One should note that the word “street” in Daniel 9:25 often refers to a “broad courtyard” which could be construed as being a “square” or “plaza.” Daniel 9 also states that a Messiah would be cut off (that is, die). Now look at Lamentations 4:18–20 (which many Jews in the first century applied to their own time because of amazing similarities in detail between the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and that by Titus). It states in verse 20 that “the Messiah of the Lord was taken in their pits” [which means the Messiah was killed]. This happened when “we cannot go in our streets [squares]” [this is the same word as in Daniel 9:25, but in Lamentations the word is plural]. This word “street” could be construed as being a “square” in Hebrew. We are told that the Temple walls surrounding the Temple were a square, and also the “Temple Mount” itself was a square. The prophecy in Lamentations stated that when Israel would be cut off from their “squares,” then verse 4:18 goes on to state: “our end is near, our days are fulfilled; our end has come.” As Josephus saw it, when the two colonnades from the Temple to Fort Antonia were destroyed, this made the Temple itself to be a perfect square and its entrance was cut off from Israel. This meant: “our end is near, our days are fulfilled; for our end is come.” It is to this section of Scripture in Lamentations 4:18–20 (associated with Daniel 9:25) that Josephus probably referred when he spoke about this prophecy of the Scriptures.

made to stand alone as a square edifice. When this occurred it was evident to Josephus that the war would not last much longer. And this was the case.

This shows how important were those roadways from the Temple to Fort Antonia in the history of the war. It is because of this significance that I have taken time to describe them as Josephus records. That is because most scholars today are not even aware that these two colonnade roadways existed. The next chapter will show how different the Temple was from Fort Antonia, and how the Haram esh-Sharif cannot be the remains of the Temple.

Chapter 33

THE TEMPLE THAT JOSEPHUS KNEW

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS for those who wish to know the location of the Temple of Herod (and consequently those of Solomon and Zerubbabel) is to pay attention to the eyewitness accounts of the Jewish priest/historian, Josephus. Not only was he one who observed the Temple for himself, he was a priest who had access to all areas of the Temple (save the Holy of Holies) and he had within his reach all of the historical documents that the Jews in the early first century maintained in Jerusalem. Besides that, in his accounts of the fall of Jerusalem and the Temple, he dedicated his works to Titus (the Roman general and later emperor) and to Herod Agrippa the Second who were both eyewitnesses to the state of affairs in Jerusalem before and after the war. They would have known whether Josephus was telling the truth about the Temple or if he was “pulling his punches” and that he greatly exaggerated his descriptions of the Temple of Herod.

It ought to be apparent to any reasonable person that the narratives of Josephus (especially when they are consistent with one another, and they are in regard to the Temple) should be given a great deal of credence in letting us know the facts of what pre-war Jerusalem and the Temple were like. If one would simply let Josephus state the evidence that he gives (and believe him), the true site of the Temple of Herod would have been recognized long ago. The truth is, Josephus describes a Temple that was very different than what modern scholars assume to be the fact. In no way does Josephus have in mind the remains of the Haram esh-Sharif when he spoke about the Temple of Herod that once existed in Jerusalem. Josephus had an altogether different building complex in mind when he spoke of the Temple.

Before we look at the clear and illuminating description of the Temple of Herod (and his historical analysis of the building of the structure from the time of Solomon), we should be aware of one geographical feature associated with the Temple that all Jewish people would have taken for granted (and so did Josephus) that the priest/historian did not believe it was necessary to mention as being a necessary part of the Temple complex. Two foreigners, however (one from Egypt about 300 years before Josephus, and one Roman who lived in the time of Josephus), felt it was essential to mention a cardinal feature of the Temple around which the whole structure was able to maintain its holiness and represent the very House of God on earth. That was the mention of a natural spring of water that was found within the precincts of the Temple to provide the needed water supplies (both ritualistically and for ordinary cleaning purposes) that any "House of God" would have to have in order to function as a suitable residence of God on earth or in heaven. Let us notice what these two foreigners had to say about the Temple and its furniture and the necessary facility that made the building a holy and divine Sanctuary that could adequately represent the "House of God" on earth.

The first witness is that of Aristeeas who came from Egypt to Jerusalem about 300 years before the time of Josephus. He leaves us a report of what he saw with his own eyes. Notice that he makes a point of the fact that inside the Temple area "the water supply is

inexhaustible since there is an abundant natural spring that gushes out from inside the Temple area.”⁶³⁶ Tacitus, the Roman, said the same.

“The Temple resembled a fortress and had its own walls, which were more laboriously constructed than the others. Even the colonnades with which it was surrounded formed an admirable outer defense. It contained an inexhaustible spring.”⁶³⁷

Readers, the only spring in the Jerusalem area (and there is no other for at least five miles in any direction) is that known in the Holy Scriptures as the Gihon Spring. That natural spring that gave an inexhaustible supply of spring water was, according to Aristeas and Tacitus, **WITHIN THE VERY PRECINCTS OF THE TEMPLE!** And this is the truth! The fact that this well-known singular spring was **IN** the Temple shows its Gihon location. It was an indispensable requirement that for a fully equipped building that would resemble on earth God’s divine House in heaven, that building had to contain a natural spring where purified water could be obtained for certain essential rituals that demanded such things. True, we know that in the time of the Hasmoneans (the Maccabees) and also in that of Pilate, there were two aqueducts that brought water from south of Bethlehem to the Temple and the Fort Antonia area to supplement the ordinary water sources found in Jerusalem. But these two aqueducts were built because of an expanding population and they were built after the time of Aristeas.

The original supply of water for the Temple was from the “inexhaustible spring” that was found within the walls of the Temple at Jerusalem. This was the Gihon Spring (the only spring in Jerusalem). This was the original (and only) spring that was located within the Temple walls. Now note this. The Gihon Spring is situated just over 1000 feet south of the Dome of the Rock and it is even about 600 feet south of the southern wall of the Haram esh-Sharif. When, in a moment, we review Josephus’ description of the Temple and its outer walls, we must understand that we will be reading about a building that had the Gihon Spring in its confines and was

⁶³⁶ *Letter of Aristeas*, emphases mine.

⁶³⁷ Tacitus, *History*, V, 11–12.

almost a quarter of a mile south of the Dome of the Rock. The two areas will be utterly different from one another.

Josephus' Description of the Temple

The first thing that Josephus does is to show what the mountain was like on top of which Solomon built the Temple in his time. Remember that this was formerly the area of the threshing floor of Ornan who sold the area to King David so that he could construct the Sanctuary of God on its summit. Though Josephus is describing events that happened a thousand years before his time, he was still giving information about the precise spot where the Temple of Herod had been built. There was no doubt to Josephus, or the Jewish authorities at his time, that Herod's Temple was still constructed in the same general area as that of Solomon's (though enlarged very much from Solomon's Temple). So, what Josephus is stating is a description of the former hill on which Solomon began to build his Temple. What Josephus states is very instructive, and in no way can it be said that he is describing any area around the present Dome of the Rock or anywhere in the region of the Haram esh-Sharif. Note what Josephus stated.

“The Temple was seated on a strong hill, the level area on its summit originally barely sufficed for shrine [the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place] and the altar [the Altar of Burnt Offering], the ground around it being precipitous and steep.”⁶³⁸

Notice carefully that the Temple was first constructed on a “strong hill.” It was a steep hill that was pretty easy to defend because of its precipitous features. Note that the area on top was surrounded by cliffs that went downslope in a manner that was “precipitous and steep.” The area on top of this strong hill was not large. It was so constrained in its top area that “its summit barely [just barely] sufficed for shrine and the altar.” How much space was this on top of this strong and precipitous hill that had steep sides all around? Since the Holy of Holies, Holy Place and Altar of Burnt Offering that Solomon built (as Josephus stated) was about 130 cubits (195 feet) in length: The Holy of Holies was 60 cubits

⁶³⁸ *War* V.5,1.

long (90 feet); the porch in front of the shrine (the Holy Place) was 20 cubits long (30 feet); and the altar was located southwest of the Holy Place some 30 cubits away (that is, 10 cubits between the porch and the laver, the laver was 10 cubits wide, and then another 10 cubits to the western side of the Altar of Burnt Offering), and then the Altar of Burnt Offering itself was a square of 20 cubits (30 feet), makes a space of about 130 cubits in length (195 feet) from west to east. Since we find that Solomon also built his palace and judgment hall just to the south of the Temple, and on this particular hill that Josephus called a “strong hill,” the width of the summit area must also have measured about 130 cubits from north to south. This made an exact square as a platform.

How high was this strong hill on which Solomon built the original Temple, his palace and government buildings? Josephus said Solomon built an east wall (or embankment) that reached upwards from the very base of the hill (that is, from the bottom of the Kedron Valley) for 300 cubits (450 feet). This eastern embankment (or wall) ascended upward from the base (from the very floor of the Kedron Valley) until it reached an altitude at the level area on top of the mountain. This eastern precinct (between the top of the hill and this artificial embankment that Solomon built in the east and directly over the Kedron Valley) was then filled in with earth, stones and bigger rocks until this eastern embankment reached the top of the hill some 450 feet above the floor of the Kedron Valley. Josephus tells us that Solomon filled in (in the Bible the Hebrew states he made the “Millo” — a “filled in” area) with earth and stones. Thus, the steep and precipitous area between the top of the hill and the embankment that Solomon erected out of the floor of the Kedron Valley was completely “filled in.” Let us see how Josephus describes this very activity of Solomon.

“But king Solomon, the actual founder of the Temple, having walled up the eastern side, a single portico [colonnade] was reared on this made ground [on top of this artificial ‘fill in’]; on its other sides [north, west, south] the sanctuary remained exposed [no walls were built by Solomon on these three sides]. In course of ages, however, through the constant additions of the people to the embankment, the hilltop by this process of leveling up widened

[they 'filled in' more areas]. They further broke down the north wall [a later activity that was done by Herod] and thus took in an area as large as the whole Temple enclosure subsequently occupied. Then, after having enclosed the hill from its base [from the floor of the Kedron and Tyropoeon valleys] with a wall on three sides [after Solomon's time the Israelites built the north, west and south walls], and accomplished a task greater than they could ever have hoped to achieve — a task upon which long ages were spent by them as well as all their sacred treasures, though replenished by the tributes offered to God from every quarter of the world — they built around the block the upper courts and the lower Temple enclosure [the final Temple of Herod was shaped like a square block]. The latter, where its foundations were lowest, they built up from 300 cubits [450 feet high]; at some spots this figure was exceeded.”⁶³⁹

Though Josephus said that the four walls supporting the Temple in his time was shaped as a square block of stones reaching up on the east side to 450 feet (and in some places even higher) from the floor of the Kedron Valley, he showed that most of the eastern part of the Temple was built over the earth and rock “fill in” that Solomon and later Israelites placed within the eastern embankment (and finally within the embankments caused by the building of the other three walls on the north, west and south). This square block of supportive walls with an abundance of “fill in” material appeared (as we will soon see) as a 40 to 45 story tower that arose out of the floor of the Kedron Valley and with its southern and northern sides extended westward over the ridge between the Kedron and Tyropoeon Valleys. Indeed, the western wall [or side] of the Temple [this square blocked tower] also arose out of the Tyropoeon Valley (though the western side was not as high). But even besides the external visible parts of the four walls surrounding the Temple tower, there were also a great number of foundation stones that supported the Sanctuary structure that could not be seen because they were built below ground. Josephus continues:

“The whole depth of the foundations was, however, not apparent [not all of the foundation stones of the Temple could be seen]; for they [Israelites over the ages] filled up a considerable part of the

⁶³⁹ *Ibid.*

ravines [the Kedron and the Tyropoeon Valleys] wishing to level the narrow alleys of the town. Blocks of stone were used in the building measuring 40 cubits [60 feet long]; for lavish funds and popular enthusiasm led to incredible enterprises, and a task seemingly interminable was through perseverance and in time actually achieved.”⁶⁴⁰

This does not end the description of the Temple by Josephus. He goes into much more elaborate detail that highlights the actual appearance of the Temple and its walls. The whole complex had the appearance of a square blocked tower that was 400 hundred cubits square at the summit of its construction (a Greek *stadium* in length on each side, or 600 feet by 600 feet). At the summit (which was 300 cubits high or 450 feet) Herod built a level platform on which he constructed four colonnades with roadways on top to surround the square block. In the interior of this platform (indeed, Josephus said “in its center”) Herod built the Sanctuary itself with its outer courts on the east and its inner courts (those of the priests and the Holy of Holies) on the west. The whole structure rose up to a height of a modern skyscraper some 40 to 45 stories above the extreme depths of the Kedron Valley. This was nowhere near the Dome of the Rock.

The Prodigious Heights of the Temple Walls

Let us look further at the eyewitness accounts of Josephus that tell us about the dimensions of the Temple of Herod and where its walls were positioned in the first century. We should start with a further description of the east wall. Josephus said the foundation of that wall was built by Solomon and was still in existence in the time of Herod. Though Josephus seems to say the eastern wall was a creation of Solomon, he may only mean that its early foundational stones were those of Solomon.⁶⁴¹ There were also enlarge-

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴¹ There is the statement in the Septuagint Version of Sirach that Simon, the son of Onias, in the early third century B.C.E., was responsible for making more foundational stones and “doubling the height” of the Temple walls. This Simon (often identified with the extraordinary powerful High Priest called Simon the Righteous) also made the Temple into a mighty fortress with battlements at intervals along the walls. See LXX, Ecclesiasticus 50:1–2, also Charles, *Apoc-*

ments to the Temple in the time of Simon the Hasmonean. We also know that Herod in his time extended the eastern wall northward from the original wall that he found in existence at his time. Whatever the case, the southeast corner of this wall was located at the extreme bottom of the Kedron Valley — right in the very floor of the valley. Josephus did not say it was located over half way up the west slope of the Kedron Valley as is the southeastern corner of the Haram. He said it was situated at the very bottom (or at the “foot”) of the Kedron Valley.

“He [Solomon] also built a wall below, beginning at the bottom [‘at the foot’ of the eastern hill, Loeb translation] which was encompassed by a deep valley [the Kedron].”⁶⁴²

It is time to pay attention to these accounts of Josephus. This position for the wall in the valley floor (at the very foot of the slope of the Kedron Valley) required that a type of manmade channel or viaduct be constructed to direct water around the eastern wall from rains or melting snow. This allowed water to flow in a conduit that avoided undermining the southeastern angle of Solomon’s (and Herod’s) Temple.

One of the reasons Solomon placed the foundation of his eastern wall at the bottom of the ravine was to give the appearance of height and impressiveness to the completed structure. The fact that Solomon placed the foundation of the east wall in the floor of the Kedron Valley is confirmed by Josephus in his account of the Roman general Pompey in his attack against the Temple in 63 B.C.E. (this was before Herod and his rebuilding activities).

“At this treatment Pompey was very angry, and took Aristobulus into custody. And when he was come to the city [Jerusalem], he looked about where he might make his attack. He saw the walls were so firm, that it would be hard to overcome them. The valley before the walls was terrible [for depth]; and that the temple, which was within that valley, was itself encompassed with a very strong wall, insomuch that if the city were taken, that temple would be a second place of refuge for the enemy to retire to.”⁶⁴³

rypha and Pseudepigraphica, vol.1, p.507.

⁶⁴² *Antiquities* XV.11,3.

⁶⁴³ *War* 1.7,1.

There is no ambiguity in this reference. Josephus cites historical records giving eyewitness accounts of what former people saw concerning the position of the eastern wall of the Temple. Pompey observed that the foundation of the eastern wall was located within the lowest part of the precipitous ravine. It was at the very bottom.

The walls Pompey saw in this reference were not those around the Haram esh-Sharif. It is evident to anyone who presently views the walls of the Haram that its southeastern angle is not down in the very floor of the Kedron Valley. Indeed, the southeastern corner of the Haram is conspicuously located over half way up the west side of the Kedron slope. And farther north at the northeastern angle of the Haram, the walls of the Haram are situated at the very top of the ridge. Pompey, however, saw very different walls than those perched near or on top of the slope. The eastern wall of the Temple that Pompey saw (and that he referred to) had its foundations at the floor of the Kedron Valley — in the very bottom of the ravine. Even the entire northern wall of the Temple (from its northeast corner to its northwest corner) was viewed by Josephus as being of “tremendous depth.”⁶⁴⁴

But the southeastern angle of the walls surrounding the Temple was even higher in elevation. That southeastern corner of Solomon’s and Herod’s Temple wall towered high above the very floor of the Kedron Valley. Josephus said that in his time this eastern angle of the wall was on the average 300 hundred cubits in height (450 feet, as high as a 40 to 45 story building). What? Could Josephus really mean this? It appears ridiculous in the extreme to some scholars that the walls surrounding the Haram esh-Sharif could ever have been that high. Yes, indeed, this would be the case if people consider the southeast angle of the Haram as the corner wall of the Temple Josephus was referring as an eyewitness. That southeast angle of the Haram could never have been that high, nor was it located directly in the very floor of the Kedron Valley. The truth is, however, Josephus is not speaking of the eastern wall of the Haram or of its southeast angle. The wall to which Josephus referred was 450 feet in height. Note again what he said:

⁶⁴⁴ *War* I.7,3.

“The latter [the eastern wall], where its foundations were lowest, they built up from a depth of three hundred cubits; at some spots this figure was exceeded.”⁶⁴⁵

Yes, the eastern wall of the Temple was even higher than 450 feet in some places! Moreover, Josephus went on to say that this awesome height of the eastern wall of the Temple was exceeded at the southeastern angle. He indicated the southeastern corner of the wall, up to the highest point of the Temple (perhaps this means to the top of the “pinnacle” [wing] of the Temple where the New Testament states Satan took Jesus), had a height of no less than 400 cubits (it reached upward 600 feet above the very bottom of the Kedron Valley floor). Josephus said:

“He [Solomon] made that Temple which was beyond this a wonderful one indeed, and such as exceeds all description in words; nay, if I may so say, is hardly believed upon sight; for when he had filled up great valleys with earth, which, on account of their immense depth, could not be looked on when you bent down to see them without pain, and had elevated the ground four hundred cubits [600 feet], he made it to be on a level with the top of the mountain on which the Temple was built.”⁶⁴⁶

Josephus went on to say: “This wall was itself the most prodigious work that was ever heard of by man.”⁶⁴⁷

This wall of the Temple at its southeast angle was 600 feet high from the lowest of the foundation stones to the top of the colonnades located at the southeast corner (or perhaps the 600 feet included the height of the “pinnacle” which could mean the extended height of the “Royal Cloister” that was located on the southern wall and reached to the eastern wall).

Whatever the case, even the eastern wall of the Temple at its northeast angle was also extremely high, and we are told by Josephus that this corner was located directly over the Kedron Valley (not up on the ridge and away from the slope of the Kedron as is that of the Haram esh-Sharif).

⁶⁴⁵ *War* V.5,1, Loeb translation.

⁶⁴⁶ *Antiquities* VIII.3,9.

⁶⁴⁷ *Antiquities* XV.11,3.

“The Romans also burnt the whole northern portico [colonnade] right up to that on the east, where the angle [northeastern angle of the Temple wall] connecting the two was built over the ravine called the Kedron, the depth at that point being consequently terrific.”⁶⁴⁸

This description by Josephus is very different from that associated with the northeast corner of the present Haram esh-Sharif. The present northeast angle of the Haram is located on top of the ridge. Indeed, it is on a flat part of the ridge. It is actually about 100 feet west of the slope that goes down into the Kedron. The simple truth is, these two northeast corners belong to two different walls that surround two different facilities. When Josephus spoke of the eastern wall of the Temple with its southeast and northeast angles, he was not in any manner referring to those angles in the walls now surrounding the Haram esh-Sharif.

And as far as the southeastern corner of the Temple wall is concerned, modern scholars can hardly believe that one must measure 600 feet downward from the “pinnacle” to reach the lowest of the foundation stones of the Temple wall in the floor of the Kedron Valley. As a comparison in height, this eastern wall would have been 120 feet higher than the top of the great pyramid of Cheops in Egypt (the largest and highest of the pyramids). And remember, Josephus was reporting these measurements concerning the walls of the Temple as an eyewitness. He was writing his book to King Agrippa and others in the royal family (plus to Titus the Roman emperor) who were also eyewitnesses to these immense and awesome dimensions of the Temple walls.

Josephus, as a historian/priest, had been to the Temple many times and he observed the enormous height of the southeast angle directly over the Kedron, and the northeast angle also of great height (though not quite as high) located directly over the Kedron Valley as well. Notice the superlatives in language Josephus used in describing this wonderful and majestic scene of this precipitous eastern wall that supported the “pinnacle” of the Temple at its southeast angle.

⁶⁴⁸ *War* VI.3,2 Loeb ed.

“This cloister [that is, the southeast corner of the southern colonnade] deserves to be mentioned better than any other under the sun. For while the valley was very deep, and its bottom could not be seen, if you looked from above into the depth, this farther vastly high elevation of the colonnade stood upon that height, insomuch that if anyone looked down from the top of the battlements, or down both these altitudes, he would be giddy, while his sight could not reach to such a great depth.”⁶⁴⁹

So high was the southern colonnade at the southeast corner of the Temple wall that Josephus said the Temple (when looked at from the south of Jerusalem) could be seen for “a great many furlongs.”⁶⁵⁰

Josephus was describing the final architectural aspects of Herod’s Temple, but he acknowledged many of these features were associated with the original Temple of Solomon.⁶⁵¹ Of course, Solomon’s Temple was nowhere as large as Herod’s Temple finally became. Indeed, the Jewish authorities after the time of Alexander the Great enlarged the size of Solomon’s original design

⁶⁴⁹ *Antiquities* XV.11,5.

⁶⁵⁰ *Antiquities* XV.11,3.

⁶⁵¹ While Josephus said in *War* V.5,1 that the top of the eastern wall of Herod’s Temple was 300 cubits’ above the Kedron Valley (or higher in places), he said in *Antiquities* VIII.3,9 the height was 400 cubits (that is 100 cubits higher). Reading the texts carefully means that the extra 100 cubits (of the 400 cubits’ measurement) remained below ground because “the whole depth of the foundations was not evident; for they filled up a considerable part of the ravines” (*War* V.5,1). And in *Antiquities* VIII.3,9, Josephus said Solomon “filled up great valleys with earth.” This means Solomon actually filled in with earth the original Kedron Valley (to the height of 100 cubits) and then on top of this foundational “fill-in,” his east wall ascended another 300 cubits exposed to the air up to the top of the Temple wall. However, we are told that it was Simon, the son of Onias, in the early third century B.C.E. who actually doubled the height of the walls around the Temple (see *Ecclesiasticus* 50:1–2). Josephus may be including this further heightening of the Temple walls by Simon in his description. Whatever the historical truth, Josephus was certainly giving proper dimensions for the eastern wall of Herod’s Temple of which he was an eyewitness. Did Josephus include the height of the “pinnacle” in his 400 cubits height at the southeast angle? The word “pinnacle” actually means “wing” (or side building) and it may have been a scenic view area and not a “tower.” There is no ritualistic or symbolic reason shown in the Bible why a “tower” had to be at that corner. If there were a “tower” at that spot (as we have illustrated as a possibility), it was only for aesthetic and/or observational purposes.

by doubling the height of the walls,⁶⁵² and that Herod himself made the Temple larger still.

We have an eyewitness account from the man named Hecateus who visited Jerusalem near the time of Alexander the Great. He said that Solomon's platform for the Temple was only 150 feet wide.⁶⁵³ You will remember that in the time of Herod, the Temple platform on which the Temple stood was a square of 600 feet on each side. Herod doubled the size of the Temple that was in his day. Josephus said he "enlarged the surrounding area to double its former extent [that is, double the size of the Temple which was in existence in his time]."⁶⁵⁴ Josephus said such extensions were made over the ages since the time of Solomon. But even the smaller lateral dimensions of Solomon's earlier Temple were grand and awe-inspiring. Josephus said:

"He [Solomon] made that Temple which was beyond this a wonderful one indeed, and such as exceeds all description in words; nay, if I may so say, is hardly believed upon sight; for when he had filled up great valleys with earth, which, on account of their immense depth, could not be looked on when you bent down to see them without pain, and had elevated the ground four hundred cubits, he made it to be on a level with the top of the mountain on which the Temple was built."⁶⁵⁵

In giving these large dimensions of height for the Temple walls (which he considered so outstanding and full of grandeur), Josephus readily admitted that most people who had never seen the Temple would have expressed disbelief at these enormous measurements. But Josephus was dedicating this very work to King Agrippa and to the Emperor Titus who were both eyewitnesses as well to the enormity of the height of the Temple walls. There is no reason to doubt Josephus' evaluation when he said the eastern wall

⁶⁵² Ecclesiasticus 50:1.

⁶⁵³ "The Jews have only one fortified city; they call it Jerusalem. Nearly in the center of the city stands a stone wall [of the Temple], enclosing an area about 500 feet long and 150 feet broad, approached by a pair of gates" (Josephus, *Contra Apion* I.22).

⁶⁵⁴ *War* I.21,1.

⁶⁵⁵ *Antiquities* VIII.3,9.

of the Temple “exceeds all descriptions in words.” He also said: “the wall was itself the most prodigious work that was ever heard of by man.”⁶⁵⁶ In stating these facts, Josephus admitted that the “immense depths” of the dimensions of the eastern wall could be “hardly believed.”

To Josephus the whole vista was wonderful beyond compare. And without doubt, this precipitous eastern wall of the Temple was truly a glorious work of art. The Temple platform was at the top of these steep walls. The Temple (on its square platform) was viewed as perched on top of a perfectly squared TOWER that reached upward 40 to 45 stories like a modern skyscraper occupying a square block of area in New York or Chicago. This square-shaped TOWER was located 600 feet south of the southern wall of Fort Antonia and it was connected to the fort by two arched bridges positioned side-by-side that attached the northwestern corner of the square Temple platform with the southwestern corner of Antonia. It was a magnificent sight to behold.

What Is Modern Opinion of these Statements?

The majority of historians today stand back in utter disbelief in what these eyewitness accounts of Josephus attest. Most modern scholars cannot believe that there is any veracity in Josephus’ narratives of these wonderful dimensions of the Temple described in his early accounts. They simply brush aside the information and suggest that Josephus was simply up to his old tricks of exaggeration. They think the poor guy must have been out of his mind!

This has to be the case from their point of view because when one looks at the present southeast angle of the Haram esh-Sharif (which they imagine to be the southeast corner of the Temple walls), it could in no way fit any of these descriptions of Josephus that we read in the above references. Prof. George Adam Smith, one of the great authorities of early Jerusalem, said: “The dimensions which Josephus gives are not trustworthy, nor reconcilable with the Haram area.”⁶⁵⁷ That’s right, what Josephus reported will

⁶⁵⁶ *Antiquities* XV.11,3.

⁶⁵⁷ *Jerusalem*, vol.I, p.231.

not fit the Haram esh-Sharif in any way, shape or form. As one point of fact, the southeast corner of the Haram has its foundations over half way to the top of the western slope of the Kedron, not down in the floor of the valley as Josephus states the actual Temple walls were located.

Indeed, if one were to transfer the dimensions of the Temple and its walls mentioned by Josephus to the area of the Haram, then the platform on which the Temple was built would have been 300 cubits (450 feet) above the base of the southeast corner. Note how this is an impossible figure. Recall that on top of the platform of the Haram, one would also have to place the “pinnacle” of the Temple. If these measurements of Josephus were true (and if one applied them to the present Haram and its walls), the Temple platform on which the Temple was built would be almost 200 feet higher than the summit of the Mount of Olives! Ouch! Such a prospect must be acknowledged as a complete absurdity.

Even the lateral dimensions of the Temple walls as given by Josephus (a square of 600 feet) will not fit harmoniously with the Haram walls. Indeed, the square of the actual Temple could be placed over the area of the Dome of the Rock, there would still be plenty of room on all sides of the Haram platform. Besides that, if scholars place the Temple as described by Josephus onto the platform of the Haram, it would be like seeing a 40 to 45 story building on that platform. This is a ridiculous assessment. Besides, Josephus tells us in the clearest of language that the southeastern corner of Herod’s Temple wall went directly down into the floor of the Kedron Valley and that the northeastern wall also did the same thing (though not quite as high above the Kedron).

The fact remains that the Haram esh-Sharif and its four rectangular walls surrounding it, are not the walls of the Temple nor is the Haram the region where the Temple was located. The Haram clearly fits the spot of Fort Antonia, and Josephus tells us that the southern wall of Antonia was precisely one *stade* (600 feet) north of the northern wall of the Temple.⁶⁵⁸

⁶⁵⁸ *War* VI.2,6.

Josephus said the fortress was so high and large that Antonia obscured from sight the whole Temple by those approaching Jerusalem directly from the north. Since these geographical indications represent the conclusions of an eyewitness, these affirmations would be nonsensical if one placed the Temple measurements mentioned by Josephus within the Haram.

The truth is, the scholars have simply selected the wrong site for the Temple. The Haram is the site of Fort Antonia. But, if one viewed the southeastern corner of the wall of the actual Temple as having its foundation at the very floor of the Kedron Valley and just south of the Gihon Spring, then Josephus' descriptions make perfectly good sense.

The Temple's Southeastern Angle in the Valley Floor

Solomon (and later Herod) had to place the southeastern corner of the Temple walls at the very bottom of the Kedron Valley. There was an essential reason for this. The Temple had to have a particular fixture within its boundaries for Sanctuary rituals to function properly, and also for the Temple to represent the physical example of God's Palace on earth. What was this feature? It was the biblical requirement that the Temple have a natural spring positioned within its borders. There are numerous scriptural evidences that prove this point.

There was only one spring in Jerusalem and that natural spring is called the Gihon located slightly upslope from the extreme floor of the Kedron Valley on its western side. In order for the Temple to have this spring within its precincts, Solomon had to place it inside his east wall. To do this, the king began an awesome and enormous building enterprise. It was in the nature of Solomon (and later, Herod the Great) to overcome what experts of their times considered impossible obstacles.

Undeterred by topographical problems he had to encounter, Solomon (according to Josephus) started to construct the foundation for the eastern wall of the Temple just east and south of the Gihon Spring in the very floor of the Kedron Valley. The wall was then elevated upward. At first Solomon may have built up the wall

about half way to the top of the ridge, and later (in the time of Simon, son of Onias) the wall was built higher to be double its former vertical dimension.⁶⁵⁹ Solomon, or later people, also extended the wall northward along the western slope of the Valley. As it continued its northward course, the foundation part of the wall started to ascend alongside the west slope of the Kedron Valley where the valley began to turn slightly eastward. The eastern wall finally reached its northeast angle. From that angle, the wall turned westward to reach to the top of the ridge separating the Kedron and Tyropoeon Valleys. At a later time, this northern wall was extended farther westward toward the Tyropoeon Valley. Even later (in the time of Herod), this north wall was even torn down and another replaced it farther north.⁶⁶⁰

The top of the crest of this ridge between the Kedron and Tyropoeon Valleys on which the north wall was built was about 2300 feet above sea level, according to Charles Wilson's survey (which is the standard I use in this book).⁶⁶¹ This crest of the ridge would be about 450 feet above the floor of the Kedron Valley (assuming this to be its pristine or pre-alluvium state). It would mean the top of this northern wall would have been 120 feet higher than the bed-rock of the crest.⁶⁶² This height would reach the top of the colon-

⁶⁵⁹ See Ecclesiasticus 50:1 where it is recorded about "doubling the height" of the former Temple walls.

⁶⁶⁰ *War* V.5,1.

⁶⁶¹ This Ordinance Survey was made under the command of Captain Charles Wilson for the Ordinance Survey Office in the United Kingdom for 1864/5.

⁶⁶² What was the elevation above sea level of the absolute floor of the Kedron Valley in the time of Solomon? Of course, no one knows. The present level opposite the Gihon Spring is about 2100 feet above sea level. But there has been a considerable amount of alluvial fill-in from the various destructions of Jerusalem since the time of Solomon. It appears that Josephus tells us that there were 100 cubits (150 feet) of foundational walls on the Temple's east side that were below surface in his day. I have taken the 300 cubits (450 feet) that Josephus said was exposed to the air for the southeast angle to begin at about 1970 feet above sea level. This would mean the top of the Temple walls would be just about 2420 feet above sea level. This level for the top of the colonnades makes it even with the platform of the Haram esh-Sharif (which is the esplanade area of the former Fort Antonia). This would allow the top of the two colonnade roadways from Fort Antonia to the Temple to be level at about 2420 feet above sea level. The measurements given in this book are based on this assumption. Until

nades surrounding the foursquare Temple. This height of the north wall of the Temple was why Herod provided two level roadways from the top of the Temple colonnades directly northward to Fort Antonia.⁶⁶³ The southern wall of the Temple would have been about 160 feet above the crest of the north/south ridge over which the Temple was situated.

Depending on the area, the four walls surrounding the Temple were either 450 feet high to around 160 feet high where the north wall crossed the crest of the ridge between the Kedron Valley and the Tyropocon Valley. Josephus describes how these walls were built and placed into operation over the ages.

“When King Solomon, who was the person that built the Temple, had built a wall to it on its east side, there was then added one cloister [a colonnade on top] founded on a bank cast up for it, and on the other parts the holy house stood naked [its other three walls around it had not been built by Solomon]; but in future ages the people added new banks [they built the other three walls and filled in the vacant space to make a large raised platform on top], and the hill became a larger plain. Then they broke down the wall on the north side [in the time of Herod], and took in as much as sufficed afterward for the compass of the entire Temple. When they had built walls on three sides of the Temple round about from the bot-

archaeological investigation is done to solve the problem of the ancient heights of ridges or the depths of valleys in and around Jerusalem within their various time periods, this value will probably work as good as any.

⁶⁶³ The top of the northern wall of the outer Temple (at the juncture with these two colonnades from Fort Antonia) was at about 160 feet in height above the rocky ground of the crest of the ridge. If there were no colonnade bridges spanning this area between the north Temple wall and the south wall of Fort Antonia, then the troops from Fort Antonia would have had to descend to the ground level of the rocky ridge and then, when they reached the north wall of the Temple, climb steps upward for at least 120 feet in order to reach the platform on which the Temple was built. Such a thing would provide little or no military advantage to any troops coming from Antonia. But Herod had the two bridges built from the southwest corner of Antonia practically on a level to the northwest corner to the outer Temple colonnades (and none but military forces could use such bridges). And another point. If it were necessary (though it was not) to position the Holy of Holies over the exposed surface of an outcropping of natural rock (like the “Rock” under the Dome of the Rock), that “Rock” would have been 120 feet below the floor of the Holy of Holies. One would have to invent stairs to reach it. There was, of course, no such requirement.

tom of the hill [from the floor of the Kedron Valley] and had performed a work that was greater than could be hoped for.”⁶⁶⁴

The reason such a prodigious building was constructed with walls of immense heights (as a TOWER) was so the Temple could be built on a platform positioned over the Gihon Spring at the bottom of the valley. The Gihon Spring had to be within the Temple for the Sanctuary to function properly. (I have thoroughly explained why the Spring had to be a part of the Temple in a further chapter.)

Of course, the Temple itself could not use all the water that erupted periodically from the Gihon Spring. To account for this overflow, Solomon constructed a conduit that exited from the bottom of the Temple wall. The viaduct led southward along the western slope of the Kedron Valley, sometimes in an open trench and at other times within an enclosed pipe. Much of the water flowed out through an aperture in the wall acting as a spout to exit the Temple area. The water then descended into the conduit alongside the Kedron Valley to flow southward into a pool.

Several Psalms in the Holy Scriptures speak of this water that came forth from the Temple which the people could use for their benefit. But in the time of Hezekiah (when the Assyrians were encamped in front of Jerusalem), Hezekiah closed the aperture at the bottom of the Temple wall. Before doing this, he had his engineers design and construct a tunnel underneath Mount Zion that brought the water into the southwestern part of the city.

“This same Hezekiah closed the upper outlet of the waters of Gihon [the waters exited through the southern wall of the Temple] and directed them down to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all his works.”⁶⁶⁵

This “upper outlet” which Hezekiah closed up was that spout that ejected water through the southern wall of the Temple that Solomon had built. Hezekiah closed up that aperture in the Temple wall and directed the water via his new tunnel to the western part of the city during the siege.

⁶⁶⁴ *War* V.5,1.

⁶⁶⁵ II Chronicles 32:30, Revised Standard Version.

As I said, it was necessary to have a natural spring within the Temple precincts. Though spring waters could be transported to the site by aqueduct, Solomon had the Gihon Spring nearby and he used those waters exclusively. The region of the Haram had no natural spring in that northern area. True, there were cisterns aplenty, but there was no natural spring, and this was a requisite feature demanded in the Scriptures. The foundational walls of the Haram were also built near the top of the ridge on the west side of the Kedron Valley. But Josephus and the other historical sources inform us that Solomon began to build his Temple wall at the floor of the Kedron Valley. This is a most significant point that needs emphasizing.

“He [Solomon] also built a wall below, beginning at the bottom [of the Kedron ravine] which was encompassed by a deep valley. At the south side he laid stones together, and bound them one to another with lead, and included some of the inner parts till it proceeded to a great height, and till both the largeness of the square edifice and its altitude were immense. The vastness of the stones in the front were plainly visible on the outside yet so that the inward parts were fastened together with iron, and preserved the joints immovable for future times. When this work was done in this manner, and joined together as part of the hill itself to the very top of it, he wrought it all into one outward surface. He filled up the hollow places that were about the wall, and made it a level on the external upper surface, and a smooth level also. [Later], this hill was walled all round, and in compass four *stades* [a *stade* was 600 feet], each angle [of the square] containing in length a *stade* [it was a square of 600 feet on each side]. But within this wall and on the very top of all, there ran another wall of stone also having on the east quarter a double cloister [colonnade] of the same length with the wall; in the midst of which was the Temple itself.”⁶⁶⁶

It is important to note that this colonnade built on the eastside of the Temple courts was itself considered a wall. In the time of Herod, this meant the colonnade surrounding the Temple courts had a wall associated with it. That wall had to be located on the inner side of the colonnade roadway (on the Temple side). We are informed that this wall had gates at various intervals that led into

⁶⁶⁶ *Antiquities* XV.11.3.

the Temple courts. One of those gates in the New Testament is called the “Gate Beautiful.”⁶⁶⁷

Recall that the colonnade roadway embracing the Temple courts was 30 cubits (45 feet) broad, as wide as a major three or four lane highway today. There was a flat roof on top of the colonnade that was the roadway used by Roman troops.⁶⁶⁸ Located at the base of the columns was the sheltered roadway that the ordinary worshippers used for entering the Temple. On the exterior side of the colonnade facing away from the Temple courts, there must have been a balustrade to protect people who were walking on the lower roadway from the immense depths that reached downward to the floor of the Kedron Valley. The same balustrade that was a part of the colonnade also protected people from the lesser depths on the other sides of the skyscraper type TOWER that represented the Temple Square.

Tacitus, the Roman historian who lived within a generation of the war with the Jews, said:

“The temple resembled a citadel, and had its own walls, which were more laboriously constructed than the others. Even the colonnades with which it was surrounded formed an admirable outwork.”⁶⁶⁹

Notice that Tacitus said the colonnades were “outwork” — they could be seen from outside the Temple area. There was no outer wall to hide the columns. The wall was actually on the inside of the four colonnades that surrounding the Temple Square.

The view from such colonnade roadways around the Temple must have been spectacular and inspiring. This is precisely what

⁶⁶⁷ Acts 3:2, 10.

⁶⁶⁸ It should be remembered that the roofs of the colonnades, both of the square Temple enclosure and the two colonnade roadways that reached from the Temple to Fort Antonia, were intended to be areas where Roman troops could guard the entrances and exits to the Temple as well as Temple Square itself. Josephus refers to this precise usage of the roofs of the colonnades. He said: “The usual crowd had assembled at Jerusalem for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the Roman cohort had taken up its position on the roof of the portico [colonnade] of the Temple; for a body of men in arms invariably mounts guard at the feasts, to prevent disorders arising from such a concourse of people” (*War* II.12,1 italics mine, Loeb translation).

⁶⁶⁹ Tacitus, *History*, Book V.10.

Herod wanted to present to the people who would walk within those colonnade areas. But that was only half of the beautiful prospect that these colonnades presented. When people looked at the Temple structure from a distance of half a mile away (let us say), they would have seen with admiration those prodigious and precipitous walls that were graced at the very top with a splendid colonnade surrounding the main Temple located in the center of the platform. It would have been a magnificent sight to behold. This grand spectacle is no doubt what Herod wanted to provide for the people of Jerusalem. He knew it would equally impress all Jews and Gentiles who came to Jerusalem from other parts of the world. We read in the Talmud: "He who has not seen the Temple of Herod has never in his life seen a beautiful building."⁶⁷⁰

Scholars and religious authorities today are not aware of these architectural features of the Temple and its walls because they refuse to believe what Josephus said, even though he was an eyewitness. Their problem is because they have selected the wrong spot for the site of the Temple. What Josephus recorded will not fit any of the dimensions of the Haram.

Because scholars wish to focus on the Haram as their Temple site, they normally believe that the colonnades surrounding the Temple Square in Herod's time must have been open on the interior side to the Temple courts (without any wall separating the Temple courts from the colonnade areas). In truth, however, the exact opposite is the case. It was the interior side of the colonnade walkway that was closed to the pedestrians because it had a wall preventing access to the Temple courts, except at various gates that were placed in the wall. Remember, the colonnades we are told by Josephus were 45 feet wide (30 cubits) and about 38 feet high (25 cubits). In the sheltered lower area among the columns supporting the roof, the normal worshippers going to the Temple (or leaving the Temple) would walk with protection from the rain, etc. On the top of the those colonnades there was the 45 feet roadway surrounding the Temple courts used by Roman troops to govern the crowds that attended the services at the Temple. This had to be the

⁶⁷⁰ *Baba Bathra* 4a.

case if the walls were as high as Josephus said they were, and if they enclosed the Gihon Spring within them.

Chapter 34

THE PROPER COMPARISONS OF THE TEMPLE

THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT that the Haram esh-Sharif is not the place of the former Temple. We now realize what that structure really was. But an interesting feature of the Haram is its astonishing resemblance to other permanent Camps of the Romans — and without doubt Fort Antonia was a Roman Camp. Note in the description of Josephus given in the previous chapter that the walls of Fort Antonia were said to be “square.” This is a clear indication that Fort Antonia was built in the form of a Roman Camp. Josephus himself said that Roman Camps were accustomed to be designed in the form of a “square.”⁶⁷¹

⁶⁷¹ Josephus said: “They [the Romans] do not begin to fight till they have walled their camp about; nor is the fence they raise rashly made, or uneven; nor do they all abide in it, nor do those that are in it take their places at random; but if it happens that the ground is uneven, it is first leveled: their camp is also four-

Josephus did not mean, however, that the camps were always a perfect square. For example, we can still see the Roman Camps set up around Masada by General Silva in 73 C.E. Though they are certainly “square-like” as Josephus stated, none of them was precisely “square” in shape. There are many remaining archaeological examples and historical accounts that show many Roman camps (though square-like) were actually rectangles. Even the dimensions of the Haram esh-Sharif are not precisely a square. Even people who for the first time have viewed the Haram from the Mount of Olives are clearly able to notice that the enclosure is not a square. It has the appearance of being a rectangle, and of course, that is what it looks like from afar. Up close, it can be seen that the Haram is not even a precise rectangle.

The Haram is actually a trapezium (a quadrilateral without parallel sides). It has the following dimensions: “929 feet on the south, 1041 feet on the north, 1556 feet on the east, and 1596 feet on the west.”⁶⁷² This represents about 36 acres in area. Remarkably, it is comparable in size to most permanent camps of the Romans. These dimensions, however, do not fit either the Temple of Solomon or that of Herod according to Josephus or in other early records of the Jews. Herod’s Temple was, on the other hand, a perfect square.

The Temple Was A Perfect Square

The walls of the Haram esh-Sharif could not be those that surrounded the Temple in the time of Josephus. He stated dogmatically the Temple walls were in the shape of an exact square and that each side had the length of a *stadium* (Greek: a *stade*).⁶⁷³ Modern scholars dispute the length of the *stade*. Though most would accept its length as about 600 feet, various lengths from 585 to 660 feet have been suggested.⁶⁷⁴ In this book, I take the *stade* to be 600 feet (or 400 cubits). This means the Temple of Herod was just

square by measure, and carpenters are ready, in great numbers, with their tools, to erect their buildings for them” (*War* III.5,1 italics mine).

⁶⁷² Josephus, *Antiquities*, Loeb edition, vol. VIII, p.193.

⁶⁷³ *Antiquities* XV.11.3.

⁶⁷⁴ The distance of the *stade* often depended on the length of local stadiums.

about eight and one quarter acres in size.⁶⁷⁵ That is a reasonable average and one most scholars would certainly accept.

The much smaller lengths of the walls around the actual Temple of Herod are ample proof in itself that the Haram esh-Sharif cannot enclose the original Temple Mount. The larger dimensions of the Haram esh-Sharif, however, do fit the description concerning Fort Antonia that he said “dominated the Temple.”⁶⁷⁶ We are told that Fort Antonia also occupied the whole north side of the Temple.⁶⁷⁷ As anyone can see, these plain eyewitness accounts by Josephus (which modern scholars are at a loss to explain) show the measurements of the Haram esh-Sharif are much larger than those associated with the Temple of Herod and Jesus. They clearly belong to another edifice — NOT the Temple. Indeed, they fit Fort Antonia perfectly.

The Temple Mount in the Mishnah

The dimensions of the Haram esh-Sharif also do not fit the measurements of the Temple stated in another early Jewish writing known as the Mishnah. The Mishnah is a Jewish document compiled about 200 C.E. that records opinions of earlier rabbis dating back to the time of the Temple. Like Josephus, it also records that the Temple Mount was a precise square. The Mishnah’s dimensions, however, differ from those of Josephus. It gives slightly larger measurements. It states the Temple Mount was reckoned to be a perfect square of 500 cubits (that answers to 750 feet on each side if the ordinary cubit were meant).⁶⁷⁸

These measurements are at variance with those of Josephus. Though both Josephus and the Mishnah speak of a perfect square, the numbers themselves do not tally. However, when one analyzes

⁶⁷⁵ Josephus clearly shows that the platform on which Herod’s Temple was constructed had walls around it precisely one *stade* on each side (making a perfect square). The *stade* was just about 600 feet in length. Thus, the size of Herod’s Temple platform was about 360,000 square feet, or just about eight and one quarter acres in size.

⁶⁷⁶ *War* V.5,8 Loeb translation.

⁶⁷⁷ *Antiquities* XV.11,4; *War* V.5,4.

⁶⁷⁸ Middoth II.1.

the texts, it will be seen that the variance is because Josephus and the Mishnah are speaking of two different perimeters. The truth is, both measurements were proper for the Temple region. Josephus concerned himself with the actual dimensions of the walls around the Temple, while the Mishnah provided the measurements for the complete area of the “Temple Mount.”⁶⁷⁹ Josephus and the Mishnah were *not* speaking of the same thing. Once this is realized, both accounts can be helpful in understanding just what the proper measurements of the Temple area really were. Let us notice what the two sources meant.

The Mishnah is referring to the dimensions of a “camp area” around the Temple structure known as the “Temple Mount.”⁶⁸⁰ There were officially three camp areas recognized in the first century as encompassing the Temple and also the City of Jerusalem. The Mishnah in referring to the Temple Mount being a square of 500 cubits was calling attention to one of those three camps of Israel situated around the Holy of Holies in the Temple.

The Camps of Israel

It was common in the first century for Jews to refer to three camps of Israel surrounding Jerusalem. These three camps were situated around the Inner Temple known as the Holy of Holies. They were non-walled areas. They were the same types of camps that the Rabbis thought existed in the wilderness encampments of the Israelites during the time of Moses. These former camps were those located around the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle. The Rabbis reckoned that the residence of God (the Holy of Holies)

⁶⁷⁹ I put the words “Temple Mount” in quotes because the “Temple Mount” and the Temple located on the “Temple Mount” were two different things.

⁶⁸⁰ In the translation of the Mishnah by Danby and the Soncino edition of the Talmud, one might get the impression that the dimensions of 500 cubits by 500 cubits for the perimeter of the Temple Mount could be speaking of stone walls. This is not, however, what the writers of the Mishnah intended, and in the excellent translation of the Mishnah by Jacob Neusner it is nowhere evident that “stone walls” were intended. Josephus, an eyewitness, gave the actual measurements of the stone walls that formed the square of the Temple, while the Mishnah is only giving the perimeter area of the “Temple Mount” itself which was a different matter altogether. This will soon be made clear.

was the center area of the Sanctuary. Around this Inner Temple was positioned the first camp of Israel. It was called the "Camp of the Priests." This embraced the region within the Temple given to the responsibility of the priests. The second camp was reckoned to be the "Camp of the Levites." It was this camp that the Mishnah was speaking about when it said that the "Temple Mount" was 500 cubits square. The third camp was a much larger area. It was a square "Camp of Israel" which reached out 2000 cubits from the threshold of the Holy of Holies in the Temple.⁶⁸¹

It is significant for us to realize these three camps were not distinguished by material walls in the time of Moses, nor did these three camps have stone walls designating them within the environment of Jerusalem and the Temple in the time of Herod and Jesus.⁶⁸² The limits of these three camps were reckoned as imaginary zones surrounding the Temple. The "camp" that concerns us in regard to the measurements of 500 cubits mentioned in the Mishnah is the "Camp of the Levites." Simply put, the second camp area of the Levites was analogous to the zone around the Temple that was called in the first century the "Temple Mount."

⁶⁸¹ The Jewish authorities in the first century chose the figure of 2000 cubits (3000 feet) because of the reference to the 2000 cubits mentioned in Joshua 3:4 that separated the Israelites from the Ark of the Covenant. The accounts in the earliest parts of the Talmuds known as the Mishnah show the use of these 2000 cubits in early Jewish interpretation (Rosh ha-Shanah 2:5, see also Sanhedrin 1:5 and Shebu'oth 2:2 for the authority of the Sanhedrin [the Supreme Court] of the Jews to set the limits of the three camps). As in the case of the Ark in the time of Joshua, the distance was determined "by measure" (Joshua 3:4). This was by walking the distance with a reed or a line [a measuring rod] in the hand. The distance was determined by walking, not by measuring the distance of 2000 cubits from the Holy of Holies as a bird would fly.

⁶⁸² Whereas it was common for Jewish towns outside of Jerusalem to have their Sabbath day zones for walking at 2000 cubits from the walls of the various towns, in Jerusalem it was different because that is where the Temple (God's House) was situated. Since the Holy of Holies in the Temple was designed to contain the Ark of the Covenant and the 2000 cubits were originally reckoned from the Ark in the time of Joshua, the 2000 cubits for the limits of the Camp of Israel (the third camp) were measured in Jerusalem from the threshold of the Holy of Holies. This was considered to be the entrance to the abode of God on earth. This agreed with the 2000 cubits' distance between the Israelites and the Ark in the time of Joshua (Joshua 3:4).

The Camps of Israel in the First Century

We need to understand these three camps. The Talmud gives an account of these camps that existed around the Holy of Holies. The Jewish authorities in Jerusalem tried to duplicate the three camps that were in the wilderness as ordered by Moses. The first camp was the priestly area of the Temple, the second camp was the “Temple Mount” and the third camp was the official religious limit of the City of Jerusalem.⁶⁸³

More precisely, these three “camps” outside the Holy of Holies were acknowledged in the first century as being: (1) the “Camp of the Priests” which occupied the priestly section of the inner Temple. Then (2) the “Camp of the Levites” which occupied the rest of what was called the “Temple Mount” (500 cubits square around the Temple according to the Mishnah — this measurement extended beyond the actual walls of the Temple which were only 400 cubits square according to Josephus). This second “Camp of the Levites” at Jerusalem had imaginary dimensions (not stone walls), like those non-walled zones that existed in the time of Moses around the Tabernacle.⁶⁸⁴ This special boundary for Levitical responsibility was a perfect square of 500 cubits on each side. It did not mean the dimensions of the walls surrounding the Temple. The Mishnah shows the walls were *inside* or *upon* the “Temple Mount” — not that the 500 cubits were the dimensions of the actual walls. The 500 cubits only denoted the area of the “Temple Mount” (which included the walls located *on* or *within* the “Temple Mount”). The 500 cubits were imaginary (not actual walls) and corresponded exactly to the area of the “Camp of the Levites.”⁶⁸⁵

There was also the third camp called (3) the “Camp of Israel.” This final “Camp” was also a square area. It extended 2000 cubits from the Temple and designated the limit to the Sabbath day’s

⁶⁸³ *Yoma* 68a, see also *Zabachim* 105b.

⁶⁸⁴ Exodus 32:26–27, and see my book *Secrets of Golgotha* for a description in greater detail (pp.36–38).

⁶⁸⁵ This means that the size of the “Temple Mount” was just about thirteen and one quarter acres. The area of the “Temple Platform” on which the Temple buildings were placed was about eight and one quarter acres. These measurements are contrasts to the Haram esh-Sharif that is about 36 acres in area.

journey (Acts 1:12).⁶⁸⁶ There were no stone walls defining this outer (third) “camp” of the Israelites either in the wilderness or at Jerusalem in the first century.

The walls of the Temple itself (according to Josephus) were a *stade* in length or 400 cubits on each side (which I take to be 600 feet). This represented a precise square.⁶⁸⁷ Josephus said: “Such was the whole enclosure, having a circumference of four *stades*, each side taking up the length of a *stade*.” The “Camp of the Levites” (representing the whole of the “Temple Mount”) was reckoned to be 500 cubits on each side. Combining those two boundaries in Josephus and in the Mishnah represents a proper explanation of the official “Temple Mount” in the first century.⁶⁸⁸

⁶⁸⁶ This “Camp of Israel” was square in shape. This configuration is to be distinguished from the astronomical “camp” which was a radius of 2000 cubits from a central position within the Holy Place in front of the Altar of Incense (see my book *Secrets of Golgotha* where the “square” camp and the “circular” camp are given in more detail). The “square” Camp allowed the Israelites to take advantage of the corners in walking on a Sabbath day. The “circular” camp did not provide such corners. The “circular” Camp, however, was only for astronomical and prophetic purposes and was not in daily use by the ordinary Israelite public.

⁶⁸⁷ *Antiquities* XV.11,3. See also *Contra Apion* II.8,11 where Josephus said the Temple had “four courts” that surrounded it.

⁶⁸⁸ Though early Jewish writings mention the “Temple Mount” as having “a colonnade within a colonnade” (*Pesachim* 52b), the records do not mean the colonnades comprising the walls represented the perimeter of the “Temple Mount.” There are statements that a person could be on the “Temple Mount” before even reaching the eastern gate located in the exterior wall of the Temple. In fact, there were three Beth Dins (religious courts) in Jerusalem. One was at the entrance to the “Temple Mount” (to allow people who were unclean in certain aspects to attend). The second Beth Din was at the Temple Gate in the wall of the Temple, and the third was the Great Beth Din located at the Chamber of Hewn Stones at the southeast corner of the Holy Place in the Temple (*Sanhedrin* 86b, 88b). There were also three ash-pits to contain ashes of the sacrifices (particularly sin offerings). One was on the Mount of Olives, the second at the entrance to the “Temple Mount,” and the third on the eastside of the Altar of Burnt Offering (*Zevachim* 104b). The fact that the “Temple Mount” answered to the “Camp of the Levites,” and did not have walls around it (just as it was in the time of Moses), has confused some modern interpreters. Those who believe the square of 500 cubits for the “Temple Mount” mentioned in the Mishnah represents the dimensions of the Temple walls in the time of Herod are at loggerheads with the eyewitness accounts of Josephus who said the Temple walls were

Indeed, in the Talmud it was recognized that the Eastern Gate of the Temple was not a part of the boundaries comprising the "Temple Mount." The dimensions of the "Temple Mount" are not to be equated with those of the Temple walls or Temple Gates.⁶⁸⁹ This was also recognized by Maimonides in the twelfth century. He said there were gradations in holiness in the various areas surrounding the Temple and within the various Camps. Maimonides said: "It is also clear that the gradation [of holiness] with regard to the various places, that is, *the Temple Mount*, to the *place between the two walls* [of Temple Square], to the *Hall of the Women*, to the *Hall* [Court of Israel], and to the *Holy of Holies*."⁶⁹⁰

In the verse just quoted from Maimonides, you will note that after mentioning *the Temple Mount* itself, he then singles out the next inward part of the Temple that had greater holiness. That was "the *place between the two walls*." In Herod's Temple there was a single colonnade walkway surrounding the Temple that was 600 feet long (a Greek *stade* in length) on each side of the perfect square of the walls of the Temple. That single walkway was 45 feet wide with walls on each side (an *outer* wall protecting people from falling over the precipice into the valleys below and an *inner* wall that shielded the Court of the Gentiles from the walkway). The *inner* wall had various Gates associated with it. The Gate on the east was called the "Gate Beautiful" (or the Shushan Gate). Abutting to this *inner* wall was a covered area on the east known

a square of 400 cubits. The interpretation given in this book solves the problem in a most reasonable manner and it agrees with the texts of Josephus, the Mishnah and the Talmuds.

⁶⁸⁹ Talmud, Mas. *Ta'anith* 15b says [the text is capitalized and I retain the capitalization]:

"IN THE DAYS OF R. HALAFTA AND R. HANINA B. TRADITION THAT A MAN STEPPED BEFORE THE ARK AND COMPLETED THE ENTIRE BENEDICTION AND THEY DID NOT RESPOND, 'AMEN'.... THIS WAS OUR ORDER OF PROCEDURE ONLY AT THE EASTERN GATES AND ON THE TEMPLE MOUNT."

Note that the last two phrases of this reference distinguish the Eastern Gates of the Temple from the "Temple Mount" itself. Two different areas are discussed in this geographical statement.

⁶⁹⁰ Maimonides, *The Guide to the Perplexed*, Book III, ch.45 (see translation by Sholomo Pines, p. 581).

as “Solomon’s Porch” that was located within the Court of the Gentiles and where people could speak without having to stand in the open area of the Court which would expose people to the weather and the sun. These two walls (the *outer* and the *inner*) helped to support the colonnade walkway that completely surrounded the square platform of the Temple of Herod.

As one can see, these measurements of the Temple in the time of Josephus were very different from the lengths of the walls now surrounding the Haram. This is another principal reason why the Haram and its walls do NOT represent the walls surrounding the former Temple. These obvious differences should have been a “red flag” to warn modern scholars and theologians that something is very wrong with their convictions that the Haram represents the remains of the Temple of Herod. But this clear disparity has not deterred the modern authorities from jettisoning any eyewitness accounts that disagree with their conclusions. They merrily inform the general public that all the ancient authorities are wrong and they (the modern scholars) are the only ones who can be trusted as having the truth. It is my judgment, however, that the ancients be given their fair hearing in this matter.

Squares Were Ideal Measurements of Temple and City

The use of squares in the design of holy places was important in certain circumstances. This was particularly the case in determining the shape of the outer walls of the Temple, or in defining the area of the Camp of the Levites and the Camp of Israel. The example for this was the scriptural teaching of Ezekiel’s ideal Temple and its inner and outer walls reckoned as a perfect square.⁶⁹¹ This same pattern can be seen in the “Temple Scroll” found among the thousands of fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls.⁶⁹² In that document, the Dead Sea sectarians represented both the Temple and the City as squares. There is also a New Testament reference to this square pattern in defining sacred areas. The Book of Revelation shows the New Jerusalem that will descend from heaven at the end

⁶⁹¹ See Ezekiel chapter 48.

⁶⁹² Yigael Yadin, *The Temple Scroll*.

of the age is a perfect square. "The city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth."⁶⁹³

The fact that these foursquare measurements are associated with several of the important features of the Sanctuaries and the City in the Holy Scriptures shows that this pattern was an important one for the early Jewish authorities. It is reflected in the measurements of Josephus in the walls of the Temple (400 cubits on each side) and the Mishnah in its description of the "Temple Mount" (500 cubits on each side) which was the size of the "Camp of the Levites." This square area of the "Camp of the Levites" (known also as the "Temple Mount") had no walls surrounding it.

There is another geographical feature that must be borne in mind in the gradations of holiness associated with the walls of the Temple and the extended Temple Mount itself. It should be noted that the square boundaries of the Temple Mount were not the same distance from the four walls of the Temple itself. That is, the Temple was NOT positioned in the exact *CENTER* of the Temple Mount. Indeed, the Mishnah states:

"The Temple Mount measured five hundred cubits [750 feet] by five hundred cubits [750 feet]. Its largest [open] space was to the south [that is, the open space was from the *outer southern* wall of the Temple to the *outer* boundary of the Temple Mount located farther south], the next largest to the east [that is, the open area from the *outer eastern* wall of the Temple to the *outer* boundary of the Temple Mount located farther east], the third largest to the north [that is, from the *outer north* wall to the *outer* boundary of the Temple Mount located farther north], and its smallest was to the west; the place where its measure was greatest was where its use was greatest."⁶⁹⁴

Most people entered the Temple Mount (the Levitical Camp) through an official entrance in its *southern* boundary and they also went into the Temple itself through a gate in its *southern* wall. This means that the distance of open space between the southern boundary of the Temple Mount and the southern wall of the Temple was deliberately made wider so that the crowds could assemble on the

⁶⁹³ Revelation 21:16.

⁶⁹⁴ *Middoth* 2:1, Danby's translation.

south side before entering the Temple. The eastern side was the next most open area between the boundary of the Levitical Camp and the eastern Temple wall. The next most open space between the two boundaries was on the north side. The least amount of open area around the Temple walls was between the western boundary of the Levitical Camp and the western wall. This region in the west was made narrower because the buildings of the city on the western side were very near the Temple and Herod had to accommodate for that architectural feature. Thus, the larger area of the Temple Mount (that is, the limits of the Levitical Camp by being 750 feet by 750 feet) is not the same area encompassed by the square walls of the Temple which were much smaller (only 600 feet by 600 feet). The geographical centers of each area were different. Since the Temple was smaller in dimension, it was positioned nearer the northwestern corner of the Temple Mount (slightly nearer to the western wall than the northern wall).

Of course, these two different measurements for the boundaries of the Temple Mount and the Temple itself have nothing to do with the site of the Haram esh-Sharif. That area was the region of Fort Antonia, and it was a much, much larger region. All of this helps to show that the Haram esh-Sharif cannot be the site of the former Temples because its walls are not a square, nor were they even a perfect rectangle. Of its four walls (though they are straight for long stretches), the eastern and western sides are actually convergent toward one another in their northern orientation. This means that the Haram is not a square. This convergent feature alone disqualifies the Haram as the Temple, for the Temple was a perfect square.

Another Fact the Haram esh-Sharif is Not Temple Site

Josephus tells us in his description of the Temple and its walls that most of the eastern wall of the Temple (that existed in the time of Herod and Jesus) was constructed by Solomon.⁶⁹⁵ Josephus said this eastern wall was made up of gigantic stones which were

⁶⁹⁵ *War* V.5,1. The New Testament also refers to one of the colonnades (no doubt the southern up to the eastern) as "Solomon's Colonnade" (Acts 3:11).

“bound together *with lead*.”⁶⁹⁶ He also said this wall of Solomon

“became greater in depth, so that the size and height of the structure, which was square, were immense, and the great size of the stones was seen along the front surface, *while iron clamps on the inside assured that the joints would remain permanently united*.”⁶⁹⁷

Notice two points in Josephus’ description that I emphasized. He said the stones that made up the wall on the east side of the Temple were “bound together with lead” and on the inside they had “iron clamps” that fused them together with such a bond that Josephus reckoned they would be permanently united together. These bonding features in the east wall that used iron and lead would have been a unique aspect associated with the binding of those stones. But note this: Much of the eastern wall of the Haram (that some attribute to Solomon because they think it is the Temple Mount) DO NOT have any of these features.⁶⁹⁸ The stones of the Haram are all placed one on another without any type of cement between them (either of lead, iron or whatever). This fact is, again, a clear indication the walls surrounding the Haram are NOT those that encompassed the Temple of Herod as described by Josephus, our eyewitness historian.

Remember, if we select the Haram esh-Sharif as the site of the Temple (as the scholars and religious authorities do today), and at the same time accept the dimensions of its walls as recorded by Josephus (as we should), we will have the platform of the Temple

⁶⁹⁶ *Antiquities* XV.11,3.

⁶⁹⁷ *Antiquities* XV.11,3 Loeb translation.

⁶⁹⁸ Meir Ben-Dov explains how the Roman architect Vitruvius established a school of engineering which dealt with the transportation of large stones in buildings, and how to set them precisely on top one another. A small hard stone that was round in shape could be placed underneath the stone and the stone could be rolled into place. The small stone could then be crushed and the large stone would then be where the builders wanted it. The metal lead was also used in a similar manner to position stones, and the archaeologists found at the edge of some of the stones of the Haram esh-Sharif the residue of lead where this procedure was used. This lead, however, was not used for bonding or cementing in the way Josephus describes it for the Temple. See Ben-Dov, Naor; and Aner, *The Western Wall*, pages 215–219 for the use of lead in setting the stones in place.

about 200 feet higher than the summit of the Mount of Olives (the Temple platform was 300 cubits or 450 feet high). But such a conclusion is absurd because it presents us with impossible geographical situations. All becomes reasonable when one positions the Temple over the Gihon Spring with its foundational corner of the southeast wall located in the very floor of the Kedron Valley. That is precisely where it belongs. This correct position for the Temple is a third of a mile south of the Dome of the Rock in the Haram area.

Once this southern location for the Temple is recognized, an historical account by Josephus now makes sense. He said that before the war, Agrippa the Second would customarily recline at dining in a veranda room at his palace with his friends. From that spot they could look at what was happening within the Temple courts. For Agrippa to see the interior of the Temple the elevated part of his palace (where he would dine with his friends) must have been in the Upper City and at an elevation higher than the western wall of the Temple. When the religious authorities heard that Agrippa was entertaining his friends in such a manner (viewing the religious activities within the Temple courts), they decided to prevent this by constructing a new wall on top of the western colonnade.⁶⁹⁹ This additional height obscured Agrippa's view.

Look at this incident carefully.⁷⁰⁰ In no way could Agrippa have seen inside the Temple courts *if* the Temple were located over the Dome of the Rock within the Haram. That area in the north is much higher in elevation and would have been far too elevated for Agrippa to look over the Temple walls into the courts where the worshippers assembled. This again shows that the Haram can in no way be considered the site of the Temple of Herod.

A Final Point

Josephus stated as an eyewitness that the southern wall of Fort Antonia was located a *stade* (600 feet) north of the northwestern

⁶⁹⁹ *Antiquities* XX.8,11.

⁷⁰⁰ I am indebted to the Israeli architect Tuvia Sagiv for pointing it out to me on his Web Site. Indeed, with the actual Temple being located 600 feet south of the southern wall of the Haram, the observation of Tuvia Sagiv makes even better sense (*War* VI.2,6).

corner of the outer Temple walls (with an open space between the two structures that was bridged by two colonnade roadways about 600 feet long).⁷⁰¹ The walls surrounding the Temple and supporting the platform on which the Temple itself stood were also a *stade* in length (600 feet) on each side, making a perfect square. On the east side, the foundation of the wall went down 100 cubits (150 feet) *below* the surface of the Kedron Valley, and there was a further 300 cubits (450 feet) up to the platform on which was placed the colonnades that were 20 cubits (38 feet) high built around the Temple. According to the accounts in Josephus, the Temple complex looked like a palatial *penthouse* on top a square-shaped skyscraper *TOWER* that was 40 to 45 stories high.

In simple terms, the Temple and its four walls was a single high TOWER standing alone like any 40/45 story building now in New York or Chicago. It was 600 feet square and it occupied a whole square block. And on top of that 40/45 story skyscraper, one found all the numerous buildings that made up the Temple itself. Imagine too that at the top, and at the northwest corner of this 40/45 story building, there were two colonnade arched roadways that led northward to a much larger structure straddling about three square blocks in area. This northern structure would answer to the Haram or Fort Antonia. This was the Haram esh-Sharif.

If you can visualize this scene (as I illustrate in the pictures accompanying this book), then you have an idea of what Josephus saw before the Temple was ruined. Another eyewitness was Barnabas. He had first-hand knowledge of how the Temple appeared. He said only 15 years after the war that the Temple was then designated as a single and isolated TOWER. He distinguished it as: "THEIR TOWER [the Temple] shall he give up to destruction; and it happened according to that which the Lord had spoken."⁷⁰² The Haram esh-Sharif, though, was NOT a *single tower* like a skyscraper building. But the Temple was a skyscraper-like structure — a high *tower* with a Sanctuary on top — very dissimilar indeed from the Haram esh-Sharif.

⁷⁰¹ *War* VI.2,6.

⁷⁰² *Barnabas* 16:6.

The Haram and Temple Were Different Buildings

In closing, let us sum up this subject with a comparison. While the Temple had walls that were a perfect square of a *stade* on each side (600 feet), the Haram and its walls were (and are) quite diverse in their dimensions. The two structures are not identical. One was a square and the other was a trapezium.

The Temple Measurements were two Squares [the Squared Temple Walls and the Squared “Temple Mount”]. The Temple Square was positioned in the northwest part of the Temple Mount and this factor made the two Squares to have different geographical centers. The usage of the two Squares was different and they are NOT to be confused as being identical. The northwest part of the Temple Mount was where the four walls of the Temple Square was located.

Temple Measurements as a Square

North Wall	=	600 feet (or 750 feet if the non-walled “Levitical Camp” is included as the Mishnah relates)
West Wall	=	600 feet (or 750 feet <i>ditto</i>)
South Wall	=	600 feet (or 750 feet <i>ditto</i>)
East Wall	=	600 feet (or 750 feet <i>ditto</i>)

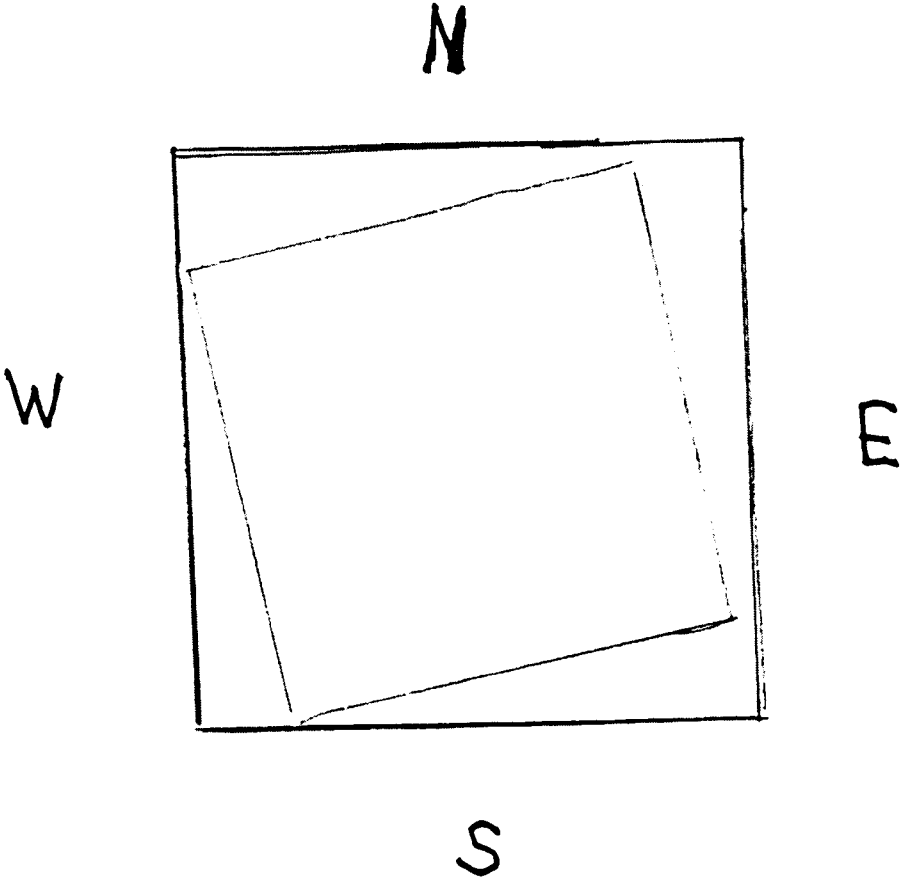
[compared with]

Haram esh-Sharif Measurements as a Trapezium

North Wall	=	1041 feet
West Wall	=	1596 feet
South Wall	=	929 feet
East Wall	=	1556 feet ⁷⁰³

⁷⁰³ Josephus, *Antiquities*, Loeb edition, vol. VIII, p.193.

It should be apparent from these disparate measurements that the Temple and the Haram were NOT the same structure. It is really quite clear. The Haram was actually the remains of Fort Antonia.



The two squared areas we see above represent an outline drawing of the Temple Mount (the larger square and oriented directly toward the cardinal points of direction) and the outline of the square walls of the Temple itself (the smaller square which is swiveled from true east and west by about 10 degrees north of east). The outer outline does NOT represent any built up walls or ramparts. It represents simply the Camp of the Levites (or what is technically called the "Temple Mount") that is 750 feet square within which the Temple itself is positioned that is 600 feet square. There were simply fewer Levitical buildings around the Temple in the southern section of the Temple Mount to allow more crowds to assemble before entering the Temple. The eastern sector had more buildings, followed by the northern sector. The western sector of the Temple Mount had many Levitical buildings and not many people could assemble on that western side. This is explained in *Middoth* 2:1. "The Temple Mount measured 500 cubits by 500 cubits. Its largest [open] space was to the south, the next largest to the east, the third largest to the north, and the smallest [open space to assemble] was to the west, the place where its measure was greatest was where its use was greatest."

Chapter 35

HOW COULD THE RABBIS FORGET?

THERE IS A CLOSING COMMENT on the matters of the Temple that I wish to make. I want to express some conciliatory remarks regarding the plight that modern scholars have had in trying to locate the original Temples of God that Solomon, Zerubbabel, Simon and Herod built. I do not want to appear unduly critical of their efforts to understand the past history of Jerusalem. After all, I finally came to see the problems involved in this issue barely six years ago, in 1994. So, some consideration and allowance should be given.

The consideration is needed because it does not make sense to most reasonable people that the whole nation of Israel would come to an ignorance of forgetting the original location of their Holy Temple in Jerusalem (which was situated at one of the great capital cities of the world and in the mainstream of civilized society throughout all recorded history). It appears preposterous in human

terms to believe that Israelites would ever forget where the original Temples were built.

Perhaps Professor George Adam Smith can sum up the primary problem that all historians have faced in this matter. Paraphrasing him in regard to his article concerning the Temple in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, he stated that it was *inconceivable* to him, and to all other scholars, that the location of such a majestic and important building as the Holy Temple of God (revered and loved by all Israelites in the world since the time it was built by Solomon) could have been lost to their knowledge.

The earlier Temples were no ordinary buildings. The Sanctuary represented the very heart and soul of the nation of Israel. It made no difference if the people of Israel were righteous or heretical, religious or secular, young or old, man or woman. Whether they lived within Israel or lived far from Israel in the Diaspora, that Temple was the very center of their lives and the prime focus of their spiritual existence. It was as important to them throughout all periods of their history and in all areas where they lived as our capitol building is to us in the United States (indeed, their Temple was infinitely more important than our capitol building because of its supreme religious significance and the divine attachment which Israel had for that Holy Place).

It truly seems *incredible* to anyone with common sense that a few years of captivity within the Babylonian period, or the three years of desecration in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, or any other periods of time when the Temples were not operating normally, would have allowed the whole nation of Israel (including every man, woman and child) to go into a state of complete ignorance and *to forget* where the original Temples had been located for almost 800 years of time. There is hardly a person in the world that would not think it to be *inconceivable* that Israel could ever forget the site of the Temple.

But strange as it may seem, the whole nation did in fact *forget!* That's right. All of them *forgot* — whether it is their scholars and educators, their leaders and elders, and it includes all their distinguished Rabbis for the past 800 years. All of them *forgot*. But wait

a moment. Not only did all Israel *forget*, all the peoples of the surrounding nations also *forgot*. All the Arabs and even later, all the peoples of Islam *forgot*. And too, all Christians in the world *forgot*. In fact, everyone on earth (including me) *forgot*. And what is the outcome? Jews and Arabs are today fighting over places in Jerusalem whose locations are based on fictitious traditional conclusions and not solid historical facts. One should wisely ask: Is there a purpose why God let all people on earth decline into a state of ignorance over these matters? Why did God let Israel and the world *forget* such a well known religious and significant site that was located in one of the most prominent and conspicuous centers of civilization in history since Abraham's time? Jerusalem was never in the outback!

One of the main reasons why this *forgetfulness* is rampant among both Jews and Arabs is the universal penchant for Jewish scholars to call Herod's Temple the "Second Temple" — as though it were a mere adaptation of the same Temple that was built by Zerubbabel after the Babylonian Captivity. This is manifestly wrong. In fact, it could be reasonably argued that Herod's Temple was the "*Sixth* Temple" from that of Solomon, NOT the "Second Temple"? That's right. The "*Sixth*." Note these facts. If one counts Solomon's Temple as the "First Temple," Nebuchadnezzar destroyed it. What then becomes the "Second Temple"? Note carefully that in Jeremiah we read that a *new* "House of God" (a temporary Temple because it had the Altar of God) was raised up in Mizpah the year after the former Temple of Solomon was demolished.⁷⁰⁴ Then, after the Babylonian Captivity, a further Altar was raised up in Jerusalem which was also called the "House of God" (compare Ezra 3:3 with 3:8). This was also recognized as a "Temple." This Temple (the "Third Temple") existed about eighteen years before the foundation of the actual building called the "House of God" (the "Fourth Temple") was begun (compare Ezra 3:6 with all of Haggai). This *fourth* "House of God" lasted until the time of Simon the Hasmonean who then built the "Fifth Temple," and he was followed some 46 years before Jesus began

⁷⁰⁴ Jeremiah 41:4–5.

his ministry with Herod building what can legitimately be called a *new* Temple (or, the “*Sixth* Temple”).

Strangely, the Jewish authorities over the past 1600 years have been accustomed to call Herod’s Temple the “Second Temple,” as though it were a mere extension of the Temple built in the time of Haggai after the Babylonian Captivity. They must have done this for nostalgic reasons, because from a historical and architectural point of view such a belief cannot be reasonably sustained.

How Quickly People Forget

What we have seen in this book is clear historical proof that people can forget very easily and quite quickly, even forgetting things dealing with the most sacred parts of their religions. While it is almost impossible to believe that the Jewish people (especially the Rabbis) could forget such a significant site as the Temple. they did indeed forget.

Firstly, I have clear historical documentation which I will soon post on the ASK Web Page on the Internet (www.askelm.com), that shows that every Jewish person in the world was fully aware a generation *before* the time of Maimonides (1134–1205 C.E.) that the holy site of their former Temples was over the Gihon Spring in southeastern Jerusalem. But, a generation *after* the time of Maimonides there was NOT a Jew in the world who remembered this historical fact. Indeed, it was Maimonides himself who got the whole of the Jewish nation to turn their eyes from the true site of their Temples over the Gihon Spring, and made them focus on the *fake site* of the Dome of the Rock that they all recognize today. I will show *why* and *how* Maimonides (the great rational philosopher) turned the whole Jewish nation to falsehood regarding the site of their holy Temples. The account is interesting indeed.

Secondly, I will also soon reveal on the ASK Web Page on the Internet *how* (and *why*) the Jewish people in the 16th century followed the advice of Rabbi Isaac Luria (the Ari) and *wrongly* selected the western wall of the Haram esh-Sharif (formerly Fort Antonia) as the “Western Wall” of Herod’s Temple. Truly, there was NOT a Jew in the world who paid the slightest respect to *that*

“Western (Wailing) Wall” before the 16th century. By following the false advice of Rabbi Isaac Luria, the whole of the Jewish nation has selected a wall to revere that was formerly a part of the Roman fortress that their ancestors in the first century held in highest contempt and disdain.

Thirdly, I will also soon reveal on the ASK Web Page the full relationship of the true location of the site of the Temples over the Gihon Spring with the area on the southern spur of the Mount of Olives where Jesus was crucified (and the place of his resurrection at the site of the Pater Nostra Church). This new information will show even more relevance and significance to Jesus being the Christ [the Messiah of the Jews and Muslims]. This new historical material will make the messages of the Holy Scriptures come alive with truth as never before understood. Keep your eyes tuned to our Web Page.

Now is the Time for the Truth to be Restored to Israel

Though I am by race a Gentile and I have no religious or emotional attachment to Judaism (or even to “sacred sites” in Jerusalem), it is a privilege for me to have this opportunity in this book to bring to the attention of my Jewish and Muslim friends that their earlier and original Temples have been found once again. This historical and geographical research should be able to help those in Israel and Palestine to realize that they are fighting over (and now negotiating over) regions of Jerusalem that have no relevance whatever to the sacred occurrences once associated with Abraham, Jacob, David, Ezra and Nehemiah, or any other biblical personage. Perhaps this new knowledge may help negotiators to re-evaluate their religious and political positions regarding these important geographical matters. This information may be helpful in getting the antagonists to put down their weapons and turn them into plowshares. I hope so.

The truth is, it is time that the Jewish and Islamic authorities abandon their erroneous designation of the Dome of the Rock as the site of the “Second Temple” and establish an identification of the various Temples (all *six* of them) to accord with the historical facts. This teaching of the Rabbis that their “Wailing Wall” is a

wall of Herod's Temple is thoroughly erroneous. They are ignorant of the truth in this regard. This is one of the reasons why the whole nation of Israel and all Islamic authorities have *forgotten* even where the Temples stood in Jerusalem. Their ignorance they now express needs to be brought to the attention of our Jewish and Muslim friends.

Now is the time to remove this profound ignorance and *forgetfulness*. It is now time to remember — to remember what the newly discovered Dead Sea Scrolls are showing us. What we now know from these new archaeological and biblical discoveries is this: Though the whole world over the past generations has *forgotten* where the original Temple of Solomon was constructed, we are now assured that the Temples of Solomon, Zerubbabel and Herod were built just above the once fresh and pure waters of the Gihon Spring located on the southeast ridge of Jerusalem. The Temples have been *found*. No longer are they: "The Temples that Jerusalem Forgot."

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